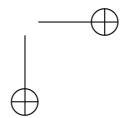
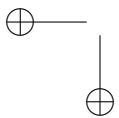
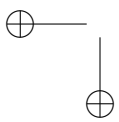
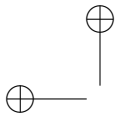


The Odes of Horace

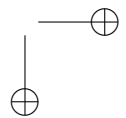
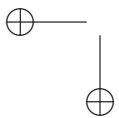


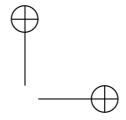
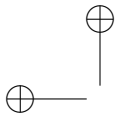




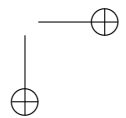
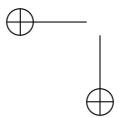
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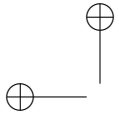
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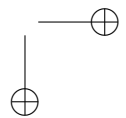
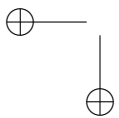


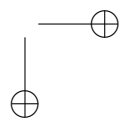
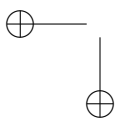
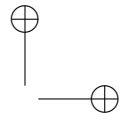
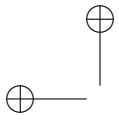
2022
First Published in 1941





To
THREE RONALDS:
KNOX, STORRS, AND FULLER
WHO HAVE HELPED AND ENCOURAGED





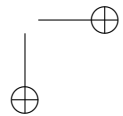
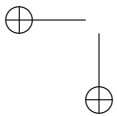


PREFACE

‘There are a hundred faults in this thing,’ we read in the preface to *The Vicar of Wakefield*, ‘and a hundred things might be said to prove them beauties.’ Goldsmith, in his wisdom, did not avail himself of the possibility; but a translator of Horace may do well to offer a few explanations and extenuations, in the hope of disarming some of the criticisms which his rash act incurs.

Mr. S. A. Courtauld writes in the introduction to his choice of translations from the Odes a sentence which gives away the whole case for translation into verse. ‘It is difficult,’ he says, ‘to believe that metrical translations of Horace apart from the Latin originals can really be interesting to many readers.’ On the contrary: unless the version can give the illatinate reader some notion of Horace’s quality as a poet, it is a superfluity, a game which scholars play to amuse themselves and annoy one another. In that game the player’s object is to render every shade of the author’s meaning, and as much as possible of his expression, with the minimum of alteration necessary for metre and rhyme; and the result is usually full of cracks and bulges, like a jigsaw puzzle in which most of the pieces have been coaxed or squeezed into the wrong place, so that the reader can never forget that what he is reading is not an original work. Of such translations it might be said that ‘faith unfaithful keeps them falsely true’; for the one thing certain is that a poem cannot be represented by a piece of verse that does not stand on its own legs in its own language.

Exact fidelity, when by a lucky chance attainable, is a great virtue; but it comes second to ease and naturalness, and when the capricious Goddesses of Rhyme and Metre oppose the attempt, the translator must have the same freedom as the poet



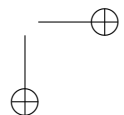
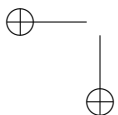


had to choose, from among the variety of ways in which a thought can be put, the one that suits him best; nor need he shrink from small omissions or even additions which make no substantial difference to anything except the vigour or the elegance of his rendering.

I am much more anxious about my metres than about my departures from literalness. Horace is a poet of strict form, and the regularity of the quatrains into which all the Odes are divided or divisible is one of the elements in his mastery of construction. As often as I could manage it, I have preserved this regularity; but when the above-mentioned Goddesses (of whose peevishness Walter Headlam so feelingly complains in the preface to his volume of translations) refused their aid, I have divagated in two directions. Of the one, I might have said grandly that I felt the Ode in hand would be better as a *canzone*; but the truth is that I was tempted into the *vers libre* (not *libres!*) to which I grew accustomed when I was translating La Fontaine's Fables. Although I am in duty bound to apologize for this as a blemish in each particular case, I am not sure that it is a disadvantage to the book as a whole. Horace's favourite metres, the Alcaic, the Sapphic, and the several Asclepiads, are much more different from one another than the changes which can be rung on the English iambic quatrain, and I hope I may have regained in variety something of what I have sacrificed in regularity.

My second form of licence has less to be said for it. Too often I have been driven by the Goddesses to vary the rhyme-scheme of an Ode in which I had otherwise observed the stanza form: worse still, I have once or twice varied the length of my short lines; and here I can only plead that when the choice was between a forced and wooden correctitude and an expressive laxity, I preferred the latter.

In *Solvitur acris* (I.IV) and *Diffugere nives* (IV.VII) Horace has used for the nonce two peculiar measures, of which I have tried to reproduce the movement in English. *Exegi monumentum*

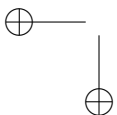


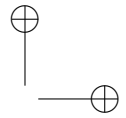


(III.XXX), since it was just too long for a sonnet, *had* to be in blank verse; and for *O fons Bandusiae* (III.XIII) and *Persicos odi* (I.XXXVIII, in this case with a slight variation) I have ventured on the unrhymed stanza which Milton used for *Quis multa gracilis* (I.V) and Collins in the *Ode to Evening*. For *Laudabunt alii* (I.VII) I have taken a hint from *Love in the Valley*; for *Te maris* (I.XXVIII) from *The Book of Thel*; and for *Dianam tenerae* (I.XXI) from the *Lays of Ancient Rome*. *Albi ne doleas* (I.XXXIII) came out as a kind of Cavalier lyric; and my greatest and perhaps least pardonable liberty was to turn *Impios parrae* (III.XXVII) into a blank-verse idyll, more like the *Cyclops* of Theocritus than anything else I can think of in the classics; for which I can only excuse myself by the hope that it is more readable than what I should have produced if I had stuck closer to the form of the original.

One other small point. Horace used for his imaginary Personages a set of conventional names, any one of which would (for the most part) do as well as any of the others: his heroine would be Lydia, Phyllis or Neaera, his hero Gyges or Nearchus, whichever fitted best into his metre. I have taken the same licence, and substituted Lycoris for Glycera, or Bassus for Teleplus, from the same motive – even going so far as to add two young gentlemen to his list. Similarly with the Muses: Polyhymnia goes beautifully into the Asclepiads of the first Ode, but I could not manage her, so I made her Erato instead. In speaking of real characters, Horace used the *nomen* or the *cognomen* (ot both) indifferently, calling for instance Messala Corvinus Corvinus, and Albius Tibullus Albius. I have chosen Messala for euphony, and Tibullus because that is the name by which the poet is known to modern readers.

I am in debt to several of my friends, from whom I would single out Mr. Walter de la Mare, for occasional suggestions; but my deepest gratitude is owed to Monsignor Ronald Knox, who has read both my manuscript and my proofs, and to Mr. Ronald Fuller, who has weighed every line and every word. I

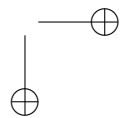
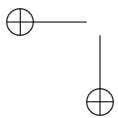




hope they have kept me straight, as I have taken no steps to modernize my Horatian scholarship, and the only commentators I have consulted are Wickham and T. E. Page.

E. M.

December 1940



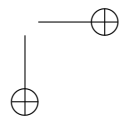
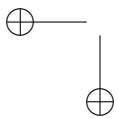


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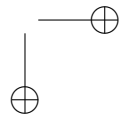
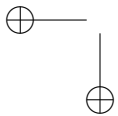




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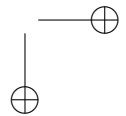
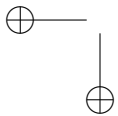


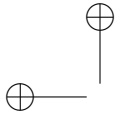


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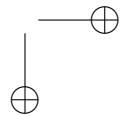
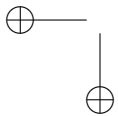
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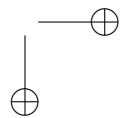
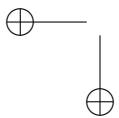
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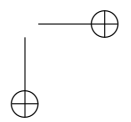
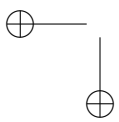
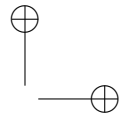
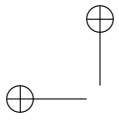


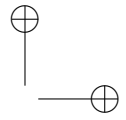
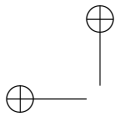


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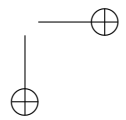
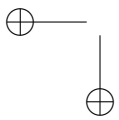
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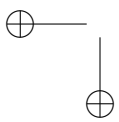
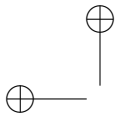






BOOK ONE





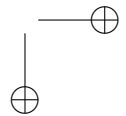
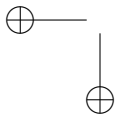


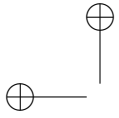
I

MAECENAS ATAVIS

Maecenas, heir of royal race,
Of my poor life the guard and grace,
What power directs our will to choose
The primal bent each man pursues?
One whirls the Olympic dust along,
And with hot axle shaves the goal:
Palm-crowned, he feels his mounting soul
Enskied by the tumultuous throng.
One in the hard-fought poll rejoices,
Cheered by the fickle Roman voices,
And one if in great barns he stores
Heaped corn from Libyan threshing-floors.
Him who no sweeter bliss has dreamt
Than hoeing his ancestral acres,
No bribe of Attalus could tempt
To launch a bark on Cretan breakers.
When Notus whips the Icarian foam,
The merchant for his rural home
Repines; but, greed reviving, soon
Cheerly refits his mauled galloon.

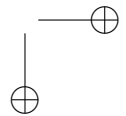
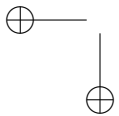
One, couched at ease in shady bowers,
Lulled by a streamlet's quiet lay,
Thinks it no shame to while the hours
And quaff old Massic half the day.
Some love the camp, the mingled tone
Of trump and horn, the din of war

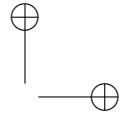
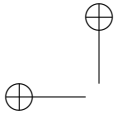




That mothers dread. The stars shine frore,
But leaving his fond wife alone,
Breathless the hunter waits the sound
Of the swift stag his dogs have started,
Or Marsian boar whose tusks have parted
The strong-twined cords that hemmed him round.

To me the ivy wreath be given,
The poet's meed and key to heaven:
Cool groves that nymph and satyr haunt,
To bid the teasing crowd avaunt;
So, let but Erato inspire
My song, Euterpe tune my lyre,
And thou approve my minstrelsy,
My head up-lift shall strike the sky.





II

JAM SATIS

Too long hath Jove with vengeful visitations
Of hail and snow, and with his red right arm
Smiting our twin-peak'd summit, struck alarm
Into the City and the nations.

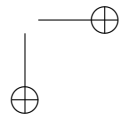
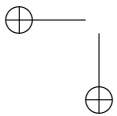
It seemed that monstrous age was born anew
When Pyrrha from the stones saw marvels bred,
And landward from the deep old Proteus led
His herds the mountain-tops to view:

When trapt by forest boughs where erst the doves
Had nested, fishes sought their path in vain,
And through salt floods that surged across the plain
The roe-deer swam in frightened droves.

Before our eyes from his Etrurian shore
Brown Tiber gathered-up his thwarted wave
To whelm in havoc Numa's holy grave
And storm great Vesta's temple door.

Boasting with sweets of vengeance to assuage
His Ilia's grief, he sent his waters roving;
But Jove as soon, such rash excess reproving,
Set bound to his uxorious rage.

Few by our fault, our remnant youth with shame
Shall learn how men of Rome in strife abhorred
Sharpened against their brothers' breast the sword
That might have dashed proud Persia's fame.





In this our evil plight, what God shall hear
The stricken people cry upon his aid,
Or with what prayer the virgin quire upbraid
Cold Vesta's unattentive ear?

Who saves us? Whom will Jove from heaven's height
Depute our guilt to ransom? Come at last,
Apollo! come, with cloudy mantle cast
About thy shoulders gleaming white.

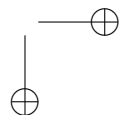
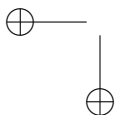
Or shall blithe Venus from Sicilian skies
Fly down with Mirth and Cupid in her train,
Or alienated Mars relenting deign
On his frail sons to bend his eyes,

Tired of his deadly sport, and ready now
For truce to polished helm and clarion's note,
And faces keen of swift-foot Moors that gloat
Exultant on their bleeding foe?

Or hast thou, son of bounteous Maia, changed
Thy wingèd shape, and with celestial ruth
Come down in likeness of a mortal youth
For Caesar's fall to be avenged?

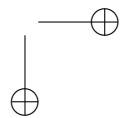
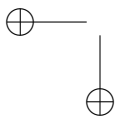
Late be thy reascent and long the day
Thou sojournest amid the Roman folk
In joy, nor ever sin of ours provoke
Swift winds of heaven to bear away

Thy Godhead; here in triumph high remain,
Our Father and our Prince, nor let the Medes
Defiant ride, and reap their violent deeds
To mock the second Caesar's reign.





STANZA 5. It is difficult to bring out the meaning of this complicated and allusive stanza, which is not one of Horace's happiest. He has married the Tiber to Ilia, mother of Romulus and therefore ancestress of Julius Caesar, whose murder is the occasion of the belated portents which have been described.



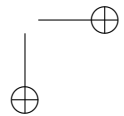
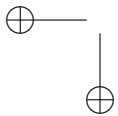


III

SIC TE DIVA

If thou wouldst have fair Venus guide
Thy course, and those twin stars, bright Helen's brothers,
Or move the Lord of Winds to bid
Only the North-West blow, and bind the others,
Swift bark, to whom the charge is given
Of Virgil, half my heart, my dearer soul,
Keep well thy trust through fair and foul,
And safe convoy him to his Attic haven.

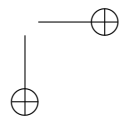
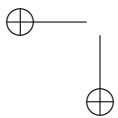
In stubborn oak and triple steel
He sure was clad, who on the raging tide
First ventured forth a brittle keel,
And Eurus' fierce down-swooping blast could bide
At grips with ruffian Aquilo
'Neath the sad Hyads, or hear wild Notus blow,
Who tames proud Hadria to his will,
And with a breath can rouse his waves or still.
Him what worse shape of Death could fright
Who had braved the swollen surge with eyes unawed,
The spouting monsters hungry-jaw'd,
And those grim reefs of the Ceraunian bight?
Alas, how vainly Heaven planned
With pathless ale to sunder land from land,
If naughty ships can break their bounds
And overleap the unpermitted sounds!

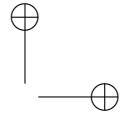
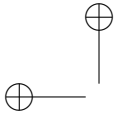




Undaunted, unashamed, mankind
Runs headlong through ill deed and ill desire:
Undaunted, Japhet's son purloined
And on the folk bestowed Jove's sacred fire –
A fatal gift, that in its train
Brought wasting sickness down, and fevers dread
That o'er the earth their poison spread,
And summoned Death, who till that hour had lain
Aloof, to mend his laggard pace.
Rash Daedalus essayed the skyey space
On wings to man forbid, and fell:
Alcides toiled to force the gates of Hell.
No height is steep to mortal thought;
Up Heaven itself we climb in froward pride,
And by our folly suffer not
Great Jove to lay his angry bolts aside.

LINE 27, *i.e.* Prometheus, son of Iapetus, whom Milton calls Japhet.





IV

SOLVITUR ACRIS HIEMS

Sharp Winter is loosing his grip at the magical touch
of Zephyr and Spring,

And the stout windlass drags the dry keels to
the beach.

No more do the kine in the stalls nor the ploughmen
huddle in front of the fire,

No more the white frost glistens on the thawing
fields,

Venus has flown from Cythera to lead her dancers
under the moon,

And with the Graces knit, the fair Nymphs ring
the ground

With the beat of their feet in rhythm, while Vulcan
reddens his cheeks in the blaze

Of anvils where his one-eyed blacksmiths forge
the bolts.

