

**FRANCIS GROSE, BRIDGES
THOMAS**

**A BURLESQUE
TRANSLATION
OF HOMER**

Francis Grose

A Burlesque Translation of Homer

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active 1759-1775 Thomas Bridges A Burlesque Translation of Homer

THE FIRST BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD

ARGUMENT

Atrides, as the story goes,
Took parson Chrysis by the nose.
Apollo, as the gods all do,
Of Christian, Pagan, Turk, or Jew,
On that occasion did not fail
To back his parson tooth and nail.
This caus'd a dev'lish quarrel 'tween
Pelides and the king of men;
Which ended to Achilles' cost,
Because a buxom wench he lost.
On which great Jove and's wife fell out,
And made a damn'd confounded rout:
And, had not honest Vulcan seen 'em
Ready for blows, and stepp'd between 'em;
'Tis two to one but their dispute
Had ended in a scratching-bout.
Juno at last was over-aw'd,
Or Jove had been well clapper-claw'd.

SOMETHING BY WAY OF PREFACE

Good people, would you know the reason
I write at this unlucky season,
When all the nation is so poor
That few can keep above one whore,
Except the lawyers – (whose large fees
Maintain as many as they please) —
And Pope, with taste and judgement great,
Has deign'd this author to translate —
The reason's this: – He may not please
The jocund tribe so well as these;
For all capacities can't climb
To comprehend the true sublime.
Another reason I can tell,
Though silence might do full as well;
But being charg'd – discharge I must,
For bladder, if too full, will burst.
The writers of the merry class,
E'er since the time of Hudibras,
In this strange blunder all agree,
To murder short-legg'd poetry.
Words, though design'd to make ye smile,
Why mayn't they run as smooth as oil?
No poetaster can convince
A man of any kind of sense,
That verse can be the greater treasure,
Because it wants both weight and measure
Or can persuade, that false rough metre,
Than true and smooth, by far is sweeter.
This is the wherefore; and the why,
Have patience, you'll see by-and-by.

HOMER'S ILIAD

BOOK I

Come, Mrs. Muse, but, if a maid,
Then come Miss Muse, and lend me aid!
Ten thousand jingling verses bring,
That I Achilles' wrath may sing,
That I may chant in curious fashion
This doughty hero's boiling passion,
Which plagu'd the Greeks; and gave 'em double
A Christian's share of toil and trouble,
And, in a manner quite uncivil,
Sent many a Broughton to the devil;
Leaving their carcasses on rows,
Food for great dogs and carrion crows.
To this sad pass the bully's freaks
Had brought his countryfolks the Greeks!
But who the devil durst say no,
Since surly Jove would have it so?
Come tell us then, dear Miss, from whence
The quarrel rose: who gave th' offence?
Latona's son, with fiery locks,
Amongst them sent both plague and pox.
And prov'd most damnably obdurate,
Because the king had vex'd his curate;
For which offence the god annoy'd 'em,
And by whole waggon-loads destroy'd 'em.

The case was this: These sons of thunder
Took a plump wench amongst their plunder.
A red-nos'd priest came hobbling after,
With presents to redeem his daughter;
Like a poor supplicant did stand,
With an old garland in his hand
Filch'd from a May-pole, and to boot
A constable's short staff lugg'd out.
These things, he told the chief that kept her,
Were his old master's crown and sceptre;
Then to the captains made a speech,
And to the brothers joint, and each:

Ye Grecian constables so stout,
May you all live to see Troy out;
And when you've pull'd it to the ground,
May you get home both safe and sound!

Was Jove but half the friend that I am,
You quickly should demolish Priam;
But, since the town his godship spares,
I'll help you all I can with pray'rs.
For my part, if you'll but restore
My daughter, I'll desire no more.
You'll hardly guess the many shifts
I made to raise you all these gifts.
If presents can't for favour plead,
Then let your pity take the lead.
Should you refuse, Apollo swears,
He'll come himself, and lug your ears.

The Grecians by their shouts declare
Th' old gentleman spoke very fair;
They swore respect to him was due,
And he should have his daughter too:
For he had brought, to piece the quarrel,
Of Yarmouth herrings half a barrel.
No wonder then their mouths should water
More for his herrings than his daughter.
But Agamemnon, who with care
Had well examin'd all her ware,
And guess'd that neither Troy nor Greece
Could furnish such another piece,
Roars out: You make a cursed jargon!
But take me with ye ere you bargain:
My turn's to speak; and as for you, Sir,
This journey you may chance to rue, Sir:
Nor shall your cap and gilded stick
Preserve your buttocks from a kick,
Unless you show your heels, and so
Escape the rage of my great toe.
What priest besides thyself e'er grumbled
To have his daughter tightly tumbled?
Then don't provoke me by your stay,
But get you gone, Sir, whilst you may.
I love the girl, and sha'nt part with her
Till age has made her hide whit-leather.
I'll keep her till I can no more,
And then I will not turn her o'er,
But with my goods at Argos land her,
And to my own old mansion hand her,
Where she shall card, and spin, and make
The bed which she has help'd to shake.
From all such blubb'ring rogues, depend on't,
I'll hold her safe, so mark the end on't.
Then cease thy canting sobs and groans,
And scamper ere I break thy bones.

Away then sneak'd the harmless wizard,
Grumbling confoundedly i' th' gizzard,
And, as in doleful dumps he pass'd,
Look'd sharp for fear of being thrash'd.
But out of harm's way when he got,
To Phœbus he set up his throat:
Smintheus, Latona's son and heir,
Cilla's chief justice, hear my pray'r!
Thou link-boy of the world, that dost
In Chrysa's village rule the roast,
And know'st the measure, *inter nos*,
Of ev'ry wench in Tenedos,
Rat-catcher general of heaven,
Remember how much flesh I've given
To stay your stomach; beef and mutton
I never fail'd your shrine to put on;
And, as I knew you lik'd them dearly,
I hung a dozen garlands yearly
About your church, nor charg'd the warden
Or overseers a single farthing;
But paid the charge and swept the gallery
Out of my own poor lousy salary.
This I have done, I'll make't appear,
For more than five-and-fifty year.
In recompense I now insist
The Grecians feel thy toe and fist;
For sure thou canst not grudge the least
To vindicate so good a priest.

Thus Chrysis pray'd: in dreadful ire,
The carrot-pated god took fire;
But ere he stirr'd he bent his bow,
That he might have the less to do,
Resolv'd before he did begin
To souse 'em whilst his hand was in.
Fierce as he mov'd the Greeks to find,
He made a rumbling noise behind;
His guts with grumbling surely never
Could roar so loud – it was his quiver,
Which, as he trotted, with a thwack
Rattled against his raw-bone back.
In darkness he his body shrouds,
By making up a cloak of clouds.
But, when he came within their view,
Twang went his trusty bow of yew:
He first began with dogs and mules,
And next demolish'd knaves and fools.
Nine nights he never went to sleep,

And knock'd 'em down like rotten sheep;
And would have sous'd 'em all, but Juno,
A scolding b – h as any you know,
Came and explain'd the matter fully
To Thetis' son, the Grecian bully,
Who ran full speed to summon all
The common council to the hall.
When seated, with a solemn look
Achilles rose, and thus he spoke:

Neighbours, can any Grecian say
We ought not all to run away
From this curst place without delay?
Else soon our best and bravest cocks
Will be destroy'd by plague or pox.
We cannot long, though Jove doth back us,
Resist, whilst two such foes attack us.
I think 'tis time to spare the few
Our broils have left; but what think you?
A cunning man perhaps may tell us
The reason why this plague befel us
Or an old woman, that can dream,
May help us out in this extreme;
For dreams, if rightly you attend 'em,
Are true, when Jove thinks fit to send 'em.
Thus may we form some judgment what
This same Apollo would be at;
Whether he mauls each wicked sinner,
Because a mighty pimping dinner
He often had but then he knew
That we had damn'd short commons too.
If 'tis for that he makes such stir,
He's not the man I took him for:
But, as I've reason for my fears,
I vote to pay him all arrears.
Therefore let such a man be found,
Either above or under ground,
To tell us quickly how we may
In proper terms begin to pray,
That he may ease us of these curses,
And stay at home and mind his horses —
Much better bus'ness for the spark
Than shooting Grecians in the dark.

He said, and squatting on his breech,
Calchas rose up, and look'd on each:
With caution he began to speak
A speech compos'd of purest Greek.
He was a wizard, and could cast

A figure to find out things past;
And things to come he could foretel,
Almost as well as Sydrophel.
The diff'rent languages he knew
Of every kind of bird that flew,
Each word could construe that they spoke.
Or screech-owl's scream, or raven's croak,
And, by a science most profound,
Distinguish rotten eggs from sound.
When first the Grecians mann'd their boats
To sail and cut the Trojans' throats,
Safely to steer 'em through the tide,
They chose this wizard for their guide.
As slow as clock-work he arose,
Then with his fingers wip'd his nose:
Dubious to speak or hold his tongue,
His words betwixt his teeth were hung:
But, having shook 'em from his jaws,
As dogs shake weasels from their nose,
Away they came both loud and clear,
And told his mind, as you shall hear:

Thou that art Jove's respected friend,
To what I speak be sure attend,
And in a twinkling shalt thou know,
Why Phœbus smokes the Grecians so,
But promise, should the chief attack me,
That thou my bully-rock wilt back me;
Because I know things must come out,
Will gripe him to the very *gut*.
These monarchs are so proud and haughty,
Subjects can't tell them when they're faulty,
Because, though now their fury drops,
Somehow or other out it pops.
And this remember whilst you live,
When kings can't punish, they'll forgive.

Achilles thus: Old cock, speak out,
Speak freely without fear or doubt.
Smite my old pot-lid! but, so long
As I draw breath amidst this throng.
The bloodiest cur in all the crew
Sha'n't dare so much as bark at you:
Not e'en the chief, so grum and tall,
Who sits two steps above us all.

These words the doubtful conj'ror cheer,
Who then proceeded without fear:
To th' gods you never play'd the thief,

But paid them well with tripe or beef;
But 'tis our chief provok'd Apollo
With this curst plague our camp to follow
Because his priest was vilely us'd,
His daughter kiss'd, himself abus'd.
The curate's pray's caus'd these disorders:
Gods fight for men in holy orders.
Nor will he from his purpose flinch,
Nor will his godship budge one inch,
But without mercy, great and small,
Will never cease to sweat us all,
If Agamemnon doth not send her,
With cooks and statesmen to attend her.
Then let's in haste the girl restore
Without a ransom; and, what's more,
Let's rams, and goats, and oxen give,
That priests and gods may let us live.

Ready to burst with vengeful ire,
That made his bloodshot eyes strike fire,
Atrides, with an angry scowl,
Replies, The devil fetch your soul!
I've a great mind, you lousy wizard,
To lay my fist across your mazzard.
Son of an ugly squinting bitch,
Pray who the pox made you a witch?
I don't believe, you mongrel dog,
You ken a handsaw from a hog;
Nor know, although you thus dare flounce,
How many f – s will make an ounce;
And yet, an imp, can always see
Some mischief cooking up for me,
And think, because you are a priest,
You safely may with captains jest.
But I forewarn thee, shun the stroke,
Nor dare my mighty rage provoke.
A pretty fellow thou! to teach
Our men to murmur at thy speech,
Tell lies as thick as you can pack 'em,
And bring your wooden gods to back 'em
And all because a girl I keep
For exercise, to make me sleep.
Besides, the wench does all things neatly,
And *handles* my *affairs* completely.
She hems, marks linen, and she *stitches*,
And mends my doublet, hose, and breeches,
My Clytemnestra well I love,
But not so well as her, by Jove!
Yet, since you say we suffer slaughter

Because I kiss this parson's daughter,
Then go she must; I'll let her go,
Since the cross gods will have it so;
Rather than Phœbus thus shall drive,
And slay the people all alive,
From this dear loving wench I'll part,
The only comfort of my heart.
But, since I must resign for Greece,
I shall expect as good a *piece*:
'Tis a great loss, and by my soul
All Greece shall join to make me whole!
Don't think that I, of all that fought,
Will take a broken pate for nought.

Achilles, starting from his breech,
Replies, By Jove, a pretty speech!
Think'st thou the troops will in her stead
Send what they got with broken head;
Or that we shall esteem you right in
Purloining what we earn'd by fighting?
You may with bullying face demand,
But who the pox will understand?
If thou for plunder look'st, my boy,
Enough of that there is in Troy:
Her apple-stalls we down may pull,
And then we'll stuff thy belly full.

The chief replies: For you, Achilles,
I care not two-pence; but my will is
Not to submit to be so serv'd,
And thou lie warm whilst I am starv'd.
Though thou in battle mak'st brave work,
Can beat the devil, pope, and Turk,
With Spaniards, Hollanders, and French,
I won't for that give up my wench:
Nor shall I, Mr. Bluff, d'ye see,
Resign my girl to pleasure thee.
Let something be produc'd to view,
Which I may have of her in lieu,
Something that's noble, great and good,
Worthy a prince of royal blood;
Just such another I should wish her,
As sev'n years since was Kitty Fisher;
Or else I will, since you provoke,
At all your prizes have a stroke;
Ulysses' booty will I seize,
Or thine or Ajax', if I please.
The man that's hurt may bawl and roar,
And swear, but he can do no more.

But this some other time may do,
I must go launch a sand-barge now:
Victuals and cooks I must take care,
With oars and pilots, to prepare;
See the ropes tarr'd, the bottom mended,
And the old sails well piec'd and bended
Then put the wench on board the boat,
Attended by some man of note,
By Creta's chief, or, if he misses,
By Ajax, or by sly Ulysses;
Or, if I please, I'll make you skip
Aboard, as captain of the ship.
We make no doubt but you with ease
His angry godship may appease;
Or else your goggle eyes, that fright us,
May scare him so he'll cease to smite us.

You would have sworn this mortal twitch
Had given old Peleus' son the itch,
So hard he scratch'd; at last found vent,
And back to him this answer sent:

Thou wretch, to all true hearts a stain,
Thou damn'd infernal rogue in grain!
Thou greater hypocrite than G-ml-y,
Thou dirtier dog than Jeremy L – y!
Whose deeds, like thine, will ever be
A scandal to nobility;
From this good day I hope no chief
Will fight thy broils, or eat thy beef.
How canst thou hope thy men will stand,
When under such a rogue's command?
What bus'ness I to fight thy battle?
The Trojans never stole my cattle.
My farm, secur'd by rocks and sands,
Was safe from all their thieving bands.
My steeds fed safe, both grey and dapple;
Nor could they steal a single apple
From any orchard did belong
To me, my fences were so strong.
I kept off all such sons of bitches
With quick-set hedges fac'd with ditches.
Our farm can all good things supply,
Our men can box, and so can I.
Hither we came, 'tis shame I'm sure,
To fight, for what? an arrant whore!
A pretty story this to tell.
Instead of being treated well,
As a reward for all our blows,

We're kick'd about by your dog's nose.
And dar'st thou think to seize my plunder,
For which I made the battle thunder,
And men and horses truckle under?
No! since it was the Grecians' gift,
To keep it I shall make a shift.
What wouldst thou have? thou hadst the *best*
Of every thing; nay, 'tis no jest:
But you take care to leave, I see,
The fighting trade to fools like me.
In this you show the statesman's skill,
To let fools fight whilst you sit still.
First I'm humbugg'd with some poor toy,
Then clapp'd o' th' back, and call'd brave boy.
This shall no more hold water, friend:
My 'prenticeship this day shall end.
When I go, and my men to boots,
I leave thee then a king of clouts.

