

Pharsalia [Civil War]

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by Marcus Annaeus Lucanus

July, 1996 [Etext #577]

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Pharsalia

(aka “The Civil War”)

by

Lucan

(Marcus Annaeus Lucanus)

A.D. 39 - A.D. 65

Originally written in Latin, approximately A.D. 61-65, by the Roman poet Lucan, and probably left unfinished upon his death in A.D. 65. Although the work has been generally known through most of history as the "Pharsalia", modern scholarship tends to agree that this was not Lucan's choice for a title.

This electronic edition was edited, proofed, and prepared by Douglas B. Killings (DeTroyes@AOL.COM), May 1996.

BOOK I

THE CROSSING OF THE RUBICON

Wars worse than civil on Emathian (1) plains, And crime let loose we sing; how
Rome's high race Plunged in her vitals her victorious sword; Armies akin
embattled, with the force Of all the shaken earth bent on the fray; And burst
asunder, to the common guilt, A kingdom's compact; eagle with eagle met,
Standard to standard, spear opposed to spear.

Whence, citizens, this rage, this boundless lust To sate barbarians with the blood
of Rome?

Did not the shade of Crassus, wandering still, (2) Cry for his vengeance? Could
ye not have spoiled, To deck your trophies, haughty Babylon?

Why wage campaigns that send no laurels home?

What lands, what oceans might have been the prize Of all the blood thus shed in
civil strife!

Where Titan rises, where night hides the stars, 'Neath southern noons all
quivering with heat, Or where keen frost that never yields to spring In icy fetters
binds the Scythian main: Long since barbarians by the Eastern sea And far
Araxes' stream, and those who know (If any such there be) the birth of Nile Had
felt our yoke. Then, Rome, upon thyself With all the world beneath thee, if thou
must, Wage this nefarious war, but not till then.

Now view the houses with half-ruined walls Throughout Italian cities; stone
from stone Has slipped and lies at length; within the home No guard is found,
and in the ancient streets so Scarce seen the passer by. The fields in vain, Rugged
with brambles and unploughed for years, Ask for the hand of man; for man is
not.

Nor savage Pyrrhus nor the Punic horde E'er caused such havoc: to no foe was given To strike thus deep; but civil strife alone Dealt the fell wound and left the death behind.

Yet if the fates could find no other way (3) For Nero coming, nor the gods with ease Gain thrones in heaven; and if the Thunderer Prevailed not till the giant's war was done, Complaint is silent. For this boon supreme Welcome, ye gods, be wickedness and crime; Thronged with our dead be dire Pharsalia's fields, Be Punic ghosts avenged by Roman blood; Add to these ills the toils of Mutina; Perusia's dearth; on Munda's final field The shock of battle joined; let Leucas' Cape Shatter the routed navies; servile hands Unsheathe the sword on fiery Etna's slopes: Still Rome is gainer by the civil war.

Thou, Caesar, art her prize. When thou shalt choose, Thy watch relieved, to seek divine abodes, All heaven rejoicing; and shalt hold a throne, Or else elect to govern Phoebus' car And light a subject world that shall not dread To owe her brightness to a different Sun; All shall concede thy right: do what thou wilt, Select thy Godhead, and the central clime Whence thou shalt rule the world with power divine.

And yet the Northern or the Southern Pole We pray thee, choose not; but in rays direct Vouchsafe thy radiance to thy city Rome.

Press thou on either side, the universe Should lose its equipoise: take thou the midst, And weight the scales, and let that part of heaven Where Caesar sits, be evermore serene And smile upon us with unclouded blue.

Then may all men lay down their arms, and peace Through all the nations reign, and shut the gates That close the temple of the God of War.

Be thou my help, to me e'en now divine!

Let Delphi's steep her own Apollo guard, And Nysa keep her Bacchus, uninvoked.

Rome is my subject and my muse art thou!

First of such deeds I purpose to unfold The causes — task immense — what

drove to arms A maddened nation, and from all the world Struck peace away.

By envious fate's decrees Abide not long the mightiest lords of earth; Beneath too heavy a burden great the fall.

Thus Rome o'ergrew her strength. So when that hour, The last in all the centuries, shall sound The world's disruption, all things shall revert To that primaeval chaos, stars on stars Shall crash; and fiery meteors from the sky Plunge in the ocean. Earth shall then no more Front with her bulwark the encroaching sea: The moon, indignant at her path oblique, Shall drive her chariot 'gainst her brother Sun And claim the day for hers; and discord huge Shall rend the spheres asunder.

On themselves Great powers are dashed: such bounds the gods have placed Upon the prosperous; nor doth Fortune lend To any nations, so that they may strike The sovereign power that rules the earth and sea, The weapons of her envy. Triple reign And baleful compact for divided power —

Ne'er without peril separate before —

Made Rome their victim. Oh! Ambition blind, That stirred the leaders so to join their strength In peace that ended ill, their prize the world!

For while the Sea on Earth and Earth on Air Lean for support: while Titan runs his course, And night with day divides an equal sphere, No king shall brook his fellow, nor shall power Endure a rival. Search no foreign lands: These walls are proof that in their infant days A hamlet, not the world, was prize enough To cause the shedding of a brother's blood.

Concord, on discord based, brief time endured, Unwelcome to the rivals; and alone

Crassus delayed the advent of the war.

Like to the slender neck that separates The seas of Graecia: should it be engulfed Then would th' Ionian and Aegean mains (4) Break each on other: thus when

Crassus fell, Who held apart the chiefs, in piteous death, And stained Assyria's plains with Latian blood, Defeat in Parthia loosed the war in Rome.

More in that victory than ye thought was won, Ye sons of Arsaces; your conquered foes Took at your hands the rage of civil strife.

The mighty realm that earth and sea contained, To which all peoples bowed, split by the sword, Could not find space for two (5). For Julia bore, Cut off by fate un pitying(6), the bond Of that ill-omened marriage, and the pledge Of blood united, to the shades below.

Had'st thou but longer stayed, it had been thine To keep the husband and the sire apart, And, as the Sabine women did of old, Dash down the threatening swords and join the hands.

With thee all trust was buried, and the chiefs Could give their courage vent, and rushed to war.

Lest newer glories triumphs past obscure, Late conquered Gaul the bays from pirates won, This, Magnus, was thy fear; thy roll of fame, Of glorious deeds accomplished for the state Allows no equal; nor will Caesar's pride A prior rival in his triumphs brook; Which had the right 'twere impious to enquire; Each for his cause can vouch a judge supreme; The victor, heaven: the vanquished, Cato, thee. (7) Nor were they like to like: the one in years Now verging towards decay, in times of peace Had unlearned war; but thirsting for applause Had given the people much, and proud of fame His former glory cared not to renew, But joyed in plaudits of the theatre, (8) His gift to Rome: his triumphs in the past, Himself the shadow of a mighty name.

As when some oak, in fruitful field sublime, Adorned with venerable spoils, and gifts Of bygone leaders, by its weight to earth With feeble roots still clings; its naked arms And hollow trunk, though leafless, give a shade; And though condemned beneath the tempest's shock To speedy fall, amid the sturdier trees In sacred grandeur rules the forest still.

No such repute had Ceesar won, nor fame; But energy was his that could not rest

The only shame he knew was not to win.

Keen and unvanquished (9), where revenge or hope Might call, resistless would he strike the blow With sword unpitying: every victory won Reaped to the full; the favour of the gods Pressed to the utmost; all that stayed his course Aimed at the summit of power, was thrust aside: Triumph his joy, though ruin marked his track.

As parts the clouds a bolt by winds compelled, With crack of riven air and crash of worlds, And veils the light of day, and on mankind, Blasting their vision with its flames oblique, Sheds deadly fright; then turning to its home, ‘

Nought but the air opposing, through its path Spreads havoc, and collects its scattered fires.

Such were the hidden motives of the chiefs; But in the public life the seeds of war Their hold had taken, such as are the doom Of potent nations: and when fortune poured Through Roman gates the booty of a world, The curse of luxury, chief bane of states, Fell on her sons. Farewell the ancient ways!

Behold the pomp profuse, the houses decked With ornament; their hunger loathed the food Of former days; men wore attire for dames Scarce fitly fashioned; poverty was scorned, Fruitful of warriors; and from all the world Came that which ruins nations; while the fields Furrowed of yore by great Camillus’ plough, Or by the mattock which a Curius held, Lost their once narrow bounds, and widening tracts By hinds unknown were tilled. No nation this To sheathe the sword, with tranquil peace content And with her liberties; but prone to ire; Crime holding light as though by want compelled: And great the glory in the minds of men, Ambition lawful even at point of sword, To rise above their country: might their law: Decrees are forced from Senate and from Plebs: Consul and Tribune break the laws alike: Bought are the fasces, and the people sell For gain their favour: bribery’s fatal curse Corrupts the annual contests of the Field.

Then covetous usury rose, and interest Was greedier ever as the seasons came; Faith tottered; thousands saw their gain in war.

Caesar has crossed the Alps, his mighty soul Great tumults pondering and the coming shock.

Now on the marge of Rubicon, he saw, In face most sorrowful and ghostly guise, His trembling country's image; huge it seemed Through mists of night obscure; and hoary hair Streamed from the lofty front with turrets crowned: Torn were her locks and naked were her arms.

Then thus, with broken sighs the Vision spake: "What seek ye, men of Rome? and whither hence Bear ye my standards? If by right ye come, My citizens, stay here; these are the bounds; No further dare." But Caesar's hair was stiff With horror as he gazed, and ghastly dread Restrained his footsteps on the further bank.

Then spake he, "Thunderer, who from the rock Tarpeian seest the wall of mighty Rome; Gods of my race who watched o'er Troy of old; Thou Jove of Alba's height, and Vestal fires, And rites of Romulus erst rapt to heaven, And Godlike Rome; be friendly to my quest.

Not with offence or hostile arms I come, Thy Caesar, conqueror by land and sea, Thy soldier here and wheresoe'er thou wilt: No other's; his, his only be the guilt Whose acts make me thy foe.' He gives the word And bids his standards cross the swollen stream.

So in the wastes of Afric's burning clime The lion crouches as his foes draw near, Feeding his wrath the while, his lashing tail Provokes his fury; stiff upon his neck Bristles his mane: deep from his gaping jaws Resounds a muttered growl, and should a lance Or javelin reach him from the hunter's ring, Scorning the puny scratch he bounds afield.

From modest fountain blood-red Rubicon In summer's heat flows on; his pigmy tide Creeps through the valleys and with slender marge Divides the Italian peasant from the Gaul.

Then winter gave him strength, and fraught with rain The third day's crescent moon; while Eastern winds Thawed from the Alpine slopes the yielding snow.

The cavalry first form across the stream ‘

To break the torrent's force; the rest with ease Beneath their shelter gain the further bank.

When Csesar crossed and trod beneath his feet The soil of Italy's forbidden fields, "Here," spake he, "peace, here broken laws be left; Farewell to treaties. Fortune, lead me on; War is our judge, and in the fates our trust."

Then in the shades of night he leads the troops Swifter than Balearic sling or shaft Winged by retreating Parthian, to the walls Of threatened Rimini, while fled the stars, Save Lucifer, before the coming sun, Whose fires were veiled in clouds, by south wind driven, Or else at heaven's command: and thus drew on The first dark morning of the civil war.

Now stand the troops within the captured town, Their standards planted; and the trumpet clang Rings forth in harsh alarums, giving note Of impious strife: roused from their sleep the men Rush to the hall and snatch the ancient arms Long hanging through the years of peace; the shield With crumbling frame; dark with the tooth of rust Their swords (10); and javelins with blunted point.

But when the well-known signs and eagles shone, And Caesar towering o'er the throng was seen, They shook for terror, fear possessed their limbs, And thoughts unuttered stirred within their souls.

"O miserable those to whom their home Denies the peace that all men else enjoy!

Placed as we are beside the Northern bounds And scarce a footstep from the restless Gaul, We fall the first; would that our lot had been Beneath the Eastern sky, or frozen North, To lead a wandering life, rather than keep The gates of Latium. Brennus sacked the town And Hannibal, and all the Teuton hosts.

For when the fate of Rome is in the scale By this path war advances." Thus they moan Their fears but speak them not; no sound is heard Giving their anguish utterance: as when In depth of winter all the fields are still, The birds are voiceless and no sound is heard To break the silence of the central sea.

But when the day had broken through the shades Of chilly darkness, lo! the torch of war!

For by the hand of Fate is swift dispersed All Caesar's shame of battle, and his mind Scarce doubted more; and Fortune toiled to make His action just and give him cause for arms.

For while Rome doubted and the tongues of men Spoke of the chiefs who won them rights of yore, The hostile Senate, in contempt of right, Drove out the Tribunes. They to Caesar's camp With Curio hasten, who of venal tongue, Bold, prompt, persuasive, had been wont to preach Of Freedom to the people, and to call Upon the chiefs to lay their weapons down (11).

And when he saw how deeply Caesar mused, "While from the rostrum I had power," he said, To call the populace to aid thy cause, By this my voice against the Senate's will Was thy command prolonged. But silenced now Are laws in war: we driven from our homes; Yet is our exile willing; for thine arms Shall make us citizens of Rome again.

Strike; for no strength as yet the foe hath gained.

Occasion calls, delay shall mar it soon: Like risk, like labour, thou hast known before, But never such reward. Could Gallia hold Thine armies ten long years ere victory came, That little nook of earth? One paltry fight Or twain, fought out by thy resistless hand, And Rome for thee shall have subdued the world: 'Tis true no triumph now would bring thee home; No captive tribes would grace thy chariot wheels Winding in pomp around the ancient hill.

Spite gnaws the factions; for thy conquests won Scarce shalt thou be unpunished. Yet 'tis fate Thou should'st subdue thy kinsman: share the world With him thou canst not; rule thou canst, alone."

As when at Elis' festival a horse

In stable pent gnaws at his prison bars Impatient, and should clamour from without Strike on his ear, bounds furious at restraint, So then was Caesar, eager for the fight, Stirred by the words of Curio. To the ranks He bids his soldiers; with majestic mien And hand commanding silence as they come.

"Comrades," he cried, "victorious returned, Who by my side for ten long years have faced, 'Mid Alpine winters and on Arctic shores, The thousand dangers of the battlefield —

Is this our country's welcome, this her prize For death and wounds and Roman blood outpoured?

Rome arms her choicest sons; the sturdy oaks Are felled to make a fleet; — what could she more If from the Alps fierce Hannibal were come With all his Punic host? By land and sea Caesar shall fly! Fly? Though in adverse war Our best had fallen, and the savage Gaul Were hard upon our track, we would not fly.

And now, when fortune smiles and kindly gods Beckon us on to glory! — Let him come Fresh from his years of peace, with all his crowd Of conscript burgesses, Marcellus' tongue (12) And Cato's empty name! We will not fly.

Shall Eastern hordes and greedy hirelings keep Their loved Pompeius ever at the helm?

Shall chariots of triumph be for him Though youth and law forbad them? Shall he seize On Rome's chief honours ne'er to be resigned?

And what of harvests (13) blighted through the world And ghastly famine made to serve his ends?

Who hath forgotten how Pompeius' bands Seized on the forum, and with glittering arms Made outraged justice tremble, while their swords Hemmed in the judgment-seat where Milo (14) stood?

And now when worn and old and ripe for rest (15), Greedy of power, the impious sword again He draws. As tigers in Hyrcanian woods Wandering, or in the caves that saw their birth, Once having lapped the blood of slaughtered kine, Shall never cease from rage; e'en so this whelp Of cruel Sulla, nursed in civil war, Outstrips his master; and the tongue which licked That reeking weapon ever thirsts for more.

Stain once the lips with blood, no other meal They shall enjoy. And shall there be no end Of these long years of power and of crime?

Nay, this one lesson, e'er it be too late, Learn of thy gentle Sulla — to retire!

Of old his victory o'er Cilician thieves And Pontus' weary monarch gave him fame, By poison scarce attained. His latest prize Shall I be, Caesar, I, who would not quit My conquering eagles at his proud command?

Nay, if no triumph is reserved for me, Let these at least of long and toilsome war
'Neath other leaders the rewards enjoy.

Where shall the weary soldier find his rest?

What cottage homes their joys, what fields their fruit Shall to our veterans yield?
Will Magnus say That pirates only till the fields alight?

Unfurl your standards; victory gilds them yet, As through those glorious years.
Deny our rights!

He that denies them makes our quarrel just.

Nay! use the strength that we have made our own.

No booty seek we, nor imperial power.

This would-be ruler of subservient Rome We force to quit his grasp; and Heaven
shall smile On those who seek to drag the tyrant down."

Thus Caesar spake; but doubtful murmurs ran Throughout the listening crowd,
this way and that Their wishes urging them; the thoughts of home And
household gods and kindred gave them pause: But fear of Caesar and the pride
of war Their doubts resolved. Then Laelius, who wore The well-earned crown
for Roman life preserved, The foremost Captain of the army, spake: "O greatest
leader of the Roman name, If 'tis thy wish the very truth to hear 'Tis mine to
speak it; we complain of this, That gifted with such strength thou did'st refrain
From using it. Had'st thou no trust in us?

While the hot life-blood fills these glowing veins, While these strong arms avail
to hurl the lance, Wilt thou make peace and bear the Senate's rule?

Is civil conquest then so base and vile?

Lead us through Scythian deserts, lead us where The inhospitable Syrtes line the
shore Of Afric's burning sands, or where thou wilt: This hand, to leave a
conquered world behind, Held firm the oar that tamed the Northern Sea And
Rhine's swift torrent foaming to the main.

To follow thee fate gives me now the power: The will was mine before. No citizen I count the man 'gainst whom thy trumpets sound.

By ten campaigns of victory, I swear, By all thy world-wide triumphs, though with hand Unwilling, should'st thou now demand the life Of sire or brother or of faithful spouse, Caesar, the life were thine. To spoil the gods And sack great Juno's temple on the hill, To plant our arms o'er Tiber's yellow stream, To measure out the camp, against the wall To drive the fatal ram, and raze the town, This arm shall not refuse, though Rome the prize."

His comrades swore consent with lifted hands And vowed to follow wheresoe'er he led.

And such a clamour rent the sky as when Some Thracian blast on Ossa's pineclad rocks Falls headlong, and the loud re-echoing woods, Or bending, or rebounding from the stroke, In sounding chorus lift the roar on high.

When Csesar saw them welcome thus the war And Fortune leading on, and favouring fates, He seized the moment, called his troops from Gaul, And breaking up his camp set on for Rome.

The tents are vacant by Lake Leman's side; The camps upon the beetling crags of Vosges No longer hold the warlike Lingon down, Fierce in his painted arms; Isere is left, Who past his shallows gliding, flows at last Into the current of more famous Rhone, To reach the ocean in another name.

The fair-haired people of Cevennes are free: Soft Aude rejoicing bears no Roman keel, Nor pleasant Var, since then Italia's bound; The harbour sacred to Alcides' name Where hollow crags encroach upon the sea, Is left in freedom: there nor Zephyr gains Nor Caurus access, but the Circian blast (16) Forbids the roadstead by Monaecus' hold.

And others left the doubtful shore, which sea And land alternate claim, whene'er the tide Pours in amain or when the wave rolls back —

Be it the wind which thus compels the deep From furthest pole, and leaves it at the flood; Or else the moon that makes the tide to swell, Or else, in search of fuel (17) for his fires, The sun draws heavenward the ocean wave; —

Whate'er the cause that may control the main I leave to others; let the gods for me Lock in their breasts the secrets of the world.

Those who kept watch beside the western shore Have moved their standards home; the happy Gaul Rejoices in their absence; fair Garonne Through peaceful meads glides onward to the sea.

And where the river broadens, neath the cape Her quiet harbour sleeps. No outstretched arm Except in mimic war now hurls the lance.

No skilful warrior of Seine directs The scythed chariot 'gainst his country's foe.

Now rest the Belgians, and the Arvernian race That boasts our kinship by descent from Troy; And those brave rebels whose undaunted hands Were dipped in Cotta's blood, and those who wear Sarmatian garb. Batavia's warriors fierce No longer listen for the bugle call, Nor those who dwell where Rhone's swift eddies sweep Saone to the ocean; nor the mountain tribes Who dwell about its source. Thou, too, oh Treves, Rejoicest that the war has left thy bounds.

Ligurian tribes, now shorn, in ancient days First of the long-haired nations, on whose necks Once flowed the auburn locks in pride supreme; And those who pacify with blood accursed Savage Teutates, Hesus' horrid shrines, And Taranis' altars cruel as were those Loved by Diana (18), goddess of the north; All these now rest in peace. And you, ye Bards, Whose martial lays send down to distant times The fame of valorous deeds in battle done, Pour forth in safety more abundant song.

While you, ye Druids (19), when the war was done, To mysteries strange and hateful rites returned: To you alone 'tis given the gods and stars To know or not to know; secluded groves Your dwelling-place, and forests far remote.

If what ye sing be true, the shades of men Seek not the dismal homes of Erebus Or death's pale kingdoms; but the breath of life Still rules these bodies in another age —

Life on this hand and that, and death between.

Happy the peoples 'neath the Northern Star In this their false belief; for them no
fear Of that which frights all others: they with hands And hearts undaunted rush
upon the foe And scorn to spare the life that shall return.

Ye too depart who kept the banks of Rhine Safe from the foe, and leave the
Teuton tribes Free at their will to march upon the world.

Caesar, with strength increased and gathered troops New efforts daring, spreads
his bands afar Through Italy, and fills the neighbouring towns.

Then empty rumour to well-grounded fear Gave strength, and heralding the
coming war In hundred voices 'midst the people spread.

One cries in terror, "Swift the squadrons come Where Nar with Tiber joins: and
where, in meads By oxen loved, Mevania spreads her walls, Fierce Caesar
hurries his barbarian horse.

Eagles and standards wave above his head, And broad the march that sweeps
across the land."

Nor is he pictured truly; greater far More fierce and pitiless — from conquered
foes Advancing; in his rear the peoples march.

Snatched from their homes between the Rhine and Alps, To pillage Rome while
Roman chiefs look on.

Thus each man's panic thought swells rumour's lie: They fear the phantoms they
themselves create.

Nor does the terror seize the crowd alone: But fled the Fathers, to the Consuls
(20) first Issuing their hated order, as for war; And doubting of their safety,
doubting too Where lay the peril, through the choking gates, Each where he
would, rushed all the people forth.

Thou would'st believe that blazing to the torch Were men's abodes, or nodding
to their fall.

So streamed they onwards, frenzied with affright, As though in exile only could they find Hope for their country. So, when southern blasts From Libyan whirlpools drive the boundless main, And mast and sail crash down upon a ship With ponderous weight, but still the frame is sound, Her crew and captain leap into the sea, Each making shipwreck for himself. 'Twas thus They passed the city gates and fled to war.

No aged parent now could stay his son; Nor wife her spouse, nor did they pray the gods To grant the safety of their fatherland.

None linger on the threshold for a look Of their loved city, though perchance the last.

Ye gods, who lavish priceless gifts on men, Nor care to guard them, see victorious Rome Teeming with life, chief city of the world, With ample walls that all mankind might hold, To coming Caesar left an easy prey.

The Roman soldier, when in foreign lands Pressed by the enemy, in narrow trench And hurried mound finds guard enough to make His slumber safe; but thou, imperial Rome, Alone on rumour of advancing foes

Art left a desert, and thy battlements They trust not for one night. Yet for their fear This one excuse was left; Pompeius fled.

Nor found they room for hope; for nature gave Unerring portents of worse ills to come.

The angry gods filled earth and air and sea With frequent prodigies; in darkest nights Strange constellations sparkled through the gloom: The pole was all afire, and torches flew Across the depths of heaven; with horrid hair A blazing comet stretched from east to west And threatened change to kingdoms. From the blue Pale lightning flashed, and in the murky air The fire took divers shapes; a lance afar Would seem to quiver or a misty torch; A noiseless thunderbolt from cloudless sky Rushed down, and drawing fire in northern parts Plunged on the summit of the Alban mount.

The stars that run their courses in the night Shone in full daylight; and the orbéd moon, Hid by the shade of earth, grew pale and wan.

The sun himself, when poised in mid career, Shrouded his burning car in blackest gloom And plunged the world in darkness, so that men Despaired of day — like as he veiled his light From that fell banquet which Mycenae saw (21).

The jaws of Etna were agape with flame That rose not heavenwards, but headlong fell In smoking stream upon the Italian flank.

Then black Charybdis, from her boundless depth, Threw up a gory sea. In piteous tones Howled the wild dogs; the Vestal fire was snatched From off the altar; and the flame that crowned The Latin festival was split in twain, As on the Theban pyre (22), in ancient days; Earth tottered on its base: the mighty Alps From off their summits shook th' eternal snow (23).

In huge upheaval Ocean raised his waves O'er Calpe's rock and Atlas' hoary head.

The native gods shed tears, and holy sweat Dropped from the idols; gifts in temples fell: Foul birds defiled the day; beasts left the woods And made their lair among the streets of Rome.

All this we hear; nay more: dumb oxen spake; Monsters were brought to birth and mothers shrieked At their own offspring; words of dire import From Cumae's prophetess were noised abroad.

Bellona's priests with bleeding arms, and slaves Of Cybele's worship, with ensanguined hair, Howled chants of havoc and of woe to men.

Arms clashed; and sounding in the pathless woods Were heard strange voices; spirits walked the earth: And dead men's ashes muttered from the urn.

Those who live near the walls desert their homes, For lo! with hissing serpents in her hair, Waving in downward whirl a blazing pine, A fiend patrols the town, like that which erst At Thebes urged on Agave (24), or which hurled Lycurgus' bolts, or that which as he came From Hades seen, at haughty Juno's word, Brought terror to the soul of Hercules.

Trumpets like those that summon armies forth Were heard re-echoing in the silent night: And from the earth arising Sulla's (25) ghost Sang gloomy oracles, and by Anio's wave All fled the homesteads, frightened by the shade Of Marius

waking from his broken tomb.

In such dismay they summon, as of yore, The Tuscan sages to the nation's aid.

Aruns, the eldest, leaving his abode In desolate Luca, came, well versed in all
The lore of omens; knowing what may mean The flight of hovering bird, the
pulse that beats In offered victims, and the levin bolt.

All monsters first, by most unnatural birth Brought into being, in accursd flames
He bids consume (26). Then round the walls of Rome Each trembling citizen in
turn proceeds.

The priests, chief guardians of the public faith, With holy sprinkling purge the
open space That borders on the wall; in sacred garb Follows the lesser crowd:
the Vestals come By priestess led with laurel crown bedecked, To whom alone is
given the right to see Minerva's effigy that came from Troy (27).

Next come the keepers of the sacred books And fate's predictions; who from
Almo's brook Bring back Cybebe laved; the augur too Taught to observe sinister
flight of birds; And those who serve the banquets to the gods; And Titian
brethren; and the priest of Mars, Proud of the buckler that adorns his neck; By
him the Flamen, on his noble head The cap of office. While they tread the path
That winds around the walls, the aged seer Collects the thunderbolts that fell
from heaven, And lays them deep in earth, with muttered words Naming the spot
accursed. Next a steer, Picked for his swelling neck and beauteous form, He
leads to the altar, and with slanting knife Spreads on his brow the meal, and
pours the wine.

The victim's struggles prove the gods averse; But when the servers press upon
his horns He bends the knee and yields him to the blow.

No crimson torrent issued at the stroke, But from the wound a dark empoisoned
stream Ebbd slowly downward. Aruns at the sight Aghast, upon the entrails of
the beast Essayed to read the anger of the gods.

Their very colour terrified the seer; Spotted they were and pale, with sable
streaks Of lukewarm gore bespread; the liver damp With foul disease, and on the
hostile part The angry veins defiant; of the lungs The fibre hid, and through the

vital parts The membrane small; the heart had ceased to throb; Blood oozes through the ducts; the caul is split: And, fatal omen of impending ill,

One lobe o'ergrows the other; of the twain The one lies flat and sick, the other beats And keeps the pulse in rapid strokes astir.

Disaster's near approach thus learned, he cries —

“Whate'er may be the purpose of the gods, 'Tis not for me to tell; this offered beast Not Jove possesses, but the gods below.

We dare not speak our fears, yet fear doth make The future worse than fact. May all the gods Prosper the tokens, and the sacrifice Be void of truth, and Tages (famous seer) Have vainly taught these mysteries.” Such his words Involved, mysterious. Figulus, to whom For knowledge of the secret depths of space And laws harmonious that guide the stars, Memphis could find no peer, then spake at large: “Either,” he said, “the world and countless orbs Throughout the ages wander at their will; Or, if the fates control them, ruin huge Hangs o'er this city and o'er all mankind.

Shall Earth yawn open and engulph the towns?

Shall scorching heat usurp the temperate air And fields refuse their timely fruit? The streams Flow mixed with poison? In what plague, ye gods, In what destruction shall ye wreak your ire?

Whate'er the truth, the days in which we live Shall find a doom for many. Had the star Of baleful Saturn, frigid in the height, Kindled his lurid fires, the sky had poured Its torrents forth as in Deucalion's time, And whelmed the world in waters. Or if thou, Phoebus, beside the Nemean lion fierce Wert driving now thy chariot, flames should seize The universe and set the air ablaze.

These are at peace; but, Mars, why art thou bent On kindling thus the Scorpion, his tail Portending evil and his claws aflame?

Deep sunk is kindly Jupiter, and dull Sweet Venus' star, and rapid Mercury Stays on his course: Mars only holds the sky.

Why does Orion's sword too brightly shine?

Why planets leave their paths and through the void Thus journey on obscure?
'Tis war that comes, Fierce rabid war: the sword shall bear the rule Confounding
justice; hateful crime usurp The name of virtue; and the havoc spread Through
many a year. But why entreat the gods?

The end Rome longs for and the final peace Comes with a despot. Draw thou out
thy chain Of lengthening slaughter, and (for such thy fate) Make good thy liberty
through civil war."

The frightened people heard, and as they heard His words prophetic made them
fear the more.

But worse remained; for as on Pindus' slopes Possessed with fury from the
Theban god Speeds some Bacchante, thus in Roman streets Behold a matron run,
who, in her trance, Relieves her bosom of the god within.

"Where dost thou snatch me, Paeon, to what shore Through airy regions borne? I
see the snows Of Thracian mountains; and Philippi's plains Lie broad beneath.
But why these battle lines, No foe to vanquish — Rome on either hand?

Again I wander 'neath the rosy hues That paint thine eastern skies, where regal
Nile Meets with his flowing wave the rising tide.

Known to mine eyes that mutilated trunk That lies upon the sand! Across the
seas By changing whirlpools to the burning climes Of Libya borne, again I see
the hosts From Thracia brought by fate's command. And now Thou bear'st me
o'er the cloud-compelling Alps And Pyrenean summits; next to Rome.

There in mid-Senate see the closing scene Of this foul war in foulest murder
done.

Again the factions rise; through all the world Once more I pass; but give me
some new land, Some other region, Phoebus, to behold!

Washed by the Pontic billows! for these eyes Already once have seen Philippi's plains!" (28) The frenzy left her and she speechless fell.

ENDNOTES:

(1) 'The great Emathian conqueror' (Milton's sonnet). Emathia was part of Macedonia, but the word is used loosely for Thessaly or Macedonia.

(2) Crassus had been defeated and slain by the Parthians in B.C.

53, four years before this period.

(3) Mr. Froude in his essay entitled "Divus Caesar" hints that these famous lines may have been written in mockery.

Probably the five years known as the Golden Era of Nero had passed when they were written: yet the text itself does not aid such a suggestion; and the view generally taken, namely that Lucan was in earnest, appears preferable. There were many who dreamed at the time that the disasters of the Civil War were being compensated by the wealth and prosperity of the empire under Nero; and the assurance of universal peace, then almost realised, which is expressed in lines 69-81, seems inconsistent with the idea that this passage was written in irony. (See Lecky's "European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne", vol. i.p.240, who describes these latter verses as Written with all the fervour of a Christian poet. See also Merivale's "Roman Empire," chapter liv.) (4) See a similar passage in the final scene of Ben Jonson's "Catiline". The cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth was proposed in Nero's reign, and actually commenced in his presence; but abandoned because it was asserted that the level of the water in the Corinthian Gulf was higher than that in the Saronic Gulf, so that, if the canal were cut, the island of Aegina would be submerged. Merivale's "Roman Empire", chapter iv.

(5) Compare:

"Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere; Nor can one England brook a double reign Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales."

— "1 Henry IV", Act v., Scene 4.

(6) This had taken place in B.C.54, about five years before the action of the poem opens.

(7) This famous line was quoted by Lamartine when addressing the French Assembly in 1848. He was advocating, against the interests of his own party (which in the Assembly was all-powerful), that the President of the Republic should be chosen by the nation, and not by the Assembly; and he ended by saying that if the course he advocated was disastrous to himself, *‘Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.’*

(8) *‘Plausuque sui gaudere theatri.’* Quoted by Mr. Pitt, in his speech on the address in 1783, on the occasion of peace being made with France, Spain, and America; in allusion to Mr. Sheridan. The latter replied, *‘If ever I again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption — to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson’s best characters — the character of the Angry Boy in the “Alchymist.”’*

(9) Cicero wrote thus of Caesar: *‘Have you ever read or heard of a man more vigorous in action or more moderate in the use of victory than our Caesar?’* — *Epp. ad Diversos, viii. 15.*

(10) Marlowe has it:

“...And swords With ugly teeth of black rust foully scarred.”

(11) In the Senate, Curio had proposed and carried a resolution that Pompeius and Caesar should lay their arms down simultaneously; but this was resisted by the Oligarchal party, who endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to expel Curio from the Senate, and who placed Pompeius in command of the legions at Capua. This was in effect a declaration of war; and Curio, after a last attempt at resistance, left the city, and betook himself to Caesar. (See the close of Book IV.)

(12) Marcus Marcellus, Consul in B.C. 51.

(13) Plutarch, “Pomp.”, 49. The harbours and places of trade were placed under his control in order that he might find a remedy for the scarcity of grain. But his enemies said that he had caused the scarcity in order to get the power.

(14) Milo was brought to trial for the murder of Clodius in B.C.52, about three years before this. Pompeius, then sole Consul, had surrounded the tribunal with

soldiers, who at one time charged the crowd. Milo was sent into exile at Massilia.

(15) See Book II., 630.

(16) The north-west wind. Circius was a violent wind from about the same quarter, but peculiar to the district.

(17) This idea that the sun found fuel in the clouds appears again in Book VII., line 7; Book IX., line 379; and Book X., line 317.

(18) This Diana was worshipped by the Tauri, a people who dwelt in the Crimea; and, according to legend, was propitiated by human sacrifices. Orestes on his return from his expiatory wanderings brought her image to Greece, and the Greeks identified her with their Artemis. (Compare Book VI., 93.) (19) The horror of the Druidical groves is again alluded to in Book III., lines 462-489. Dean Merivale remarks (chapter li.) on this passage, that in the despair of another life which pervaded Paganism at the time, the Roman was exasperated at the Druids' assertion of the transmigration of souls. But the passage seems also to betray a lingering suspicion that the doctrine may in some shape be true, however horrible were the rites and sacrifices. The reality of a future life was a part of Lucan's belief, as a state of reward for heroes. (See the passage at the beginning of Book IX.; and also Book VI., line 933). But all was vague and uncertain, and he appears to have viewed the Druidical transmigration rather with doubt and unbelief, as a possible form of future or recurring life, than with scorn as an absurdity.

(20) Plutarch says the Consuls fled without making the sacrifices usual before wars. ("Pomp." 61.) (21) Compare Ben Jonson's "Catiline," I. 1: —

Lecca: The day goes back, Or else my senses.

Curius: As at Atreus' feast.

(22) When the Theban brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, were being burned on the same pyre, the flame shot up in two separate tongues, indicating that even in death they could not be reconciled. (Mr. Haskins' note, citing Statius, "Thebiad") (23) "Shook the old snow from off their trembling laps."

(Marlowe.) The Latin word is "jugis".

(24) Book VI., 420.

(25) Sulla was buried in the Campus Martius. (Plutarch, "Sulla,") The corpse of Marius was dragged from his tomb by Sulla's order, and thrown into the Anio.

(26) Such a ceremonial took place in A.D. 56 under Nero, after the temples of Jupiter and Minerva had been struck by lightning, and was probably witnessed by Lucan himself.

(See Merivale's "History of the Roman Empire," chapter lii.) (27) See Book IX., 1178.

(28) The confusion between the site of the battle of Philippi and that of the battle of Pharsalia is common among the Roman writers. (See the note to Merivale, chapter xxvi.) BOOK II

THE FLIGHT OF POMPEIUS

This was made plain the anger of the gods; The universe gave signs Nature reversed In monstrous tumult fraught with prodigies Her laws, and prescient spake the coming guilt.

How seemed it just to thee, Olympus' king, That suffering mortals at thy doom should know By omens dire the massacre to come?

Or did the primal parent of the world When first the flames gave way and yielding left Matter unformed to his subduing hand, And realms unbalanced, fix by stern decree'

Unalterable laws to bind the whole

(Himself, too, bound by law), so that for aye All Nature moves within its fated bounds?

Or, is Chance sovereign over all, and we The sport of Fortune and her turning wheel?

Whate'er be truth, keep thou the future veiled From mortal vision, and amid their fears May men still hope.

Thus known how great the woes The world should suffer, from the truth divine, A solemn fast was called, the courts were closed, All men in private garb; no purple hem Adorned the togas of the chiefs of Rome; No complaints were uttered, and a voiceless grief Lay deep in every bosom: as when death Knocks at some door but enters not as yet, Before the mother calls the name aloud Or bids her grieving maidens beat the breast, While still she marks the glazing eye, and soothes The stiffening limbs and gazes on the face, In nameless dread, not sorrow, and in awe Of death approaching: and with mind distraught Clings to the dying in a last embrace.

The matrons laid aside their wonted garb: Crowds filled the temples — on the unpitying stones Some dashed their bosoms; others bathed with tears The statues of the gods; some tore their hair Upon the holy threshold, and with shrieks And vows unceasing called upon the names Of those whom mortals supplicate. Nor all Lay in the Thunderer's fane: at every shrine Some prayers are offered which refused shall bring Reproach on heaven. One whose livid arms Were dark with blows, whose cheeks with tears bedewed And riven, cried, "Beat, mothers, beat the breast, Tear now the lock; while doubtful in the scales Still fortune hangs, nor yet the fight is won, You still may grieve: when either wins rejoice."

Thus sorrow stirs itself.

Meanwhile the men Seeking the camp and setting forth to war, Address the cruel gods in just complaint.

"Happy the youths who born in Punic days On Cannae's uplands or by Trebia's stream Fought and were slain! What wretched lot is ours!

No peace we ask for: let the nations rage; Rouse fiercest cities! may the world find arms To wage a war with Rome: let Parthian hosts Rush forth from Susa; Scythian Ister curb No more the Massagete: unconquered Rhine Let loose from furthest North her fair-haired tribes: Elbe, pour thy Suevians forth! Let us be foes Of all the peoples. May the Getan press Here, and the Dacian there; Pompeius meet The Eastern archers, Caesar in the West Confront th' Iberian. Leave to Rome no hand To raise against herself in civil strife.

Or, if Italia by the gods be doomed, Let all the sky, fierce Parent, be dissolved And falling on the earth in flaming bolts, Their hands still bloodless, strike both leaders down, With both their hosts! Why plunge in novel crime To settle which of them shall rule in Rome?

Scarce were it worth the price of civil war To hinder either." Thus the patriot voice Still found an utterance, soon to speak no more.

Meantime, the aged fathers o'er their fates In anguish grieved, detesting life prolonged That brought with it another civil war.

And thus spake one, to justify his fears: "No other deeds the fates laid up in store When Marius (1), victor over Teuton hosts, Afric's high conqueror, cast out from Rome, Lay hid in marshy ooze, at thy behest, O Fortune! by the yielding soil concealed And waving rushes; but ere long the chains Of prison wore his weak and aged frame, And lengthened squalor: thus he paid for crime His punishment beforehand; doomed to die Consul in triumph over wasted Rome.

Death oft refused him; and the very foe, In act to murder, shuddered in the stroke And dropped the weapon from his nerveless hand.

For through the prison gloom a flame of light He saw; the deities of crime abhorred; The Marius to come. A voice proclaimed Mysterious, 'Hold! the fates permit thee not That neck to sever. Many a death he owes To time's predestined laws ere his shall come; Cease from thy madness. If ye seek revenge For all the blood shed by your slaughtered tribes to Let this man, Cimbrians, live out all his days.'

Not as their darling did the gods protect The man of blood, but for his ruthless hand Fit to prepare that sacrifice of gore Which fate demanded. By the sea's despite Borne to our foes, Jugurtha's wasted realm He saw, now conquered; there in squalid huts Awhile he lay, and trod the hostile dust Of Carthage, and his ruin matched with hers: Each from the other's fate some solace drew, And prostrate, pardoned heaven. On Libyan soil (2) Fresh fury gathering (3), next, when Fortune smiled The prisons he threw wide and freed the slaves.

Forth rushed the murderous bands, their melted chains Forged into weapons for his ruffian needs.

No charge he gave to mere recruits in guilt Who brought not to the camp some proof of crime.

How dread that day when conquering Marius seized The city's ramparts! with what fated speed Death strode upon his victims! plebs alike And nobles perished; far and near the sword Struck at his pleasure, till the temple floors Ran wet with slaughter and the crimson stream Befouled with slippery gore the holy walls.

No age found pity men of failing years, Just tottering to the grave, were hurled to death; From infants, in their being's earliest dawn (4), The growing life was severed. For what crime?

Tw'as cause enough for death that they could die.

The fury grew: soon 'twas a sluggard's part To seek the guilty: hundreds died to swell The tale of victims. Shamed by empty hands, The bloodstained conqueror snatched a reeking head From neck unknown. One way of life remained, To kiss with shuddering lips the red right hand (5).

Degenerate people! Had ye hearts of men, Though ye were threatened by a thousand swords, Far rather death than centuries of life Bought at such price; much more that breathing space Till Sulla comes again (6). But time would fail In weeping for the deaths of all who fell.

Encircled by innumerable bands

Fell Baebius, his limbs asunder torn, His vitals dragged abroad. Antonius too, Prophet of ill, whose hoary head (7) was placed, Dripping with blood, upon the festal board.

There headless fell the Crassi; mangled frames 'Neath Fimbria's falchion: and the prison cells Were wet with tribunes' blood. Hard by the fane Where dwells the goddess and the sacred fire, Fell aged Scaevola, though that gory hand (8) Had spared him, but the feeble tide of blood Still left the flame alive upon the hearth.

That selfsame year the seventh time restored (9) The Consul's rods; that year to Marius brought The end of life, when he at Fortune's hands All ills had suffered; all her goods enjoyed.

"And what of those who at the Sacriport (10) And Colline gate were slain, then, when the rule Of Earth and all her nations almost left This city for another, and the chiefs Who led the Samnite hoped that Rome might bleed More than at Caudium's Forks she bled of old?

Then came great Sulla to avenge the dead, And all the blood still left within her

frame Drew from the city; for the surgeon knife Which shore the cancerous limbs cut in too deep, And shed the life stream from still healthy veins.

True that the guilty fell, but not before All else had perished. Hatred had free course And anger reigned unbridled by the law.

The victor's voice spake once; but each man struck Just as he wished or willed. The fatal steel Urged by the servant laid the master low.

Sons dripped with gore of sires; and brothers fought For the foul trophy of a father slain, Or slew each other for the price of blood.

Men sought the tombs and, mingling with the dead, Hoped for escape; the wild beasts' dens were full.

One strangled died; another from the height Fell headlong down upon the un pitying earth, And from the encrimsoned victor snatched his death: One built his funeral pyre and oped his veins, And sealed the furnace ere his blood was gone.

Borne through the trembling town the leaders' heads Were piled in middle forum: hence men knew Of murders else unpublished. Not on gates Of Diomedes (11), tyrant king of Thrace, Nor of Antaeus, Libya's giant brood, Were hung such horrors; nor in Pisa's hall Were seen and wept for when the suitors died.

Decay had touched the features of the slain When round the mouldering heap, with trembling steps The grief-struck parents sought and stole their dead.

I, too, the body of my brother slain Thought to remove, my victim to the peace Which Sulla made, and place his loved remains On the forbidden pyre. The head I found, But not the butchered corse.

“Why now renew The tale of Catulus's shade appeased?

And those dread tortures which the living frame Of Marius (12) suffered at the tomb of him Who haply wished them not? Pierced, mangled, torn —

Nor speech nor grasp was left: his every limb Maimed, hacked and riven; yet the fatal blow The murderers with savage purpose spared.

‘Twere scarce believed that one poor mortal frame Such agonies could bear e’er death should come.

Thus crushed beneath some ruin lie the dead; Thus shapeless from the deep are borne the drowned.

Why spoil delight by mutilating thus, The head of Marius? To please Sulla’s heart That mangled visage must be known to all.

Fortune, high goddess of Praeneste’s fane, Saw all her townsmen hurried to their deaths In one fell instant. All the hope of Rome, The flower of Latium, stained with blood the field Where once the peaceful tribes their votes declared.

Famine and Sword, the raging sky and sea, And Earth upheaved, have laid such numbers low: But ne’er one man’s revenge. Between the slain And living victims there was space no more, Death thus let slip, to deal the fatal blow.

Hardly when struck they fell; the severed head Scarce toppled from the shoulders; but the slain Blent in a weighty pile of massacre Pressed out the life and helped the murderer’s arm.

Secure from stain upon his lofty throne, Unshuddering sat the author of the whole, Nor feared that at his word such thousands fell.

At length the Tuscan flood received the dead The first upon his waves; the last on those That lay beneath them; vessels in their course Were stayed, and while the lower current flowed Still to the sea, the upper stood on high Dammed back by carnage. Through the streets meanwhile In headlong torrents ran a tide of blood, Which furrowing its path through town and field Forced the slow river on. But now his banks No longer held him, and the dead were thrown Back on the fields above. With labour huge At length he struggled to his goal and stretched In crimson streak across the Tuscan Sea.

“For deeds like these, shall Sulla now be styled ‘Darling of Fortune’, ‘Saviour of the State’?”

For these, a tomb in middle field of Mars Record his fame? Like horrors now
return For us to suffer; and the civil war Thus shall be waged again and thus
shall end.

Yet worse disasters may our fears suggest, For now with greater carnage of
mankind The rival hosts in weightier battle meet.

To exiled Marius, successful strife Was Rome regained; triumphant Sulla knew
No greater joy than on his hated foes To wreak his vengeance with unsparing
sword.

But these more powerful rivals Fortune calls To worse ambitions; nor would
either chief For such reward as Sulla's wage the war."

Thus, mindful of his youth, the aged man Wept for the past, but feared the
coming days.

Such terrors found in haughty Brutus' breast No home. When others sat them
down to fear He did not so, but in the dewy night When the great wain was
turning round the pole He sought his kinsman Cato's humble home.

Him sleepless did he find, not for himself Fearing, but pondering the fates of
Rome, And deep in public cares. And thus he spake: "O thou in whom that
virtue, which of yore Took flight from earth, now finds its only home, Outcast to
all besides, but safe with thee: Vouchsafe thy counsel to my wavering soul And
make my weakness strength. While Caesar some, Pompeius others, follow in the
fight, Cato is Brutus' guide. Art thou for peace, Holding thy footsteps in a
tottering world Unshaken? Or wilt thou with the leaders' crimes And with the
people's fury take thy part, And by thy presence purge the war of guilt?

In impious battles men unsheath the sword; But each by cause impelled: the
household crime; Laws feared in peace; want by the sword removed; And
broken credit, that its ruin hides In general ruin. Drawn by hope of gain, And not
by thirst for blood, they seek the camp.

Shall Cato for war's sake make war alone?

What profits it through all these wicked years That thou hast lived untainted?

This were all Thy meed of virtue, that the wars which find Guilt in all else, shall make thee guilty too.

Ye gods, permit not that this fatal strife Should stir those hands to action! When the clouds Of flying javelins hiss upon the air, Let not a dart be thine; nor spent in vain Such virtue! All the fury of the war Shall launch itself on thee, for who, when faint And wounded, would not rush upon thy sword, Take thence his death, and make the murder thine?

Do thou live on thy peaceful life apart As on their paths the stars unshaken roll.

The lower air that verges on the earth Gives flame and fury to the levin bolt; The deeps below the world engulph the winds And tracts of flaming fire. By Jove's decree Olympus rears his summit o'er the clouds: In lowlier valleys storms and winds contend, But peace eternal reigns upon the heights.

What joy for Caesar, if the tidings come That such a citizen has joined the war?

Glad would he see thee e'en in Magnus' tents; For Cato's conduct shall approve his own.

Pompeius, with the Consul in his ranks, And half the Senate and the other chiefs, Vexes my spirit; and should Cato too Bend to a master's yoke, in all the world The one man free is Caesar. But if thou For freedom and thy country's laws alone Be pleased to raise the sword, nor Magnus then Nor Caesar shall in Brutus find a foe.

Not till the fight is fought shall Brutus strike, Then strike the victor."

Brutus thus; but spake Cato from inmost breast these sacred words: "Chief in all wickedness is civil war, Yet virtue in the paths marked out by fate Treads on securely. Heaven's will be the crime To have made even Cato guilty. Who has strength To gaze unawed upon a toppling world?

When stars and sky fall headlong, and when earth Slips from her base, who sits with folded hands?

Shall unknown nations, touched by western strife, And monarchs born beneath

another clime Brave the dividing seas to join the war?

Shall Scythian tribes desert their distant north, And Getae haste to view the fall of Rome, And I look idly on? As some fond sire, Reft of his sons, compelled by grief, himself Marshals the long procession to the tomb, Thrusts his own hand within the funeral flames, Soothing his heart, and, as the lofty pyre Rises on high, applies the kindled torch: Nought, Rome, shall tear thee from me, till I hold Thy form in death embraced; and Freedom's name, Shade though it be, I'll follow to the grave.

Yea! let the cruel gods exact in full Rome's expiation: of no drop of blood The war be robbed. I would that, to the gods Of heaven and hell devoted, this my life Might satisfy their vengeance. Decius fell, Crushed by the hostile ranks. When Cato falls Let Rhine's fierce barbarous hordes and both the hosts Thrust through my frame their darts! May I alone Receive in death the wounds of all the war!

Thus may the people be redeemed, and thus Rome for her guilt pay the atonement due.

Why should men die who wish to bear the yoke And shrink not from the tyranny to come?

Strike me, and me alone, of laws and rights In vain the guardian: this vicarious life Shall give Hesperia peace and end her toils.

Who then will reign shall find no need for war.

You ask, 'Why follow Magnus? If he wins (13) He too will claim the Empire of the world.'

Then let him, conquering with my service, learn Not for himself to conquer." Thus he spoke And stirred the blood that ran in Brutus' veins Moving the youth to action in the war.

Soon as the sun dispelled the chilly night, The sounding doors flew wide, and from the tomb Of dead Hortensius grieving Marcia came (14).

First joined in wedlock to a greater man Three children did she bear to grace his

home: Then Cato to Hortensius gave the dame To be a fruitful mother of his sons
And join their houses in a closer tie.

And now the last sad offices were done She came with hair dishevelled, beaten
breast, And ashes on her brow, and features worn With grief; thus only pleasing
to the man.

“When youth was in me and maternal power I did thy bidding, Cato, and
received A second husband: now in years grown old Ne’er to be parted I return
to thee.

Renew our former pledges undefiled: Give back the name of wife: upon my
tomb Let `Marcia, spouse to Cato,’ be engraved.

Nor let men question in the time to come, Did’st thou compel, or did I willing
leave My first espousals. Not in happy times, Partner of joys, I come; but days of
care And labour shall be mine to share with thee.

Nor leave me here, but take me to the camp, Thy fond companion: why should
Magnus’ wife Be nearer, Cato, to the wars than thine?”

Although the times were warlike and the fates Called to the fray, he lent a
willing ear.