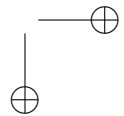
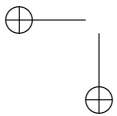
Now is the time to adorn our anointed heads with
myrtle green,

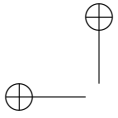
Or else with the first flowers that pierce the
softening loam,

And now in the shade of the groves offer our sacrifice
to Faunus,

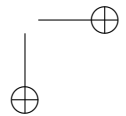
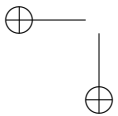
White lamb or bleating kid, according to his
choice.

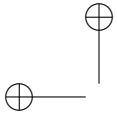
Pale Death with impartial foot beats on the door of
the poor man's hut





And on the king's high portal. Sestius, my
friend,
Brief is the span of life, and long-drawn hopes for-
bidden to men:
 Soon night will hold you fast, night and the
 fabled Shades,
And the unsubstantial house of Pluto, whose gate
once you have passed,
 No more the dice shall choose you Master of
 the Revel,
No more shall you feast your eyes on Lycidas, now
the toast of his comrades,
 Destined ere long to set the wenches' hearts on
 fire.



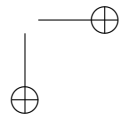
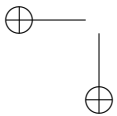


V

QUIS MULTA GRACILIS

Pyrrha, what essenced youth with ardours bold
Pursues thee now? for whom hast spread
In thy delicious bower a roseleaf bed,
And wrought mean thy lovely head
That easy miracle of curling gold?
Alas! how soon the hapless boy shall rue
Thy broken faith, the kindly gods gone cold,
And with amazement wake to view
Black sudden winds lash up the seas
Where now, unwitting of the treacherous breeze,
He sails in blinded bliss, and holds thee true,
Deeming thy sweet accommodating mood
Set fair. Poor souls, I bode ye little good
Who know not what those smiling deeps conceal.
For me – my wreck is an old tale:
Long since my votive scroll and garments wet,
In Neptune's temple hung, avowed my debt.

The fifth line does duty for the famous and exquisite phrase – its own best epithet – *simplex munditiis*, which Milton translated word for word, but not quite grace for grace, 'plain in thy neatness.' I believe it to be impregnable by frontal attack.





VI

SCRIBERIS VARIO

Let Varius chant your praises: he is heir
To Homer's wing, and the victorious feats
In which you lead your armies and your fleets
Can with befitting state declare.

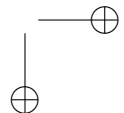
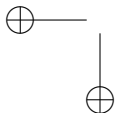
Not mine, Agrippa, those high acts to sing,
Nor yet Achilles sulking by the brine,
Or horrid chronicle of Pelops' line,
Or sly Ulysses' sea-faring.

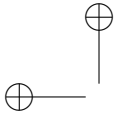
Small wits, small themes! I know my humble place,
Nor would the Muse of my unwarlike lyre
Suffer my verse with ineffectual fire
Your fame or Caesar's to disgrace.

Some worthier scribe retail the hard alloy
Of Mars his tunic; or the fearful odds
When Diomed armed by Pallas fought with Gods,
Or Merion, black with dust of Troy.

To feast and dance I frame an idle song,
And broil of sharp-nail'd girls their swains defying:
Even should some warmer fancy set me flying,
You must not bid me soar too long.

LAST LINE: *Non practer solitum leves*. 'Leves' was always taken as an adjective, till A. W. Verrall persuaded himself that it was a verb. I don't know if he persuaded the learned world; but I have followed his view as an act of piety towards my old teacher.



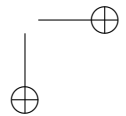
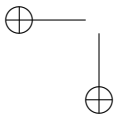


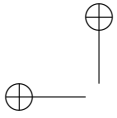
VII

LAUDABUNT ALII

Let others hymn the glories of Rhodes or Mytilene,
Ephesus the golden, or Tempe, Thessaly's pride,
Battlemented Corinth on twin seas pillioned,
Delphi by Apollo, Thebes by Bacchus dignified.
Some never cease inditing of virgin Pallas' city,
Plucking all its olive-leaves to twine their singing-
crowns;
Some to honour Juno vaunt the cavalcades of Argos,
Some Mycenae, wealthiest of the Grecian towns.
I would never tune a string for hardy Lacedaemon,
Never turn a stave for Larissa's bounteous loam;
Only let me sweetly sing Albunea's echoing cavern,
And the rocks where Anio leaps down in sudden
foam,
Only praise through all my days the grove of old Tibur-
nus,
Where between the apple trees the lightfoot rillets
roam.

Plancus, leave the pennon'd camp, come home to
woody Tibur,
And as the white South Wind of Spring at last
withholds his rain
And wipes the dusky clouds away, forget your weary
labours
Over a bowl of mellow wine, that routs dull care
and pain.





When Teucer put his angered sire and Salamis behind
him,

’Tis told that with a poplar wreath he crowned
his beaded brow

Glowing with the heady fumes of sorrow-easing Bac-
chus,

And thus bespake his troubled friends, clustered
round the prow:

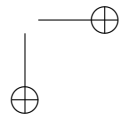
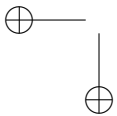
‘Whithersoever Fortune lead us, kinder than a father,
Fellows and companions, together we will sail.

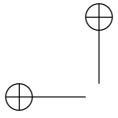
Dream not of despairing, while Teucer guards and
guides you,

Trusting in Apollo, whose promise cannot fail.
To a new land he calls us, to build another Salamis –
Great-heart comrades, you and I have shared worse
ills than these;

Fill with wine your cups and mine, tonight we drown
our bodings,

Then tomorrow forth once more over the vasty
seas.’

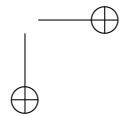
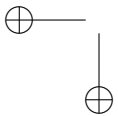




VIII

LYDIA DIC PER OMNES

Lydia, why, in Heaven's name,
If you love him so dear, are you bent on his ruin?
Before you set his heart aflame,
Day after day he was up and doing,
Best of his year at every game,
Wet or fine, from dawn to dark,
Racing his Barbary horse in the Park,
Putting his brother cadets to shame.
Why, oh why, do we see him no more
Swimming the Tiber from shore to shore,
Hurling his javelin past the mark,
Tossing the weight till his arms were sore,
Rubbing his body all over with oil,
Which now he shuns like adder's bile?
Why does he skulk behind your door,
Like Achilles of old, of whom 'tis told
How Thetis, aftaid for her darling boy,
Dressed him up in a maiden's clothes,
Lest he should follow the King to Troy,
And bare his heel to the Lycian bows?





IX

VIDES UT ALTA

Look, where Soracte tears his gleaming top
Snow-quilted, and the stricken woods
O'erloaded vail their boughs, the floods
By gripping frost constrained run slow and stop.

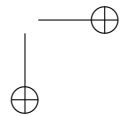
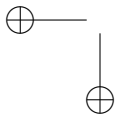
Pile high the hearth with logs to rout the cold,
Young Thaliarchus, neither spare
To broach yon tall twin-handled Sabine jar
For the good wine four seasons old.

All else let Heaven dispose, whose ruling will
First sets uproarious winds to wage
Strife with fierce seas, then checks their rage,
And bids tossed cypresses and elms be still.

What chance tomorrow brings, ask not nor care,
But thank thy stars for any day
They list to send thee; love and dance and play
Pursue, nor till sad blanching hair

Turn thy fresh sap to gall, deny their power.
Now for the playing-field, the park,
Soft whispers in the gathering dark
That calls young lovers to the trysting hour,

When from a shadow'd nook the maiden's laugh
Betrays her ambush to the boy,
And he from guarding arm or finger coy
Wrests the shared token's other half.





X

MERCURI FACUNDE

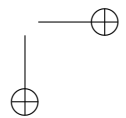
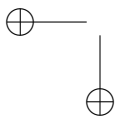
Grandson of Atlas, who when first the race
Of Man uncouth appeared beneath the skies
Didst frame his tongue to speech, his limbs to grace
With supple exercise,

Most eloquent Mercury, of thee I sing,
Jove's herald: author of the shapely lyre:
Young scapegrace, gaily filching everything
That tickled thy desire.

When Phoebus missed his Oxen, and well knew
Who was the thief, but that same instant, while
He raged against thee, missed his quiver too,
How could he help but smile?

'Tis thou wert Priam's guide when like a ghost
He crept from Ilium, past Atrides' tent,
Past the Thessalian fires, through all the host
On Troy's destruction bent.

Thou the blest spirits to the peaceful land
Dost gently convoy, with thy golden wand
Herding the shadowy troop; in Heaven and Hell
No power but owns thy spell.

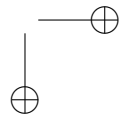
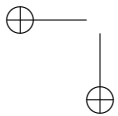




XI

TU NE QUAESIERIS

Born you and I must surely die, Leuconoe! but
never pry
In Heaven's guarded calendars among the riddles of
the stars
With Babylonian charts to date the secret purposes
of Fate.
Whether this winter be our last, that now with
overweening blast
Shatters his waves against the shore, or Jove has
many a year in store
For us to savour, let it be: not ours to question his
decree!
So take your ease with flowers and wine, and in brief
span long hopes confine.
– Before my next quick word is said, a precious
second will have fled –
Be wise, drown sorrow, enjoy today, and leave to-
morrow its yea or nay.





XII

QUEM VIRUM AUT HEROA

God, man, or hero wilt thou choose this day,
Clio, with lyre or shrilling pipe to sing?
What name in answer to thy storied lay
Shall mirthful Echo ring

From Haemus' caves, or else some shady hollow
Of Helicon, or Pindus' airy head,
Whence long ago the woods made haste to follow
Where singing Orpheus led,

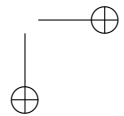
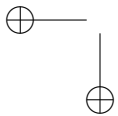
At whose sweet spell, learnt from his mother Muse,
The streams forgot to flow, the winds to roar;
Who with his tuneful harping lured the yews
And cedars, deaf no more?

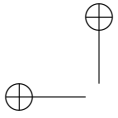
Thee, Father, first with customary praise
I hymn, who gods and mortals dost command;
Whose changing seasons' punctual order sways
Heaven and sea and land.

Greater than all thy works, in state supreme
Thou reign'st alone, and know'st nor peer nor
second!

Yet after thee shall Pallas be my theme,
As next in honour reckoned.

Nor will I leave unsung thy martial fire,
Bold Bacchus, nor fair Dian's maidenhead,
Foe to wild beasts, nor Phoebus with his lyre
And scapeless arrow dread;





Alcides too, and Leda's Twins divine,
Horseman and Boxer, strong to save; for when
From the dark firmament their starry sign
Beams on sea-faring men,

Back from the rocks the weltering torrent slides,
Down drop the furious winds, the clouds di-
shevel,
And at their hest the threatening wave subsides
Upon the watery level.

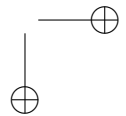
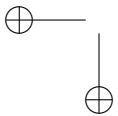
These sung, shall Romulus my tale provide,
Or Numa, blest, since peace was in his time?
Or Tarquin's lictors hedged about his pride,
Or Cato's death sublime?

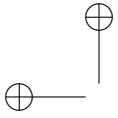
Regulus and Camillus, names apart,
In joyful numbers shall my Muse exalt,
And Paulus, lavishing his noble heart
The Punic march to halt.

Scaurus, or Curius of the unbarber'd head –
These were the sons that in a frugal home
And small ancestral farm stern Penury bred
To fight the wars of Rome.

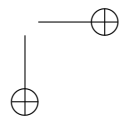
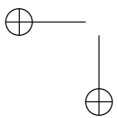
Like some fair tree through secret seasons grown
Marcellus to his height of fame aspires;
Forth shines the Julian planet, like the Moon
Among the lesser fires.

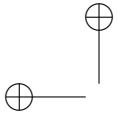
Saviour and Sire of Man, Saturnian Jove,
Omnipotent, eternal! since to thee
Fate trusts her mighty Caesar, reign above,
While he, thy deputy,





– Whatever foes along the Sacred Way
He leads in triumph due, the Parthian bands,
Our ancient dread, or hordes of wild Cathay
And farthest Indian lands –
Obeying thy just will, shall rule the world:
Thou with thy chariot-wheels shalt shake heaven's
frame,
And on the groves of sin thy bolts be hurled
To purge thy realm of shame.

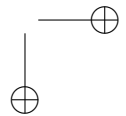
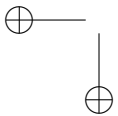




XIII

CUM TU LYDIA

Ah, Lydia, when I hear you telling
The catalogue of Milo's charms,
His rosy neck, his waxen arms,
God, how I feel my dander swelling!
My cheeks go pale, my senses fail,
And beads upon my forehead start
That show the hidden fever of my heart.
I boil to see your shoulders red with scratches
Fresh from your tipsy drinking-matches,
And that soft mouth after a fight
Marked by the frantic stripling's bite.
You need not think the wanton boy
Will take a never-ending joy
In savaging those lovely lips
That Venus in her sweetest nectar dips.
Not that way lies your bliss, but in a bond
That joins two faithful hearts for ever
In love no angry words can sever
Till the last hour shall sound.





XIV

O NAVIS

Hold, hold the port, fair bark, while yet thou mayst,
Ere fresh tides wash thee back to sea! oh haste!

Look how thy sides are shorn
Of oars, thy canvas torn,

Hark how the yard-arms yell, the shivering mast
Cracks in the onset of the Libyan blast!

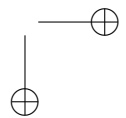
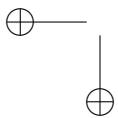
Oh rope thy ribs, before
The surge with greedy roar

Comes foaming down to work its tyrant will.
Thy gods are deaf, though thou beseech them still,
And desperately invoke
That venerable oak,

Thy Pontic sire, whose pride thou dost inherit.
Think not with thy gay painted poop to inspirit
The frantic crew, or brave
The mocking of the wave.

Fair bark, so late my care, my hope, my fear,
Now more than ever cherished, go not near
The gilded Cyclades
That lock the sundering seas.

STANZA 2, LINE 3: reading *cavernae*.





XV

PASTOR CUM TRAHERET

When the false shepherd o'er the speeding seas
Bore Helen Troyward from her Spartan home,
In baleful calm old Nereus lulled the breeze,
To utter thus his ruthless doom:

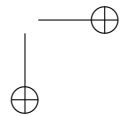
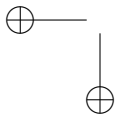
'Woe worth the day, when to thy father's house
Thou carriest Her, whom thy strong Grecian foe
Shall soon reclaim, conjoined to thwart thy vows,
And Priam's ancient realm o'erthrow.

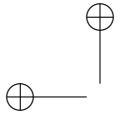
Alack, what blood, what sweat that day shall mar
Rider and horse! to what a gulf of death
Thou lead'st thy race! for Pallas mounts her car
And dons her helm and whets her wrath.

Favourite of Venus art thou, and wouldst comb
Thy flowing locks, and on the unwarlike lyre
Thrum thy soft ditties in the women's room,
And think to scape the rushing fire

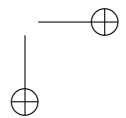
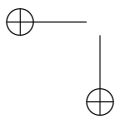
Of spears and arrows, and the clanging chase
Of men at arms, and Ajax hot with lust
To slay thee? Then too late thou shalt abase
Those amorous tresses in the dust.

Look where Ulysses lurks, disastrous foe
To all thy house, and aged Nestor sits
In council, look where Teucer bends his bow
Alert, and valiant Sthenelus fits





His armour on, or drives his fiery steeds!
 Look, look where Merion fronts thee face to face,
And Diomed, bettering his great father's deeds,
 Tracks out thy craven hiding-place,
Whom thou, as when a stag upon the heath
 At browse far off a ravening wolf hath spied,
Shalt fly with straining neck and sobbing breath –
 Brave sight for thy deluded bride!
For numbered winters though Achilles' ire
 Defer the doom that waits the Phrygian dames,
Full soon, that respite past, shall Argive fire
 Whelm the tall roofs of Troy in flames.'