The general gave him tit for tat,
And answer'd, cocking first his hat:
Go, and be hang'd, you blust'ring whelp,
Pray who the murrain wants your help?
When you are gone, I know there are
Col'nels sufficient for the war,
Militia bucks that know no fears,
Brave fishmongers and auctioneers.
Besides, great Jove will fight for us,
What need we then this mighty fuss?
Thou lov'st to quarrel, fratch, and jangle,
To scold and swear, and fight and wrangle.
Great strength thou hast, and pray what then?
Art thou so stupid, canst not ken,
The gods, that ev'ry thing can see,
Give strength to bears as well as thee?
Of all Jove's sons, a bastard host,
For reasons good, I hate thee most.
Prithee be packing; thou'rt not fit,
Or here to stand, or there to sit:
In your own parish kick your scrubs,
They're taught to bear such kind of rubs;
But, for my part, I scorn the help
Of such a noisy, bullying whelp:
Go therefore, friend, and learn at school,
First to obey, and then to rule.
The gods they say for Chryseis send,
And to restore her I intend;
But look what follows, Mr. Bully!
See if I don't convince thee fully,

That thy bluff wench with sandy hair
The loss I suffer shall repair:
I'll let thee feel what 'tis to be
A rival to a chief like me;
That thou and all these folks may know,
Great men are only subject to
The gods, or right or wrong they do.

Had you but seen Achilles fret it,
I think you never could forget it;
A sight so dreadful ne'er was seen,
He sweat for very rage and spleen:
Long was he balanc'd at both ends;
When reason mounted, rage descends;
The last commanded sword lug out;
The first advis'd him not to do't.
With half-drawn weapon fierce he stood,
Eager to let the general blood;
When Pallas, swift descending down,
Lent him a knock upon the crown;
Then roar'd as loud as she could yelp,
Lugging his ears, 'Tis I, you whelp!
Now Mrs. Juno, 'cause they both
Were fav'rites, was exceeding loth
To have 'em quarrel; so she sent
This wench all mischief to prevent,
And, to obstruct her being seen,
Lent her a cloud to make a screen.

Pelides wonder'd who could be
So bold, and turn'd about to see:
He knew the twinkling of her eyes,
And loud as he could bawl, he cries,
Goddess of Wisdom! pray what weather
Has blown your goatskin doublet hither?
Howe'er, thou com'st quite opportune
To see how basely I'm run down;
Thou com'st most *à-propos incog*.
To see how I will trim this dog:
For, by this trusty blade, his life
Or mine shall end this furious strife!

To whom reply'd the blue-ey'd Pallas,
I come to save thee from the gallows:
Thou'rt surely either mad or drunk,
To threaten murder for a punk:
Prithee, now let this passion cool;
For once be guided by a fool.
From heav'n I sous'd me down like thunder,

To keep your boiling passion under;
For white-arm'd Juno bid me say,
Let reason now thy passion sway,
And give it vent some other day;
Sheathe thy cheese-toaster in its case,
But call him scoundrel to his face.
To Juno both alike are dear,
And both alike to me, I'll swear.
In a short time the silly whelp
Will give a guinea for thy help;
Only just now revenge forbear,
And be content to scold and swear.

Achilles thus: With ears and eyes
I mind thee, goddess bold and wise!
'Tis hard; but since 'tis your command,
Depend upon't I'll hold my hand —
Knowing, if your advice I take,
Some day a recompense you'll make:
Besides, of all the heavenly crew,
I pay the most regard to you.
This said, he rams into the sheath
His rusty instrument of death.

(Pallas then instantly took flight,
Astride her broom-stick, out of sight;
And ere you could repeat twice seven,
Had reach'd the outward gate of heaven.)
His gizzard still was mighty hot,
And boil'd like porridge in a pot;
Atrides he did so randan,
He call'd him all but gentleman;
By Jove, says he, thou'rt always drunk,
And always squabbling for a punk.
Thou dog in face! thou deer in heart!
Thou call'd a fighter! thou a f – t!
When didst thou e'er in ambush lie,
Unless to seize some mutton pie?
And there you're safe, because you can
Run faster than the baker's man.
When fighting comes you bid us fight,
And claim the greatest profit by't.
Great Agamemnon safer goes,
To rob his friends than plunder foes:
And he who dares to contradict
Is sure to have his pockets pick'd:
Hear then, you pilfering dirty cur,
Whose thieving makes so great a stir;
And let the crowd about us hear

What I by this same truncheon swear,
Which to the tree whereon it grew
Will never join, nor I with you,
The devil fetch me if I do!
Therefore, I say, by this same stick,
Expect no more I'll come i' th' nick
Your luggs to save: let Hector souse ye,
And with his trusty broomshaft douse ye.
God help us all, I know thou'lt say,
Then stare and gape, and run away:
All this will happen, I conjecture,
The very next time you see Hector;
And then thyself thou'lt hang, I trow,
For using great Achilles so.
This said, his truncheon, gilded all
Like ginger-bread upon a stall,
Around the top and bottom too,
Slap bang upon the floor he threw.
His wrath Atrides could not hold,
But cock'd his mouth again to scold,
And talk'd away at such a rate,
He distanc'd hard-mouth'd scolding Kate,
The orator of Billingsgate.

Whilst thus they rant and scold and swear
Old Square-toes rises from his chair;
With honey words your ears he'd sooth,
Pomatum was not half so smooth.
Nestor had fill'd the highest stations
For almost three whole generations;
At ev'ry meeting took the chair,
Had been a dozen times lord-mayor,
And, what you hardly credit will,
Remain'd a fine old Grecian still.
On him with gaping jaws they look,
Whilst the old coney-catcher spoke:
To Greece 'twill be a burning shame,
But to the Trojans special game,
That our best leaders, men so stout,
For whores and rogues should thus fall out:
Young men the old may treat as mules,
We know full well young men are fools;
Therefore, to lay the case before ye
Plain as I can, I'll tell a story:
I once a set of fellows knew,
All hearts of oak, and backs of yew:
To look for such would be in vain,
I ne'er shall see the like again.
Though bruis'd from head to foot they fought on,

Pirithous was himself a Broughton.
Bold Dryas was as hard as steel,
His knuckles would make Buckhurst feel;
And strong-back'd Theseus, though a sailor,
Would single-handed beat the Nailor.
Great Polyphemus too I brag on,
He fought and kick'd like Wantley's dragon;
And Cineus often would for fun
Make constables and watchmen run.
Such were my cronies, rogues in buff,
Who taught me how to kick and cuff.
With these the boar stood little chance;
They made the four-legg'd Centaurs prance.
Now these brave boys, these hearts of oak,
Were all attention when I spoke;
And listen'd to my fine oration
Like Whitfield's gaping congregation:
Though I was young, they thought me wise;
You sure may now with me advise.
Atrides, don't Briseis seek;
For, if you do, depend, each Greek,
The dastard rogue as well as brave,
Will say our king's both fool and knave.
The want of brains is no great shame,
'Cause nature there is most to blame;
But this plain fact by all is known,
If you're a rogue, the fault's your own.
Achilles, don't you play the fool,
And snub the king; for he must rule.
Thou art in fight the first, I grant;
As brave as Mars, or John-a-Gaunt:
But then you must allow one thing,
No man should scold and huff a king.
Matters you know are just this length,
He has got pow'r, and you have strength
Of each let's take a proper sup
To make a useful mixture up.
Do you, Atrides, strive to ease
Your heart; this bully I'll appease.
I'd rather give five hundred pound
Than have Pelides quit the ground.
Bravo! old boy! the king replies,
I swear my vet'ran's wondrous wise:
But that snap-dragon won't submit
To laws, unless he thinks 'em fit;
Because he can the Trojans swinge,
He fancies I to him should cringe:
But I, in spite of all his frumps,
Shall make him know I'm king of trumps.

Achilles quickly broke the thread
Of this fine speech; and thus he said:

Now, smite me, but I well deserv'd
To be so us'd, when first I serv'd
So great a rogue as you; but damn me
If you another day shall flam me:
Seize my Briseis, if you list,
I've pass'd my word I won't resist;
Safely then do it, for no more,
For any woman, wife or whore,
Achilles boxes; but take care
Your scoundrels steal no other ware:
No more Achilles dare t'affront,
Lest he should call thee to account,
And the next scurvy squabble close,
By wringing off thy snotty nose.

This Billingsgate affair being o'er,
Sullen they turn'd 'em to the door.
Achilles in a hurry went,
And sat down sulky in his tent:
Patroclus, as a friend should do,
Both grumbled and look'd sulky too.
Mean time Atrides fitted out
From Puddle Dock a smuggling-boat.
On deck Miss Chryseis took her stand;
Ulysses had the chief command.
The off'rings in the hold they stuff'd,
Then, all sails set, away they luff'd.
The chol'ric chief doth next essay
The soldiers' filth to wash away;
A cart and horse to every tent,
He with a noisy bellman sent:
The bell did signify, You must
Without delay bring out your dust:
Then made 'em stand upon the shore,
And wash their dirty limbs all o'er:
Next, by advice of Doctor Grimstone,
He rubb'd their mangy joints with brimstone,
Because, when first they sally'd forth,
Some mercenaries from the north
Had brought a queer distemper, which
The learned doctors call'd the itch.
He next begins to cut the throats
Of bulls, and sheep, and lambs, and goats;
The legs and loins in order laid,
To Phœbus all his share is paid:

Apollo, as the smoke arose,
Snuff'd ev'ry atom up his nose;
And, rather than they would provoke him,
They sent him smoke enough to choke him.
Still in the midst of all this coil,
Atrides felt his ewer boil:
Talthybius and Euribates,
Two ticket porters, did await his
Dread will, to carry goods and chattels,
Or run with messages in battles:
To these he speaks: – Ye scoundrels two,
What I command observe ye do;
Run to Achilles' tent, take heed,
And bring away his wench with speed;
Tell him you're order'd to attend her,
And I expect he'll quickly send her;
Else with a file of musqueteers
I'll beat his tent about his ears.

They hung an arse, what could they do?
They'd rather not, but yet must go:
Pensive they trod the barren sand,
On this side sea, on that side land,
And look'd extreme disconsolate,
Fearing at least a broken pate.
The hero in his tent they found,
His day-lights fix'd upon the ground:
They relish'd not his surly look,
So out of fear their distance took:
Quickly he guess'd they were in trouble,
And scorn'd to make their burden double
But with his finger, or his thumb,
Beckon'd the tardy knaves to come.
Ye trusty messengers, draw near,
And don't bedaub yourselves for fear,
Though you smell strong; but if 'tis so,
Pray clean yourselves before ye go;
Your master, if my thoughts prove true,
Will soon smell stronger far than you.
I partly guess for what you came;
Poor rogues, like you, should bear no blame.
Compell'd, you hither bent your way;
And servants always should obey.
Patroclus, fetch this square-stern'd jade,
Let her be to his tent convey'd:
But hark, ye messengers declare,
What I by Gog and Magog swear,
That though in blood all Greece shall wallow,
With fretting I'll consume no tallow,

But coolly let, and so I tell ye,
The Trojans beat your bones to jelly;
And if to me they are but civil,
May drive you scoundrels to the devil.
Your muddy-pated, hot-brain'd chief,
(Whose folly far exceeds belief)
When he has got a broken pate,
Will find himself an ass too late.
Mean time the bold Patroclus bears
The red-hair'd wench all drown'd in tears;
Who, with a woful heavy heart,
(As loth from his strong back to part)
Whilst with the porters twain she went,
Kept squinting backward to his tent.

Now, when the buxom wench was gone,
What think you doth this lubber-loon,
But, when he found no mortal near him,
Roar so, 'twould do you good to hear him;
And hanging his great jolter head
O'er the salt sea, he sobb'd, and said:

Oh, mother! since I'm to be shot,
Or some way else must go to pot,
I think great Jove, if he did right,
Should scour my fame exceeding bright.
'Tis quite reverse: yon brazen knave
Has stole the plumpest wench I have;
And in the face of all the throng
Of constables has done me wrong.

The goddess heard him under water,
And ran as fast as she could patter:
She saw he'd almost broke his heart,
And, like good mother, took his part:

My son, I'm vext to hear thee cry;
Come, tell mamma the reason why.
From th' bottom of his wame he sigh'd,
And to his mammy thus reply'd:

For what that rogue has made me cry,
You know, I'm sure, as well as I:
Yet since you bid me tell my story,
I'll whip it over in a hurry.
What think you that vile scoundrel's done,
That Agamemnon, to your son?
Because his pretty girl was gone,
He must have mine, forsooth, or none.

The Grecians gave to me this prize:
He huffs the Greeks, and damns their eyes.
We went to Thebes, and sack'd a village,
And brought away a world of pillage:
Amongst the plunder that was taken,
Besides fat geese, and eggs, and bacon,
We got some wenches plump and fair,
Of which one fell to that rogue's share:
But in the middle of our feast,
There came a hobbling red-nos'd priest;
In a great wallet that old dreamer
Had brought some presents to redeem her,
And made such humble supplication,
Attended with a fine oration,
That ev'ry Greek, except Atrides,
On the old hobbling parson's side is.
But he, of no one soul afraid,
Swore blood-and-oons he'd keep the maid
And, with an answer most uncivil,
Damn'd the old fellow to the devil.
The priest walk'd home in doleful dumps
(Like Witherington upon his stumps):
But, it is plain, he made a holla
That reach'd his loving friend Apollo;
For he in wrath, most furiously,
Began to smite us hip and thigh;
And had not I found out a prophet,
That told us all the reason of it,
Burn my old shoes, if e'er a sinner
Had now been left to eat a dinner;
But that, as sure as cits of London
Oft leave their spouses' business undone,
And trudge away to Russel-street
Some little dirty whore to meet,
Whilst the poor wife, to cure her dumps,
Works her apprentice to the stumps;
So sure this god, for rage or fun,
Had pepper'd ev'ry mother's son.
'Twas I, indeed, did first advise
To cook him up a sacrifice,
And then his pardon strive to gain
By sending home the wench again;
For which the damn'd confounded churl
Swore he would have my bouncing girl:
And I this minute, you must know,
Like a great fool, have let her go:
For which, no doubt, it will be said
Your son has got a chuckle head.
To Jove then go, and catch him by

The hand, or foot, or knee, or thigh;
Hold him but fast, and coax him well.
And mind you that old story tell,
How you of all the gods held out
When they once rais'd a rebel rout,
And brought a giant from Guildhall
With face so grim he scar'd 'em all:
When once you'd got him rais'd above,
And plac'd him by the side of Jove,
So fast with both his hands he thunder'd,
The rebels swore he'd got a hundred,
Threw down the ropes they'd brought to bind 'em,
And, scamp'ring, never look'd behind 'em:
Tell him, for this, to drive pell mell
The Grecian sons of whores to hell,
That Atreus' son, that stupid fool,
May have no scoundrels left to rule;
And then he'll hang himself for spite,
He durst the boldest Grecian slight.

His mother's heart was almost broke,
To hear how dolefully he spoke:
But having belch'd, she thus replies,
The salt brine running from her eyes:

O Killey, since the Fates do stint
Thy precious life, the devil's in't
That thou must likewise bear to boots
This scurvy, mangey rascal's flouts:
But take thy mammy's good advice,
And his thee homeward in a trice;
Or, if thou'd rather choose to stay,
Don't help the dogs in any fray.
Depend upon't, to Jove I'll go,
And let him all the matter know:
He junkets now with swarthy faces
(For he, like men, has all his paces),
And will continue at the feast
Ten or eleven days at least:
Taking, like our Jamaica planters,
Their fill of what our vilest ranters
Would puke at but these kind of beast
Esteem it as a noble feast;
I mean the breaking-up the trenches
Of sooty, sweaty negro wenches
(Though most o' th' planters that thus roam,
Like Jove, have wife enough at home.)
Soon as his guts have got their fill,
I'll tell him all, by Jove I will!