Yet must they plight their faith in simple form Of law; their witnesses the gods
alone.

No festal wreath of flowers crowned the gate Nor glittering fillet on each post
entwined; No flaming torch was there, nor ivory steps, No couch with robes of
broidered gold adorned; No comely matron placed upon her brow The bridal
garland, or forbad the foot (15) To touch the threshold stone; no saffron veil
Concealed the timid blushes of the bride; No jewelled belt confined her flowing
robe (16) Nor modest circle bound her neck; no scarf Hung lightly on the snowy
shoulder’s edge Around the naked arm. Just as she came, Wearing the garb of
sorrow, while the wool Covered the purple border of her robe, Thus was she
wedded. As she greets her sons So doth she greet her husband. Festal games
Graced not their nuptials, nor were friends and kin As by the Sabines bidden:
silent both They joined in marriage, yet content, unseen By any save by Brutus.

Sad and stern On Cato's lineaments the marks of grief Were still unsoftened, and the hoary hair Hung o'er his reverend visage; for since first Men flew to arms, his locks were left unkempt To stream upon his brow, and on his chin His beard untended grew. 'Twas his alone Who hated not, nor loved, for all mankind To mourn alike. Nor did their former couch Again receive them, for his lofty soul E'en lawful love resisted. 'Twas his rule Inflexible, to keep the middle path Marked out and bounded; to observe the laws Of natural right; and for his country's sake To risk his life, his all, as not for self Brought into being, but for all the world: Such was his creed. To him a sumptuous feast Was hunger conquered, and the lowly hut, Which scarce kept out the winter, was a home Equal to palaces: a robe of price

Such hairy garments as were worn of old: The end of marriage, offspring. To the State Father alike and husband, right and law He ever followed with unswerving step: No thought of selfish pleasure turned the scale In Cato's acts, or swayed his upright soul.

Meanwhile Pompeius led his trembling host To fields Campanian, and held the walls First founded by the chief of Trojan race (17).

These chose he for the central seat of war, Some troops despatching who might meet the foe Where shady Apennine lifts up the ridge Of mid Italia; nearest to the sky

Upsoaring, with the seas on either hand, The upper and the lower. Pisa's sands Breaking the margin of the Tuscan deep, Here bound his mountains: there Ancona's towers Laved by Dalmatian waves. Rivers immense, In his recesses born, pass on their course, To either sea diverging. To the left Metaurus, and Crustumium's torrent, fall And Sena's streams and Aufidus who bursts On Adrian billows; and that mighty flood Which, more than all the rivers of the earth, Sweeps down the soil and tears the woods away And drains Hesperia's springs. In fabled lore His banks were first by poplar shade enclosed: (18) And when by Phaethon the waning day Was drawn in path transverse, and all the heaven Blazed with his car aflame, and from the depths Of inmost earth were rapt all other floods, Padus still rolled in pride of stream along.

Nile were no larger, but that o'er the sand Of level Egypt he spreads out his

waves; Nor Ister, if he sought the Scythian main Unhelped upon his journey through the world By tributary waters not his own.

But on the right hand Tiber has his source, Deep-flowing Rutuba, Vulturnus swift, And Sarnus breathing vapours of the night Rise there, and Liris with Vestinian wave Still gliding through Marica's shady grove, And Siler flowing through Salernian meads: And Macra's swift unnavigable stream By Luna lost in Ocean. On the Alps Whose spurs strike plainwards, and on fields of Gaul The cloudy heights of Apennine look down In further distance: on his nearer slopes The Sabine turns the ploughshare; Umbrian kine And Marsian fatten; with his pineclad rocks He girds the tribes of Latium, nor leaves Hesperia's soil until the waves that beat On Scylla's cave compel. His southern spurs Extend to Juno's temple, and of old Stretched further than Italia, till the main O'erstepped his limits and the lands repelled.

But, when the seas were joined, Pelorus claimed His latest summits for Sicilia's isle.

Caesar, in rage for war, rejoicing found Foes in Italia; no bloodless steps

Nor vacant homes had pleased him (19); so his march Were wasted: now the coming war was joined Unbroken to the past; to force the gates Not find them open, fire and sword to bring Upon the harvests, not through fields unharmed To pass his legions — this was Caesar's joy; In peaceful guise to march, this was his shame.

Italia's cities, doubtful in their choice, Though to the earliest onset of the war About to yield, strengthened their walls with mounds And deepest trench encircling: massive stones And bolts of war to hurl upon the foe They place upon the turrets. Magnus most The people's favour held, yet faith with fear Fought in their breasts. As when, with strident blast, A southern tempest has possessed the main And all the billows follow in its track: Then, by the Storm-kick smitten, should the earth Set Eurys free upon the swollen deep, It shall not yield to him, though cloud and sky Confess his strength; but in the former wind Still find its master. But their fears prevailed, And Caesar's fortune, o'er their wavering faith.

For Libo fled Etruria; Umbria lost

Her freedom, driving Thermus (20) from her bounds; Great Sulla's son,
unworthy of his sire, Feared at the name of Caesar: Varus sought The caves and
woods, when smote the hostile horse The gates of Auximon; and Spinther driven
From Asculum, the victor on his track, Fled with his standards, soldierless; and
thou, Scipio, did'st leave Nuceria's citadel Deserted, though by bravest legions
held Sent home by Caesar for the Parthian war (21); Whom Magnus earlier, to
his kinsman gave A loan of Roman blood, to fight the Gaul.

But brave Domitius held firm his post (22) Behind Corfinium's ramparts; his the
troops Who newly levied kept the judgment hall At Milo's trial (23). When from
far the plain Rolled up a dusty cloud, beneath whose veil The sheen of armour
glistening in the sun, Revealed a marching host. "Dash down," he cried, Swift;
as ye can, the bridge that spans the stream; And thou, O river, from thy mountain
source With all thy torrents rushing, planks and beams Ruined and broken on thy
foaming breast Bear onward to the sea. The war shall stop Here, to our triumph;
for this headlong chief Here first at our firm bidding shall be stayed."

He bade his squadrons, speeding from the walls, Charge on the bridge: in vain:
for Caesar saw They sought to free the river from his chains (24) And bar his
march; and roused to ire, he cried: "Were not the walls sufficient to protect Your
coward souls? Seek ye by barricades And streams to keep me back? What
though the flood Of swollen Ganges were across my path?

Now Rubicon is passed, no stream on earth Shall hinder Caesar! Forward, horse
and foot, And ere it totters rush upon the bridge."

Urged in their swiftest gallop to the front Dashed the light horse across the
sounding plain; And suddenly, as storm in summer, flew A cloud of javelins
forth, by sinewy arms Hurlled at the foe; the guard is put to flight, And
conquering Caesar, seizing on the bridge, Compels the enemy to keep the walls.

Now do the mighty engines, soon to hurl Gigantic stones, press forward, and the
ram Creeps 'neath the ramparts; when the gates fly back, And lo! the traitor
troops, foul crime in war, Yield up their leader. Him they place before His proud
compatriot; yet with upright form, And scornful features and with noble mien,
He asks his death. But Caesar knew his wish Was punishment, and pardon was
his fear: "Live though thou would'st not," so the chieftain spake, "And by my

gift, unwilling, see the day: Be to my conquered foes the cause of hope, Proof of my clemency — or if thou wilt Take arms again — and should'st thou conquer, count This pardon nothing." Thus he spake, and bade Let loose the bands and set the captive free.

Ah! better had he died, and fortune spared The Roman's last dishonour, whose worse doom It is, that he who joined his country's camp And fought with Magnus for the Senate's cause Should gain for this — a pardon! Yet he curbed His anger, thinking, "Wilt thou then to Rome And peaceful scenes, degenerate? Rather war, The furious battle and the certain end!

Break with life's ties: be Caesar's gift in vain."

Pompeius, ignorant that his captain thus Was taken, armed his levies newly raised To give his legions strength; and as he thought To sound his trumpets with the coming dawn, To test his soldiers ere he moved his camp Thus in majestic tones their ranks addressed: "Soldiers of Rome! Avengers of her laws!

To whom the Senate gives no private arms, Ask by your voices for the battle sign.

Fierce falls the pillage on Hesperian fields, And Gallia's fury o'er the snowy Alps (25) Is poured upon us. Caesar's swords at last Are red with Roman blood. But with the wound We gain the better cause; the crime is theirs.

No war is this, but for offended Rome We wreak the vengeance; as when Catiline Lifted against her roofs the flaming brand And, partner in his fury, Lentulus, And mad Cethegus (26) with his naked arm.

Is such thy madness, Caesar? when the Fates With great Camillus' and Metellus' names Might place thine own, dost thou prefer to rank With Marius and Cinna? Swift shall be Thy fall: as Lepidus before the sword Of Catulus; or who my axes felt,

Carbo (27), now buried in Sicanian tomb; Or who, in exile, roused Iberia's hordes, Sertorius — yet, witness Heaven, with these I hate to rank thee; hate the task that Rome Has laid upon me, to oppose thy rage.

Would that in safety from the Parthian war And Scythian steppes had conquering
Crassus come!

Then haply had'st thou fallen by the hand That smote vile Spartacus the robber
foe.

But if among my triumphs fate has said Thy conquest shall be written, know this
heart Still sends the life blood coursing: and this arm (28) Still vigorously flings
the dart afield.

He deems me slothful. Caesar, thou shalt learn We brook not peace because we
lag in war.

Old, does he call me? Fear not ye mine age.

Let me be elder, if his soldiers are.

The highest point a citizen can reach And leave his people free, is mine: a throne
Alone were higher; whoso would surpass Pompeius, aims at that. Both Consuls
stand Here; here for battle stand your lawful chiefs: And shall this Caesar drag
the Senate down?

Not with such blindness, not so lost to shame Does Fortune rule. Does he take
heart from Gaul: For years on years rebellious, and a life Spent there in labour?
or because he fled Rhine's icy torrent and the shifting pools He calls an ocean?
or unchallenged sought Britannia's cliffs; then turned his back in flight?

Or does he boast because his citizens Were driven in arms to leave their hearths
and homes?

Ah, vain delusion! not from thee they fled: My steps they follow — mine, whose
conquering signs Swept all the ocean (29), and who, ere the moon Twice filled
her orb and waned, compelled to flight The pirate, shrinking from the open sea,
And humbly begging for a narrow home In some poor nook on shore. 'Twas I
again Who, happier far than Sulla, drave to death (30) That king who, exiled to
the deep recess Of Scythian Pontus, held the fates of Rome Still in the balances.
Where is the land That hath not seen my trophies? Icy waves Of northern Phasis,
hot Egyptian shores, And where Syene 'neath its noontide sun Knows shade on
neither hand (31): all these have learned To fear Pompeius: and far Baetis' (32)
stream, Last of all floods to join the refluent sea.

Arabia and the warlike hordes that dwell Beside the Euxine wave: the famous land That lost the golden fleece; Cilician wastes, And Cappadocian, and the Jews who pray Before an unknown God; Sophene soft —

All felt my yoke. What conquests now remain, What wars not civil can my kinsman wage?"

No loud acclaim received his words, nor shout Asked for the promised battle: and the chief Drew back the standards, for the soldier's fears Were in his soul alike; nor dared he trust An army, vanquished by the fame alone Of Caesar's powers, to fight for such a prize.

And as some bull, his early combat lost, Forth driven from the herd, in exile roams Through lonely plains or secret forest depths, Whets on opposing trunks his growing horn, And proves himself for battle, till his neck Is ribbed afresh with muscle: then returns, Defiant of the hind, and victor now Leads wheresoe'er he will his lowing bands: Thus Magnus, yielding to a stronger foe, Gave up Italia, and sought in flight Brundusium's sheltering battlements.

Here of old Fled Cretan settlers when the dusky sail (33) Spread the false message of the hero dead; Here, where Hesperia, curving as a bow, Draws back her coast, a little tongue of land Shuts in with bending horns the sounding main.

Yet insecure the spot, unsafe in storm, Were it not sheltered by an isle on which The Adriatic billows dash and fall, And tempests lose their strength: on either hand A craggy cliff opposing breaks the gale That beats upon them, while the ships within Held by their trembling cables ride secure.

Hence to the mariner the boundless deep Lies open, whether for Corcyra's port He shapes his sails, or for Illyria's shore, And Epidamnus facing to the main

Ionian. Here, when raging in his might Fierce Adria whelms in foam Calabria's coast, When clouds tempestuous veil Ceraunus' height, The sailor finds a haven.

When the chief Could find no hope in battle on the soil He now was quitting,
and the lofty Alps Forbad Iberia, to his son he spake, The eldest scion of that
noble stock: "Search out the far recesses of the earth, Nile and Euphrates,
wheresoe'er the fame Of Magnus lives, where, through thy father's deeds, The
people tremble at the name of Rome.

Lead to the sea again the pirate bands; Rouse Egypt's kings; Tigranes, wholly
mine, And Pharnaces and all the vagrant tribes Of both Armenias; and the Pontic
hordes, Warlike and fierce; the dwellers on the hills Rhipaeon, and by that dead
northern marsh Whose frozen surface bears the loaded wain.

Why further stay thee? Let the eastern world Sound with the war, all cities of the
earth Conquered by me, as vassals, to my camp Send all their levied hosts. And
you whose names Within the Latian book recorded stand, Strike for Epirus with
the northern wind; And thence in Greece and Macedonian tracts, (While winter
gives us peace) new strength acquire For coming conflicts." They obey his
words And loose their ships and launch upon the main.

But Caesar's might, intolerant of peace Or lengthy armistice, lest now perchance
The fates might change their edicts, swift pursued The footsteps of his foe. To
other men, So many cities taken at a blow,

So many strongholds captured, might suffice; And Rome herself, the mistress of
the world, Lay at his feet, the greatest prize of all.

Not so with Caesar: instant on the goal He fiercely presses; thinking nothing
done While aught remained to do. Now in his grasp Lay all Italia; — but while
Magnus stayed Upon the utmost shore, his grieving soul Deemed all was shared
with him. Yet he essayed Escape to hinder, and with labour vain Piled in the
greedy main gigantic rocks: Mountains of earth down to the sandy depths Were
swallowed by the vortex of the sea; Just as if Eryx and its lofty top

Were cast into the deep, yet not a speck Should mark the watery plain; or Gaurus
huge Split from his summit to his base, were plunged In fathomless Avernus'
stagnant pool.

The billows thus unstemmed, 'twas Caesar's will To hew the stately forests and
with trees Enchained to form a rampart. Thus of old (If fame be true) the

boastful Persian king Prepared a way across the rapid strait 'Twixt Sestos and Abydos, and made one The European and the Trojan shores; And marched upon the waters, wind and storm Counting as nought, but trusting his emprise To one frail bridge, so that his ships might pass Through middle Athos. Thus a mighty mole Of fallen forests grew upon the waves, Free until then, and lofty turrets rose, And land usurped the entrance to the main.

This when Pompeius saw, with anxious care His soul was filled; yet hoping to regain The exit lost, and win a wider world Wherein to wage the war, on chosen ships He hoists the sails; these, driven by the wind And drawn by cables fastened to their prows, Scattered the beams asunder; and at night Not seldom engines, worked by stalwart arms, Flung flaming torches forth. But when the time For secret flight was come, no sailor shout Rang on the shore, no trumpet marked the hour, No bugle called the armament to sea.

Already shone the Virgin in the sky Leading the Scorpion in her course, whose claws Foretell the rising Sun, when noiseless all They cast the vessels loose; no song was heard To greet the anchor wrenched from stubborn sand; No captain's order, when the lofty mast Was raised, or yards were bent; a silent crew Drew down the sails which hung upon the ropes, Nor shook the mighty cables, lest the wind Should sound upon them. But the chief, in prayer, Thus spake to Fortune: "Thou whose high decree Has made us exiles from Italia's shores, Grant us at least to leave them." Yet the fates Hardly permitted, for a murmur vast Came from the ocean, as the countless keels Furrowed the waters, and with ceaseless splash The parted billows rose again and fell.

Then were the gates thrown wide; for with the fates The city turned to Caesar: and the foe, Seizing the town, rushed onward by the pier That circled in the harbour; then they knew With shame and sorrow that the fleet was gone And held the open: and Pompeius' flight Gave a poor triumph.

Yet was narrower far The channel which gave access to the sea Than that Euboean strait (34) whose waters lave The shore by Chalcis. Here two ships stuck fast Alone, of all the fleet; the fatal hook Grappled their decks and drew them to the land, And the first bloodshed of the civil war Here left a blush upon

the ocean wave.

As when the famous ship (36) sought Phasis' stream The rocky gates closed in
and hardly gripped Her flying stern; then from the empty sea The cliffs
rebounding to their ancient seat Were fixed to move no more. But now the steps
Of morn approaching tinged the eastern sky With roseate hues: the Pleiades were
dim, The wagon of the Charioteer grew pale, The planets faded, and the silvery
star Which ushers in the day, was lost in light.

Then Magnus, hold'st the deep; yet not the same Now are thy fates, as when
from every sea Thy fleet triumphant swept the pirate pest.

Tired of thy conquests, Fortune now no more Shall smile upon thee. With thy
spouse and sons, Thy household gods, and peoples in thy train, Still great in
exile, in a distant land Thou seek'st thy fated fall; not that the gods, Wishing to
rob thee of a Roman grave, Decreed the strands of Egypt for thy tomb: 'Twas
Italy they spared, that far away Fortune on shores remote might hide her crime,
And Roman soil be pure of Magnus' blood.

ENDNOTES:

(1) When dragged from his hiding place in the marsh, Marius was sent by the
magistrates of Minturnae to the house of a woman named Fannia, and there
locked up in a dark apartment. It does not appear that he was there long. A Gallic
soldier was sent to kill him; "and the eyes of Marius appeared to him to dart a
strong flame, and a loud voice issued from the gloom, 'Man, do you dare to kill
Caius Marius?'" He rushed out exclaiming, "I cannot kill Caius Marius."
(Plutarch, "Marius", 38.)

(2) The Governor of Libya sent an officer to Marius, who had landed in the
neighbourhood of Carthage. The officer delivered his message, and Marius
replied, "Tell the Governor you have seen Caius Marius, a fugitive sitting on the
ruins of Carthage," a reply in which he not inaptly compared the fate of that city
and his own changed fortune.

(Plutarch, "Marius", 40.)

(3) In the “gathering of fresh fury on Libyan soil”, there appears to be an allusion to the story of Antruns, in Book IV.

(4) See Ben Jonson’s “Catiline”, Act i., scene 1, speaking of the Sullan massacre.

Cethegus: Not infants in the porch of life were free.

....

Catiline: ‘Twas crime enough that they had lives: to strike but only those that could do hurt was dull and poor: some fell to make the number as some the prey.

(5) Whenever he did not salute a man, or return his salute, this was a signal for massacre. (Plutarch, “Marius”, 49.) (6) The Marian massacre was in B.C. 87-86; the Sullan in 82-81.

(7) The head of Antonius was struck off and brought to Marius at supper. He was the grandfather of the triumvir.

(8) Scaevola, it would appear, was put to death after Marius the elder died, by the younger Marius. He was Pontifex Maximus, and slain by the altar of Vesta.

(9) B.C. 86, Marius and Cinna were Consuls. Marius died seventeen days afterwards, in the seventieth year of his age.

(10) The Battle of Sacriportus was fought between Marius the younger and the Sullan army in B.C. 82. Marius was defeated with great loss, and fled to Praeneste, a town which afterwards submitted to Sulla, who put all the inhabitants to death (line 216). At the Colline gate was fought the decisive battle between Sulla and the Saranires, who, after a furious contest, were defeated.

(11) Diomedes was said to feed his horses on human flesh. (For Antaeus see Book IV., 660.) Enomaus was king of Pisa in Elis. Those who came to sue for his daughter’s hand had to compete with him in a chariot race, and if defeated were put to death.

(12) The brother of the Consul.

(13) So Cicero: “Our Cnaeus is wonderfully anxious for such a royalty as Sulla’s. I who tell you know it.” (“Ep. ad Att.”, ix. 7.)

(14) Marcia was first married to Cato, and bore him three sons; he then yielded her to Hortensius. On his death she returned to Cato. (Plutarch, "Cato", 25, 52.) It was in reference to this that Caesar charged him with making a traffic of his marriage; but Plutarch says "to accuse Cato of filthy lucre is like upbraiding Hercules with cowardice."

After the marriage Marcia remained at Rome while Cato hurried after Pompeius.

(15) The bride was carried over the threshold of her new home, for to stumble on it would be of evil omen. Plutarch ("Romulus") refers this custom to the rape of the Sabine women, who were "so lift up and carried away by force."

(North, volume i., p. 88, Edition by Windham.) I have read "vetuit" in this passage, though "vitat" appears to be a better variation according to the manuscripts.

(16) The bride was dressed in a long white robe, bound round the waist with a girdle. She had a veil of bright yellow colour. ("Dict. Antiq.")

(17) Capua, supposed to be founded by Capys, the Trojan hero.

(Virgil, "Aeneid", x., 145.)

(18) Phaethon's sisters, who yoked the horses of the Sun to the chariot for their brother, were turned into poplars.

Phaethon was flung by Jupiter into the river Po.

(19) See the note to Book I., 164. In reality Caesar found little resistance, and did not ravage the country.

(20) Thermus. to whom Iguvium had been entrusted by the Senate, was compelled to quit it owing to the disaffection of the inhabitants. (Merivale, chapter xiv.) Auximon in a similar way rose against Varus.

(21) After Caesar's campaign with the Nervii, Pompeius had lent him a legion. When the Parthian war broke out and the Senate required each of the two leaders to supply a legion for it, Pompeius demanded the return of the legion which he had sent to Gaul; and Caesar returned it, together with one of his own. They

were, however, retained in Italy.

(22) See Book VII., 695.

(23) See Book I., 368.

(24) That is to say, by the breaking of the bridge, the river would become a serious obstacle to Caesar.

(25) See line 497.

(26) This family is also alluded to by Horace ("Ars Poetica,") as having worn a garment of ancient fashion leaving their arms bare. (See also Book VI., 945.)

(27) In B.C. 77, after the death of Sulla, Carbo had been defeated by Pompeius in 81 B.C., in which occasion Pompeius had, at the early age of twenty-five, demanded and obtained his first triumph. The war with Sertorius lasted till 71

B.C., when Pompeius and Metellus triumphed in respect of his overthrow.

(28) See Book I., line 369.

(29) In B.C. 67, Pompeius swept the pirates off the seas. The whole campaign did not last three months.

(30) From B.C. 66 to B.C. 63, Pompeius conquered Mithridates, Syria and the East, except Parthia.

(31) Being (as was supposed) exactly under the Equator. Syene (the modern Assouan) is the town mentioned by the priest of Sais, who told Herodotus that "between Syene and Elephantine are two hills with conical tops. The name of one of them is Croph, and of the other, Mophi. Midway between them are the fountains of the Nile." (Herod., II., chapter 28.) And see "Paradise Regained," IV., 70: —

"Syene, and where the shadow both way falls, "Meroe, Nilotick isle;..."

(32) Baetis is the Guadalquivir.

(33) Theseus, on returning from his successful exploit in Crete, hoisted by mistake black sails instead of white, thus spreading false intelligence of disaster.

(34) It seems that the Euripus was bridged over. (Mr. Haskins' note.)

(35) The "Argo".

BOOK III

MASSILIA

With canvas yielding to the western wind The navy sailed the deep, and every eye Gazed on Ionian billows. But the chief Turned not his vision from his native shore Now left for ever, while the morning mists Drew down upon the mountains, and the cliffs Faded in distance till his aching sight No longer knew them. Then his wearied frame Sank in the arms of sleep. But Julia's shape, In mournful guise, dread horror on her brow, Rose through the gaping earth, and from her tomb Erect (1), in form as of a Fury spake: "Driven from Elysian fields and from the plains The blest inhabit, when the war began, I dwell in Stygian darkness where abide The souls of all the guilty. There I saw Th' Eumenides with torches in their hands Prepared against thy battles; and the fleets (2) Which by the ferryman of the flaming stream Were made to bear thy dead: while Hell itself Relaxed its punishments; the sisters three With busy fingers all their needful task Could scarce accomplish, and the threads of fate Dropped from their weary hands. With me thy wife, Thou, Magnus, leddest happy triumphs home: New wedlock brings new luck. Thy concubine, Whose star brings all her mighty husbands ill, Cornelia, weds in thee a breathing tomb. (3) Through wars and oceans let her cling to thee So long as I may break thy nightly rest: No moment left thee for her love, but all By night to me, by day to Caesar given.

Me not the oblivious banks of Lethe's stream Have made forgetful; and the kings of death Have suffered me to join thee; in mid fight I will be with thee, and my haunting ghost Remind thee Caesar's daughter was thy spouse.

Thy sword kills not our pledges; civil war Shall make thee wholly mine." She spake and fled.

But he, though heaven and hell thus bode defeat, More bent on war, with mind assured of ill, "Why dread vain phantoms of a dreaming brain?

Or nought of sense and feeling to the soul Is left by death; or death itself is nought."

Now fiery Titan in declining path

Dipped to the waves, his bright circumference So much diminished as a growing moon
Not yet full circled, or when past the full; When to the fleet a hospitable coast
Gave access, and the ropes in order laid, The sailors struck the masts and rowed ashore.

When Caesar saw the fleet escape his grasp And hidden from his view by lengthening seas,
Left without rival on Hesperian soil, He found no joy in triumph; rather grieved
That thus in safety Magnus' flight was sped.

Not any gifts of Fortune now sufficed His fiery spirit; and no victory won,
Unless the war was finished with the stroke.

Then arms he laid aside, in guise of peace Seeking the people's favour; skilled to know
How to arouse their ire, and how to gain The popular love by corn in plenty given.

For famine only makes a city free;

By gifts of food the tyrant buys a crowd To cringe before him: but a people starved
Is fearless ever.

Curio he bids

Cross over to Sicilian cities, where Or ocean by a sudden rise o'erwhelmed The land,
or split the isthmus right in twain, Leaving a path for seas. Unceasing tides
There labour hugely lest again should meet The mountains rent asunder. Nor were left
Sardinian shores unvisited: each isle Is blest with noble harvests which have filled
More than all else the granaries of Rome, And poured their plenty on Hesperia's shores.

Not even Libya, with its fertile soil, Their yield surpasses, when the southern wind
Gives way to northern and permits the clouds To drop their moisture on the teeming earth.

This ordered, Caesar leads his legions on, Not armed for war, but as in time of peace Returning to his home. Ah! had he come With only Gallia conquered and the North (4), What long array of triumph had he brought!

What pictured scenes of battle! how had Rhine And Ocean borne his chains! How noble Gaul, And Britain's fair-haired chiefs his lofty car Had followed! Such a triumph had he lost By further conquest. Now in silent fear They watched his marching troops, nor joyful towns Poured out their crowds to welcome his return.

Yet did the conqueror's proud soul rejoice, Far more than at their love, at such a fear.

Now Anxur's hold was passed, the oozy road That separates the marsh, the grove sublime (5) Where reigns the Scythian goddess, and the path By which men bear the fasces to the feast On Alba's summit. From the height afar —

Gazing in awe upon the walls of Rome His native city, since the Northern war Unseen, unvisited — thus Caesar spake: "Who would not fight for such a godlike town?

And have they left thee, Rome, without a blow?

Thank the high gods no eastern hosts are here To wreak their fury; nor Sarmatian horde With northern tribes conjoined; by Fortune's gift This war is civil: else this coward chief Had been thy ruin."

Trembling at his feet He found the city: deadly fire and flame, As from a conqueror, gods and fanes dispersed; Such was the measure of their fear, as though His power and wish were one. No festal shout Greeted his march, no feigned acclaim of joy.

Scarce had they time for hate. In Phoebus' hall Their hiding places left, a crowd appeared Of Senators, uncalled, for none could call.

No Consul there the sacred shrine adorned Nor Praetor next in rank, and every

seat Placed for the officers of state was void: Caesar was all; and to his private voice (6) All else were listeners. The fathers sat Ready to grant a temple or a throne, If such his wish; and for themselves to vote Or death or exile. Well it was for Rome That Caesar blushed to order what they feared.

Yet in one breast the spirit of freedom rose Indignant for the laws; for when the gates Of Saturn's temple hot Metellus saw, Were yielding to the shock, he clove the ranks Of Caesar's troops, and stood before the doors As yet unopened. 'Tis the love of gold Alone that fears not death; no hand is raised For perished laws or violated rights: But for this dross, the vilest cause of all, Men fight and die. Thus did the Tribune bar The victor's road to rapine, and with voice Clear ringing spake: "Save o'er Metellus dead This temple opens not; my sacred blood Shall flow, thou robber, ere the gold be thine.

And surely shall the Tribune's power defied Find an avenging god; this Crassus knew (7), Who, followed by our curses, sought the war And met disaster on the Parthian plains.

Draw then thy sword, nor fear the crowd that gapes To view thy crimes: the citizens are gone.

Not from our treasury reward for guilt Thy hosts shall ravish: other towns are left, And other nations; wage the war on them —

Drain not Rome's peace for spoil." The victor then, Incensed to ire: "Vain is thy hope to fall In noble death, as guardian of the right; With all thine honours, thou of Caesar's rage Art little worthy: never shall thy blood Defile his hand. Time lowest things with high Confounds not yet so much that, if thy voice Could save the laws, it were not better far They fell by Caesar." Such his lofty words.

But as the Tribune yielded not, his rage Rose yet the more, and at his soldiers' swords One look he cast, forgetting for the time What robe he wore; but soon Metellus heard These words from Cotta: "When men bow to power Freedom of speech is only Freedom's bane (8), Whose shade at least survives, if with free will Thou dost whate'er is bidden thee. For us Some pardon may be found: a host of ills Compelled submission, and the shame is less That to have done which could not be refused.

Yield, then, this wealth, the seeds of direful war.

A nation's anger is by losses stirred, When laws protect it; but the hungry slave
Brings danger to his master, not himself."

At this Metellus yielded from the path; And as the gates rolled backward, echoed
loud The rock Tarpeian, and the temple's depths Gave up the treasure which for
centuries No hand had touched: all that the Punic foe And Perses and Philippus
conquered gave, And all the gold which Pyrrhus panic-struck Left when he fled:
that gold (9), the price of Rome, Which yet Fabricius sold not, and the hoard
Laid up by saving sires; the tribute sent By Asia's richest nations; and the wealth
Which conquering Metellus brought from Crete, And Cato (10) bore from
distant Cyprus home; And last, the riches torn from captive kings And borne
before Pompeius when he came In frequent triumph. Thus was robbed the
shrine, And Caesar first brought poverty to Rome.

Meanwhile all nations of the earth were moved To share in Magnus' fortunes and
the war, And in his fated ruin. Graecia sent, Nearest of all, her succours to the
host.

From Cirrha and Parnassus' double peak And from Amphissa, Phocis sent her
youth: Boeotian leaders muster in the meads By Dirce laved, and where
Cephisus rolls Gifted with fateful power his stream along: And where Alpheus,
who beyond the sea (11) In fount Sicilian seeks the day again.

Pisa deserted stands, and Oeta, loved By Hercules of old; Dodona's oaks

Are left to silence by the sacred train, And all Epirus rushes to the war.

And proud Athena, mistress of the seas, Sends three poor ships (alas! her all) to
prove Her ancient victory o'er the Persian King.

Next seek the battle Creta's hundred tribes Beloved of Jove and rivalling the east
In skill to wing the arrow from the bow.

The walls of Dardan Oricum, the woods Where Athamanians wander, and the

banks Of swift Absyrtus foaming to the main Are left forsaken. Enchelaean tribes Whose king was Cadmus, and whose name records His transformation (12), join the host; and those Who till Penean fields and turn the share Above Iolcos in Thessalian lands.”

There first men steeled their hearts to dare the waves (13) And ‘gainst the rage of ocean and the storm To match their strength, when the rude Argo sailed Upon that distant quest, and spurned the shore, Joining remotest nations in her flight, And gave the fates another form of death.

Left too was Pholoe; pretended home Where dwelt the fabled race of double form (14); Arcadian Maenalus; the Thracian mount Named Haemus; Strymon whence, as autumn falls, Winged squadrons seek the banks of warmer Nile; And all the isles the mouths of Ister bathe Mixed with the tidal wave; the land through which The cooling eddies of Caicus flow

Idalian; and Arisbe bare of glebe.

The hinds of Pitane, and those who till Celaenae’s fields which mourned of yore the gift Of Pallas (15), and the vengeance of the god, All draw the sword; and those from Marsyas’ flood First swift, then doubling backwards with the stream Of sinuous Meander: and from where

Pactolus leaves his golden source and leaps From Earth permitting; and with rival wealth Rich Hermus parts the meads. Nor stayed the bands Of Troy, but (doomed as in old time) they joined Pompeius’ fated camp: nor held them back The fabled past, nor Caesar’s claimed descent From their Iulus. Syrian peoples came From palmy Idumea and the walls

Of Ninus great of yore; from windy plains Of far Damascus and from Gaza’s hold, From Sidon’s courts enriched with purple dye, And Tyre oft trembling with the shaken earth.

All these led on by Cynosura’s light (16) Furrow their certain path to reach the war.

Phoenicians first (if story be believed) Dared to record in characters; for yet Papyrus was not fashioned, and the priests Of Memphis, carving symbols upon

walls Of mystic sense (in shape of beast or fowl) Preserved the secrets of their magic art.

Next Persean Tarsus and high Taurus' groves Are left deserted, and Corycium's cave; And all Cilicia's ports, pirate no more, Resound with preparation. Nor the East Refused the call, where furthest Ganges dares, Alone of rivers, to discharge his stream Against the sun opposing; on this shore (17) The Macedonian conqueror stayed his foot And found the world his victor; here too rolls Indus his torrent with Hydaspes joined Yet hardly feels it; here from luscious reed Men draw sweet liquor; here they dye their locks With tints of saffron, and with coloured gems Bind down their flowing garments; here are they, Who satiate of life and proud to die, Ascend the blazing pyre, and conquering fate, Scorn to live longer; but triumphant give The remnant of their days in flame to heaven. (18) Nor fails to join the host a hardy band Of Cappadocians, tilling now the soil, Once pirates of the main: nor those who dwell Where steep Niphates hurls the avalanche, And where on Median Coatra's sides

The giant forest rises to the sky.

And you, Arabians, from your distant home Came to a world unknown, and wondering saw The shadows fall no longer to the left. (19) Then fired with ardour for the Roman war Oretas came, and far Carmania's chiefs, Whose clime lies southward, yet men thence descry Low down the Pole star, and Bootes runs Hasting to set, part seen, his nightly course; And Ethiopians from that southern land Which lies without the circuit of the stars, Did not the Bull with curving hoof advanced O'erstep the limit. From that mountain zone They come, where rising from a common fount Euphrates flows and Tigris, and did earth Permit, were joined with either name; but now While like th' Egyptian flood Euphrates spreads His fertilising water, Tigris first Drawn down by earth in covered depths is plunged And holds a secret course; then born again Flows on unhindered to the Persian sea.

But warlike Parthia wavered 'twixt the chiefs, Content to have made them two (20); while Scythia's hordes Dipped fresh their darts in poison, whom the stream Of Bactros bounds and vast Hyrcanian woods.

Hence springs that rugged nation swift and fierce, Descended from the Twins' great charioteer. (21) Nor failed Sarmatia, nor the tribes that dwell By richest Phasis, and on Halys' banks, Which sealed the doom of Croesus' king; nor where From far Rhipaeon ranges Tanais flows, On either hand a quarter of the world, Asia and Europe, and in winding course Carves out a continent; nor where the strait In boiling surge pours to the Pontic deep Maeotis' waters, rivalling the pride Of those Herculean pillar-gates that guard The entrance to an ocean. Thence with hair In golden fillets, Arimaspians came, And fierce Massagetae, who quaff the blood Of the brave steed on which they fight and flee.

Not when great Cyrus on Memnonian realms His warriors poured; nor when, their weapons piled, (22) The Persian told the number of his host; Nor when th' avenger (23) of a brother's shame Loaded the billows with his mighty fleet, Beneath one chief so many kings made war; Nor e'er met nations varied thus in garb And thus in language. To Pompeius' death Thus Fortune called them: and a world in arms Witnessed his ruin. From where Afric's god, Two-horned Ammon, rears his temple, came All Libya ceaseless, from the wastes that touch The bounds of Egypt to the shore that meets The Western Ocean. Thus, to award the prize Of Empire at one blow, Pharsalia brought 'Neath Caesar's conquering hand the banded world.

Now Caesar left the walls of trembling Rome And swift across the cloudy Alpine tops He winged his march; but while all others fled Far from his path, in terror of his name, Phocaea's (24) manhood with un-Grecian faith Held to their pledged obedience, and dared To follow right not fate; but first of all With olive boughs of truce before them borne The chieftain they approach, with peaceful words In hope to alter his unbending will And tame his fury. "Search the ancient books Which chronicle the deeds of Latian fame; Thou'lt ever find, when foreign foes pressed hard, Massilia's prowess on the side of Rome.

And now, if triumphs in an unknown world Thou seekest, Caesar, here our arms and swords Accept in aid: but if, in impious strife Of civil discord, with a Roman foe

Thou seek'st to join in battle, weeping then We hold aloof: no stranger hand may

touch Celestial wounds. Should all Olympus' hosts Have rushed to war, or should the giant brood Assault the stars, yet men would not presume Or by their prayers or arms to help the gods: And, ignorant of the fortunes of the sky, Taught by the thunderbolts alone, would know That Jupiter supreme still held the throne.

Add that unnumbered nations join the fray: Nor shrinks the world so much from taint of crime That civil wars reluctant swords require.

But grant that strangers shun thy destinies And only Romans fight — shall not the son Shrink ere he strike his father? on both sides Brothers forbid the weapon to be hurled?

The world's end comes when other hands are armed (25) Than those which custom and the gods allow.

For us, this is our prayer: Leave, Caesar, here Thy dreadful eagles, keep thy hostile signs Back from our gates, but enter thou in peace Massilia's ramparts; let our city rest Withdrawn from crime, to Magnus and to thee Safe: and should favouring fate preserve our walls Inviolatè, when both shall wish for peace Here meet unarmed. Why hither turn'st thou now Thy rapid march? Nor weight nor power have we To sway the mighty conflicts of the world.

We boast no victories since our fatherland We left in exile: when Phocaea's fort Perished in flames, we sought another here; And here on foreign shores, in narrow bounds Confined and safe, our boast is sturdy faith; Nought else. But if our city to blockade Is now thy mind — to force the gates, and hurl Javelin and blazing torch upon our homes —

Do what thou wilt: cut off the source that fills Our foaming river, force us, prone in thirst, To dig the earth and lap the scanty pool; Seize on our corn and leave us food abhorred: Nor shall this people shun, for freedom's sake, The ills Saguntum bore in Punic siege; (26) Torn, vainly clinging, from the shrunken breast The starving babe shall perish in the flames.

Wives at their husbands' hands shall pray their fate, And brothers' weapons deal a mutual death.

Such be our civil war; not, Caesar, thine."

But Caesar's visage stern betrayed his ire Which thus broke forth in words:
"Vain is the hope Ye rest upon my march: speed though I may Towards my
western goal, time still remains To blot Massilia out. Rejoice, my troops!

Unsought the war ye longed for meets you now: The fates concede it. As the
tempests lose Their strength by sturdy forests unopposed, And as the fire that
finds no fuel dies, Even so to find no foe is Caesar's ill.

When those who may be conquered will not fight That is defeat. Degenerate,
disarmed Their gates admit me! Not content, forsooth, With shutting Caesar out
they shut him in!

They shun the taint of war! Such prayer for peace Brings with it chastisement. In
Caesar's age Learn that not peace, but war within his ranks Alone can make you
safe."

Fearless he turns His march upon the city, and beholds Fast barred the
gateways, while in arms the youths Stand on the battlements. Hard by the walls
A hillock rose, upon the further side Expanding in a plain of gentle slope, Fit (as
he deemed it) for a camp with ditch And mound encircling. To a lofty height The
nearest portion of the city rose, While intervening valleys lay between.

These summits with a mighty trench to bind The chief resolves, gigantic though
the toil.

But first, from furthest boundaries of his camp, Enclosing streams and meadows,
to the sea To draw a rampart, upon either hand Heaved up with earthy sod; with
lofty towers Crowned; and to shut Massilia from the land.

Then did the Grecian city win renown Eternal, deathless, for that uncompelled
Nor fearing for herself, but free to act She made the conqueror pause: and he
who seized All in resistless course found here delay: And Fortune, hastening to
lay the world Low at her favourite's feet, was forced to stay For these few
moments her impatient hand.

Now fell the forests far and wide, despoiled Of all their giant trunks: for as the mound On earth and brushwood stood, a timber frame Held firm the soil, lest pressed beneath its towers The mass might topple down. There stood a grove Which from the earliest time no hand of man Had dared to violate; hidden from the sun (27) Its chill recesses; matted boughs entwined Prisoned the air within. No sylvan nymphs Here found a home, nor Pan, but savage rites And barbarous worship, altars horrible On massive stones upreared; sacred with blood Of men was every tree. If faith be given To ancient myth, no fowl has ever dared To rest upon those branches, and no beast Has made his lair beneath: no tempest falls, Nor lightnings flash upon it from the cloud.

Stagnant the air, unmoving, yet the leaves Filled with mysterious trembling; dripped the streams From coal-black fountains; effigies of gods Rude, scarcely fashioned from some fallen trunk Held the mid space: and, pallid with decay, Their rotting shapes struck terror. Thus do men Dread most the god unknown. 'Twas said that caves Rumbled with earthquakes, that the prostrate yew Rose up again; that fiery tongues of flame Gleamed in the forest depths, yet were the trees Unkindled; and that snakes in frequent folds Were coiled around the trunks. Men flee the spot Nor dare to worship near: and e'en the priest Or when bright Phoebus holds the height, or when Dark night controls the heavens, in anxious dread Draws near the grove and fears to find its lord.

Spared in the former war, still dense it rose Where all the hills were bare, and Caesar now Its fall commanded. But the brawny arms Which swayed the axes trembled, and the men, Awed by the sacred grove's dark majesty, Held back the blow they thought would be returned.

This Caesar saw, and swift within his grasp Uprose a ponderous axe, which downward fell Cleaving a mighty oak that towered to heaven, While thus he spake: "Henceforth let no man dread To fell this forest: all the crime is mine.

This be your creed." He spake, and all obeyed, For Caesar's ire weighed down the wrath of Heaven.

Yet ceased they not to fear. Then first the oak, Dodona's ancient boast; the knotty holm; The cypress, witness of patrician grief, The buoyant alder, laid their

foliage low Admitting day; though scarcely through the stems Their fall found passage. At the sight the Gauls Grieved; but the garrison within the walls Rejoiced: for thus shall men insult the gods And find no punishment? Yet fortune oft Protects the guilty; on the poor alone The gods can vent their ire. Enough hewn down, They seize the country wagons; and the hind, His oxen gone which else had drawn the plough, Mourns for his harvest.

But the eager chief Impatient of the combat by the walls Carries the warfare to the furthest west.

Meanwhile a giant mound, on star-shaped wheels Concealed, they fashion, crowned with double towers High as the battlements, by cause unseen Slow creeping onwards; while amazed the foe, Beheld, and thought some subterranean gust Had burst the caverns of the earth and forced The nodding pile aloft, and wondered sore Their walls should stand unshaken. From its height Hissed clown the weapons; but the Grecian bolts With greater force were on the Romans hurled; Nor by the arm unaided, for the lance Urged by the catapult resistless rushed Through arms and shield and flesh, and left a death Behind, nor stayed its course: and massive stones Cast by the beams of mighty engines fell; As from the mountain top some time-worn rock At length by winds dislodged, in all its track Spreads ruin vast: nor crushed the life alone Forth from the body, but dispersed the limbs In fragments undistinguished and in blood.

But as protected by the armour shield The might of Rome drew nigh beneath the wall (The front rank with their bucklers interlaced And held above their helms), the missiles fell Behind their backs, nor could the toiling Greeks Deflect their engines, throwing still the bolts Far into space; but from the rampart top Flung ponderous masses down. Long as the shields Held firm together, like to hail that falls Harmless upon a roof, so long the stones Crushed down innocuous; but as the blows Rained fierce and ceaseless and the Romans tired, Some here and there sank fainting. Next the roof Advanced with earth besprinkled: underneath The ram conceals his head, which, poised and swung, They dash with mighty force upon the wall, Covered themselves with mantlets. Though the head Light on the lower stones, yet as the shock Falls and refalls, from battlement to base The rampart soon shall topple. But by balks And rocky fragments overwhelmed,

and flames, The roof at length gave way; and worn with toil All spent in vain,
the wearied troops withdrew And sought the shelter of their tents again.

Thus far to hold their battlements was all The Greeks had hoped; now, venturing
attack, With glittering torches for their arms, by night Fearless they sallied forth:
nor lance they bear Nor deadly bow, nor shaft; for fire alone Is now their
weapon. Through the Roman works Driven by the wind the conflagration
spread: Nor did the newness of the wood make pause The fury of the flames,
which, fed afresh By living torches, 'neath a smoky pall Leaped on in fiery
tongues. Not wood alone But stones gigantic crumbling into dust Dissolved
beneath the heat; the mighty mound Lay prone, yet in its ruin larger seemed.

Next, conquered on the land, upon the main They try their fortunes. On their
simple craft No painted figure-head adorned the bows Nor claimed protection
from the gods; but rude, Just as they fell upon their mountain homes, The trees
were knit together, and the deck Gave steady foothold for an ocean fight.

Meantime had Caesar's squadron kept the isles Named Stoechades (28), and
Brutus (29) turret ship Mastered the Rhone. Nor less the Grecian host —

Boys not yet grown to war, and aged men, Armed for the conflict, with their all
at stake.

Nor only did they marshal for the fight Ships meet for service; but their ancient
keels Brought from the dockyards. When the morning rays Broke from the
waters, and the sky was clear, And all the winds were still upon the deep,
Smoothed for the battle, swift on either part The fleets essay the open; and the
ships Tremble beneath the oars that urge them on, By sinewy arms impelled.
Upon the wings That bound the Roman fleet, the larger craft With triple and
quadruple banks of oars Gird in the lesser: so they front the sea; While in their
rear, shaped as a crescent moon, Liburnian galleys follow. Over all Towers
Brutus' deck praetorian. Oars on oars Propel the bulky vessel through the main,
Six ranks; the topmost strike the waves afar.

When such a space remained between the fleets As could be covered by a single stroke, Innumerable voices rose in air

Drowning with resonant din the beat of oars And note of trumpet summoning: and all Sat on the benches and with mighty stroke Swept o'er the sea and gained the space between.

Then crashed the prows together, and the keels Rebounded backwards, and unnumbered darts Or darkened all the sky or, in their fall, The vacant ocean. As the wings grew wide, Less densely packed the fleet, some Grecian ships Pressed in between; as when with west and east The tide contends, this way the waves are driven And that the sea; so as they plough the deep In various lines converging, what the prow Throws up advancing, from the foemen's oars Falls back repelled. But soon the Grecian fleet Was handier found in battle, and in flight Pretended, and in shorter curves could round; More deftly governed by the guiding helm: While on the Roman side their steadier keels Gave vantage, as to men who fight on land.

Then Brutus to the pilot of his ship: "Dost suffer them to range the wider deep, Contending with the foe in naval skill?"

Draw close the war and drive us on the prows Of these Phocaeans." Him the pilot heard; And turned his vessel slantwise to the foe.

Then was the sea all covered with the war: Then Grecian ships attacking Brutus found Their ruin in the stroke, and vanquished lay Beside his bulwarks; while with grappling hooks Others laid fast the foe, themselves by oars Held back the while. And now no outstretched arm Hurls forth the javelin, but hand to hand With swords they wage the fight: each from his ship Leans forward to the stroke, and falls when slain Upon a foeman's deck. Deep flows the stream Of purple slaughter to the foamy main: By piles of floating corpses are the sides, Though grappled, kept asunder. Some, half dead, Plunge in the ocean, gulping down the brine Encrimsoned with their blood; some lingering still Draw their last struggling breath amid the wreck Of broken navies: weapons which have missed Find yet their victims, and the falling steel Fails not in middle deep to deal the wound.

One vessel circled by Phocaeen keels Divides her strength, and on the right and left On either side with equal war contends; On whose high poop while Tagus

fighting gripped The stern Phocaeen, pierced his back and breast Two fatal weapons; in the midst the steel Meets, and the blood, uncertain whence to flow, Stands still, arrested, till with double course Forth by a sudden gush it drives each dart, And sends the life abroad through either wound.

Here fated Telon also steered his ship: No pilot's hand upon an angry sea

More deftly ruled a vessel. Well he knew, Or by the sun or crescent moon, how best To set his canvas fitted for the breeze To-morrow's light would bring. His rushing stem Shattered a Roman vessel: but a dart Hurl'd at the moment quivers in his breast.

He falls, and in the fall his dying hand Diverts the prow. Then Gyareus, in act To climb the friendly deck, by javelin pierced, Still as he hung, by the retaining steel Fast to the side was nailed.

Twin brethren stand A fruitful mother's pride; with different fates, But ne'er distinguished till death's savage hand Struck once, and ended error: he that lived, Cause of fresh anguish to their sorrowing souls, Called ever to the weeping parents back The image of the lost: who, as the oars Grecian and Roman mixed their teeth oblique, Grasped with his dexter hand the Roman ship; When fell a blow that shore his arm away.

So died, upon the side it held, the hand, Nor loosed its grasp in death. Yet with the wound His noble courage rose, and maimed he dared Renew the fray, and stretched across the sea To grasp the lost — in vain! another blow Lopped arm and hand alike. Nor shield nor sword Henceforth are his. Yet even now he seeks No sheltering hold, but with his chest advanced Before his brother armed, he claims the fight, And holding in his breast the darts which else Had slain his comrades, pierced with countless spears, He fails in death well earned; yet ere his end Collects his parting life, and all his strength Strains to the utmost and with failing limbs Leaps on the foeman's deck; by weight alone Injurious; for streaming down with gore And piled on high with corpses, while her sides Sounded to ceaseless blows, the fated ship Let in the greedy brine until her ways Were level with the waters — then she plunged In whirling eddies downwards — and the main First parted, then closed in upon its prey.

Full many wondrous deaths, with fates diverse, Upon the sea in that day's fight befell.

Caught by a grappling-hook that missed the side, Had Lysidas been whelmed in middle deep; But by his feet his comrades dragged him back, And rent in twain he hung; nor slowly flowed As from a wound the blood; but all his veins (30) Were torn asunder and the stream of life Gushed o'er his limbs till lost amid the deep.

From no man dying has the vital breath Rushed by so wide a path; the lower trunk Succumbed to death, but with the lungs and heart Long strove the fates, and hardly won the whole.

While, bent upon the fight, an eager crew Were gathered to the margin of their deck (Leaving the upper side as bare of foes), Their ship was overset. Beneath the keel Which floated upwards, prisoned in the sea, And powerless by spread of arms to float The main, they perished. One who haply swam Amid the battle, chanced upon a death Strange and unheard of; for two meeting prows Transfixed his body. At the double stroke Wide yawned his chest; blood issued from his mouth With flesh commingled; and the brazen beaks Resounding clashed together, by the bones Unhindered: now they part and through the gap Swift pours the sea and drags the corpse below.

Next, of a shipwrecked crew, the larger part Struggling with death upon the waters, reached A comrade bark; but when with elbows raised do They seized upon the bulwarks and the ship Rolled, nor could bear their weight, the ruthless crew Hacked off their straining arms; then maimed they sank Below the seething waves, to rise no more.

Now every dart was hurled and every spear, The soldier weaponless; yet their rage found arms: One hurls an oar; another's brawny arm Tugs at the twisted stern; or from the seats The oarsmen driving, swings a bench in air.

The ships are broken for the fight. They seize The fallen dead and snatch the sword that slew.