XVI

O MATRE PULCRA

O lovelier daughter of a lovely mother,
Do what you will with my calumnious verses!
I leave them wholly to your tender mercies –
Burn, drown, destroy them, one way or another.

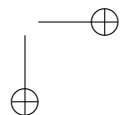
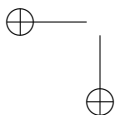
Anger's a curse; it warps the minds of men
As Bacchus drugs his Fauns, or Cybele
Her frantic cymbal-clashing dervishry,
Or Phoebus his mad Sibyls in their den.

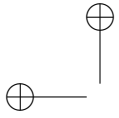
No power can daunt it: not Toledo steel,
Nor timber-shivering seas, nor hungry fire,
Nor yet the frown of Heaven's offended Sire
Volleying from on high his thunderous peal.

They say Prometheus, when he shaped our mould,
And had to borrow of his new-made creatures
A scrap from each to furnish forth our natures,
Took the fierce lion's gall to make us bold.

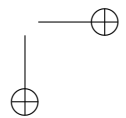
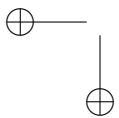
'Twas wrath, 'twas wrath, that brought Thyestes low:
Wrath sows the seed wherefrom destruction flowers
For lofty cities, casting down their towers
In utter ruin, till the haughty foe

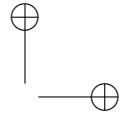
Drives his fell ploughshare o'er the shattered wall.
Forgive! I too was angry, when I wrote,
In my sweet youth, with wild blood raging hot,
Those headlong couplets I would now recall.





Surely the time has come to change the pain
Of those old days for peace. Your penitent
Unsays his insults: will not you relent,
And be my friend, and let me live again?





XVII

VELOX AMOENUM

When fickle Faunus leaps with swift caprice
From far Lycaeum to Lucretilis,
And summer's glare or wind-blown rain forbids
 To scathe my gentle kids,

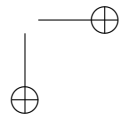
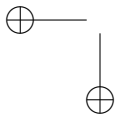
How fearlessly through friendly bush and briar
Their greedy dams and their unsavoury sire
Nose thyme and arbutus, and flout the snakes
 Green-glistening in the brakes,

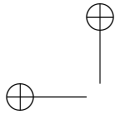
Or even the formidable Wolf; for when
That clear pipe echoes in my rocky glen
And fills the bosoming valley, hurt nor harm
 Is proof against the charm.

Yes, Tyndaris! High Heaven is my guard,
Heaven loves a man of faith, and loves a bard.
Come then, and share what Plenty's bounteous hand
 Pours forth to bless my land.

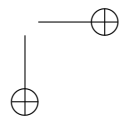
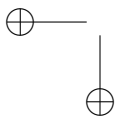
Here in the vale withdrawn, no Dogstar's fire
Will tan you through the leaves; so bring your lyre,
To sing perplexed Ulysses, torn between
 His sea-nymph and his queen.

Here you shall drink my harmless Lesbian wine
That breeds no quarrels, human or divine;
Mars shall hobnob with Bacchus – have no fear!
 No rowdy Cyrus here





Shall fix you with his jealous eyes, nor play
Rough pranks, or in unequal combat lay
Rude hands on you, to tear your flowery crown
And unoffending gown.





XVIII

NULLAM VARE

What tree, my Varus, shall you plant to shade Catillus'
wall

And feed on Tibur's mellow soil? The Vine were best of
all.

To him who drinks not, Heaven's plan seems fraught with
dark despairs,

And 'tis the holy Vine alone can chase our gnawing cares.
Who, that has drunk, is heard to harp on want of war's
alarms?

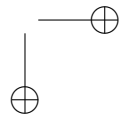
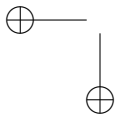
'Tis Bacchus' bounty he will praise, or Venus and her
charms.

Yet mark – lest any fail to use the wise God's gift
aright –

How Wine embroiled the Centaurs with their hosts in
furious fight,

How Liber's hand was heavy on the wild Sithonian throng
Who made of their own lusts an easy law of right and
wrong.

Then trust me, shining God! no troublous votary I
To thrust the leaves apart and on thy secret emblems pry.
Yet hush those madding strains of timbrel and of horn,
For of their wildering music may evil things be born,
As blind Self-Love, Vainglory lifting high her witless head,
And Faith, turned false, like glass to let her hidden lore
be read.





XIX

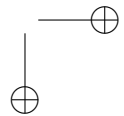
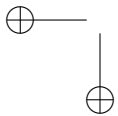
MATER SAEVA CUPIDINUM

I thought my day of love was done,
But cruel Venus with her Cherubin,
And Semele's impulsive son,
Working on my Original Sin,
Call me once more the old business to begin.

This time 'tis Chloe, shining bright,
Purer than marble borne in Parian ships,
Has set my smouldering heart alight
With her enchanting wiles and quips,
And sweet temptation of her perilous lips.

Quitting her Paphian citadel,
The Goddess leaps on me with all her forces,
And will not suffer me to tell
Of Scyths, or Parthians' wheeling horses,
Or aught but the one theme her writ endorses.

Bring turves to run an altar up,
Quick, bring me incense, boys, and bring me salt,
And myrtle branches, and a cup
Of wine well seasoned in the vault –
A sacrifice may slacken her assault!



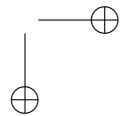
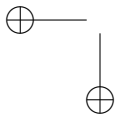


XX

VILE POTABIS

There's Sabine for you, when you come this way,
 In sober country tankards – nothing grand,
 But sealed with my own hand
In a Greek pitcher, on that famous day,
Dear knight Maecenas, when the playhouse rose
 To greet you, and your father Tiber's shore
 Sent back the joyful roar,
While the gay Vatican echo shrilled applause.
Then Caecuban to follow, if you will,
 Or else Calenian; I do not run
 To old Falernian,
Or the rich ooziings of the Formian hill.

STANZA 3, LINE 1. I have used the reading supported by T. E. Page, *Tum bibes*; but the passage is difficult. The better-attested *Tu bibes* makes Horace say first 'You will drink Sabine when you stay with me,' and then, 'You will drink Caecuban and Calenian [when you are at home],' which seems clumsy beyond belief. On the other hand, he definitely mentions Calenian in LXXXI as a wine of the first rank, and always speaks of Caecuban with respect.





XXI

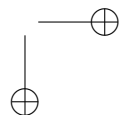
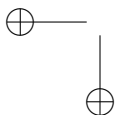
DIANAM TENERAE

Sing, gentle maids, of Dian,
Goddess of stream and grove!
Sing, boys, of Phoebus golden-hair'd
And Leto, loved of Jove!

For Dian joys in rivers,
In woods she takes delight,
Whether on snowy Algidus
The oaks are clad in white,
Or black on gloomy Erymanth,
Or green on Cragus' height.

Sing, lads, the dales of Tempe,
And Delos, holy hill,
Fair birthplace of Apollo,
Whose arrows work his will,
Who on his gleaming shoulder wears
His brother's lyre and quill.

Sad war and plague and famine,
Moved by your prayer, he'll chase
Far from great Caesar's happy reign
And all our Roman trace;
The Persians and the Britons
Shall feel his wrath instead,
And on our favoured city walls
Alone his grace be shed.





XXII

INTEGER VITAE

The man who lives by right and works no ill
Is armed of Heaven; no Moorish dart he needs
To brandish, nor no bulging quiver fill
 With venom'd reeds,

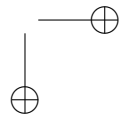
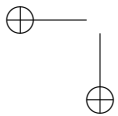
Safe, whether Syrtis' boiling race he seeks,
Or clammers Caucasus' unwelcoming peaks,
Or journeys where between his fabled shores
 Hydaspes roars.

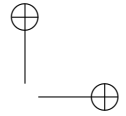
For as through Latian groves I went my way,
Singing my Lalage, careless where I sped
And all unarmed, a monstrous Wolf this day
 Spied me, and fled:

A Fear, whose like the martial Daunian land
Saw never through her oak-woods lead his band,
Nor hot Numidia boasts among her scions,
 Parched nurse of lions.

Set me in those numb plains where never a tree
Thaws with fresh life on summer breezes blown,
And Jove's dire mists hang thick o'er sky and sea;
 Set me i' the zone

Where charioting too near the sultry beach
The sun by noonday shrivels roof and rafter –
Still were I thrall to Lalage's sweet laughter
 And sweeter speech.



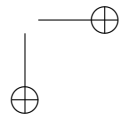
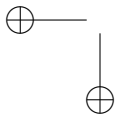


XXIII

VITAS HINNULEO

You shun me, Chloe, like a fawn
That on the wild untrodden screes
Seeks her shy mother, startled if a breeze
Rustles among the trees;
For if the first faint shivering dawn
Of earliest spring
Sets the young leaves a-whispering,
Or the green lizards shake
A bramble in the brake,
She stands with knocking heart and trembling kees.

Yet no fierce tiger I, dear child,
No lion from the Libyan wild
In hot pursuit to seize
And crunch you – quit at last your mother's side!
'Tis time you were a bride.





XXIV

QUIS DESIDERIO

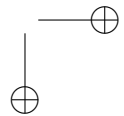
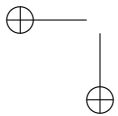
So it is true – in the long sleep of death
Quintilius lies; and Honour and bright Faith
And Truth unshamed and Justice weep their one
 Incomparable son.

Most proud and measureless our grief must be
For such dear loss. Teach me, Melpomene,
Thy saddest music, thou on whom thy Sire
 Bestowed both voice and lyre.

By many mourned he went, hearts brave and true;
Virgil, by none more tenderly than you.
To Heaven's grace you pledged him; now in vain
 You claim your pledge again.

What though more tunefully you frame your song
Than Orpheus when he lured the trees along,
Can the warm blood return to the empty shade
 That Hermes once has bade

Follow his pitiless wand in the black drove
He ushers to the Fates no prayer can move?
Ay me! but patience lightens in the end
 The ills we may not mend.





XXV

PARCIUS JUNCTAS

Your slumbers are more rarely broken now
By all those wild young sparks who used to throw
Stones at your shutter'd windows, and your door
Cleaves to the lintel, that before

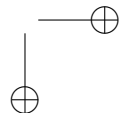
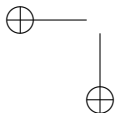
Moved on such easy hinges; less and less
You hear them moaning: 'Pity my distress!
Can Lydia sleep, and leave her heart's delight
In torment all the livelong night?'

Next phase: an old hag in a lonely slum,
Flayed by the new-moon wind, a-cold and numb,
You'll curse the lordly rakes who pass you by,
Their stale, forgotten harlotry,

Though through your lecherous and poisoned blood
Desire still surges in a raging flood,
While like some lust-bound whinnying mare you strain,
And in your misery complain

That gallant youth is taken by the sheen
Of bloom-black myrtle and soft ivy green,
Not by the withered leaves that next cold day
The wintry blast will bear away.

LAST LINE, Reading *Euro*.





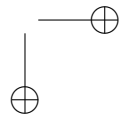
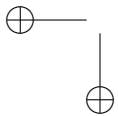
XXVI

MUSIS AMICUS

Come, wanton winds, and blow
My fears and sorrows to the Cretan sea!
Friends with the Muses, what care I to know
Which monarch holds the chilly North in fee,

Or why Armenian kings
Shake in their buskins? Weave thy roses red,
Pimpleia, regent of the lucid springs,
In sunny garlands for my Lamia's head.

Vain were my little skill,
Without thy Sisterhood, his worth to tell.
Bless then my lyre, and teach the Lesbian quill
To pluck new strings, that I may praise him well.





XXVII

NATIS IN USUM

Goblets were made for jollity; only Gauls
Use them to fight with. Gentlemen, behave!
For Bacchus has a character to save,
And shouldn't be mixed-up in murderous brawls.

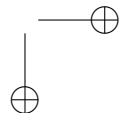
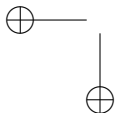
Daggers are out of place among good wine
And lighted candles. Stop that wicked noise,
And keep your elbow on the cushion, boys!
We didn't meet to quarrel, but to dine.

You bid me drink my whack? With all my heart,
(Such sound Falernian!) if that woebegone
Young brother of Megilla's there will own
What blissful wound he bears, who aimed the dart.

He falters? Speak, or I refuse to drink.
You're not the lad, whoever it may be,
To get involved with an impossible she
And shame your parentage – of that, I think,

We may be sure. Come, tell your friends her name,
'Twill go no farther. . . . What? Oh misery!
Has that Charybdis dragged you under sea?
Poor stripling, worthy of a better flame!

What witch, what sorcerer with magic oils
Brought fresh from Thessaly, what God can save you?
Scarce Pegasus himself will disenslave you,
Once the Chimera holds you in its toils.

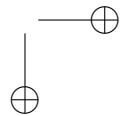
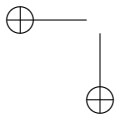




XXVIII

TE MARIS

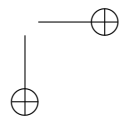
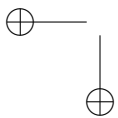
Archytas meted with his wand the bounds of earth and sea,
Or weighed the unnumbered sand; and by a little meed of dust
Cribbed on the Matine shore he lies, nor aught avails him now
The airy citadels to have scaled, and the convex of heaven
Visited with a mind that all the while was doomed to die.
Death found Tithonus, hidden in the secret courts of Dawn,
And Minos, whom all-ruling Jove to his deep counsels called,
And Tantalus, who supped with gods. He also, who shook off
The bands of Hades, teacher best of Nature and of Truth,
Pythagoras, although he proved, by plucking from the wall
His forebear's shield, that he had known the ancient days of
Troy,
And to black Death had yielded his skin and sinews only,
Returned to those blind depths for good. One night awaits us
all,
One mortal road to tread at last. Of some the Furies make
A peepshow for grim Mars, and some the greedy seas devour;
With old and young in endless throng pell-mell the charnels
choke,
And not a head but fierce Proserpin marks it for her prey.
Me too the swift South Wind that sees Orion to his bed
In cold Illyrian waves o'erwhelmed; but prithee, gentle sailor,
Grudge not a fistful of light sand to hide my staring bones
And head that lies unburied; so, when Eurus wreaks his ire
Upon the western tide and flails the tall Venusian forest,
May you sail scatheless, and your trade with rich reward be
heaped





By Jove's disposing hand, and Neptune, warden of Tarentum.
Bethink you well, ere you incur a guilt that must recoil
Upon your innocent sons hereafter; nay, yourself may meet
Requital, and implore in vain the mercy you deny:
These payers you spurn shall be avenged, nor no burnt offerings
purge you.
Whatever be your haste, I ask no long delay:
Three sprinklings of white dust, and you may go your way.

This Ode has given rise to endless questionings: what is the scene, who are the characters, who is speaking at a given moment? I have aimed at leaving the answers in the same degree of obscurity as surrounds them in the Latin.





XXIX

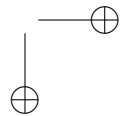
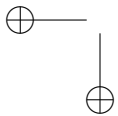
ICCI BEATIS

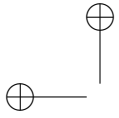
Iccius, what change is here? You covet now
Arabian treasures, and inflame your mind
Proud princes of Sabaea to o'erthrow,
And furious Medes to bind.

What Syrian damsel, widowed by your sword,
From golden ewer shall bathe your conquering feet?
What curled and courtly page beside the board
Shall serve you wine and meat,

Erst skilled to level from his father's bow
Cathayan arrows? Who will now deny
That downward rivers up steep hills can flow,
Or Tiber backward hie,

When you, from whom we hoped for better things,
Swap the choice books you bought at every sale –
The best philosophers' best imaginings –
For coats of Spanish mail?

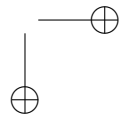
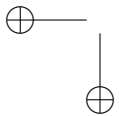




XXX

O VENUS REGINA

Queen of Cnidus, Queen of Paphos, hearken!
Leave thy Cyprian pleasance, and betake thee
Whete Lycoris in her comely chapel:
 Heaps thee incense.
Thither Mercury and burning Cupid
And the Nymphs and fair loose-girded Graces
Quickly bring, and Youth, who lacks without thee
 Half his favour.