Till he has granted my petition,
Don't stir to keep 'em from perdition;
Not e'en to save their souls, plague rot 'em!
So souse she plung'd, and reach'd the bottom.

Mean time Ulysses, full of cares,
Had moor'd his boat at Chrysa's stairs:
When sails were furl'd, and all made snug,
They tipp'd the can, and pass'd the jug;
Then fell to work, and brought their store
Of cows and rotten sheep ashore:
This done, the last of all came out
The girl that caus'd this woful rout.
Ulysses, ever on the lurch,
Hurries the girl away to church,
Knowing full well that there he had
Best chance of finding her old dad;
And as he gave her to th' old man,
To lie¹ and cant he thus began:

I come upon my bended knees,
Thine and Apollo's wrath t' appease;
And that I'm in good earnest, see
Thy girl come back, and ransom-free;
And, what I own is boldly said,
I've brought her with her maidenhead;
For which, I hope, our friend you'll stand,
That Sol may hold his heavy hand,
The parson hugg'd and kiss'd his daughter,
And shak'd the hands of them that brought her
So pleas'd to see the girl again,
He fell to prayers might and main;
And, whilst the Greeks the cattle slay,
The parson thus was heard to pray:

Apollo, pr'ythee hear me now,
As eke thou didst nine days ago:
As thou at my request didst murder
The Grecians, pr'ythee go no further;
Hear, once again, thy priest's petition,
And mend their most bedaub'd condition.

Apollo, as the sound drew near,
To ev'ry syllab lent an ear:
And now they fell to cutting throats
Of bulls and oxen, sheep and goats.
After the day-light god was serv'd,

¹ Every body knows Ulysses could lie with a very grave face.

The priest for all the people carv'd.
But how the hungry whoresons scaff'd;
How eagerly the beer they quaff'd,
Till they had left no single chink,
Either to hold more meat or drink,
None can describe: they grew so mellow,
Nothing was heard but whoop and halloo;
Rare songs they sung, and catches too —
(The composition good and true)
Apollo made 'em, but took care
They should not last above a year,
Well knowing that the future race
Of men all knowledge would disgrace,
And that his lines must have great luck,
Not to give place to Stephen Duck.

At sun-set all hands went from shore
On board their oyster-boat to snore.
I' th' morning, when they hoist their sail,
Apollo lent a mack'rel gale,
With which they nimbly cross'd the main,
And haul'd their boat ashore again.

But now 'tis time we look about
And find the bold Achilles out:
Pensive he sat, and bit his thumbs;
No comfort yet, no mammy comes:
The days had number'd just eleven,
When Jupiter return'd to heaven;
He'd got his belly full of smacks
From thick-lip'd Ethiopian blacks.

The mother on her word must think;
So up she mounted in a twink,
Approach'd his godship, whom she took
Fast by the hand, and thus she spoke:

If ever I had luck to be
Useful in time of need to thee,
(Which, I am sure, you can't deny,
Unless you tell a cursed lie)
Quickly revenge th' affront that's done
By Agamemnon to my son.
Let Hector thrash 'em, if he list,
Till ev'ry Grecian rogue's bepiss'd,
And make them run like frighten'd rats
From mother Dobson's tabby cats.

Whilst Jove considers what to say,

Onward she goes; she'll have no nay:

You must with my request comply,
My dearest dad, so don't deny;
But let the heavenly rabble see
Some kindness is reserv'd for me.

Then answers he who rolls the thunder:
I'm much amaz'd, and greatly wonder,
That you should thus attempt, with tears,
To set my rib and me by th' ears;
This, by my soul! will make rare work:
Juno will rate me like a Turk:
You surely know, and have known long,
The devil cannot match her tongue:
To Troy, I'm sure, I wish full well,
She ne'er forgets that tale to tell:
But his away from hence, lest she
Should spy you holding chat with me.
If I but say I'll grant your suit,
You may depend upon't I'll do't:
With head (observe) I'll make a nod,
That cannot be revers'd by god.
The thund'rer then his noddle shakes,
And Greece, like city custard, quakes.
Thetis, well pleas'd the Greeks to souse,
Dives under water like a goose;
Whilst Jove to th' upper house repairs,
And calls about him all his peers;
Who ran t' attend his call much faster
Than schoolboys run to meet their master.
All silent stood the gaping bevy,
Like sneaking courtiers at a levee,
Juno excepted: fear she scorns,
She hates all manners, damns all forms;
And because Jove had just been talking
With Thetis (nothing more provoking),
Her passion rose, and she ding dong
Would quarrel with him, right or wrong.

'Tis mighty civil, on my life,
To keep all secrets from your wife:
Is this the method, Mr. Jove,
You take to show your wife your love?
Pray who's that brimstone-looking quean,
With whom you whispering was seen?
Perhaps you're set some secret task,
And I'm impertinent to ask.
Is there a wife 'tween here and Styx,

Like me, would bear your whoring tricks?
But, goodman Roister! I'd have you know,
Though you are Jove, I still am Juno!

Madam, says Jove, by all this prate,
I partly guess what you'd be at;
You want the secrets to disclose,
Which I conceal from friends and foes;
You only seek your own disquiet;
Secrets to women are bad diet.
A secret makes a desp'rate rumble,
Nor ceases in the gut to grumble
Till vent it finds; then out it flies,
Attended with ten thousand lies;
All characters to pieces tears,
And sets the neighbourhood by th' ears.
What's proper I'll to you relate,
The rest remains with me and Fate:
But from this day I'll order, no man
That's wise shall trust a tattling woman.

The goddess with the goggle eyes
Roll'd 'em about, and thus replies:

I find 'twill be in vain to plead,
When once you get it in your head
To contradict your loving wife;
You value neither noise nor strife,
But, spite of all that we can say,
You mules will always have your way.
But yet for Greece I'm sore afraid,
E'er since that cunning white-legg'd jade,
That Thetis, a long conf'rence had;
I'm sure she's hatching something bad,
And hath some mighty favour won
For her dear ranting roaring son?
Else, by my soul, you'd not have given
A nod that shook both earth and heaven;
Perhaps you'll take the whore's-bird's side,
And thrash my Grecians back and hide.
Flux me! quoth Jove, thy jealous pate,
Instead of love, will move my hate.
I tell thee, cunning thou must be
To worm this secret out of me;
'Tis better far, good wife, to cease
To plague me thus, and study peace;
Or if you want to make resistance,
Call all the gods to your assistance;
So all your jackets will I baste,

You'll not rebel again in haste.

Juno, with face as broad as platter,
Soon found she had mista'en the master;
She relish'd not this surly dish,
So sat her down as mute as fish:
At which the guests were so confounded,
That all their mirth was well nigh drowned
Their knives and forks they every one
Before their greasy plates laid down;
Each mouth was ready cock'd, to beg
Leave to depart, and make a leg;
When Juno's son, ycleped Vulcan,
A special fellow at a full can,
Who was of handicrafts the top,
And kept a noted blacksmith's shop,
Where he made nets, steel caps, and thunder,
And finish'd potlids to a wonder;
He, finding things were going wrong,
And that they'd fall by th' ears ere long,
Starts up, and in a merry strain
Hammer'd a speech from his own brain.

Quoth he, What pity 'tis that we,
Who should know nought but jollity,
Should scold and squabble, brawl and wrangle,
And about mortal scoundrels jangle!
In peace put we the can about,
Let Englishmen in drink fall out,
And, at the meetings of the trade,
Fight when the reck'ning should be paid.
Mother, you know not what you're doing;
To CALLOT thus will be your ruin;
He'll some time, in a dev'lish fury,
Do you some mischief, I'll assure you:
Yet, I'll lay sixpence to a farthing,
He'll kiss you, if you ask his pardon.
This said, a swingeing bowl he takes,
And drank it off for both their sakes;
Then with a caper fill'd another,
Which he presented to his mother:

Not courtier-like I hand this bowl:
But take it from an honest soul,
That means and thinks whate'er he says;
It won't be so in future days:
Here, drink Jove's health, and own his sway:
You know all women must obey.
When once my father's in a passion,

He's dev'lish cross, hear my relation:
In your good cause I felt his twist,
My leg he seiz'd in his strong wrist;
In vain it was with him to grapple,
He grasp'd me as you would an apple;
And from his mutton-fist when hurl'd,
For three long days and nights I twirl'd;
At last upon the earth fell squash,
My legs were broken all to smash:
'Tis true, they're set, as you may see,
But most folks think damn'd awkwardly.
He then the bowl, with clownish grace,
Fill'd round, and wip'd his sooty face,
Then limp'd away into his place.

This cur'd them all from being dull,
And made 'em laugh their bellies full:
Once more their teeth to work they set,
And laid about 'em till they sweat,
Drinking, like well-fed aldermen,
A bumper every now and then,
Which they took care their guts to put in
Whilst t' other slice of beef was cutting;
For they, like cits, allow'd no crime
So great as that of losing time,
At home, abroad, or any meeting
Where the debate must end in eating.
Now they were in for't, all day long
They booz'd about, and had a song:
The fiddlers scrap'd both flat and sharp;
Apollo thrum'd the old Welch harp:
Nine ballad-singers from the street
Were fetch'd, with voices all so sweet,
Compar'd with them, Mansoli's squeaking
Would seem like rusty hinges creaking.
At sun-set², with a heavy head,
Each drunkard reel'd him home to bed,
Vulcan, who was the royal coiner,
Besides both carpenter and joiner,
Had built for every god a house,
And scorn'd to take a single sous.
Now night came on, the thund'rer led
His helpmate to her wicker bed;
There they agreed, and where's the wonder?
His sceptre rais'd, she soon knock'd under.

² Homer makes the gods go home at sun-set; I wish he could make all country justices and parsons do the same.

THE SECOND BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD

ARGUMENT

Jove, or by fame he much bely'd is,
Sends off a Dream to hum Atrides:
His conscience telling him it meet is
To make his promise good to Thetis;
Gave it commission as it went,
To tell the cull by whom 'twas sent;
And bid it fill his head top full,
Of taking Troy, and cock and bull.
The Vision goes as it was bid,
And fairly turns the poor man's head,
Who eagerly began to stare
At castles building in the air,
And fancy'd, as the work went on,
He heard Troy's walls come tumbling down.
But ere he starts, he has an eye
The metal of his rogues to try:
He tells the chiefs, when he proposes
That homeward all shall point their noses,
They must take care, when he had sped,
To come and knock it all o' th' head.
The plot succeeds; they're glad to go;
But sly Ulysses answer'd, No;
Then drove his broomstick with a thwack
Upon Thersites' huckle back;
Check'd other scoundrels with a frown,
And knock'd the sauciest rascals down;
Proving, that at improper times
To speak the truth's the worst of crimes.

Th' assembly met; old Nestor preaches,
And all the chiefs, like schoolboys, teaches
Orders each diff'rent shire to fix
A rendezvous, nor longer mix,
But with their own bluff captains stay,
Whether they fight or run away:
And whilst thus gather'd in a cluster,
They nick the time, and make a muster.

HOMER'S ILIAD

BOOK II

The watch past twelve o'clock were roaring,
And citizens in bed were snoring,
And all the gods of each degree
Were snoring hard for company,
Whilst Jove, whose mind could get no ease,
Perplex'd with cares as well as fleas
(For cares he in his bosom carried,
As every creature must that's married),
Was plotting, since he had begun,
How he might honour Thetis' son;
And scratch'd, and scratch'd, but yet he could
Not find a method for his blood
To keep his word. At last he caught,
By scratching hard, a lucky thought
(And 'faith, I think, 'twas no bad scheme);
To send the Grecian chief a Dream,
Made of a Cloud, on which he put
A coat and waistcoat, ready cut
Out of the self-same kind of stuff,
But yet it suited well enough
To give it shape: Now, Mr. Dream,
Take care you keep the shape you seem,
Says Jove; then do directly go
To Agamemnon's tent below:
Tell him to arm his ragged knaves
With cudgels, spits, and quarter-staves,
Then instantly their time employ
To rattle down the walls of Troy.
Tell him, in this, Miss Destiny
And all the heav'nly crew agree:
For Juno has made such a riot,
The gods do aught to keep her quiet.

Away goes Dream upon the wing,
And stands before the snoring king:
Grave Nestor's coat and figure took,
As old as he, as wise his look,
Rubs the cull's noddle with his wings,
And, full of guile, thus small he sings:

Monarch, how canst thou sleeping lie,
When thou hast other fish to fry?

O Atreus' son, thou mighty warrior,
Whose father was a skilful farrier,
Hast thou no thought about decorum,
Who art the very head o'th' quorum?
I shame myself to think I'm catching
Thee fast asleep, instead of watching.
Is not all Greece pinn'd on thy lap?
Rise, and for once postpone thy nap,
Lest by some rogue it should be said,
The chief of chiefs went drunk to bed:
For Jove, by whom you are respected,
Says your affairs sh'an't be neglected;
So sends you word he now is poring
On your concerns, whilst you are snoring:
He bids thee arm thy ragged knaves
With cudgels, spits, and quarter-staves,
Then instantly thy time employ
To rattle down the walls of Troy:
To this, he adds, Miss Destiny
And all the heav'nly crew agree:
For Juno has made such a riot,
The gods do aught to keep her quiet.

Then nothing more this Nothing says,
But turn'd about, and went his ways.
Up starts the king, and with his nail
Scratch'd both his head, and back, and tail;
And all the while his fancy's tickl'd,
To think how Troy would soon be pickl'd.
A silly goose! he little knew
What surly Jove resolv'd to do;
What shoals of sturdy knaves must tumble
Before they could the Trojans humble.
Down on an ancient chopping-block
This mighty warrior clapp'd his dock
(The block, worn out with chopping meat,
Now made the chief a rare strong seat):
Then don'd his shirt with Holland cuff,
For, Frenchman-like, he lay in buff;
Next o'er his greasy doublet threw
A thread-bare coat that once was blue,
But dirt and time had chang'd its hue;
Slipp'd on his shoes, but lately cobbled,
And to the board of council hobbled;
But took his sword with brazen hilt,
And wooden sceptre finely gilt.
Now, Madam Morn popp'd up her face,
And told 'em day came on apace;
When Agamemnon's beadles rouse

The Greeks to hear this joyful news.
He long'd, like breeding wife, it seems,
To tell his tickling, pleasing dreams.
I' th' int'rim, trotting to the fleet,
Old Nestor there he chanc'd to meet,
Whose tent he borrows for that morn,
To make a council-chamber on;
And reason good he had, I ween,
It kept his own apartment clean.