Nay, many from their wounds, frenzied for arms, Pluck forth the deadly steel,
and pressing still Upon their yawning sides, hurl forth the spear Back to the
hostile ranks from which it came; Then ebbs their life blood forth.

But deadlier yet Was that fell force most hostile to the sea; For, thrown in
torches and in sulphurous bolts Fire all-consuming ran among the ships, Whose
oily timbers soaked in pitch and wax Inflammable, gave welcome to the flames.

Nor could the waves prevail against the blaze Which claimed as for its own the
fragments borne Upon the waters. Lo! on burning plank One hardly 'scapes
destruction; one to save His flaming ship, gives entrance to the main.

Of all the forms of death each fears the one That brings immediate dying: yet
quails not Their heart in shipwreck: from the waves they pluck The fallen darts
and furnishing the ship Essay the feeble stroke; and should that hope Still fail
their hand, they call the sea to aid And seizing in their grasp some floating foe
Drag him to mutual death.

But on that day Phoeus above all others proved his skill.

Well trained was he to dive beneath the main And search the waters with
unfailing eye; And should an anchor 'gainst the straining rope Too firmly bite
the sands, to wrench it free.

Oft in his fatal grasp he seized a foe Nor loosed his grip until the life was gone.

Such was his frequent deed; but this his fate: For rising, victor (as he thought), to
air, Full on a keel he struck and found his death.

Some, drowning, seized a hostile oar and checked The flying vessel; not to die in
vain, Their single care; some on their vessel's side Hanging, in death, with
wounded frame essayed To check the charging prow.

Tyrrhenus high Upon the bulwarks of his ship was struck By leaden bolt from

Balearic sling

Of Lygdamus; straight through his temples passed The fated missile; and in streams of blood Forced from their seats his trembling eyeballs fell.

Plunged in a darkness as of night, he thought That life had left him; yet ere long he knew The living rigour of his limbs; and cried, "Place me, O friends, as some machine of war Straight facing towards the foe; then shall my darts Strike as of old; and thou, Tyrrhenus, spend Thy latest breath, still left, upon the fight: So shalt thou play, not wholly dead, the part That fits a soldier, and the spear that strikes Thy frame, shall miss the living." Thus he spake, And hurled his javelin, blind, but not in vain; For Argus, generous youth of noble blood, Below the middle waist received the spear And failing drave it home. His aged sire From furthest portion of the conquered ship Beheld; than whom in prime of manhood none, More brave in battle: now no more he fought, Yet did the memory of his prowess stir Phocaeen youths to emulate his fame.

Oft stumbling o'er the benches the old man hastes To reach his boy, and finds him breathing still.

No tear bedewed his cheek, nor on his breast One blow he struck, but o'er his eyes there fell A dark impenetrable veil of mist

That blotted out the day; nor could he more Discern his luckless Argus. He, who saw His parent, raising up his drooping head With parted lips and silent features asks A father's latest kiss, a father's hand To close his dying eyes. But soon his sire, Recovering from his swoon, when ruthless grief Possessed his spirit, "This short space," he cried, "I lose not, which the cruel gods have given, But die before thee. Grant thy sorrowing sire Forgiveness that he fled thy last embrace.

Not yet has passed thy life blood from the wound Nor yet is death upon thee — still thou may'st (31) Outlive thy parent." Thus he spake, and seized The reeking sword and drave it to the hilt, Then plunged into the deep, with headlong bound, To anticipate his son: for this he feared A single form of death should not suffice.

Now gave the fates their judgment, and in doubt No longer was the war: the Grecian fleet In most part sunk; — some ships by Romans oared Conveyed the victors home: in headlong flight Some sought the yards for shelter. On the strand

What tears of parents for their offspring slain, How wept the mothers! 'Mid the pile confused Ofttimes the wife sought madly for her spouse And chose for her last kiss some Roman slain; While wretched fathers by the blazing pyres Fought for the dead. But Brutus thus at sea First gained a triumph for great Caesar's arms. (32) ENDNOTES:

(1) Reading adscenso, as Francken (Leyden, 1896).

(2) So: "The rugged Charon fainted, And asked a navy, rather than a boat, To ferry over the sad world that came."

(Ben Jonson, "Catiline", Act i., scene 1.) (3) I take "tepidus busto" as the dative case; and, as referring to Pompeius, doomed, like Cornelia's former husband, to defeat and death.

(4) It may be remarked that, in B.C. 46, Caesar, after the battle of Thapsus, celebrated four triumphs: for his victories over the Gauls, Ptolemaeus, Pharnaces, and Juba.

(5) Near Aricia. (See Book VI., 92.) (6) He held no office at the time.

(7) The tribune Ateius met Crassus as he was setting out from Rome and denounced him with mysterious and ancient curses.

(Plutarch, "Crassus", 16.)

(8) That is, the liberty remaining to the people is destroyed by speaking freely to the tyrant.

(9) That is, the gold offered by Pyrrhus, and refused by Fabricius, which, after the final defeat of Pyrrhus, came into the possession of the victors.

(10) See Plutarch, "Cato", 34, 39.

(11) It was generally believed that the river Alpheus of the Peloponnesus passed under the sea and reappeared in the fountain of Arethusa at Syracuse. A goblet was said to have been thrown into the river in Greece, and to have reappeared in the Sicilian fountain. See the note in Grote's "History of Greece", Edition 1863, vol. ii., p. 8.) (12) As a serpent. XXXXX is the Greek word for serpent.

(13) Conf. Book VI., 473.

(14) The Centaurs.

(15) Probably the flute thrown away by Pallas, which Marsyas picked up and then challenged Apollo to a musical contest.

For his presumption the god had him flayed alive.

(16) That is, the Little Bear, by which the Phoenicians steered, while the Greeks steered by the Great Bear. (See Sir G.

Lewis's "Astronomy of the Ancients", p. 447.) In Book VI., line 193, the pilot declares that he steers by the pole star itself, which is much nearer to the Little than to the Great Bear, and is (I believe) reckoned as one of the stars forming the group known by that name. He may have been a Phoenician.

(17) He did not in fact reach the Ganges, as is well known.

(18) Perhaps in allusion to the embassy from India to Augustus in B.C. 19, when Zarmanochanus, an Indian sage, declaring that he had lived in happiness and would not risk the chance of a reverse, burnt himself publicly. (Merivale, chapter xxxiv.) (19) That is to say, looking towards the west; meaning that they came from the other side of the equator. (See Book IX., 630.)

(20) See Book I., 117.

(21) A race called Heniochi, said to be descended from the charioteer of Castor and Pollux.

(22) "Effusus telis". I have so taken this difficult expression.

Herodotus (7, 60) says the men were numbered in ten thousands by being packed close together and having a circle drawn round them. After the first ten thousand had been so measured a fence was put where the circle had been, and the subsequent ten thousands were driven into the enclosure. It is not unlikely that they piled their weapons before being so measured, and Lucan's account would then be made to agree with that of Herodotus. Francken, on the other hand, quotes a Scholiast, who says that each hundredth man shot off an arrow.

(23) Agamemnon.

(24) Massilia (Marseilles) was founded from Phocaea in Asia Minor about 600 B.C. Lucan (line 393) appears to think that the founders were fugitives from their city when it was stormed by the Persians sixty years later. See Thucydides I. 13; Grote, "History of Greece", chapter xxii.

(25) A difficult passage, of which this seems to be the meaning least free from objection.

(26) Murviedro of the present day. Its gallant defence against Hannibal has been compared to that of Saragossa against the French.

(27) See note to Book I., 506.

(28) Three islands off the coast near Toulon, now called the Isles d'Hyerres.

(29) This was Decimus Brutus, an able and trusted lieutenant of Caesar, who made him one of his heirs in the second degree.

He, however, joined the conspiracy, and it was he who on the day of the murder induced Caesar to go to the Senate House.

Less than two years later, after the siege of Perasia, he was deserted by his army, taken and put to death.

(30) According to some these were the lines which Lucan recited while bleeding to death; according to others, those at Book ix., line 952.

(31) It was regarded as the greatest of misfortunes if a child died before his parent.

(32) It was Brutus who gained the naval victory over the Veneti some seven years before; the first naval fight, that we know of, fought in the Atlantic Ocean.

BOOK IV

CAESAR IN SPAIN. WAR IN THE ADRIATIC SEA. DEATH OF CURIO.

But in the distant regions of the earth Fierce Caesar warring, though in fight he dealt No baneful slaughter, hastened on the doom To swift fulfillment. There on Magnus' side Afranius and Petreius (1) held command, Who ruled alternate, and the rampart guard Obeyed the standard of each chief in turn.

There with the Romans in the camp were joined Asturians (2) swift, and Vettons lightly armed, And Celts who, exiled from their ancient home, Had joined "Iberus" to their former name.

Where the rich soil in gentle slope ascends And forms a modest hill, Ilerda (3) stands, Founded in ancient days; beside her glides Not least of western rivers, Sicoris Of placid current, by a mighty arch Of stone o'erspanned, which not the winter floods Shall overwhelm. Upon a rock hard by Was Magnus' camp; but Caesar's on a hill, Rivalling the first; and in the midst a stream.

Here boundless plains are spread beyond the range Of human vision; Cinga girds them in With greedy waves; forbidden to contend With tides of ocean; for that larger flood Who names the land, Iberus, sweeps along The lesser stream commingled with his own.

Guiltless of war, the first day saw the hosts In long array confronted; standard rose Opposing standard, numberless; yet none Essayed attack, in shame of impious strife.

One day they gave their country and her laws.

But Caesar, when from heaven fell the night, Drew round a hasty trench; his foremost rank With close array concealing those who wrought.

Then with the morn he bids them seize the hill Which parted from the camp

Ilerda's walls, And gave them safety. But in fear and shame On rushed the foe and seized the vantage ground, First in the onset. From the height they held Their hopes of conquest; but to Caesar's men Their hearts by courage stirred, and their good swords Promised the victory. Burdened up the ridge The soldier climbed, and from the opposing steep But for his comrade's shield had fallen back; None had the space to hurl the quivering lance Upon the foeman: spear and pike made sure The failing foothold, and the falchion's edge Hewed out their upward path. But Caesar saw Ruin impending, and he bade his horse By circuit to the left, with shielded flank, Hold back the foe. Thus gained his troops retreat, For none pressed on them; and the victor chiefs, Forced to withdrawal, gained the day in vain.

Henceforth the fitful changes of the year Governed the fates and fashioned out the war.

For stubborn frost still lay upon the land, And northern winds, controlling all the sky, Prisoned the rain in clouds; the hills were nipped With snow unmelted, and the lower plains By frosts that fled before the rising sun; And all the lands that stretched towards the sky Which whelms the sinking stars, 'neath wintry heavens Were parched and arid. But when Titan neared The Ram, who, backward gazing on the stars, Bore perished Helle, (4) and the hours were held In juster balance, and the day prevailed, The earliest faded moon which in the vault Hung with uncertain horn, from eastern winds Received a fiery radiance; whose blasts Forced Boreas back: and breaking on the mists Within his regions, to the Occident Drave all that shroud Arabia and the land Of Ganges; all that or by Caurus (5) borne Bedim the Orient sky, or rising suns Permit to gather; pitiless flamed the day Behind them, while in front the wide expanse Was driven; nor on mid earth sank the clouds Though weighed with vapour. North and south alike Were showerless, for on Calpe's rock alone All moisture gathered; here at last, forbidden To pass that sea by Zephyr's bounds contained, And by the furthest belt (6) of heaven, they pause, In masses huge convolved; the widest breadth Of murky air scarce holds them, which divides Earth from the heavens; till pressed by weight of sky In densest volume to the earth they pour Their cataracts; no lightning could endure Such storm unquenched: though oft athwart the gloom Gleamed its pale fire. Meanwhile a watery arch Scarce touched with colour, in imperfect shape Embraced the sky and drank the ocean waves, So rendering to the clouds their flood outpoured.

And now were thawed the Pyrenaean snows Which Titan had not conquered; all the rocks Were wet with melting ice; accustomed springs Found not discharge; and from the very banks Each stream received a torrent. Caesar's arms Are shipwrecked on the field, his tottering camp Swims on the rising flood; the trench is filled With whirling waters; and the plain no more Yields corn or kine; for those who forage seek, Err from the hidden furrow. Famine knocks (First herald of o'erwhelming ills to come), Fierce at the door; and while no foe blockades The soldier hungers; fortunes buy not now The meanest measure; yet, alas! is found The fasting peasant, who, in gain of gold, Will sell his little all! And now the hills Are seen no more; and rivers whelmed in one; Beasts with their homes sweep downwards; and the tide Repels the foaming torrent. Nor did night Acknowledge Phoebus' rise, for all the sky Felt her dominion and obscured its face, And darkness joined with darkness. Thus doth lie The lowest earth beneath the snowy zone And never-ending winters, where the sky Is starless ever, and no growth of herb Sprouts from the frozen earth; but standing ice Tempers (7) the stars which in the middle zone Kindle their flames. Thus, Father of the world, And thou, trident-god who rul'st the sea Second in place, Neptunus, load the air With clouds continual; forbid the tide, Once risen, to return: forced by thy waves Let rivers backward run in different course, Thy shores no longer reaching; and the earth, Shaken, make way for floods. Let Rhine o'erflow And Rhone their banks; let torrents spread afield Unmeasured waters: melt Rhipaean snows: Spread lakes upon the land, and seas profound, And snatch the groaning world from civil war.

Thus for a little moment Fortune tried Her darling son; then smiling to his part Returned; and gained her pardon for the past By greater gifts to come. For now the air Had grown more clear, and Phoebus' warmer rays Coped with the flood and scattered all the clouds In fleecy masses; and the reddening east Proclaimed the coming day; the land resumed Its ancient marks; no more in middle air The moisture hung, but from about the stars Sank to the depths; the forest glad upreared Its foliage; hills again emerged to view And 'neath the warmth of day the plains grew firm.

When Sicoris kept his banks, the shallop light Of hoary willow bark they build,
which bent On hides of oxen, bore the weight of man And swam the torrent.
Thus on sluggish Po Venetians float; and on th' encircling sea (8) Are borne
Britannia's nations; and when Nile Fills all the land, are Memphis' thirsty reeds
Shaped into fragile boats that swim his waves.

The further bank thus gained, they haste to curve The fallen forest, and to form
the arch By which imperious Sicoris shall be spanned.

Yet fearing he might rise in wrath anew, Not on the nearest marge they placed
the beams, But in mid-field. Thus the presumptuous stream They tame with
chastisement, parting his flood In devious channels out; and curb his pride.

Petreius, when he saw that Caesar's fates Swept all before them, left Ilerda's
steep, His trust no longer in the Roman world; And sought for strength amid
those distant tribes, Who, loving death, rush in upon the foe, (9) And win their
conquests at the point of sword.

But in the dawn, when Caesar saw the camp Stand empty on the hill, "To arms!"
he cried: "Seek not the bridge nor ford: plunge in the stream And breast the
foaming torrent." Then did hope Of coming battle find for them a way Which
they had shunned in flight.

Their arms regained, Their streaming limbs they cherished till the blood
Coursed in their veins; until the shadows fell Short on the sward, and day was at
the height.

Then dashed the horsemen on, and held the foe 'Twixt flight and battle. In the
plain arose Two rocky heights: from each a loftier ridge Of hills ranged onwards,
sheltering in their midst A hollow vale, whose deep and winding paths Were safe
from warfare; which, when Caesar saw: That if Petreius held, the war must pass
To lands remote by savage tribes possessed; "Speed on," he cried, "and meet
their flight in front; Fierce be your frown and battle in your glance: No coward's
death be theirs; but as they flee Plunge in their breasts the sword." They seize the
pass And place their camp. Short was the span between Th' opposing sentinels;
with eager eyes Undimmed by space, they gazed on brothers, sons, Or friends

and fathers; and within their souls They grasped the impious horror of the war.

Yet for a little while no voice was heard, For fear restrained; by waving blade alone Or gesture, spake they; but their passion grew, And broke all discipline; and soon they leaped The hostile rampart; every hand outstretched (10) Embraced the hand of foeman, palm in palm; One calls by name his neighbour, one his host, Another with his schoolmate talks again Of olden studies: he who in the camp Found not a comrade, was no son of Rome.

Wet are their arms with tears, and sobs break in Upon their kisses; each, unstained by blood, Dreads what he might have done. Why beat thy breast?

Why, madman, weep? The guilt is thine alone To do or to abstain. Dost fear the man Who takes his title to be feared from thee?

When Caesar's trumpets sound the call to arms Heed not the summons; when thou seest advance His standards, halt. The civil Fury thus Shall fold her wings; and in a private robe Caesar shall love his kinsman.

Holy Peace That sway'st the world; thou whose eternal bands Sustain the order of material things, Come, gentle Concord! (11) these our times do now For good or evil destiny control

The coming centuries! Ah, cruel fate!

Now have the people lost their cloak for crime: Their hope of pardon. They have known their kin.

Woe for the respite given by the gods Making more black the hideous guilt to come!

Now all was peaceful, and in either camp Sweet converse held the soldiers; on the grass They place the meal; on altars built of turf Pour out libations from the mingled cup; On mutual couch with stories of their fights, They wile the sleepless hours in talk away; "Where stood the ranks arrayed, from whose right hand The quivering lance was sped:" and while they boast Or challenge, deeds

of prowess in the war, Faith was renewed and trust. Thus made the fates Their doom complete, and all the crimes to be; Grew with their love.

For when Petreius knew The treaties made; himself and all his camp Sold to the foe; he stirs his guard to work An impious slaughter: the defenceless foe Flings headlong forth: and parts the fond embrace By stroke of weapon and in streams of blood.

And thus in words of wrath, to stir the war: “Of Rome forgetful, to your faith forsworn!

And could ye not with victory gained return, Restorers of her liberty, to Rome?

Lose then! but losing call not Caesar lord.

While still your swords are yours, with blood to shed In doubtful battle, while the fates are hid, Will you like cravens to your master bear Doomed eagles? Will you ask upon your knees That Caesar deign to treat his slaves alike, And spare, forsooth, like yours, your leaders’ lives? (12) Nay! never shall our safety be the price Of base betrayal! Not for boon of life We wage a civil war. This name of peace Drags us to slavery. Ne’er from depths of earth, Fain to withdraw her wealth, should toiling men Draw store of iron; ne’er entrench a town; Ne’er should the war-horse dash into the fray Nor fleet with turret bulwarks breast the main, If freedom for dishonourable peace

Could thus be bought. The foe are pledged to fight By their own guilt. But you, who still might hope For pardon if defeated — what can match Your deep dishonour? Shame upon your peace.

Thou callest, Magnus, ignorant of fate, From all the world thy powers, and dost entreat Monarchs of distant realms, while haply here We in our treaties bargain for thy life!”

Thus did he stir their minds and rouse anew The love of impious battle. So when beasts Grown strange to forests, long confined in dens, Their fierceness lose, and learn to bear with man; Once should they taste of blood, their thirsty jaws Swell

at the touch, and all the ancient rage Comes back upon them till they hardly spare Their keeper. Thus they rush on every crime: And blows which dealt at chance, and in the night Of battle, had brought hatred on the gods, Though blindly struck, their recent vows of love Made monstrous, horrid. Where they lately spread The mutual couch and banquet, and embraced Some new-found friend, now falls the fatal blow Upon the selfsame breast; and though at first Groaning at the fell chance, they drew the sword; Hate rises as they strike, the murderous arm Confirms the doubtful will: with monstrous joy Through the wild camp they smite their kinsmen down; And carnage raged unchecked; and each man strove, Proud of his crime, before his leader's face To prove his shamelessness of guilt.

But thou, Caesar, though losing of thy best, dost know The gods do favour thee. Thessalian fields Gave thee no better fortune, nor the waves That lave Massilia; nor on Pharos' main Didst thou so triumph. By this crime alone Thou from this moment of the better cause Shalt be the Captain.

Since the troops were stained With foulest slaughter thus, their leaders shunned All camps with Caesar's joined, and sought again Ilerda's lofty walls; but Caesar's horse Seized on the plain and forced them to the hills Reluctant. There by steepest trench shut in, He cuts them from the river, nor permits Their circling ramparts to enclose a spring.

By this dread path Death trapped his captive prey.

Which when they knew, fierce anger filled their souls, And took the place of fear. They slew the steeds Now useless grown, and rushed upon their fate; Hopeless of life and flight. But Caesar cried: "Hold back your weapons, soldiers, from the foe, Strike not the breast advancing; let the war Cost me no blood; he falls not without price Who with his life-blood challenges the fray.

Scorning their own base lives and hating light, To Caesar's loss they rush upon their death, Nor heed our blows. But let this frenzy pass, This madman onset; let the wish for death Die in their souls." Thus to its embers shrank The fire within

when battle was denied, And fainter grew their rage until the night Drew down
her starry veil and sank the sun.

Thus keener fights the gladiator whose wound Is recent, while the blood within
the veins Still gives the sinews motion, ere the skin Shrinks on the bones: but as
the victor stands His fatal thrust achieved, and points the blade Unfaltering,
watching for the end, there creeps Torpor upon the limbs, the blood congeals
About the gash, more faintly throbs the heart, And slowly fading, ebbs the life
away.

Raving for water now they dig the plains Seeking for hidden fountains, not with
spade And mattock only searching out the depths, But with the sword; they hack
the stony heights, In shafts that reach the level of the plain.

No further flees from light the pallid wretch Who tears the bowels of the earth
for gold.

Yet neither riven stones revealed a spring, Nor streamlet whispered from its
hidden source; To water trickled on the gravel bed, Nor dripped within the
cavern. Worn at length With labour huge, they crawl to light again, After such
toil to fall to thirst and heat The readier victims: this was all they won.

All food they loathe; and 'gainst their deadly thirst Call famine to their aid.
Damp clods of earth They squeeze upon their mouths with straining hands.

Where'er on foulest mud some stagnant slime Or moisture lies, though doomed
to die they lap With greedy tongues the draught their lips had loathed Had life
been theirs to choose. Beast-like they drain The swollen udder, and where milk
was not, They sucked the life-blood forth. From herbs and boughs Dripping with
dew, from tender shoots they pressed, Say, from the pith of trees, the juice
within.

Happy the host that onward marching finds Its savage enemy has fouled the
wells With murderous venom; had'st thou, Caesar, cast The reeking filth of
shambles in the stream, And henbane dire and all the poisonous herbs That lurk
on Cretan slopes, still had they drunk The fatal waters, rather than endure Such

lingering agony. Their bowels racked With torments as of flame; the swollen tongue And jaws now parched and rigid, and the veins; Each laboured breath with anguish from the lungs Enfeebled, moistureless, was scarcely drawn, And scarce again returned; and yet agape, Their panting mouths sucked in the nightly dew; They watch for showers from heaven, and in despair Gaze on the clouds, whence lately poured a flood.

Nor were their tortures less that Meroe Saw not their sufferings, nor Cancer's zone, Nor where the Garamantian turns the soil; But Sicoris and Iberus at their feet, Two mighty floods, but far beyond their reach, Rolled down in measureless volume to the main.

But now their leaders yield; Afranius, Vanquished, throws down his arms, and leads his troops, Now hardly living, to the hostile camp Before the victor's feet, and sues for peace.

Proud was his bearing, and despite of ills, His mien majestic, of his triumphs past Still mindful in disaster — thus he stood, Though suppliant for grace, a leader yet; From fearless heart thus speaking: "Had the fates Thrown me before some base ignoble foe, Not, Caesar, thee; still had this arm fought on And snatched my death. Now if I suppliant ask, 'Tis that I value still the boon of life Given by a worthy hand. No party ties Roused us to arms against thee; when the war, This civil war, broke out, it found us chiefs; And with our former cause we kept the faith, So long as brave men should. The fates' decree No longer we withstand. Unto thy will We yield the western tribes: the east is thine And all the world lies open to thy march.

Be generous! blood nor sword nor wearied arm Thy conquests bought. Thou hast not to forgive Aught but thy victory won. Nor ask we much.

Give us repose; to lead in peace the life Thou shalt bestow; suppose these armed lines Are corpses prostrate on the field of war Ne'er were it meet that thy victorious ranks Should mix with ours, the vanquished. Destiny Has run for us its course: one boon I beg; Bid not the conquered conquer in thy train."

Such were his words, and Caesar's gracious smile Granted his prayer, remitting

rights that war Gives to the victor. To th' unguarded stream The soldiers speed:
prone on the bank they lie And lap the flood or foul the crowded waves.

In many a burning throat the sudden draught Poured in too copious, filled the
empty veins And choked the breath within: yet left unquenched The burning pest
which though their frames were full Craved water for itself. Then, nerved once
more, Their strength returned. Oh, lavish luxury, Contented never with the frugal
meal!

Oh greed that searchest over land and sea To furnish forth the banquet! Pride that
joy'st In sumptuous tables! learn what life requires, How little nature needs! No
ruddy juice Pressed from the vintage in some famous year, Whose consuls are
forgotten, served in cups With gold and jewels wrought restores the spark, The
failing spark, of life; but water pure And simplest fruits of earth. The flood, the
field Suffice for nature. Ah! the weary lot Of those who war! But these, their
amour laid Low at the victor's feet, with lightened breast, Secure themselves, no
longer dealing death, Beset by care no more, seek out their homes.

What priceless gift in peace had they secured!

How grieved it now their souls to have poised the dart With arm outstretched; to
have felt their raving thirst; And prayed the gods for victory in vain!

Nay, hard they think the victor's lot, for whom A thousand risks and battles still
remain; If fortune never is to leave his side, How often must he triumph! and
how oft Pour out his blood where'er great Caesar leads!

Happy, thrice happy, he who, when the world Is nodding to its ruin, knows the
spot Where he himself shall, though in ruin, lie!

No trumpet call shall break his sleep again: But in his humble home with faithful
spouse And sons unlettered Fortune leaves him free From rage of party; for if
life he owes To Caesar, Magnus sometime was his lord.

Thus happy they alone live on apart, Nor hope nor dread the event of civil war.

Not thus did Fortune upon Caesar smile In all the parts of earth; (13) but 'gainst
his arms Dared somewhat, where Salona's lengthy waste Opposes Hadria, and

Iadar warm

Meets with his waves the breezes of the west.

There brave Curectae dwell, whose island home Is girded by the main; on whom relied Antonius; and beleaguered by the foe, Upon the furthest margin of the shore, (Safe from all ills but famine) placed his camp.

But for his steeds the earth no forage gave, Nor golden Ceres harvest; but his troops Gnawed the dry herbage of the scanty turf Within their rampart lines. But when they knew That Baslus was on th' opposing shore With friendly force, by novel mode of flight They aim to reach him. Not the accustomed keel They lay, nor build the ship, but shapeless rafts Of timbers knit together, strong to bear All ponderous weight; on empty casks beneath By tightened chains made firm, in double rows Supported; nor upon the deck were placed The oarsmen, to the hostile dart exposed, But in a hidden space, by beams concealed.

And thus the eye amazed beheld the mass Move silent on its path across the sea, By neither sail nor stalwart arm propelled.

They watch the main until the reflux waves Ebb from the growing sands; then, on the tide Receding, launch their vessel; thus she floats With twin companions: over each uprose With quivering battlements a lofty tower.

Octavius, guardian of Illyrian seas, Restrained his swifter keels, and left the rafts Free from attack, in hope of larger spoil From fresh adventures; for the peaceful sea May tempt them, and their goal in safety reached, To dare a second voyage. Round the stag Thus will the cunning hunter draw a line Of tainted feathers poisoning the air; Or spread the mesh, and muzzle in his grasp The straining jaws of the Molossian hound, And leash the Spartan pack; nor is the brake Trusted to any dog but such as tracks The scent with lowered nostrils, and refrains From giving tongue the while; content to mark By shaking leash the covert of the prey.

Ere long they manned the rafts in eager wish To quit the island, when the latest glow Still parted day from night. But Magnus' troops, Cilician once, taught by

their ancient art, In fraudulent deceit had left the sea To view unguarded; but
with chains unseen Fast to Illyrian shores, and hanging loose, They blocked the
outlet in the waves beneath.

The leading rafts passed safely, but the third Hung in mid passage, and by ropes
was hauled Below o'ershadowing rocks. These hollowed out In ponderous
masses overhung the main, And nodding seemed to fall: shadowed by trees Dark
lay the waves beneath. Hither the tide Brings wreck and corpse, and, burying
with the flow, Restores them with the ebb: and when the caves Belch forth the
ocean, swirling billows fall In boisterous surges back, as boils the tide In that
famed whirlpool on Sicilian shores.

Here, with Venetian settlers for its load, Stood motionless the raft. Octavius'
ships Gathered around, while foemen on the land Filled all the shore. But well
the captain knew, Volteius, how the secret fraud was planned, And tried in vain
with sword and steel to burst The bands that held them; without hope he fights,
Uncertain where to avoid or front the foe.

Caught in this strait they strove as brave men should Against opposing hosts; nor
long the fight, For fallen darkness brought a truce to arms.

Then to his men disheartened and in fear Of coming fate Volteius, great of soul,
Thus spake in tones commanding: "Free no more, Save for this little night,
consult ye now In this last moment, soldiers, how to face Your final fortunes. No
man's life is short Who can take thought for death, nor is your fame Less than a
conqueror's, if with breast advanced Ye meet your destined doom. None know
how long The life that waits them. Summon your own fate, And equal is your
praise, whether the hand Quench the last flicker of departing light, Or shear the
hope of years. But choice to die Is thrust not on the mind — we cannot flee; See
at our throats, e'en now, our kinsmen's swords.

Then choose for death; desire what fate decrees.

At least in war's blind cloud we shall not fall; Nor when the flying weapons hide
the day, And slaughtered heaps of foemen load the field, And death is common,
and the brave man sinks Unknown, inglorious. Us within this ship, Seen of both

friends and foes, the gods have placed; Both land and sea and island cliffs shall bear, From either shore, their witness to our death, In which some great and memorable fame Thou, Fortune, dost prepare. What glorious deeds Of warlike heroism, of noble faith, Time's annals show! All these shall we surpass.

True, Caesar, that to fall upon our swords For thee is little; yet beleaguered thus, With neither sons nor parents at our sides, Shorn of the glory that we might have earned, We give thee here the only pledge we may.

Yet let these hostile thousands fear the souls That rage for battle and that welcome death, And know us for invincible, and joy That no more rafts were stayed. They'll offer terms And tempt us with a base unhonoured life.

Would that, to give that death which shall be ours The greater glory, they may bid us hope For pardon and for life! lest when our swords Are reeking with our hearts'-blood, they may say This was despair of living. Great must be The prowess of our end, if in the hosts That fight his battles, Caesar is to mourn This little handful lost. For me, should fate Grant us retreat, — myself would scorn to shun The coming onset. Life I cast away, The frenzy of the death that comes apace Controls my being. Those alone whose end Inspires them, know the happiness of death, Which the high gods, that men may bear to live, Keep hid from others." Thus his noble words Warmed his brave comrades' hearts; and who with fear And tearful eyes had looked upon the Wain, Turning his nightly course, now hoped for day, Such precepts deep within them. Nor delayed The sky to dip the stars below the main; For Phoebus in the Twins his chariot drove At noon near Cancer; and the hours of night (14) Were shortened by the Archer.

When day broke, Lo! on the rocks the Istrians; while the sea Swarmed with the galleys and their Grecian fleet All armed for fight: but first the war was stayed And terms proposed: life to the foe they thought Would seem the sweeter, by delay of death Thus granted. But the band devoted stood, Proud of their promised end, and life forsworn, And careless of the battle: no debate Could shake their high resolve. (15) In numbers few 'Gainst foemen numberless by land and sea, They wage the desperate fight; then satiate Turn from the foe. And first demanding death Volteius bared his throat. "What youth," he cries, "Dares strike me down, and through his captain's wounds Attest his love for death?" Then through his side Plunge blades uncounted on the moment drawn.

He praises all: but him who struck the first Grateful, with dying strength, he does to death.

They rush together, and without a foe Work all the guilt of battle. Thus of yore, Rose up the glittering Dircaean band From seed by Cadmus sown, and fought and died, Dire omen for the brother kings of Thebes.

And so in Phasis' fields the sons of earth, Born of the sleepless dragon, all inflamed By magic incantations, with their blood Deluged the monstrous furrow, while the Queen Feared at the spells she wrought. Devoted thus To death, they fall, yet in their death itself Less valour show than in the fatal wounds They take and give; for e'en the dying hand Missed not a blow — nor did the stroke alone Inflict the wound, but rushing on the sword Their throat or breast received it to the hilt; And when by fatal chance or sire with son, Or brothers met, yet with unfaltering weight Down flashed the pitiless sword: this proved their love, To give no second blow. Half living now They dragged their mangled bodies to the side, Whence flowed into the sea a crimson stream Of slaughter. 'Twas their pleasure yet to see The light they scorned; with haughty looks to scan The faces of their victors, and to feel The death approaching. But the raft was now Piled up with dead; which, when the foemen saw, Wondering at such a chief and such a deed, They gave them burial. Never through the world Of any brave achievement was the fame More widely blazed. Yet meaner men, untaught By such examples, see not that the hand Which frees from slavery needs no valiant mind To guide the stroke. But tyranny is feared As dealing death; and Freedom's self is galled By ruthless arms; and knows not that the sword Was given for this, that none need live a slave.

Ah Death! would'st thou but let the coward live And grant the brave alone the prize to die!

Nor less were Libyan fields ablaze with war.

For Curio rash from Lilybaean (16) coast Sailed with his fleet, and borne by gentle winds Betwixt half-ruined Carthage, mighty once, And Clupea's cliff, upon the well-known shore His anchors dropped. First from the hoary sea Remote, where Bagra slowly ploughs the sand, He placed his camp: then sought the further hills And mazy passages of cavernous rocks, Antaeus' kingdom

called. From ancient days This name was given; and thus a swain retold The story handed down from sire to son: "Not yet exhausted by the giant brood, Earth still another monster brought to birth, In Libya's caverns: huger far was he, More justly far her pride, than Briareus With all his hundred hands, or Typhon fierce, Or Tityos: 'twas in mercy to the gods That not in Phlegra's (17) fields Antaeus grew, But here in Libya; to her offspring's strength, Unmeasured, vast, she added yet this boon, That when in weariness and labour spent He touched his parent, fresh from her embrace Renewed in rigour he should rise again.

In yonder cave he dwelt, 'neath yonder rock He made his feast on lions slain in chase: There slept he; not on skins of beasts, or leaves, But fed his strength upon the naked earth.

Perished the Libyan hinds and those who came, Brought here in ships, until he scorned at length The earth that gave him strength, and on his feet Invincible and with unaided might

Made all his victims. Last to Afric shores, Drawn by the rumour of such carnage, came Magnanimous Alcides, he who freed

Both land and sea of monsters. Down on earth He threw his mantle of the lion's skin Slain in Cleone; nor Antaeus less

Cast down the hide he wore. With shining oil, As one who wrestles at Olympia's feast, The hero rubs his limbs: the giant feared Lest standing only on his parent earth His strength might fail; and cast o'er all his bulk Hot sand in handfuls. Thus with arms entwined And grappling hands each seizes on his foe; With hardened muscles straining at the neck Long time in vain; for firm the sinewy throat Stood column-like, nor yielded; so that each Wondered to find his peer. Nor at the first Divine Alcides put forth all his strength, By lengthy struggle wearing out his foe, Till chilly drops stood on Antaeas' limbs, And toppled to its fall the stately throat, And smitten by the hero's blows, the legs Began to totter. Breast to breast they strive To gain the vantage, till the victor's arms Gird in the giant's yielding back and sides, And squeeze his middle part: next 'twixt the thighs He puts his feet, and forcing them apart, Lays low the mighty monster limb by limb.

The dry earth drank his sweat, while in his veins Warm ran the life-blood, and with strength refreshed, The muscle swelled and all the joints grew firm, And

with his might restored, he breaks his bonds And rives the arms of Hercules away.

Amazed the hero stood at such a strength.

Not thus he feared, though then unused to war, That hydra fierce, which smitten in the marsh Of Inachus, renewed its severed heads.

Again they join in fight, one with the powers Which earth bestowed, the other with his own: Nor did the hatred of his step-dame (18) find In all his conflicts greater room for hope.

She sees bedewed in sweat the neck and limbs Which once had borne the mountain of the gods Nor knew the toil: and when Antaeus felt His foeman's arms close round him once again, He flung his wearying limbs upon the sand To rise with strength renewed; all that the earth, Though labouring sore, could breathe into her son She gave his frame. But Hercules at last Saw how his parent gave the giant strength.

'Stand thou,' he cried; 'no more upon the ground Thou liest at thy will — here must thou stay Within mine arms constrained; against this breast, Antaeus, shalt thou fall.' He lifted up And held by middle girth the giant form, Still struggling for the earth: but she no more Could give her offspring rigour. Slowly came The chill of death upon him, and 'twas long Before the hero, of his victory sure, Trusted the earth and laid the giant down.

Hence hoar antiquity that loves to prate And wonders at herself (19), this region called Antaeus' kingdom. But a greater name It gained from Scipio, when he recalled From Roman citadels the Punic chief.

Here was his camp; here can'st thou see the trace Of that most famous rampart (20) whence at length Issued the Eagles of triumphant Rome."

But Curio rejoiced, as though for him The fortunes of the spot must hold in store The fates of former chiefs: and on the place Of happy augury placed his tents ill-starred, Took from the hills their omens; and with force Unequal, challenged his barbarian foe.

All Africa that bore the Roman yoke Then lay 'neath Varus. He, though placing
first Trust in his Latian troops, from every side And furthest regions, summons
to his aid The nations who confessed King Juba's rule.

Not any monarch over wider tracts

Held the dominion. From the western belt (21) Near Gades, Atlas parts their
furthest bounds; But from the southern, Hammon girds them in Hard by the
whirlpools; and their burning plains Stretch forth unending 'neath the torrid
zone, In breadth its equal, till they reach at length The shore of ocean upon either
hand.

From all these regions tribes unnumbered flock To Juba's standard: Moors of
swarthy hue As though from Ind; Numidian nomads there And Nasamon's needy
hordes; and those whose darts Equal the flying arrows of the Mede: Dark
Garamantians leave their fervid home; And those whose coursers unrestrained
by bit Or saddle, yet obey the rider's hand Which wields the guiding switch: the
hunter, too, Who wanders forth, his home a fragile hut, And blinds with flowing
robe (if spear should fail) The angry lion, monarch of the steppe.

Not eagerness alone to save the state Stirred Juba's spirit: private hatred too
Roused him to war. For in the former year, When Curio all things human and the
gods Polluted, he by tribune law essayed To ravish Libya from the tyrant's sway,
And drive the monarch from his father's throne, While giving Rome a king. To
Juba thus, Still smarting at the insult, came the war, A welcome harvest for his
crown retained.

These rumours Curio feared: nor had his troops (Ta'en in Corfinium's hold) (23)
in waves of Rhine Been tested, nor to Caesar in the wars Had learned devotion:
wavering in their faith, Their second chief they doubt, their first betrayed.

Yet when the general saw the spirit of fear Creep through his camp, and
discipline to fail, And sentinels desert their guard at night, Thus in his fear he
spake: "By daring much Fear is disguised; let me be first in arms, And bid my

soldiers to the plain descend, While still my soldiers. Idle days breed doubt.

By fight forestall the plot (24). Soon as the thirst Of bloodshed fills the mind,
and eager hands Grip firm the sword, and pressed upon the brow The helm
brings valour to the failing heart —

Who cares to measure leaders' merits then?

Who weighs the cause? With whom the soldier stands, For him he fights; as at
the fatal show No ancient grudge the gladiator's arm Nerves for the combat, yet
as he shall strike He hates his rival." Thinking thus he leads His troops in battle
order to the plain.

Then victory on his arms deceptive shone Hiding the ills to come: for from the
field Driving the hostile host with sword and spear, He smote them till their
camp opposed his way.

But after Varus' rout, unseen till then, All eager for the glory to be his,

By stealth came Juba: silent was his march; His only fear lest rumour should
forestall His coming victory. In pretended war He sends Sabura forth with scanty
force To tempt the enemy, while in hollow vale He holds the armies of his realm
unseen.

Thus doth the sly ichneumon (25) with his tail Waving, allure the serpent of the
Nile Drawn to the moving shadow: he, with head Turned sideways, watches till
the victim glides Within his reach, then seizes by the throat Behind the deadly
fangs: forth from its seat Balked of its purpose, through the brimming jaws
Gushes a tide of poison. Fortune smiled On Juba's stratagem; for Curio

(The hidden forces of the foe unknown) Sent forth his horse by night without the
camp To scour more distant regions. He himself At earliest peep of dawn bids
carry forth His standards; heeding not his captains' prayer Urged on his ears:
"Beware of Punic fraud, The craft that taints a Carthaginian war."

Hung over him the doom of coming death And gave the youth to fate; and civil
strife Dragged down its author.

On the lofty tops Where broke the hills abruptly to their fall He ranks his troops and sees the foe afar: Who still deceiving, simulated flight, Till from the height in loose unordered lines The Roman forces streamed upon the plain, In thought that Juba fled. Then first was known The treacherous fraud: for swift Numidian horse On every side surround them: leader, men —

All see their fate in one dread moment come.

No coward flees, no warrior bravely strides To meet the battle: nay, the trumpet call Stirs not the charger with resounding hoof To spurn the rock, nor galling bit compels To champ in eagerness; nor toss his mane And prick the ear, nor prancing with his feet To claim his share of combat. Tired, the neck Droops downwards: smoking sweat bedews the limbs: Dry from the squalid mouth protrudes the tongue, Hoarse, raucous panting issues from their chests; Their flanks distend: and every curb is dry With bloody foam; the ruthless sword alone Could move them onward, powerless even then To charge; but giving to the hostile dart A nearer victim. But when the Afric horse First made their onset, loud beneath their hoofs Rang the wide plain, and rose the dust in air As by some Thracian whirlwind stirred; and veiled The heavens in darkness. When on Curio's host The tempest burst, each footman in the rank Stood there to meet his fate — no doubtful end Hung in the balance: destiny proclaimed Death to them all. No conflict hand to hand Was granted them, by lances thrown from far And sidelong sword-thrusts slain: nor wounds alone, But clouds of weapons falling from the air By weight of iron o'erwhelmed them. Still drew in The straightening circle, for the first pressed back On those behind; did any shun the foe, Seeking the inner safety of the ring, He needs must perish by his comrades' swords.

And as the front rank fell, still narrower grew The close crushed phalanx, till to raise their swords Space was denied. Still close and closer forced The armed breasts against each other driven Pressed out the life. Thus not upon a scene Such as their fortune promised, gazed the foe.

No tide of blood was there to glut their eyes, No members lopped asunder, though the earth so Was piled with corpses; for each Roman stood In death upright against his comrade dead.

Let cruel Carthage rouse her hated ghosts By this fell offering; let the Punic shades, And bloody Hannibal, from this defeat Receive atonement: yet 'twas shame, ye gods, That Libya gained not for herself the day; And that our Romans on that field should die To save Pompeius and the Senate's cause.

Now was the dust laid low by streams of blood, And Curio, knowing that his host was slain.

Chose not to live; and, as a brave man should.

He rushed upon the heap, and fighting fell.

In vain with turbid speech hast thou profaned The pulpit of the forum: waved in vain From that proud (26) citadel the tribune flag: And armed the people, and the Senate's rights Betraying, hast compelled this impious war Betwixt the rival kinsmen. Low thou liest Before Pharsalus' fight, and from thine eyes Is hid the war. 'Tis thus to suffering Rome, For arms seditious and for civil strife Ye mighty make atonement with your blood.

Happy were Rome and all her sons indeed, Did but the gods as rigidly protect As they avenge, her violated laws!

There Curio lies; untombed his noble corpse, Torn by the vultures of the Libyan wastes.

Yet shall we, since such merit, though unsung, Lives by its own imperishable fame, Give thee thy meed of praise. Rome never bore Another son, who, had he right pursued, Had so adorned her laws; but soon the times, Their luxury, corruption, and the curse Of too abundant wealth, in transverse stream Swept o'er his wavering mind: and Curio changed, Turned with his change the scale of human things.

True, mighty Sulla, cruel Marius,

And bloody Cinna, and the long descent Of Caesar and of Caesar's house became Lords of our lives. But who had power like him?

All others bought the state: he sold alone. (27) ENDNOTES:

(1) Both of these generals were able and distinguished officers.

Afranius was slain by Caesar's soldiers after the battle of Thapsus. Petreius, after the same battle, escaped along with Juba; and failing to find a refuge, they challenged each other to fight. Petreius was killed, and Juba, the survivor, put an end to himself.

(2) These are the names of Spanish tribes. The Celtiberi dwelt on the Ebro.

(3) Lerida, on the river Segre, above its junction with the Ebro. Cinga is the modern Cinca, which falls into the Segre (Sicoris).

(4) Phrixus and Helle, the children of Nephele, were to be sacrificed to Zeus: but Nephele rescued them, and they rode away through the air on the Ram with the golden fleece. But Helle fell into the sea, which from her was named the Hellespont. (See Book IX., 1126.) The sun enters Aries about March 20. The Ram is pictured among the constellations with his head averse.

(5) See Book I., 463.

(6) See Mr. Heitland's introduction, upon the meaning of the word "cardo". The word "belt" seems fairly to answer to the two great circles or four meridians which he describes. The word occurs again at line 760; Book V., 80; Book VII., 452.

(7) The idea is that the cold of the poles tempers the heat of the equator.

(8) Fuso: either spacious, outspread; or, poured into the land (referring to the estuaries) as Mr. Haskins prefers; or, poured round the island. Portable leathern skiffs seem to have been in common use in Caesar's time in the English Channel. These were the rowing boats of the Gauls.

(Mommsen, vol. iv., 219.)

(9) Compare Book I., 519.

(10) Compare the passage in Tacitus, "Histories", ii., 45, in which the historian describes how the troops of Otho and Vitellius wept over each other after the

battle and deplored the miseries of a civil war. “Victi victoresque in lacrimas effusi, sortem civilium armorum misera laetitia detestantes.”

(11) “Saecula nostra” may refer either to Lucan’s own time or to the moment arrived at in the poem; or it may, as Francken suggests, have a more general meaning.

(12) “Petenda est”? — “is it fit that you should beg for the lives of your leaders?” Mr. Haskins says, “shall you have to beg for them?” But it means that to do so is the height of disgrace.

(13) The scene is the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic. Here was Diocletian’s palace. (Described in the 13th chapter of Gibbon.)

(14) That is, night was at its shortest.

(15) On the following passage see Dean Merivale’s remarks, “History of the Roman Empire”, chapter xvi.

(16) That is, Sicilian.

(17) For Phlegra, the scene of the battle between the giants and the gods, see Book VII., 170, and Book IX., 774. Ben Jonson (“Sejanus”, Act v., scene 10) says of Sejanus: —

“Phlegra, the field where all the sons of earth Mustered against the gods, did ne’er acknowledge So proud and huge a monster.”

(18) Juno.

(19) That is, extols ancient deeds.

(20) Referring to the battle of Zama.

(21) See line 82.

(22) Curio was tribune in B.C. 50. His earlier years are stated to have been stained with vice.

(23) See Book II., 537.

(24) Preferring the reading “praeripe”, with Francken.

(25) Bewick (“Quadrupeds,” p. 238) tells the following anecdote of a tame ichneumon which had never seen a serpent, and to which he brought a small one. “Its first emotion seemed to be astonishment mixed with anger; its hair became erect; in an instant it slipped behind the reptile, and with remarkable swiftness and agility leaped upon its head, seized it and crushed it with its teeth.”

(26) Reading “arce”, not “arte”. The word “signifer” seems to favour the reading I have preferred; and Dean Merivale and Hosius adopted it.

(27) For the character and career of Curio, see Merivale’s “History of the Roman Empire”, chapter xvi. He was of profligate character, but a friend and pupil of Cicero; at first a rabid partisan of the oligarchy, he had, about the period of his tribuneship (B.C. 50-49), become a supporter of Caesar. How far Gaulish gold was the cause of this conversion we cannot tell. It is in allusion to this change that he was termed the prime mover of the civil war. His arrival in Caesar’s camp is described in Book I., line 303.

He became Caesar’s chief lieutenant in place of the deserter Labienus; and, as described in Book III., was sent to Sardinia and Sicily, whence he expelled the senatorial forces. His final expedition to Africa, defeat and death, form the subject of the latter part of this book. Mommsen describes him as a man of talent, and finds a resemblance between him and Caesar. (Vol. iv., p. 393.)

BOOK V

THE ORACLE. THE MUTINY. THE STORM

Thus had the smiles of Fortune and her frowns Brought either chief to
Macedonian shores Still equal to his foe. From cooler skies Sank Atlas’ (1)
daughters down, and Haemus’ slopes Were white with winter, and the day drew
nigh Devoted to the god who leads the months, And marking with new names
the book of Rome, When came the Fathers from their distant posts By both the
Consuls to Epirus called (2) Ere yet the year was dead: a foreign land Obscure
received the magistrates of Rome, And heard their high debate. No warlike camp
This; for the Consul’s and the Praetor’s axe Proclaimed the Senate-house; and

Magnus sat One among many, and the state was all.

When all were silent, from his lofty seat Thus Lentulus began, while stern and sad The Fathers listened: "If your hearts still beat With Latian blood, and if within your breasts Still lives your fathers' vigour, look not now On this strange land that holds us, nor enquire Your distance from the captured city: yours This proud assembly, yours the high command In all that comes. Be this your first decree, Whose truth all peoples and all kings confess; Be this the Senate. Let the frozen wain Demand your presence, or the torrid zone Wherein the day and night with equal tread For ever march; still follows in your steps The central power of Imperial Rome.

When flamed the Capitol with fires of Gaul When Veii held Camillus, there with him Was Rome, nor ever though it changed its clime Your order lost its rights. In Caesar's hands Are sorrowing houses and deserted homes, Laws silent for a space, and forums closed In public fast. His Senate-house beholds Those Fathers only whom from Rome it drove, While Rome was full. Of that high order all Not here, are exiles. (3) Ignorant of war, Its crimes and bloodshed, through long years of peace, Ye fled its outburst: now in session all Are here assembled. See ye how the gods Weigh down Italia's loss by all the world Thrown in the other scale? Illyria's wave Rolls deep upon our foes: in Libyan wastes Is fallen their Curio, the weightier part (4) Of Caesar's senate! Lift your standards, then, Spur on your fates and prove your hopes to heaven.

Let Fortune, smiling, give you courage now As, when ye fled, your cause. The Consuls' power Fails with the dying year: not so does yours; By your commandment for the common weal Decree Pompeius leader." With applause They heard his words, and placed their country's fates, Nor less their own, within the chieftain's hands.

Then did they shower on people and on kings Honours well earned — Rhodes, Mistress of the Seas, Was decked with gifts; Athena, old in fame, Received her praise, and the rude tribes who dwell On cold Taygetus; Massilia's sons

Their own Phocaea's freedom; on the chiefs Of Thracian tribes, fit honours were bestowed.

They order Libya by their high decree To serve King Juba's sceptre; and, alas!

On Ptolemaeus, of a faithless race

The faithless sovereign, scandal to the gods, And shame to Fortune, placed the diadem Of Pella. Boy! thy sword was only sharp Against thy people. Ah if that were all!

The fatal gift gave, too, Pompeius' life; Bereft thy sister of her sire's bequest, (5) Half of the kingdom; Caesar of a crime.

Then all to arms.

While soldier thus and chief, In doubtful sort, against their hidden fate
Devised their counsel, Appius (6) alone Feared for the chances of the war, and
sought Through Phoebus' ancient oracle to break The silence of the gods and
know the end.

Between the western belt and that which bounds (7) The furthest east, midway
Parnassus rears His double summit: to the Bromian god And Paeon consecrate,
to whom conjoined The Theban band leads up the Delphic feast On each third
year. This mountain, when the sea Poured o'er the earth her billows, rose alone,
By one high peak scarce master of the waves, Parting the crest of waters from
the stars.