XXXI

QUID DEDICATUM

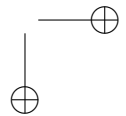
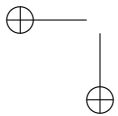
Apollo, at thy niche a poet stands
To pour thee dues of wine and ask a boon;
But not such bumper crops as crown
The sleek Sardinian lands,

Nor herds that in Calabrian pastures low
He craves, nor Indian gold or ivory,
Nor fields that Liris noiselessly
Saps with his deep still flow.

Let Fortune's minion prune Calenian vines,
The merchant, battenning with Syrian trade,
In golden chalices parade
His rare, delicious wines

(Heaven's darling to be sure! since twice or thrice
Each year he braves unharmed the Atlantic seas) –
For me, my chives and chicories
A modest board suffice.

Be this the boon: contentment with my lot,
Sound health of mind and body both; and then
Age honoured in the eyes of men,
Nor by the Muse forgot.





XXXII

POSCIMUR

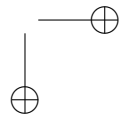
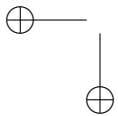
A challenge, Lyre! If e'er of yore
Our idle music-making in the shade
Chanced on a stave might live a year or more,
Be now a Roman song essayed

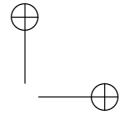
On thy clear strings that first the Lesbian bard
Tuned in brief respite from fierce war,
Or haply when, turned sailor, he amarred
His storm-tossed pinnace on the shore

To sing of Bacchus and the Nine,
Or Venus with her Cupid and her doves,
Or Lycus, with his tresses dark as wine
And dark eyes, latest of his loves.

Apollo's glory, feasting Jove's delight,
Sweet comrade in my difficult trade,
Wake, Lyre! and if I summon thee aright,
Never withhold thy dearest aid.

STANZA 2, LINE 3. I have ventured to borrow back from the French the beautiful (and, I must own, convenient) word which they made out of our 'moor.' The Lesbian bard is Alcaeus.





XXXIII

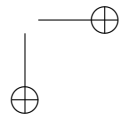
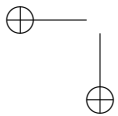
ALBI NE DOLEAS

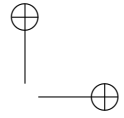
Tibullus, pull yourself together!
You mustn't make such heavy weather
 When women throw you over.
All day you melt in songs of woe,
Merely because a younger beau
 Is now Neaera's lover.

The slender-brow'd Lycoris burns
For Cyrus: presto, Cyrus turns
 To court the peevish Julia;
But Julia will no more abate
Her virgin pride, than does will mate
 With wolves from wild Apulia.

Thus Venus plays her grimmest joke;
She loves to match beneath her yoke
 Those who have least in common,
And both in looks and characters
Concocts the most unlikely pairs –
 No help for man or woman!

Take my own case: I might have wooed
A girl as fair as she was good,
 And here you see me slaving,
In utter bliss, for Myrtale,
A slut, more tetchy than the sea
 Round southern headlands raving.





XXXIV

PARCUS DEORUM

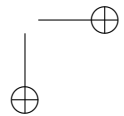
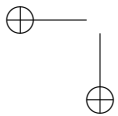
The Epicureans ascribed all phenomena to natural causes. It was the clashing of the clouds, they said, not Jupiter, that made the thunder. Hearing thunder when there were no clouds in the sky, Horace concludes that they were mistaken.

I, who of late to Heaven had paid
But scant and casual worship, while I strayed
In bond to crazy science, now perforce
Tack right-about, and seek my ancient course;

For Jove, whose wont it is to ply
His zigzag levin mid a clouded sky,
This day through the clear azure drove afar
His thundering coursers and flame-pinion'd car –

The same that rocks in wild commotion
The massy Earth and wandering tides of Ocean,
Hell's dismal region, Styx in cataract hurled,
And Atlas, fixed boundary of the world.

God shuffles high with low estate,
Raising the humble, casting down the great,
While Fortune to and fro on clangorous wings
Flies plucking crowns, to make and unmake kings.





XXXV

O DIVA GRATUM

Goddess of Antium, whose all-present hand
Can raise to height of power the lowliest slave,
Or in mid triumph by abrupt command
Thrust an o'erweening conqueror to the grave!

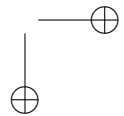
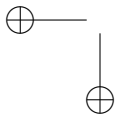
Thee the poor husbandman with anxious prayers
No less intently supplicates than he
Who in his light Bithynian scallop dares
The hazards of the wild Carpathian sea.

Thee cities dread, and nations; thee the stout
Getan, the fleeing Scyth, the Volscian bold;
Thee mothers of barbarian kings redoubt,
And tyrants in their purple, shuddering cold

Lest with injurious foot thou trample down
Their steadfast columns, when the rebels call
To arms, to arms! and hound the waverers on,
Thronging the palace gates to urge their fall.

And in thy progress harsh Necessity
Walks still before thee, in her brazen hand
Bearing the tools of thy strong masonry,
Wedges and nails, the clamp, the lead, the band.

Hope likewise dwells with thee, and Faith seld-seen,
Veiled in her white; though when thou turn'st away
From some erst-favoured door with altered mien,
She keeps her trust, and knows not to betray.





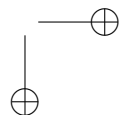
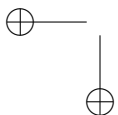
Not so the common crowd, the treacherous whore:
They, once the hospitable casks are drained,
Take to their cunning heels, and seek no more
To share alike with their once-boasted friend.

Guard our great Caesar, Fortune! as he nears
Earth's boundary, Britain; guard the novice bands
Of Roman youth, now carrying deathly fears
Into red seas and quaking Eastern lands.

O shameful years, scars, stains of brethren's blood,
Be past! What crime has our hard age forgone,
What ugly prompting of foul hate withstood,
What altar spared, what evil left undone

Through fear of Heaven's wrath? Oh beat our swords
On a new anvil, Goddess! turn them now
Against the Caspian and Arabian hordes,
From our own breast, against our proper foe.

It is none of the translator's business to call his author over the coals, but he cannot take responsibility for this disjointed Ode, with its comically-jumbled catalogues and inconsequent trains of thought. To account for my departure from Horace's nomenclature in the third stanza, I must reveal that in an awkward moment I found myself with nations, Latians, and a choice between Dacians and Thracians, all in two lines.





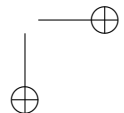
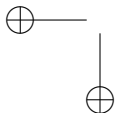
XXXVI

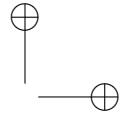
ET THURE ET FIDIBUS

With lute and lyre and incense burning,
And a white calf, my vow to pay,
I handsel Numida's returning,
And bless the Gods who watched his way
 Home again from far-off Spain.

Kisses on all his play-fellows,
But most on Lamia he bestows,
His first of friends, in memory fond
How on the selfsame day they donned
Their manly togas, and at school
Endured the selfsame tyrant's rule.

White chalk to score the blissful day,
Quick parsley on the table spread
With lilies brief and roses red,
Bottle on bottle in swift relay,
 And dance and song the whole night long!
Shall thirsty Damalis weary out
Young Bassus in the drinking-bout?
All glue on her their melted eyes,
But hers are all for her new prize,
As round his neck her arms she flings,
And tight as wanton ivy clings.

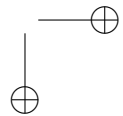
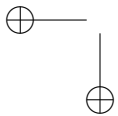


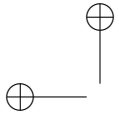


XXXVII

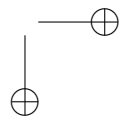
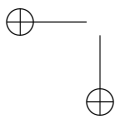
NUNC EST BIBENDUM

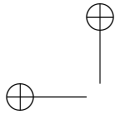
Now, comrades, to drink deep,
Now with free foot to beat the ground,
Now with rich feasts and goblets crowned
The tables of the Gods to heap!
Before this hour, it had been sin
To broach our Formian from the long-stored bin,
While with her lewd and leprous crew the Queen,
Drunk with fair fortune, setting never a bound
To vast insensate hope, sat plotting ruin
To Rome's high Capitol, and the undoing
Of Rome's proud empery. But that rage was quenched
When scarce one galleon scaped the flames; and now
Het wits, with Mareotic dazed and drenched,
Cleared, and she knew the truth; for with fast prow
And oars onrushing Caesar drove her back
From the Italian coast, as when a hawk
Drives helpless doves, or on the Haemonian plain
The hunter drives a hare – bent all to chain
The baleful Pest. She, resolute to die
Royally, with no womanish fears
Or craven tears
Blenched from the sword, nor sought to fly
With her swift fleet to any sheltering land,
But viewed with steady eye
Her palace rased; then with unfaltering hand
Grasped the fell snake, as 'twere a festal cup,





And with her body drank its venom up,
In calm deliberate death too proud
To freight Liburnian galleys, and be shown
In triumph, fallen from her throne,
The mockery of a Roman crowd.



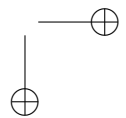
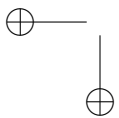


XXXVIII

PERSICOS ODI

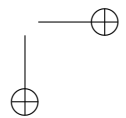
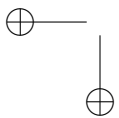
Away with Persian poe and fineries,
And wreaths on linden withies nicely wound;
Search not the fading garden
For one forgotten rose.

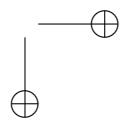
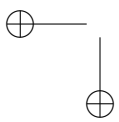
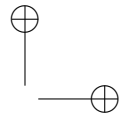
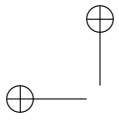
Plain myrtle, boy, a spray for each, will deck
Beseemingly both you who fill the cup
And me who drain it, lying
Under the woven vine.

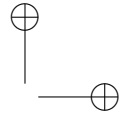




BOOK TWO



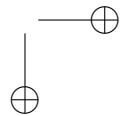
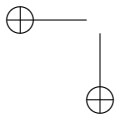




I

MOTUM EX METELLO

Pollio, how vast your theme! the intestine broils
 First moved the year Metellus ruled the state;
The seeds of war, the follies and the toils,
 Chiefs joined in ruinous league, the jests of Fate,
Arms steeped in blood that still for forfeit cries –
 Bold gamester, to essay such perilous task!
For over hidden fires your pathway lies
 Of lava-streams that treacherous ashes mask.
Pleader most eloquent for men opprest,
 Prop of the Senate's counsels, famed in war,
Bearing eternally about your crest
 Unfaded laurels from the Illyrian shore,
Now must your Attic Muse awhile withhold
 Her precepts from the playhouse, while your pen
These long eventful annals shall unfold:
 Then shall the buskin's meed be yours again.
Even now your clarions shrilling to the skies
 Grate on my ear, your trumpets sound alarms;
Even now the horses flee, the riders' eyes
 Blench from the dazzle of the foeman's arms.
I see great chiefs in habit as they stood,
 With dust and sweat of battle bravely foul,
And Earth's whole heritage to force subdued,
 Save only Cato's unrelenting soul.





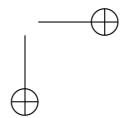
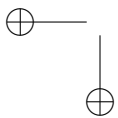
The heavenly faction who from Afric land
Of old withdrew their ineffectual aid
Return, and Juno with avenging hand
Lays Rome's young sons before Jugurtha's shade.

Where is the plain, not fat with Latian dead,
By Latian graves unfurrowed, but resounds
Our impious fights, and to the listening Mede
Echoes loud ruin from the Western bounds?

What sea, what river but has learnt the dread
And woe of bitter war? What farthest flood
That has not run with Daunian slaughter red,
What shore that has not battered on our blood?

But hold, my playful Muse, have done! beware
Dark moods: the Cean dirge is not for thee.
Come, let us seek Dione's cave, and there
Tune our gay music to a lighter key.

Daunian: a poetical synonym for Italian. *Cean dirge*: from Simonides of Ceos. *Dione*: mother of Venus.





II

NULLUS ARGENTO

Well know'st thou, Crispus, enemy declared
Of hoarded coin and idle wealth unshared:

 Silver, deep-hid in jealous mines,
No lustre hath, till in sage use it shines,

Still Proculeius lives, Time's change above,
Who to his brethren showed a father's love;

 Him the strong wings of Memory
Shall bear unfaltering, wheresoe'er they fly.

Whoso his covetous spirit curbs, shall reign
Widelier than he who to the Libyan plain

 Joins utmost Gades; whose behest
Runs in the two Phoenicias, East and West.

Fell dropsy battens on its growth and greed,
Yet still thirst rages, till a cure indeed

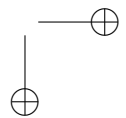
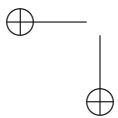
 Ousts the prime mischief from our veins,
And from puffed limbs the deadening water drains.

Though Cyrus' throne Phraates reascend
While the duped mob the sky with plaudits rend,

 Virtue from the true roll of Fame,
To teach them better, rases out his name

Inexorably, and for him alone
Who passes by heaped gold and costly stone

 And on the precious bane looks down,
Reserves her laurel and enduring crown.





III

AEQUAM MEMENTO

To hold your balance true, is all in all:
Not to despair when evil hours befall,
Nor ride too high in triumph when they mend –
 Death being the one certain end,

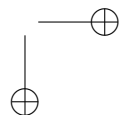
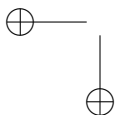
Whether a man have had his lot in pain,
Or far from sorrow in the soft grass lain,
With old Falernian of the choicest year
 Blessing his days in endless cheer.

Where the white poplar and the towering pine
Their cool and hospitable shades combine
Beside the untiring rivulet that speeds
 Down its thwart channel through the reeds,

There, good my Delliis, bid a feast be spread,
With wine, and roses sweet that bloom and fade,
While youth and fortune and the Sisters Three
 Vouchsafe their opportunity.

Your wide-bought acres, your famed country seat
By Tiber washed, your mansion, you must quit:
All these, and all the wealth you heaped so high,
 A gloating heir shall occupy.

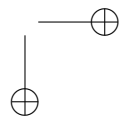
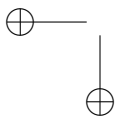
Rich you may be, and sprung from ancient kings,
Or poor, and born of nameless underlings,
It makes no matter: once your days are done,
 Pluto unpitying claims his own.





All to one fold are herded; first or last,
The lot from out the shaken urn is cast
That posts each wight across the Stygian sound,
For everlasting exile bound.

STANZA 3. This is a difficult passage. Nothing will persuade me that the *Quo* and the *Huc* do not belong together, and rather than divorce them I would accept the awkward parenthesis in which A. W. Verrall wished to enclose the words about the rivulet. This however is quite unmanageable in English, and I was driven to write as if I believed in the MSS. which give a second *quo* instead of the *quid* – though this seems a metrical impossibility.





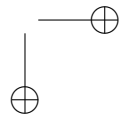
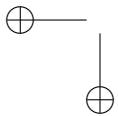
IV

NE SIT ANCILLAE

But Xanthias, you have no cause for shame!
You love a slave, it seems – and pray why not?
Such is the common lot
Of heroes. Proud Achilles did the same,
Whom snowy-hued Briseis set aflame.
Take Ajax too, stout son of Telamon,
By his fair prey Tecmessa quite undone;
And Agamemnon, at his pitch of fame,
The day Troy's towers fell
Before the conquering Myrmidon,
When Hector gone
Yielded the weary Greeks her citadel,
Was kindled by the wench his lance had won.

 If but the truth were known,
Your flaxen Phyllis may have been
Born in the purple, and a fallen queen
Your future mother-in-law; at any rate,
Her parents, sure, are folk of good estate,
Whose careless guardian gods have let them down.
Depend upon it, her surpassing worth,
Her faithfulness, her positive distaste
For money, argue no ignoble birth;
Your blood by hers can never be disgraced.