Now all-hands met, he takes his time,
And told his case in prose or rhyme:

Friends, neighbours, and confed'rates bold,
Attend, whilst I my tale unfold:
As in my bed I lay last night,
I saw an odd-look'd kind of sprite;
It seem'd, grave Nestor, to my view,
Just such a queer old put as you —
'Tis fact, for all your surly look —
And this short speech distinctly spoke:

How canst thou, monarch, sleeping lie,
When thou hast other fish to fry?
O Atreus' son, thou mighty warrior,
Whose father was a special farrier
(Which, by the by, although 'tis true,
Yet I'd be glad you'd tell me how
This bushy-bearded spirit knew),
Hast thou no thought about decorum,
Who art the very head o' th' quorum?
I shame myself to think I'm catching
Thee fast asleep, instead of watching.
Is not all Greece pinn'd on thy lap?
Rise, and for once postpone thy nap;
Or by some rogue it will be said,
The chief of chiefs went drunk to bed:
For Jove, by whom you are respected,
Says your affairs sha'n't be neglected:
But now on your affair he's poring,
Whilst you lie f – ting here and snoring:
He bids thee arm thy ragged knaves
With cudgels, spits, and quarter-staves;
For now the time is come, he swears,
To pull Troy's walls about their ears:
Nay more, he adds, the gods agree
With Fate itself it thus shall be.
Jove and his queen have had their quantum
Of jaw, and such-like rantum-scantum:

She now puts on her best behaviours,
And they're as kind as incle-weavers.
Then nothing more the Vision said,
But kick'd me half way out of bed.
This very token did, I vow,
Convince me that the dream was true;
For, waking soon, I found my head
And shoulders on the floor were laid,
Whilst my long legs kept snug in bed:
Therefore, since Jove, with good intent,
So rare a messenger has sent,
We should directly, I've a notion,
Put all our jolly boys in motion:
But first, what think you if we settle
A scheme to try the scarecrows' mettle,
As with nine years they're worn to th' stumps?
I'll feign my kingship in the dumps
With Jove himself, and then propose
That homeward they direct their nose.
But take you care, if I succeed,
To show yourselves in time of need:
Swear you don't mind the gen'ral's clack,
But in a hurry drive 'em back.

He spoke, and squatting on his breech,
Square-toes got up and made a speech:
I think our chief would not beguile us,
Says the old constable of Pylos.
Had any soul though, but our leader,
For dreams and visions been a pleader,
I should, my boys, to say no worse,
Have call'd him an old guzzling nurse.
I seldom old wives' tales believe,
Nurses invent 'em to deceive.
But now there can be no disguise,
For kings should scorn to tell folks lies;
So let us e'en, with one accord,
Resolve to take his royal word:
For though the speech is queerish stuff,
'Tis the king's speech, and that's enough.
I therefore say, My buffs so stout,
Of this same vision make no doubt;
The tokens are so very clear,
There can be little room for fear.
Did not our monarch, as he said,
Feel the Dream kick him out of bed,
And, by his waking posture, knew
His sense of feeling told him true?
Then, since affairs so far are gone,

Let's put our fighting faces on.
He said; nor did they longer stay,
But from the council haste away.
The leaders bring their men along;
They still were many thousands strong;
As thick as gardens swarm with bees,
Or tailors' working-boards with fleas:
And Jove, for fear they should not all
Attend, and mind their general's call,
Bid Fame, a chatt'ring, noisy strumpet,
To sound her longest brazen trumpet:

This brought such numbers on the lawn,
The very earth was heard to groan,
Nine criers went to still their noise;
That they might hear their leader's voice.
He haw'd and hemm'd before he spoke,
Then rais'd his truncheon made of oak:
'Twas Vulcan's making, which Jove gave
To Mercury, a thieving knave;
Who going down to Kent to steal hops,
Resign'd his staff to carter Pelops;
From Pelops it to Atreus came;
He to Thyestes left the same,
Who kept it dry, lest rain should rot it,
And when he dy'd Atrides got it:
With this he rules the Greeks with ease,
Or breaks their noddles if he please;
Now leaning on't, he silence broke,
And with so grum an accent spoke,
Those people that the circle stood in,
Fancy'd his mouth was full of pudding.

Thus he began: We've got, my neighbours,
Finely rewarded for our labours:
On Jove, you know, we have rely'd,
And several conjurers have try'd,
But both, I shame to say't, have ly'd.
One says, that we on board our scullers
Should all return with flying colours;
Another, we should cram our breeches
As full as they can hold with riches,
For presents to our wives and misses,
Which they'll repay us back with kisses.
Instead of this, we're hack'd and worn,
Our money spent, and breeches torn;
And, to crown all, our empty sculls
Fill'd with strange tales of cocks and bulls.
Now Jove is got on t'other tack,

And says we all must trundle back:
Dry blows we've got, and, what is more,
Our credit's lost upon this shore:
Nor can I find one soul that's willing
To trust us now a single shilling.
No longer since than yesterday,
Our butcher broke, and ran away:
The baker swears too, by Apollo,
If times don't mend he soon must follow:
As for the alehouse-man, 'tis clear
That half-penny a pot on beer
Will send him off before next year;
And then we all must be content
To guzzle down pure element.
A time there was, when who but we!
Now were humbugg'd, you plainly see;
And, what's the worst of all, you'll say,
A handful makes us run away:
For, if our numbers I can ken,
Where Troy has one man, we have ten.
Nine years, and more, the Grecian host
Have been upon this cursed coast;
And Troy's as far from being sack'd
As when it was at first attack'd;
The more we kill, the more appear;
They grow as fast as mushrooms here!
Like Toulon frigates rent and torn,
Our leaky boats to stumps are worn;
Then let's be packing and away;
For what the vengeance should we stay?
Our wives without it won't remain;
Pray how the pox should they contain?
For one that fasts, I'll lay there's ten
Are now employing journeymen:
If that's the case, I know you'll say
'Tis time indeed to hyke away;
Let us no more then make this fuss,
Troy was not doom'd to fall by us.

Most of the rabble, that were not
Consulted in this famous plot,
Were hugely pleas'd, and straight begin
To cry, God save our noble king!
He that spoke last, spoke like a man.
So whipp'd about, and off they ran.
As they jogg'd on, their long lank hair
Did like the dyers' rags appear;
Which you in every street will find
Waving like streamers in the wind:

To it they went with all their heart,
To get things ready to depart;
And made a sort of humming roar,
Like billows rumbling to the shore.

Halloo, cry'd some, here lend a hand
To heave the lighters off the strand;
Don't lounging stand to bite your nails,
But bustle, boys, and bend the sails.
Now all the vessels launch'd had been,
If scolding Juno had not seen:
That noisy brimstone seldom slept,
But a sharp eye for ever kept;
Not out of love to th' Grecian state,
But to poor harmless Paris hate,
Because on Ida's mountain he
Swore Venus better made than she:
And most are of opinion still,
He show'd himself a man of skill;
For Juno, ever mischief hatching,
Had wrinkled all her bum with scratching,
Whilst this enchanting Venus was
As smooth all o'er as polish'd glass.

Since then there was so wide a difference,
Pray who can wonder at the preference?
For wrinkles I'm myself no pleader:
Pray what are you, my gentle reader?
A simple answer to the question
Will put an end to this digression:
Why can't you speak now, when you're bid?
You like smooth skins? I thought you did:
And, since you've freely spoke your mind,
We'll back return, and Juno find.
Upon a cloud she sat astride,
(As now-a-days our angels ride)
Where calling Pallas, thus she spoke:
Would it not any soul provoke,
To see those Grecian hang-dogs run,
And leave their bus'ness all undone?
This will be pretty work, indeed;
For Greece to fly, and Troy succeed.
Rot me! but Priam's whoring race
(Sad dogs, without one grain of grace)
Shan't vamp it thus, whilst lovely Helen
Is kept for that damn'd rogue to dwell in;
That whoring whelp, who trims her so
She never thinks of Menelau:
But I shall stir my stumps, and make

The Greeks once more their broomsticks shake,
Then fly, my crony, in great haste,
Lest opportunity be past.
The cause, my girl, is partly thine;
He scorn'd thy ware as well as mine:
And, just as if he'd never seen us,
Bestow'd the prize on Madam Venus,
A blacksmith's wife, or kettle-mender,
And one whose reputation's slender;
Though her concerns I scorn to peep in,
Yet Mars has had her long in keeping.

Pallas obeys, and down the slope
Slides, like a sailor on a rope.
Upon the barren shore she found
Ulysses lost in thoughts profound:
His head with care so very full,
He look'd as solemn as an owl;
Was sorely grip'd, nor at this pinch
Would launch his boats a single inch.

And is it thus, she says, my king,
The Greeks their hogs to market bring?
See how they skip on board each hoy,
Ready to break their necks for joy!
Shall Priam's lecherous son, that thrives
By kissing honest tradesmen's wives,
Be left that heaven of bliss to dwell in,
The matchless arms of beauteous Helen?
O, no; the very thought, by Gad,
Makes Wisdom's goddess almost mad!
Though, by thy help, I think 'tis hard.
But yet I singe the rascal's beard.
Then fly, Ulysses, stop 'em all;
The captains must their troops recall.
Thou hast the gift o' th' gab, I know;
Be quick and use it, prithee do:
From Pallas thou shalt have assistance,
Should any scoundrel make resistance.

Ulysses ken'd her voice so shrill,
And mov'd to execute her will;
Then pull'd his breeches up in haste,
Which being far too wide i' th' waist,
Had left his buttocks almost bare —
He guess'd what made the goddess stare;
Next try'd his coat of buff to doff,
But could not quickly get it off,
So fast upon his arms it stuck,

Till Pallas kindly lent a pluck.
Off then it came, when, like a man,
He took him to his heels and ran.
The first that in his race he met
Was Agamemnon in a pet,
Striving, for breakfast, with his truncheon
To bruise a mouldy brown-bread luncheon.
Ulysses tells him, with a laugh,
I've better bus'ness for that staff,
And must request you'll lend it me
To keep up my authority.
Which having got, he look'd as big
As J-n-n's coronation wig;
Then flew, like wild-fire, through the ranks?
'Twas wond'rous how he ply'd his shanks.
Each captain by his name he calls;
I'm here, each noble captain bawls.
Then thus: O knights of courage stout,
Pray, what the devil makes this rout?
You that exalted are for samples,
Should set your soldiers good examples:
Instead of that, I pray, why strove ye
To run as if the devil drove ye?
You knew full well, or I belie ye,
Our general only spoke to try ye:
All that he meant by't was to know,
Whether we'd rather stay or go?
And is more vext to find us willing
To run, than if he'd lost a shilling;
Because at council-board, this day,
Quite different things you heard him say.
But if he met a common man,
That dar'd to contradict his plan;
Or, if the scoundrel durst but grumble;
Nay, if he did but seem to mumble;
He, with his truncheon of command,
First knock'd him down, then bid him stand
By this good management they stopp'd;
But not till eight or ten were dropp'd.
From launching boats, with one accord,
They trudg'd away to th' council-board.
The hubbub then began to cease:
The noise was hush'd, and all was peace.
Only one noisy ill-tongu'd whelp,
Thersites call'd, was heard to yelp:
The rogue had neither shame nor manners;
His hide was only fit for tanners:
With downright malice to defame
Good honest cocks, was all his aim:

All sorts of folks hard names he'd call,
But aldermen the worst of all.
Grotesque his figure was and vile,
Much in the Hudibrastic style:
One shoulder 'gainst his head did rest,
The other dropp'd below his breast;
His lank lean limbs in growth were stinted,
And nine times worse than Wilkes he squinted:
His pate was neither round nor flat,
But shap'd like Mother Shipton's hat.
You'd think, when this baboon was speaking,
You heard some damn'd blind fiddler squeaking.
Now this sad dog by dirty joking
Was every day the chief provoking:
The Greeks despis'd the rogue, and yet
To hear his vile harangues they'd sit
Silent as though he'd been a Pitt.
His screech-owl's voice he rais'd with might
And vented thus his froth and spite:

Thersites from the matter wide is,
Or something vexes great Atrides;
But what the murrain it can be,
The Lord above can only see!
No man alive can be censorious,
His reign has been so very glorious:
Then what has lodg'd the heavy bullet
Of discontent within his gullet,
That makes him look as foul as thunder,
To me's a secret and a wonder:
He had the best, the Grecians know,
Of gold, and handsome wenches too.
Best did I say? Bar Helen's bum,
He had the best in Christendom,
And yet's not pleas'd: but tell us what
Thy mighty kingship would be at?
Say but, shall Greece and I go speed
To Troy, and bring thee in thy need
The race of royal sons of whores,
By ransom to increase thy stores?
When we return, prepare to seize
Whate'er the royal eye shall please:
This thou mayst do sans dread and fear;
'Tis mighty safe to plunder here.
When the fit moves thee for that same,
Take any captain's favourite dame;
Our master wills, and 'tis but fit
Such scrubs as we should all submit.
Ye women Greeks, a sneaking race,

Take my advice to quit this place;
And leave this mighty man of pleasure
To kiss his doxies at his leisure.
When Hector comes, we'll then be mist
When Hector comes, he'll be bepist.
The man that makes us slaves submit,
When Hector comes, will be be – t;
He'll rue the dire unlucky day
He forc'd Achilles' girl away:
That buxom wench we all agreed
To give the bully for his need.
Achilles, though in discontent,
Don't think it proper to resent:
But if the bully's patience ceases,
He'll kick thee into half-crown pieces.
Sudden Ulysses with a bound
Rais'd his backside from off the ground,
Ready to burst his very gall
To hear this scurvy rogue so maul
The constable of Greece – an elf,
Famous for hard-mouth'd words himself;
His eyes look'd fierce, like ferrets red;
Hunchback he scans; and thus he said:

Moon-calf, give o'er this noisy babbling,
And don't stand prating thus and squabbling.
If thy foul tongue again dispute
The royal sway, I'll cut it out;
Thou art, and hast been from thy birth,
As great a rogue as lives on earth.
What plea canst thou have names to call,
Who art the vilest dog of all?
Think'st thou a single Greek will stir
An inch for such a snarling cur?
How dar'st thou use Atrides' name,
And of a constable make game?
For safe return great Jove we trust:
'Tis ours to fight, and fight we must
If to our noble chief a few
Make presents, pray, what's that to you?
What mighty gifts have you bestow'd,
Except your venom? scurvy toad!
If the bold bucks their plunder gave,
Thou canst not think' among the brave
We reckon such a lousy knave.
May I be doom'd to keep a tin-shop,
Or smite my soul into a gin-shop,
There to be drawn by pint or gill,
For drunken whores to take their fill;

Or may I find my dear son Telley
With back and bones all beat to jelly;
Or in his stead behold another,
Got by some rascal on his mother;
If I don't punish the next fault,
By stripping off thy scarlet coat,
That shabby, ragged, thread-bare lac'd coat
Then with a horsewhip dust thy waistcoat;
I'll lay on so that all the navy
Shall hear thy curship roar peccavi.