There, to avenge his mother, from her home Chased by the angered goddess
while as yet She bore him quick within her, Paeon came (When Themis ruled the
tripods and the spot) (8) And with unpractised darts the Python slew.

But when he saw how from the yawning cave A godlike knowledge breathed,
and all the air Was full of voices murmured from the depths, He took the shrine
and filled the deep recess; Henceforth to prophesy.

Which of the gods Has left heaven's light in this dark cave to hide?

What spirit that knows the secrets of the world And things to come, here
condescends to dwell, Divine, omnipotent? bear the touch of man, And at his
bidding deigns to lift the veil?

Perchance he sings the fates, perchance his song, Once sung, is fate. Haply some
part of Jove Sent here to rule the earth with mystic power, Balanced upon the
void immense of air, Sounds through the caves, and in its flight returns To that
high home of thunder whence it came.

Caught in a virgin's breast, this deity Strikes on the human spirit: then a voice
Sounds from her breast, as when the lofty peak Of Etna boils, forced by
compelling flames, Or as Typhoeus on Campania's shore

Frets 'neath the pile of huge Inarime. (9) Though free to all that ask, denied to
none, No human passion lurks within the voice That heralds forth the god; no
whispered vow, No evil prayer prevails; none favour gain: Of things
unchangeable the song divine; Yet loves the just. When men have left their
homes To seek another, it hath turned their steps Aright, as with the Tyrians; (10)
and raised The hearts of nations to confront their foe, As prove the waves of
Salamis: (11) when earth Hath been unfruitful, or polluted air Has plagued
mankind, this utterance benign Hath raised their hopes and pointed to the end.

No gift from heaven's high gods so great as this Our centuries have lost, since
Delphi's shrine Has silent stood, and kings forbade the gods (12) To speak the
future, fearing for their fates.

Nor does the priestess sorrow that the voice Is heard no longer; and the silent
fane To her is happiness; for whatever breast Contains the deity, its shattered
frame Surges with frenzy, and the soul divine Shakes the frail breath that with
the god receives, As prize or punishment, untimely death.

These tripods Appius seeks, unmoved for years These soundless caverned rocks,
in quest to learn Hesperia's destinies. At his command To loose the sacred
gateways and permit The prophetess to enter to the god, The keeper calls
Phemonoe; (13) whose steps Round the Castalian fount and in the grove Were
wandering careless; her he bids to pass The portals. But the priestess feared to
tread The awful threshold, and with vain deceits Sought to dissuade the chieftain
from his zeal To learn the future. "What this hope," she cried, "Roman, that

moves thy breast to know the fates?

Long has Parnassus and its silent cleft Stifled the god; perhaps the breath divine
Has left its ancient gorge and thro' the world Wanders in devious paths; or else
the fane, Consumed to ashes by barbarian (14) fire, Closed up the deep recess
and choked the path Of Phoebus; or the ancient Sibyl's books Disclosed enough
of fate, and thus the gods Decreed to close the oracle; or else Since wicked steps
are banished from the fane, In this our impious age the god finds none Whom he
may answer." But the maiden's guile Was known, for though she would deny the
gods Her fears approved them. On her front she binds A twisted fillet, while a
shining wreath Of Phocian laurels crowns the locks that flow Upon her
shoulders. Hesitating yet The priest compelled her, and she passed within.

But horror filled her of the holiest depths From which the mystic oracle
proceeds; And resting near the doors, in breast unmoved She dares invent the
god in words confused, Which proved no mind possessed with fire divine; By
such false chant less injuring the chief Than faith in Phoebus and the sacred
fane.

No burst of words with tremor in their tones, No voice re-echoing through the
spacious vault Proclaimed the deity, no bristling locks Shook off the laurel
chaplet; but the grove Unshaken, and the summits of the shrine, Gave proof she
shunned the god. The Roman knew The tripods yet were idle, and in rage,
"Wretch," he exclaimed, "to us and to the gods, Whose presence thou pretendest,
thou shalt pay For this thy fraud the punishment; unless Thou enter the recess,
and speak no more, Of this world-war, this tumult of mankind, Thine own
inventions." Then by fear compelled, At length the priestess sought the furthest
depths, And stayed beside the tripods; and there came Into her unaccustomed
breast the god, Breathed from the living rock for centuries Untouched; nor ever
with a mightier power Did Paeon's inspiration seize the frame Of Delphic
priestess; his pervading touch Drove out her former mind, expelled the man, And
made her wholly his. In maddened trance She whirls throughout the cave, her
locks erect With horror, and the fillets of the god Dashed to the ground; her steps
unguided turn To this side and to that; the tripods fall O'erturned; within her
seethes the mighty fire Of angry Phoebus; nor with whip alone He urged her
onwards, but with curb restrained; Nor was it given her by the god to speak All
that she knew; for into one vast mass (15) All time was gathered, and her panting
chest Groaned 'neath the centuries. In order long All things lay bare: the future
yet unveiled Struggled for light; each fate required a voice; The compass of the

seas, Creation's birth, Creation's death, the number of the sands, All these she knew. Thus on a former day The prophetess upon the Cuman shore, (16)
Disdaining that her frenzy should be slave To other nations, from the boundless threads Chose out with pride of hand the fates of Rome.

E'en so Phemonoe, for a time oppressed With fates unnumbered, laboured ere she found, Beneath such mighty destinies concealed, Thine, Appius, who alone had'st sought the god In land Castalian; then from foaming lips First rushed the madness forth, and murmurs loud Uttered with panting breath and blent with groans; Till through the spacious vault a voice at length Broke from the virgin conquered by the god: "From this great struggle thou, O Roman, free Escap'st the threats of war: alive, in peace, Thou shalt possess the hollow in the coast Of vast Euboea." Thus she spake, no more.

Ye mystic tripods, guardians of the fates And Paeon, thou, from whom no day is hid By heaven's high rulers, Master of the truth, Why fear'st thou to reveal the deaths of kings, Rome's murdered princes, and the latest doom Of her great Empire tottering to its fall, And all the bloodshed of that western land?

Were yet the stars in doubt on Magnus' fate Not yet decreed, and did the gods yet shrink From that, the greatest crime? Or wert thou dumb That Fortune's sword for civil strife might wreak Just vengeance, and a Brutus' arm once more Strike down the tyrant?

From the temple doors Rushed forth the prophetess in frenzy driven, Not all her knowledge uttered; and her eyes, Still troubled by the god who reigned within, Or filled with wild affright, or fired with rage Gaze on the wide expanse: still works her face Convulsive; on her cheeks a crimson blush With ghastly pallor blent, though not of fear.

Her weary heart throbs ever; and as seas Boom swollen by northern winds, she finds in sighs, All inarticulate, relief. But while She hastes from that dread light in which she saw The fates, to common day, lo! on her path The darkness fell. Then by a Stygian draught Of the forgetful river, Phoebus snatched Back from her soul his secrets; and she fell Yet hardly living.

Nor did Appius dread Approaching death, but by dark oracles Baffled, while yet the Empire of the world Hung in the balance, sought his promised realm In Chalcis of Euboea. Yet to escape All ills of earth, the crash of war — what god Can give thee such a boon, but death alone?

Far on the solitary shore a grave

Awaits thee, where Carystos' marble crags (17) Draw in the passage of the sea, and where The fane of Rhamnus rises to the gods Who hate the proud, and where the ocean strait Boils in swift whirlpools, and Euripus draws Deceitful in his tides, a bane to ships, Chalcidian vessels to bleak Aulis' shore.

But Caesar carried from the conquered west His eagles to another world of war; When envying his victorious course the gods Almost turned back the prosperous tide of fate.

Not on the battlefield borne down by arms But in his tents, within the rampart lines, The hoped-for prize of this unholy war Seemed for a moment gone. That faithful host, His comrades trusted in a hundred fields, Or that the falchion sheathed had lost its charm; Or weary of the mournful bugle call Scarce ever silent; or replete with blood, Well nigh betrayed their general and sold For hope of gain their honour and their cause.

No other perilous shock gave surer proof How trembled 'neath his feet the dizzy height From which great Caesar looked. A moment since His high behest drew nations to the field: Now, maimed of all, he sees that swords once drawn Are weapons for the soldier, not the chief.

From the stern ranks no doubtful murmur rose; Not silent anger as when one conspires, His comrades doubting, feared himself in turn; Alone (he thinks) indignant at the wrongs Wrought by the despot. In so great a host Dread found no place. Where thousands share the guilt Crime goes unpunished. Thus from dauntless throats They hurled their menace: "Caesar, give us leave To quit thy crimes; thou seek'st by land and sea The sword to slay us; let the fields of Gaul And far Iberia, and the world proclaim How for thy victories our comrades fell.

What boots it us that by an army's blood The Rhine and Rhone and all the northern lands Thou hast subdued? Thou giv'st us civil war For all these battles; such the prize. When fled The Senate trembling, and when Rome was ours What homes or temples did we spoil? Our hands Reek with offence! Aye, but our poverty Proclaims our innocence! What end shall be Of arms and armies? What shall be enough If Rome suffice not? and what lies beyond?

Behold these silvered locks, these nerveless hands And shrunken arms, once stalwart! In thy wars Gone is the strength of life, gone all its pride!

Dismiss thine aged soldiers to their deaths.

How shameless is our prayer! Not on hard turf To stretch our dying limbs; nor seek in vain, When parts the soul, a hand to close our eyes; Not with the helmet strike the stony clod: (19) Rather to feel the dear one's last embrace, And gain a humble but a separate tomb.

Let nature end old age. And dost thou think We only know not what degree of crime Will fetch the highest price? What thou canst dare These years have proved, or nothing; law divine Nor human ordinance shall hold thine hand.

Thou wert our leader on the banks of Rhine; Henceforth our equal; for the stain of crime Makes all men like to like. Add that we serve A thankless chief: as fortune's gift he takes The fruits of victory our arms have won.

We are his fortunes, and his fates are ours To fashion as we will. Boast that the gods Shall do thy bidding! Nay, thy soldiers' will Shall close the war." With threatening mien and speech Thus through the camp the troops demand their chief.

When faith and loyalty are fled, and hope For aught but evil, thus may civil war In mutiny and discord find its end!

What general had not feared at such revolt?

But mighty Caesar trusting on the throw, As was his wont, his fortune, and o'erjoyed To front their anger raging at its height Unflinching comes. No temples of the gods, Not Jove's high fane on the Tarpeian rock, Not Rome's high

dames nor maidens had he grudged To their most savage lust: that they should ask The worst, his wish, and love the spoils of war.

Nor feared he aught save order at the hands Of that unconquered host. Art thou not shamed That strife should please thee only, now condemned Even by thy minions? Shall they shrink from blood, They from the sword recoil? and thou rush on Heedless of guilt, through right and through unright, Nor learn that men may lay their arms aside Yet bear to live? This civil butchery Escapes thy grasp. Stay thou thy crimes at length; Nor force thy will on those who will no more.

Upon a turfy mound unmoved he stood And, since he feared not, worthy to be feared; And thus while anger stirred his soul began: "Thou that with voice and hand didst rage but now Against thine absent chief, behold me here; Here strike thy sword into this naked breast, To stay the war; and flee, if such thy wish.

This mutiny devoid of daring deed

Betrays your coward souls, betrays the youth Who tires of victories which gild the arms Of an unconquered chief, and yearns for flight.

Well, leave me then to battle and to fate!

I cast you forth; for every weapon left, Fortune shall find a man, to wield it well.

Shall Magnus in his flight with such a fleet Draw nations in his train; and not to me as My victories bring hosts, to whom shall fall The prize of war accomplished, who shall reap Your laurels scorned, and scathless join the train That leads my chariot to the sacred hill?

While you, despised in age and worn in war, Gaze on our triumph from the civic crowd.

Think you your dastard flight shall give me pause?

If all the rivers that now seek the sea Were to withdraw their waters, it would fail By not one inch, no more than by their flow It rises now. Have then your efforts given Strength to my cause? Not so: the heavenly gods Stoop not so low; fate has no time to judge Your lives and deaths. The fortunes of the world Follow

heroic souls: for the fit few The many live; and you who terrified With me the northern and Iberian worlds, Would flee when led by Magnus. Strong in arms For Caesar's cause was Labienus; (20) now That vile deserter, with his chief preferred, Wanders o'er land and sea. Nor were your faith One whit more firm to me if, neither side Espoused, you ceased from arms. Who leaves me once, Though not to fight against me with the foe, Joins not my ranks again. Surely the gods Smile on these arms who for so great a war Grant me fresh soldiers. From what heavy load Fortune relieves me! for the hands which aimed At all, to which the world did not suffice, I now disarm, and for myself alone

Reserve the conflict. Quit ye, then, my camp, `Quirites', (21) Caesar's soldiers now no more, And leave my standards to the grasp of men!

Yet some who led this mad revolt I hold, Not as their captain now, but as their judge.

Lie, traitors, prone on earth, stretch out the neck And take th' avenging blow. And thou whose strength Shall now support me, young and yet untaught, Behold the doom and learn to strike and die."

Such were his words of ire, and all the host Drew back and trembled at the voice of him They would depose, as though their very swords Would from their scabbards leap at his command Themselves unwilling; but he only feared Lest hand and blade to satisfy the doom Might be denied, till they submitting pledged Their lives and swords alike, beyond his hope.

To strike and suffer (22) holds in surest thrall The heart inured to guilt; and Caesar kept, By dreadful compact ratified in blood, Those whom he feared to lose.

He bids them march Upon Brundisium, and recalls the ships From soft Calabria's inlets and the point Of Leucas, and the Salapinian marsh, Where sheltered Sipus nestles at the feet Of rich Garganus, jutting from the shore In huge escarpment that divides the waves Of Hadria; on each hand, his seaward slopes Buffeted by the winds; or Auster borne From sweet Apulia, or the sterner blast Of Boreas rushing from Dalmatian strands.

But Caesar entered trembling Rome unarmed, Now taught to serve him in the garb of peace.

Dictator named, to grant their prayers, forsooth: Consul, in honour of the roll of Rome.

Then first of all the names by which we now Lie to our masters, men found out the use: For to preserve his right to wield the sword He mixed the civil axes with his brands; With eagles, fasces; with an empty word Clothing his power; and stamped upon the time A worthy designation; for what name Could better mark the dread Pharsalian year Than “Caesar, Consul”? (23) Now the famous field Pretends its ancient ceremonies: calls The tribes in order and divides the votes In vain solemnity of empty urns.

Nor do they heed the portents of the sky: Deaf were the augurs to the thunder roll; The owl flew on the left; yet were the birds Propitious sworn. Then was the ancient name Degraded first; and monthly Consuls, (24) Shorn of their rank, are chosen to mark the years.

And Trojan Alba’s (25) god (since Latium’s fall Deserving not) beheld the wonted fires Blaze from his altars on the festal night.

Then through Apulia’s fallows, that her hinds Left all untilled, to sluggish weeds a prey Passed Caesar onward, swifter than the fire Of heaven, or tigress dam: until he reached Brundisium’s winding ramparts, built of old By Cretan colonists. There icy winds Constrained the billows, and his trembling fleet Feared for the winter storms nor dared the main.

But Caesar’s soul burned at the moments lost For speedy battle, nor could brook delay Within the port, indignant that the sea Should give safe passage to his routed foe: And thus he stirred his troops, in seas unskilled, With words of courage: “When the winter wind Has seized on sky and ocean, firm its hold; But the inconstancy of cloudy spring Permits no certain breezes to prevail Upon the billows. Straight shall be our course.

No winding nooks of coast, but open seas Struck by the northern wind alone we

plough, And may he bend the spars, and bear us swift To Grecian cities; else Pompeius' oars, Smiting the billows from Phaeacian (26) coasts, May catch our flagging sails. Cast loose the ropes From our victorious prows. Too long we waste Tempests that blow to bear us to our goal."

Now sank the sun to rest; the evening star Shone on the darkening heaven, and the moon Reigned with her paler light, when all the fleet Freed from retaining cables seized the main.

With slackened sheet the canvas wooed the breeze, Which rose and fell and fitful died away, Till motionless the sails, and all the waves Were still as deepest pool, where never wind Ripples the surface. Thus in Scythian climes Cimmerian Bosphorus restrains the deep Bound fast in frosty fetters; Ister's streams (27) No more impel the main, and ships constrained Stand fast in ice; and while in depths below The waves still murmur, loud the charger's hoof Sounds on the surface, and the travelling wheel Furrows a track upon the frozen marsh.

Cruel as tempest was the calm that lay In stagnant pools upon the mournful deep: Against the course of nature lay outstretched A rigid ocean: 'twas as if the sea

Forgot its ancient ways and knew no more The ceaseless tides, nor any breeze of heaven, Nor quivered at the image of the sun, Mirrored upon its wave. For while the fleet Hung in mid passage motionless, the foe Might hurry to attack, with sturdy stroke Churning the deep; or famine's deadly grip Might seize the ships becalmed. For dangers new New vows they find. "May mighty winds arise And rouse the ocean, and this sluggish plain Cast off stagnation and be sea once more."

Thus did they pray, but cloudless shone the sky, Unrippled slept the surface of the main; Until in misty clouds the moon arose And stirred the depths, and moved the fleet along Towards the Ceraunian headland; and the waves And favouring breezes followed on the ships, Now speeding faster, till (their goal attained) They cast their anchors on Palaeste's (28) shore.

This land first saw the chiefs in neighbouring camps Confronted, which the

streams of Apsus bound And swifter Genusus; a lengthy course Is run by neither, but on Apsus' waves Scarce flowing from a marsh, the frequent boat Finds room to swim; while on the foamy bed Of Genusus by sun or shower compelled The melted snows pour seawards. Here were met (So Fortune ordered it) the mighty pair; And in its woes the world yet vainly hoped That brought to nearer touch their crime itself Might bleed abhorrence: for from either camp Voices were clearly heard and features seen.

Nor e'er, Pompeius, since that distant day When Caesar's daughter and thy spouse was reft By pitiless fate away, nor left a pledge, Did thy loved kinsman (save on sands of Nile) So nearly look upon thy face again.

But Caesar's mind though frenzied for the fight Was forced to pause until Antonius brought The rearward troops; Antonius even now Rehearsing Leucas' fight. With prayers and threats Caesar exhorts him. "Why delay the fates, Thou cause of evil to the suffering world?

My speed hath won the major part: from thee Fortune demands the final stroke alone.

Do Libyan whirlpools with deceitful tides Uncertain separate us? Is the deep Untried to which I call? To unknown risks Art thou commanded? Caesar bids thee come, Thou sluggard, not to leave him. Long ago I ran my ships midway through sands and shoals To harbours held by foes; and dost thou fear My friendly camp? I mourn the waste of days Which fate allotted us. Upon the waves And winds I call unceasing: hold not back Thy willing troops, but let them dare the sea; Here gladly shall they come to join my camp, Though risking shipwreck. Not in equal shares The world has fallen between us: thou alone Dost hold Italia, but Epirus I

And all the lords of Rome." Twice called and thrice Antonius lingered still: but Caesar thought To reap in full the favour of the gods, Not sit supine; and knowing danger yields To whom heaven favours, he upon the waves Feared by Antonius' fleets, in shallow boat Embarked, and daring sought the further shore.

Now gentle night had brought repose from arms; And sleep, blest guardian of the

poor man's couch, Restored the weary; and the camp was still.

The hour was come that called the second watch When mighty Caesar, in the silence vast With cautious tread advanced to such a deed (29) As slaves should dare not. Fortune for his guide, Alone he passes on, and o'er the guard Stretched in repose he leaps, in secret wrath At such a sleep. Pacing the winding beach, Fast to a sea-worn rock he finds a boat On ocean's marge afloat. Hard by on shore Its master dwelt within his humble home.

No solid front it reared, for sterile rush And marshy reed enwoven formed the walls, Propped by a shallop with its bending sides Turned upwards. Caesar's hand upon the door Knocks twice and thrice until the fabric shook.

Amyclas from his couch of soft seaweed Arising, calls: "What shipwrecked sailor seeks My humble home? Who hopes for aid from me, By fates adverse compelled?" He stirs the heap Upon the hearth, until a tiny spark Glows in the darkness, and throws wide the door.

Careless of war, he knew that civil strife Stoops not to cottages. Oh! happy life That poverty affords! great gift of heaven Too little understood! what mansion wall, What temple of the gods, would feel no fear When Caesar called for entrance? Then the chief: "Enlarge thine hopes and look for better things.

Do but my bidding, and on yonder shore Place me, and thou shalt cease from one poor boat To earn thy living; and in years to come Look for a rich old age: and trust thy fates To those high gods whose wont it is to bless The poor with sudden plenty." So he spake E'en at such time in accents of command, For how could Caesar else? Amyclas said, "'Twere dangerous to brave the deep to-night.

The sun descended not in ruddy clouds Or peaceful rays to rest; part of his beams Presaged a southern gale, the rest proclaimed A northern tempest; and his middle orb, Shorn of its strength, permitted human eyes To gaze upon his grandeur; and the moon Rose not with silver horns upon the night Nor pure in middle space; her slender points Not drawn aright, but blushing with the track Of raging tempests, till her lurid light Was sadly veiled within the clouds. Again The forest sounds; the surf upon the shore; The dolphin's mood, uncertain where to play; The sea-mew on the land; the heron used To wade among the shallows, borne aloft And soaring on his wings — all these alarm; The raven, too, who plunged his head in spray, As if to anticipate the coming rain, And trod the

margin with unsteady gait.

But if the cause demands, behold me thine.

Either we reach the bidden shore, or else Storm and the deep forbid — we can no more.”

Thus said he loosed the boat and raised the sail.

No sooner done than stars were seen to fall In flaming furrows from the sky: nay, more; The pole star trembled in its place on high: Black horror marked the surging of the sea; The main was boiling in long tracts of foam, Uncertain of the wind, yet seized with storm.

Then spake the captain of the trembling bark: “See what remorseless ocean has in store!

Whether from east or west the storm may come Is still uncertain, for as yet confused The billows tumble. Judged by clouds and sky A western tempest: by the murmuring deep A wild south-eastern gale shall sweep the sea.

Nor bark nor man shall reach Hesperia’s shore In this wild rage of waters. To return Back on our course forbidden by the gods, Is our one refuge, and with labouring boat To reach the shore ere yet the nearest land Way be too distant.”

But great Caesar’s trust Was in himself, to make all dangers yield.

And thus he answered: “Scorn the threatening sea, Spread out thy canvas to the raging wind; If for thy pilot thou refusest heaven, Me in its stead receive. Alone in thee One cause of terror just — thou dost not know Thy comrade, ne’er deserted by the gods, Whom fortune blesses e’en without a prayer.

Break through the middle storm and trust in me.

The burden of this fight fails not on us But on the sky and ocean; and our bark Shall swim the billows safe in him it bears.

Nor shall the wind rage long: the boat itself Shall calm the waters. Flee the nearest shore, Steer for the ocean with unswerving hand: Then in the deep, when to our ship and us No other port is given, believe thou hast Calabria's harbours. And dost thou not know The purpose of such havoc? Fortune seeks In all this tumult of the sea and sky A boon for Caesar." Then a hurricane Swooped on the boat and tore away the sheet: The fluttering sail fell on the fragile mast: And groaned the joints. From all the universe Commingled perils rush. In Atlas' seas First Corus (30) lifts his head, and stirs the depths To fury, and had forced upon the rocks Whole seas and oceans; but the chilly north Drove back the deep that doubted which was lord.

But Scythian Aquilo prevailed, whose blast Tossed up the main and showed as shallow pools Each deep abyss; and yet was not the sea Heaped on the crags, for Corus' billows met The waves of Boreas: such seas had clashed Even were the winds withdrawn; Eurus enraged Burst from the cave, and Notus black with rain, And all the winds from every part of heaven Strove for their own; and thus the ocean stayed Within his boundaries. No petty seas Rapt in the storm are whirled. The Tuscan deep Invades th' Aegean; in Ionian gulfs Sounds wandering Hadria. How long the crags Which that day fell, the Ocean's blows had braved!

What lofty peaks did vanquished earth resign!

And yet on yonder coast such mighty waves Took not their rise; from distant regions came Those monster billows, driven on their course By that great current which surrounds the world. (31) Thus did the King of Heaven, when length of years Wore out the forces of his thunder, call His brother's trident to his help, what time The earth and sea one second kingdom formed And ocean knew no limit but the sky.

Now, too, the sea had risen to the stars In mighty mass, had not Olympus' chief Pressed down its waves with clouds: came not from heaven That night, as others; but the murky air Was dim with pallor of the realms below; (32) The sky lay on the deep; within the clouds The waves received the rain: the lightning flash Clove through the parted air a path obscured By mist and darkness: and the heavenly vaults Re-echoed to the tumult, and the frame That holds the sky was shaken. Nature feared Chaos returned, as though the elements Had burst their bonds, and night had come to mix Th' infernal shades with heaven.

In such turmoil Not to have perished was their only hope.

Far as from Leucas point the placid main Spreads to the horizon, from the
billow's crest They viewed the dashing of th' infuriate sea; Thence sinking to the
middle trough, their mast Scarce topped the watery height on either hand, Their
sails in clouds, their keel upon the ground.

For all the sea was piled into the waves, And drawn from depths between laid
bare the sand.

The master of the boat forgot his art, For fear o'ercame; he knew not where to
yield Or where to meet the wave: but safety came From ocean's self at war: one
billow forced The vessel under, but a huger wave

Repelled it upwards, and she rode the storm Through every blast triumphant. Not
the shore Of humble Sason (33), nor Thessalia's coast Indented, not Ambracia's
scanty ports Dismay the sailors, but the giddy tops Of high Ceraunia's cliffs.

But Caesar now, Thinking the peril worthy of his fates: "Are such the labours
of the gods?" exclaimed, "Bent on my downfall have they sought me thus, Here
in this puny skiff in such a sea?

If to the deep the glory of my fall Is due, and not to war, intrepid still Whatever
death they send shall strike me down.

Let fate cut short the deeds that I would do And hasten on the end: the past is
mine.

The northern nations fell beneath my sword; My dreaded name compels the foe
to flee.

Pompeius yields me place; the people's voice Gave at my order what the wars
denied.

And all the titles which denote the powers Known to the Roman state my name
shall bear.

Let none know this but thou who hear'st my prayers, Fortune, that Caesar

summoned to the shades, Dictator, Consul, full of honours, died Ere his last prize was won. I ask no pomp Of pyre or funeral; let my body lie Mangled beneath the waves: I leave a name That men shall dread in ages yet to come And all the earth shall honour." Thus he spake, When lo! a tenth gigantic billow raised The feeble keel, and where between the rocks A cleft gave safety, placed it on the shore.

Thus in a moment fortune, kingdoms, lands, Once more were Caesar's.

But on his return When daylight came, he entered not the camp Silent as when he parted; for his friends Soon pressed around him, and with weeping eyes In accents welcome to his ears began: "Whither in reckless daring hast thou gone, Unpitying Caesar? Were these humble lives Left here unguarded while thy limbs were given, Unsought for, to be scattered by the storm?

When on thy breath so many nations hang For life and safety, and so great a world Calls thee its master, to have courted death Proves want of heart. Was none of all thy friends Deserving held to join his fate with thine?

When thou wast tossed upon the raging deep We lay in slumber! Shame upon such sleep!

And why thyself didst seek Italia's shores?

'Twere cruel (such thy thought) to speak the word That bade another dare the furious sea.

All men must bear what chance or fate may bring, The sudden peril and the stroke of death; But shall the ruler of the world attempt The raging ocean? With incessant prayers Why weary heaven? is it indeed enough To crown the war, that Fortune and the deep Have cast thee on our shores? And would'st thou use The grace of favouring deities, to gain Not lordship, not the empire of the world, But lucky shipwreck!" Night dispersed, and soon The sun beamed on them, and the wearied deep, The winds permitting, lulled its waves to rest.

And when Antonius saw a breeze arise Fresh from a cloudless heaven, to break the sea, He loosed his ships which, by the pilots' hands And by the wind in equal order held, Swept as a marching host across the main.

But night unfriendly from the seamen snatched All governance of sail, parting
the ships In divers paths asunder. Like as cranes Deserting frozen Strymon for
the streams Of Nile, when winter falls, in casual lines Of wedge-like figures (34)
first ascend the sky; But when in loftier heaven the southern breeze Strikes on
their pinions tense, in loose array Dispersed at large, in flight irregular, They
wing their journey onwards. Stronger winds With day returning blew the navy
on, Past Lissus' shelter which they vainly sought, Till bare to northern blasts,
Nymphaeum's port, But safe in southern, gave the fleet repose, For favouring
winds came on.

When Magnus knew That Caesar's troops were gathered in their strength And
that the war for quick decision called Before his camp, Cornelia he resolved To
send to Lesbos' shore, from rage of fight Safe and apart: so lifting from his soul
The weight that burdened it. Thus, lawful Love.

Thus art thou tyrant o'er the mightiest mind!

His spouse was the one cause why Magnus stayed Nor met his fortunes, though
he staked the world And all the destinies of Rome. The word He speaks not
though resolved; so sweet it seemed, When on the future pondering, to gain A
pause from Fate! But at the close of night, When drowsy sleep had fled, Cornelia
sought To soothe the anxious bosom of her lord And win his kisses. Then
amazed she saw His cheek was tearful, and with boding soul She shrank
instinctive from the hidden wound, Nor dared to rouse him weeping. But he
spake: "Dearer to me than life itself, when life Is happy (not at moments such as
these); The day of sorrow comes, too long delayed, Nor long enough! With
Caesar at our gates With all his forces, a secure retreat Shall Lesbos give thee.
Try me not with prayers.

This fatal boon I have denied myself.

Thou wilt not long be absent from thy lord.

Disasters hasten, and things highest fall With speediest ruin. 'Tis enough for thee
To hear of Magnus' peril; and thy love (35) Deceives thee with the thought that
thou canst gaze Unmoved on civil strife. It shames my soul On the eve of war to
slumber at thy side, And rise from thy dear breast when trumpets call A woeful
world to misery and arms.

I fear in civil war to feel no loss To Magnus. Meantime safer than a king Lie hid,
nor let the fortune of thy lord Whelm thee with all its weight. If unkind heaven
Our armies rout, still let my choicest part Survive in thee; if fated is my flight,
Still leave me that whereto I fain would flee.”

Hardly at first her senses grasped the words In their full misery; then her mind
amazed Could scarce find utterance for the grief that pressed.

“Nought, Magnus, now is left wherewith to upbraid The gods and fates of
marriage; ‘tis not death That parts our love, nor yet the funeral pyre, Nor that
dread torch which marks the end of all.

I share the ignoble lot of vulgar lives: My spouse rejects me. Yes, the foe is
come!

Break we our bonds and Julia’s sire appease! —

Is this thy consort, Magnus, this thy faith In her fond loving heart? Can danger
fright Her and not thee? Long since our mutual fates Hang by one chain; and
dost thou bid me now The thunderbolts of ruin to withstand Without thee? Is it
well that I should die Even while you pray for fortune? And suppose I flee from
evil and with death self-sought Follow thy footsteps to the realms below —

Am I to live till to that distant isle Some tardy rumour of thy fall may come?

Add that thou fain by use would’st give me strength To bear such sorrow and my
doom. Forgive Thy wife confessing that she fears the power.

And if my prayers shall bring the victory, The joyful tale shall come to me the
last In that lone isle of rocks. When all are glad, My heart shall throb with
anguish, and the sail Which brings the message I shall see with fear, Not safe
e’en then: for Caesar in his flight Might seize me there, abandoned and alone To
be his hostage. If thou place me there, The spouse of Magnus, shall not all the
world Well know the secret Mitylene holds?

This my last prayer: if all is lost but flight, And thou shalt seek the ocean, to my
shores Turn not thy keel, ill-fated one: for there, There will they seek thee.” Thus
she spoke distraught, Leaped from the couch and rushed upon her fate; No stop

nor stay: she clung not to his neck Nor threw her arms about him; both forego
The last caress, the last fond pledge of love, And grief rushed in unchecked upon
their souls; Still gazing as they part no final words Could either utter, and the
sweet Farewell Remained unspoken. This the saddest day Of all their lives: for
other woes that came More gently struck on hearts inured to grief.

Borne to the shore with failing limbs she fell And grasped the sands, embracing,
till at last Her maidens placed her senseless in the ship.

Not in such grief she left her country's shores When Caesar's host drew near; for
now she leaves, Though faithful to her lord, his side in flight And flees her
spouse. All that next night she waked; Then first what means a widowed couch
she knew, Its cold, its solitude. When slumber found Her eyelids, and
forgetfulness her soul, Seeking with outstretched arms the form beloved, She
grasps but air. Though tossed by restless love, She leaves a place beside her as
for him Returning. Yet she feared Pompeius lost To her for ever. But the gods
ordained Worse than her fears, and in the hour of woe Gave her to look upon his
face again.

ENDNOTES:

(1) The Pleiades, said to be daughters of Atlas.

(2) These were the Consuls for the expiring year, B.C. 49 —

Caius Marcellus and L. Lentulus Crus.

(3) That is to say, Caesar's Senate at Rome could boast of those Senators only
whom it had, before Pompeius' flight, declared public enemies. But they were to
be regarded as exiles, having lost their rights, rather than the Senators in Epirus,
who were in full possession of theirs.

(4) Dean Merivale says that probably Caesar's Senate was not less numerous
than his rival's. Duruy says there were senators in Pompeius' camp, out of a total
of between 500

and 600. Mommsen says, “they were veritably emigrants.

This Roman Coblentz presented a pitiful spectacle of the high pretensions and paltry performances of the grandees of Rome.” (Vol. iv., p. 397.) Almost all the Consulars were with Pompeius.

(5) By the will of Ptolemy Auletes, Cleopatra had been appointed joint sovereign of Egypt with her young brother. Lucan means that Caesar would have killed Pompeius if young Ptolemy had not done so. She lost her hare of the kingdom, and Caesar was clear of the crime.

(6) Appius was Proconsul, and in command of Achaia, for the Senate.

(7) See Book IV., 82.

(8) Themis, the goddess of law, was in possession of the Delphic oracle, previous to Apollo. (Aesch., “Eumenides”, line 2.) (9) The modern isle of Ischia, off the Bay of Naples.

(10) The Tyrians consulted the oracle in consequence of the earthquakes which vexed their country (Book III., line 225), and were told to found colonies.

(11) See Herodotus, Book VII., 140-143. The reference is to the answer given by the oracle to the Athenians that their wooden walls would keep them safe; which Themistocles interpreted as meaning their fleet.

(12) Cicero, on the contrary, suggests that the reason why the oracles ceased was this, that men became less credulous.

(“De Div.”, ii., 57) Lecky, “History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne”, vol. i., p. 368.

(13) This name is one of those given to the Cumaean Sibyl mentioned at line 210. She was said to have been the daughter of Apollo.

(14) Probably by the Gauls under Brennus, B.C. 279.

(15) These lines form the Latin motto prefixed to Shelley’s poem, “The Demon of the World”.

(16) Referring to the visit of Aeneas to the Sibyl. (Virgil, "Aeneid", vi., 70, &c.)

(17) Appius was seized with fever as soon as he reached the spot; and there he died and was buried, thus fulfilling the oracle.

(18) That is, Nemesis.

(19) Reading "galeam", with Francken; not "glebam".

(20) Labienus left Caesar's ranks after the Rubicon was crossed, and joined his rival. In his mouth Lucan puts the speech made at the oracle of Hammon in Book IX. He was slain at Munda, B.C. 45.

(21) That is, civilians; no longer soldiers. This one contemptuous expression is said to have shocked and abashed the army. (Tacitus, "Annals", I., 42.) (22) Reading "tenet", with Hosius and Francken; not "timet", as Haskins. The prospect of inflicting punishment attracted, while the suffering of it subdued, the mutineers.

(23) Caesar was named Dictator while at Massilia. Entering Rome, he held the office for eleven days only, but was elected Consul for the incoming year, B.C. 48, along with Servilius Isauricus. (Caesar, "De Bello Civili", iii., 1; Merivale, chapter xvi.)

(24) In the time of the Empire, the degraded Consulship, preserved only as a name, was frequently transferred monthly, or even shorter, intervals from one favourite to another.

(25) Caesar performed the solemn rites of the great Latin festival on the Alban Mount during his Dictatorship.

(Compare Book VII., line 471.) (26) Dyrrhachium was founded by the Corcyreans, with whom the Homeric Phaeacians have been identified.

(27) Apparently making the Danube discharge into the Sea of Azov.

See Mr. Heitland's Introduction, p. 53.

(28) At the foot of the Acroceraunian range.

(29) Caesar himself says nothing of this adventure. But it is mentioned by Dion, Appian and Plutarch ("Caesar", 38). Dean Merivale thinks the story may have been invented to introduce the apophthegm used by Caesar to the sailor, "Fear nothing: you carry Caesar and his fortunes" (lines 662-665).

Mommsen accepts the story, as of an attempt which was only abandoned because no mariner could be induced to undertake it. Lucan colours it with his wildest and most exaggerated hyperbole.

(30) See Book I., 463.

(31) The ocean current, which, according to Hecataeus, surrounded the world. But Herodotus of this theory says, "For my part I know of no river called Ocean, and I think that Homer or one of the earlier poets invented the name and introduced it into his poetry." (Book II., 23, and Book IV., 36.) In "Oceanus" Aeschylus seems to have intended to personify the great surrounding stream. ("Prom. Vinc.", lines 291, 308.) (32) Comp. VI., 615.

(33) Sason is a small island just off the Ceraunian rocks, the point of which is now called Cape Linguetta, and is nearly opposite to Brindisi.

(34) Compare "Paradise Lost", VII., 425.

(35) Reading "Teque tuus decepit amor", as preferred by Hosius.

BOOK VI

THE FIGHT NEAR DYRRHACHIUM. SCAEVA'S EXPLOITS. THE WITCH
OF

THESSALIA

Now that the chiefs with minds intent on fight Had drawn their armies near upon the hills And all the gods beheld their chosen pair, Caesar, the Grecian towns despising, scorned To reap the glory of successful war Save at his kinsman's cost. In all his prayers He seeks that moment, fatal to the world, When shall be cast the die, to win or lose, And all his fortune hang upon the throw.

Thrice he drew out his troops, his eagles thrice, Demanding battle; thus to increase the woe Of Latium, prompt as ever: but his foes, Proof against every art, refused to leave The rampart of their camp. Then marching swift By hidden path between the wooded fields He seeks, and hopes to seize, Dyrrhachium's (1) fort; But Magnus, speeding by the ocean marge, First camped on Petra's slopes, a rocky hill Thus by the natives named. From thence he keeps Watch o'er the fortress of Corinthian birth Which by its towers alone without a guard Was safe against a siege. No hand of man In ancient days built up her lofty wall, No hammer rang upon her massive stones: Not all the works of war, nor Time himself Shall undermine her. Nature's hand has raised Her adamantine rocks and hedged her in With bulwarks girded by the foamy main: And but for one short bridge of narrow earth Dyrrhachium were an island. Steep and fierce, Dreaded of sailors, are the cliffs that bear Her walls; and tempests, howling from the west, Toss up the raging main upon the roofs; And homes and temples tremble at the shock.

Thirsting for battle and with hopes inflamed Here Caesar hastes, with distant rampart lines Seeking unseen to coop his foe within, Though spread in spacious camp upon the hills.

With eagle eye he measures out the land Meet to be compassed, nor content with turf Fit for a hasty mound, he bids his troops Tear from the quarries many a giant rock: And spoils the dwellings of the Greeks, and drags Their walls asunder for his own. Thus rose A mighty barrier which no ram could burst Nor any ponderous machine of war.

Mountains are cleft, and level through the hills The work of Caesar strides: wide yawns the moat, Forts show their towers rising on the heights, And in vast circle

forests are enclosed And groves and spacious lands, and beasts of prey, As in a line of toils. Pompeius lacked Nor field nor forage in th' encircled span Nor room to move his camp; nay, rivers rose Within, and ran their course and reached the sea; And Caesar wearied ere he saw the whole, And daylight failed him. Let the ancient tale Attribute to the labours of the gods The walls of Ilium: let the fragile bricks Which compass in great Babylon, amaze The fleeting Parthian. Here a larger space Than those great cities which Orontes swift And Tigris' stream enclose, or that which boasts In Eastern climes, the lordly palaces Fit for Assyria's kings, is closed by walls Amid the haste and tumult of a war

Forced to completion. Yet this labour huge Was spent in vain. So many hands had joined Or Sestos with Abydos, or had tamed With mighty mole the Hellespontine wave, Or Corinth from the realm of Pelops' king Had rent asunder, or had spared each ship Her voyage round the long Malean cape, Or had done anything most hard, to change The world's created surface. Here the war Was prisoned: blood predestinate to flow In all the parts of earth; the host foredoomed To fall in Libya or in Thessaly

Was here: in such small amphitheatre The tide of civil passion rose and fell.

At first Pompeius knew not: so the hind Who peaceful tills the mid-Sicilian fields Hears not Pelorous (2) sounding to the storm; So billows thunder on Rutupian shores (3), Unheard by distant Caledonia's tribes.

But when he saw the mighty barrier stretch O'er hill and valley, and enclose the land, He bade his columns leave their rocky hold And seize on posts of vantage in the plain; Thus forcing Caesar to extend his troops On wider lines; and holding for his own Such space encompassed as divides from Rome Aricia, (4) sacred to that goddess chaste Of old Mycenae; or as Tiber holds

From Rome's high ramparts to the Tuscan sea, Unless he deviate. No bugle call

Commands an onset, and the darts that fly Fly though forbidden; but the arm that flings For proof the lance, at random, here and there Deals impious slaughter. Weighty care compelled Each leader to withhold his troops from fight; For there the weary earth of produce failed Pressed by Pompeius' steeds, whose horny hoofs Rang in their gallop on the grassy fields And killed the succulence. They strengthless lay Upon the mown expanse, nor pile of straw, Brought from full

barns in place of living grass, Relieved their craving; shook their panting flanks,
And as they wheeled Death struck his victim down.

Then foul contagion filled the murky air Whose poisonous weight pressed on
them in a cloud Pestiferous; as in Nesis' isle (5) the breath Of Styx rolls upwards
from the mist-clad rocks; Or that fell vapour which the caves exhale From
Typhon (6) raging in the depths below.

Then died the soldiers, for the streams they drank Held yet more poison than the
air: the skin Was dark and rigid, and the fiery plague Made hard their vitals, and
with pitiless tooth Gnawed at their wasted features, while their eyes Started from
out their sockets, and the head Drooped for sheer weariness. So the disease Grew
swifter in its strides till scarce was room, 'Twixt life and death, for sickness, and
the pest Slew as it struck its victim, and the dead Thrust from the tents (such all
their burial) lay Blent with the living. Yet their camp was pitched Hard by the
breezy sea by which might come All nations' harvests, and the northern wind
Not seldom rolled the murky air away.

Their foe, not vexed with pestilential air Nor stagnant waters, ample range
enjoyed Upon the spacious uplands: yet as though In leaguer, famine seized
them for its prey.

Scarce were the crops half grown when Caesar saw How prone they seized upon
the food of beasts, And stripped of leaves the bushes and the groves, And
dragged from roots unknown the doubtful herb.

Thus ate they, starving, all that teeth may bite Or fire might soften, or might pass
their throats Dry, parched, abraded; food unknown before Nor placed on tables:
while the leaguered foe Was blessed with plenty.

When Pompeius first Was pleased to break his bonds and be at large, No
sudden dash he makes on sleeping foe Unarmed in shade of night; his mighty
soul Scorns such a path to victory. 'Twas his aim, To lay the turrets low; to mark
his track, By ruin spread afar; and with the sword To hew a path between his
slaughtered foes.

Minucius' (7) turret was the chosen spot Where groves of trees and thickets gave
approach Safe, unbetrayed by dust.

Up from the fields Flashed all at once his eagles into sight And all his trumpets blared. But ere the sword Could win the battle, on the hostile ranks Dread panic fell; prone as in death they lay Where else upright they should withstand the foe; Nor more availed their valour, and in vain The cloud of weapons flew, with none to slay.

Then blazing torches rolling pitchy flame Are hurled, and shaken nod the lofty towers And threaten ruin, and the bastions groan Struck by the frequent engine, and the troops Of Magnus by triumphant eagles led

Stride o'er the rampart, in their front the world.

Yet now that passage which not Caesar's self Nor thousand valiant squadrons had availed To rescue from their grasp, one man in arms Steadfast till death refused them; Scaeva named This hero soldier: long he served in fight Waged 'gainst the savage on the banks of Rhone; And now centurion made, through deeds of blood, He bore the staff before the marshalled line.

Prone to all wickedness, he little recked How valourous deeds in civil war may be Greatest of crimes; and when he saw how turned His comrades from the war and sought in flight A refuge, (8) "Whence," he cried, "this impious fear Unknown to Caesar's armies? Do ye turn Your backs on death, and are ye not ashamed Not to be found where slaughtered heroes lie?"

Is loyalty too weak? Yet love of fight Might bid you stand. We are the chosen few Through whom the foe would break. Unbought by blood This day shall not be theirs. 'Neath Caesar's eye, True, death would be more happy; but this boon Fortune denies: at least my fall shall be Praised by Pompeius. Break ye with your breasts Their weapons; blunt the edges of their swords With throats unyielding. In the distant lines The dust is seen already, and the sound Of tumult and of ruin finds the ear Of Caesar: strike; the victory is ours: For he shall come who while his soldiers die Shall make the fortress his." His voice called forth The courage that the trumpets failed to rouse When first they rang: his comrades mustering come To watch his deeds; and, wondering at the man, To test if valour thus by foes oppressed, In narrow space, could hope for aught but death.

But Scaeva standing on the tottering bank Heaves from the brimming turret on the foe The corpses of the fallen; the ruined mass Furnishing weapons to his hands; with beams, And ponderous stones, nay, with his body threatens His enemies; with poles and stakes he thrusts The breasts advancing; when they grasp the wall He lops the arm: rocks crush the foeman's skull And rive the scalp asunder: fiery bolts Dashed at another set his hair aflame, Till rolls the greedy blaze about his eyes With hideous crackle. As the pile of slain Rose to the summit of the wall he sprang, Swift as across the nets a hunted pard, Above the swords upraised, till in mid throng Of foes he stood, hemmed in by densest ranks And ramparted by war; in front and rear, Where'er he struck, the victor. Now his sword Blunted with gore congealed no more could wound, But brake the stricken limb; while every hand Flung every quivering dart at him alone; Nor missed their aim, for rang against his shield Dart after dart unerring, and his helm In broken fragments pressed upon his brow; His vital parts were safeguarded by spears That bristled in his body. Fortune saw Thus waged a novel combat, for there warred Against one man an army. Why with darts, Madmen, assail him and with slender shafts, 'Gainst which his life is proof? Or ponderous stones This warrior chief shall overwhelm, or bolts Flung by the twisted thongs of mighty slings.

Let steelshod ram or catapult remove This champion of the gate. No fragile wall Stands here for Caesar, blocking with its bulk Pompeius' way to freedom. Now he trusts His shield no more, lest his sinister hand, Idle, give life by shame; and on his breast Bearing a forest of spears, though spent with toil And worn with onset, falls upon his foe And braves alone the wounds of all the war.

Thus may an elephant in Afric wastes, Oppressed by frequent darts, break those that fall Rebounding from his horny hide, and shake Those that find lodgment, while his life within Lies safe, protected, nor doth spear avail To reach the fount of blood. Unnumbered wounds By arrow dealt, or lance, thus fail to slay This single warrior. But lo! from far A Cretan archer's shaft, more sure of aim Than vows could hope for, strikes on Scaeva's brow To light within his eye: the hero tugs Intrepid, bursts the nerves, and tears the shaft Forth with the eyeball, and with dauntless heel Treads them to dust. Not otherwise a bear Pannonian, fiercer for the wound received, Maddened by dart from Libyan thong propelled, Turns circling on her wound, and still pursues The weapon fleeing as she whirls around.

Thus, in his rage destroyed, his shapeless face Stood foul with crimson flow. The

victors' shout Glad to the sky arose; no greater joy A little blood could give them had they seen That Caesar's self was wounded. Down he pressed Deep in his soul the anguish, and, with mien, No longer bent on fight, submissive cried, "Spare me, ye citizens; remove the war Far hence: no weapons now can haste my death; Draw from my breast the darts, but add no more.

Yet raise me up to place me in the camp Of Magnus, living: this your gift to him; No brave man's death my title to renown, But Caesar's flag deserted." So he spake.

Unhappy Aulus thought his words were true, Nor saw within his hand the pointed sword; And leaping forth in haste to make his own The prisoner and his arms, in middle throat Received the lightning blade. By this one death Rose Scaeva's valour again; and thus he cried, Such be the punishment of all who thought Great Scaeva vanquished; if Pompeius seeks Peace from this reeking sword, low let him lay At Caesar's feet his standards. Me do ye think Such as yourselves, and slow to meet the fates?

Your love for Magnus and the Senate's cause Is less than mine for death." These were his words; And dust in columns proved that Caesar came.

Thus was Pompeius' glory spared the stain Of flight compelled by Scaeva. He, when ceased The battle, fell, no more by rage of fight, Or sight of blood outpouring from his wounds, Roused to the combat. Fainting there he lay Upon the shoulders of his comrades borne, Who him adoring (as though deity

Dwelt in his bosom) for his matchless deeds, Plucked forth the gory shafts and took his arms To deck the gods and shield the breast of Mars.

Thrice happy thou with such a name achieved, Had but the fierce Iberian from thy sword, Or heavy shielded Teuton, or had fled The light Cantabrian: with no spoils shalt thou Adorn the Thunderer's temple, nor upraise The shout of triumph in the ways of Rome.

For all thy prowess, all thy deeds of pride Do but prepare her lord.

Nor on this hand Repulsed, Pompeius idly ceased from war, Content within his bars; but as the sea Tireless, which tempests force upon the crag That breaks

it, or which gnaws a mountain side Some day to fall in ruin on itself; He sought the turrets nearest to the main, On double onset bent; nor closely kept His troops in hand, but on the spacious plain Spread forth his camp. They joyful leave the tents And wander at their will. Thus Padus flows In brimming flood, and foaming at his bounds, Making whole districts quake; and should the bank Fail 'neath his swollen waters, all his stream Breaks forth in swirling eddies over fields Not his before; some lands are lost, the rest Gain from his bounty.

Hardly from his tower Had Caesar seen the fire or known the fight: And coming found the rampart overthrown, The dust no longer stirred, the rains cold As from a battle done. The peace that reigned There and on Magnus' side, as though men slept, Their victory won, aroused his angry soul.

Quick he prepares, so that he end their joy Careless of slaughter or defeat, to rush With threatening columns on Torquatus' post.

But swift as sailor, by his trembling mast Warned of Circean tempest, furls his sails, So swift Torquatus saw, and prompt to wage The war more closely, he withdrew his men Within a narrower wall.

Now past the trench Were Caesar's companies, when from the hills Pompeius hurled his host upon their ranks Shut in, and hampered. Not so much o'erwhelmed As Caesar's soldiers is the hind who dwells On Etna's slopes, when blows the southern wind, And all the mountain pours its cauldrons forth Upon the vale; and huge Enceladus (9) Writhing beneath his load spouts o'er the plains A blazing torrent.

Blinded by the dust, Encircled, vanquished, ere the fight, they fled In cloud of terror on their rearward foe, So rushing on their fates. Thus had the war Shed its last drop of blood and peace ensued, But Magnus suffered not, and held his troops.

Back from the battle.

Thou, oh Rome, had'st been Free, happy, mistress of thy laws and rights Were Sulla here. Now shalt thou ever grieve That in his crowning crime, to have met in fight A pious kinsman, Caesar's vantage lay.

Oh tragic destiny! Nor Munda's fight Hispania had wept, nor Libya mourned Encrimsoned Utica, nor Nilus' stream, With blood unspeakable polluted, borne A nobler corse than her Egyptian kings: Nor Juba (10) lain unburied on the sands, Nor Scipio with his blood outpoured appeased The ghosts of Carthage; nor the blameless life Of Cato ended: and Pharsalia's name Had then been blotted from the book of fate.