 'Tis merely as a critic that I praise
Her shapely ankles and her charming face;
You cannot reasonably fear
A rival Time has rushed well past his fortieth year.





V

NONDUM SUBACTA

Your heifer is too young as yet to wear
A yoke upon her wilful neck, and pull
Her weight in double harness, or to bear
The onset of an amorous bull!

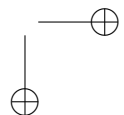
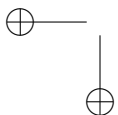
A grassy field is still her heart's delight,
And all her passion with cool streams to slake
Her greedy thirst, or in a willow brake
Sport with the calves from dawn to night.

Wait for your grapes to ripen! Spring is by,
But Summer has her fostering work to do,
And soon enough will motley Autumn dye
The pale bunch with his purple hue.

Soon 'twill be she that seeks; Time runs in spate,
Adding to her the years he steals from you;
And 'tis not long till Lalage shall woo
With butting horns her lusty mate –

Far dearer than teasing Pholoe,
Or Chloris even, whose white shoulders shone
Like the pure moon upon the midnight sea,
Or Cnidian Corydon,

Who if you showed him dancing with the girls
Would set a stranger guessing, in the grace
Of his soft slender limbs and flowing curls
And sweet ambiguous face.





VI

SEPTIMI GADES

Adventurous comrade, who wouldst fare with me
Were I for Gades or Cantabria bound,
Or those wild Syrtes where the Moorish sea
Boils in the narrow sound,

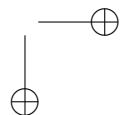
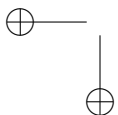
Where shall we rest our age? The sweetest place
Were Tibur, planted by the Argive king:
There, worn with toil of arms and wayfaring,
I fain would end my days.

But if ungentle Fates that prayer disdained,
There is a quiet river I would choose,
Galaesus, pasturing his coated ewes
Where old Phalanthus reigned.

Always that corner of the earth has been
My private heaven; Hymettus never brewed
Such honey-dew, nor in Venafrum green
Such olives blessed the wood.

There by Jove's bounty Spring prolongs her stay,
And Winter mellows; there the fruitful vines
Of Aulon, dear to Bacchus' heart, purvey
More-than-Falernian wines.

For us those hills and happy valleys call,
Septimius, in their peace to close our years;
There, when thy friend hath sung his last, thy tears
On his warm dust shall fall.





VII

O SAEPE MECUM

Old messmate of the days when Brutus' men
Followed his flag at direst odds,
What power restores you to your Roman Gods,
Your native skies, once more a Citizen?

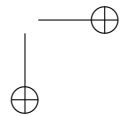
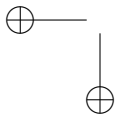
First of my friends! I see us as we were,
What time we sped the loitering hours,
Drinking, and decking our luxurious hair
With Syrian unguents and elaborate flowers.

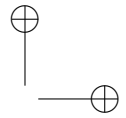
Then War: Philippi, and the wild stampede
(Alas my shield, the victor's spoil!)
When valour cracked, and cavalier and steed
In lamentable downfall bit the soil.

Me clever Mercury made invisible,
And bore a-quaking through the host;
But you the wave of war sucked back, and tossed
Yet many a year on its fierce ebb and swell.

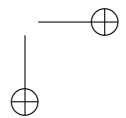
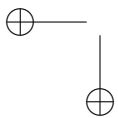
So now pay Jupiter the feast you owe him,
And under these cool bays of mine
Stretch your tired limbs, and listen to a poem –
And don't, dear Pompey, dally with the wine.

Fill the smooth cups with Massic, boys, that drowns
All care, pour ointment from the shell,
And plenty of it! bring water from the well,
Pick myrtle and wet parsley for the crowns.





Who shall be Master of the Revelry?
Fair Venus, choose, and choose aright.
The Edonians rave for Bacchus – so will I!
My friend is home, I go stark mad tonight.

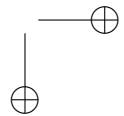
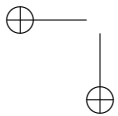




VIII

ULLA SI JURIS

If for your endless outrages on truth,
Barine, you had paid in any way:
If but one finger-nail, one tooth,
Had shown the faintest blemish, I might say
'This time I'll trust you'; but instead,
The moment you have pledged your faithless head,
Lovelier than ever, forth you shine, and spread
Confusion in the ranks of youth.
It positively suits you, to betray
Your mother's buried bones, the midnight sky
Packed with observant stars, the eye of day,
The Gods who know not what it is to die.
And what does Venus do about it? Why,
She laughs! the Graces laugh like anything,
And so does that ungentle Boy, for ever
Upon his blood-flecked grindstone sharpening
The fiery arrows for his quiver.
Moreover, every sprig who comes of age
Adds a fresh item to your vassalage,
While all their predecessors, though they swore
Never again to cross your impious door,
Knock just as often as before.
The mothers of young hopefuls dread your name,
And the close-fisted elders feel the same.
As for the wretched brides,
They hardly dare
Let their new husbands from their sides,
Lest they should breathe your air.





IX

NON SEMPER IMBRES

Not everlasting are the rains
The gray sky sluices on the shaggy plains,
Nor yet the storms that jag the Caspian, tossed
In flaw-struck billows, nor the weary frost

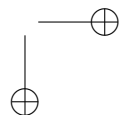
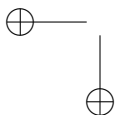
Numbing Armenian hills in snow,
Nor the tempestuous blast of Aquilo
That whips Apulian forests, and bereaves
The oaks and ashes of their lingering leaves.

But you, my Valgius! – still your love repines
For Mystes, your lost treasure; Vesper shines
At eve, and flees before the striding sun:
All night your woeful numbers run.

Thrice-agèd Nestor mourned Antilochus,
But not for ever; lovely Troilus
Was slain, King Priam and his daughters wept,
But at long last their sorrow slept.

Leave then your impotent bewailing,
And sing with me great Caesar's arms, prevailing
At length to storm Niphates' frozen height!
Or blazon those new trophies of his might,

Euphrates, numbered with his slaves,
Rolling through Babylon diminished waves;
And cavalry of wild Gelonian tribes
Hemmed in the narrow bounds his will prescribes.





X

RECTIUS VIVES

He who would steer his course aright
Must neither crowd all sail to make the deep,
Nor fearful of foul weather hug too tight
The shore that rocky waters keep.

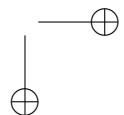
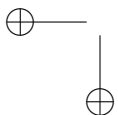
Whoso pursues the golden mean
Will neither lodge in dingy tumble-down
Of mouldered walls, nor rouse his neighbour's spleen
With marbles flaunting in the sun.

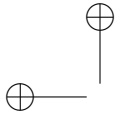
'Tis the tall pine the tempest shakes,
The loftiest towers that fall with heaviest crash,
The highest hills whereon Jove's levin breaks,
The proudest backs that feel his lash.

A heart by discipline made firm
In plenty dreads, but hopes in misery,
That luck will veer; Heaven dates rude winter's term
To bind the earth and set it free.

Does all seem dark? One day 'twill not be so.
The Muse is dumb? Apollo with his lyre
Wakes her to rapture, and unstrings his bow
Once he hath slaked his heavenly ire.

In peril, let your front declare
Mettle and strength to brave the angry gales;
But when soft favouring zephyrs blow too fair,
Be warned, take in your swelling sails.





XI

QUID BELLICOSUS

What strife's afoot beyond the Hadrian brine,
Quintius, is small concern of yours or mine.

Just for today, relax from scanning,
What Scythians or Cantabrians may be planning.

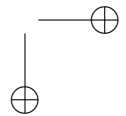
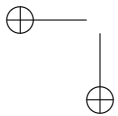
Our needs are slight, not worth such anxious dread,
Now smooth-cheek'd youth and all its grace are fled;
Light loves are foe to graying hair,
Nor easy slumber frees old hearts from care.

The fading flowers of Spring, the waning moon,
And every beauteous thing that dies too soon,
Warn us to spare our narrow brains
The toil of searching Heaven's eternal plans.

Then why not lay us down by plane or pine,
Just as we are, and in our white locks twine
Sweet-scented roses while we may,
And let good Bacchus drive our griefs away?

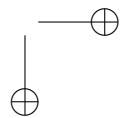
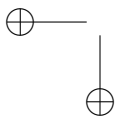
Bring forth the Assyrian ointment, lads, and one
To the fresh brook that bounds my garden run
For water in a jug to cool
The fiery ardours of the Massic bowl:

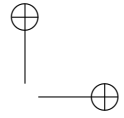
One coax our flighty Lydia from her cot,
And bid her in a plain Laconian knot
Her loosely-flowing tresses tire,
And hurry over with her ivory lyre.





STANZA 2, LINE 3. I have never been sure whether the discrepancy between this and the concluding stanza is an oversight or a subtlety.





XII

NOLIS LONGA

Prince Hannibal – Numantia’s endless war –
Sicilian waves imbrued with Punic gore –
Surely not these the themes you would desire,
Maecenas, for my gentle lyre,

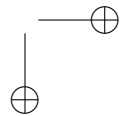
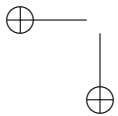
Nor those fierce Lapiths joined in furious brawls
With drunken Centaurs, nor Alcides armed
Against the Earth-born champions who alarmed
Old Saturn in his shining halls;

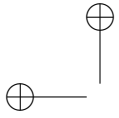
And as for Caesar – you in your great prose
Will tell his battles better, and display
Proud kings with necks enchained, his vanquished foes,
Led captive down the Sacred Way.

Me the sage Muse assigns an apter part,
To praise your fair Licymnia’s radiant eyes,
Her thrilling voice that lifts you to the skies,
The treasure of her faithful heart;

How all she does becomes her, the swift play
Of partying wit, the dance of frolic grace
When with the bright-robed girls she takes her place
To hymn Diana’s festal day.

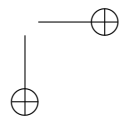
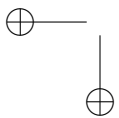
Friend, were you shown the wealth of Persia’s heir,
The teeming riches of the Phrygian plain
And stored Arabian castles, would you deign
To buy them with a single hair





Of her sweet head, when to your burning kisses
She bends her neck, and with a teasing mask
Of soon-surrendered pride denies the blisses
She craves yet more than you that ask?

Under the name Licymnia Horace is thought to have concealed Maecenas' wife Terentia – perhaps with a design of making his revelations of her home life less embarrassing.





XIII

ILLE ET NEFASTO

On a black-letter day, whate'er his name,
He planted, and with heaven-defying hand
Reared thee, O Tree! who left thee to the land
A heritage of ill, the hamlet's shame.

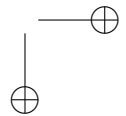
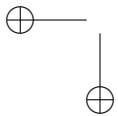
His father's neck (I am assured 'tis true)
He broke; and when he housed a visitor,
Spattered the guest-room hangings with his gore
At midnight, or with some fell Colchian brew

Destroyed him; every crime man's wit has bred
He surely practised, who beside my wall
Set thee, untoward Trunk! foredoomed to fall
One day upon thy owner's blameless head.

Each man, how vainly, guesses which way lies
His private stroke of fate. Alas, it veers
From tick to tock. The Punic sailor fears
The Bosphorus; elsewhere, he shuts his eyes.

The soldier dreads the lure of flying foe
And Parthian dart: the Parthian spends his breath
Shunning the Roman dungeon: always Death
Steals up unseen, to lay the peoples low.

How close I missed the dim sequestered Shades,
And sight of dark Proserpin's royal head,
Old Aeacus in judgement on the dead,
And Sappho girding at the island maids,



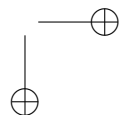
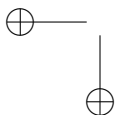


Mistress of sweet Aeolian strings; and thee,
Alcaeus, in full tones more resonant still
Chanting to descant of thy golden quill
Hard war, hard exile, throes by land and sea.

Shoulder to shoulder packed, the admiring ghosts,
In holy silence held, those rivals hear;
Yet still the rabble drinks with greedier ear
The tyrants driven forth, the battling hosts.

Small marvel if the many-headed Hound
Droops his black ears beneath that lulling spell,
Or in the Furies' hair the snakes of Hell
Twist livelier, quickened by the thrilling sound.

Nay, of his pains Prometheus finds surcease,
Parched Tantalus forgets the baffling stream;
Orion for an hour content to dream
Leaves the red tiger and the lynx in peace.





XIV

EHEU FUGACES

Ah, Postumus! The moving years flow past,
And neither prayer nor faith
 Can stay their speed, nor save us at the last
From wrinkled brows, and age, and conquering death.

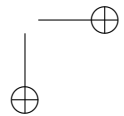
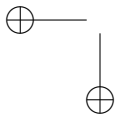
Not with the daily blood
Of thrice a hundred bulls canst thou appease
 Stern Pluto, who constrains Geryones
And Tityos in the bourne of that dark flood

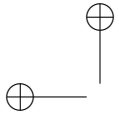
Which every man who eats the fruits of earth
One day must ferry over, once for all,
 Whether a kingly palace gave him birth,
Or the poor hovel of a thrall.

In vain we shun the shafts of Mars,
Or reefs and races of the Hadrian tide,
 Or far from dreaded Auster's region bide,
Who breathes his poison under autumn stars –

Still must thou view the black and sluggish coil
Of sad Cocytus, and the penance laid
 On those false Danaids, and the shade
Of Sisyphus at his eternal toil;

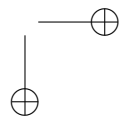
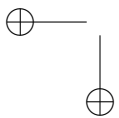
Still leave Earth's cheerful air, thy well-loved home
And dear familiar wife; sole tree
 Of all thy woods shall Cypress follow thee,
Thy brief reign over, to the silent tomb.





The precious wines of thy fast-bolted store,
No pontiff's feast could boast the like of, then
Thy worthier heir shall drain,
And spill their glories on his blushing floor.

Worthier heir: I suppose on the principle that a live dog is better than a
dead lion – at any rate in his own estimation.





XV

JAM PAUCA ARATRO

Idle the plough, since rich men's lordly piles
Usurped the fruitful acres; pond and stew,
Broad as the Lucrine water, miles on miles,
Make sights for tourists gaping at the view.

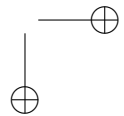
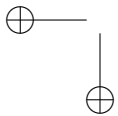
The spinster plane drives out the wedded elm;
Myrtle and violet, every odorous weed,
Dispense their perfumes in the olive's realm,
Whose erstwhile masters fed the public need,

And close-bough'd laurels weave luxurious shade –
Not thus our bearded fathers built the State,
When Romulus or Cato were obeyed,
And in her rugged plainness Rome was great.

Wealth for the City, not the citizen,
Was massed; no upstart burgess felled his trees
And with nice compass plotted on the plain
Verandahs cool to take the northern breeze.

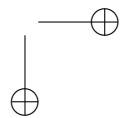
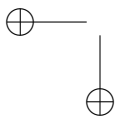
Men roofed their homes with turves from every field,
While at the general charge their towns grew fine
With stately buildings, and the quarry's yield
With new-cut stone adorned each holy shrine.

STANZA 2, LINE 1. The Romans thought of trees as married to the vines which were trained upon them. The plane was not put to this use, because its broad leaves would keep the sun off; but that was just why the millionaires liked it. Horace, I suspect, composed this little piece of





evidently commissioned propaganda without much zest, and towards the end scarcely troubled to write sense. In the first line of the last stanza he says that 'it was forbidden by law to despise turves met with accidentally.'





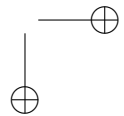
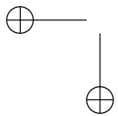
XVI

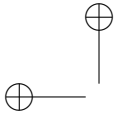
OTIUM DIVOS

Repose! thou universal boon,
Craved of poor shipmen battling through the night
On open seas, when clouds have hid the moon
And stars their guiding ray withhold;
And grim Thracian warriors mad for fight
And Medes exulting in their quivers bright,
But never yet for gems or gold
Or bales of glowing purple sold.
For neither treasuries of Eastern kings
Nor puissant consul's bullying halberdiers
Can chase the anguish of the mind, the fears
That round the coffered ceiling brush their wings.