This said, his broomshaft with a thwack
He drove against his huckle back.
It fell with such a dev'lish thump,
It almost rais'd another hump.
The poor faint-hearted culprit cries,
And tears ran down his blood-shot eyes:
With clout he wip'd his ugly face,
And sneak'd in silence to his place.
Then might you hear the mob declare
Their thoughts on courage, and on fear.
Up to the stars they cry'd Ulysses,
A braver fellow never pisses;
Of insolence he stops the tide,
Nor gives it time to spread too wide.
We want but half a score such samples,
To make all prating knaves examples:
'Twould teach the mob much better things,
Than dare to chatter about kings.
Whilst thus they sing Ulysses' praises,
The constable his body raises.
The gen'ral's truncheon of command
He flourish'd in his dexter hand.
Pallas in herald's coat stood by,
And with great noise did silence cry,
That all the rabble far and near
This crafty Grecian's speech might hear.
With staring looks and open jaws
They catch each syllab as it flows.
First, with his hand he scratch'd his head,
To try if wit's alive or dead:
But, when he found his wit was strong,
And ready to assist his tongue,
To clear his throat he hem'd aloud,
And thus humbugg'd the list'ning crowd:

Unlucky chief, to be so us'd,
Deserted first, and then abus'd!
At Argos, when we came to muster,

And were all gather'd in a cluster,
The general voice was heard to say,
The de'il fetch him that runs away!
Then took a bible oath that night,
They never would return from fight
Till the old Trojan town should tumble;
And yet you see for home they grumble.
I own myself, 'tis very hard
To be from home so long debarr'd:
If but a single fortnight we
Are kept confin'd upon the sea
From our good wives and bantlings dear,
How do we rave, and curse, and swear!
Then, after nine years' absence, sure
These folks may look a little sour.
They're not to blame for being sad;
But thus bamboozled, makes one mad:
Though wizard Calchas plainly said,
If we the space of nine years staid,
The tenth we surely should destroy
This paltry mud-wall'd borough Troy.
Have patience then, and let's endure
To box it out a few weeks more.
Remember how a mighty dragon
A plane-tree mounted from a waggon;
He found a bird's nest at the top,
And quickly ate eight young ones up;
To make the ninth there wants another;
On which the serpent snapp'd the mother:
Though, after he had made this rout,
He ne'er had time to shit 'em out;
For twenty minutes were not gone
Before he chang'd to solid stone,
Where, on the summit of a hill,
At Aulis, you may see him still.
When Calchas saw this wondrous thing,
Like Endor's witch, he drew a ring;
And, standing by himself i' th' middle,
Began this wonder to unriddle:

My friends, if you'll but lend an ear,
I'll quickly ease you of your fear:
Give you but credit to my speeches,
And then you'll all keep cleaner breeches.
This prodigy from Jove was sent ye,
To show that something good he meant ye:
As many birds, so many years
Should we be kept in hopes and fears;
But 'ware the tenth, for then shall Ilion

Tumble, though guarded by a million.
All this may happen, if you stay,
But cannot, if you run away:
For, be the captains e'er so cunning,
No towns were ever ta'en by running.
Can you remember Helen's rape,
And let those Trojan whelps escape?
Let that eternal rascal go
That made poor Helen cry O! O?

Up started then old chitter chatter,
And lent his hand to clench the matter:
You are fine fellows, smite my eyes,
If blust'ring words could get a prize:
At first you all could say great things,
And swear you'd pull down popes and kings;
In a great splutter take, like Teague,
The solemn covenant and league;
For Ilion's walls resolve to steer,
And store of bread and cheese prepare.
Now all, I find, was but a joke;
Your bouncing's vanish'd into smoke.
But precious time by talk is spent;
To pull down Troy is our intent;
And we will do't without delay,
If you, Atrides, lead the way.
Whoever here are not content,
Pray let 'em all be homeward sent.
Their help we value not three farthings:
Cowards make excellent churchwardens;
Then let them to their parish go,
And serve their town in noise and show.
No weapon should they touch but needles,
Or staves for constables and beadles:
Such posts as these will suit men right,
That eat much keener than they fight;
Therefore, whoever dare not stay,
I'd have directly sneak away.
When we the Trojan hides shall curry
Without their help, they'll be so sorry
That they will hang themselves, I hope —
And, by my soul, I'll find 'em rope.
Then how the rogues will wish they'd fought!
But wishes will avail 'em nought.
Did not great Jove, when we set out,
Make a most damn'd confounded rout?
Did he not roll the ball, and roll

Till he half crack'd his mustard bowl³;
And kept the noise upon our right,
To hearten us to go and fight,
Till every wench that Troy did dwell in
Should cry O! O! as much as Helen?
Show me the man that dare but think
To make the poorest Grecian shrink;
If any rascal draws one scrub in,
I'll give the dog a handsome drubbing.
And thou, my bully, be not nice,
But take for once a fool's advice;
Let's not like city rabble fight,
Who roar all day, and drink all night;
Millions of such can ne'er oppose
A little band of men well chose;
For discipline, when manag'd right,
Will make a trainband captain fight.
Let me advise, that ev'ry shire
To their own rendezvous retire;
Nor let them mix, but each be sent
To his own ragged regiment.
Let their chief constable command,
If you can find a chief will stand:
The leaders then will quickly ken
Who fight like women, who like men;
Who fight as if inspir'd by Mars,
Or who, like Dutchmen, hang an arse;
Can punish every sneaking knave,
And with good punch reward the brave:
Then shall we understand, no doubt,
Why Troy so long has held it out;
And if they've done us all these evils,
By help of men, or gods, or devils.

Atrides gave him this for answer:
I now can plainly see, old grandsire,
That noisy chatt'ring ribs of thine
Has got more brains by half than mine:
If Jove, to help us in our streights,
Would lend us half a score such pates,
Split me, we should have brains enough
To strip these Trojans into buff,
And all the men and women leave
As nak'd as Adam first knew Eve.
But Jove, or by design or chance;
Has led us all a pretty dance:
'Tis he that makes us thus dispute

³ They made thunder formerly in the play-houses by rolling a ball in an empty mustard bowl.

And squabble till we all fall out.
As for Achilles, I abus'd him,
Kidnap'd his girl, and vilely us'd him;
And, like two English tars, we swore
And scolded for a little whore;
But hope (unless I am beguil'd)
Ere long we shall be reconcil'd;
And then, my boys, you'll see how soon
This whore's nest, Troy, will tumble down.
But now 'tis time for every sinner
To look out sharp to find a dinner;
And then we'll fight, while fighting's good,
And drench our soleless shoes in blood.
Fit then your potlids on your wrists,
And grasp your broomsticks in your fists;
Your mettled horses bring all out,
Both cut and longtail, for this bout.
Like hungry wolves and bears we'll fight,
And kick and cuff from morn to night:
Who dares his coward head to flinch
The thousandth part of half an inch
Or should a moment's time let slip,
By skulking in his crazy ship,
His scurvy hide, for shunning blows,
Shall be devour'd by carrion crows.
Soon as he spoke, both front and rear
Began to look confounded queer.
But late they thought to kiss their wives,
And lead at home good quiet lives;
Instead of that, they find they must
Have t'other bout at cut and thrust:
So forc'd against their wills to stay,
The grumbling whore's-birds sneak'd away.
Now fires by scores were quickly made,
And cows by dozens knock'd o' th' head.
The victuals for theirselves they took,
But wisely fed their gods with smoke:
For men it would be choking stuff,
But for the gods did well enough.
And whilst the garbage broils, they pray
T'escape a broken pate that day.
But to fill all their bellies full,
The priest had drest a fine young bull;
And then invited ev'ry chief
To come and eat this rare bull beef;
Ask'd Nestor first, because his beard
Was longest by a full half-yard;
Idomen did the next succeed,
And then that varlet Diomed:

Ajax the less, and Ajax great,
With sly Ulysses took their seat;
Lest they should think the cuckold slighted,
He came to dinner uninvited.
Now each man draws his pudding-knife,
And eats as though he ate for life.
But first, Atrides said a grace,
Holding his hat before his face;
Then added, in a canting tone,
A pray'r he'd better left alone.

O mighty Jupiter! that shrouds
Thy dwelling-house with coal-black clouds
Of thy own weaving, great protector,
Grant I may swinge this sad dog, Hector,
Without the help, if so thy will is,
Of that same bullying scrub Achilles.
But Jove, I verily believe,
Just then was laughing in his sleeve;
Nor would he let the foolish elf
Kill one much better than himself:
But though he kick'd the canting pray'r
A thousand fathom in the air,
Yet did he not refuse the treat,
But snuff'd the smoke, and lick'd the meat.
And now, to show they scorn all thieving,
They serve Jove first, then take his leaving;
Upon his altar burnt a piece,
And up his nose sent smoke and grease:
The god they were resolv'd to please,
Or smoke him till they made him sneeze:
For he would think them very hollow
To keep him sharper than Apollo;
Therefore, Burn more and more, they cry'd,
Until he owns he's satisfy'd.
When all had stuff'd their bellies full,
And ate the very hoofs o' th' bull,
Old chatt'ring Nestor 'gan to talk,
And thus to Agamemnon spoke:

Bid the blind fiddlers scrape away,
And all the troops shall march to-day;
And, that no useful man be mist,
Let muster-master bring his list
And call 'em o'er: if then we're right,
Do you lead on, by Jove we'll fight.
At the chief constable's commands
They muster'd all their trusty bands;
Each knew his right and left hand man,

And eke his officer could scan.
As Nestor said, each hang-dog went
To his own ragged regiment.
Minerva too was got among 'em,
Though she of right did not belong 'em;
Her brawny arm a potlid shak'd,
As bright as blacking-balls could make't,
On which there hung an ugly head,
So grim, 'twould strike the train-bands dead:
With this, and other little helps,
She cheers the poor faint-hearted whelps.

For wives they now no longer sob,
But swear to die or do the job.
As when a bonfire, with a noise,
Is kindled by the parish-boys,
It catches first the straw, then rushes.
And seizes on the dry furze-bushes,
Which causes such a dev'lish glaring,
That half the fools i' th' town stand staring:
Just so you spy'd reflected streaks
From greasy doublets of the Greeks;
For noise, you'd swear these sons of Greece
Were nought but flocks of Solan geese,
Who gabble rarely in their flight,
But ten times louder when they 'light:
Thus in a noisy crowd they wander,
Before they reach the fam'd Scamander;
And as they hasten to the shore,
They make the very welkin roar.
Thick as the crowds that walk the Strand,
Upon the river's bank they stand;
Or thick as leaves that yearly fall,
By pecks and bushels in the Mall;
Or swarms of flies, that find a crop
Of sugar in a grocer's shop;
So throng'd the varlets stand, and vow
They'll beat the Trojans black and blue.
About each trusty serjeant goes,
And sets them all in proper rows,
As easily as Rachael Sparrow
Places the apples in her barrow,
Where (though at first no form they keep)
She quickly makes a curious heap.
Above the rest the king appears,
And tops 'em all by th' head and ears:
He look'd, amidst this set of warriors,
Like a great hound amongst the tarriers.
For breadth of chest, as well as back,

He beat the mighty bruiser, Slack;
But in his strut and martial air
He seem'd a first-rate grenadier.
This day Jove order'd he should pass
To view, much bigger than he was:
And as he knew the head o' th' cull
With brains was not a quarter full,
He clapp'd a candle in his skull,
Which shining briskly through his eyes,
Fill'd all the Grecians with surprise;
For Jove, you need not fear, took care,
At proper times, to make folks stare.
As for these various ragged packs
Of rogues, from different wapentakes,
Their Christian names I've many times
Labour'd to jumble into rhymes;
But could not do it for my soul,
So leave them to the muster-roll.
If any critic choose to pop
His head into my printer's shop,
He'll find a copy there, not spurious,
Left for th' inspection of the curious.

THE THIRD BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD

ARGUMENT

Now all the troops in order plac'd,
Against their minds, each other fac'd;
When nimble Paris, by a fit
Of courage, or of phrensy, bit,
Fierce sallies forth upon the plain;
The cuckold drives him back again:
Yet hearten'd afterwards by Hector,
Who read him a confounded lecture,
This dancing, cuckold-making knight
Challeng'd the cuckold out to fight;
Which Menelaus answer'd soon,
And in the scuffle knock'd him down.
Fast by the crown the Spartan held him,
And swore most bloodily he'd geld him:
But Venus, queen of love and beauty,
Who thinks all whoring tricks a duty,
In a great hurry came and caught him
Fast by the luggs, and fairly brought him
To his own room; then from the closet
She fetch'd a smoking-hot sack posset.
Soon as she found it warm'd his belly,
She stepp'd to th' door, and call'd up Nelly;
Who scolded hard at first, but soon
Pull'd off her clothes, and laid her down
Upon the bed beside her swain,
Who trimm'd her buff with might and main.
How oft, at exercise so vi'lent,
They cry'd Encore, our author's silent.

HOMER'S ILIAD

BOOK III

Thus muster'd by their leaders' care,
Both sides for fisty-cuffs prepare.
The Trojans toss their caps and shout,
And noise proclaims 'em bloody stout;
Like cranes that fly in winter time
(As poets tell us) to a clime
Where pigmies dwell, with whom they fight
To th' ears in blood from morn to night.
But the bold Grecians on their toes
Steal softly to surprise their foes,
Taking huge steps along the green
To get a blow before they're seen,
Knowing, a sorry rogue may crack
A brave man's crown behind his back.
With nimble feet, in sweat well soak'd,
They trudge it, though with dust half chok'd.
Thus, when a mist on mountain head
As thick as mustard round is spread,
The puzzled shepherd cannot keep
The goats from mingling with the sheep:
So of the Greeks, not one, I trow,
Ask him but hastily, could know
Whether his nose was on or no.
Now front to front they ready stand
To fight, and only wait command;
When nimble Paris to the van,
Dress'd à la mode de François, ran:
With coney-skins he edg'd his coat,
To show he was a man of note:
A cross-bow o'er his back was slung;
And on his thigh his poniard hung.
A staff he pois'd would fell an ox,
And dar'd the boldest Greek to box.
As thus he struts, and makes a splutter,
Like crow i' th' middle of a gutter,
Him Menelaus soon espies,
And joyful to himself he cries:

Blast my old shoes, but very soon
I'll have a knock at your rogue's crown!
Then darted, in a bloody rage,
From his old duns cart to engage:

And as he hied along to meet him,
He look'd as if he meant to eat him.
So joys the bailiff, when he spies
A half-pay officer his prize:
Headlong he drives across the way,
Regardless both of cart and dray,
Nor stops till he has seiz'd his prey.

Soon as the youth the cuckold saw,
As guilt will ever feel an awe,
In spite of all that he could say,
He found his legs would run away:
Then, since the matter turn'd out so,
'Twas best, he thought, to let 'em go;
So turn'd about, and in a crack
They brought their master safely back;
And, as he puff'd along, we find him
Not daring once to look behind him.
As when a bumpkin sees a snake
Come slyly stealing from the brake,
He starts, and looks confounded cunning,
But quickly saves himself by running:
So this young beau the cuckold shuns,
And 'mongst his trusty Trojans runs.
This the bold Hector could not bear;
He thought he ran away for fear —
Without considering, now and then
The very best and boldest men
Cannot their members so command
To make 'em at all seasons stand.
Be that as't may; with accent grave
He thus began to scold the knave:

Paris, says he, you're but a cheat,
And only dare the wenches meet;
But though a man you dare not face,
Yet, when the fight becomes a chase,
You'd beat a thousand in the race.
I wish, ere Nelly thou hadst felt,
Thou'dst broke thy neck, or hadst been gelt:
Better by half than thus to bully,
Then run away from such a cully.
The Greeks all swear thou art besh-t,
And their fat sides with laughing split.
Thou look a soldier! thou be d – d!
The Grecians cannot be so flamm'd.
When thy fine long-boats went to Greece
To steal away this precious piece;
Say, did'st thou, in thy first attack

On Helen's freehold, thus give back?
Joy to thy foes, shame to thy race,
Thy father's grief, and Troy's disgrace,
Recover thy lost credit soon,
And stoutly stand by what you've done;
Or else all Troy, as well as me,
Thy buxom wench will plainly see
Belongs a better man than thee.
Take heed, Troy may awake at last,
And make thee pay for all that's past.
Here Paris blush'd – a sign of grace;
Nor durst he look in Hector's face:

Then answers, By my soul, you're right
But who like you can preach and fight?
I know you're made of best of steel,
And box as if you could not feel.
You have your gifts, and I have mine:
Where each may in his province shine.
Smite you the men; I smite the wenches,
And seldom fail to storm their trenches.
Don't you despise the lover's charms:
They're Venus' gift, her powerful arms.
A good strong back, and proper measure
Of love, to give the fair ones pleasure,
Are blessings, which the gods bestow
Only to favourites below.
Yet, if it please thee, I will stand
This cuckold's combat hand to hand:
His mutton-fist bold Paris scorns,
He only fears his branching horns;
Should he receive from these a wound,
Our quack can never make him sound.
But go, explain the matter fully,
And I will box this Spartan bully.
My pretty Nelly shall be set
For him that doth the conquest get:
Her swelling breasts and matchless eyes
Shall be the lucky conqu'ror's prize:
Then Troy and Greece, in any weather,
May smoke a sober pipe together.
This challenge pleas'd, and Hector quick
Stopp'd all the Trojans with his stick;
Next to the foe, with Spanish pace,
Advanc'd, to let them know the case.