But Caesar left the region where his arms Had found the deities averse, and marched His shattered columns to Thessalian lands.

Then to Pompeius came (whose mind was bent To follow Caesar wheresoe'er he fled) His captains, striving to persuade their chief To seek Ausonia, his native land,

Now freed from foes. "Ne'er will I pass," he said, "My country's limit, nor revisit Rome Like Caesar, at the head of banded hosts.

Hesperia when the war began was mine; Mine, had I chosen in our country's shrines, (11) In midmost forum of her capital,

To join the battle. So that banished far Be war from Rome, I'll cross the torrid zone Or those for ever frozen Scythian shores.

What! shall my victory rob thee of the peace I gave thee by my flight? Rather than thou Should'st feel the evils of this impious war, Let Caesar deem thee his." Thus said, his course He turned towards the rising of the sun, And following devious paths, through forests wide, Made for Emathia, the land by fate

Foredoomed to see the issue.

Thessalia on that side where Titan first Raises the wintry day, by Ossa's rocks Is
prisoned in: but in th' advancing year When higher in the vault his chariot rides
'Tis Pelion that meets the morning rays.

And when beside the Lion's flames he drives The middle course, Othrys with
woody top Screens his chief ardour. On the hither side Pindus receives the
breezes of the west And as the evening falls brings darkness in.

There too Olympus, at whose foot who dwells Nor fears the north nor sees the
shining bear.

Between these mountains hemmed, in ancient time The fields were marsh, for
Tempe's pass not yet Was cleft, to give an exit to the streams That filled the
plain: but when Alcides' hand Smote Ossa from Olympus at a blow, (12) And
Nereus wondered at the sudden flood Of waters to the main, then on the shore
(Would it had slept for ever 'neath the deep) Seaborn Achilles' home Pharsalus
rose; And Phylace (13) whence sailed that ship of old Whose keel first touched
upon the beach of Troy; And Dorion mournful for the Muses' ire On Thamyras
(14) vanquished: Trachis; Melibe Strong in the shafts (15) of Hercules, the price
Of that most awful torch; Larissa's hold Potent of yore; and Argos, (16) famous
erst, O'er which men pass the ploughshare: and the spot Fabled as Echionian
Thebes, (17) where once Agave bore in exile to the pyre

(Grieving 'twas all she had) the head and neck Of Pentheus massacred. The lake
set free Flowed forth in many rivers: to the west Aeas, (18) a gentle stream; nor
stronger flows The sire of Isis ravished from his arms; And Achelous, rival for
the hand

Of Oeneus' daughter, rolls his earthy flood (19) To silt the shore beside the
neighbouring isles.

Evenus (20) purpled by the Centaur's blood Wanders through Calydon: in the
Malian Gulf Thy rapids fall, Spercheius: pure the wave With which Amphrysos
(21) irrigates the meads Where once Apollo served: Anaurus (22) flows
Breathing no vapour forth; no humid air Ripples his face: and whatever stream,
Nameless itself, to Ocean gives its waves Through thee, Peneus: (23) whirled in
eddy foams Apidanus; Enipeus lingers on

Swift only when fresh streams his volume swell: And thus Asopus takes his
ordered course, Phoenix and Melas; but Eurotas keeps His stream aloof from

that with which he flows, Peneus, gliding on his top as though Upon the channel.
Fable says that, sprung From darkest pools of Styx, with common floods He
scorns to mingle, mindful of his source, So that the gods above may fear him
still.

Soon as were sped the rivers, Boebian ploughs Dark with its riches broke the
virgin soil; Then came Lelegians to press the share, And Dolopes and sons of
Oeolus

By whom the glebe was furrowed. Steed-renowned Magnetians dwelt there, and
the Minyan race Who smote the sounding billows with the oar.

There in the cavern from the pregnant cloud Ixion's sons found birth, the
Centaur brood Half beast, half human: Monychus who broke The stubborn rocks
of Pholoe, Rhoetus fierce Hurling from Oeta's top gigantic elms Which northern
storms could hardly overturn; Pholus, Alcides' host: Nessus who bore The
Queen across Evenus' (24) waves, to feel The deadly arrow for his shameful
deed; And aged Chiron (25) who with wintry star Against the huger Scorpion
draws his bow.

Here sparkled on the land the warrior seed; (26) Here leaped the charger from
Thessalian rocks (27) Struck by the trident of the Ocean King, Omen of dreadful
war; here first he learned, Champing the bit and foaming at the curb, Yet to obey
his lord. From yonder shore The keel of pine first floated, (28) and bore men To
dare the perilous chance of seas unknown: And here Ionus ruler of the land

First from the furnace molten masses drew Of iron and brass; here first the
hammer fell To weld them, shapeless; here in glowing stream Ran silver forth
and gold, soon to receive The minting stamp. 'Twas thus that money came
Whereby men count their riches, cause accursed Of warfare. Hence came down
that Python huge On Cirrha: hence the laurel wreath which crowns The Pythian
victor: here Aloeus' sons Gigantic rose against the gods, what time Pelion had
almost touched the stars supreme, And Ossa's loftier peak amid the sky
Opposing, barred the constellations' way.

When in this fated land the chiefs had placed Their several camps, foreboding of

the end Now fast approaching, all men's thoughts were turned Upon the final issue of the war.

And as the hour drew near, the coward minds Trembling beneath the shadow of the fate Now hanging o'er them, deemed disaster near: While some took heart; yet doubted what might fall, In hope and fear alternate. 'Mid the throng Sextus, unworthy son of worthy sire Who soon upon the waves that Scylla guards, (29) Sicilian pirate, exile from his home, Stained by his deeds of shame the fights he won, Could bear delay no more; his feeble soul, Sick of uncertain fate, by fear compelled, Forecast the future: yet consulted not The shrine of Delos nor the Pythian caves; Nor was he satisfied to learn the sound Of Jove's brass cauldron, 'mid Dodona's oaks, By her primaeval fruits the nurse of men: Nor sought he sages who by flight of birds, Or watching with Assyrian care the stars And fires of heaven, or by victims slain, May know the fates to come; nor any source Lawful though secret. For to him was known That which excites the hate of gods above; Magicians' lore, the savage creed of Dis And all the shades; and sad with gloomy rites Mysterious altars. For his frenzied soul Heaven knew too little. And the spot itself Kindled his madness, for hard by there dwelt The brood of Haemon (30) whom no storied witch Of fiction e'er transcended; all their art In things most strange and most incredible; There were Thessalian rocks with deadly herbs Thick planted, sensible to magic chants, Funereal, secret: and the land was full Of violence to the gods: the Queenly guest (31) From Colchis gathered here the fatal roots That were not in her store: hence vain to heaven Rise impious incantations, all unheard; For deaf the ears divine: save for one voice Which penetrates the furthest depths of airs Compelling e'en th' unwilling deities To hearken to its accents. Not the care Of the revolving sky or starry pole Can call them from it ever. Once the sound Of those dread tones unspeakable has reached The constellations, then nor Babylon Nor secret Memphis, though they open wide The shrines of ancient magic and entreat The gods, could draw them from the fires that smoke Upon the altars of far Thessaly.

To hearts of flint those incantations bring Love, strange, unnatural; the old man's breast Burns with illicit fire. Nor lies the power In harmful cup nor in the juicy pledge Of love maternal from the forehead drawn; (32) Charmed forth by spells alone the mind decays, By poisonous drugs unharmed. With woven threads Crossed in mysterious fashion do they bind Those whom no passion born of beauteous form Or loving couch unites. All things on earth Change at their bidding; night usurps the day; The heavens disobey their wonted laws; At that dread hymn the Universe stands still; And Jove while urging the revolving

wheels Wonders they move not. Torrents are outpoured Beneath a burning sun;
and thunder roars Uncaused by Jupiter. From their flowing locks Vapours
immense shall issue at their call; When falls the tempest seas shall rise and foam
(33) Moved by their spell; though powerless the breeze To raise the billows.
Ships against the wind With bellying sails move onward. From the rock Hangs
motionless the torrent: rivers run Uphill; the summer heat no longer swells Nile
in his course; Maeander's stream is straight; Slow Rhone is quickened by the
rush of Saone; Hills dip their heads and topple to the plain; Olympus sees his
clouds drift overhead; And sunless Scythia's sempiternal snows Melt in mid-
winter; the inflowing tides Driven onward by the moon, at that dread chant Ebb
from their course; earth's axes, else unmoved, Have trembled, and the force
centripetal Has tottered, and the earth's compacted frame Struck by their voice
has gaped, (34) till through the void Men saw the moving sky. All beasts most
fierce And savage fear them, yet with deadly aid Furnish the witches' arts. Tigers
athirst For blood, and noble lions on them fawn With bland caresses: serpents at
their word Uncoil their circles, and extended glide Along the surface of the
frosty field; The viper's severed body joins anew; And dies the snake by human
venom slain.

Whence comes this labour on the gods, compelled To hearken to the magic chant
and spells, Nor daring to despise them? Doth some bond Control the deities? Is
their pleasure so, Or must they listen? and have silent threats Prevailed, or piety
unseen received So great a guerdon? Against all the gods Is this their influence,
or on one alone Who to his will constrains the universe, Himself constrained?
Stars most in yonder clime Shoot headlong from the zenith; and the moon
Gliding serene upon her nightly course Is shorn of lustre by their poisonous
chant, Dimmed by dark earthly fires, as though our orb Shadowed her brother's
radiance and barred The light bestowed by heaven; nor freshly shines Until
descending nearer to the earth She sheds her baneful drops upon the mead.

These sinful rites and these her sister's songs Abhorred Erichtho, fiercest of the
race, Spurned for their piety, and yet viler art Practised in novel form. To her no
home Beneath a sheltering roof her direful head Thus to lay down were crime:
deserted tombs Her dwelling-place, from which, darling of hell, She dragged the
dead. Nor life nor gods forbad But that she knew the secret homes of Styx And

learned to hear the whispered voice of ghosts At dread mysterious meetings. (35)
Never sun Shed his pure light upon that haggard cheek Pale with the pallor of
the shades, nor looked Upon those locks unkempt that crowned her brow.

In starless nights of tempest crept the hag Out from her tomb to seize the levin
bolt; Treading the harvest with accursed foot She burned the fruitful growth, and
with her breath Poisoned the air else pure. No prayer she breathed Nor
supplication to the gods for help Nor knew the pulse of entrails as do men Who
worship. Funeral pyres she loves to light And snatch the incense from the
flaming tomb.

The gods at her first utterance grant her prayer For things unlawful, lest they
hear again Its fearful accents: men whose limbs were quick With vital power she
thrust within the grave Despite the fates who owed them years to come: The
funeral reversed brought from the tomb Those who were dead no longer; and the
pyre Yields to her shameless clutch still smoking dust And bones enkindled, and
the torch which held Some grieving sire but now, with fragments mixed In sable
smoke and ceremental cloths Singed with the redolent fire that burned the dead.

But those who lie within a stony cell Untouched by fire, whose dried and
mummied frames No longer know corruption, limb by limb Venting her rage she
tears, the bloodless eyes Drags from their cavities, and mauls the nail Upon the
withered hand: she gnaws the noose By which some wretch has died, and from
the tree Drags down a pendent corpse, its members torn Asunder to the winds:
forth from the palms Wrenches the iron, and from the unbending bond Hangs by
her teeth, and with her hands collects The slimy gore which drips upon the
limbs.

Where lay a corpse upon the naked earth On ravening birds and beasts of prey
the hag Kept watch, nor marred by knife or hand her spoil, Till on his victim
seized some nightly wolf; (36) Then dragged the morsel from his thirsty fangs;
Nor fears she murder, if her rites demand Blood from the living, or some banquet
fell Requires the panting entrail. Pregnant wombs Yield to her knife the infant to
be placed On flaming altars: and whene'er she needs Some fierce undaunted
ghost, he fails not her Who has all deaths in use. Her hand has chased From
smiling cheeks the rosy bloom of life; And with sinister hand from dying youth
Has shorn the fatal lock: and holding oft In foul embraces some departed friend

Severed the head, and through the ghastly lips, Held by her own apart, some
impious tale Dark with mysterious horror hath conveyed Down to the Stygian
shades.

When rumour brought Her name to Sextus, in the depth of night, While
Titan's chariot beneath our earth Wheeled on his middle course, he took his way
Through fields deserted; while a faithful band, His wonted ministers in deeds of
guilt, Seeking the hag 'mid broken sepulchres, Beheld her seated on the crags
afar Where Haemus falls towards Pharsalia's plain. (37) There was she proving
for her gods and priests Words still unknown, and framing numbered chants Of
dire and novel purpose: for she feared Lest Mars might stray into another world,
And spare Thessalian soil the blood ere long To flow in torrents; and she thus
forbade Philippi's field, polluted with her song, Thick with her poisonous
distilments sown, To let the war pass by. Such deaths, she hopes, Soon shall be
hers! the blood of all the world Shed for her use! to her it shall be given To sever
from their trunks the heads of kings, Plunder the ashes of the noble dead, Italia's
bravest, and in triumph add The mightiest warriors to her host of shades.

And now what spoils from Magnus' tombless corpse Her hand may snatch, on
which of Caesar's limbs She soon may pounce, she makes her foul forecast And
eager gloats.

To whom the coward son Of Magnus thus: "Thou greatest ornament Of
Haemon's daughters, in whose power it lies Or to reveal the fates, or from its
course To turn the future, be it mine to know By thy sure utterance to what final
end Fortune now guides the issue. Not the least Of all the Roman host on yonder
plain Am I, but Magnus' most illustrious son, Lord of the world or heir to death
and doom.

The unknown affrights me: I can firmly face The certain terror. Bid my destiny
Yield to thy power the dark and hidden end, And let me fall foreknowing. From
the gods Extort the truth, or, if thou spare the gods, Force it from hell itself. Fling
back the gates That bar th' Elysian fields; let Death confess Whom from our
ranks he seeks. No humble task I bring, but worthy of Erichtho's skill Of such a
struggle fought for such a prize To search and tell the issue."

Then the witch Pleased that her impious fame was noised abroad Thus made her answer: "If some lesser fates Thy wish had been to change, against their wish It had been easy to compel the gods To its accomplishment. My art has power When of one man the constellations press The speedy death, to compass a delay; And mine it is, though every star decrees A ripe old age, by mystic herbs to shear The life midway. But should some purpose set From the beginning of the universe, And all the labouring fortunes of mankind, Be brought in question, then Thessalian art Bows to the power supreme. But if thou be Content to know the issue pre-ordained, That shall be swiftly thine; for earth and air And sea and space and Rhodopaeon crags Shall speak the future. Yet it easiest seems Where death in these Thessalian fields abounds To raise a single corpse. From dead men's lips Scarce cold, in fuller accents falls the voice; Not from some mummied flame in accents shrill Uncertain to the ear."

Thus spake the hag And through redoubled night, a squalid veil Swathing her pallid features, stole among Unburied carcasses. Fast fled the wolves, The carrion birds with maw unsatisfied Relaxed their talons, as with creeping step She sought her prophet. Firm must be the flesh As yet, though cold in death, and firm the lungs Untouched by wound. Now in the balance hung The fates of slain unnumbered; had she striven Armies to raise and order back to life Whole ranks of warriors, the laws had failed Of Erebus; and, summoned up from Styx, Its ghostly tenants had obeyed her call, And rising fought once more. At length the witch Picks out her victim with pierced throat agape Fit for her purpose. Gripped by pitiless hook O'er rocks she drags him to the mountain cave Accursed by her fell rites, that shall restore The dead man's life.

Close to the hidden brink The land that girds the precipice of hell Sinks towards the depths: with ever falling leaves A wood o'ershadows, and a spreading yew Casts shade impenetrable. Foul decay Fills all the space, and in the deep recess Darkness unbroken, save by chanted spells, Reigns ever. Not where gape the misty jaws Of caverned Taenarus, the gloomy bound Of either world, through which the nether kings Permit the passage of the dead to earth, So poisonous, mephitic, hangs the air.

Nay, though the witch had power to call the shades Forth from the depths, 'twas doubtful if the cave Were not a part of hell. Discordant hues Flamed on her garb as by a fury worn; Bare was her visage, and upon her brow Dread vipers hissed, beneath her streaming locks In sable coils entwined. But when she saw The youth's companions trembling, and himself With eyes cast down, with visage as of death, Thus spake the witch: "Forbid your craven souls These fears to cherish: soon returning life This frame shall quicken, and in tones which reach Even the timorous ear shall speak the man.

If I have power the Stygian lakes to show, The bank that sounds with fire, the fury band, And giants lettered, and the hound that shakes Bristling with heads of snakes his triple head, What fear is this that cringes at the sight Of timid shivering shades?"

Then to her prayer.

First through his gaping bosom blood she pours Still fervent, washing from his wounds the gore.

Then copious poisons from the moon distils Mixed with all monstrous things which Nature's pangs Bring to untimely birth; the froth from dogs Stricken with madness, foaming at the stream; A lynx's entrails: and the knot that grows Upon the fell hyaena; flesh of stags Fed upon serpents; and the sucking fish Which holds the vessel back (38) though eastern winds Make bend the canvas; dragon's eyes; and stones That sound beneath the brooding eagle's wings.

Nor Araby's viper, nor the ocean snake Who in the Red Sea waters guards the shell, Are wanting; nor the slough on Libyan sands By horned reptile cast; nor ashes fail Snatched from an altar where the Phoenix died.

And viler poisons many, which herself Has made, she adds, whereto no name is given: Pestiferous leaves pregnant with magic chants And blades of grass which in their primal growth Her cursed mouth had slimed. Last came her voice More potent than all herbs to charm the gods Who rule in Lethe. Dissonant murmurs first And sounds discordant from the tongues of men She utters, scarce articulate: the bay Of wolves, and barking as of dogs, were mixed With that fell chant; the screech of nightly owl Raising her hoarse complaint; the howl of beast And sibilant hiss of snake — all these were there; And more — the waft of

waters on the rock, The sound of forests and the thunder peal.

Such was her voice; but soon in clearer tones Reaching to Tartarus, she raised her song: “Ye awful goddesses, avenging power Of Hell upon the damned, and Chaos huge Who striv’st to mix innumerable worlds, And Pluto, king of earth, whose weary soul Grieves at his godhead; Styx; and plains of bliss We may not enter: and thou, Proserpine, Hating thy mother and the skies above, My patron goddess, last and lowest form (39) Of Hecate through whom the shades and I Hold silent converse; warder of the gate Who castest human offal to the dog: Ye sisters who shall spin the threads again; (40) And thou, O boatman of the burning wave, Now wearied of the shades from hell to me Returning, hear me if with voice I cry Abhorred, polluted; if the flesh of man Hath ne’er been absent from my proffered song, Flesh washed with brains still quivering; if the child Whose severed head I placed upon the dish But for this hand had lived — a listening ear Lend to my supplication! From the caves Hid in the innermost recess of hell I claim no soul long banished from the light.

For one but now departed, lingering still Upon the brink of Orcus, is my prayer.

Grant (for ye may) that listening to the spell Once more he seek his dust; and let the shade Of this our soldier perished (if the war Well at your hands has merited), proclaim The destiny of Magnus to his son.”

Such prayers she uttered; then, her foaming lips And head uplifting, present saw the ghost.

Hard by he stood, beside the hated corpse His ancient prison, and loathed to enter in.

There was the yawning chest where fell the blow That was his death; and yet the gift supreme Of death, his right, (Ah, wretch!) was reft away.

Angered at Death the witch, and at the pause Conceded by the fates, with living snake Scourges the moveless corse; and on the dead She barks through fissures gaping to her song, Breaking the silence of their gloomy home: “Tisiphone, Megaera, heed ye not?

Flies not this wretched soul before your whips The void of Erebus? By your very

names, She-dogs of hell, I'll call you to the day, Not to return; through
sepulchres and death Your gaoler: from funereal urns and tombs I'll chase you
forth. And thou, too, Hecate, Who to the gods in comely shape and mien, Not
that of Erebus, appearst, henceforth Wasted and pallid as thou art in hell At my
command shalt come. I'll noise abroad The banquet that beneath the solid earth
Holds thee, thou maid of Enna; by what bond Thou lov'st night's King, by what
mysterious stain Infected, so that Ceres fears from hell To call her daughter. And
for thee, base king, Titan shall pierce thy caverns with his rays And sudden day
shall smite thee. Do ye hear?

Or shall I summon to mine aid that god At whose dread name earth trembles;
who can look Unflinching on the Gorgon's head, and drive The Furies with his
scourge, who holds the depths Ye cannot fathom, and above whose haunts Ye
dwell supernal; who by waves of Styx Forswears himself unpunished?"

Then the blood Grew warm and liquid, and with softening touch Cherished the
stiffened wounds and filled the veins, Till throbbed once more the slow returning
pulse And every fibre trembled, as with death Life was commingled. Then, not
limb by limb, With toil and strain, but rising at a bound Leaped from the earth
erect the living man.

Fierce glared his eyes uncovered, and the life Was dim, and still upon his face
remained The pallid hues of hardly parted death.

Amazement seized upon him, to the earth Brought back again: but from his lips
tight drawn No murmur issued; he had power alone When questioned to reply.
"Speak," quoth the hag, "As I shall bid thee; great shall be thy gain If but thou
answerest truly, freed for aye From all Haemonian art. Such burial place Shall
now be thine, and on thy funeral pyre Such fatal woods shall burn, such chant
shall sound, That to thy ghost no more or magic song Or spell shall reach, and
thy Lethaeon sleep Shall never more be broken in a death From me received
anew: for such reward Think not this second life enforced in vain.

Obscure may be the answers of the gods By priestess spoken at the holy shrine;
But whose braves the oracles of death In search of truth, should gain a sure
response.

Then speak, I pray thee. Let the hidden fates Tell through thy voice the mysteries

to come.”

Thus spake she, and her words by mystic force Gave him his answer; but with gloomy mien, And tears swift flowing, thus he made reply: “Called from the margin of the silent stream I saw no fateful sisters spin the threads.

Yet know I this, that ‘mid the Roman shades Reigns fiercest discord; and this impious war Destroys the peace that ruled the fields of death.

Elysian meads and deeps of Tartarus In paths diverse the Roman chieftains leave And thus disclose the fates. The blissful ghosts Bear visages of sorrow. Sire and son The Decii, who gave themselves to death In expiation of their country’s doom, And great Camillus, wept; and Sulla’s shade Complained of fortune. Scipio bewailed The scion of his race about to fall In sands of Libya: Cato, greatest foe To Carthage, grieves for that indignant soul Which shall disdain to serve. Brutus alone In all the happy ranks I smiling saw, First consul when the kings were thrust from Rome.

The chains were fallen from boastful Catiline.

Him too I saw rejoicing, and the pair Of Marii, and Cethegus’ naked arm. (41) The Drusi, heroes of the people, joyed, In laws immoderate; and the famous pair (42) Of greatly daring brothers: guilty bands By bars eternal shut within the doors That close the prison of hell, applaud the fates, Claiming the plains Elysian: and the King Throws wide his pallid halls, makes hard the points Of craggy rocks, and forges iron chains, The victor’s punishment. But take with thee This comfort, youth, that there a calm abode, And peaceful, waits thy father and his house.

Nor let the glory of a little span

Disturb thy boding heart: the hour shall come When all the chiefs shall meet. Shrink not from death, But glowing in the greatness of your souls, E’en from your humble sepulchres descend, And tread beneath your feet, in pride of place, The wandering phantoms of the gods of Rome. (43) Which of the chiefs by Tiber’s yellow stream, And which by Nile shall rest (the leaders’ fate) This fight decides, no more. Nor seek to know From me thy fortunes: for the fates in time Shall give thee all thy due; and thy great sire, (44) A surer prophet, in Sicilian

fields Shall speak thy future — doubting even he What regions of the world thou should'st avoid And what should'st seek. O miserable race!

Europe and Asia and Libya's plains, (45) Which saw your conquests, now shall hold alike Your burial-place — nor has the earth for you A happier land than this."

His task performed, He stands in mournful guise, with silent look Asking for death again; yet could not die Till mystic herb and magic chant prevailed.

For nature's law, once used, had power no more To slay the corpse and set the spirit free.

With plenteous wood she builds the funeral pyre To which the dead man comes: then as the flames Seized on his form outstretched, the youth and witch Together sought the camp; and as the dawn Now streaked the heavens, by the hag's command The day was stayed till Sextus reached his tent, And mist and darkness veiled his safe return.

ENDNOTES:

(1) Dyrrhachium (or Epidamnus) was a Corcyraean colony, but its founder was of Corinth, the metropolis of Corcyra. It stood some sixty miles north of the Ceraunian promontory (Book V., 747). About the year 1100 it was stormed and taken by Robert the Guiscard, after furious battles with the troops of the Emperor Alexius. Its modern name is Durazzo. It may be observed that, according to Caesar's account, he succeeded in getting between Pompey and Dyrrhachium, B.C. 3, 41, 42.

(2) C. del Faro, the N.E. point of Sicily.

(3) The shores of Kent.

(4) Aricia was situated on the Via Appia, about sixteen miles from Rome. There was a temple of Diana close to it, among some woods on a small lake. Aricia was Horace's first halting place on his journey to Brundisium ("Satires", i.

5). As to Diana, see Book I., line 501.

(5) An island in the Bay of Puteoli.

(6) Typhon, the hundred-headed giant, was buried under Mount Etna.

(7) This was Scaeva's name.

(8) The vinewood staff was the badge of the centurion's office.

(9) This giant, like Typhon, was buried under Mount Etna.

(10) Juba and Petreius killed each other after the battle of Thepsus to avoid falling into Caesar's hands. See Book IV., line 5.

(11) So Cicero: "Shall I, who have been called saviour of the city and father of my country, bring into it an army of Getae Armenians and Colchians?" ("Ep. ad Atticum," ix., 10.) (12) See Book VIII., line 3.

(13) Protesilaus, from this place, first landed at Troy.

(14) Thamyras challenged the Muses to a musical contest, and being vanquished, was by them deprived of sight.

(15) The arrows given to Philoctetes by Hercules as a reward for kindling his funeral pyre.

(16) This is the Pelasgic, not the historical, Argos.

(17) Book I., line 632; Book VII., line 904. Agave was a daughter of Cadmus, and mother of Pentheus, king of the Boeotian Thebes. He was opposed to the mysterious worship of Dionysus, which his mother celebrated, and which he had watched from a tree. She tore him to pieces, being urged into a frenzy and mistaking him for a wild beast. She then retired to another Thebes, in Phthiotis, in triumph, with his head and shoulders. By another legend she did not leave the Boeotian Thebes. (See Grote, vol. i., p. 220. Edit.

1862.)

(18) Aeas was a river flowing from the boundary of Thessaly through Epirus to

the Ionian Sea. The sire of Isis, or Io, was Inachus; but the river of that name is usually placed in the Argive territory.

(19) A river rising in Mount Pindus and flowing into the Ionian Sea nearly opposite to Ithaca. At its mouth the sea has been largely silted up.

(20) The god of this river fought with Hercules for the hand of Deianira. After Hercules had been married to Deianira, and when they were on a journey, they came to the River Evenus.

Here Nessus, a Centaur, acted as ferryman, and Hercules bade him carry Deianira across. In doing so he insulted her, and Hercules shot him with an arrow.

(21) Admetus was King of Pherae in Thessaly, and sued for Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, who promised her to him if he should come in a chariot drawn by lions and boars. With the assistance of Apollo, Admetus performed this. Apollo, for the slaughter of the Cyclops, was condemned to serve a mortal, and accordingly he tended the flocks of Admetus for nine years. The River Amphrysos is marked as flowing into the Pagasaeon Gulf at a short distance below Pherae.

(22) Anaurus was a small river passing into the Pagasaeon Gulf past Iolcos. In this river Jason is said to have lost one of his slippers.

(23) The River Peneus flowed into the sea through the pass of Tempe, cloven by Hercules between Olympus and Ossa (see line 406); and carried with it Asopus, Phoenix, Melas, Enipeus, Apidanus, and Titaresus (or Eurotas). The Styx is generally placed in Arcadia, but Lucan says that Eurotas rises from the Stygian pools, and that, mindful of this mysterious source, he refuses to mingle his streams with that of Peneus, in order that the gods may still fear to break an oath sworn upon his waters.

(24) See on line 429.

(25) Chiron, the aged Centaur, instructor of Peleus, Achilles, and others. He was killed by one of the poisoned arrows of Hercules, but placed by Zeus among the stars as the Archer, from which position he appears to be aiming at the Scorpion.

His constellation appears in winter.

(26) The teeth of the dragon slain by Cadmus; though this took place in Boeotia.

(27) Poseidon and Athena disputed as to which of them should name the capital of Attica. The gods gave the reward to that one of them who should produce the thing most useful to man; whereupon Athena produced an olive tree, and Poseidon a horse. Homer also places the scene of this event in Thessaly. (“Iliad”, xxiii., 247.) (28) The Argo. Conf. Book III., 223.

(29) See Book VII., 1022.

(30) Son of Pelasgus. From him was derived the ancient name of Thessaly, Haemonia.

(31) Medea.

(32) It was supposed that there was on the forehead of the new-born foal an excrescence, which was bitten off and eaten by the mother. If she did not do this she had no affection for the foal. (Virgil, “Aeneid”, iv., 515.) (33) “When the boisterous sea, Without a breath of wind, hath knocked the sky.”

— Ben Jonson, “Masque of Queens”.

(34) The sky was supposed to move round, but to be restrained in its course by the planets. (See Book X., line 244.) (35) “Coatus audire silentum.” To be present at the meetings of the dead and hear their voices. So, in the sixth Aeneid, the dead Greek warriors in feeble tones endeavour to express their fright at the appearance of the Trojan hero (lines 492, 493).

(36) “As if that piece were sweeter which the wolf had bitten.”

Note to “The Masque of Queens”, in which the first hag says: “I have been all day, looking after A raven feeding on a quarter, And soon as she turned her beak to the south I snatched this morsel out of her mouth.”

—Ben Jonson, “Masque of Queens”.

But more probably the meaning is that the wolf’s bite gave the flesh magical efficacy.

(37) Confusing Pharsalia with Philippi. (See line 684.) (38) One of the

miraculous stories to be found in Pliny's "Natural History". See Lecky's "Augustus to Charlemagne", vol. i., p. 370.

(39) The mysterious goddess Hecate was identified with Luna in heaven, Diana on earth, and Proserpine in the lower regions.

The text is doubtful.

(40) That is, for the second life of her victim.

(41) See Book II., 609.

(42) The Gracchi, the younger of whom aimed at being a perpetual tribune, and was in some sort a forerunner of the Emperors.

(43) That is, the Caesars, who will be in Tartarus.

(44) Referring probably to an episode intended to be introduced in a later book, in which the shade of Pompeius was to foretell his fate to Sextus.

(45) Cnaeus was killed in Spain after the battle of Munda; Sextus at Miletus; Pompeius himself, of course, in Egypt.

BOOK VII

THE BATTLE

Ne'er to the summons of the Eternal laws More slowly Titan rose, (1) nor drave his steeds, Forced by the sky revolving, (2) up the heaven, With gloomier presage; wishing to endure The pangs of ravished light, and dark eclipse; And drew the mists up, not to feed his flames, (3) But lest his light upon Thessalian earth Might fall undimmed.

Pompeius on that morn, To him the latest day of happy life, In troubled sleep an empty dream conceived.

For in the watches of the night he heard Innumerable Romans shout his name

Within his theatre; the benches vied To raise his fame and place him with the gods; As once in youth, when victory was won O'er conquered tribes where swift Iberus flows, (4) And where Sertorius' armies fought and fled, The west subdued, with no less majesty Than if the purple toga graced the car, He sat triumphant in his pure white gown A Roman knight, and heard the Senate's cheer.

Perhaps, as ills drew near, his anxious soul, Shunning the future wooed the happy past; Or, as is wont, prophetic slumber showed That which was not to be, by doubtful forms Misleading; or as envious Fate forbade Return to Italy, this glimpse of Rome Kind Fortune gave. Break not his latest sleep, Ye sentinels; let not the trumpet call Strike on his ear: for on the morrow's night Shapes of the battle lost, of death and war Shall crowd his rest with terrors. Whence shalt thou The poor man's happiness of sleep regain?

Happy if even in dreams thy Rome could see Once more her captain! Would the gods had given To thee and to thy country one day yet To reap the latest fruit of such a love: Though sure of fate to come! Thou marchest on As though by heaven ordained in Rome to die; She, conscious ever of her prayers for thee Heard by the gods, deemed not the fates decreed Such evil destiny, that she

should lose The last sad solace of her Magnus' tomb.

Then young and old had blent their tears for thee, And child unbidden; women
torn their hair And struck their bosoms as for Brutus dead.

But now no public woe shall greet thy death As erst thy praise was heard: but
men shall grieve In silent sorrow, though the victor's voice Amid the clash of
arms proclaims thy fall; Though incense smoke before the Thunderer's shrine,
And shouts of welcome bid great Caesar hail.

The stars had fled before the growing morn, When eager voices (as the fates
drew on The world to ruin) round Pompeius' tent Demand the battle signal.
What! by those So soon to perish, shall the sign be asked, Their own, their
country's doom? Ah! fatal rage That hastens on the hour; no other sun Upon this
living host shall rise again.

"Pompeius fears!" they cry. "He's slow to act; Too 'kind to Caesar; and he
fondly rules A world of subject peoples; but with peace Such rule were ended."
Eastern kings no less, And peoples, eager for their distant homes, Already
murmured at the lengthy war.

Thus hath it pleased the gods, when woe impends On guilty men, to make them
seem its cause.

We court disaster, crave the fatal sword.

Of Magnus' camp Pharsalia was the prayer; For Tullius, of all the sons of Rome
Chief orator, beneath whose civil rule Fierce Catiline at the peace-compelling
axe Trembled and fled, arose, to Magnus' ear Bearing the voice of all. To him
was war Grown hateful, and he longed once more to hear The Senate's plaudits;
and with eloquent lips He lent persuasion to the weaker cause.

"Fortune, Pompeius, for her gifts to thee Asks this one boon, that thou should'st
use her now.

Here at thy feet thy leading captains lie; And here thy monarchs, and a suppliant

world Entreats thee prostrate for thy kinsman's fall.

So long shall Caesar plunge the world in war?

Swift was thy tread when these proud nations fell; How deep their shame, and justly, should delay Now mar thy conquests! Where thy trust in Fate, Thy fervour where? Ingrate! Dost dread the gods, Or think they favour not the Senate's cause?

Thy troops unbidden shall the standards seize And conquer; thou in shame be forced to win.

If at the Senate's orders and for us The war is waged, then give to us the right To choose the battlefield. Why dost thou keep From Caesar's throat the swords of all the world?

The weapon quivers in the eager hand: Scarce one awaits the signal. Strike at once, Or without thee the trumpets sound the fray.

Art thou the Senate's comrade or her lord?

We wait your answer."

But Pompeius groaned; His mind was adverse, but he felt the fates Opposed his wish, and knew the hand divine.

"Since all desire it, and the fates prevail, So let it be; your leader now no more, I share the labours of the battlefield.

Let Fortune roll the nations of the earth In one red ruin; myriads of mankind See their last sun to-day. Yet, Rome, I swear, This day of blood was forced upon thy son.

Without a wound, the prizes of the war Might have been thine, and he who broke the peace In peace forgotten. Whence this lust for crime?

Shall bloodless victories in civil war Be shunned, not sought? We've ravished from our foe All boundless seas, and land; his starving troops Have snatched

earth's crop half-grown, in vain attempt Their hunger to appease; they prayed for death, Sought for the sword-thrust, and within our ranks Were fain to mix their life-blood with your own.

Much of the war is done: the conscript youth Whose heart beats high, who burns to join the fray (Though men fight hard in terror of defeat), The shock of onset need no longer fear.

Bravest is he who promptly meets the ill When fate commands it and the moment comes, Yet brooks delay, in prudence; and shall we, Our happy state enjoying, risk it all?

Trust to the sword the fortunes of the world?

Not victory, but battle, ye demand.

Do thou, O Fortune, of the Roman state Who mad'st Pompeius guardian, from his hands Take back the charge grown weightier, and thyself Commit its safety to the chance of war.

Nor blame nor glory shall be mine to-day.

Thy prayers unjustly, Caesar, have prevailed: We fight! What wickedness, what woes on men, Destruction on what realms this dawn shall bring!

Crimson with Roman blood yon stream shall run.

Would that (without the ruin of our cause) The first fell bolt hurled on this cursed day Might strike me lifeless! Else, this battle brings A name of pity or a name of hate.

The loser bears the burden of defeat; The victor wins, but conquest is a crime."

Thus to the soldiers, burning for the fray, He yields, forbidding, and throws down the reins.

So may a sailor give the winds control Upon his barque, which, driven by the seas, Bears him an idle burden. Now the camp Hums with impatience, and the brave man's heart With beats tumultuous throbs against his breast; And all the host had standing in their looks (5) The paleness of the death that was to come.

On that day's fight 'twas manifest that Rome And all the future destinies of man
Hung trembling; and by weightier dread possessed, They knew not danger. Who
would fear for self Should ocean rise and overwhelm the mountain tops, And sun and
sky descend upon the earth In universal chaos? Every mind

Is bent upon Pompeius, and on Rome.

They trust no sword until its deadly point Glows on the sharpening stone; no
lance will serve Till straightened for the fray; each bow is strung Anew, and
arrows chosen for their work Fill all the quivers; horsemen try the curb And fit
the bridle rein and whet the spur.

If toils divine with human may compare, 'Twas thus, when Phlegra bore the
giant crew, (6) In Etna's furnace glowed the sword of Mars, Neptunus' trident
felt the flame once more; And great Apollo after Python slain Sharpened his
darts afresh: on Pallas' shield Was spread anew the dread Medusa's hair; And
broad Sicilia trembled at the blows Of Vulcan forging thunderbolts for Jove.

Yet Fortune failed not, as they sought the field, In various presage of the ills to
come; All heaven opposed their march: portentous fire In columns filled the
plain, and torches blazed: And thirsty whirlwinds mixed with meteor bolts
Smote on them as they strode, whose sulphurous flames Perplexed the vision.
Crests were struck from helmets; The melted sword-blade flowed upon the hilt:
The spear ran liquid, and the hurtful steel Smoked with a sulphur that had come
from heaven.

Nay, more, the standards, hid by swarms of bees Innumerable, weighed the
bearer down, Scarce lifted from the earth; bedewed with tears; No more of Rome
the standards, (7) or her state.

And from the altar fled the frantic bull To fields afar; nor was a victim found To
grace the sacrifice of coming doom.

But thou, Caesar, to what gods of ill Didst thou appeal? What furies didst thou
call, What powers of madness and what Stygian Kings Whelmed in th' abyss of
hell? Didst favour gain By sacrifice in this thine impious war?

Strange sights were seen; or caused by hands divine Or due to fearful fancy.
Haemus' top Plunged headlong in the valley, Pindus met With high Olympus,
while at Ossa's feet Red ran Baebeis, (8) and Pharsalia's field Gave warlike
voices forth in depth of night.

Now darkness came upon their wondering gaze, Now daylight pale and wan,
their helmets wreathed In pallid mist; the spirits of their sires Hovered in air, and
shades of kindred dead Passed flitting through the gloom. Yet to the host
Conscious of guilty prayers which sought to shed The blood of sires and
brothers, earth and air Distraught, and horrors seething in their hearts Gave
happy omen of the end to come.

Was't strange that peoples whom their latest day Of happy life awaited (if their
minds Foreknew the doom) should tremble with affright?

Romans who dwelt by far Araxes' stream, And Tyrian Gades, (9) in whatever
clime, 'Neath every sky, struck by mysterious dread Were plunged in sorrow —
yet rebuked the tear, For yet they knew not of the fatal day.

Thus on Euganean hills (10) where sulphurous fumes Disclose the rise of
Aponus (11) from earth, And where Timavus broadens in the meads, An augur
spake: "This day the fight is fought, The arms of Caesar and Pompeius meet To
end the impious conflict." Or he saw The bolts of Jupiter, predicting ill; Or else
the sky discordant o'er the space Of heaven, from pole to pole; or else perchance
The sun was sad and misty in the height And told the battle by his wasted beams.

By Nature's fiat that Thessalian day Passed not as others; if the gifted sense Of
reading portents had been given to all, All men had known Pharsalia. Gods of
heaven!

How do ye mark the great ones of the earth!

The world gives tokens of their weal or woe; The sky records their fates: in
distant climes To future races shall their tale be told, Or by the fame alone of
mighty deeds Had in remembrance, or by this my care Borne through the
centuries: and men shall read In hope and fear the story of the war And
breathless pray, as though it were to come, For that long since accomplished; and
for thee Thus far, Pompeius, shall that prayer be given.

Reflected from their arms, th' opposing sun Filled all the slope with radiance as they marched In ordered ranks to that ill-fated fight, And stood arranged for battle. On the left Thou, Lentulus, had'st charge; two legions there, The fourth, and bravest of them all, the first: While on the right, Domitius, ever stanch, Though fates be adverse, stood: in middle line The hardy soldiers from Cilician lands, In Scipio's care; their chief in Libyan days, To-day their comrade. By Enipeus' pools And by the rivulets, the mountain troops Of Cappadocia, and loose of rein

Thy squadrons, Pontus: on the firmer ground Galatia's tetrarchs and the greater kings; And all the purple-robed, the slaves of Rome.

Numidian hordes were there from Afric shores, There Creta's host and Ituraeans found Full space to wing their arrows; there the tribes From brave Iberia clashed their shields, and there Gaul stood arrayed against her ancient foe.

Let all the nations be the victor's prize, None grace in future a triumphal car; This fight demands the slaughter of a world.

Caesar that day to send his troops for spoil Had left his tent, when on the further hill Behold! his foe descending to the plain.

The moment asked for by a thousand prayers Is come, which puts his fortune on the risk Of imminent war, to win or lose it all.

For burning with desire of kingly power His eager soul ill brooked the small delay This civil war compelled: each instant lost Robbed from his due! But when at length he knew The last great conflict come, the fight supreme, Whose prize the leadership of all the world: And felt the ruin nodding to its fall: Swiftest to strike, yet for a little space His rage for battle failed; the spirit bold To pledge itself the issue, wavered now: For Magnus' fortunes gave no room for hope, Though Caesar's none for fear. Deep in his soul Such doubt was hidden, as with mien and speech That augured victory, thus the chief began: "Ye conquerors of a world, my hope in all, Prayed for so oft, the dawn of fight is come.

No more entreat the gods: with sword in hand Seize on our fates; and Caesar in

your deeds This day is great or little. This the day For which I hold since
Rubicon was passed Your promise given: for this we flew to arms: (12) For this
deferred the triumphs we had won, And which the foe refused: this gives you
back Your homes and kindred, and the peaceful farm, Your prize for years of
service in the field.

And by the fates' command this day shall prove Whose quarrel juster: for defeat
is guilt To him on whom it falls. If in my cause With fire and sword ye did your
country wrong, Strike for acquittal! Should another judge This war, not Caesar,
none were blameless found.

Not for my sake this battle, but for you, To give you, soldiers, liberty and law
'Gainst all the world. Wishful myself for life Apart from public cares, and for the
gown That robes the private citizen, I refuse To yield from office till the law
allows Your right in all things. On my shoulders rest All blame; all power be
yours. Nor deep the blood Between yourselves and conquest. Grecian schools Of
exercise and wrestling (13) send us here Their chosen darlings to await your
swords; And scarcely armed for war, a dissonant crowd Barbaric, that will start
to hear our trump, Nay, their own clamour. Not in civil strife Your blows shall
fall — the battle of to-day Sweeps from the earth the enemies of Rome.

Dash through these cowards and their vaunted kings: One stroke of sword and
all the world is yours.

Make plain to all men that the crowds who decked Pompeius' hundred pageants
scarce were fit For one poor triumph. Shall Armenia care Who leads her masters,
or barbarians shed One drop of blood to make Pompeius chief O'er our Italia?
Rome, 'tis Rome they hate And all her children; yet they hate the most Those
whom they know. My fate is in the hands Of you, mine own true soldiers, proved
in all The wars we fought in Gallia. When the sword Of each of you shall strike,
I know the hand: The javelin's flight to me betrays the arm That launched it
hurtling: and to-day once more I see the faces stern, the threatening eyes,
Unfailing proofs of victory to come.

E'en now the battle rushes on my sight; Kings trodden down and scattered
senators Fill all th' ensanguined plain, and peoples float Unnumbered on the
crimson tide of death.

Enough of words — I but delay the fates; And you who burn to dash into the

fray, Forgive the pause. I tremble with the hopes (14) Thus finding utterance. I ne'er have seen The mighty gods so near; this little field Alone dividing us; their hands are full Of my predestined honours: for 'tis I Who when this war is done shall have the power O'er all that peoples, all that kings enjoy To shower it where I will. But has the pole Been moved, or in its nightly course some star Turned backwards, that such mighty deeds should pass Here on Thessalian earth? To-day we reap Of all our wars the harvest or the doom.

Think of the cross that threatens us, and the chain, Limbs hacked asunder, Caesar's head displayed Upon the rostra; and that narrow field Piled up with slaughter: for this hostile chief Is savage Sulla's pupil. 'Tis for you, If conquered, that I grieve: my lot apart Is cast long since. This sword, should one of you Turn from the battle ere the foe be fled, Shall rob the life of Caesar. O ye gods, Drawn down from heaven by the throes of Rome, May he be conqueror who shall not draw Against the vanquished an inhuman sword, Nor count it as a crime if men of Rome Preferred another's standard to his own.

Pompeius' sword drank deep Italian blood When cabined in yon space the brave man's arm No more found room to strike. But you, I pray, Touch not the foe who turns him from the fight, A fellow citizen, a foe no more.

But while the gleaming weapons threaten still, Let no fond memories unnerve the arm, (15) No pious thought of father or of kin; But full in face of brother or of sire, Drive home the blade. Unless the slain be known Your foes account his slaughter as a crime; Spare not our camp, but lay the rampart low And fill the fosse with ruin; not a man But holds his post within the ranks to-day.

And yonder tents, deserted by the foe, Shall give us shelter when the rout is done."

Scarce had he paused; they snatch the hasty meal, And seize their armour and with swift acclaim Welcome the chief's predictions of the day, Tread low their camp when rushing to the fight; And take their post: nor word nor order given, In fate they put their trust. Nor, had'st thou placed All Caesars there, all striving for the throne Of Rome their city, had their serried ranks With speedier tread dashed down upon the foe.

But when Pompeius saw the hostile troops Move forth in order and demand the fight, And knew the gods' approval of the day, He stood astonished, while a deadly chill Struck to his heart — omen itself of woe, That such a chief should at the call to arms, Thus dread the issue: but with fear repressed, Borne on his noble steed along the line Of all his forces, thus he spake: "The day Your bravery demands, that final end Of civil war ye asked for, is at hand.

Put forth your strength, your all; the sword to-day Does its last work. One crowded hour is charged With nations' destinies. Whoe'er of you Longs for his land and home, his wife and child, Seek them with sword. Here in mid battlefield, The gods place all at stake. Our better right Bids us expect their favour; they shall dip Your brands in Caesar's blood, and thus shall give Another sanction to the laws of Rome, Our cause of battle. If for him were meant An empire o'er the world, had they not put An end to Magnus' life? That I am chief Of all these mingled peoples and of Rome Disproves an angry heaven. See here combined All means of victory. Noble men have sought Unmasked the risks of war. Our soldiers boast Ancestral statues. If to us were given A Curius, if Camillus were returned, Or patriot Decius to devote his life, Here would they take their stand. From furthest east All nations gathered, cities as the sand Unnumbered, give their aid: a world complete Serves 'neath our standards. North and south and all Who have their being 'neath the starry vault, Here meet in arms conjoined: And shall we not Crush with our closing wings this paltry foe?

Few shall find room to strike; the rest with voice Must be content to aid: for Caesar's ranks Suffice not for us. Think from Rome's high walls The matrons watch you with their hair unbound; Think that the Senate hoar, too old for arms, With snowy locks outspread; and Rome herself, The world's high mistress, fearing now, alas!

A despot — all exhort you to the fight.

Think that the people that is and that shall be Joins in the prayer — in freedom to be born, In freedom die, their wish. If 'mid these vows Be still found place for mine, with wife and child, So far as Imperator may, I bend

Before you suppliant — unless this fight Be won, behold me exile, your disgrace, My kinsman's scorn. From this, 'tis yours to save.

Then save! Nor in the latest stage of life, Let Magnus be a slave.”

Then burned their souls At these his words, indignant at the thought, And Rome rose up within them, and to die Was welcome.

Thus alike with hearts aflame Moved either host to battle, one in fear And one in hope of empire. These hands shall do Such work as not the rolling centuries Not all mankind though free from sword and war Shall e’er make good. Nations that were to live This fight shall crush, and peoples pre-ordained To make the history of the coming world Shall come not to the birth. The Latin names Shall sound as fables in the ears of men, And ruins loaded with the dust of years Shall hardly mark her cities. Alba’s hill, Home of our gods, no human foot shall tread, Save of some Senator at the ancient feast By Numa’s orders founded — he compelled Serves his high office. (16) Void and desolate Are Veii, Cora and Laurentum’s hold; Yet not the tooth of envious time destroyed These storied monuments — ‘twas civil war That rased their citadels. Where now hath fled The teeming life that once Italia knew?

Not all the earth can furnish her with men: Untenanted her dwellings and her fields: Slaves till her soil: one city holds us all: Crumbling to ruin, the ancestral roof Finds none on whom to fall; and Rome herself, Void of her citizens, draws within her gates The dregs of all the world. That none might wage A civil war again, thus deeply drank Pharsalia’s fight the life-blood of her sons.

Dark in the calendar of Rome for aye, The days when Allia and Cannae fell: And shall Pharsalus’ morn, darkest of all, Stand on the page unmarked? Alas, the fates!

Not plague nor pestilence nor famine’s rage, Not cities given to the flames, nor towns Trembling at shock of earthquake shall weigh down Such heroes lost, when Fortune’s ruthless hand Lops at one blow the gift of centuries, Leaders and men embattled. How great art thou, Rome, in thy fall! Stretched to the widest bounds War upon war laid nations at thy feet Till flaming Titan nigh to either pole Beheld thine empire; and the furthest east Was almost thine, till day and night and sky For thee revolved, and all the stars could see Throughout their course was Roman. But the fates In one dread day of slaughter and despair

Turned back the centuries and spoke thy doom.

And now the Indian fears the axe no more Once emblem of thy power, now no more
The girded Consul curbs the Getan horde, Or in Sarmatian furrows guides the share: (17)
Still Parthia boasts her triumphs unavenged: Foul is the public life; and Freedom, fled
To furthest Earth beyond the Tigris' stream, And Rhine's broad river, wandering at her will
'Mid Teuton hordes and Scythian, though by sword Sought, yet returns not. Would that from the day
When Romulus, aided by the vulture's flight, Ill-omened, raised within that hateful grove
Rome's earliest walls, down to the crimsoned field In dire Thessalia fought, she ne'er had known
Italia's peoples! Did the Bruti strike In vain for liberty? Why laws and rights
Sanctioned by all the annals designate With consular titles? Happier far the
Medes And blest Arabia, and the Eastern lands Held by a kindlier fate in despot rule!

That nation serves the worst which serves with shame.

No guardian gods watch over us from heaven: Jove (18) is no king; let ages
whirl along In blind confusion: from his throne supreme Shall he behold such
carnage and restrain His thunderbolts? On Mimas shall he hurl His fires, on
Rhodope and Oeta's woods Unmeriting such chastisement, and leave This life to
Cassius' hand? On Argos fell At grim Thyestes' feast (19) untimely night By
him thus hastened; shall Thessalia's land Receive full daylight, wielding kindred
swords In fathers' hands and brothers'? Careless of men Are all the gods. Yet for
this day of doom Such vengeance have we reaped as deities May give to mortals;
for these wars shall raise Our parted Caesars to the gods; and Rome Shall deck
their effigies with thunderbolts, And stars and rays, and in the very fanes Swear
by the shades of men.