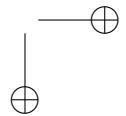
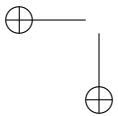
Ah, Grosphus! he lives well who lives content
With little; on whose frugal board
His father's salt, sole ornament,
Shines fleckless; him the Gods afford
Calm sleep by no mean cares oppressed,
By greedy longings unpossessed.

Why waste in vaulting hopes our little span,
Why seek strange suns abroad, though well we know
Our same self cleaves to us where'er we go,
And still we end as we began?
Proud captains board their ships, brave horsemen ride,
But still, to unman them, Care is at their side –
Care that outstrips the stag, and faster flies
Than winds that drive the clouds across the skies.





Live happy in the moment, take no thought
For hidden things beyond, be firm to test
And turn the edge of troubles with a jest;
For bliss unmixed was never earthly lot.
Young, but illustrious, Achilles died:
Tithonus in immortal age decays;
And Time, who knows? may grant my lowlier days
Good gifts to yours denied.
For you, the neighing of your chariot mares
And countless lowing of Sicilian kine;
For you the precious dye the murex bears,
And jewels of the Indian mine:
With me kind Fate has kept her word;
My little farm she gives me, country peace,
A strain of music from the hills of Greece,
A mind made strong to flout the envious herd.





XVII

CUR ME QUERELIS

Why with these chill forebodings numb my heart,
Maecenas, prop and glory of my days?

Not my will, nor God's grace
Shall suffer thee before me to depart.

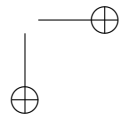
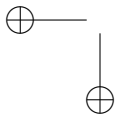
Ah, if some murderous and impatient year
Should snatch thee, parcel of my being, away,
How should I longer stay,
Halved, maimed, undone, to my own self less dear?

Nay, I am sworn, and by this oath I stand,
To share with thee, my friend, the hour of woe;
And when thou goest I go:
On that last road we journey hand in hand.

No fabled fear shall part us – Geryon,
Flame-breath'd Chimera, Gyas hundred-handed,
All three together banded;
Justice and Fate are leagued to keep us one.

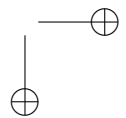
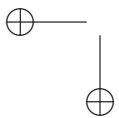
Whether dread Scorpio eyes my destiny,
Or Libra on the night when I was born
Rode highest, or Capricorn,
Impetuous tyrant of the Hesperian sea,

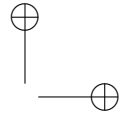
'Tis strange beyond belief what links unite
Thy star with mine; for in one selfsame hour
Jove from the evil power
Of Saturn tearing thee with succour bright





Drove back Death's hurrying wings, that all the folk,
Met in the playhouse, hailed the joyous date;
 And Faunus from my pate,
Guardian of poets, switched the crashing oak
One saving inch askew. Thy sacrifice
Must be of herded victims, and a shrine
 Of votive stone; for mine,
A modest lamb or heifer must suffice.

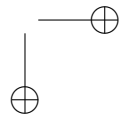
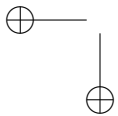


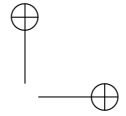


XVIII

NON EBUR NEQUE AUREUM

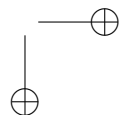
No ivory nor gilded ceiling
Gleams in my unpretentious dwelling;
No pillars hewn from Libyan caves
Support Hymettian architraves,
Nor haughty handmaidens within
Thread of Laconian purple spin.
No long-lost heir of Attalus
Am I, to claim a kingly house!
But these I have: an honest heart,
And native skill to ply my art,
So Grandeur seeks my lowly door;
From Heaven's grace I ask no more,
Nor badger my illustrious Friend
His ample bounty to extend,
But pass my days contentedly,
My one dear Sabine farm enough for me.
 The days before the morrows fly,
New moons grow old, and fade, and die;
But Dives, heedless of the grave
Whose edge he stands on, still must crave
Fresh marbles for the mounting pile
Of his proud seat, and plan the while
To push the noisy sea away
From off the coast of Baiae's bay,
That cramps the scope of his impatient sway.
His neighbours' landmarks too, that stop





His inroads, must be rooted up,
And his own clients' boundaries
Bestrode. With stony eye he sees
Wife and husband trudge the roads
Hugging their simple household gods
And shabby little ones. Thou Fool,
Who knowest not that by God's rule
Death is an end more surely waits
Rich lords than all their half-built palace-gates!

Stay then thy hand; the selfsame earth
Is dug for mean or royal birth:
Nor wile nor bribe nor charm nor spell
Could win Death's grisly sentinel
To row Prometheus back from Hell;
For that dread potentate can bind
Proud Tantalus and all his kind,
And whether he be called or not,
Sets free at last the toiler from his lot.





XIX

BACCHUM IN REMOTIS

Where Bacchus taught his novice choir to sing
I watched this day (oh marvel for the years!) –
Nymphs on the lone hill listened in a ring,
And goat-foot Satyrs pricked their ears.

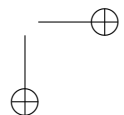
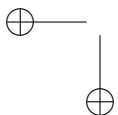
Still reels my mind with joy and holy fear,
Still throbs my heart with presence of the God;
I faint, I tremble – mighty Liber, hear!
Spare me the terrors of thy rod.

Now may I sing thy headstrong Thyiades,
Rivers of milk and springs of running wine,
And honey dropping from the hollow trees,
And purple clusters of the vine.

Now may I hymn thy thronèd consort's crown
Raised to declare her glory from the skies,
And Pentheus' walls by thy just wrath thrown down,
And harsh Lycurgus' blinded eyes.

Before thy tread outlandish seas unbare
Their hidden floor; and in the footless brakes
Of Bistony thou knot'st thy votaries' hair
With writhing of disvenomed snakes.

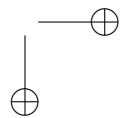
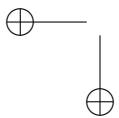
Thou, when intent to shake thy Father's throne
The rebel host of Titans climbed on high,
The lion's jowl and talons didst put on,
And hurl huge Rhoetus from the sky.

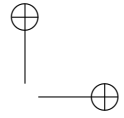




Though by thy fellows deemed more fit for jest
And dance and revel than for war's alarms,
Yet in the hour of proof thou stood'st confessed
The hub alike of peace and arms.

When thy gold horn shone out the Shades among,
Charmed Cerberus put by his rage to greet
Thy Godhead fawning, and with triple tongue
Devoutly kissed thy parting feet.





XX

NON USITATA

Wing'd for no common nor no feeble flight,
Half bird, half poet, I shall soar
Through heaven's pure air, outranging scorn and spite,
Nor fields of men nor cities know me more.

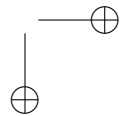
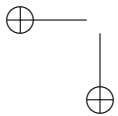
Born to no wealth, inheriting no pride,
This man Maecenas called his friend:
Therefore no power of jealous Death can end
My being, nor the gloomy Stygian tide

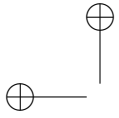
Confine. Even now my change approaches! lo,
My ruffled shoulders fledge, and on
My breast, my arms, white down and feathers grow,
And toward the expectant zenith mounts a Swan.

Now Icarus be forgot! my course explores
Earth's farthest: Syrtis' boiling sands,
And Bosphorus moaning twixt his narrow shores,
Shall catch my song, and the Hyperborean lands.

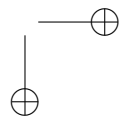
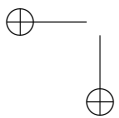
To Colchians fierce, and Dacians, shamming bold
To front our arms, my fame be known!
Let polished Spaniards hear the story told,
Barbarian Scyths, and tribes that drink the Rhone.

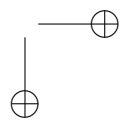
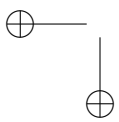
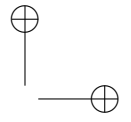
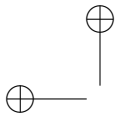
No dirge be sung around my funeral urn,
No priest intone nor mourners rave;
Shed no vain tears, nor foolish offerings burn,
To mock the stillness of an empty grave.

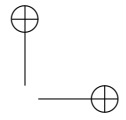
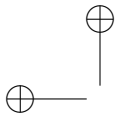




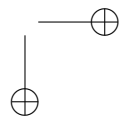
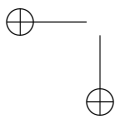
I must apologize for scamping the details of Horace's metamorphosis or apocynosis. The 'skin roughening and shrinking to my legs' (Wickham) was beyond the resources of my poetic diction. It is surprising that with the glorious *Eregi monumentum* in reserve to crown his Third Book, Horace should have cared to finish his Second with this far less impressive intimation of his immortality. Perhaps it was a favourite early work which had grown out of unawares.

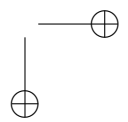
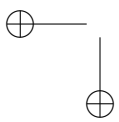
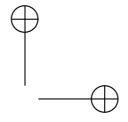
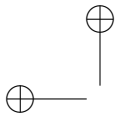






BOOK THREE







I

ODI PROFANUM

Ye ribalds by the Muses banned, away!
While I, their priest, mid holy silence sing
To youths and maidens listening
High chants unheard before this day.

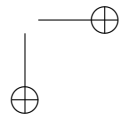
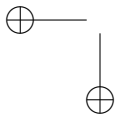
Dread monarchs whom their herded slaves adore
Themselves are slave to Jove, eternal God,
The Titans' glorious conqueror,
Who rules creation by his nod.

One man with planted woodlands, oak on oak,
Outvies his neighbour; one by lofty birth
Catches the suffrage of the folk,
One by good life and tested worth,

One with massed clients in obsequious crowd –
Yet to each wight impartial Fate in turn
Applies her ballot; mean or proud,
No name but rattles in her urn.

For him o'er whose doomed neck the avenging sword
Hangs bright, Sicilian feasts distil in vain
Their studied flavours, nor sweet bird
Nor lute can bring him sleep again –

Soft sleep that scorneth not the humble roof
Of labouring men who till the weary land,
Nor murmuring brookside shade sun-proof,
Nor Tempe by cool zephyrs fanned.





Him whose ambitions to his need conform
No dread of ocean's angry tumult frets;
 Arcturus rises, Haedus sets,
 But calm his temper, though the storm

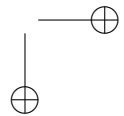
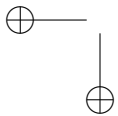
Whips his good vines with hail and brings to nought
The promise of his glebe, or fiery drought
 Consumes his fields, or by cold rain
 Stript bare his olive trees complain.

Piles and caissons are lowered in the bay,
Crowding the fishes; down the foreman crams
 His rubble, masons build their dams,
 And the bored seignior day by day

Reviews the rising pomp; but Doubt and Fear
Creep by his side; black Care with threatening brow
 Lurks on the galleon's brazen prow,
 Rides pillion with the cavalier.

Then since nor Phrygian gems, nor costly wear
Of purple glowing like the starry sky,
 Nor Formian wine nor Persian myrrh
 Can soothe one mortal misery,

Why should I seek my fellows' pride to assail
With lofty halls and marbles rich and strange,
 Why for the load of wealth exchange
 The meadows of my Sabine vale?





II

ANGUSTAM AMICE

Breed thy young son to rate frugality
His happiness, and schooled in warlike deed
Grow hard and strong, that from his charging steed
And dreaded spear the Parthian foe may fly.

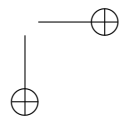
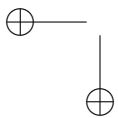
Let him live dangerously in storm and sun,
That so the enemy's women may look down
From leaguered walls, and the young chieftain's bride,
Seeing his valiance, murmur Woe betide,

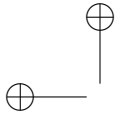
Lest her dear lord, unversed in such affray,
By opposition tempt the lion's wrath,
When through the cowering host he seeks his prey,
And havoc and destruction strew his path.

How sweet his fame, who for his country dies!
But vain their dastard hope, who put their faith
In piteous flight, and fondly deem that Death
May spare their trembling knees and pleading eyes.

Fair Virtue seeks no suffrage, cap in hand;
She keeps the fountain of her honours pure;
Her seals of office are her own, secure
Whatever wind of faction sweep the land.

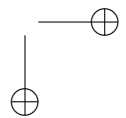
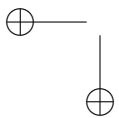
She for the chosen heirs of dateless life
Finds secret paths to Heaven, and opes the door;
Shunning the sordid haunts of human strife,
Above the swamps of Earth her pinions soar.

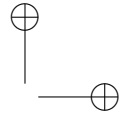




Let trusty Silence too, have meed; but he
Who blabs great Ceres' mystery far and wide –
That wretch shall never 'neath my roof-tree bide,
Nor in my brittle bark put out to sea;

For angered Jove not seldom will confuse
Guilty with innocent in equal fate,
And though she limp, the Fury soon or late
Her quarry to the certain end pursues.





III

JUSTUM ET TENACEM

The man to his just purpose true
No ravening mob's foul-passion'd hue and cry,
No tyrant's frown, brow-beating, eye to eye,
Shall move, what his firm mind holds wrong, to do,

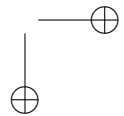
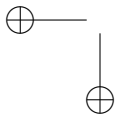
Nor yet Jove's clenched bolt-hurling hand,
Nor Hadria by tumultuous Auster driven;
He, were the round world from its axle riven,
Calm 'neath the ruining firmament would stand.

Such valour raised Alcides up,
And great-heart Pollux, to the mansions bright
Where couched betwixt them in empyreal light
Caesar aglow shall quaff his nectar cup.

Thou too, bold Bacchus, so didst yoke
Thy stiff-necked tigers for thy wayfarings;
And so Quirinus, charioted on wings
Of Mars's team, through bounds of Hades broke,

What day Queen Juno, reconciled,
Truce to the Olympian conclave proffered: 'Troy
I have forgiven, nor need I more destroy
What that doomed lecherous fool, who judged me, spoiled –

He and his foreign dame – and laid
In dust; for Troy, that since Laomedon broke
His faith with Gods, was forfeit, king and folk,
To Pallas and to me, full price hath paid.





No more the Spartan harlot's guest
Rides high and dazzling in his guilt; no more
The perjured house of Priam shall outwar
The valorous Greeks by Hector's might oppressed.

Our feuds composed, that kept the strife
Afoot so long, lo, Peace! and straightway I,
Son Mars, to thee resign, old wrath put by,
My hated grandson, whom thine ill-matched wife,

The Trojan Vestal, bare; my hand
Shall lead him to the shining halls, and pour
His draught of nectar, ay, for evermore
Enrol him in the calm celestial band.

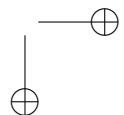
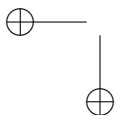
Yet but so long as broad seas rave
Twixt Rome and Ilium shall his exiled sons
Choose where they will to plant their prosperous thrones;
While foxes litter in false Paris' grave

And asses stamp o'et Priam's head,
So long, no longer, shall the Capitol
Stand in the sun, and conquering Rome take toll
Of the proud Orient in her triumphs led;

So to the farthest shores be borne
Her dreaded name, both where the severing strait
Europe from Afric holds, and where the spate
Of annual Nile foment the Egyptian corn.

Gold let her resolutely spurn,
Or, safer still, leave hid in deepest rand,
Lest her weak sons with sacrilegious hand
Unhoard it, and to man's base uses turn.

To the contrasted bounds of Earth
Her venturous troops shall range, with wondering eyes
Beholding now fierce rout of torrid skies,
Now hails and lightnings of the misty North.





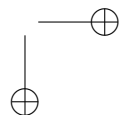
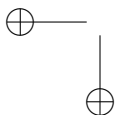
Yet this my law if she forget,
I seal her doom: Let not her warriors claim,
Too mindful of their sires and ancient fame,
On Troy's high hill a second Troy to set.