The Greeks, like coward sons of whores,
Threw bricks and cobble-stones in show'rs.

Atrides soon the tumult spies:
Give o'er, ye silly dogs! he cries;
'Tis Hector comes, if I am right,
To talk a little, not to fight:
I know him by his breadth of chest,
I know his skull-cap's always drest
With goose quills of the very best:
Then be not in such woeful splutter,
But hear what Hector has to utter.
At this rebuke they threw no more:
The tumult ceas'd; the fray was o'er:
His eyes the bully Trojan roll'd,
And briefly thus his story told:

Hear, all ye warriors, fam'd for toils,
In civil feuds and drunken broils:
Paris demands you now forbear
To kick and cuff, and curse and swear;
But on the ground your cudgels throw,
And stick your broomstaves on a row:
Let Troy and Greece but sit 'em down,
Paris will fight this Spartan loon;
The charming Helen shall be set,
For him that shall the conquest get;
Her snowy breasts and matchless eyes
Shall be the lucky conqu'ror's prize:
Then Troy and Greece, in any weather,
May smoke a sober pipe together.

He spoke; and for six minutes good,
With mouths half-cock'd, both armies stood:

When Menelaus thus began:
Bold Hector offers like a man,
And I the challenge will accept;
As freely as I ever slept.
Hector, perhaps, may think I won't,
But singe my whiskers if I don't!
I know, my lads, you fight for me,
And in my quarrel cross'd the sea.
I thank you, friends, for what you've done;
But now the battle's all my own:
Who falls, it matters not a fig,
If one survives to dance a jig
With that bewitching female Helen,
And stump it tightly when he's well in.
So, Trojans, if you mean no flams,
Go buy directly two grass-lambs;
One for the Earth, as black as crow,

One for the Sun, as white as snow:
For surly Jove, you need not fear,
We'll get one, be they cheap or dear;
For well we know he'll make us feel,
If e'er we cheat him of a meal.
But let King Priam on the place
Appear; we rev'ence his old face.
His sons are hect'ring roaring fellows,
And fifty thousand lies may tell us;
Old age is not so quick in motion,
But sees with care, and moves with caution.
Experience makes old folks discerning;
At blunders past they oft take warning.

Both parties hear, and hope, at last
Their broils and broken pates are past;
Nor staid they to be bidden twice,
But stripp'd their jackets in a trice:
Their cudgels, all the circle round
As quick as thought threw on the ground.
Two beadles Hector sent to town,
In haste to fetch his daddy down;
And bid 'em tell old limberhams,
Not to forget to bring two lambs.
The running footman of the fleet
(Talthybius call'd, with nimble feet)
With all his speed his stumps did stir
To fetch a lamb for Jupiter.
I' th' int'rim, fond of mischief-telling,
The rainbow goddess flies to Helen:
(Most modern farts, I ever knew,
When set on fire, burn only blue,
Or simple red; but when behind
This nimble goddess lets out wind,
It leaves a track along the skies
Compos'd of fifty different dyes.)
She seem'd like old Antenor's daughter,
That Helen might not know she sought her.
The housewife at her task she found,
With all her wenches seated round:
For, as she work'd in Priam's hall,
She chose to have them within call:
Where, like a brazen, saucy jade,
She wrought her tale in light and shade:
How, for her sake, the Greeks employ
Their utmost force to pull down Troy;
And wove the story in her loom,
Of horns, her former husband's doom:
Adding withal, to keep her going,

What for nine years they had been doing:
The necessary names wrote under,
Lest lookers-on should make a blunder;
Lest they should make a wrong conjecture:
This is brisk Paris – that is Hector;
This is Ulysses – that the beast
Thersites – so of all the rest.
Helen, says Iris, pray come out
And see what work they're all about.
Their clubs thrown down; their staves they prick
Fast in the ground, and there they stick.
They fight no more; for this good day
Paris and Menelaus say
They'll have one bout at cudgel play.
These happy rogues appear in view
To box their very best for you;
And which soever of 'em win,
With kissing he will soon begin.
This put the light-heel'd dame in mind
Of people she had left behind
In her own country: not these two
(She'd try'd the best that they could do);
But she had left behind some dozens
Of uncles, aunts, and loving cousins.
She gulp'd, and swallow'd down her spittle,
But yet was seen to weep a little;
Then left her work, and on her wait
Two wenches to the Scean gate,
Where some old square-toes, grave and try'd,
Were chatting close to Priam's side:
I think they were in number seven;
It matters not, or odd or even.
The name of each I would rehearse,
But it would edge your teeth in verse.
Like grasshoppers they sat i' th' sun,
Telling strange tales of ancient fun;
And, in a feeble hollow tone,
Repeated what great feats they'd done;
How they had thrum'd the maids of Troy,
When Adam was a little boy:
At Helen's shapes they shook their wings;
What could they more? they had no stings.

No wonder, 'faith, they cry, that Greece
Should fight for such a tempting piece;
The man that Helen's ringlets touzes,
Can never grudge a thousand bruises;
But since 'tis o'er with us long since,
'Tis best to send the brimstone hence:

If she stays here, Troy tumbles down;
But pack her off, we save the town.

Whilst thus the gipsy's praise they squeak,
The Trojan king began to speak:

Come hither, girl, I take a pride
To have thee chatter by my side.
Behold your friends, my dearest honey,
And take a view of your old crony.
'Tis not your fault: you're not the cause
Of half our bruises, kicks, and blows.
The gods, they say, are in a pet;
And when they're once on mischief set
The devil cannot keep 'em down,
Till they've demolish'd some old town;
And for nine years, I plainly see,
They have been grumbling hard at me.
But tell us, who's that swinging fellow
That struts so fierce? he's drest in yellow,
And cocks his hat with such a pinch,
He looks a soldier ev'ry inch.

Helen replies, Although, good Priam,
No woman's better kiss'd than I am,
Yet I could wish I had been hang'd,
Or at a whipping-post well bang'd,
Ere I away with Paris ran,
And cuckolded an honest man:
My little girl most bitterly,
They tell me, for her mam doth cry:
I'm full of grief, if that would do;
But matters can't be mended now.

The gipsy, after this parade,
Thus to the good old Trojan said:
He whom to know my daddy seeks,
Is the great leader of the Greeks:

His fame is known both near and far,
To scold in peace, and kick in war:
My brother he was call'd, before
Your son and I turn'd rogue and whore:
To call him so I'm now asham'd,
And even blush to hear him nam'd.

Is that Atrides, quoth the king?
To me he seems the very thing:
I'm told he is, or grave or mellow,

In peace or war, a clever fellow.
Amongst the Phrygians I have been.
But ne'er a tighter fellow seen.
When Otreus sat upon their throne,
And Migdon led their hang-dogs on,
I and my Trojans join'd the roysters;
Where, by the help of cod and oysters,
We laid, with many strokes and thwacks,
The Amazons upon their backs:
Yet those now standing in our sight
Are tighter fellows, by this light.
But tell me, Helen, if you can,
Who's that broad-breasted little man;
His shoulders large and widely spread,
But not so tall as th' last by th' head?
He is no serjeant, I've a notion;
Yet like a serjeant in his motion:
He seems to bustle much about him;
You'd swear they could not do without him.

Helen replies, My judgment misses,
If he you speak of ben't Ulysses.
Now that I take a better view,
'Tis he himself, I spy him now:
Let him be standing still, or running,
You'll hardly find his match for cunning;
He knows a thousand slipp'ry tricks,
But shines the most in politics.
Though from a barren isle he came,
The world's too little for his fame:
And, had he not been born a prince,
He'd been prime minister long since.

Antenor told the king, he knew
What Helen said was very true.
When Atreus' son and he came over,
This coaxing baggage to recover,
Men of great worth they seem'd to be,
I therefore let 'em lodge with me:
I knew them both before that day,
And knew they could their reck'ning pay.
Whene'er we chatted o'er a can
Of flip, with care I mark'd each man.
Atrides standing, look'd the best,
'Cause he was mostly better drest:
Seated, Ulysses reverence drew;
On breech he gave the clearest view.
Atrides was no man of tongue;
His speech was good, though never long:

But when Ulysses 'gan to speak,
You never heard so queer a Greek;
He'd fix his eyes upon the ground,
As if a speech could there be found;
Look'd foolish, though he knew no tongue
Like his was half so glibly hung:
He could, with oily words, I tell ye,
Make your heart jump within your belly:
His roguiship from the flowers and trees
Would call the very birds and bees.

Then Priam thus: Amidst the throng
I spy a man exceeding strong;
Shoulders so spread, and such a chest,
He's stole a giant's back and breast:
So strong a carl you'll seldom see;
My lovely girl, who can it be?
Ajax, replies fair Leda's daughter,
Is he you're now inquiring after:
Of him the Grecians well may crack,
For he upon his brawny back
Could lug the city gates, when bid,
As well as ever Samson did.
The next that looks this way to see us,
Is the far-fam'd Idomeneus:
With my good man he once took quarter,
And look'd so trim, my mouth did water.
As for the rest, if I judge rightly,
They're fellows that can box it tightly.
But all this while, old dad, have I
Been looking sharp, if I can spy
A pair of twins, and each my brother
Castor is one, and Pollux t'other.
But hap the colonels fight no more,
Or scorn to quarrel for a whore.

Poor Helen dreamt not on her bed,
Her brothers were as herrings dead;
That the last doublet they put on
Was made of Bath or Portland stone,
Where, free from broils, they slept secure,
And dreamt of whores and rogues no more.
And now both beadles did with care
The lambs for sacrifice prepare;
But first in order form the ring,
And thus they call the Trojan king:

Arise, O king! come down with speed.
And lend a hand in time of need

To seal the truce; for there's no troth,
Unless you come and take the oath.
Your son and famous Menelau
For Nell agree to pull a crow:
And he that makes his rival yield,
Or lays him flat upon the field,
May unmolested take his fill,
And tousel Helen when he will;
That we may cease this curs'd fatigue,
And join in everlasting league;
Trojans may plough their lands, and Greece
Return, and kiss their wives in peace.

Priam, though with a heavy heart,
Gave orders for his apple-cart,
A vehicle contriv'd with care
To serve for cart or one-horse chair;
Then, with Antenor by his side,
Like two grave cits they took a ride
Quite through the Scean gate, among
The Trojan and the Grecian throng:
When Agamemnon 'midst the crew,
And eke the sly Ulysses too,
Both rose, and made a handsome bow.
And now the blue-coat beadles, grac'd
With large red caps all silver-lac'd,
The method of the farce to fix,
Some Greek and Trojan beverage mix;
Then pour a little on the hand
Of each commander, as they stand;
But have our priestly way of thinking,
To save the most for private drinking:
Lastly, – this grand affair to close,
His knife the Grecian gen'ral draws,
And cutting from the beasts some hair,
The beadles gave each chief a share,
To show that all things should be fair.
Then with a thund'ring voice, that made
A dev'lish noise, to Jove they pray'd:

O Jupiter! who every Friday
Art worshipp'd on a mount call'd Ida:
O Phœbus! and thou mother Earth!
That gives to thieves and lawyers birth:
O demons! and infernal furies!
Whose counsels aid Westminster juries:
Thou discord-making fiend I that trudges
The six months' circuits with the judges;
And thou, the hellish imp, that brings

Brimstone to singe all wicked kings!
Hear what we promise, and depend on't,
We'll keep our words, or mark the end on't.
Should Paris drub this Menelaus;
To pox and poverty betray us,
If we don't leave the brimstone Helen
Safe in her present Trojan dwelling
For Paris' use! Much good may't do him,
And make her true and faithful to him;
Whilst we poor devils will depart,
And trudge it home with all our heart.
But if by Menelaus' blows
Paris should get a bloody nose,
They shall again restore his Nelly,
With what belongs her back and belly;
A forfeit too consent to pay
For stealing of the girl away;
And Paris cannot think it much
To pay a piece for every touch:
If they refuse, again we'll fight,
And force the rogues to do us right.
With that he seiz'd the sheep by th' crown.
And cut their throats or knock'd them down
By death they soon were overtaken,
Though they kick'd hard to save their bacon.
The chiefs then tipp'd, the other round,
And pour'd a little on the ground;
Adding withal a shorter prayer,
Because they'd not much time to spare:
Hear, Jove, and all ye gods on high!
Whose vicars say you hate a lie
(Though amongst them, for lies and swearing,
There's scarce a barrel better herring),
Whoever takes a thing in hand,
And will not to their bargain stand,
May their heart's blood run out much quicker
Than from the jug we pour this liquor;
And may their wives such harlots be,
That a whole parish can't serve three!
Thus both the armies clubb'd a prayer,
Which Jove refus'd, and kick'd in air.
Now, when these popish rites were done,
Old square-toes hasten'd to be gone:

It will be rather hard, quoth he,
For one so very old as me,
Bruises and broken pates to see:
But Jove knows best, who rules us all,
Which knave shall stand, or which shall fall.

To stay within yond' walls I choose,
And be the last to hear bad news:
Then instantly his chair ascended;
Antenor by his side attended:
But first, and rightly did he judge it,
He stuff'd both lambs within his budget.

Ulysses then, and Hector stout,
The limits of the fight mark'd out:
They both agreed that chance might try
Who first should let his broomstick fly.
The people pray on bended knees,
And mutter out such words as these:

O Jupiter! who hast by odds
The greatest head of all the gods,
Let him that did this mischief brew
Return with ribs all black and blue;
Or let him be demolish'd quick,
And sent full gallop to Old Nick!
Such rogues once hang'd, all wars would cease,
And soldiers eat their bread in peace.

Hector, who was a wary chap
At pitch and chuck, or hustle-cap,
An old Scotch bonnet quickly takes,
In which he three brass farthings shakes:
Then turn'd his head without deceit,
To show them th he scorn'd to cheat;
And cries aloud, Here goes, my boy,
'Tis heads for Greece, and tails for Troy;
Then turns the cap: Great Troy prevails,
Two farthings out of three were tails,
Paris now arms himself in haste,
And ty'd his jacket round his waist
With a buff belt, and then with 'traps
About his legs some hay-bands wraps;
To guard his heart he closely press'd
A sheet of tin athwart his breast;
His trusty sword across his breech
Was hung, to be within his reach;
A horse's tail, just like a mop,
He stuck upon his scull-cap's top.
Thus arm'd complete, with care and skill,
He seem'd as stout as Bobadil:
And Menelaus, you might see,
Appear'd as stout and fierce as he.
Ready for fight, they both look'd sour,
And eyed each other o'er and o'er.