With swift advance They seize the space that yet delays the fates Till short the
span dividing. Then they gaze For one short moment where may fall the spear,
What hand may deal their death, what monstrous task Soon shall be theirs; and
all in arms they see, In reach of stroke, their brothers and their sires With front
opposing; yet to yield their ground It pleased them not. But all the host was
dumb With horror; cold upon each loving heart, Awe-struck, the life-blood
pressed; and all men held With arms outstretched their javelins for a time, Poised
yet unthrown. Now may th' avenging gods Allot thee, Crastinus, (20) not such a

death As all men else do suffer! In the tomb May'st thou have feeling and remembrance still!

For thine the hand that first flung forth the dart, Which stained with Roman blood Thessalia's earth.

Madman! To speed thy lance when Caesar's self Still held his hand! Then from the clarions broke The strident summons, and the trumpets blared Responsive signal. Upward to the vault The sound re-echoes where nor clouds may reach Nor thunder penetrate; and Haemus' slopes (21) Reverberate to Pelion the din;

Pindus re-echoes; Oeta's lofty rocks Groan, and Pangaeian cliffs, till at their rage Borne back from all the earth they shook for fear.

Unnumbered darts they hurl, with prayers diverse; Some hope to wound: others, in secret, yearn For hands still innocent. Chance rules supreme, And wayward Fortune upon whom she wills Makes fall the guilt. Yet for the hatred bred By civil war suffices spear nor lance, Urged on their flight afar: the hand must grip The sword and drive it to the foeman's heart.

But while Pompeius' ranks, shield wedged to shield, Were ranged in dense array, and scarce had space To draw the blade, came rushing at the charge Full on the central column Caesar's host, Mad for the battle. Man nor arms could stay The crash of onset, and the furious sword Clove through the stubborn panoply to the flesh, There only stayed. One army struck — their foes Struck not in answer; Magnus' swords were cold, But Caesar's reeked with slaughter and with guilt.

Nor Fortune lingered, but decreed the doom Which swept the ruins of a world away.

Soon as withdrawn from all the spacious plain, Pompeius' horse was ranged upon the flanks; Passed through the outer files, the lighter armed Of all the nations joined the central strife, With divers weapons armed, but all for blood Of Rome athirst: then blazing torches flew, Arrows and stones. and ponderous balls of lead Molten by speed of passage through the air.

There Ituraean archers and the Mede Winged forth their countless shafts till all the sky Grew dark with missiles hurled; and from the night Brooding above, Death struck his victims down, Guiltless such blow, while all the crime was heaped Upon the Roman spear. In line oblique Behind the standards Caesar in reserve Had placed some companies of foot, in fear The foremost ranks might waver. These at his word, No trumpet sounding, break upon the ranks Of Magnus' horsemen where they rode at large Flanking the battle. They, unshamed of fear And careless of the fray, when first a steed Pierced through by javelin spurned with sounding hoof The temples of his rider, turned the rein, And through their comrades spurring from the field In panic, proved that not with warring Rome Barbarians may grapple. Then arose Immeasurable carnage: here the sword, There stood the victim, and the victor's arm Wearied of slaughter. Oh, that to thy plains, Pharsalia, might suffice the crimson stream From hosts barbarian, nor other blood Pollute thy fountains' sources! these alone Shall clothe thy pastures with the bones of men!

Or if thy fields must run with Roman blood Then spare the nations who in times to come Must be her peoples!

Now the terror spread Through all the army, and the favouring fates Decreed for Caesar's triumph: and the war Ceased in the wider plain, though still ablaze Where stood the chosen of Pompeius' force, Upholding yet the fight. Not here allies Begged from some distant king to wield the sword: Here were the Roman sons, the sires of Rome, Here the last frenzy and the last despair: Here, Caesar, was thy crime: and here shall stay My Muse repelled: no poesy of mine

Shall tell the horrors of the final strife, Nor for the coming ages paint the deeds Which civil war permits. Be all obscured In deepest darkness! Spare the useless tear And vain lament, and let the deeds that fell In that last fight of Rome remain unsung.

But Caesar adding fury to the breasts Already flaming with the rage of war, That each might bear his portion of the guilt Which stained the host, unflinching through the ranks Passed at his will. He looked upon the brands, These reddened only at the point, and those Streaming with blood and gory, to the hilt: He marks

the hand which trembling grasped the sword, Or held it idle, and the cheek that grew Pale at the blow, and that which at his words Glowed with the joy of battle: midst the dead He treads the plain and on each gaping wound Presses his hand to keep the life within.

Thus Caesar passed: and where his footsteps fell As when Bellona shakes her crimson lash, Or Mavors scourges on the Thracian mares (22) When shunning the dread face on Pallas' shield, He drives his chariot, there arose a night Dark with huge slaughter and with crime, and groans As of a voice immense, and sound of alms As fell the wearer, and of sword on sword Crashed into fragments. With a ready hand Caesar supplies the weapon and bids strike Full at the visage; and with lance reversed Urges the flagging ranks and stirs the fight.

Where flows the nation's blood, where beats the heart, Knowing, he bids them spare the common herd, But seek the senators — thus Rome he strikes, Thus the last hold of Freedom. In the fray, Then fell the nobles with their mighty names Of ancient prowess; there Metellus' sons, Corvini, Lepidi, Torquati too,

Not once nor twice the conquerors of kings, First of all men, Pompeius' name except, Lay dead upon the field.

But, Brutus, where, Where was thy sword? (23) "Veiled by a common helm Unknown thou wanderest. Thy country's pride, Hope of the Senate, thou (for none besides); Thou latest scion of that race of pride, Whose fearless deeds the centuries record, Tempt not the battle, nor provoke the doom!

Awaits thee on Philippi's fated field Thy Thessaly. Not here shalt thou prevail 'Gainst Caesar's life. Not yet hath he surpassed The height of power and deserved a death Noble at Brutus' hands — then let him live, Thy fated victim!

There upon the field Lay all the honour of Rome; no common stream Mixed with the purple tide. And yet of all Who noble fell, one only now I sing, Thee, brave Domitius. (24) Whene'er the day Was adverse to the fortunes of thy chief Thine was the arm which vainly stayed the fight.

Vanquished so oft by Caesar, now 'twas thine Yet free to perish. By a thousand

wounds Came welcome death, nor had thy conqueror power Again to pardon. Caesar stood and saw The dark blood welling forth and death at hand, And thus in words of scorn: "And dost thou lie, Domitius, there? And did Pompeius name Thee his successor, thee? Why leavest thou then His standards helpless?" But the parting life Still faintly throbbed within Domitius' breast, Thus finding utterance: "Yet thou hast not won Thy hateful prize, for doubtful are the fates; Nor thou the master, Caesar; free as yet, With great Pompeius for my leader still, Warring no more, I seek the silent shades, Yet with this hope in death, that thou subdued To Magnus and to me in grievous guise May'st pay atonement." So he spake: no more; Then closed his eyes in death.

'Twere shame to shed, When thus a world was perishing, the tear Meet for each fate, or sing the wound that reft Each life away. Through forehead and through throat The pitiless weapon clove its deadly path, Or forced the entrails forth: one fell to earth Prone at the stroke; one stood though shorn of limb; Glanced from this breast unharmed the quivering spear; That it transfix'd to earth. Here from the veins Spouted the life-blood, till the foeman's arms Were crimsoned. One his brother slew, nor dared To spoil the corse, till severed from the neck He flung the head afar. Another dashed Full in his father's teeth the fatal sword, By murderous frenzy striving to disprove His kinship with the slain. Yet for each death We find no separate dirge, nor weep for men When peoples fell. Thus, Rome, thy doom was wrought At dread Pharsalus. Not, as in other fields, By soldiers slain, or captains; here were swept Whole nations to the death; Assyria here, Achaia, Pontus; and the blood of Rome Gushing in torrents forth, forbade the rest To stagnate on the plain. Nor life was reft, Nor safety only then; but reeled the world And all her manifold peoples at the blow In that day's battle dealt; nor only then Felt, but in all the times that were to come.

Those swords gave servitude to every age That shall be slavish; by our sires was shaped For us our destiny, the despot yoke.

Yet have we trembled not, nor feared to bare Our throats to slaughter, nor to face the foe: We bear the penalty for others' shame.

Such be our doom; yet, Fortune, sharing not In that last battle, 'twas our right to strike One blow for freedom ere we served our lord.

Now saw Pompeius, grieving, that the gods Had left his side, and knew the fates of Rome Passed from his governance; yet all the blood That filled the field scarce brought him to confess His fortunes fled. A little hill he sought Whence to descry the battle raging still Upon the plain, which when he nearer stood The warring ranks concealed. Thence did the chief Gaze on unnumbered swords that flashed in air And sought his ruin; and the tide of blood In which his host had perished. Yet not as those Who, prostrate fallen, would drag nations down To share their evil fate, Pompeius did.

Still were the gods thought worthy of his prayers To give him solace, in that after him Might live his Romans. "Spare, ye gods," he said, "Nor lay whole peoples low; my fall attained, The world and Rome may stand. And if ye need More bloodshed, here on me, my wife, and sons Wreak out your vengeance — pledges to the fates Such have we given. Too little for the war Is our destruction? Doth the carnage fail, The world escaping? Magnus' fortunes lost, Why doom all else beside him?" Thus he cried, And passed amid his standards, and recalled His vanquished host that rushed on fate declared.

Not for his sake such carnage should be wrought.

So thought Pompeius; nor the foeman's sword He feared, nor death; but lest upon his fall To quit their chief his soldiers might refuse, And o'er his prostrate corpse a world in arms Might find its ruin: or perchance he wished From Caesar's eager eyes to veil his death.

In vain, unhappy! for the fates decree He shall behold, shorn from the bleeding trunk, Again thy visage. And thou, too, his spouse, Beloved Cornelia, didst cause his flight; Thy longed-for features; yet he shall not die When thou art present.
(25)

Then upon his steed, Though fearing not the weapons at his back, Pompeius fled, his mighty soul prepared To meet his destinies. No groan nor tear, But solemn grief as for the fates of Rome, Was in his visage, and with mien unchanged He saw Pharsalia's woes, above the frowns Or smiles of Fortune; in triumphant days And in his fall, her master. The burden laid Of thine impending fate, thou partest free To muse upon the happy days of yore.

Hope now has fled; but in the fleeting past How wast thou great! Seek thou the wars no more, And call the gods to witness that for thee Henceforth dies no man. In the fights to come On Afric's mournful shore, by Pharos' stream And fateful Munda; in the final scene Of dire Pharsalia's battle, not thy name Doth stir the war and urge the foeman's arm, But those great rivals bidding with us yet, Caesar and Liberty; and not for thee But for itself the dying Senate fought, When thou had'st fled the combat.

Find'st thou not Some solace thus in parting from the fight Nor seeing all the horrors of its close?

Look back upon the dead that load the plain, The rivers turbid with a crimson stream; Then pity thou thy victor. How shall he Enter the city, who on such a field Finds happiness? Trust thou in Fortune yet, Her favourite ever; and whate'er, alone In lands unknown, an exile, be thy lot, Whate'er thy sufferings 'neath the Pharian king, 'Twere worse to conquer. Then forbid the tear, Cease, sounds of woe, and lamentation cease, And let the world adore thee in defeat, As in thy triumphs. With unfaltering gaze, Look on the suppliant kings, thy subjects still; Search out the realms and cities which they hold, Thy gift, Pompeius; and a fitting place Choose for thy death.

First witness of thy fall, And of thy noble bearing in defeat, Larissa. Weeping, yet with gifts of price Fit for a victor, from her teeming gates Poured forth her citizens, their homes and fanes Flung open; wishing it had been their lot With thee to share disaster. Of thy name Still much survives, unto thy former self Alone inferior, still could'st thou to arms All nations call and challenge fate again.

But thus he spake: "To cities nor to men Avails the conquered aught; then pledge your faith To him who has the victory." Caesar trod Pharsalia's slaughter, while his daughter's spouse Thus gave him kingdoms; but Pompeius fled 'Mid sobs and groans and blaming of the gods For this their fierce commandment; and he fled Full of the fruits and knowledge of the love The peoples bore him, which he knew not his In times of happiness.

When Italian blood Flowed deep enough upon the fatal field, Caesar bade halt, and gave their lives to those Whose death had been no gain. But that their camp Might not recall the foe, nor calm of night Banish their fears, he bids his cohorts dash, While Fortune glowed and terror filled the plain, Straight on the ramparts of the conquered foe.

Light was the task to urge them to the spoil; "Soldiers," he said, "the victory is ours, Full and triumphant: there doth lie the prize Which you have won, not Caesar; at your feet Behold the booty of the hostile camp.

Snatched from Hesperian nations ruddy gold, And all the riches of the Orient world, Are piled within the tents. The wealth of kings And of Pompeius here awaits its lords.

Haste, soldiers, and outstrip the flying foe; E'en now the vanquished of Pharsalia's field Anticipate your spoils." No more he said, But drave them, blind with frenzy for the gold, To spurn the bodies of their fallen sires, And trample chiefs in dashing on their prey.

What rampart had restrained them as they rushed To seize the prize for wickedness and war And learn the price of guilt? And though they found In ponderous masses heaped for need of war The trophies of a world, yet were their minds Unsatisfied, that asked for all. Whate'er Iberian mines or Tagus bring to day, Or Arimaspians from golden sands

May gather, had they seized; still had they thought Their guilt too cheaply sold. When pledged to them Was the Tarpeian rock, for victory won, And all the spoils of Rome, by Caesar's word, Shall camps suffice them?

Then plebeian limbs On senators' turf took rest, on kingly couch The meanest soldier; and the murderer lay Where yesternight his brother or his sire.

In raving dreams within their waking brains Yet raged the battle, and the guilty hand Still wrought its deeds of blood, and restless sought The absent sword-hilt. Thou had'st said that groans Issued from all the plain, that parted souls Had breathed a life into the guilty soil, That earthly darkness teemed with gibbering ghosts And Stygian terrors. Victory foully won Thus claimed its punishment. The slumbering sense Already heard the hiss of vengeful flames As from the

depths of Acheron. One saw Deep in the trances of the night his sire And one his brother slain. But all the dead In long array were visioned to the eyes Of Caesar dreaming. Not in other guise Orestes saw the Furies ere he fled

To purge his sin within the Scythian bounds; Nor in more fierce convulsions raged the soul Of Pentheus raving; nor Agave's (26) mind When she had known her son. Before his gaze Flashed all the javelins which Pharsalia saw, Or that avenging day when drew their blades The Roman senators; and on his couch, Infernal monsters from the depths of hell Scourged him in slumber. Thus his guilty mind Brought retribution. Ere his rival died The terrors that enfold the Stygian stream And black Avernus, and the ghostly slain Broke on his sleep.

Yet when the golden sun Unveiled the butchery of Pharsalia's field (27) He shrank not from its horror, nor withdrew His feasting gaze. There rolled the streams in flood With crimson carnage; there a seething heap Rose shrouding all the plain, now in decay Slow settling down; there numbered he the host Of Magnus slain; and for the morn's repast That spot he chose whence he might watch the dead, And feast his eyes upon Emathia's field Concealed by corpses; of the bloody sight Insatiate, he forbad the funeral pyre, And cast Emathia in the face of heaven.

Nor by the Punic victor was he taught, Who at the close of Cannae's fatal fight Laid in the earth the Roman consul dead, To find fit burial for his fallen foes; For these were all his countrymen, nor yet His ire by blood appeased. Yet ask we not For separate pyres or sepulchres apart Wherein to lay the ashes of the fallen: Burn in one holocaust the nations slain; Or should it please thy soul to torture more Thy kinsman, pile on high from Oeta's slopes And Pindus' top the woods: thus shall he see While fugitive on the deep the blaze that marks Thessalia. Yet by this idle rage

Nought dost thou profit; for these corporal frames Bearing innate from birth the certain germs Of dissolution, whether by decay

Or fire consumed, shall fall into the lap Of all-embracing nature. Thus if now Thou should'st deny the pyre, still in that flame When all shall crumble, (28) earth and rolling seas And stars commingled with the bones of men, These too shall perish. Where thy soul shall go These shall companion thee; no higher

flight In airy realms is thine, nor smoother couch Beneath the Stygian darkness;
for the dead No fortune favours, and our Mother Earth All that is born from her
receives again, And he whose bones no tomb or urn protects Yet sleeps beneath
the canopy of heaven.

And thou, proud conqueror, who would'st deny The rites of burial to thousands
slain, Why flee thy field of triumph? Why desert This reeking plain? Drink,
Caesar, of the streams, Drink if thou can'st, and should it be thy wish Breathe the
Thessalian air; but from thy grasp The earth is ravished, and th' unburied host,
Routing their victor, hold Pharsalia's field.

Then to the ghastly harvest of the war Came all the beasts of earth whose facile
sense Of odour tracks the bodies of the slain.

Sped from his northern home the Thracian wolf; Bears left their dens and lions
from afar Scenting the carnage; dogs obscene and foul Their homes deserted: all
the air was full Of gathering fowl, who in their flight had long Pursued the
armies. Cranes (29) who yearly change The frosts of Thracia for the banks of
Nile, This year delayed their voyage. As ne'er before The air grew dark with
vultures' hovering wings, Innumerable, for every grove and wood Sent forth its
denizens; on every tree Dripped from their crimsoned beaks a gory dew.

Oft on the conquerors and their impious arms Or purple rain of blood, or
mouldering flesh Fell from the lofty heaven; or limbs of men From weary talons
dropped. Yet even so The peoples passed not all into the maw Of ravening beast
or fowl; the inmost flesh Scarce did they touch, nor limbs — thus lay the dead
Scorned by the spoiler; and the Roman host By sun and length of days, and rain
from heaven, At length was mingled with Emathia's plain.

Ill-starred Thessalia! By what hateful crime Didst thou offend that thus on thee
alone Was laid such carnage? By what length of years Shalt thou be cleansed
from the curse of war?

When shall the harvest of thy fields arise Free from their purple stain? And when
the share Cease to upturn the slaughtered hosts of Rome?

First shall the battle onset sound again, Again shall flow upon thy fated earth A crimson torrent. Thus may be o'erthrown Our sires' memorials; those erected last, Or those which pierced by ancient roots have spread Through broken stones their sacred urns abroad.

Thus shall the ploughman of Haemonia gaze On more abundant ashes, and the rake Pass o'er more frequent bones. Wert, Thracia, thou.

Our only battlefield, no sailor's hand Upon thy shore should make his cable fast; No spade should turn, the husbandman should flee Thy fields, the resting-place of Roman dead; No lowing kine should graze, nor shepherd dare To leave his fleecy charge to browse at will On fields made fertile by our mouldering dust; All bare and unexplored thy soil should lie, As past man's footsteps, parched by cruel suns, Or palled by snows unmelting! But, ye gods, Give us to hate the lands which bear the guilt; Let not all earth be cursed, though not all Be blameless found.

'Twas thus that Munda's fight And blood of Mutina, and Leucas' cape, And sad Pachynus, (30) made Philippi pure.

ENDNOTES:

(1) "It is, methinks, a morning full of fate!

It riseth slowly, as her sullen car Had all the weight of sleep and death hung at it!"

...

And her sick head is bound about with clouds As if she threatened night ere noon of day."

— Ben Jonson, "Catiline", i., 1.

(2) See Book VI., 577.

(3) As to the sun finding fuel in the clouds, see Book I., line 471.

(4) Pompeius triumphed first in 81 B.C. for his victories in Sicily and Africa, at the age of twenty-four. Sulla at first objected, but finally yielded and said, "Let him triumph then in God's name." The triumph for the defeat of Sertorius was not till 71 B.C., in which year Pompeius was elected Consul along with Crassus. (Compare Book IX., 709.) (5) These two lines are taken from Ben Jonson's "Catiline", act v., scene 6.

(6) The volcanic district of Campania, scene of the fabled battle of the giants. (See Book IV., 666.) (7) Henceforth to be the standards of the Emperor.

(8) A lake at the foot of Mount Ossa. Pindus, Ossa, Olympus, and, above all, Haemus (the Balkans) were at a long distance from Pharsalia. Comp. Book VI., 677.

(9) Gades (Cadiz) is stated to have been founded by the Phoenicians about 1000 B.C.

(10) This alludes to the story told by Plutarch ("Caesar", 47) that, at Patavium, Caius Cornelius, a man reputed for skill in divination, and a friend of Livy the historian, was sitting to watch the birds that day. "And first of all (as Livius says) he discovered the time of the battle, and he said to those present that the affair was now deciding and the men were going into action. Looking again, and observing the signs, he sprang up with enthusiasm and called out, 'You conquer, Caesar.'" (Long's translation.) (11) The Fontes Aponi were warm springs near Padua. An altar, inscribed to Apollo Aponus, was found at Ribchester, and is now at St. John's College, Cambridge. (Wright, "Celt, Roman, and Saxon", p. 320.)

(12) See Book I., 411, and following lines.

(13) For the contempt here expressed for the Greek gymnastic schools, see also Tacitus, "Annals", 14, 21. It is well known that Nero instituted games called Neronia which were borrowed from the Greeks; and that many of the Roman citizens despised them as foreign and profligate. Merivale, chapter liii., cites this passage.

(14) Thus paraphrased by Dean Stanley: "I tremble not with terror, but with hope, As the great day reveals its coming scope; Never in earlier days, our hearts

to cheer, Have such bright gifts of Heaven been brought so near, Nor ever has been kept the aspiring soul By space so narrow from so grand a goal.”

Inaugural address at St. Andrews. 1873, on the “Study of Greatness”.

(15) That such were Caesar’s orders is also attested by Appian.

(16) See Book V., 463.

(17) That is, marked out the new colony with a ploughshare.

This was regarded as a religious ceremony, and therefore performed by the Consul with his toga worn in ancient fashion.

(18) “Hath Jove no thunder?” — Ben Jonson, “Catiline”, iii., 2.

(19) Compare Book I., line 600.

(20) This act of Crastinus is recorded by Plutarch (“Pompeius”, 71), and by Caesar, “Civil War”, Book III., 91. Caesar called him by name and said: “Well, Crastinus, shall we win today?” “We shall win with glory, Caesar,” he replied in a loud voice, “and to-day you will praise me, living or dead.”

— Durny, “History of Rome”, vol. iii., 312. He was placed in a special tomb after the battle.

(21) See on line 203.

(22) That is, lashes on his team terrified by the Gorgon shield in the ranks of the enemy.

(23) Plutarch states that Brutus after the battle escaped and made his way to Larissa, whence he wrote to Caesar. Caesar, pleased that he was alive, asked him to come to him; and it was on Brutus’ opinion that Caesar determined to hurry to Egypt as the most probable refuge of Pompeius. Caesar entrusted Brutus with the command of Cisalpine Gaul when he was in Africa.

(24) “He perished, after a career of furious partisanship, disgraced with cruelty and treachery, on the field of Pharsalia” (Merivale, “Hist. Romans under the Empire”, chapter lii.). Unless this man had been an ancestor of Nero it is

impossible to suppose that Lucan would have thus singled him out. But he appears to have been the only leader who fell. (Compare Book II, lines 534-590, for his conduct at Corfinium.)

(25) This appears to be the only possible meaning of the text.

But in truth, although Cornelia was not by her husband's side at his murder, she was present at the scene.

(26) See Book VI., 420.

(27) The whole of this passage is foreign to Caesar's character, and unfounded in fact. Pompeians perished on the field, and were taken prisoners. When Caesar passed over the field he is recorded to have said in pity, "They would have it so; after all my exploits I should have been condemned to death had I not thrown myself upon the protection of my soldiers."

— Plutarch, "Caesar"; Durny, "History of Rome", vol. iii., p. 311.

(28) Alluding to the general conflagration in which (by the Stoic doctrines) all the universe would one day perish.

(29) Wrongly supposed by Lucan to feed on carrion.

(30) Alluding to the naval war waged by Sextus Pompeius after Caesar's death. He took possession of Sicily, and had command of the seas, but was ultimately defeated by the fleet of Octavius under Agrippa in B.C. 36. Pachynus was the S.E. promontory of the island, but is used in the sense of Sicily, for this battle took place on the north coast.

BOOK VIII

DEATH OF POMPEIUS.

Now through Alcides'(1) pass and Tempe's groves Pompeius, aiming for
Haemonian glens And forests lone, urged on his wearied steed Scarce heeding
now the spur; by devious tracks Seeking to veil the footsteps of his flight: The
rustle of the foliage, and the noise Of following comrades filled his anxious soul
With terrors, as he fancied at his side Some ambushed enemy. Fallen from the
height Of former fortunes, still the chieftain knew His life not worthless; mindful
of the fates: And 'gainst the price he set on Caesar's head, He measures Caesar's
value of his own.

Yet, as he rode, the features of the chief Made known his ruin. Many as they
sought The camp Pharsalian, ere yet was spread News of the battle, met the
chief, amazed, And wondered at the whirl of human things: Nor held disaster
sure, though Magnus' self Told of his ruin. Every witness seen Brought peril on
his flight: 'twere better far Safe in a name obscure, through all the world To
wander; but his ancient fame forbad.

Too long had great Pompeius from the height Of human greatness, envied of
mankind, Looked on all others; nor for him henceforth Could life be lowly. The
honours of his youth Too early thrust upon him, and the deeds Which brought
him triumph in the Sullan days, His conquering navy and the Pontic war, Made
heavier now the burden of defeat, And crushed his pondering soul. So length of
days Drags down the haughty spirit, and life prolonged When power has
perished. Fortune's latest hour, Be the last hour of life! Nor let the wretch Live
on disgraced by memories of fame!

But for the boon of death, who'd dare the sea Of prosperous chance?

Upon the ocean marge By red Peneus blushing from the fray, Borne in a sloop,
to lightest wind and wave Scarce equal, he, whose countless oars yet smote
Upon Coreyra's isle and Leucas point, Lord of Cilicia and Liburnian lands, Crept
trembling to the sea. He bids them steer For the sequestered shores of Lesbos
isle; For there wert thou, sharer of all his griefs, Cornelia! Sadder far thy life
apart Than wert thou present in Thessalia's fields.

Racked is thy heart with presages of ill; Pharsalia fills thy dreams; and when the
shades Give place to coming dawn, with hasty step Thou tread'st some cliff sea-
beaten, and with eyes Gazing afar art first to mark the sail Of each approaching
bark: yet dar'st not ask Aught of thy husband's fate.

Behold the boat Whose bending canvas bears her to the shore: She brings
(unknown as yet) thy chiefest dread, Rumour of evil, herald of defeat,

Magnus, thy conquered spouse. Fear then no more, But give to grief thy
moments. From the ship He leaps to land; she marks the cruel doom Wrought by
the gods upon him: pale and wan His weary features, by the hoary locks Shaded;
the dust of travel on his garb.

Dark on her soul a night of anguish fell; Her trembling limbs no longer bore her
frame: Scarce throbbed her heart, and prone on earth she lay Deceived in hope of
death. The boat made fast, Pompeius treading the lone waste of sand Drew near;
whom when Cornelia's maidens saw, They stayed their weeping, yet with sighs
subdued, Reproached the fates; and tried in vain to raise Their mistress' form, till
Magnus to his breast Drew her with cherishing arms; and at the touch Of
soothing hands the life-blood to her veins Returned once more, and she could
bear to look Upon his features. He forbad despair, Chiding her grief. "Not at the
earliest blow By Fortune dealt, inheritress of fame Bequeathed by noble fathers,
should thy strength Thus fail and yield: renown shall yet be thine, To last
through ages; not of laws decreed Nor conquests won; a gentler path to thee As
to thy sex, is given; thy husband's woe.

Let thine affection struggle with the fates, And in his misery love thy lord the
more.

I bring thee greater glory, for that gone Is all the pomp of power and all the
crowd Of faithful senators and suppliant kings; Now first Pompeius for himself

alone Tis thine to love. Curb this unbounded grief, While yet I breathe,
unseemly. O'er my tomb Weep out thy full, the final pledge of faith.

Thou hast no loss, nor has the war destroyed Aught save my fortune. If for that
thy grief That was thy love."

Roused by her husband's words, Yet scarcely could she raise her trembling
limbs, Thus speaking through her sobs: "Would I had sought Detested Caesar's
couch, ill-omened wife Of spouse unhappy; at my nuptials twice A Fury has
been bridesmaid, and the ghosts Of slaughtered Crassi, with avenging shades
Brought by my wedlock to the doomed camp The Parthian massacre. Twice my
star has cursed The world, and peoples have been hurled to death In one red
moment; and the gods through me Have left the better cause. O, hero mine,
mightiest husband, wedded to a wife Unworthy! 'Twas through her that Fortune
gained The right to strike thee. Wherefore did I wed To bring thee misery? Mine,
mine the guilt, Mine be the penalty. And that the wave May bear thee gently
onwards, and the kings May keep their faith to thee, and all the earth Be ready to
thy rule, me from thy side Cast to the billows. Rather had I died To bring thee
victory; thy disasters thus, Thus expiate. And, cruel Julia, thee, Who by this war
hast vengeance on our vows, From thine abode I call: atonement find In this thy
rival's death, and spare at least Thy Magnus." Then upon his breast she fell,
While all the concourse wept — e'en Magnus' self, Who saw Thessalia's field
without a tear.

But now upon the shore a numerous band From Mitylene thus approached the
chief: "If 'tis our greatest glory to have kept The pledge with us by such a
husband placed, Do thou one night within these friendly walls We pray thee,
stay; thus honouring the homes Long since devoted, Magnus, to thy cause.

This spot in days to come the guest from Rome For thee shall honour. Nowhere
shalt thou find A surer refuge in defeat. All else May court the victor's favour;
we long since Have earned his chastisement. And though our isle Rides on the
deep, girt by the ocean wave, No ships has Caesar: and to us shall come, Be sure,
thy captains, to our trusted shore, The war renewing. Take, for all is thine, The
treasures of our temples and the gold, Take all our youth by land or on the sea To

do thy bidding: Lesbos only asks This from the chief who sought her in his pride, Not in his fall to leave her.” Pleased in soul At such a love, and joyed that in the world Some faith still lingered, thus Pompeius said: “Earth has for me no dearer land than this.

Did I not trust it with so sweet a pledge And find it faithful? Here was Rome for me, Country and household gods. This shore I sought Home of my wife, this Lesbos, which for her Had merited remorseless Caesar’s ire: Nor was afraid to trust you with the means To gain his mercy. But enough — through me Your guilt was caused — I part, throughout the world To prove my fate. Farewell thou happiest land!

Famous for ever, whether taught by thee Some other kings and peoples may be pleased To give me shelter; or should’st thou alone Be faithful. And now seek I in what lands Right may be found or wrong. My latest prayer Receive, O deity, if still with me

Thou bidest, thus. May it be mine again, Conquered, with hostile Caesar on my tracks To find a Lesbos where to enter in

And whence to part, unhindered.”

In the boat He placed his spouse: while from the shore arose Such lamentation, and such hands were raised In ire against the gods, that thou had’st deemed All left their kin for exile, and their homes.

And though for Magnus grieving in his fall Yet for Cornelia chiefly did they mourn Long since their gentle guest. For her had wept The Lesbian matrons had she left to join A victor husband: for she won their love, By kindly modesty and gracious mien, Ere yet her lord was conquered, while as yet Their fortunes stood.

Now slowly to the deep Sank fiery Titan; but not yet to those He sought (if such there be), was shown his orb, Though veiled from those he quitted. Magnus’ mind, Anxious with waking cares, sought through the kings His subjects, and the cities leagued with Rome In faith, and through the pathless tracts that lie Beyond the southern bounds: until the toil Of sorrowing thought

upon the past, and dread Of that which might be, made him cast afar His
wavering doubts, and from the captain seek Some counsel on the heavens; how
by the sky He marked his track upon the deep; what star Guided the path to
Syria, and what points Found in the Wain would pilot him aright To shores of
Libya. But thus replied The well-skilled watcher of the silent skies: “Not by the
constellations moving ever Across the heavens do we guide our barks; For that
were perilous; but by that star (2) Which never sinks nor dips below the wave,
Girt by the glittering groups men call the Bears.

When stands the pole-star clear before the mast, Then to the Bosphorus look we,
and the main Which carves the coast of Scythia. But the more Bootes dips, and
nearer to the sea

Is Cynosura seen, so much the ship

Towards Syria tends, till bright Canopus (3) shines, In southern skies content to
hold his course; With him upon the left past Pharos borne Straight for the Syrtes
shalt thou plough the deep.

But whither now dost bid me shape the yards And set the canvas?”

Magnus, doubting still; “This only be thy care: from Thracia steer The vessel
onward; shun with all thy skill Italia’s distant shore: and for the rest Trust to the
winds for guidance. When I sought, Pledged with the Lesbians, my spouse
beloved, My course was sure: now, Fortune, where thou wilt Give me a refuge.”
These his answering words.

The pilot, as they hung from level yards Shifted the sails; and hauling to the
stern One sheet, he slacked the other, to the left Steering, where Samian rocks
and Chian marred The stillness of the waters; while the sea Sent up in answer to
the changing keel A different murmur. Not so deftly turns Curbing his steeds, his
wain the Charioteer, While glows his dexter wheel, and with the left He almost
touches, yet avoids the goal.

Now Titan veiled the stars and showed the shore; When, following Magnus,
came a scattered band Saved from the Thracian storm. From Lesbos' port His
son; (4) next, captains who preserved their faith; For at his side, though
vanquished in the field, Cast down by fate, in exile, still there stood, Lords of the
earth and all her Orient realms, The Kings, his ministers.

To the furthest lands He bids (5) Deiotarus: "O faithful friend, Since in
Emathia's battlefield was lost The world, so far as Roman, it remains To test the
faith of peoples of the East Who drink of Tigris and Euphrates' stream, Secure as
yet from Caesar. Be it thine Far as the rising of the sun to trace The fates that
favour Magnus: to the courts Of Median palaces, to Scythian steppes; And to the
son of haughty Arsaces,

To bear my message, `Hold ye to the faith, Pledged by your priests and by the
Thunderer's name Of Latium sworn? Then fill your quivers full, Draw to its
fullest span th' Armenian bow; And, Getan archers, wing the fatal shaft.

And you, ye Parthians, if when I sought The Caspian gates, and on th' Alaunian
tribes (6) Fierce, ever-warring, pressed, I suffered you In Persian tracts to
wander, nor compelled To seek for shelter Babylonian walls; If beyond Cyrus'
kingdom (7) and the bounds Of wide Chaldaeae, where from Nysa's top Pours
down Hydaspes, and the Ganges flood Foams to the ocean, nearer far I stood
Than Persia's bounds to Phoebus' rising fires; If by my sufferance, Parthians,
you alone Decked not my triumphs, but in equal state Sole of all Eastern princes,
face to face Met Magnus in his pride, nor only once Through me were saved;
(for after that dread day Who but Pompeius soothed the kindling fires Of
Latium's anger?) — by my service paid Come forth to victory: burst the ancient
bounds By Macedon's hero set: in Magnus' cause March, Parthians, to Rome's
conquest. Rome herself Prays to be conquered.'"

Hard the task imposed; Yet doffed his robe, and swift obeyed, the king
Wrapped in a servant's mantle. If a Prince For safety play the boor, then happier,
sure, The peasant's lot than lordship of the world.

The king thus parted, past Icaria's rocks Pompeius' vessel skirts the foamy crags
Of little Samos: Colophon's tranquil sea And Ephesus lay behind him, and the
air Breathed freely on him from the Coan shore.

Cuidos he shunned, and, famous for its sun, Rhodos, and steering for the middle
deep Escaped the windings of Telmessus' bay; Till rose Pamphylian coasts
before the bark, And first the fallen chieftain dared to find In small Phaseils
shelter; for therein Scarce was the husbandman, and empty homes Forbad to
fear. Next Taurus' heights he saw And Dipsus falling from his lofty sides: So
sailed he onward.

Did Pompeius hope, Thus severed by the billows from the foe, To make his
safety sure? His little boat Flies unmolested past Cilician shores; But to their
exiled lord in chieftest part The senate of Rome was drawn. Celendrae there
Received their fleet, where fair Selinus' stream In spacious bay gives refuge
from the main; And to the gathered chiefs in mournful words At length
Pompeius thus resolved his thoughts: "O faithful comrades mine in war and
flight!

To me, my country! Though this barren shore Our place of meeting, and no
gathered host Surrounds us, yet upon our changed estate I seek your counsel.
Rouse ye as of yore With hearts of courage! Magnus on the field Not all is
perished, nor do fates forbid But that I rise afresh with living hope Of future
victories, and spurn defeat.

From Libyan ruins did not Marius rise Again recorded Consul on the page

Full of his honours? shall a lighter blow Keep Magnus down, whose thousand
chiefs and ships Still plough the billows; by defeat his strength Not whelmed but
scattered? And the fame alone Of our great deeds of glory in the past Shall now
protect us, and the world unchanged Still love its hero.

"Weigh upon the scales Ye chiefs, which best may help the needs of Rome, In
faith and armies; or the Parthian realm Egypt or Libya. For myself, ye chiefs, I
veil no secret thoughts, but thus advise.

Place no reliance on the Pharian king; His age forbids: nor on the cunning Moor,
Who vain of Punic ancestors, and vain Of Carthaginian memories and descent
(8) Supposed from Hannibal, and swollen with pride At Varus' supplication, sees
in thought Rome lie beneath him. Wherefore, comrades, seek At speed, the
Eastern world. Those mighty realms Disjoins from us Euphrates, and the gates
Called Caspian; on another sky than ours There day and night revolve; another
sea Of different hue is severed from our own. (9) Rule is their wish, nought else:
and in their plains Taller the war-horse, stronger twangs the bow; There fails nor
youth nor age to wing the shaft Fatal in flight. Their archers first subdued The
lance of Macedon and Baetra's (10) walls, Home of the Mede; and haughty
Babylon With all her storied towers: nor shall they dread The Roman onset;
trusting to the shafts By which the host of fated Crassus fell.

Nor trust they only to the javelin blade Untipped with poison: from the
rancorous edge The slightest wound deals death.

“Would that my lot Forced me not thus to trust that savage race Of Arsaces!
(11) Yet now their emulous fate Contends with Roman destinies: the gods Smile
favouring on their nation. Thence I'll pour On Caesar peoples from another earth
And all the Orient ravished from its home.

But should the East and barbarous treaties fail, Fate, bear our shipwrecked
fortunes past the bounds Of earth, as known to men. The kings I made I
supplicate not, but in death shall take To other spheres this solace: chief of all;
His hands, my kinsman's, never shed my blood Nor soothed me dying. Yet as
my mind in turn The varying fortunes of my life recalls, How was I glorious in
that Eastern world!

How great my name by far Maeotis marsh And where swift Tanais flows! No
other land Has so resounded with my conquests won, So sent me home
triumphant. Rome, do thou Approve my enterprise! What happier chance Could
favouring gods afford thee? Parthian hosts Shall fight the civil wars of Rome,
and share Her ills, and fall enfeebled. When the arms Of Caesar meet with
Parthian in the fray, Then must kind Fortune vindicate my lot Or Crassus be
avenged.”

But murmurs rose, And Magnus speaking knew his words condemned.

Then Lentulas (12) answered, with indignant soul, Foremost to rouse their valour, thus in words Worthy a Consul: "Have Thessalian woes Broken thy spirit so? One day's defeat Condemned the world to ruin? Is the cause Lost in one battle and beyond recall?

Find we no cure for wounds? Does Fortune drive Thee, Magnus, to the Parthians' feet alone?

And dost thou, fugitive, spurn the lands and skies Known heretofore, and seek for other poles And constellations, and Chaldaean gods, And rites barbarian, servant of the realm Of Parthia? But why then took we arms For love of liberty? If thou canst slave Thou hast deceived the world! Shall Parthia see Thee at whose name, ruler of mighty Rome, She trembled, at whose feet she captive saw Hyrcanian kings and Indian princes kneel, Now humbly suppliant, victim of the fates; And at thy prayer her puny strength extol In mad contention with the Western world?

Nor think, Pompeius, thou shalt plead thy cause In that proud tongue unknown to Parthian ears Of which thy fame is worthy; sobs and tears He shall demand of thee. And has our shame Brought us to this, that some barbarian foe Shall vengeance Hesperia's wrongs ere Rome her own?

Thou wert our leader for the civil war: Mid Scythia's peoples dost thou bruit abroad Wounds and disasters which are ours alone?

Rome until now, though subject to the yoke Of civic despots, yet within her walls Has brooked no foreign lord. And art thou pleased From all the world to summon to her gates These savage peoples, while the standards lost By far Euphrates when the Crassi fell Shall lead thy columns? Shall the only king Who failed Emathia, while the fates yet hid Their favouring voices, brave the victor's power, And join with thine his fortune? Nay, not so This nation trusts itself. Each race that claims A northern birth, unconquered in the fray Claims but the warrior's death; but as the sky Slopes towards the eastern tracts and gentler climes So are the nations. There in flowing robes And garments delicate are men arrayed.

True that the Parthian in Sarmatia's plains, Where Tigris spreads across the level meads, Contends invincible; for flight is his Unbounded; but should uplands bar

his path He scales them not; nor through the night of war Shall his weak bow
uncertain in its aim Repel the foeman; nor his strength of arm The torrent stem;
nor all a summer's day In dust and blood bear up against the foe.

They fill no hostile trench, nor in their hands Shall battering engine or machine
of war Dash down the rampart; and whate'er avails To stop their arrows, battles
like a wall. (13) Wide sweep their horsemen, fleeting in attack And light in
onset, and their troops shall yield A camp, not take it: poisoned are their shafts;
Nor do they dare a combat hand to hand; But as the winds may suffer, from afar
They draw their bows at venture. Brave men love The sword which, wielded by
a stalwart arm, Drives home the blow and makes the battle sure.

Not such their weapons; and the first assault Shall force the flying Mede with
coward hand And empty quiver from the field. His faith In poisoned blades is
placed; but trustest thou Those who without such aid refuse the war?

For such alliance wilt thou risk a death, With all the world between thee and thy
home?

Shall some barbarian earth or lowly grave Enclose thee perishing? E'en that
were shame While Crassus seeks a sepulchre in vain.

Thy lot is happy; death, unfeared by men, Is thy worst doom, Pompeius; but no
death Awaits Cornelia — such a fate for her This king shall not reserve; for
know not we The hateful secrets of barbarian love, Which, blind as that of
beasts, the marriage bed Pollutes with wives unnumbered? Nor the laws By
nature made respect they, nor of kin.

In ancient days the fable of the crime By tyrant Oedipus unwitting wrought,
Brought hate upon his city; but how oft Sits on the throne of Arsaces a prince Of
birth incestuous? This gracious dame Born of Metellus, noblest blood of Rome,
Shall share the couch of the barbarian king With thousand others: yet in savage
joy, Proud of her former husbands, he may grant Some larger share of favour;
and the fates May seem to smile on Parthia; for the spouse Of Crassus, captive,
shall to him be brought As spoil of former conquest. If the wound Dealt in that
fell defeat in eastern lands Still stirs thy heart, then double is the shame First to
have waged the war upon ourselves, Then ask the foe for succour. For what
blame Can rest on thee or Caesar, worse than this That in the clash of conflict ye
forgot For Crassus' slaughtered troops the vengeance due?

First should united Rome upon the Mede Have poured her captains, and the troops who guard The northern frontier from the Dacian hordes; And all her legions should have left the Rhine Free to the Teuton, till the Parthian dead Were piled in heaps upon the sands that hide Our heroes slain; and haughty Babylon Lay at her victor's feet. To this foul peace We pray an end; and if Thessalia's day Has closed our warfare, let the conqueror march Straight on our Parthian foe. Then should this heart, Then only, leap at Caesar's triumph won.

Go thou and pass Araxes' chilly stream On this thine errand; and the fleeting ghost Pierced by the Scythian shaft shall greet thee thus: `Art thou not he to whom our wandering shades Looked for their vengeance in the guise of war?

And dost thou sue for peace?' There shalt thou meet Memorials of the dead. Red is yon wall Where passed their headless trunks: Euphrates here Engulfed them slain, or Tigris' winding stream Cast on the shore to perish. Gaze on this, And thou canst supplicate at Caesar's feet In mid Thessalia seated. Nay, thy glance Turn on the Roman world, and if thou fear'st King Juba faithless and the southern realms, Then seek we Pharos. Egypt on the west Girt by the trackless Syrtes forces back By sevenfold stream the ocean; rich in glebe And gold and merchandise; and proud of Nile Asks for no rain from heaven. Now holds this boy Her sceptre, owed to thee; his guardian thou: And who shall fear this shadow of a name?

Hope not from monarchs old, whose shame is fled, Or laws or troth or honour of the gods: New kings bring mildest sway." (14) His words prevailed Upon his hearers. With what freedom speaks, When states are trembling, patriot despair!

Pompeius' voice was quelled.

They hoist their sails For Cyprus shaped, whose altars more than all The goddess loves who from the Paphian wave Sprang, mindful of her birth, if such be truth, And gods have origin. Past the craggy isle Pompeius sailing, left at length astern Its southern cape, and struck across the main With winds transverse and tides; nor reached the mount Grateful to sailors for its nightly gleam: But to the bounds of Egypt hardly won With battling canvas, where divided Nile Pours through the shallows his Pelusian stream. (15) Now was the season when the heavenly scale Most nearly balances the varying hours, Once only equal; for the

wintry day Repays to night her losses of the spring; And Magnus learning that
th' Egyptian king Lay by Mount Casius, ere the sun was set Or flagged his
canvas, thither steered his ship.

Already had a horseman from the shore In rapid gallop to the trembling court
Brought news their guest was come. Short was the time For counsel given; but in
haste were met All who advised the base Pellaeian king, Monsters, inhuman;
there Achoreus sat Less harsh in failing years, in Memphis born Of empty rites,
and guardian of the rise (16) Of fertilising Nile. While he was priest Not only
once had Apis (17) lived the space Marked by the crescent on his sacred brow.

First was his voice, for Magnus raised and troth And for the pledges of the king
deceased: But, skilled in counsel meet for shameless minds And tyrant hearts,
Pothinus, dared to claim Judgment of death on Magnus. "Laws and right Make
many guilty, Ptolemmus king.

And faith thus lauded (18) brings its punishment When it supports the fallen. To
the fates Yield thee, and to the gods; the wretched shun But seek the happy. As
the stars from earth Differ, and fire from ocean, so from right Expedience. (19)
The tyrant's shorn of strength Who ponders justice; and regard for right Bring's
ruin on a throne. For lawless power The best defence is crime, and cruel deeds
Find safety but in doing. He that aims At piety must flee the regal hall;

Virtue's the bane of rule; he lives in dread Who shrinks from cruelty. Nor let this
chief Unpunished scorn thy youth, who thinks that thou Not even the conquered
from our shore can'st bar.

Nor to a stranger, if thou would'st not reign, Resign thy sceptre, for the ties of
blood Speak for thy banished sister. Let her rule O'er Nile and Pharos: we shall
at the least Preserve our Egypt from the Latian arms.

What Magnus owned not ere the war was done, No more shall Caesar. Driven
from all the world, Trusting no more to Fortune, now he seeks Some foreign
nation which may share his fate.

Shades of the slaughtered in the civil war Compel him: nor from Caesar's arms
alone But from the Senate also does he fly, Whose blood outpoured has gorged
Thessalian fowl; Monarchs he fears whose all he hath destroyed, And nations

piled in one ensanguined heap, By him deserted. Victim of the blow Thessalia dealt, refused in every land, He asks for help from ours not yet betrayed.

But none than Egypt with this chief from Rome Has juster quarrel; who has sought with arms To stain our Pharos, distant from the strife And peaceful ever, and to make our realm Suspected by his victor. Why alone Should this our country please thee in thy fall?

Why bringst thou here the burden of thy fates, Pharsalia's curse? In Caesar's eyes long since We have offence which by the sword alone Can find its condonation, in that we By thy persuasion from the Senate gained This our dominion. By our prayers we helped If not by arms thy cause. This sword, which fate Bids us make ready, not for thee I hold Prepared, but for the vanquished; and on thee (Would it had been on Caesar) falls the stroke; For we are borne. as all things, to his side.

And dost thou doubt, since thou art in my power, Thou art my victim? By what trust in us Cam'st thou, unhappy? Scarce our people tills The fields, though softened by the refluent Nile: Know well our strength, and know we can no more.

Rome 'neath the ruin of Pompeius lies: Shalt thou, king, uphold him? Shalt thou dare To stir Pharsalia's ashes and to call War to thy kingdom? Ere the fight was fought We joined not either army — shall we now Make Magnus friend whom all the world deserts?

And fling a challenge to the conquering chief And all his proud successes? Fair is help Lent in disaster, yet reserved for those Whom fortune favours. Faith her friends selects Not from the wretched.”

They decree the crime: Proud is the boyish tyrant that so soon His slaves permit him to so great a deed To give his favouring voice; and for the work They choose Achillas.

Where the treacherous shore Runs out in sand below the Casian mount And where the shallow waters of the sea Attest the Syrtes near, in little boat Achillas

and his partners in the crime With swords embark. Ye gods! and shall the Nile
And barbarous Memphis and th' effeminate crew That throngs Pelusian Canopus
raise Its thoughts to such an enterprise? Do thus Our fates press on the world? Is
Rome thus fallen That in our civil frays the Phaxian sword Finds place, or
Egypt? O, may civil war Be thus far faithful that the hand which strikes Be of
our kindred; and the foreign fiend Held worlds apart! Pompeius, great in soul,
Noble in spirit, had deserved a death From Caesar's self. And, king, hast thou no
fear At such a ruin of so great a name?

And dost thou dare when heaven's high thunder rolls, Thou, puny boy, to mingle
with its tones Thine impure utterance? Had he not won A world by arms, and
thrice in triumph scaled The sacred Capitol, and vanquished kings, And
championed the Roman Senate's cause; He, kinsman of the victor? 'Twas
enough To cause forbearance in a Pharian king, That he was Roman. Wherefore
with thy sword Dost stab our breasts? Thou know'st not, impious boy, How
stand thy fortunes; now no more by right Hast thou the sceptre of the land of
Nile; For prostrate, vanquished in the civil wars Is he who gave it.

Furling now his sails, Magnus with oars approached th' accursed land, When
in their little boat the murderous crew Drew nigh, and feigning from th' Egyptian
court A ready welcome, blamed the double tides Broken by shallows, and their
scanty beach Unfit for fleets; and bade him to their craft Leaving his loftier ship.
Had not the fates'

Eternal and unalterable laws

Called for their victim and decreed his end Now near at hand, his comrades'
warning voice Yet might have stayed his course: for if the court To Magnus, who
bestowed the Pharian crown, In truth were open, should not king and fleet In
pomp have come to greet him? But he yields: The fates compel. Welcome to him
was death Rather than fear. But, rushing to the side, His spouse would follow, for
she dared not stay, Fearing the guile. Then he, "Abide, my wife, And son, I pray
you; from the shore afar Await my fortunes; mine shall be the life To test their
honour." But Cornelia still Withstood his bidding, and with arms outspread
Frenzied she cried: "And whither without me, Cruel, departest? Thou forbid'st
me share Thy risks Thessalian; dost again command That I should part from
thee? No happy star Breaks on our sorrow. If from every land Thou dost debar

me, why didst turn aside In flight to Lesbos? On the waves alone Am I thy fit companion?" Thus in vain, Leaning upon the bulwark, dazed with dread; Nor could she turn her straining gaze aside, Nor see her parting husband. All the fleet Stood silent, anxious, waiting for the end: Not that they feared the murder which befell, But lest their leader might with humble prayer Kneel to the king he made.

As Magnus passed, A Roman soldier from the Pharian boat, Septimius, salutes him. Gods of heaven!