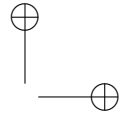
Woe worth the day when Troy shall rise
Once more, in worse relapse once more to fall,
When I, Jove's spouse and sister, marshal all
My conquering hosts her challenge to chastise.

Though thrice Apollo build again
The brazen wall, thrice too my Grecian knives
Shall rase it, thrice the captive Trojan wives
Weep for their husbands and their children slain.'

Bethink thee, Muse! Too great the odds
Against thy soaring. Keep within thy wit,
Nor deem thy alight and playful numbers fit
To imitate the accents of the Gods.

STANZA 15. This is as neat as I can get to such sense as there is in one of Horace's most confused and confusing stanzas.





IV

DESCENDE CAELO

Sweet queen of parley, quit thy heavenly sphere,
Calliope! and with a leisured lay
Of voice alone, or dulcet interplay
Of pipe or lute or viol, grace mine ear.

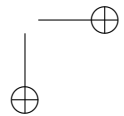
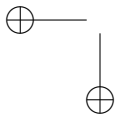
Heard ye, my friends? or does fond fancy cheat
My sense, that so I only seem to hear,
And pace the hallowed forest where the clear
Sounds of soft airs and running waters meet?

Still is the wonder claimed by them who dwell
High-nested on the Acherontian steep,
Or in the Bantine glades, or valley deep
Of rich Forentum, still the gossips tell

How while I slept, fordone with boyish play,
Where lofty Voltur crowns my native hills,
Mysterious doves brought fresh leaves in their bills
To hide my body with Apollo's bay

And myrtle, lest in that precarious wild
Some adder gleaming black or mumbling bear
Should harm me as I lay; such early care
Did Heaven vouchsafe to the poetic child.

And still, ye Muses, still I own your sway,
Whether I mount the Sabine hills, or seek
Low Tibur's vale, or cool Praeneste's peak,
Or the pure sparkling air of Baiæ's bay.





Dear to your springs and quires, my favoured head
The menace of the falling trunk defied,
And scaped the whirl of the Sicilian tide,
And that dire rout when Brutus' legions fled.

Safe in your holy ward, I need not shun
To sail the madding Bosphorus, or land
In those wild regions where the torrid sand
Of waste Assyria drinks the glaring sun;

Scatheless I'll ford bleak Scythia's angry flood,
Brave the Gelonian, master of the bow,
Or Briton fierce, the harmless traveller's foe,
Or grim Concanian, drunk with horses' blood.

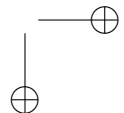
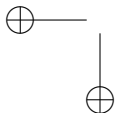
To you great Caesar turns when, war forgot,
Homeward his weary cohorts he dispatches,
And for an hour of craved refreshment stretches
His tired limbs in the Pierian grot.

Then to his ear with gladness ye convey
Your gentle counsels. Old the tale, how he
Who guides the cumbrous earth and windy sea
And reigns o'er Heaven and Hell with righteous sway,

When the young Titans and their monstrous crew
Arose in proud rebellious arms with aim
To dispossess him and their rule proclaim,
Hailing his volleyed bolts their host o'erthrew.

Well might the Sovereign tremble on his throne,
When those enormous brethren dared his levin
To daunt their muscled arms, and laddered Heaven
With dark Olympus piled on Pelion;

But what could Typho, what could Mimas do,
Or bold Enceladus, who tore from earth
With boastful prowess trees of ancient girth,
Or vast Porphyryon, towering in the blue,





When 'gainst their onset Pallas clanged her shield?
There fiery Vulcan in his lustihood
To guard his sire, there matron Juno stood,
And one beside them, by his bow revealed,

Who in pure dews of the Castalian fount
Dips his bright tresses, lord of Lycian fells
And forests green that clothe his natal dells,
Apollo, glory of the Delian mount.

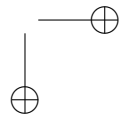
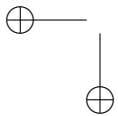
Strength, joined with folly, falls by its own weight:
With wisdom joined, wins favour in God's sight.
Fell violence, urged by sinful appetite
To foul excesses, earns his utmost hate.

So hundred-handed Gyas bit the dust:
Orion so, when his desire assailed
Chaste Dian, by her virgin arrow quelled,
To his eternal shame, atoned his lust.

Heaped on her giant brood, Earth mourns their doom,
By Heaven's artillery whelmed in murky death:
Pant as they may, not all their fiery breath
Can burn through Etna, their enduring tomb.

Even now lewd Tityos, damned to endless pains,
Writhes while his heart the avenging vulture tears:
Even now the ravisher Pirithous wears
In Pluto's keep his triple load of chains.

In putting Olympus on top of Pelion instead of the other way round I have followed Virgil, who knew as much of the matter as Horace. Can I hope to forestall criticism by owning that my version of this Ode illustrates the proverb 'Milton helps them who *help themselves*'?





V

CAELO TONANTEM

The Carthaginians, having taken Regulus and his army prisoner, sent him to Rome with their terms for ransom.

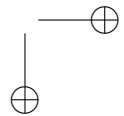
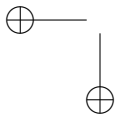
Jove thundered out of heaven, and straight was known
Earth's monarch: so shall Caesar stand revealed
Apparent God, when, East and West o'erthrown,
Britain and Persia to his rule shall yield.

How then could Crassus' vanquished soldiery,
Sons of the Senate, bred to Roman ways,
Wive with their captors' women, live and die
Drilled by old foes, new kinsmen, all their days,

Marsians, Apulians, thrall to Medish kings,
Forgetful of the name, the robe, the blood,
And Numa's shield, and Vesta's holy things,
And living Rome, where yet Jove's altar stood?

Such foul dishonour Regulus foresaw
Unending, were the foeman's proffered grace
Not spurned; such presage could his wisdom draw
Of long disaster to a falling race,

If pity for the captive youth prevailed;
And thus his words found way: 'These eyes have known
Our standards in the shrines of Carthage trailed,
Our men, unwounded, lay their weapons down,





Free men of Rome, arms pinioned to their side,
To slavery marched where once they matched to war;
Gates, that had braved our leaguer, standing wide,
And fields our fire had wasted, sown once more.

Bought back with gold, they will return, you say,
With doubled spirit? Oh folly heaped on blame!
Your wool discoloured, dye it as you may,
Will it regain its hue, and be the same?

No, nor true valour, once driven out and spoiled,
Deigns in her ruined seat to dwell again.
Show me the stag, once in the nets entailed,
Will fight another bout, and tell me then

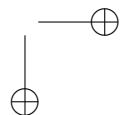
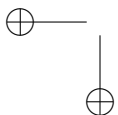
That he who parleyed with a treacherous foe,
And felt the thong upon his limbs, and lay
Passive in craven fear of death, will go
Forth to destroy him in a second fray.

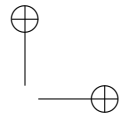
Oh base, to seek for life where no life is,
And peace with war confound! oh depth of shame!
Oh mighty Carthage, first of enemies,
Who on Rome's downfall buildest up thy fame!

'Tis told, that when his wife and little sons
Came with their kisses, he, as one disowned,
Put them away, nor looked upon them once,
But sternly fixed his eyes upon the ground,

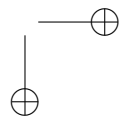
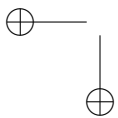
Strengthening the hesitant Fathers to obey
His word, self-doomed as never man but he;
Then through his weeping kin he took his way
To exile, and to immortality.

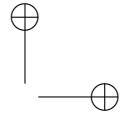
Full well he knew what pains he must abide,
The torturer's devilry, the screw, the rack,
Yet gently thrust his clamouring friends aside,
And the fond crowd that strove to hold him back,





Just as of old, the day's long business done,
His clients served, he started on his way
To green Venafrum by the setting sun,
Or the calm folds of the Calabrian bay.





VI

DELICTA MAJORUM

Deems't thou the Gods with careless eye behold
Their crumbling fanes, and marbles smoke-befouled?

Renew them, lest on thy own head,
Roman, thy fathers' sins be visited.

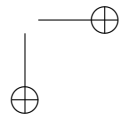
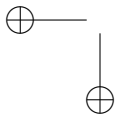
Ruler of man, but minister of Heaven:
This, first and last, be on thy heart engraven;
Too oft hath Italy betrayed
Her fealty, and grievous forfeit paid.

Twice now have Pacorus and Monaeses wreaked
Repulse on our unomen'd arms, and eked
Their scant barbaric ornaments
With booty rifled from the Roman tents.

But now by faction maimed the City lay
Sheer on destruction's verge, a helpless prey
To Dacia's dreaded archery,
And Egypt, all but mistress of the sea.

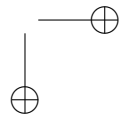
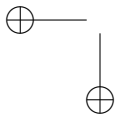
From desecrated wedlock first began
The mischief that in growing ferment ran
With manifold pollution rife
Through every vein of our disordered life.

Mark how the full-blown virgin tricks her charms,
And learns the Ionian way to writhe her arms;
Then, wed, in every fibre yearns
To ply the urge that through her being burns.





The older she, the younger wax her beaux.
Lights down, under her tipsy husband's nose
 (But all the while he's in the plot)
She deals her random favours round the lot,
Past caring which is which: a client beckons,
And up she jumps, while in a flash she reckons
 Whether the handsome Spanish raider
Will stump up best, or the Phoenician trader.
Not from such stock as this was raised the brood
That dyed our seas with Carthaginian blood,
 And slew Antiochus the Tall,
And Pyrrhus, and the matchless Hannibal.
No, 'twas a race of warrior yeomen, skilled
With Sabine hoe to break their father's field,
 And lay their load of faggots down
For judgement of the housewife's critic frown
At that blest hour when the departing sun
Changes the mountain shadows one by one,
 Disyokes the weary ox, and sheds
The pleasant cool of evening on the meads.
Injurious Time, what age escapes thy curse?
Evil our grandsires were, our fathers worse;
 And we, till now unmatched in ill,
Must leave successors more corrupted still.

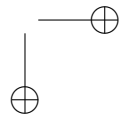
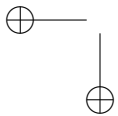


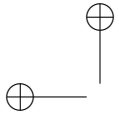


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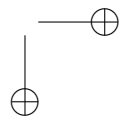
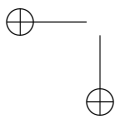
QUID FLES ASTERIE

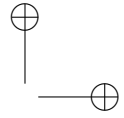
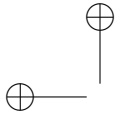
Asterie, dry your eyes – he is not gone
For ever! the first days of Spring
Favonius on his balmy wing
Shall waft your handsome Gyges back
With half the wealth of Lydia in his pack,
Faithful and true. 'Twas when the Goatstar shone
The wild South drove him to the Illyrian bay,
And there in tears and sighs
All through the long cold sleepless nights he lies,
Though his distracted hostess every day
Sends an abominable go-between
To tell him how she pines away
In fires at least as hot as yours, and try
A thousand means to shake his constancy;
Relating how the treacherous queen
With lying accusations drove
The simple-minded Proetus on
To compass death for poor Bellerophon,
Who had too chastely spurned her love;
Also by what a narrow shave
Peleus escaped an early grave
Because he shunned Hippolyta's embraces;
And many another such immoral tale
The wily crone puts through its paces,
But all to no avail –
So far! for still your lover hears





Her prate with staunch and stony ears.
But all the same, if you are wise,
You will not let Enipeus from next door
Find too much favour in your eyes.
True, he has no competitor
In feats of gallant horsemanship,
Nor can another swimmer slip
So fleetly past brown Tiber's shore –
Yet draw your bolts when twilight falls,
And if you hear a plaintive pipe below,
Refrain from looking down; and when he calls
You heartless, let him find you so.





VIII

MARTIIS CAELEBS

The First of March, and I, a bachelor,
With flowers, and a censer, and a green
Turf altar heaped with coals – what can it mean?
For all your antiquarian lore,

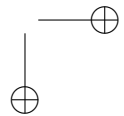
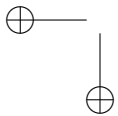
Grecian and Roman both, you give it up?
– I promised Bacchus, when he rescued me
This day last year from the assassin tree,
A white goat and a flowing cup.

Henceforth, Maecenas, this auspicious date
From its pitch-plastered cork shall liberate
A jar that had its baptism of smoke
The year old Tullus ruled the folk.

With toasts five-score I'll have you grace the Feast
Of my Deliverance; let the torches flame
Till dawn of day; no rude or noisy guest
Shall put our revelry to shame.

Forget the toils of state, the City's need!
The Dacian chieftain sees his host in ruin,
The Medes, against themselves divided, lead
Their armies to their own undoing;

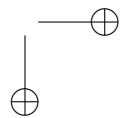
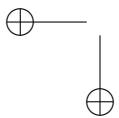
Now at long last our ancient Spanish foes,
Enslaved and chained, eat out their angry heart,
The tired Scyths prepare to unstring their bows
And from their windy plains depart.





Have you not earned one hour to be yourself,
To lay aside the load of public cares,
Accept the gifts the fleeting moment bears,
And leave your problems on their shelf?

The Calends of March were the festival of the Matronalia, for Ladies Only. Wine was kept where it would profit by the warmth from the smoky bath-furnace. Tullus was Consul 37 years before the probable date of the Ode.





IX

DONEC GRATUS

‘When I found favour in your sight,
And round your neck no arm but mine was thrown,
On Fortune’s peak I stood alone,
And Persian monarchs knew less bliss than I.’

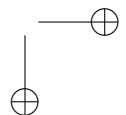
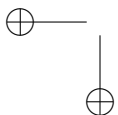
‘When Lydia was your sole delight,
And Thracian Chloe spread her nets in vain,
How absolute was Lydia’s reign!
The Roman Ilia knew less fame than I.’

‘Now Chloe has me in her thrall,
With skill of lute and voice beyond compare.
Could I prevail on Fate to spare
The charming creature, I would gladly die.’

‘Now Calais is my all-in-all,
Such fond devotion each to each we bear.
Could I prevail on Fate to spare
My Thurian boy, twice over I would die.’

‘What if our hearts that strayed so far
Resumed the brazen yoke that erst they bore,
Were flaxen Chloe shown the door,
And banished Lydia sealed her lease anew?’

‘Though Calais dims the morning star,
And you are fickle as an April breeze
And angrier than the Hadrian seas,
’Twere all I ask, to live and die with you.’





X

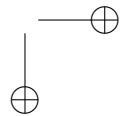
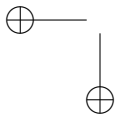
EXTREMUM TANAIN

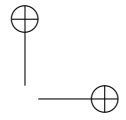
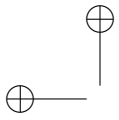
You might have dwelt beside the Don,
Wed with a dour and jealous Hun,
 And still not thought it fitting,
Lyce, to leave me thus all night
Exposed to winds that freeze and bite
 On your chill doorstep sitting.

Hark how the shutters bang and groan,
And how the tossing branches moan,
 Walled in your garden-close,
While shooting down his pure serene
Jove with a crust of icy sheen
 Congeals the drifted snows.

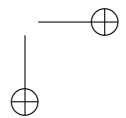
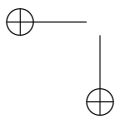
Such pride flouts Venus; have you thought
That if you wind the rope too taut
 It snaps from over-stressing?
Or that no Tyrrhene pedigree
Bred you a chaste Penelope
 To keep the princes guessing?

Oh, if neither gifts nor sighs
Nor the violet-lidded eyes
 Of your pale suitors move you,
(Nor even your husband's escapade
With that seductive Balkan jade),
 Yet spare the fools that love you.





No – cruel as a Moorish snake
And harder than an oaken stake
 You are, and will remain.
Think not for ever that my head
Will patiently accept a bed
 Of paving-stones and rain.