Paris puts on a warlike phiz,
And from his hand his staff goes whiz,
Which lent the Grecian targe a thump,
And then upon the ground fell plump.
His broomstaff then, with aim as true,
The cuckold at the Trojan threw;
But ere he spent his ammunition,
He sent to Jove a small petition:

Mayst please my good design to help,
And let me souse this lech'rous whelp;
That men may cease to do amiss,
And not in others' fish-ponds fish!
Thus, like Old Noll, he coin'd a pray'r,
Then sent his broomstick through the air
With such a vengeance did it fall,
Through the tin-plates it bor'd a hole,
And tore his doublet and his shirt;
But to his guts did little hurt;
Because the knave, by bending low,
Escap'd the fury of the blow.
Some think he daub'd his breeks that hit,
But that remains a query yet.
The Greek, who did not often judge ill,
Pursu'd th' advantage with his cudgel,
And laid about at such a rate,
As if he meant to break his pate;
But, as his jobber-noul he rapp'd,
His stick in twenty pieces snapp'd.
Vex'd to the guts, he lifts his eyes,
And mutt'ring to himself, he cries:

This rascal's jacket I had dusted,
If Jupiter could have been trusted;
But honest men he keeps at distance,
And lends to whores and rogues assistance.
Just when I had secur'd my prize,
My lousy stick in pieces flies.
This said, he gave a hasty snap
At the horse-tail upon his cap,
And lugg'd most stoutly at his crown,
In hopes to pull the varlet down:
The more he lugg'd to end the farce,
The more the Trojan hung an arse:
Still he haul'd on with many a bob,
And certainly had done his job,
Because so firmly was his cap
Ty'd with a tinsel'd leather strap,
That though the knave began to cough,

The de'il a bit would it come off:
But watchful Venus came in season,
Before the Greek had stopp'd his weasand;
Her scissars from her side she whipp'd,
And in a twink the stay-band snipp'd.
The Greek, who thought he well had sped,
And pull'd off both his cap and head,
Was vex'd to find, instead of full cap,
He'd only got an empty skull-cap:
In grievous wrath, away he threw it.

Amongst his men, who flock'd to view it,
Admir'd the glitt'ring band, and swore
They'd never seen the like before.

He then, with all his might and main,
Let drive at Paris once again;
With a fresh broomstick thought to smoke him,
But Venus whipp'd him up, and took him
In her smock lap, and very soon
Near his own dwelling set him down;
From thence, with gentle touch, she led
The younker home, and warm'd his bed.
To take away perfumes not good,
She burnt perfumes of spicy wood.

No sooner was he seated well in
His garret, but she look'd for Helen:
Amongst her chamber-maids she found her;
The wenches all were standing round her.
Quickly she chang'd her form, and whipp'd on
The nose and chin of Mother Shipton;
Then on her tip-toes coming near,
She whispers softly in her ear:

My dearest jewel, Paris wants
To ramble in the usual haunts;
Upon a good flock-bed he lies,
And longs to view your wicked eyes:
The whoring rascal, safe and sound,
Prepares to fire a double round.

Helen began to make a din
At this old woman's nose and chin,
But as she star'd her through and through,
Her old acquaintance soon she knew
By her fine alabaster bobbies,
Her eyes of jet, and lips of rubies.
The fright made all her teeth to chatter,

And, 'faith, she scarce could hold her water:
But soon a little courage took,
And to the goddess silence broke
(The reader in her speech will find,
That, woman like, she spoke her mind):

Could I believe that Venus would
For such a rascal turn a bawd?
Don't think that Helen e'er will truckle,
And with a beaten scoundrel buckle.
If to your calling you bewitch her,
For God's sake let a brave man switch her,
Nor think that I can like a scrub
That any lousy rogue can drub.
Now he is worsted in the fight,
I am become another's right:
I know your drift; it sha'n't take place;
To send me homeward with disgrace,
And make my husband quite uncivil:
You a fine goddess! you a devil!
If Paris cannot live without
A tit bit, you yourself may do't;
Be you his loving wench or wife,
I'll go no more, upon my life:
To me it will afford no sport,
I am not in a humour for't;
You're always ready for a bout,
When I'd as lief be hang'd as do't:
But know, that I'll no longer bear
Of every saucy jade the sneer,
Who cry, She's very handsome, sure,
But yet the brim's an errant whore.

Hey-day! quoth Venus, what's all this?
On nettles sure you've been to piss:
Yon will not that, or t'other do:
Pray, who will first have cause to rue?
If I forsake thee, every grace
Will leave that pretty smirking face;
Trojans won't give a fig to see
What once they view'd with so much glee;
Nor will the wildest rake in town
Value thy ware at half a crown,

This eas'd poor Helen of her doubts,
And put an end to all disputes;
Rather than risk the loss of beauty,
She'd be content with double duty;
On which the gipsies tripp'd away,

And soon arriv'd where Paris lay.
The maids about like lightning flew,
For they had fifty things to do:
But Nell and Venus mount up stairs;
They were to mind their own affairs.
Soon as they reach'd the garret-door,
The goddess tripp'd it in before;
And, squatting down just by the fire,
Made Helen on a stool sit by her:
All o'er she look'd so very charming,
That Paris found his liver warming;
He seiz'd her, and began to play
The prelude to *et cætera*;
Hoping a tune o' th' silent flute
Would keep the scolding baggage mute:
Instead of which the vixen fell
Upon the harmless rogue pell mell.

After you've suffer'd such disgrace,
How dare you look in Helen's face?
What wench, now thou hast lost thine honour,
Will let thee lay a leg upon her?
Perhaps you think I'll suffer you
To toy, but split me if I do;
Not I, by Jove. Are all thy brags,
Of beating Menelaus to rags,
Come off with this? Once more go try
Thy strength – But what a fool am I!
A stripling thou, a giant he;
At single gulp he'd swallow thee.
Then venture into scrapes no more;
But, since thou'rt safe, e'en shut the door.

Paris replies, Good dame, ha' done;
We can't recall the setting sun:
Though your old cuckold-pated whelp,
By that damn'd brim Minerva's help,
Did win this match, the next that's try'd
I'll lay the odds I trim his hide.
But haste, my girl, let's buckle to't,
And mind the business we're about:
I ne'er before had such desire;
My heart and pluck are both on fire:
Just now I've far more appetite,
Than when with you, that merry night,
In Cranse's isle, to work we buckled,
And dubb'd your bluff-fac'd husband cuckold.

This speech no sooner had he made,

But up he jump'd upon the bed;
Where Nelly soon resign'd her charms.
And sunk into the varlet's arms:
Around her waist he never caught her,
But it in special temper brought her.

Whilst thus they up and down engage,
The Greek was in a bloody rage;
He like a pointer rang'd about,
To try to find the younker out,
And peep'd in ev'ry hole and corner,
In hopes to spy this Mr. Horner;
(Nor would the Trojans, not to wrong 'em,
Have screen'd him, had he been among 'em)
But the bawd Venus took good care
He should not find him far or near.
Then Agamemnon from his breech
Lifted himself, and made this speech:

Ye Dardans and ye Trojans trusty,
Whose swords we keep from being rusty,
You plainly see the higher powers
Determine that the day is ours;
For Menelaus sure has beat him,
And may, for aught we know, have eat him,
As not a man upon the spot,
Can tell us where the rogue is got:
If therefore Helen you'll restore,
We'll take her, be she wife or whore,
With all her clothes and other gear,
Adding a sum for wear and tear:
The wear, a female broker may
Settle in less than half a day;
But for the tear, no mortal elf
Can judge so well as Mene's self.
If Troy will pay a fine so just,
And that they will, I firmly trust,
We'll leave this curs'd unlucky shore,
And swear to trouble you no more.

With mighty shouts the Grecians each
Vow 'tis a very noble speech;
That every single word was right;
And swore the Trojans should stand by't.

THE FOURTH BOOK OF HOMER'S ILIAD

ARGUMENT

With solemn phiz, about the fate
Of Troy the gods deliberate;
And long dispute the matter, whether
To joul their loggerheads together,
Or make all farther scuffles cease,
And let them drink and whore in peace.
At last the gods agree *nem. con.*
To let the rascals squabble on:
Paris then jogs Lycaon's son
To knock poor Menelaus down;
And whilst the honest quack, Machaon,
A plaster spread the wound to lay on,
A dreadful noise of shouts and drumming
Forewarn'd the Greeks that Troy was coming.
The gen'ral now, the troops to settle,
And show himself a man of mettle,
In a great splutter runs about
To call their trusty leaders out,
Swaggers and bounces, kicks and cuffs,
Some serjeants praises, others huffs;
At last the roysters join in battle,
And clubs, and staves, and potlids rattle.

HOMER'S ILIAD

BOOK IV

The watchman op'd the gates of heaven,
Just as the clock was striking seven;
When all the gods, with yawning faces,
To council came, and took their places.
Hebe prepar'd upon the spot
A jug of purl made piping hot,
Of which she gave each god a cup,
Who sup and blow, and blow and sup;
And whilst their time they thus employ,
Just slightly ask, What news from Troy?
When thus unlucky Jove, for fun,
To vex his ox-ey'd wife, begun:

Two scolding brims of royal blood
Assist the Greeks – if not, they should;
But, perch'd above, like daws they sit,
Nor they to help their friends think fit;
But, suff'ring Greece to go to ruin,
Content themselves with mischief brewing;
Whilst grateful Venus in the throng,
To aid her lecher, scours along;
With nimble bum, or nimbler wrist,
She guides his weapon where she list;
Knowing a touch of her soft hand,
If fallen down, will make him stand.

But, messmates, since we have begun,
'Tis time to fix what must be done.
The book of Fate then let us scan,
And view what is ordain'd for man;
That we about them may determine,
To kill, or keep alive, the vermin:
Say then, shall smiling peace ensue,
Or dreadful broils, with face of rue?
If now your godships think that Nelly
Should go and warm her husband's belly,
And Paris pay for doing work
Would glad the heart of Jew or Turk;
Why then the borough may stand firm
A thousand years, or any term;
May back recall its old renown,
And once more be a market-town.

Whilst thus he preach'd, his angry queen
With Pallas whispering was seen;
And as they jabber'd pate to pate,
Against poor Troy express'd their hate
The boxing vixen, though in wrath,
Yet holds her peace, and nothing saith;
Nor would, had Jove preach'd e'er so long,
For heavenly wisdom rul'd her tongue;
She prudent acts; not so Jove's wife,
Whose joy consists in noise and strife.

Begun: Don't think your dunder-pate
Shall use your queen at such a rate:
On whoring Troy I've made just war;
Have rous'd my Grecians near and far;
My post-chaise rattled many a mile,
My peacocks sweating all the while;
And all to bring destruction on
This perjur'd, lying, whoring⁴ town.
But spouse my cares and toils derides;
Because they're rogues, he's on their sides;
To punish rogues in grain refuses,
And thus his loving wife abuses:
Though, if the gods will take my side,
In spite of Jove I'll trim their hide.

At this same speech you cannot wonder
The thunder-driver look'd like thunder:
He wav'd his locks, and fit to choke
With rage, he to his vixen spoke:

Why, how now, hussy! whence this hate
To Priam and the Trojan state?
Can mortal scoundrels thee perplex,
And the great brim of brimstones vex,
That thou should'st make such woeful pother,
And Troy's whole race desire to smother;
Then level, out of female spite,
Their spires, with weather-cocks so bright;
And all because that rogue on Ida
Fancy'd your mouth an inch too wide-a?
Pray how can I the varlet blame,
Who fifty times have thought the same?⁵

⁴ *Whoring*. You see Juno keeps continually harping on that word: we may judge from thence, she came in for small share of the labours of these whoring Trojans; but Venus did. There was one Anchises, a twice five-fingered Trojan, that (as old stories say) used to thrum her jacket. Æneas was the produce of their leisure hours.

⁵ *The same*. Here Juno overlooks a very severe rub of Jupiter's, because he directly gives her leave to satiate her revenge: had it not been for that, it is thought he would hardly have escaped without a scratched face at least, or perhaps the loss of an eye.

But for this once I'll give thee string
Enough, to let thy fury swing:
Burn the whole town; blow up the walls;
Destroy their shops and cobblers' stalls:
Murder old Priam on the place,
And smother all his bastard race;
With his boil'd beef and cabbage glut
The fury of thy greedy gut.
Peace, then, perhaps I may enjoy
When there shall be no more of Troy:
But should I choose to be uncivil,
And send your scoundrels to the devil,
Don't think, good Mrs. Brim, that you
Shall hold my hand: remember how
I suffer harmless Troy to tumble,
To stop your everlasting grumble.
I tell thee, brim, of all I know
In heav'n above, or earth below,
Bastards of mortal rogues or gods,
I value Troy the most by odds:
No men on earth deserve my favour
Like Trojan boys, for good behaviour;
Because, whene'er they pay their vows,
They kill good store of bulls and cows;
Nor do they ever grudge the least,
To lend their daughters to the priest;
From whence it cannot be deny'd,
But true religion is their guide.

Juno, like puppet, rolls her eyes,
And, meditating, thus replies:

Three boroughs have I got in Greece,
Most dearly lov'd in war and peace;
Mycenae, Argos, aye, and Sparta,
Destroy 'em all⁶, care I a f – t-a?
With the dry pox or thunder strike 'em;
'Tis fault enough for me to like 'em.
Must thy poor wife's good friends be drubb'd,
And she herself thus hourly snubb'd,
As if her family, Sir Cull,
Was not as good as yours to th' full?
I know I ought, were you well bred,
To share your power as well as bed;
But there I know, and so do you,
I'm robb'd of more than half my due.

⁶ *Destroy 'em, &c.* See the fury of an enraged woman! Rather than Troy should escape, how easily she gives up three dearly-beloved towns! But it is to be hoped, there are few such women alive now-a-days.

Your dad⁷ was but a lead-refiner,
Or else a Derbyshire lead-miner;
Mine was refiner of the small
Assays, for years, at Goldsmiths'-Hall:
Then prithee don't, my dearest life,
Refuse due honour to your wife:
Alternately let's take the sway;
Each bear a bob both night and day;
And then the vulgar gods shall see
We mount by turns, now you, now me.
See trusty Pallas sneaking stands,
And waits your worship's dread commands:
She'll soon, if you unloose her tether,
Set Greece and Troy by th' ears together:
But bid her use her utmost care,
Troy's whoring sons begin the war;
Then, if they get the worst o' th' game,
They dare not say that we're to blame.

Of heaven and earth the whoring king
Swore that his wife had hit the thing:
Then go, my Pallas, in the nick,
And serve these Phrygian whelps a trick;
Make 'em, like Frenchmen, treaties break:
Away, and do not stay to speak.

Pleas'd she darts downward in a trice,
And smooth as younkers slide on ice;
Or when the upper regions vomit
A long-tail'd firebrand, call'd a comet,
Which robs old women of their wits,
And frights their daughters into fits;
Gives wond'ring loons the belly-ache,
And makes the valiant soldier quake:
With horrid whiz it falls from high,
And whisks its tail along the sky:
Just so this brimstone did appear,
As she shot downward through the air.
They guess'd, and paus'd, and guess'd again,
What this strange prodigy could mean:
At last agreed, that angry Fate
Was big with something mighty great.
'Twas war, or peace, or wind, or rain,
Or scarcity next year of grain.
Some cunning heads this reason hit,
That B – e would soon make room for P – tt;
But all the bold north-country rout

⁷ Saturn.

Swore that it would much better suit
His M – , to stick to B – te.

Whilst thus they jar and disagree,
Minerva lit behind a tree;
And lest her phiz should make 'em gape,
Borrow'd an honest mortal shape;
Laodocus, no snivelling dastard,
But great Antenor's nephew's bastard:
She quickly found Lycaon's son,
A rare strong chief for back and bone,
Whose troops from black Esopee came,
A place but little known to fame.
The arms his raggamuffins bore
Were broomsticks daub'd with blood all o'er.
To him she with a harmless look,
Like a mischievous brimstone, spoke:

Will you, friend Pand'rus, says she,
A little counsel take from me?
You know that every prudent man
Should pick up money when he can;
And now, if you could have the luck
To make a hole in Sparta's pluck,
Paris, as certain as I live,
Would any sum of money give.
Such a bold push must sure be crown'd
With ten, at least, or twenty pound:
Don't gape and stare, for now or never
You gain or lose the cash for ever:
But first, to th' Lycian archer pay
(By most he's call'd the god of day)
A ram; this same unerring spark
Can guide thy arrow to its mark:
'Tis highly necessary this,
Or two to one your aim you'll miss.