There stood he, minion to a barbarous king, Nor bearing still the javelin of Rome; But vile in all his arms; giant in form Fierce, brutal, thirsting as a beast may thirst For carnage. Didst thou, Fortune, for the sake Of nations, spare to dread Pharsalus field This savage monster's blows? Or dost thou place Throughout the world, for thy mysterious ends, Some ministering swords for civil war?

Thus, to the shame of victors and of gods, This story shall be told in days to come: A Roman swordsman, once within thy ranks, Slave to the orders of a puny prince, Severed Pompeius' neck. And what shall be Septimius' fame hereafter? By what name This deed be called, if Brutus wrought a crime?

Now came the end, the latest hour of all: Rapt to the boat was Magnus, of himself No longer master, and the miscreant crew Unsheathed their swords; which when the chieftain saw He swathed his visage, for he scorned unveiled To yield his life to fortune; closed his eyes And held his breath within him, lest some word, Or sob escaped, might mar the deathless fame His deeds had won. And when within his side Achillas plunged his blade, nor sound nor cry He gave, but calm consented to the blow And proved himself in dying; in his breast These thoughts revolving: "In the years to come Men shall make mention of our Roman toils, Gaze on this boat, ponder the Pharian faith; And think upon thy fame and all the years While fortune smiled: but for the ills of life How thou could'st bear them, this men shall not know Save by thy death. Then weigh thou not the shame That waits on thine undoing. Whose strikes, The blow is Caesar's. Men may tear this frame And cast it mangled to the winds of heaven; Yet have I prospered, nor can all the gods Call back my triumphs. Life may bring defeat,

But death no misery. If my spouse and son Behold me murdered, silently the more I suffer: admiration at my death

Shall prove their love.” Thus did Pompeius die, Guarding his thoughts.

But now Cornelia filled The air with lamentations at the sight; “O, husband, whom my wicked self hath slain!

That lonely isle apart thy bane hath been And stayed thy coming. Caesar to the Nile Has won before us; for what other hand May do such work? But whosoe’er thou art Sent from the gods with power, for Caesar’s ire, Or thine own sake, to slay, thou dost not know Where lies the heart of Magnus. Haste and do!

Such were his prayer — no other punishment Befits the conquered. Yet let him ere his end See mine, Cornelia’s. On me the blame Of all these wars, who sole of Roman wives Followed my spouse afield nor feared the fates; And in disaster, when the kings refused, Received and cherished him. Did I deserve Thus to be left of thee, and didst thou seek To spare me? And when rushing on thine end Was I to live? Without the monarch’s help Death shall be mine, either by headlong leap Beneath the waters; or some sailor’s hand Shall bind around this neck the fatal cord; Or else some comrade, worthy of his chief, Drive to my heart his blade for Magnus’ sake, And claim the service done to Ceasar’s arms.

What! does your cruelty withhold my fate?

Ah! still he lives, nor is it mine as yet To win this freedom; they forbid me death, Kept for the victor’s triumph.” Thus she spake, While friendly hands upheld her fainting form; And sped the trembling vessel from the shore.

Men say that Magnus, when the deadly blows Fell thick upon him, lost nor form divine, Nor venerated mien; and as they gazed Upon his lacerated head they marked Still on his features anger with the gods.

Nor death could change his visage — for in act Of striking, fierce Septimius’ murderous hand (Thus making worse his crime) severed the folds That swathed the face, and seized the noble head And drooping neck ere yet was fled the life:

Then placed upon the bench; and with his blade
Slow at its hideous task, and
blows unskilled Hacked through the flesh and brake the knotted bone: For yet
man had not learned by swoop of sword Deftly to lop the neck. Achilles claimed
The gory head dissevered. What! shalt thou A Roman soldier, while thy blade
yet reeks From Magnus' slaughter, play the second part To this base varlet of the
Pharian king?

Nor bear thyself the bleeding trophy home?

Then, that the impious boy (ah! shameful fate) Might know the features of the
hero slain, Seized by the locks, the dread of kings, which waved Upon his stately
front, on Pharian pike The head was lifted; while almost the life Gave to the
tongue its accents, and the eyes Were yet scarce glazed: that head at whose
command Was peace or war, that tongue whose eloquent tones Would move
assemblies, and that noble brow On which were showered the rewards of Rome.

Nor to the tyrant did the sight suffice To prove the murder done. The perishing
flesh, The tissues, and the brain he bids remove By art nefarious: the shrivelled
skin Draws tight upon the bone; and poisonous juice Gives to the face its
lineaments in death.

Last of thy race, thou base degenerate boy, About to perish (20) soon, and yield
the throne To thine incestuous sister; while the Prince From Macedon here in
consecrated vault Now rests, and ashes of the kings are closed In mighty
pyramids, and lofty tombs Of thine unworthy fathers mark the graves; Shall
Magnus' body hither and thither borne Be battered, headless, by the ocean wave?

Too much it troubled thee to guard the corse Unmutilated, for his kinsman's eye
To witness! Such the faith which Fortune kept With prosperous Pompeius to the
end.

'Twas not for him in evil days some ray Of light to hope for. Shattered from the
height Of power in one short moment to his death!

Years of unbroken victories balanced down By one day's carnage! In his happy
time Heaven did not harass him, nor did she spare In misery. Long Fortune held
the hand That dashed him down. Now beaten by the sands, Torn upon rocks, the

sport of ocean's waves Poured through its wounds, his headless carcase lies,
Save by the lacerated trunk unknown.

Yet ere the victor touched the Pharian sands Some scanty rites to Magnus
Fortune gave, Lest he should want all burial. Pale with fear Came Cordus,
hasting from his hiding place; Quaestor, he joined Pompeius on thy shore,
Idalian Cyprus, bringing in his train A cloud of evils. Through the darkening
shades Love for the dead compelled his trembling steps, Hard by the marin of
the deep to search And drag to land his master. Through the clouds The moon
shone sadly, and her rays were dim; But by its hue upon the hoary main

He knew the body. In a fast embrace He holds it, wrestling with the greedy sea,
And deftly watching for a reflux wave Gains help to bring his burden to the
land.

Then clinging to the loved remains, the wounds Washed with his tears, thus to
the gods he speaks, And misty stars obscure: "Here, Fortune, lies Pompeius,
thine: no costly incense rare Or pomp of funeral he dares to ask; Nor that the
smoke rise heavenward from his pyre With eastern odours rich; nor that the
necks Of pious Romans bear him to the tomb, Their parent; while the forums
shall resound With dirges; nor that triumphs won of yore Be borne before him;
nor for sorrowing hosts To cast their weapons forth. Some little shell He begs as
for the meanest, laid in which His mutilated corse may reach the flame.

Grudge not his misery the pile of wood Lit by this menial hand. Is't not enough
That his Cornelia with dishevelled hair Weeps not beside him at his obsequies,
Nor with a last embrace shall place the torch Beneath her husband dead, but on
the deep Hard by still wanders?"

Burning from afar He sees the pyre of some ignoble youth Deserted of his
own, with none to guard: And quickly drawing from beneath the limbs Some
glowing logs, "Whoe'er thou art," he said "Neglected shade, uncared for, dear to
none, Yet happier than Pompeius in thy death, Pardon I ask that this my stranger
hand Should violate thy tomb. Yet if to shades Be sense or memory, gladly shalt
thou yield This from thy pyre to Magnus. 'Twere thy shame, Blessed with due
burial, if his remains Were homeless." Speaking thus, the wood aflame Back to

the headless trunk at speed he bore, Which hanging on the margin of the deep,
Almost the sea had won. In sandy trench The gathered fragments of a broken
boat, Trembling, he placed around the noble limbs.

No pile above the corpse nor under lay, Nor was the fire beneath. Then as he
crouched Beside the blaze, "O, greatest chief," he cried, Majestic champion of
Hesperia's name, If to be tossed unburied on the deep Rather than these poor
rites thy shade prefer, From these mine offices thy mighty soul Withdraw,
Pompeius. Injuries dealt by fate Command this duty, lest some bird or beast Or
ocean monster, or fierce Caesar's wrath Should venture aught upon thee. Take
the fire; All that thou canst; by Roman hand at least Enkindled. And should
Fortune grant return To loved Hesperia's land, not here shall rest Thy sacred
ashes; but within an urn Cornelia, from this humble hand received, Shall place
them. Here upon a meagre stone We draw the characters to mark thy tomb.

These letters reading may some kindly friend Bring back thine head, dissevered,
and may grant Full funeral honours to thine earthly frame."

Then did he cherish the enfeebled fire Till Magnus' body mingled with its
flames.

But now the harbinger of coming dawn Had paled the constellations: he in fear
Seeks for his hiding place. Whom dost thou dread, Madman, what punishment
for such a crime, For which thy fame by rumour trumpet-tongued Has been sent
down to ages? Praise is thine For this thy work, at impious Caesar's hands; Sure
of a pardon, go; confess thy task, And beg the head dissevered. But his work
Was still unfinished, and with pious hand (Fearing some foe) he seizes on the
bones Now half consumed, and sinews; and the wave Pours in upon them, and in
shallow trench Commits them to the earth; and lest some breeze Might bear
away the ashes, or by chance Some sailor's anchor might disturb the tomb, A
stone he places, and with stick half burned Traces the sacred name: HERE
MAGNUS LIES.

And art thou, Fortune, pleased that such a spot Should be his tomb which even
Caesar's self Had chosen, rather than permit his corse To rest unburied? Why,
with thoughtless hand Confine his shade within the narrow bounds Of this poor

sepulchre? Where the furthest sand Hangs on the margin of the baffled deep
Cabined he lies; yet where the Roman name Is known, and Empire, such in truth
shall be The boundless measure of his resting-place.

Blot out this stone, this proof against the gods!

Oeta finds room for Hercules alone, And Nysa's mountain for the Bromian god;
(21) Not all the lands of Egypt should suffice For Magnus dead: and shall one
Pharian stone Mark his remains? Yet should no turf disclose His title, peoples of
the earth would fear To spurn his ashes, and the sands of Nile No foot would
tread. But if the stone deserves So great a name, then add his mighty deeds:
Write Lepidus conquered and the Alpine war, And fierce Sertorius by his aiding
arm O'erthrown; the chariots which as knight he drove; (22) Cilician pirates
driven from the main, And Commerce safe to nations; Eastern kings Defeated
and the barbarous Northern tribes; Write that from arms he ever sought the robe;
Write that content upon the Capitol Thrice only triumphed he, nor asked his due.

What mausoleum were for such a chief A fitting monument? This paltry stone
Records no syllable of the lengthy tale Of honours: and the name which men
have read Upon the sacred temples of the gods, And lofty arches built of hostile
spoils, On desolate sands here marks his lowly grave With characters uncouth,
such as the glance Of passing traveller or Roman guest Might pass unnoticed.

Thou Egyptian land By destiny foredoomed to bear a part In civil warfare, not
unreasoning sang High Cumae's prophetess, when she forbad (23) The stream
Pelusian to the Roman arms, And all the banks which in the summer-tide Are
covered by his flood. What grievous fate Shall I call down upon thee? May the
Nile Turn back his water to his source, thy fields Want for the winter rain, and all
the land Crumble to desert wastes! We in our fanes Have known thine Isis and
thy hideous gods, Half hounds, half human, and the drum that bids To sorrow,
and Osiris, whom thy dirge (24) Proclaims for man. Thou, Egypt, in thy sand
Our dead containest. Nor, though her temples now Serve a proud master, yet has
Rome required Pompeius' ashes: in a foreign land

Still lies her chief. But though men feared at first The victor's vengeance, now at
length receive Thy Magnus' bones, if still the restless wave Hath not prevailed
upon that hated shore.

Shall men have fear of tombs and dread to move The dust of those who should
be with the gods?

O, may my country place the crime on me, If crime it be, to violate such a tomb
Of such a hero, and to bear his dust Home to Ausonia. Happy, happy he

Who bears such holy office in his trust! (25) Haply when famine rages in the
land Or burning southern winds, or fires abound And earthquake shocks, and
Rome shall pray an end From angry heaven — by the gods' command, In
council given, shalt thou be transferred To thine own city, and the priest shall
bear Thy sacred ashes to their last abode.

Who now may seek beneath the raging Crab Or hot Syene's waste, or Thebes
athirst Under the rainy Pleiades, to gaze

On Nile's broad stream; or whose may exchange On the Red Sea or in Arabian
ports

Some Eastern merchandise, shall turn in awe To view the venerable stone that
marks Thy grave, Pompeius; and shall worship more Thy dust commingled with
the arid sand, Thy shade though exiled, than the fane upreared (26) On Casius'
mount to Jove! In temples shrined And gold, thy memory were viler deemed:
Fortune lies with thee in thy lowly tomb And makes thee rival of Olympus' king.

More awful is that stone by Libyan seas Lashed, than are Conquerors' altars.
There in earth A deity rests to whom all men shall bow More than to gods
Tarpeian: and his name Shall shine the brighter in the days to come For that no
marble tomb about him stands Nor lofty monument. That little dust Time shall
soon scatter and the tomb shall fall And all the proofs shall perish of his death.

And happier days shall come when men shall gaze Upon the stone, nor yet
believe the tale: And Egypt's fable, that she holds the grave Of great Pompeius,
be believed no more Than Crete's which boasts the sepulchre of Jove. (27)
ENDNOTES:

(1) Comp. Book VI., line 407.

(2) Comp. Book III., line 256.

(3) Canopus is a star in Argo, invisible in Italy. (Haskins.) (4) Sextus.

(5) Tetrarch of Galatia. He was always friendly to Rome, and in the civil war sided with Pompeius. He was at Pharsalia.

(6) A Scythian people.

(7) Pompeius seems to have induced the Roman public to believe that he had led his armies to such extreme distances, but he never in fact did so. — Mommsen, vol. iv. p. 147.

(8) Juba was of supposed collateral descent from Hannibal.

(Haskins, quoting “The Scholiast.”) (9) Confusing the Red Sea with the Persian Gulf.

(10) Balkh of modern times. Bactria was one of the kingdoms established by the successors of Alexander the Great. It was, however, subdued by the Parthians about the middle of the third century B.C.

(11) Dion could not believe it possible that Pompeius ever contemplated taking refuge in Parthia, but Plutarch states it as a fact; and says that it was Theophanes of Lesbos who dissuaded him from doing so. (“Pompeius”, 76). Mommsen (vol. iv., pp. 421-423) discusses the subject, and says that from Parthia only could Pompeius have attempted to seek support, and that such an attempt, putting the objections to it aside, would probably have failed. Lucan’s sympathies were probably with Lentulus.

(12) Probably Lucius Lentulus Crus, who had been Consul, for B.C.

49, along with Caius Marcellus. (See Book V., 9.) He was murdered in Egypt by Ptolemy’s ministers.

(13) That is, be as easily defended.

(14) Thus rendered by Sir Thomas May, of the Long Parliament: “Men used to sceptres are ashamed of nought: The mildest government a kingdom finds Under new kings.”

(15) That is, he reached the most eastern mouth of the Nile instead of the

western.

(16) At Memphis was the well in which the rise and fall of the water acted as a Nilometer (Mr. Haskins's note).

(17) Comp. Herodotus, Book iii. 27. Apis was a god who appeared at intervals in the shape of a calf with a white mark on his brow. His appearance was the occasion of general rejoicing.

Cambyzes slew the Apis which came in his time, and for this cause became mad, as the Egyptians said.

(18) That is, by Achoreus, who had just spoken.

(19) Compare Ben Jonson's "Sejanus", Act ii., Scene 2: —

The prince who shames a tyrant's name to bear Shall never dare do anything, but fear; All the command of sceptres quite doth perish If it begin religious thoughts to cherish; Whole empires fall, swayed by these nice respects, It is the licence of dark deeds protects E'en states most hated, when no laws resist The sword, but that it acteth what it list."

(20) He was drowned in attempting to escape in the battle on the Nile in the following autumn.

(21) Dionysus. But this god, though brought up by the nymphs of Mount Nysa, was not supposed to have been buried there.

(22) See Book VII., line 20.

(23) This warning of the Sibyl is also alluded to by Cicero in a letter to P. Lentulus, Proconsul of Cilicia. (Mr. Haskins'

note. See also Mommsen, vol. iv., p. 305.) It seems to have been discovered in the Sibylline books at the time when it was desired to prevent Pompeius from interfering in the affairs of Egypt, in B.C. 57.

(24) That is, by their weeping for Iris departure they treated him as a mortal and not as a god. Osiris was the soul of Apis (see on line 537), and when that animal grew old and unfit for the residence of Osiris the latter was thought to quit it.

Then began the weeping, which continued until a new Apis appeared, selected, of course, by Osiris for his dwelling-place. Then they called out “We have found him, let us rejoice.” For a discussion on the Egyptian conception of Osiris, and his place in the theogony of that nation, see Hegel’s “Lectures on the Philosophy of History”: Chapter on Egypt.

(25) It may be noted that the Emperor Hadrian raised a monument on the spot to the memory of Pompeius some sixty years after this was written (Durny’s ‘History of Rome,’ iii., 319).

Plutarch states that Cornelia had the remains taken to Rome and interred in a mausoleum. Lucan, it may be supposed, knew nothing of this.

(26) There was a temple to Jupiter on “Mount Casius old”.

(27) The legend that Jove was buried in Crete is also mentioned by Cicero: “De Natura Deorum”, iii., 21.

BOOK IX

CATO

Yet in those ashes on the Pharian shore, In that small heap of dust, was not confined So great a shade; but from the limbs half burnt And narrow cell sprang forth (1) and sought the sky Where dwells the Thunderer. Black the space of air Upreaching to the poles that bear on high The constellations in their nightly round; There 'twixt the orbit of the moon and earth Abide those lofty spirits, half divine, Who by their blameless lives and fire of soul Are fit to tolerate the pure expanse That bounds the lower ether: there shall dwell, Where nor the monument encased in gold, Nor richest incense, shall suffice to bring The buried dead, in union with the spheres, Pompeius' spirit. When with heavenly light His soul was filled, first on the wandering stars And fixed orbs he bent his wondering gaze; Then saw what darkness veils our earthly day And scorned the insults heaped upon his corse.

Next o'er Emathian plains he winged his flight, And ruthless Caesar's standards, and the fleet Tossed on the deep: in Brutus' blameless breast Tarried awhile, and roused his angered soul To reap the vengeance; last possessed the mind Of haughty Cato.

He while yet the scales Were poised and balanced, nor the war had given The world its master, hating both the chiefs, Had followed Magnus for the Senate's cause And for his country: since Pharsalia's field Ran red with carnage, now was all his heart Bound to Pompeius. Rome in him received Her guardian; a people's trembling limbs He cherished with new hope and weapons gave Back to the craven hands that cast them forth.

Nor yet for empire did he wage the war Nor fearing slavery: nor in arms achieved Aught for himself: freedom, since Magnus fell, The aim of all his host. And lest the foe In rapid course triumphant should collect His scattered bands, he sought Corcyra's gulfs Concealed, and thence in ships unnumbered bore The fragments of the ruin wrought in Thrace.

Who in such mighty armament had thought A routed army sailed upon the main

Thronging the sea with keels? Round Malea's cape And Taenarus open to the shades below And fair Cythera's isle, th' advancing fleet Sweeps o'er the yielding wave, by northern breeze Borne past the Cretan shores. But Phycus dared Refuse her harbour, and th' avenging hand Left her in ruins. Thus with gentle airs They glide along the main and reach the shore From Palinurus (2) named; for not alone On seas Italian, Pilot of the deep, Hast thou thy monument; and Libya too Claims that her waters pleased thy soul of yore.

Then in the distance on the main arose The shining canvas of a stranger fleet, Or friend or foe they knew not. Yet they dread In every keel the presence of that chief Their fear-compelling conqueror. But in truth That navy tears and sorrow bore, and woes To make e'en Cato weep.

For when in vain Cornelia prayed her stepson and the crew To stay their flight, lest haply from the shore Back to the sea might float the headless corse; And when the flame arising marked the place Of that unhallowed rite, "Fortune, didst thou Judge me unfit," she cried, "to light the pyre To cast myself upon the hero dead,

The lock to sever, and compose the limbs Tossed by the cruel billows of the deep, To shed a flood of tears upon his wounds, And from the flickering flame to bear away And place within the temples of the gods All that I could, his dust? That pyre bestows No honour, haply by some Pharian hand Piled up in insult to his mighty shade.

Happy the Crassi lying on the waste Unburied. To the greater shame of heaven Pompeius has such funeral. And shall this For ever be my lot? her husbands slain Cornelia ne'er enclose within the tomb, Nor shed the tear beside the urn that holds The ashes of the loved? Yet for my grief What boots or monument or ordered pomp?

Dost thou not, impious, upon thy heart Pompeius' image, and upon thy soul

Bear ineffaceable? Dust closed in urns Is for the wife who would survive her lord Not such as thee, Cornelia! And yet Yon scanty light that glimmers from afar Upon the Pharian shore, somewhat of thee Recalls, Pompeius! Now the

flame sinks down And smoke drifts up across the eastern sky Bearing thine ashes, and the rising wind Sighs hateful in the sail. To me no more Dearer than this whatever land may yield Pompeius' victory, nor the frequent car That carried him in triumph to the hill; Gone is that happy husband from my thoughts; Here did I lose the hero whom I knew; Here let me stay; his presence shall endear The sands of Nile where fell the fatal blow.

Thou, Sextus, brave the chances of the war And bear Pompeius' standard through the world.

For thus thy father spake within mine ear: `When sounds my fatal hour let both my sons Urge on the war; nor let some Caesar find Room for an empire, while shall live on earth Still one in whom Pompeius' blood shall run.

This your appointed task; all cities strong In freedom of their own, all kingdoms urge To join the combat; for Pompeius calls.

Nor shall a chieftain of that famous name Ride on the seas and fail to find a fleet.

Urged by his sire's unconquerable will And mindful of his rights, mine heir shall rouse All nations to the conflict. One alone, (Should he contend for freedom) may ye serve; Cato, none else!' Thus have I kept the faith; Thy plot (3) prevailed upon me, and I lived Thy mandate to discharge. Now through the void Of space, and shades of Hell, if such there be, I follow; yet how distant be my doom I know not: first my spirit must endure The punishment of life, which saw thine end And could survive it; sighs shall break my heart, Tears shall dissolve it: sword nor noose I need Nor headlong plunge. 'Twere shameful since thy death, Were aught but grief required to cause my own."

She seeks the cabin, veiled, in funeral garb, In tears to find her solace, and to love Grief in her husband's room; no prayers were hers For life, as were the sailors'; nor their shout Roused by the height of peril, moved her soul, Nor angered waves: but sorrowing there she lay, Resigned to death and welcoming the storm.

First reached they Cyprus on the foamy brine; Then as the eastern breeze more

gently held The favouring deep, they touched the Libyan shore Where stood the camp of Cato. Sad as one Who deep in fear presages ills to come, Cnaeus beheld his brother and his band Of patriot comrades. Swift into the wave He leaps and cries, "Where, brother, is our sire?

Still stands our country mistress of the world, Or are we fallen, Rome with Magnus' death Rapt to the shades?" Thus he: but Sextus said "Oh happy thou who by report alone

Hear'st of the deed that chanced on yonder shore!

These eyes that saw, my brother, share the guilt.

Not Caesar wrought the murder of our sire, Nor any captain worthy in the fray.

He fell beneath the orders of a king Shameful and base, while trusting to the gods Who shield the guest; a king who in that land By his concession ruled: (this the reward For favours erst bestowed). Within my sight Pierced through with wounds our noble father fell: Yet deeming not the petty prince of Nile So fell a deed would dare, to Egypt's strand I thought great Caesar come. But worse than all, Worse than the wounds which gaped upon his frame Struck me with horror to the inmost heart, Our murdered father's head, shorn from the trunk And borne aloft on javelin; this sight, As rumour said, the cruel victor asked To feast his eyes, and prove the bloody deed.

For whether ravenous birds and Pharian dogs Have torn his corse asunder, or a fire Consumed it, which with stealthy flame arose Upon the shore, I know not. For the parts Devoured by destiny I only blame

The gods: I weep the part preserved by men."

Thus Sextus spake: and Cnaeus at the words Flamed into fury for his father's shame.

"Sailors, launch forth our navies, by your oars Forced through the deep though wind and sea oppose: Captains, lead on: for civil strife ne'er gave So great a prize; to lay in earth the limbs Of Magnus, and avenge him with the blood Of that unmanly tyrant. Shall I spare Great Alexander's fort, nor sack the shrine

And plunge his body in the tideless marsh?

Nor drag Amasis from the Pyramids,

And all their ancient Kings, to swim the Nile?

Torn from his tomb, that god of all mankind Isis, unburied, shall avenge thy shade; And veiled Osiris shall I hurl abroad In mutilated fragments; and the form Of sacred Apis; (4) and with these their gods Shall light a furnace, that shall burn the head They held in insult. Thus their land shall pay The fullest penalty for the shameful deed.

No husbandman shall live to till the fields Nor reap the benefit of brimming Nile.

Thou only, Father, gods and men alike Fallen and perished, shalt possess the land.”

Such were the words he spake; and soon the fleet Had dared the angry deep: but Cato’s voice While praising, calmed the youthful chieftain’s rage.

Meanwhile, when Magnus’ fate was known, the air Sounded with lamentations which the shore Re-echoed; never through the ages past, By history recorded, was it known

That thus a people mourned their ruler’s death.

Yet more when worn with tears, her pallid cheek Veiled by her loosened tresses, from the ship Cornelia came, they wept and beat the breast.

The friendly land once gained, her husband’s garb, His arms and spoils, embroidered deep in gold, Thrice worn of old upon the sacred hill (5) She placed upon the flame. Such were for her The ashes of her spouse: and such the love Which glowed in every heart, that soon the shore Blazed with his obsequies. Thus at winter-tide By frequent fires th’ Apulian herdsman seeks To render to the fields their verdant growth; Till blaze Garganus’ uplands and the meads Of

Vultur, and the pasture of the herds By warm Matinum.

Yet Pompeius' shade Nought else so gratified, not all the blame The people dared to heap upon the gods, For him their hero slain, as these few words From Cato's noble breast instinct with truth: "Gone is a citizen who though no peer (6) Of those who disciplined the state of yore In due submission to the bounds of right, Yet in this age irreverent of law

Has played a noble part. Great was his power, But freedom safe: when all the plebs was prone To be his slaves, he chose the private gown; So that the Senate ruled the Roman state, The Senate's ruler: nought by right of arms He e'er demanded: willing took he gifts Yet from a willing giver: wealth was his Vast, yet the coffers of the State he filled Beyond his own. He seized upon the sword, Knew when to sheath it; war did he prefer To arts of peace, yet armed loved peace the more.

Pleased took he power, pleased he laid it down: Chaste was his home and simple, by his wealth Untarnished. Mid the peoples great his name And venerated: to his native Rome

He wrought much good. True faith in liberty Long since with Marius and Sulla fled: Now when Pompeius has been reft away Its counterfeit has perished. Now unshamed Shall seize the despot on Imperial power, Unshamed shall cringe the Senate. Happy he Who with disaster found his latest breath And met the Pharian sword prepared to slay.

Life might have been his lot, in despot rule, Prone at his kinsman's throne. Best gift of all The knowledge how to die; next, death compelled.

If cruel Fortune doth reserve for me An alien conqueror, may Juba be

As Ptolemaeus. So he take my head

My body grace his triumph, if he will."

More than had Rome resounded with his praise Words such as these gave honour to the shade Of that most noble dead.

Meanwhile the crowd Weary of warfare, since Pompeius' fall, Broke into discord, as their ancient chief Cilician called them to desert the camp.

But Cato hailed them from the furthest beach: "Untamed Cilician, is thy course now set For Ocean theft again; Pompeius gone, Once more a pirate?" Thus he spake, and gazed At all the stirring throng; but one whose mind Was fixed on flight, thus answered, "Pardon, chief, 'Twas love of Magnus, not of civil war, That led us to the fight: his side was ours: With him whom all the world preferred to peace, Our cause is perished. Let us seek our homes Long since unseen, our children and our wives.

If nor the rout nor dread Pharsalia's field Nor yet Pompeius' death shall close the war, Whence comes the end? The vigour of a life For us is vanished: in our failing years Give us at least some pious hand to speed The parting soul, and light the funeral pyre.

Scarce even to its captains civil strife Concedes due burial. Nor in our defeat Does Fortune threaten us with the savage yoke Of distant nations. In the garb of Rome And with her rights, I leave thee. Who had been Second to Magnus living, he shall be My first hereafter: to that sacred shade Be the prime honour. Chance of war appoints My lord but not my leader. Thee alone I followed, Magnus; after thee the fates.

Nor hope we now for victory, nor wish; For all our Thracian army is fled

In Caesar's victory, whose potent star Of fortune rules the world, and none but he Has power to keep or save. That civil war Which while Pompeius lived was loyalty Is impious now. If in the public right Thou, patriot Cato, find'st thy guide, we seek The standards of the Consul." Thus he spake And with him leaped into the ship a throng Of eager comrades.

Then was Rome undone, For all the shore was stirring with a crowd Athirst for slavery. But burst these words From Cato's blameless breast: "Then with like vows As Caesar's rival host ye too did seek A lord and master! not for Rome the fight, But for Pompeius! For that now no more Ye fight for tyranny, but for yourselves, Not for some despot chief, ye live and die; Since now 'tis safe to

conquer and no lord Shall rob you, victors, of a world subdued —

Ye flee the war, and on your abject necks Feel for the absent yoke; nor can endure Without a despot! Yet to men the prize Were worth the danger. Magnus might have used To evil ends your blood; refuse ye now, With liberty so near, your country's call?

Now lives one tyrant only of the three; Thus far in favour of the laws have wrought The Pharian weapons and the Parthian bow; Not you, degenerate! Begone, and spurn This gift of Ptolemaeus. (8) Who would think Your hands were stained with blood? The foe will deem That you upon that dread Thessalian day First turned your backs. Then flee in safety, flee!

By neither battle nor blockade subdued Caesar shall give you life! O slaves most base, Your former master slain, ye seek his heir!

Why doth it please you not yet more to earn Than life and pardon? Bear across the sea Metellus' daughter, Magnus' weeping spouse, And both his sons; outstrip the Pharian gift, Nor spare this head, which, laid before the feet Of that detested tyrant, shall deserve A full reward. Thus, cowards, shall ye learn In that ye followed me how great your gain.

Quick to your task and purchase thus with blood Your claim on Caesar. Dastardly is flight Which crime commends not."

Cato thus recalled The parting vessels. So when bees in swarm Desert their waxen cells, forget the hive Ceasing to cling together, and with wings Untrammelled seek the air, nor slothful light On thyme to taste its bitterness — then rings The Phrygian gong — at once they pause aloft Astonied; and with love of toil resumed Through all the flowers for their honey store In ceaseless wanderings search; the shepherd joys, Sure that th' Hyblaeon mead for him has kept His cottage store, the riches of his home.

Now in the active conduct of the war Were brought to discipline their minds, untaught To bear repose; first on the sandy shore Toiling they learned fatigue: then stormed thy walls, Cyrene; prizeless, for to Cato's mind 'Twas prize enough

to conquer. Juba next He bids attack, though Nature on the path Had placed the Syrtes; which his sturdy heart Aspired to conquer. Either at the first When Nature gave the universe its form She left this region neither land nor sea; Not wholly shrunk, so that it should receive The ocean flood; nor firm enough to stand Against its buffets — all the pathless coast Lies in uncertain shape; the land by earth Is parted from the deep; on sandy banks The seas are broken, and from shoal to shoal The waves advance to sound upon the shore.

Nature, in spite, thus left her work undone, Unfashioned to men's use — Or else of old A foaming ocean filled the wide expanse, But Titan feeding from the briny depths His burning fires (near to the zone of heat) Reduced the waters; and the sea still fights With Phoebus' beams, which in the length of time Drank deeper of its fountains.

When the main Struck by the oars gave passage to the fleet, Black from the sky rushed down a southern gale Upon his realm, and from the watery plain Drave back th' invading ships, and from the shoals Compelled the billows, and in middle sea Raised up a bank. Forth flew the bellying sails Beyond the prows, despite the ropes that dared Resist the tempest's fury; and for those Who prescient housed their canvas to the storm, Bare-masted they were driven from their course.

Best was their lot who gained the open waves Of ocean; others lightened of their masts Shook off the tempest; but a sweeping tide Hurried them southwards, victor of the gale.

Some freed of shallows on a bank were forced Which broke the deep: their ship in part was fast, Part hanging on the sea; their fates in doubt.

Fierce rage the waves till hems (9) them in the land; Nor Auster's force in frequent buffets spent Prevails upon the shore. High from the main By seas inviolate one bank of sand, Far from the coast arose; there watched in vain The storm-tossed mariners, their keel aground, No shore descrying. Thus in sea were lost Some portion, but the major part by helm And rudder guided, and by pilots' hands Who knew the devious channels, safe at length Floated the marsh of Triton loved (as saith The fable) by that god, whose sounding shell (10) All seas and shores re-echo; and by her, Pallas, who springing from her father's head

First lit on Libya, nearest land to heaven, (As by its heat is proved); here on the brink She stood, reflected in the placid wave And called herself Tritonis. Lethe's flood Flows silent near, in fable from a source Infernal sprung, oblivion in his stream; Here, too, that garden of the Hesperids Where once the sleepless dragon held his watch, Shorn of its leafy wealth. Shame be on him Who calls upon the poet for the proof Of that which in the ancient days befell; But here were golden groves by yellow growth Weighed down in richness, here a maiden band Were guardians; and a serpent, on whose eyes Sleep never fell, was coiled around the trees, Whose branches bowed beneath their ruddy load.

But great Alcides stripped the bending boughs, And bore their shining apples (thus his task Accomplished) to the court of Argos' king.

Driven on the Libyan realms, more fruitful here, Pompeius (11) stayed the fleet, nor further dared In Garamantian waves. But Cato's soul Leaped in his breast, impatient of delay, To pass the Syrtes by a landward march, And trusting to their swords, 'gainst tribes unknown To lead his legions. And the storm which closed The main to navies gave them hope of rain; Nor biting frosts they feared, in Libyan clime; Nor suns too scorching in the falling year.

Thus ere they trod the deserts, Cato spake: "Ye men of Rome, who through mine arms alone Can find the death ye covet, and shall fall With pride unbroken should the fates command, Meet this your weighty task, your high emprise With hearts resolved to conquer. For we march On sterile wastes, burnt regions of the world; Scarce are the wells, and Titan from the height Burns pitiless, unclouded; and the slime Of poisonous serpents fouls the dusty earth.

Yet shall men venture for the love of laws And country perishing, upon the sands Of trackless Libya; men who brave in soul Rely not on the end, and in attempt Will risk their all. 'Tis not in Cato's thoughts On this our enterprise to lead a band Blind to the truth, unwitting of the risk.

Nay, give me comrades for the danger's sake, Whom I shall see for honour and for Rome Bear up against the worst. But whose needs A pledge of safety, to whom life is sweet, Let him by fairer journey seek his lord.

First be my foot upon the sand; on me First strike the burning sun; across my path The serpent void his venom; by my fate Know ye your perils. Let him only thirst Who sees me at the spring: who sees me seek The shade, alone sink fainting in the heat; Or whoso sees me ride before the ranks Plodding their weary march: such be the lot Of each, who, toiling, finds in me a chief And not a comrade. Snakes, thirst, burning sand The brave man welcomes, and the patient breast Finds happiness in labour. By its cost Courage is sweeter; and this Libyan land Such cloud of ills can furnish as might make Men flee unshamed." 'Twas thus that Cato spake, Kindling the torch of valour and the love Of toil: then reckless of his fate he strode The desert path from which was no return: And Libya ruled his destinies, to shut His sacred name within a narrow tomb.

One-third of all the world, (12) if fame we trust, Is Libya; yet by winds and sky she yields Some part to Europe; for the shores of Nile No more than Scythian Tanais are remote From furthest Gades, where with bending coast, Yielding a place to Ocean, Europe parts From Afric shores. Yet falls the larger world To Asia only. From the former two

Issues the Western wind; but Asia's right Touches the Southern limits and her left The Northern tempest's home; and of the East She's mistress to the rising of the Sun.

All that is fertile of the Afric lands Lies to the west, but even here abound No wells of water: though the Northern wind, Infrequent, leaving us with skies serene, Falls there in showers. Not gold nor wealth of brass It yields the seeker: pure and unalloyed Down to its lowest depths is Libyan soil.

Yet citron forests to Maurusian tribes Were riches, had they known; but they, content, Lived 'neath the shady foliage, till gleamed The axe of Rome amid the virgin grove, To bring from furthest limits of the world Our banquet tables and the fruit they bear. (13) But suns excessive and a scorching air Burn all the glebe beside the shifting sands: There die the harvests on the crumbling mould; No root finds sustenance, nor kindly Jove Makes rich the furrow nor matures the vine.

Sleep binds all nature and the tract of sand Lies ever fruitless, save that by the shore The hardy Nasamon plucks a scanty grass.

Unclothed their race, and living on the woes Worked by the cruel Syrtes on mankind; For spoilers are they of the luckless ships Cast on the shoals: and with the world by wrecks Their only commerce.

Here at Cato's word His soldiers passed, in fancy from the winds That sweep the sea secure: here on them fell Smiting with greater strength upon the shore, Than on the ocean, Auster's tempest force, And yet more fraught with mischief: for no crags Repelled his strength, nor lofty mountains tamed His furious onset, nor in sturdy woods He found a bar; but free from reining hand, Raged at his will o'er the defenceless earth.

Nor did he mingle dust and clouds of rain In whirling circles, but the earth was swept And hung in air suspended, till amazed The Nasamon saw his scanty field and home Reft by the tempest, and the native huts From roof to base were hurried on the blast.

Not higher, when some all-devouring flame Has seized upon its prey, in volumes dense Rolls up the smoke, and darkens all the air.

Then with fresh might he fell upon the host Of marching Romans, snatching from their feet The sand they trod. Had Auster been enclosed In some vast cavernous vault with solid walls And mighty barriers, he had moved the world Upon its ancient base and made the lands To tremble: but the facile Libyan soil By not resisting stood, and blasts that whirled The surface upwards left the depths unmoved.

Helmet and shield and spear were torn away By his most violent breath, and borne aloft Through all the regions of the boundless sky; Perchance a wonder in some distant land, Where men may fear the weapons from the heaven There falling, as the armour of the gods, Nor deem them ravished from a soldier's arm.

'Twas thus on Numa by the sacred fire Those shields descended which our chosen priests (14) Bear on their shoulders; from some warlike race By tempest rapt, to be the prize of Rome.

Fearing the storm prone fell the host to earth Winding their garments tight, and

with clenched hands Gripping the earth: for not their weight alone Withstood the tempest which upon their frames Piled mighty heaps, and their recumbent limbs Buried in sand. At length they struggling rose Back to their feet, when lo! around them stood, Forced by the storm, a growing bank of earth Which held them motionless. And from afar Where walls lay prostrate, mighty stones were hurled, Thus piling ills on ills in wondrous form: No dwellings had they seen, yet at their feet Beheld the ruins. All the earth was hid In vast envelopment, nor found they guide Save from the stars, which as in middle deep Flamed o'er them wandering: yet some were hid Beneath the circle of the Libyan earth Which tending downwards hid the Northern sky.

When warmth dispersed the tempest-driven air, And rose upon the earth the flaming day, Bathed were their limbs in sweat, but parched and dry Their gaping lips; when to a scanty spring Far off beheld they came, whose meagre drops All gathered in the hollow of a helm They offered to their chief. Caked were their throats With dust, and panting; and one little drop Had made him envied. "Wretch, and dost thou deem Me wanting in a brave man's heart?" he cried, "Me only in this throng? And have I seemed Tender, unfit to bear the morning heat?

He who would quench his thirst 'mid such a host, Doth most deserve its pangs." Then in his wrath Dashed down the helmet, and the scanty spring, Thus by their leader spurned, sufficed for all.

Now had they reached that temple which possess Sole in all Libya, th' untutored tribes Of Garamantians. Here holds his seat (So saith the story) a prophetic Jove, Wielding no thunderbolts, nor like to ours, The Libyan Hammen of the curved horn.

No wealth adorns his fane by Afric tribes Bestowed, nor glittering hoard of Eastern gems.

Though rich Arabians, Ind and Ethiop Know him alone as Jove, still is he poor Holding his shrine by riches undefiled Through time, and god as of the olden days Spurns all the wealth of Rome. That here some god Dwells, witnesses the only grove

That buds in Libya — for that which grows Upon the arid dust which Leptis
parts From Berenice, knows no leaves; alone Hammon uprears a wood; a fount
the cause Which with its waters binds the crumbling soil.

Yet shall the Sun when poised upon the height Strike through the foliage: hardly
can the tree Protect its trunk, and to a little space His rays draw in the circle of
the shade.

Here have men found the spot where that high band Solstitial divides in middle
sky (15) The zodiac stars: not here oblique their course, Nor Scorpion rises
straighter than the Bull, Nor to the Scales does Ram give back his hours, Nor
does Astraea bid the Fishes sink More slowly down: but watery Capricorn Is
equal with the Crab, and with the Twins The Archer; neither does the Lion rise
Above Aquarius. But the race that dwells Beyond the fervour of the Libyan fires
Sees to the South that shadow which with us Falls to the North: slow Cynosure
sinks (16) For them below the deep; and, dry with us, The Wagon plunges; far
from either pole, No star they know that does not seek the main, But all the
constellations in their course Whirl to their vision through the middle sky.

Before the doors the Eastern peoples stood Seeking from horned Jove to know
their fates: Yet to the Roman chief they yielded place, Whose comrades prayed
him to entreat the gods Famed through the Libyan world, and judge the voice
Renowned from distant ages. First of these Was Labienus: (17) “Chance,” he
said, “to us The voice and counsel of this mighty god Has offered as we march;
from such a guide To know the issues of the war, and learn To track the Syrtes.
For to whom on earth If not to blameless Cato, shall the gods Entrust their
secrets? Faithful thou at least, Their follower through all thy life hast been; Now
hast thou liberty to speak with Jove.

Ask impious Caesar’s fates, and learn the laws That wait our country in the
future days: Whether the people shall be free to use Their rights and customs, or
the civil war For us is wasted. To thy sacred breast, Lover of virtue, take the
voice divine; Demand what virtue is and guide thy steps By heaven’s high
counsellor.”

But Cato, full Of godlike thoughts borne in his quiet breast, This answer

uttered, worthy of the shrines: "What, Labienus, dost thou bid me ask?

Whether in arms and freedom I should wish To perish, rather than endure a king?

Is longest life worth aught? And doth its term Make difference? Can violence to the good Do injury? Do Fortune's threats avail Outweighed by virtue? Doth it not suffice To aim at deeds of bravery? Can fame Grow by achievement? Nay! No Hammen's voice Shall teach us this more surely than we know.

Bound are we to the gods; no voice we need; They live in all our acts, although the shrine Be silent: at our birth and once for all What may be known the author of our being Revealed; nor Chose these thirsty sands to chaunt To few his truth, whelmed in the dusty waste.

God has his dwelling in all things that be, In earth and air and sea and starry vault, In virtuous deeds; in all that thou can'st see, In all thy thoughts contained. Why further, then, Seek we our deities? Let those who doubt And halting, tremble for their coming fates, Go ask the oracles. No mystic words, Make sure my heart, but surely-coming Death.

Coward alike and brave, we all must die.

Thus hath Jove spoken: seek to know no more."

Thus Cato spake, and faithful to his creed He parted from the temple of the god And left the oracle of Hammon dumb.

Bearing his javelin, as one of them Before the troops he marched: no panting slave With bending neck, no litter bore his form.

He bade them not, but showed them how to toil.

Spare in his sleep, the last to sip the spring When at some rivulet to quench their thirst The eager ranks pressed onward, he alone Until the humblest follower might drink Stood motionless. If for the truly good Is fame, and virtue by the deed itself, Not by successful issue, should be judged, Yield, famous ancestors!

Fortune, not worth Gained you your glory. But such name as his Who ever
merited by successful war

Or slaughtered peoples? Rather would I lead With him his triumph through the
pathless sands And Libya's bounds, than in Pompeius' car Three times ascend
the Capitol, (18) or break The proud Jugurtha. (19) Rome! in him behold His
country's father, worthiest of thy vows; A name by which men shall not blush to
swear, Whom, should'st thou break the fetters from thy neck, Thou may'st in
distant days decree divine.

Now was the heat more dense, and through that clime Than which no further on
the Southern side The gods permit, they trod; and scarcer still The water, till in
middle sands they found One bounteous spring which clustered serpents held
Though scarce the space sufficed. By thirsting snakes The fount was thronged
and asps pressed on the marge.

But when the chieftain saw that speedy fate Was on the host, if they should leave
the well Untasted, "Vain," he cried, "your fear of death.

Drink, nor delay: 'tis from the threatening tooth Men draw their deaths, and fatal
from the fang Issues the juice if mingled with the blood; The cup is harmless."
Then he sipped the fount, Still doubting, and in all the Libyan waste There only
was he first to touch the stream.

Why fertile thus in death the pestilent air Of Libya, what poison in her soil

Her several nature mixed, my care to know Has not availed: but from the days of
old A fabled story has deceived the world.

Far on her limits, where the burning shore Admits the ocean fervid from the sun
Plunged in its waters, lay Medusa's fields Untilled; nor forests shaded, nor the
plough Furrowed the soil, which by its mistress' gaze Was hardened into stone:
Phorcus, her sire.

Malevolent nature from her body first Drew forth these noisome pests; first from her jaws Issued the sibilant rattle of serpent tongues; Clustered around her head the poisonous brood Like to a woman's hair, wreathed on her neck Which gloried in their touch; their glittering heads Advanced towards her; and her tresses kempt Dripped down with viper's venom. This alone Thou hast, accursed one, which men can see Unharm'd; for who upon that gaping mouth Looked and could dread? To whom who met her glance, Was death permitted? Fate delayed no more.

But ere the victim feared had struck him down: Perished the limbs while living, and the soul Grew stiff and stark ere yet it fled the frame.

Men have been frenzied by the Furies' locks, Not killed; and Cerberus at Orpheus' song Ceased from his hissing, and Alcides saw The Hydra ere he slew. This monster born Brought horror with her birth upon her sire Phorcus, in second order God of Waves, And upon Ceto and the Gorgon brood, (20) Her sisters. She could threat the sea and sky With deadly calm unknown, and from the world Bid cease the soil. Borne down by instant weight Fowls fell from air, and beasts were fixed in stone.

Whole Ethiop tribes who tilled the neighbouring lands Rigid in marble stood. The Gorgon sight No creature bore and even her serpents turned Back from her visage. Atlas in his place Beside the Western columns, by her look Was turned to rocks; and when on snakes of old Phlegraean giants stood and frighted heaven, She made them mountains, and the Gorgon head Borne on Athena's bosom closed the war.

Here born of Danae and the golden shower, Floating on wings Parrhasian, by the god Arcadian given, author of the lyre

And wrestling art, came Perseus, down from heaven Swooping. Cyllenian Harp (21) did he bear Still crimson from another monster slain, The guardian of the heifer loved by Jove.

This to her winged brother Pallas lent Price of the monster's head: by her command Upon the limits of the Libyan land

He sought the rising sun, with flight averse, Poised o'er Medusa's realm; a burnished shield Of yellow brass upon his other arm, Her gift, he bore: in which she bade him see The fatal face unscathed. Nor yet in sleep Lay all the monster,

for such total rest To her were death — so fated: serpent locks In vigilant watch,
some reaching forth defend Her head, while others lay upon her face And
slumbering eyes. Then hero Perseus shook Though turned averse; trembled his
dexter hand: But Pallas held, and the descending blade Shore the broad neck
whence sprang the viper brood.

What visage bore the Gorgon as the steel Thus reft her life! what poison from
her throat Breathed! from her eyes what venom of death distilled!

The goddess dared not look, and Perseus' face Had frozen, averse, had not
Athena veiled With coils of writhing snakes the features dead.

Then with the Gorgon head the hero flew Uplifted on his wings and sought the
sky.

Shorter had been his voyage through the midst Of Europe's cities; but Athena
bade To spare her peoples and their fruitful lands; For who when such an airy
courser passed Had not looked up to heaven? Western winds Now sped his
pinions, and he took his course O'er Libya's regions, from the stars and suns
Veiled by no culture. Phoebus' nearer track There burns the soil, and loftiest on
the sky (22) There fails the night, to shade the wandering moon, If o'er forgetful
of her course oblique, Straight through the stars, nor bending to the North Nor to
the South, she hastens. Yet that earth, In nothing fertile, void of fruitful yield,
Drank in the poison of Medusa's blood, Dripping in dreadful dew upon the soil,
And in the crumbling sands by heat matured.

First from the dust was raised a gory clot (23) In guise of Asp, sleep-bringing,
swollen of neck: Full was the blood and thick the poison drop That were its
making; in no other snake More copious held. Greedy of warmth it seeks No
frozen world itself, nor haunts the sands Beyond the Nile; yet has our thirst of
gain No shame nor limit, and this Libyan death, This fatal pest we purchase for
our own.

Haemorrhoids huge spreads out his scaly coils, Who suffers not his hapless
victims' blood To stay within their veins. Chersydros sprang To life, to dwell
within the doubtful marsh Where land nor sea prevails. A cloud of spray Marked
fell Chelyder's track: and Cenchris rose Straight gliding to his prey, his belly
tinged With various spots unnumbered, more than those Which paint the Theban

(24) marble; horned snakes With spines contorted: like to torrid sand
Ammodytes, of hue invisible:

Sole of all serpents Scytale to shed In vernal frosts his slough; and thirsty
Dipsas; Dread Amphisbaena with his double head Tapering; and Natrix who in
bubbling fount Fuses his venom. Greedy Prester swells His foaming jaws;
Pareas, head erect Furrows with tail alone his sandy path; Swift Jaculus there,
and Seps (25) whose poisonous juice Makes putrid flesh and frame: and there
upreared His regal head, and frightened from his track With sibilant terror all the
subject swam, Baneful ere darts his poison, Basilisk (26) In sands deserted king.
Ye serpents too Who in all other regions harmless glide Adored as gods, and
bright with golden scales, In those hot wastes are deadly; poised in air Whole
herds of kine ye follow, and with coils Encircling close, crush in the mighty bull.

Nor does the elephant in his giant bulk, Nor aught, find safety; and ye need no
fang Nor poison, to compel the fatal end.

Amid these pests undaunted Cato urged His desert journey on. His hardy troops
Beneath his eyes, pricked by a scanty wound, In strangest forms of death
unnumbered fall.

Tyrrhenian Aulus, bearer of a flag, Trod on a Dipsas; quick with head reversed
The serpent struck; no mark betrayed the tooth: The aspect of the wound nor
threatened death, Nor any evil; but the poison germ

In silence working as consuming fire Absorbed the moisture of his inward
frame, Draining the natural juices that were spread Around his vitals; in his arid
jaws Set flame upon his tongue: his wearied limbs No sweat bedewed; dried up,
the fount of tears Fled from his eyelids. Tortured by the fire Nor Cato's
sternness, nor of his sacred charge The honour could withhold him; but he dared
To dash his standard down, and through the plains Raging, to seek for water that
might slake The fatal venom thirsting at his heart.

Plunge him in Tanais, in Rhone and Po, Pour on his burning tongue the flood of
Nile, Yet were the fire unquenched. So fell the fang Of Dipsas in the torrid
Libyan lands; In other climes less fatal. Next he seeks Amid the sands, all barren
to the depths, For moisture: then returning to the shoals Laps them with greed —
in vain — the briny draught Scarce quenched the thirst it made. Nor knowing yet

The poison in his frame, he steels himself To rip his swollen veins and drink the gore.

Cato bids lift the standard, lest his troops May find in thirst a pardon for the deed.

But on Sabellus' yet more piteous death Their eyes were fastened. Clinging to his skin A Seps with curving tooth, of little size, He seized and tore away, and to the sands Pierced with his javelin. Small the serpent's bulk; None deals a death more horrible in form.

For swift the flesh dissolving round the wound Bared the pale bone; swam all his limbs in blood; Wasted the tissue of his calves and knees: And all the muscles of his thighs were thawed In black distilment, and file membrane sheath Parted, that bound his vitals, which abroad Flowed upon earth: yet seemed it not that all His frame was loosed, for by the venomous drop Were all the bands that held his muscles drawn Down to a juice; the framework of his chest Was bare, its cavity, and all the parts Hid by the organs of life, that make the man.

So by unholy death there stood revealed His inmost nature. Head and stalwart arms, And neck and shoulders, from their solid mass Melt in corruption. Not more swiftly flows Wax at the sun's command, nor snow compelled By southern breezes. Yet not all is said: For so to noxious humours fire consumes Our fleshly frame; but on the funeral pyre What bones have perished? These dissolve no less Than did the mouldered tissues, nor of death Thus swift is left a trace. Of Afric pests Thou bear'st the palm for hurtfulness: the life They snatch away, thou only with the life The clay that held it.

Lo! a different fate, Not this by melting! for a Prester's fang Nasidius struck, who erst in Marsian fields Guided the ploughshare. Burned upon his face A redness as of flame: swollen the skin, His features hidden, swollen all his limbs Till more than human: and his definite frame One tumour huge concealed. A ghastly gore Is puffed from inwards as the virulent juice Courses through all his body; which, thus grown, His corselet holds not. Not in caldron so Boils up to mountainous height the steaming wave; Nor in such bellying curves does canvas bend To Eastern tempests. Now the ponderous bulk Rejects the limbs, and as a

shapeless trunk Burdens the earth: and there, to beasts and birds A fatal feast, his comrades left the corse Nor dared to place, yet swelling, in the tomb.

But for their eyes the Libyan pests prepared More dreadful sights. On Tullus great in heart, And bound to Cato with admiring soul, A fierce Haemorrhoids fixed. From every limb, (27) (As from a statue saffron spray is showered In every part) there spouted forth for blood A sable poison: from the natural pores Of moisture, gore profuse; his mouth was filled And gaping nostrils, and his tears were blood.

Brimmed full his veins; his very sweat was red; All was one wound.

Then piteous Levus next In sleep was victim, for around his heart Stood still the blood congealed: no pain he felt Of venomous tooth, but swift upon him fell Death, and he sought the shades; more swift to kill No draught in poisonous cups from ripened plants Of direst growth Sabaeen wizards brew.

Lo! Upon branchless trunk a serpent, named By Libyans Jaculus, rose in coils to dart His venom from afar. Through Paullus' brain It rushed, nor stayed; for in the wound itself Was death. Then did they know how slowly flies, Flung from a sling, the stone; how gently speed Through air the shafts of Scythia.

What availed, Murrus, the lance by which thou didst transfix A Basilisk? Swift through the weapon ran The poison to his hand: he draws his sword And severs arm and shoulder at a blow: Then gazed secure upon his severed hand Which perished as he looked. So had'st thou died, And such had been thy fate!

Whoe'er had thought A scorpion had strength o'er death or fate?

Yet with his threatening coils and barb erect He won the glory of Orion (28)

slain; So bear the stars their witness. And who would fear Thy haunts, Salpuga?
(29) Yet the Stygian Maids Have given thee power to snap the fatal threads.

Thus nor the day with brightness, nor the night With darkness gave them peace.
The very earth On which they lay they feared; nor leaves nor straw They piled
for couches, but upon the ground Unshielded from the fates they laid their limbs,
Cherished beneath whose warmth in chill of night The frozen pests found
shelter; in whose jaws Harmless the while, the lurking venom slept.

Nor did they know the measure of their march Accomplished, nor their path; the
stars in heaven Their only guide. "Return, ye gods," they cried, In frequent wail,
"the arms from which we fled.

Give back Thessalia. Sworn to meet the sword Why, lingering, fall we thus? In
Caesar's place The thirsty Dipsas and the horned snake Now wage the warfare.
Rather let us seek That region by the horses of the sun Scorched, and the zone
most torrid: let us fall Slain by some heavenly cause, and from the sky Descend
our fate! Not, Africa, of thee Complain we, nor of Nature. From mankind Cut
off, this quarter, teeming thus with pests She gave to snakes, and to the barren
fields Denied the husbandman, nor wished that men Should perish by their
venom. To the realms Of serpents have we come. Hater of men, Receive thy
vengeance, whoso of the gods Severed this region upon either hand, With death
in middle space. Our march is set Through thy sequestered kingdom, and the
host Which knows thy secret seeks the furthest world.

Perchance some greater wonders on our path May still await us; in the waves be
plunged Heaven's constellations, and the lofty pole Stoop from its height. By
further space removed No land, than Juba's realm; by rumour's voice Drear,
mournful. Haply for this serpent land There may we long, where yet some living
thing Gives consolation. Not my native land Nor European fields I hope for now

Lit by far other suns, nor Asia's plains.

But in what land, what region of the sky, Where left we Africa? But now with
frosts Cyrene stiffened: have we changed the laws Which rule the seasons, in
this little space?

Cast from the world we know, 'neath other skies And stars we tread; behind our

backs the home Of southern tempests: Rome herself perchance Now lies beneath
our feet. Yet for our fates This solace pray we, that on this our track Pursuing
Caesar with his host may come.”

Thus was their stubborn patience of its complaints Disburdened. But the bravery of
their chief Forced them to bear their toils. Upon the sand, All bare, he lies and
dares at every hour Fortune to strike: he only at the fate Of each is present, flies
to every call; And greatest boon of all, greater than life, Brought strength to die.
To groan in death was shame In such a presence. What power had all the ills
Possessed upon him? In another’s breast He conquers misery, teaching by his
mien That pain is powerless.

Hardly aid at length Did Fortune, wearied of their perils, grant.

Alone unharmed of all who till the earth, By deadly serpents, dwells the Psyllian
race.

Potent as herbs their song; safe is their blood, Nor gives admission to the poison
germ E’en when the chant has ceased. Their home itself Placed in such
venomous tract and serpent-thronged Gained them this vantage, and a truce with
death, Else could they not have lived. Such is their trust In purity of blood, that
newly born Each babe they prove by test of deadly asp For foreign lineage. So
the bird of Jove Turns his new fledglings to the rising sun And such as gaze
upon the beams of day With eyes unwavering, for the use of heaven He rears;
but such as blink at Phoebus’ rays Casts from the nest. Thus of unmixed descent
The babe who, dreading not the serpent touch, Plays in his cradle with the deadly
snake.

Nor with their own immunity from harm Contented do they rest, but watch for
guests Who need their help against the noisome plague.

Now to the Roman standards are they come, And when the chieftain bade the
tents be fixed, First all the sandy space within the lines With song they purify
and magic words From which all serpents flee: next round the camp In widest

circuit from a kindled fire Rise aromatic odours: danewort burns, And juice distils from Syrian galbanum; Then tamarisk and costum, Eastern herbs, Strong panacea mixt with centaury

From Thrace, and leaves of fennel feed the flames, And thapsus brought from Eryx: and they burn Larch, southern-wood and antlers of a deer Which lived afar. From these in densest fumes, Deadly to snakes, a pungent smoke arose; And thus in safety passed the night away.

But should some victim feel the fatal fang Upon the march, then of this magic race Were seen the wonders, for a mighty strife Rose 'twixt the Psyllian and the poison germ.

First with saliva they anoint the limbs That held the venomous juice within the wound; Nor suffer it to spread. From foaming mouth Next with continuous cadence would they pour Unceasing chants — nor breathing space nor pause —

Else spreads the poison: nor does fate permit A moment's silence. Oft from the black flesh Flies forth the pest beneath the magic song: But should it linger nor obey the voice, Repugnant to the summons, on the wound Prostrate they lay their lips and from the depths Now paling draw the venom. In their mouths, Sucked from the freezing flesh, they hold the death, Then spew it forth; and from the taste shall know The snake they conquer.

Aided thus at length Wanders the Roman host in better guise Upon the barren fields in lengthy march. (30) Twice veiled the moon her light and twice renewed; Yet still, with waning or with growing orb Saw Cato's steps upon the sandy waste.

But more and more beneath their feet the dust Began to harden, till the Libyan tracts Once more were earth, and in the distance rose Some groves of scanty foliage, and huts Of plastered straw unfashioned: and their hearts Leaped at the prospect of a better land.

How fled their sorrow! how with growing joy They met the savage lion in the path!

In tranquil Leptis first they found retreat: And passed a winter free from heat and

rain. (31) When Caesar sated with Emathia's slain Forsook the battlefield, all other cares Neglected, he pursued his kinsman fled, On him alone intent: by land his steps He traced in vain; then, rumour for his guide, He crossed the sea and reached the Thracian strait For love renowned; where on the mournful shore Rose Hero's tower, and Helle born of cloud (32) Took from the rolling waves their former name.

Nowhere with shorter space the sea divides Europe from Asia; though Pontus parts By scant division from Byzantium's hold Chalcedon oyster-rich: and small the strait Through which Propontis pours the Euxine wave.

Then marvelling at their ancient fame, he seeks Sigeum's sandy beach and Simois' stream, Rhoeteum noble for its Grecian tomb, And all the hero's shades, the theme of song.

Next by the town of Troy burnt down of old Now but a memorable name, he turns

His steps, and searches for the mighty stones Relics of Phoebus' wall. But bare with age Forests of trees and hollow mouldering trunks Pressed down Assaracus' palace, and with roots Wearied, possessed the temples of the gods.

All Pergamus with densest brake was veiled And even her stones were perished. He beheld Thy rock, Hesione; the hidden grove, Anchises' nuptial chamber; and the cave Where sat the arbiter; the spot from which Was snatched the beauteous youth; the mountain lawn Where played Oenone. Not a stone but told The story of the past. A little stream Scarce trickling through the arid plain he passed, Nor knew 'twas Xanthus: deep in grass he placed, Careless, his footstep; but the herdsman cried "Thou tread'st the dust of Hector." Stones confused Lay at his feet in sacred shape no more: "Look on the altar of Jove," thus spake the guide, "God of the household, guardian of the home."

O sacred task of poets, toil supreme, Which rescuing all things from allotted fate Dost give eternity to mortal men!

Grudge not the glory, Caesar, of such fame.

For if the Latian Muse may promise aught, Long as the heroes of the Trojan time

Shall live upon the page of Smyrna's bard, So long shall future races read of thee
In this my poem; and Pharsalia's song Live unforgotten in the age to come.

When by the ancient grandeur of the place The chieftain's sight was filled, of
gathered turf Altars he raised: and as the sacred flame Cast forth its odours, these
not idle vows Gave to the gods, "Ye deities of the dead, Who watch o'er
Phrygian ruins: ye who now Lavinia's homes inhabit, and Alba's height: Gods of
my sire Aeneas, in whose fanes The Trojan fire still burns: pledge of the past
Mysterious Pallas, (24) of the inmost shrine, Unseen of men! here in your
ancient seat, Most famous offspring of Iulus' race, I call upon you and with
pious hand Burn frequent offerings. To my emprise Give prosperous ending!
Here shall I replace The Phrygian peoples, here with glad return Italia's sons
shall build another Troy, Here rise a Roman Pergamus."

This said, He seeks his fleet, and eager to regain Time spent at Ilium, to the
favouring breeze Spreads all his canvas. Past rich Asia borne, Rhodes soon he
left while foamed the sparkling main Beneath his keels; nor ceased the wind to
stretch His bending sails, till on the seventh night The Pharian beam proclaimed
Egyptian shores.

But day arose, and veiled the nightly lamp Ere rode his barks on waters safe
from storm.

Then Caesar saw that tumult held the shore, And mingled voices of uncertain
sound Struck on his ear: and trusting not himself To doubtful kingdoms, of
uncertain troth, He kept his ships from land.

But from the king Came his vile minion forth upon the wave, Bearing his
dreadful gift, Pompeius' head, Wrapped in a covering of Pharian wool.

First took he speech and thus in shameless words Commends the murder:
"Conqueror of the world, First of the Roman race, and, what as yet Thou dost
not know, safe by thy kinsman slain; This gift receive from the Pellaeian king,
Sole trophy absent from the Thracian field, To crown thy toils on lands and on
the deep.

Here in thine absence have we placed for thee An end upon the war. Here Magnus came To mend his fallen fortunes; on our swords Here met his death. With such a pledge of faith Here have we bought thee, Caesar; with his blood Seal we this treaty. Take the Pharian realm Sought by no bloodshed, take the rule of Nile, Take all that thou would'st give for Magnus' life: And hold him vassal worthy of thy camp To whom the fates against thy son-in-law Such power entrusted; nor hold thou the deed Lightly accomplished by the swordsman's stroke, And so the merit. Guest ancestral he Who was its victim; who, his sire expelled, Gave back to him the sceptre. For a deed So great, thou'lt find a name — or ask the world.

If 'twas a crime, thou must confess the debt To us the greater, for that from thy hand We took the doing."

Then he held and showed Unveiled the head. Now had the hand of death Passed with its changing touch upon the face: Nor at first sight did Caesar on the gift Pass condemnation; nor avert his gaze, But dwelt upon the features till he knew The crime accomplished. Then when truth was sure The loving father rose, and tears he shed Which flowed at his command, and glad in heart Forced from his breast a groan: thus by the flow Of feigned tears and grief he hoped to hide His joy else manifest: and the ghastly boon Sent by the king disparaging, professed Rather to mourn his son's dissevered head, Than count it for a debt. For thee alone, Magnus, he durst not fail to find a tear: He, Caesar, who with mien unaltered spurned The Roman Senate, and with eyes undimmed Looked on Pharsalia's field. O fate most hard!

Didst thou with impious war pursue the man Whom 'twas thy lot to mourn? No kindred ties No memory of thy daughter and her son Touch on thy heart. Didst think perchance that grief Might help thy cause 'mid lovers of his name?

Or haply, moved by envy of the king, Griev'st that to other hands than thine was given To shed the captive's life-blood? and complain'st Thy vengeance perished and the conquered chief Snatched from thy haughty hand? Whate'er the cause That urged thy grief, 'twas far removed from love.

Was this forsooth the object of thy toil O'er lands and oceans, that without thy ken He should not perish? Nay! but well was reft From thine arbitrament his

fate. What crime Did cruel Fortune spare, what depth of shame To Roman honour! since she suffered not, Perfidious traitor, while yet Magnus lived, That thou should'st pity him!

Thus by words he dared, To gain their credence in his sembled grief: "Hence from my sight with thy detested gift, Thou minion, to thy King. Worse does your crime Deserve from Caesar than from Magnus' hands.

The only prize that civil war affords Thus have we lost — to bid the conquered live.

If but the sister of this Pharian king Were not by him detested, by the head Of Cleopatra had I paid this gift.

Such were the fit return. Why did he draw His separate sword, and in the toil that's ours Mingle his weapons? In Thessalia's field Gave we such right to the Pellaeon blade?

Magnus as partner in the rule of Rome I had not brooked; and shall I tolerate Thee, Ptolemaeus? In vain with civil wars Thus have we roused the nations, if there be Now any might but Caesar's. If one land Yet owned two masters, I had turned from yours The prows of Latium; but fame forbids, Lest men should whisper that I did not damn This deed of blood, but feared the Pharian land.

Nor think ye to deceive; victorious here I stand: else had my welcome at your hands Been that of Magnus; and that neck were mine But for Pharsalia's chance. At greater risk So seems it, than we dreamed of, took we arms; Exile, and Magnus' threats, and Rome I knew, Not Ptolemaeus. But we spare the boy: Pass by the murder. Let the princeling know We give no more than pardon for his crime.

And now in honour of the mighty dead, Not merely that the earth may hide your guilt, Lay ye the chieftain's head within the tomb; With proper sepulture appease his shade And place his scattered ashes in an urn.

Thus may he know my coming, and may hear Affection's accents, and my fond complaints.

Me sought he not, but rather, for his life, This Pharian vassal; snatching from mankind The happy morning which had shown the world A peace between us. But my prayers to heaven No favouring answer found; that arms laid down In happy victory, Magnus, once again I might embrace thee, begging thee to grant Thine ancient love to Caesar, and thy life.

Thus for my labours with a worthy prize Content, thine equal, bound in faithful peace, I might have brought thee to forgive the gods For thy disaster; thou had'st gained for me From Rome forgiveness."

Thus he spake, but found No comrade in his tears; nor did the host Give credit to his grief. Deep in their breasts They hide their groans, and gaze with joyful front (O famous Freedom!) on the deed of blood: And dare to laugh when mighty Caesar wept.

ENDNOTES:

(1) This was the Stoic theory. The perfect of men passed after death into a region between our atmosphere and the heavens, where they remained until the day of general conflagration, (see Book VII. line 949), with their senses amplified and rendered akin to divine.

(2) A promontory in Africa was so called, as well as that in Italy.

(3) Meaning that her husband gave her this commission in order to prevent her from committing suicide.

(4) See Book VIII., line 547.

(5) See line 709.

(6) This passage is described by Lord Macaulay as "a pure gem of rhetoric without one flaw, and, in my opinion, not very far from historical truth" (Trevelyan's "Life and Letters", vol.

i., page 462.)

(7) "... Clarum et venembile nomen Gentibus, et multum nostrae quod profuit urbi,"

quoted by Mr. Burke, and applied to Lord Chatham, in his Speech on American taxation.

(8) That is, liberty, which by the murder of Pompeius they had obtained.

(9) Reading "saepit", Hosius. The passage seems to be corrupt.

(10) "Scaly Triton's winding shell", (Comus, 878). He was Neptune's son and trumpeter. That Pallas sprang armed from the head of Jupiter is well known.

(11) Cnaeus.

(12) Compare Herodotus, ii., 16: "For they all say that the earth is divided into three parts, Europe, Asia and Libya." (And see Bunbury's "Ancient Geography", i., 145, 146, for a discussion of this subject.)

(13) Citron tables were in much request at Rome. (Comp. "Paradise Regained", Book iv., 115; and see Book X., line 177.) (14) Alluding to the shield of Mars which fell from heaven on Numa at sacrifice. Eleven others were made to match it ("Dict. Antiq.") While Horace speaks of them as chief objects of a patriot Roman's affection ("Odes" iii., 5, 9), Lucan discovers for them a ridiculous origin. They were in the custody of the priests of Mars. (See Book I., 666.) (15) *I.e.* Where the equinoctial circle cuts the zodiac in its centre. — Haskins.

(16) Compare Book III., 288.

(17) See Book V., 400.

(18) 1st. For his victories in Sicily and Africa, B.C. 81; 2nd.

For the conquest of Sertorius, B.C. 71; 3rd. For his Eastern triumphs, B.C. 61. (Compare Book II., 684, &c.) (19) Over whom Marius triumphed.

(20) Phoreus and Ceto were the parents of the Gorgons — Stheno, Euryale. and Medusa, of whom the latter alone was mortal, (Hesiod. "Theogony", 276.) Phorcus was a son of Pontus and Gaia (sea and land), *ibid*, 287.

(21) The scimitar lent by Hermes (or Mercury) to Perseus for the purpose; with which had been slain Argus the guardian of Io (Conf. "Prometheus vinctus", 579.) Hermes was born in a cave in Mount Cyllene in Arcadia.

(22) The idea seems to be that the earth, bulging at the equator, casts its shadow highest on the sky: and that the moon becomes eclipsed by it whenever she follows a straight path instead of an oblique one, which may happen from her forgetfulness (Mr. Haskins' note).

(23) This catalogue of snakes is alluded to in Dante's "Inferno", 24.

"I saw a crowd within

Of serpents terrible, so strange of shape And hideous that remembrance in my veins Yet shrinks the vital current. Of her sands Let Libya vaunt no more: if Jaculus, Pareas, and Chelyder be her brood, Cenchris and Amphisbaena, plagues so dire Or in such numbers swarming ne'er she showed."

— Carey.

(See also Milton's "Paradise Lost", Book X., 520-530.) (24) The Egyptian Thebes.

(25) "... All my being Like him whom the Numidian Seps did thaw Into a dew with poison, is dissolved, Sinking through its foundations."

—Shelley, "Prometheus Unbound", Act iii, Scene 1.

(26) The glance of the eye of the basilisk or cockatrice, was supposed to be deadly. (See "King Richard III", Act i., Scene 2: —

Gloucester: Thine eyes, sweet lady, have infected mine.

Anne: Would they were basilisks, to strike thee dead!) The word is also used for a big cannon. ("1 King Henry IV", Act ii., Scene 3.)

(27) See Book III., 706.

(28) According to one story Orion, for his assault on Diana, was killed by the Scorpion, who received his reward by being made into a constellation.

(29) A sort of venomous ant.

(30) No other author gives any details of this march; and those given by Lucan are unreliable. The temple of Hammon is far from any possible line of route taken from the Lesser Syrtes to Leptis. Dean Merivale states that the inhospitable sands extended for seven days' journey, and ranks the march as one of the greatest exploits in Roman military history.

Described by the names known to modern geography, it was from the Gulf of Cades to Cape Africa. Pope, in a letter to Henry Cromwell, dated November 11, 1710, makes some caustic remarks on the geography of this book. (See "Pope's Works", Vol. vi., 109; by Elwin & Courthope.) (31) See Line 444.

(32) See Book IV., 65.

(33) The "Palladium" or image of Pallas, preserved in the temple of Vesta. (See Book I., 659.)

BOOK X

CAESAR IN EGYPT

When Caesar, following those who bore the head, First trod the shore accursed, with Egypt's fates His fortunes battled, whether Rome should pass In crimson conquest o'er the guilty land, Or Memphis' arms should ravish from the world Victor and vanquished: and the warning shade Of Magnus saved his kinsman from the sword.

First, by the crime assured, his standards borne Before, he marched upon the Pharian town; But when the people, jealous of their laws, Murmured against the fasces, Caesar knew Their minds were adverse, and that not for him Was Magnus' murder wrought. And yet with brow Dissembling fear, intrepid, through the shrines Of Egypt's gods he strode, and round the fane Of ancient Isis; bearing witness all To Macedon's vigour in the days of old.

Yet did nor gold nor ornament restrain His hasting steps, nor worship of the gods, Nor city ramparts: but in greed of gain He sought the cave dug out amid the tombs. (1) The madman offspring there of Philip lies The famed Pellaeon robber, fortune's friend, Snatched off by fate, avenging so the world.

In sacred sepulchre the hero's limbs, Which should be scattered o'er the earth, repose, Still spared by Fortune to these tyrant days: For in a world to freedom once recalled, All men had mocked the dust of him who set The baneful lesson that so many lands Can serve one master. Macedon he left His home obscure; Athena he despised The conquest of his sire, and spurred by fate Through Asia rushed with havoc of mankind, Plunging his sword through peoples; streams unknown Ran red with Persian and with Indian blood.

Curse of all earth and thunderbolt of ill To every nation! On the outer sea (2) He launched his fleet to sail the ocean wave: Nor flame nor flood nor sterile Libyan sands Stayed back his course, nor Hammon's pathless shoals; Far to the west, where downward slopes the world He would have led his armies, and the poles Had compassed, and had drunk the fount of Nile: But came his latest day; such

end alone Could nature place upon the madman king, Who jealous in death as
when he won the world His empire with him took, nor left an heir.

Thus every city to the spoiler's hand Was victim made: Yet in his fall was his
Babylon; and Parthia feared him. Shame on us That eastern nations dreaded
more the lance Of Macedon than now the Roman spear.

True that we rule beyond where takes its rise The burning southern breeze,
beyond the homes Of western winds, and to the northern star; But towards the
rising of the sun, we yield To him who kept the Arsacids in awe; And puny Pella
held as province sure The Parthia fatal to our Roman arms.

Now from the stream Pelusian of the Nile, Was come the boyish king, taming the
rage Of his effeminate people: pledge of peace; And Caesar safely trod Pellaean
halls; When Cleopatra bribed her guard to break The harbour chains, and borne
in little boat Within the Macedonian palace gates, Caesar unknowing, entered:
Egypt's shame; Fury of Latium; to the bane of Rome Unchaste. For as the
Spartan queen of yore By fatal beauty Argos urged to strife And Ilium's homes,
so Cleopatra roused Italia's frenzy. By her drum (3) she called Down on the
Capitol terror (if to speak Such word be lawful); mixed with Roman arms
Coward Canopus, hoping she might lead A Pharian triumph, Caesar in her train;
And 'twas in doubt upon Leucadian (4) waves Whether a woman, not of Roman
blood, Should hold the world in awe. Such lofty thoughts Seized on her soul
upon that night in which The wanton daughter of Pellaean kings First shared our
leaders' couches. Who shall blame Antonius for the madness of his love, When
Caesar's haughty breast drew in the flame?

Who red with carnage, 'mid the clash of arms, In palace haunted by Pompeius'
shade, Gave place to love; and in adulterous bed, Magnus forgotten, from the
Queen impure, To Julia gave a brother: on the bounds, Of furthest Libya
permitting thus

His foe to gather: he in dalliance base Waited upon his mistress, and to her
Pharos would give, for her would conquer all.

Then Cleopatra, trusting to her charms, Tearless approached him, though in form

of grief; Her tresses loose as though in sorrow torn, So best becoming her; and thus began: "If, mighty Caesar, aught to noble birth Be due, give ear. Of Lagian race am I Offspring illustrious; from my father's throne Cast forth to banishment; unless thy hand Restore to me the sceptre: then a Queen Falls at thy feet embracing. To our race Bright star of justice thou! Nor first shall I As woman rule the cities of the Nile; For, neither sex preferring, Pharos bows To queenly governance. Of my parted sire Read the last words, by which 'tis mine to share With equal rights the kingdom and the bed.

And loves the boy his sister, were he free; But his affections and his sword alike Pothinus orders. Nor wish I myself To wield my father's power; but this my prayer: Save from this foul disgrace our royal house, Bid that the king shall reign, and from the court Remove this hateful varlet, and his arms.

How swells his bosom for that his the hand That shore Pompeius' head! And now he threatens Thee, Caesar, also; which the Fates avert!

'Twas shame enough upon the earth and thee That of Pothinus Magnus should have been The guilt or merit."

Caesar's ears in vain Had she implored, but aided by her charms The wanton's prayers prevailed, and by a night Of shame ineffable, passed with her judge, She won his favour.

When between the pair (5) Caesar had made a peace, by costliest gifts Purchased, a banquet of such glad event Made fit memorial; and with pomp the Queen Displayed her luxuries, as yet unknown To Roman fashions. First uprose the hall Like to a fane which this corrupted age Could scarcely rear: the lofty ceiling shone With richest tracery, the beams were bound In golden coverings; no scant veneer Lay on its walls, but built in solid blocks Of marble, gleamed the palace. Agate stood In sturdy columns, bearing up the roof; Onyx and porphyry on the spacious floor Were trodden 'neath the foot; the mighty gates Of Maroe's throughout were formed,

He mere adornment; ivory clothed the hall, And fixed upon the doors with labour rare Shells of the tortoise gleamed, from Indian seas, With frequent

emeralds studded. Gems of price And yellow jasper on the couches shone.

Lustrous the coverlets; the major part Dipped more than once within the vats of Tyre Had drunk their juice: part feathered as with gold; Part crimson dyed, in manner as are passed Through Pharian leash the threads. There waited slaves In number as a people, some in ranks By different blood distinguished, some by age; This band with Libyan, that with auburn hair Red so that Caesar on the banks of Rhine None such had witnessed; some with features scorched By torrid suns, their locks in twisted coils Drawn from their foreheads. Eunuchs too were there, Unhappy race; and on the other side Men of full age whose cheeks with growth of hair Were hardly darkened.

Upon either hand Lay kings, and Caesar in the midst supreme.

There in her fatal beauty lay the Queen Thick daubed with unguents, nor with throne content Nor with her brother spouse; laden she lay On neck and hair with all the Red Sea spoils, And faint beneath the weight of gems and gold.

Her snowy breast shone through Sidonian lawn Which woven close by shuttles of the east The art of Nile had loosened. Ivory feet Bore citron tables brought from woods that wave (6) On Atlas, such as Caesar never saw

When Juba was his captive. Blind in soul By madness of ambition, thus to fire By such profusion of her wealth, the mind Of Caesar armed, her guest in civil war!

Not though he aimed with pitiless hand to grasp The riches of a world; not though were here Those ancient leaders of the simple age, Fabricius or Curius stern of soul,

Or he who, Consul, left in sordid garb His Tuscan plough, could all their several hopes Have risen to such spoil. On plates of gold They piled the banquet sought in earth and air And from the deepest seas and Nilus' waves, Through all the world; in craving for display, No hunger urging. Frequent birds and beasts, Egypt's high gods, they placed upon the board: In crystal goblets water of the Nile They handed, and in massive cups of price Was poured the wine; no juice of Mareot grape (7) But noble vintage of Falernian growth Which in few years in Meroe's vats had foamed, (For such the clime) to ripeness. On their brows

Chaplets were placed of roses ever young With glistening nard entwined; and in
their locks Was cinnamon infused, not yet in air Its fragrance perished, nor in
foreign climes; And rich amomum from the neighbouring fields.

Thus Caesar learned the booty of a world To lavish, and his breast was shamed
of war Waged with his son-in-law for meagre spoil, And with the Pharian realm
he longed to find A cause of battle.

When of wine and feast They wearied and their pleasure found an end, Caesar
drew out in colloquy the night Thus with Achoreus, on the highest couch With
linen ephod as a priest begirt: “O thou devoted to all sacred rites, Loved by the
gods, as proves thy length of days, Tell, if thou wilt, whence sprang the Pharian
race; How lie their lands, the manners of their tribes, The form and worship of
their deities.

Expound the sculptures on your ancient fanes: Reveal your gods if willing to be
known: If to th’ Athenian sage your fathers taught Their mysteries, who worthier
than I To bear in trust the secrets of the world?

True, by the rumour of my kinsman’s flight Here was I drawn; yet also by your
fame: And even in the midst of war’s alarms The stars and heavenly spaces have
I conned; Nor shall Eudoxus’ year (8) excel mine own.

But though such ardour burns within my breast, Such zeal to know the truth, yet
my chief wish To learn the source of your mysterious flood Through ages
hidden: give me certain hope To see the fount of Nile — and civil war Then shall
I leave.”

He spake, and then the priest: “The secrets, Caesar, of our mighty sires (9)
Kept from the common people until now I hold it right to utter. Some may deem
That silence on these wonders of the earth Were greater piety. But to the gods I
hold it grateful that their handiwork And sacred edicts should be known to men.

“A different power by the primal law, Each star possesses: (10) these alone

control The movement of the sky, with adverse force Opposing: while the sun divides the year, And day from night, and by his potent rays Forbids the stars to pass their stated course.

The moon by her alternate phases sets The varying limits of the sea and shore.

‘Neath Saturn’s sway the zone of ice and snow Has passed; while Mars in lightning’s fitful flames And winds abounds’ beneath high Jupiter Unvexed by storms abides a temperate air; And fruitful Venus’ star contains the seeds Of all things. Ruler of the boundless deep The god (11) Cyllenian: whene’er he holds That part of heaven where the Lion dwells With neighbouring Cancer joined, and Sirius star Flames in its fury; where the circular path (Which marks the changes of the varying year) Gives to hot Cancer and to Capricorn Their several stations, under which doth lie The fount of Nile, he, master of the waves, Strikes with his beam the waters. Forth the stream Brims from his fount, as Ocean when the moon Commands an increase; nor shall curb his flow Till night wins back her losses from the sun. (12) “Vain is the ancient faith that Ethiop snows (13) Send Nile abundant forth upon the lands.

Those mountains know nor northern wind nor star.

Of this are proof the breezes of the South, Fraught with warm vapours, and the people’s hue Burned dark by suns: and ‘tis in time of spring, When first are thawed the snows, that ice-fed streams In swollen torrents tumble; but the Nile Nor lifts his wave before the Dog star burns; Nor seeks again his banks, until the sun In equal balance measures night and day.

Nor are the laws that govern other streams Obeyed by Nile. For in the wintry year Were he in flood, when distant far the sun, His waters lacked their office; but he leaves His channel when the summer is at height, Tempering the torrid heat of Egypt’s clime.

Such is the task of Nile; thus in the world He finds his purpose, lest exceeding heat Consume the lands: and rising thus to meet Enkindled Lion, to Syene’s prayers

By Cancer burnt gives ear; nor curbs his wave Till the slant sun and Meroe’s lengthening shades Proclaim the autumn. Who shall give the cause?

‘Twas Parent Nature’s self which gave command Thus for the needs of earth

should flow the Nile.

“Vain too the fable that the western winds (14) Control his current, in continuous course At stated seasons governing the air; Or hurrying from Occident to South

Clouds without number which in misty folds Press on the waters; or by constant blast, Forcing his current back whose several mouths Burst on the sea; — so, forced by seas and wind, Men say, his billows pour upon the land.

Some speak of hollow caverns, breathing holes Deep in the earth, within whose mighty jaws Waters in noiseless current underneath From northern cold to southern climes are drawn: And when hot Meroe pants beneath the sun, Then, say they, Ganges through the silent depths And Padus pass: and from a single fount The Nile arising not in single streams Pours all the rivers forth. And rumour says That when the sea which girdles in the world (15) O'erflows, thence rushes Nile, by lengthy course, Softening his saltness. More, if it be true That ocean feeds the sun and heavenly fires, Then Phoebus journeying by the burning Crab Sucks from its waters more than air can hold Upon his passage — this the cool of night Pours on the Nile.

“If, Caesar, 'tis my part To judge such difference, 'twould seem that since Creation's age has passed, earth's veins by chance Some waters hold, and shaken cast them forth: But others took when first the globe was formed A sure abode; by Him who framed the world Fixed with the Universe.

“And, Roman, thou, In thirsting thus to know the source of Nile Dost as the Pharian and Persian kings And those of Macedon; nor any age

Refused the secret, but the place prevailed Remote by nature. Greatest of the kings By Memphis worshipped, Alexander grudged (16) To Nile its mystery, and to furthest earth Sent chosen Ethiops whom the crimson zone Stayed in their further march, while flowed his stream Warm at their feet. Sesostri (17) westward far Reached, to the ends of earth; and necks of kings Bent 'neath his chariot yoke: but of the springs Which fill your rivers, Rhone and Po, he drank.

Not of the fount of Nile. Cambyses king In madman quest led forth his host to
where The long-lived races dwell: then famine struck, Ate of his dead (17) and,
Nile unknown, returned.

No lying rumour of thy hidden source Has e'er made mention; wheresoe'er thou
art Yet art thou sought, nor yet has nation claimed In pride of place thy river as
its own.

Yet shall I tell, so far as has the god, Who veils thy fountain, given me to know.

Thy progress. Daring to upraise thy banks 'Gainst fiery Cancer's heat, thou
tak'st thy rise Beneath the zenith: straight towards the north And mid Bootes
flowing; to the couch Bending, or to the risings, of the sun In sinuous bends
alternate; just alike To Araby's peoples and to Libyan sands.

By Seres (18) first beheld, yet know they not Whence art thou come; and with no
native stream Strik'st thou the Ethiop fields. Nor knows the world To whom it
owes thee. Nature ne'er revealed Thy secret origin, removed afar.

Nor did she wish thee to be seen of men While still a tiny rivulet, but preferred
Their wonder to their knowledge. Where the sun Stays at his limit, dost thou rise
in flood Untimely; such try right: to other lands Bearing try winter: and by both
the poles Thou only wanderest. Here men ask thy rise And there thine ending.
Meroe rich in soil And tilled by swarthy husbandmen divides Thy broad
expanse, rejoicing in the leaves Of groves of ebony, which though spreading far
Their branching foliage, by no breadth of shade Soften the summer sun —
whose rays direct Pass from the Lion to the fervid earth. (20) Next dost thou
journey onwards past the realm Of burning Phoebus, and the sterile sands, With
equal volume; now with all thy strength Gathered in one, and now in devious
streams Parting the bank that crumbles at thy touch.

Then by our kingdom's gates, where Philae parts Arabian peoples from Egyptian
fields The sluggish bosom of thy flood recalls Try wandering currents, which
through desert wastes Flow gently on to where the merchant track Divides the
Red Sea waters from our own.

Who, gazing, Nile, upon thy tranquil flow, Could picture how in wild array of
foam (Where shelves the earth) thy billows shall be plunged Down the steep
cataracts, in fuming wrath That rocks should bar the passage of thy stream Free
from its source? For whirled on high the spray Aims at the stars, and trembles all

the air With rush of waters; and with sounding roar The foaming mass down
from the summit pours In hoary waves victorious. Next an isle In all our ancient
lore “untrodden” named Stems firm thy torrent; and the rocks we call Springs of
the river, for that here are marked The earliest tokens of the coming flood.

With mountain shores now nature hems thee in And shuts thy waves from Libya;
in the midst Hence do thy waters run, till Memphis first Forbids the barrier
placed upon thy stream And gives thee access to the open fields.”

Thus did they pass, as though in peace profound, The nightly watches. But
Pothinus’ mind, Once with accursed butchery imbued, Was frenzied still; since
great Pompeius fell No deed to him was crime; his rabid soul Th’ avenging
goddesses and Magnus’ shade Stirred to fresh horrors; and a Pharian hand No
less was worthy, as he deemed, to shed That blood which Fortune purposed
should bedew The conquered fathers: and the fell revenge Due to the senate for
the civil war This hireling almost snatched. Avert, ye fates, Far hence the shame
that not by Brutus’ hand This blow be struck! Shall thus the tyrant’s fall Just at
our hands, become a Pharian crime, Reft of example? To prepare a plan (Fated to
fail) he dares; nor veils in fraud A plot for murder, but with open war Attacks th’
unconquered chieftain: from his crimes He gained such courage as to send
command To lop the head of Caesar, and to join In death the kinsmen chiefs.

These words by night His faithful servants to Achillas bear, His foul associate,
whom the boy had made Chief of his armies, and who ruled alone O’er Egypt’s
land and o’er himself her king: “Now lay thy limbs upon the sumptuous couch
And sleep in luxury, for the Queen hath seized The palace; nor alone by her
betrayed, But Caesar’s gift, is Pharos. Dost delay Nor hasten to the chamber of
thy Queen?

Thou only? Married to the Latian chief, The impious sister now her brother weds
And hurrying from rival spouse to spouse Hath Egypt won, and plays the bawd
for Rome.

By amorous potions she has won the man: Then trust the boy! Yet give him but a
night In her enfondling arms, and drunk with love Thy life and mine he’ll barter
for a kiss.

We for his sister's charms by cross and flame Shall pay the penalty: nor hope of aid; Here stands adulterous Caesar, here the King Her spouse: how hope we from so stern a judge To gain acquittal? Shall she not condemn Those who ne'er sought her favours? By the deed We dared together and lost, by Magnus' blood Which wrought the bond between us, be thou swift With hasty tumult to arouse the war: Dash in with nightly band, and mar with death Their shameless nuptials: on the very bed With either lover smite the ruthless Queen.

Nor let the fortunes of the Western chief Make pause our enterprise. We share with him The glory of his empire o'er the world.

Pompeius fallen makes us too sublime.

There lies the shore that bids us hope success: Ask of our power from the polluted wave, And gaze upon the scanty tomb which holds Not all Pompeius' ashes. Peer to him Was he whom now thou fearest. Noble blood True, is not ours: what boots it? Nor are realms Nor wealth of peoples given to our command.

Yet have we risen to a height of power For deeds of blood, and Fortune to our hands Attracts her victims. Lo! a nobler now Lies in our compass, and a second death Hesperia shall appease; for Caesar's blood, Shed by these hands, shall give us this, that Rome Shall love us, guilty of Pompeius' fall.

Why fear these titles, why this chieftain's strength?

For shorn of these, before your swords he lies A common soldier. To the civil war This night shall bring completion, and shall give To peoples slain fit offerings, and send That life the world demands beneath the shades.

Rise then in all your hardihood and smite This Caesar down, and let the Roman youths Strike for themselves, and Lagos for its King.

Nor do thou tarry: full of wine and feast Thou'lt fall upon him in the lists of love; Then dare the venture, and the heavenly gods Shall grant of Cato's and of Brutus' prayers To thee fulfilment."

Nor was Achilles slow To hear the voice that counselled him to crime.

No sounding clarion summoned, as is wont, His troops to arms; nor trumpet blare betrayed Their nightly march: but rapidly he seized All needed instruments of blood and war.

Of Latian race the most part of his train, Yet to barbarian customs were their minds By long forgetfulness of Rome debased: Else had it shamed to serve the Pharian King; But now his vassal and his minion's word Compel obedience. Those who serve in camps Lose faith and love of kin: their pittance earned (21) Makes just the deed: and for their sordid pay, Not for themselves, they threaten Caesar's life.

Where finds the piteous destiny of the realm Rome with herself at peace? The host withdrawn From dread Thessalia raves on Nilus' banks As all the race of Rome. What more had dared, With Magnus welcomed, the Laguean house?

Each hand must render to the gods their due, Nor son of Rome may cease from civil war; By Heaven's command our state was rent in twain; Nor love for husband nor regard for sire Parted our peoples. 'Twas a slave who stirred Afresh the conflict, and Achilles grasped In turn the sword of Rome: nay more, had won, Had not the fates adverse restrained his hand From Caesar's slaughter.

For the murderous pair Ripe for their plot were met; the spacious hall Still busied with the feast. So might have flowed Into the kingly cups a stream of gore, And in mid banquet fallen Caesar's head.

Yet did they fear lest in the nightly strife (The fates permitting) some incautious hand —

So did they trust the sword — might slay the King.

Thus stayed the deed, for in the minds of slaves The chance of doing Caesar to the death Might bear postponement: when the day arose Then should he suffer; and a night of life Thus by Pothinus was to Caesar given.

Now from the Casian rock looked forth the Sun Flooding the land of Egypt with a day Warm from its earliest dawn, when from the walls Not wandering in

disorder are they seen, But drown in close array, as though to meet A foe
opposing; ready to receive

Or give the battle. Caesar, in the town Placing no trust, within the palace courts
Lay in ignoble hiding place, the gates Close barred: nor all the kingly rooms
possessed, But in the narrowest portion of the space He drew his band together.
There in arms They stood, with dread and fury in their souls.

He feared attack, indignant at his fear.

Thus will a noble beast in little cage Imprisoned, fume, and break upon the bars
His teeth in frenzied wrath; nor more would rage The flames of Vulcan in
Sicilian depths Should Etna's top be closed. He who but now By Haemus' mount
against Pompeius chief, Italia's leaders and the Senate line, His cause forbidding
hope, looked at the fates He knew were hostile, with unfaltering gaze, Now fears
before the crime of hireling slaves, And in mid palace trembles at the blow: He
whom nor Scythian nor Alaun (22) had dared To violate, nor the Moor who aims
the dart Upon his victim slain, to prove his skill.

The Roman world but now did not suffice To hold him, nor the realms from
furthest Ind To Tyrian Gades. Now, as puny boy, Or woman, trembling when a
town is sacked, Within the narrow corners of a house He seeks for safety; on the
portals closed His hope of life; and with uncertain gait He treads the hails; yet
not without the King; In purpose, Ptolemaeus, that thy life For his shall give
atonement; and to hurl Thy severed head among the servant throng Should darts
and torches fail. So story tells The Colchian princess (23) with sword in hand,
And with her brother's neck bared to the blow, Waited her sire, avenger of his
realm Despoiled, and of her flight. In the imminent risk Caesar, in hopes of
peace, an envoy sent To the fierce vassals, from their absent lord Bearing a
message, thus: "At whose command Wage ye the war?" But not the laws which
bind All nations upon earth, nor sacred rights, Availed to save or messenger of
peace, Or King's ambassador; or thee from crime Such as befitted thee, thou
land of Nile Fruitful in monstrous deeds: not Juba's realm Vast though it be, nor
Pontus, nor the land Thessalian, nor the arms of Pharnaces, Nor yet the tracts
which chill Iberus girds, Nor Libyan coasts such wickedness have dared, As
thou, with all thy luxuries. Closer now War hemmed them in, and weapons in the
courts, Shaking the innermost recesses, fell.

Yet did no ram, fatal with single stroke, Assail the portal, nor machine of war;

Nor flame they called in aid; but blind of plan They wander purposeless, in
separate bands Around the circuit, nor at any spot With strength combined
attempt to breach the wall.

The fates forbad, and Fortune from their hands Held fast the palace as a
battlement.

Nor failed they to attack from ships of war The regal dwelling, where its
frontage bold Made stand apart the waters of the deep: There, too, was Caesar's
all-protecting arm; For these at point of sword, and those with fire (24) He forces
back, and though besieged he dares To storm th' assailants: and as lay the ships
Joined rank to rank, bids drop upon their sides Lamps drenched with reeking tar.
Nor slow the fire To seize the hempen cables and the decks Oozing with melting
pitch; the oarsman's bench All in one moment, and the topmost yards Burst into
flame: half merged the vessels lay While swam the foemen, all in arms, the
wave; Nor fell the blaze upon the ships alone, But seized with writhing tongues
the neighbouring homes, And fanned to fury by the Southern breeze
Tempestuous, it leaped from roof to roof; Not otherwise than on its heavenly
track, Unfed by matter, glides the ball of light, By air alone aflame.

This pest recalled Some of the forces to the city's aid From the besieged halls.
Nor Caesar gave To sleep its season; swifter than all else To seize the crucial
moment of the war.

Quick in the darkest watches of the night He leaped upon his ships, and Pharos
(25) seized, Gate of the main; an island in the days Of Proteus seer, now
bordering the walls Of Alexander's city. Thus he gained A double vantage, for
his foes were pent Within the narrow entrance, which for him And for his aids
gave access to the sea.

Nor longer was Pothinus' doom delayed, Yet not with cross or flame, nor with
the wrath His crime demanded; nor by savage beasts Torn, did he suffer; but by
Magnus' death, Alas the shame! he fell; his head by sword Hacked from his
shoulders. Next by frauds prepared By Ganymede her base attendant, fled
Arsinoe (26) from the Court to Caesar's foes; There in the absence of the King
she ruled As of Lagaan blood: there at her hands, The savage minion of the

tyrant boy, Achillas, fell by just avenging sword.

Thus did another victim to thy shade Atone, Pompeius; but the gods forbid That this be all thy vengeance! Not the king Nor all the stock of Lagos for thy death Would make fit sacrifice! So Fortune deemed; And not till patriot swords shall drink the blood Of Caesar, Magnus, shalt thou be appeased.

Still, though was slain the author of the strife, Sank not their rage: with Ganymede for chief Again they rush to arms; in deeds of fight Again they conquer. So might that one day Have witnessed Caesar's fate; so might its fame Have lived through ages.

As the Roman Chief, Crushed on the narrow surface of the mole, Prepared to throw his troops upon the ships, Sudden upon him the surrounding foes With all their terrors came. In dense array Their navy lined the shores, while on the rear The footmen ceaseless charged. No hope was left, For flight was not, nor could the brave man's arm Achieve or safety or a glorious death.

Not now were needed for great Caesar's fall, Caught in the toils of nature, routed host Or mighty heaps of slain: his only doubt To fear or hope for death: while on his brain Brave Scaeva's image flashed, now vainly sought, Who on the wall by Epidamnus' fields Earned fame immortal, and with single arm Drove back Pompeius as he trod the breach....

ENDNOTES:

(1) The body of Alexander was embalmed, and the mummy placed in a glass case. The sarcophagus which enclosed them is stated to be now in the British Museum.

(2) See Book III., 268.

(3) The kettledrum used in the worship of Isis. (See Book VIII, line 974.)

(4) At the Battle of Actium. The island of Leucas, close to the promontory of Actium, is always named by Lucan when he refers to this battle. (See also Virgil,

“Aeneid”, viii., 677.)

(5) Between Cleopatra and her brother.

(6) See Book IX., 507.

(7) Yet the Mareot grape was greatly celebrated. (See Professor Rawlinson’s note to Herodotus. ii., 18.) (8) The calendar introduced by Caesar, in B.C. 45, was founded on the Egyptian or solar year. (See Herodotus, ii., 4.) Eudoxus seems to have dealt with this year and to have corrected it. He is probably alluded to by Virgil, “Eclogue” iii., 41.

(9) Herodotus was less fortunate. For he says “Concerning the nature of the river I was not able to gain any information either from the priests or others.” (ii., 19.)

(10) It was supposed that the Sun and Moon and the planets (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus) were points which restrained the motion of the sky in its revolution.

(See Book VI., 576.)

(11) Mercury. (See Book IX., 777.)

(12) That is, at the autumnal equinox. The priest states that the planet Mercury causes the rise of the Nile. The passage is difficult to follow; but the idea would seem to be that this god, who controlled the rise and fall of the waves of the sea, also when he was placed directly over the Nile caused the rise of that river.

(13) So also Herodotus, Book ii., 22. Yet modern discoveries have proved the snows.

(14) So, too, Herodotus, Book ii., 20, who attributes the theory to Greeks who wish to get a reputation for cleverness.

(15) See on Book V., 709. Herodotus mentions this theory also, to dismiss it.

(16) The historians state that Alexander made an expedition to the temple of Jupiter Hammon and consulted the oracle.

Jupiter assisted his march, and an army of crows pointed out the path (Plutarch). It is, however stated, in a note in Langhorne’s edition, that Maximus

Tyrius informs us that the object of the journey was the discovery of the sources of the Nile.

(17) Sesostris, the great king, does not appear to have pushed his conquests to the west of Europe.

(18) See Herodotus, iii., 17. These Ethiopian races were supposed to live to the age of 120 years, drinking milk, and eating boiled flesh. On Cambyses's march his starving troops cast lots by tens for the one man who was to be eaten.

(19) The Seres are, of course, the Chinese. The ancients seem to have thought that the Nile came from the east. But it is possible that there was another tribe of this name dwelling in Africa.

(20) A passage of difficulty. I understand it to mean that at this spot the summer sun (in Leo) strikes the earth with direct rays.

(21) Reading "ibi fas ubi proxima merees", with Hosius.

(22) See Book VIII., 253.

(23) Medea, who fled from Colchis with her brother, Absyrtus.

Pursued by her father Aeetes, she killed her brother and strewed the parts of his body into the sea. The king paused to collect them.

(24) It was in this conflagration that a large part of the library of the Ptolemies was destroyed. 400,000 volumes are stated to have perished.

(25) The island of Pharos, which lay over against the port of Alexandria, had been connected with the mainland in the middle by a narrow causeway. On it stood the lighthouse.

(See Book IX, 1191.) Proteus, the old man of the sea, kept here his flock of seals, according to the Homeric story.

("Odyssey", Book IV, 400.)

(26) Younger sister of Cleopatra.

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PREPARER'S NOTES:

Lucan's "Pharsalia" (or, "Civil War", as many scholars now prefer to call it) was written approximately a century after the events it chronicles took place.

Lucan was born into a prominent Roman family (Seneca the Elder was his grandfather, and Seneca the Younger his uncle), and seems to have befriended the young Emperor Nero at an early age. He was for several years a poet of some prominence in the Emperor's court, and it is during this period that the "Civil War"/"Pharsalia" was probably begun. However, Nero and Lucan's friendship evidently soured, and in A.D. 65 Lucan joined Calpurnius Piso's conspiracy to overthrow Nero. When the conspiracy was discovered, Lucan was given the option of suicide or death; he chose suicide, and recited several lines of his poetry while he died (possibly Book III, l. 700-712).

Lucan's "Pharsalia" was left (probably) unfinished upon his death, coincidentally breaking off at almost the exact same point where Julius Caesar broke off in his commentary "On the Civil War". Ten books are extant; no one knows how many more Lucan planned, but two to six more books (possibly taking the story as far as Caesar's assassination in B.C. 46) seem a reasonable estimate.

It should be noted that, as history, Lucan's work is far from being scrupulously accurate, frequently ignoring historical fact for the benefit of drama and rhetoric. For this reason, it should not be read as a reliable account of the Roman Civil War.

However, as a work of poetic literature, it has few rivals; its powerful depiction of civil war and its consequences have haunted readers for centuries, and

prompted many Medieval and Renaissance poets to regard Lucan among the ranks of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid.

–DBK

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