Like gunpowder, the thick-skull'd elf
Took fire, and up he blew himself:
Then fitting to his bow the string,
He swore, by Jove, he'd do the thing.
His trusty bow was made of horn
An old ram goat for years had worn.
This goat by Pandarus was shot,
And left upon the cliffs to rot:
The curling horns, that spread asunder
Two tailors' yards, became his plunder;
Which he took care to smooth, and so
Produc'd a very handsome bow:

The blacksmith fil'd a curious joint,
And Deard with tinsel tipp'd each point.
This bow of bows, without being seen
By any but his countrymen,
He bent; and, that he might be safe,
Took care to hide his better half
Behind the potlids of his band;
For those he always could command.
Before he aim'd, he squatted low
To fit an arrow to his bow;
One from a hundred out he picks,
To send the cuckold over Styx
(Sharp was the point of this same arrow,
Design'd to reach the Spartan's marrow);
Then to the god of day-light vows
To give a dozen bulls and cows.
Now hard he strains, with wondrous strength,
And draws the arrow all its length:
Swift through the air the weapon hies,
Whilst the string rattles as it flies.
Had then Atrides been forgot,
He certainly had gone to pot:
But Pallas, for his life afraid,
In pudding-time came to his aid,
And turn'd aside the furious dart,
That was intended for his heart,
Into a more ignoble part.
So careful mothers, when they please,
Their children guard from lice and fleas.
The first emotion that he felt,
Was a great thump upon his belt:
For there the arrow, Pallas knew,
Could only pierce a little through.
It did so; and the skin it rais'd:
The blood gush'd out: which so amaz'd
The cuckold, that he was half craz'd:
He felt within himself strange twitches;
'Twas thought by most he spoil'd his breeches.
As when you seek for stuff to grace
Some fine court lady's neck and face,
All o'er her muddy skin you spread
A load of paint, both white and red,
The diff'ring colours, sure enough,
Must help to set each other off,
Spite of the hue that glares within
The filthy, muddy, greasy skin:
Just so Atrides' blood you'd spy,
As it ran down his dirty thigh;
His knee, and leg, and ancle pass'd,

And reach'd his sweaty foot at last.
At this most dreadful, rueful sight,
Atrides' hair stood bolt upright,
And lifted, all the Grecians said,
His hat six inches from his head.
Nor less the honest cuckold quak'd;
His heart as well as belly ach'd;
Till looking at the place that bled,
He plainly saw the arrow's head
Stopp'd by his greasy belt: he then
Boldly took heart of grace again.
But the great chief, who thought the arrow
Had reach'd his brother's guts or marrow,
With bitter sobbing heav'd his chest,
And thus his heavy grief express'd;
Whilst all the Grecians, far and near,
Did nought but threaten, curse, and swear:

My dearest bro. for this did I
Desire a truce? Zounds! I could cry:
It proves a fatal truce to thee;
Nay, fatal both to thee and me.
Thou fought'st till all the fray did cease:
Now to be slain, in time of peace,
Is dev'lish hard: – with rueful phiz
He added? By my soul it is!
Those scoundrel Trojans all combine,
In hopes to ruin thee and thine;
They've stole thy goods, and kiss'd thy wife,
And now they want to take thy life:
With perjuries the rogues are cramm'd,
For which they will be double damn'd.
Now we good Grecians, when it meet is
To make with scoundrel neighbours treaties,
As Britons (but the Lord knows how)
With roguish Frenchmen often do,
We're strict and honest to our word;
So should each man that wears a sword.
What pity 'tis that rogues so base
Should thus bamboozle Jove's own race!
But let it be thy comfort, brother,
And with it thy resentment smother,
That Jove in flames such rogues will burnish;
Already he begins to furnish
With red-hot balls his mutton fist,
To singe and pepper whom he list.
Be sure, that when he once begins,
He'll smoke these scoundrels for their sins,
Make Priam's house of scurvy peers

Come tumbling down about their ears.
These Trojans, if they do not mend on't,
Will all be hang'd at least, depend on't:
For thee, my brother, who deserv'd
Much better fate than be so serv'd,
I trust thou wilt not die so sudden,
But still eat many a pound of pudding.
If aught but good should hap to thee,
God knows what must become of me.
When thou art gone, thy men of might
Will run, but rot me if they'll fight.
When once they've lost thy brave example,
They'll let the Trojan rascals trample
Their very guts out ere they'll budge;
They will, as sure as God's my judge.
Shall Helen then with Paris stay,
Whilst thy poor bones consume away;
And some sad dog, thy recent tomb,
Lug out his ware and piss upon?
Adding, that all Atrides got,
Was to come here to lie and rot;
Nor durst his bullying brother stay,
But very stoutly ran away.
Before this scandal on me peep,
May I be buried nine yards deep!

He spoke; and sighing rubs his eyes,
When Menelaus thus replies:
Thy tears, my hero, prithee keep,
Lest they should make our soldiers weep:
'Tis but, at worst, a harmless scratch;
I'll put upon't a lady's patch:
Or, if you think 'twill mend you faster,
I'll send for Borton's⁸ sticking-plaster.
But if a surgeon's help is meet,
Dispatch a messenger to th' Fleet;
There is a man, who well can do
For scratches, burns, and poxes too.

The brother king, with gracious look,
Once more resum'd the thread, and spoke

May all the gods thy life defend,
And all thy wounds and scratches mend!
Talthybius, fly, Machaon bid
Run faster than he ever did;
Let him await us in our tents,

⁸ Borton, an honest chymist in Piccadilly.

And bring his box of instruments;
My brother's wounded with a dart,
For aught I know, in mortal part

With such a haste Talhybius run,
He knock'd two common troopers down;
Then search'd through every file and rank,
And found the surgeon in the flank.

The king, Machaon, wants your help;
You must not march, but run, you whelp;
And, with your box of instruments,
Attend the brothers in their tents:
Make speed, the best leg foremost put;
One brother's wounded in the gut;
And for the other, 'tis not clear
But he has burst his guts for fear.

The surgeon was a soldier good,
And in his regimentals stood.
Soon as he heard of what had pass'd,
No surgeon ever ran so fast.
Talhybius, who his speed did view,
Swears to this day he thought he flew.
Away he hied, with double speed,
To help the king in time of need
(A double motive surgeons brings,
When they attend the wounds of kings;
It happens oft, as I have heard,
Besides their pay, they get preferr'd).
Away puff'd Chiron on full drive,
In hopes to see the king alive.
Standing he found the man he sought,
And cleaner than at first was thought.
His comrades look'd a little blue,
And so perhaps might I or you.
He pluck'd the arrow with such speed,
Close to the head he broke the reed;
On which he for the buckles felt,
And loos'd at once both head and belt:
When kneeling down upon the ground,
Like Edward's queen he suck'd the wound;
Then to the place, to give it ease,
Apply'd a salve of pitch and grease.

But, while the surgeon was employ'd,
The Grecians sorely were annoy'd
By Trojan boys that flew about,
Resolv'd just then to box it out;

Roaring they came like drunken sailors,
Or idle combination tailors.
The king durst hardly go or stay;
But yet he scorn'd to run away:
Though peace might make his head appear
A little thick, in war 'twas clear.
Though his own coach was by his side,
Yet, like a man, he scorn'd to ride,
Lest they should think him touch'd with pride,
But ran on foot through all the host,
As nimbly as a penny post:

And cries, Attend, each mother's son!
This battle must be lost or won.
Remember now your ancient glory,
What broken heads there are in story
Related of your fathers stout;
And you yourselves are talk'd about:
A Trojan fighting one of you,
Has odds against him three to two:
The rascals rotten are as melons,
And full of guilt as Newgate felons.
We'll have 'em all in chains and cuffs,
But till that time let's work their buffs.
This speech was made for men of mettle;
He next the cowards strives to settle:

O shame to all your former trades,
The ridicule of oyster jades!
Do you intend to stand and see
Your lighters flaming in the sea?
A special time to stare and quake,
When more than all ye have's at stake!
Like stags, who, whilst they stand at bay,
Dare neither fight nor run away;
Perhaps you think it worth the while
For Jove to fight, and save you toil:
But you will find, without a jest,
He safest stands who boxes best.

This said, like Brentford's mighty king
He march'd, and strutted round the ring.
Th' old Cretan gave him great content,
To see him head his regiment;
And to observe how void of fear
The bold Merion form'd the rear.
The serjeant-majors, in their places,
Advanc'd, with grim determin'd faces.
The king, elated much with joy,

Clasp'd in his arms the fine old boy:
O Idomen! what thanks we owe
To men of such-like mould as you!
Thy worth by far exceeds belief:
When Jove from war shall give relief,
Be thine the foremost cut o' th' beef:
And when our pots of ale we quaff,
Mix'd with small beer the better half,
Thy share, depend, shall never fail
To be a double pot, all ale.

The Cretan had not learn'd to dance;
Had ne'er from Dover skipp'd to France:
For though 'tis plain he meant no evil,
You'll say his answer was not civil:

There needs no words to raise my courage
So save your wind to cool your porridge:
I'll venture boldly though to say,
I'll act what you command this day:
Let but the trumpets sound to battle,
I'll make the Trojans' doublets rattle.

The king was rather pleas'd than vex'd,
So travell'd onward to the next.
Ajax he found among his blues;
Ajax, says he, my boy, what news?
Now this he said, because 'twas hard
To have for all a speech prepar'd:
But yet he gladly feasts his eyes
With his new mode of exercise:
He found 'twas Prussian every inch;
Of mighty service at a pinch;
He saw him close his files, then double
(A trick, new learn'd, the foe to bubble);
Next wheel'd to right and left about,
And made 'em face both in and out;
Then turn upon the centre quick,
As easy as a juggler's trick;
Whence soon they form'd into a square;
Then back again just as they were.
By this parade, Atrides knew
That phalanx might be trusted to.
Now, all this while his plotting head
Had conn'd a speech, and thus he said:

To say I'm pleas'd, O gallant knight!
Is barely doing what is right:
Thy soldiers well may heroes be,

When they such bright examples see.

Would Jove but to the rest impart
A piece of thy undaunted heart,
Trojans would helter-skelter run,
And their old walls come tumbling down.

The next he found was ancient Nestor,
Who, spite of age, was still a jester:
For military art renown'd,
As Bland's his knowledge was profound
Besides, when he thought fit, could speak
In any language – best in Greek.
The king espy'd his men in ranks,
And flew to give th' old firelock thanks;
Observ'd how just he plac'd his forces,
His footmen and his line of horses.
The foot⁹ were wisely rang'd in front,
That they the first might bear the brunt.

The horse along the flanks he drew,
To keep 'em ready to pursue.
The rear made up of mod'rate men,
Half hearts of cock, half hearts of hen.
The very riff-raff rogues they venture
To squeeze together in the centre.
Thus fix'd, they kept a sharp look-out,
And ready stood to buckle to't.
A man with half an eye could see
A rare old Grecian this must be,
Who in so small a space could keep
His knaves from jumbling in a heap;
Then with a phiz as wise as grave
The following advice he gave:

If you in battle chance to fall,
Don't stay to rise, for that spoils all;
To rise as some men do, I mean,
Burn foremost, then your back is seen;
But jump directly bolt upright,
Ready prepar'd to run or fight.
Advice like this our fathers took,
And drove the world along like smoke.

Thus spoke the queer old Grecian chief,
And pleas'd the king beyond belief;

⁹ I imagine the author has placed the troops as he thinks they should be, not as they were. The author knows the Grecians had no horses but what they used to their chariots: but, as he talks like an apothecary, he gives himself what liberty he pleases.

Who cry'd, 'Tis cursed hard that age
Should drive such leaders off the stage:
Whilst other bruisers die forgot,
Eternal youth should be thy lot.

When Nestor shook his hoary locks,
And thus replies: Age, with a pox!
Will come apace: could I, forsooth,
Recall the strength I had in youth,
When Ereuthalion I did thwack,
Be sure I would that strength call back;
But dear experience can't be gotten
Till we're with tricks of youth half rotten:
The young are fittest for the field,
But to the old in council yield.
Though now my fighting bears no price,
Yet I can give you rare advice.
Fight you and scuffle whilst you're young,
My vigour centres in my tongue:
I would do more to show my love,
But can no other weapon move.
With joy great Agamemnon heard
This doughty knight o' th' grizzle beard,

He left him then, because he had
No time to spare, things look'd but bad:
When, lo! he found Menestheus
In a most lamentable fuss.
His potlid he could not explore,
Because 'twas hid behind the door:
Searching about his tent all round him,
The gen'ral left him where he found him.

Next spy'd Ulysses at his stand;
Th' old buffs were under his command:
Idle they lay at distance far,
Nor knew a word about the war:
Atrides saw them playing pranks,
And all disorder'd in their ranks;
Which made him in a mighty passion
The poor Ulysses fall slap dash on:

I thought you, Mr. Slight-of-Hand,
Had known much better than to stand
Picking your fingers, whilst the rest
Are forc'd to box their very best,
And make a marvellous resistance
To keep these Trojan whelps at distance:
In time of peace you're much respected,

And never at our feasts neglected;
You're first i' th' list when I invite,
And therefore should be first in fight.

The sage Ulysses, with a blush,
Returns for answer, Hush, hush, hush:
If you speak loud, the Trojans hear;
Not that we care, what need we fear?
But I'm persuaded you'll ere long
Wish you had kept that noisy tongue
Betwixt your teeth, nor let it pass
To tell us all you're half an ass;
Why, can't you see we're ready booted,
And I've just got my jacket clouted?
Without your keeping such a coil.
Ten minutes fits us for our broil;
Give you the word, and we'll obey,
At quarter-staff or cudgel play;
When we begin, perhaps I'll do
Such wonders as may frighten you.

Well said, Ulysses! cries the king
(A little touch'd though with the sting
Of this rum speech); I only fear'd
To catch my warrior off his guard;
But am rejoic'd to find thee steady,
For broils and wenching always ready.

He said, and pass'd to Diomedes,
And caught him fast asleep in bed.
Zoons! quoth the king, I thought Tydides,
The man in whom my greatest pride is,
Might absent been perhaps a-whoring,
But little dreamt to catch him snoring:
Dost thou not hear the Trojans rattle?
Already they've begun the battle.
Not so thy father – none could doubt him,
He long ere this had laid about him;
Had gi'n the Trojans such a drubbing,
As would have say'd a twelvemonth's scrubbing:
'Tis known he was a lad of wax,
Let *bellum* be the word, *aut pax*.
He was, indeed, of stature small,
But then in valour he was tall.
I saw him once, 'twas when he stray'd
To Polynice's house for aid;
Troopers he begg'd, and straight we gave 'em;
But Jove sent word he should not have 'em:
With long-tail'd comets made such rout,

That we e'en let him go without.
But after that, I know it fact,
He fifty blust'ring bullies thwack'd:
Nay, hold, I fib, 'twas forty-nine;
For one he sav'd, a friend of mine,
To witness that the tale was true,
Else 'twould have been believ'd by few.
Though two bold bruisers led them on,
Meon and sturdy Lycophon,
He trimm'd their jackets ev'ry one.
But I must tell you in this case,
And tell you flatly to your face,
Since our affairs so ill you handle,
You're hardly fit to hold his candle.

With rage and grief Tydides stung,
Scratch'd his rump raw, yet held his tongue;
Provok'd by this abusive knight
To scratch the place that did not bite.
Not so the son of Capaneus;
He soon began to play the deuce:

Good Mr. Chief, if you would try
To speak the truth, you would not lye;
Like other mortals though we rest,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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