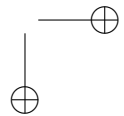
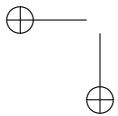
XI

MERCURI NAM TE DOCILIS

Great Mercury, whose lessons could inspire
Amphion with sweet song to move the stones,
And thou, my seven-string'd lyre,
Mistress of sounding tones,
Once inarticulate and harsh, now dear
To rich men's boards and holy fanes,
Come teach me such compulsive strains
As may arouse young Chloe's wilful ear;
For still she leaps and frisks about the field
Like an unbroken filly, wild and shy,
Thoughtless of mating, all unlearnt to yield
Her freedom to a lover's mastery.

Tigers and trees thou ledest by thy spell,
The running rivers pause to hark the sound;
And once thy pleading charmed the goblin Hound
That keeps the vasty halls of Hell –
Nay, from Ixion's anguish wrung a smile,
And smoothed sad Tityos' brow; a little while,
Tranced by the lulling melody,
The Danaids let their urn go dry.

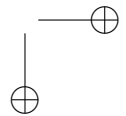
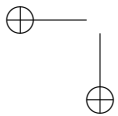
Yes, Chloe, hear how by a signal doom
Those wicked virgins fill for evermore
The unbottom'd jar that empties as they pour;
Hear the reward, though late, that in the gloom
Of Orcus waits on guilt – oh guilt abhorred,
What viler known in any time or land?

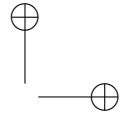
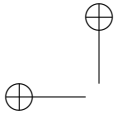




Each plied the knife, and with unnatural hand
Each slew her wedded lord!
Yet was there one who did not shame
The nuptial torch, but with illustrious lie
Outwitted her false sire, and won a name
That through the ages shall not die;
Who to her slumbering bridegroom whispered 'Rise,
Lest sleep eternal close thine eyes.
Thou know'st not thy new kindred seek thy blood,
My father and that evil sisterhood,
Who now like wild beasts leaping on a drove
Maul each her calf – no sisters they
Of mine – I would not cage thee, neither slay,
But save thee, dear my love.
If this my mercy earns my father's hate,
So be it, I care not, let him choose my fate,
Bind me in cruel chains, or banish me
To desert lands beyond the sea –
But thou, go quickly whither chance may guide thee,
By wet or dry, while night and Venus hide thee.
Go with godspeed; and on my tomb
Be graved my honour and my doom.'

Nothing will persuade me that Horace had anything to do with the wretched lines which pass for a fifth stanza, and I have indulged myself in leaving them out. If anyone asks why I call the beneficiary of the Ode 'young Chloe' instead of 'young Lyde,' I shall be ashamed to give the answer.





XII

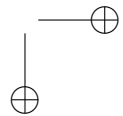
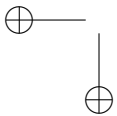
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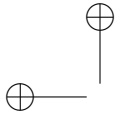
It would seem a girl is doomed to be a saint:
They tell us what we may and what we mayn't:
 We mustn't have affairs,
 We mustn't drown our cares,
Or we're lectured by an uncle till we faint.

Any morning, if I start to spin my wool,
Or do the useful things I learnt at school,
 Comes Cupid on the wing
 To set me wondering
Where Hebrus is, and then my thoughts are full.

Is he riding like a new Bellerophon,
Or swimming up the Tiber in the sun
 With his body shining white?
 Is he finishing a fight,
Or passing all the champions in a run?

Is he shooting at the stags that wildly fly
Across the plains in maddened company,
 Or when the great boar rushes
 From its covert in the bushes,
Is he ready with his dart to pierce its eye?





XIII

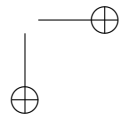
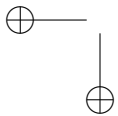
O FONS BANDUSIAE

Fair spring Bandusia, more than crystal bright,
None worthier to be sued with flowers and wine,
This day I pledge to thee
A kid whose budding horns

Presage him prowess both for love and war,
In vain! for to bereave his lusty tribe
My knife with his red blood
Shall tinge thy cold clear stream.

Thee the swart season of the Dogstar's glare
Can touch not; thou delicious cool dost bring
To the plough-wearied ox
And wayward-nibbling herd.

Thus on the roll of memorable springs
I write thee, telling how the ilex crowns
The hollow rock from whence
Thy babbling waters leap.





XIV

HERCULIS RITU

Rejoice, ye folk, for Caesar home again!
Our Hercules, for whom we feared but now
Hazard and death in distant Spain,
Returns with laurel on his brow.

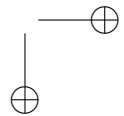
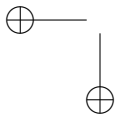
Let then his consort in her joyful pride
Bearing her gifts before the altar stand,
With his fair sister at her side,
And in their train a comely band

Of matrons chapleted for victory
To hail their warrior sons restored; but ye,
Glad youths and damsels, let no word
Of evil augury be heard.

I from a full heart bless the happy day
That brings us peace and drives black care away.
While Caesar rules, I have no fear
Of mob or thief or murderer.

Go, boy, fetch wreaths, and ointment, and a barrel
– If one that hid from Spartacus' guerrillas
Can yet be found – of age to tell us
Tales of the bygone Marsian quarrel.

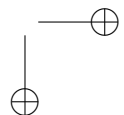
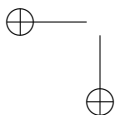
Next bid the tuneful Glycera bind up
Her myrrhy locks and hasten round to sup;
But should her grumpy footboy say
She's not at home. . . well, come away!





Our tempers cool, you know, with grizzling hair,
That once were quarrelsome and obstinate:
When Plancus held the curule chair,
I shouldn't have put up with it.

A few dates: Augustus returned from Spain in 25 B.C., and the Marsian or Social War was in 90-88 B.C., so it is not likely that much wine that could 'remember it' would have been still available, even if Spartacus – the gladiator who led the rebels in the Servile War of 73-71 B.C. – had left it alone. Plancus was Consul in 42 B.C., when Horace was twenty-three. Everyone is struck, and some of the editors are shocked, by the want of keeping between the stiffness of the three perfunctory opening stanzas and the cosy ease of the rest.

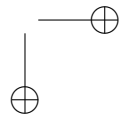
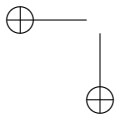




XV

UXOR PAUPERIS IBYCI

How long, old Madam, will you carry on
This monstrous racket, which your patient lord
So obviously can't afford?
Your lease of life is nearly done,
Yet midst the golden girls you play and ply,
A blot on their bright galaxy,
Forgetting that what Pholoe may do
Is less acceptable in you.
Your daughter, now, is at the age
To storm a bachelor's chambers, and rampage
Like a daft Maenad with a tambourine;
Poor darling, she's in love, and so
Must be allowed to play the wanton roe!
For you, 'tis time to quit the scene,
The red rose in the wig, the violins,
The red wine drained; for at your age, you know,
A body stays at home and spins.





XVI

INCLUSAM DANAEN

The brazen tower, the strong gate bolted fast,
The wakeful mastiffs yelping at a tread,
Had made a barrier for Danae's bed
No midnight-prowling fornicator e'er had passed;

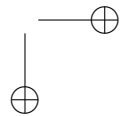
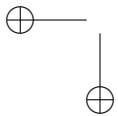
But Jove and Venus, laughing to behold
Acrisius, her anxious janitor,
So busy with his keys, well knew the door
Would soon fly open for a God transformed to gold.

Through palace-guards gold threads its path unstayed,
Or blasts the granite rock, as lightning swift.
The Argive augur, gulfed in earthquake rift,
Perished with all his house, by his bought queen betrayed.

With bribes the Macedonian could suborn
The breach of ramparts, and inflict his rule
On rival monarchs; bribes have made a tool
Of many a captain bold, his seaman's faith forsworn.

As money grows, ambition grows, and care
Keeps even pace with both. How fitly I
Have still abhorred to raise my head too high!
(As you, Maecenas, grace the name of Commoner).

The more a man forgoes, the more he gains.
For me, till now camp-follower of the Rich,
I change my colours, and without a stitch
Desert to the happy Have-not-Want-nots in the plains,





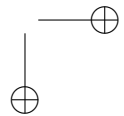
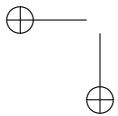
Prouder of an unenvied competence
Than if I heard men say my barns were heaped
With all the corn the swinked Apulian reaped –
Poor amid plenty, indigent in opulence.

What bliss to me this modest homestead yields,
These few well-wooded acres, one clear stream,
And my sure harvest hopes, they little dream
Who, prone in splendour, lord it over Libyan fields.

What though to me the loamy hills of Var
Send no fat fleeces, the Calabrian bee
Sucks honey from the flowers, but none for me,
Nor Bacchus mellows in the Lestrygonian jar?

Yet irksome Poverty besets me not,
(And if for more I wished, you'd give me more!)
Thus better shall I nurse my humble store
In unaspiring satisfaction with my lot,

Than if what Alyattes held in fee
To Phrygian plains I joined. Who seeks too much
Will get too little; him no hurt can touch,
To whom with measured hand God grants sufficiency.





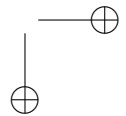
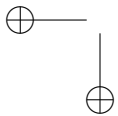
XVII

AELI VETUSTO

Friend Aelius, born of Lamus' royal stock –
Since 'tis from him the pristine Lamias took
Their name; and all that noble race,
Renowned throughout our annals, trace
Their origin to him who reared the walls
Of Formiæ, and where slow Liris crawls
Across Marica's fertile plain
Ruled far and wide his rich domain –

To-morrow, if we trust the weather-wise
And long-experienced crow, a storm will rise
To strip the forest leaves, and strow
The beach with useless seaweed. Now,
While time is, heap dry logs; and then to-morrow
Do yourself well, with wine to banish sorrow,
And on a suckling porker feast
The slaves, for once from toil released.

LINE 4. Reading *ducit*. No one had ever been able to make much of this odd little Ode, till A. W. Verrall suggested that Horace was chaffing his bailiff, who happened to be called Lamia, though he was no relation to the noble family of that name. This view would in a measure justify the pompous beginning and trivial upshot of the piece, although according to our notions the joke would not be in the best of taste.





XVIII

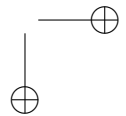
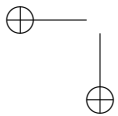
FAUNE NYMPHARUM

Thou whose pursuit the startled Oreads fly,
Tread gently, Faunus, o'er my sun-steeped farm,
 And passing, leave no harm
To my small nurslings of the byre and sty.

So shall thy feast-day boast a yeanning kid,
A tankard (Venus' boon-companion) flowing
 With wine of my own growing,
And in rich myrrhy clouds thine altar hid.

For when thy wintry Nones come round, the flocks
In every grassy field rush out to play;
 Free of his toil, the ox
Shares with the swains the village holiday.

For thee the woodland sheds its leaves, and lo!
Harmless the wolf about the sheepcote ramps;
 Thrice the gay ditcher stamps
On the hard earth as on a beaten foe.





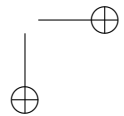
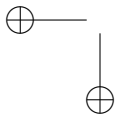
XIX

QUANTUM DISTET

No history, please! Work out some other time
The pedigree of Aeacus,
Settle the dates of Inachus
And Codrus, in his death sublime.
Even your outline of the Trojan War,
Just now, would be a bore.
Far sooner would we have you say
What price a cask of Chian is today,
Or where, and what o'clock, we dine,
Who warms the water for the wine,
And shields us from this Arctic winter's nip.

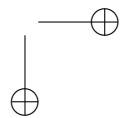
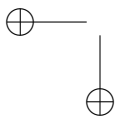
Now, boy, the toasts! Murena's augurship!
New Moon! and Midnight! shall the bumpers be
Nine ladlefuls, or three?
Our frenzied bard, the Muses' votary,
Will plump, of course, for nine;
While they who, like the Graces, hate a riot,
Choose three, to keep the table quiet.

Now we'll go berserk – let the binge begin!
Pipe up, thou Berecynthian flute!
Down from your pegs, ye lyre and lute!
I hate a stingy host like sin.
More roses! wake the neighbours with the din –
Crusty old Lycus and his Pretty Poll,
Who has no use for him at all.
Here Love be lord! flushed Rhoda find her heaven





In Bassus, shining like the star of even
With his bright curly hair; while I,
Burning for Chloe, lingeringly die.





XX

NON VIDES QUANTO

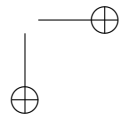
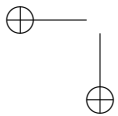
Think, Pyrrhus, what awaits you if you dare
Molest the lioness's young!

What if she sends you flying like a hare,
A routed brigand, every nerve unstrung,

When round the hedge of jostling youths she prowls
Nosing fair Mystes out with angry growls?
'Tis a nice question, whether you or she
Will carry off the victory.

Meantime, while you your doughty sword unsheathe
And she arrays her formidable teeth,
The umpire of the bout in placid calm
Sets his bare foot upon the palm,

Letting the soft enlivening breezes play
In the bright curls that on his shoulder stray,
Lovely as Nireus, or the boy
From fountain'd Ida haled for Jove to enjoy.





XXI

O NATA MECUM

Twin-born with me when Manlius ruled the state,
Ambiguous jar, that holdest in thy keep
Now mirth, now mopes, fierce love and sudden hate,
Or thy best bounty, easeful sleep!

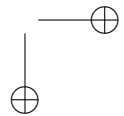
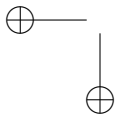
Let thy choice Massic bring what gift it may,
And quit thy shelf; for when Messala dines
With Horace, thou alone befit'st the day
That bids me broach my mellowest wines.

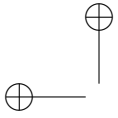
No bristling pedant he, though double-dyed
In deep Socratic lore, to flout thy charm:
Old Cato even, who other joys denied,
Would drink to keep his virtue warm.

'Tis thine to coax or spur the backward wit,
And with a solvent magic turn to jest
The wise man's hidden cares, and bring to light
The buried treasure of his breast;

Or hope to the despairing mind restore,
And raise the poor man's hackles to defy
The angered crowns of kings, or men of war
Full-rigged in fearsome panoply.

Bacchus, and Venus too, sobeit she will,
And girdled Graces in sweet unison,
And my late lamps, shall keep thee busy till
The stars take flight before the sun.



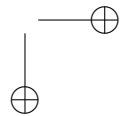
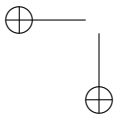


XXII

MONTIUM CUSTOS

Chaste guardian of the forests and the hills,
Who when young wives in childbed, near their time,
Thrice call thy name, dost hear, and heal their ills,
Goddess triform, sublime!

Thine be the fir that shades my rustic door,
So in glad yearly homage I may spill
Around its foot the blood of the wild boar
That slants his tusk to kill.





XXIII

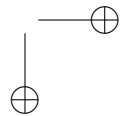
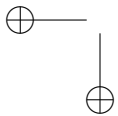
CAELO SUPINAS

Lift but thy hands, fair country maid,
Palm-upwards to the new-born moon:
Before thy household gods be laid
Fresh barley from the rising mow,
A pinch of incense, and a greedy sow,
And they will grant thy boon.

No poisonous wind in Libya born
Shall blast the promise of the vine,
No mildew rust the ripening corn,
Nor misty Autumn, ushering death,
Creep through the barton and with sickly breath
Make thy sweet nurslings pine.

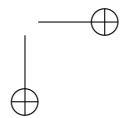
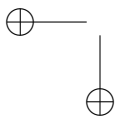
For on some snow-capt Latian hill,
Under the ilex and the oak,
The fated victim crops her fill,
Or fattens in an Alban field,
Whose neck one day her spurting blood shall yield
To the proud pontiff's stroke.

For thee, no need with sacrifice
Of bleating flocks on altar high
To bribe exacting deities;
Thy midget gods are pleased enow
With wreaths of slender myrtle for their brow
Inwove with rosemary.





Touch then the shrine with empty hand:
For thy small sins no heavenly ire
Elaborate ransom will demand.
Full favour waits thee, once thou hast knelt
And dutifully sprinkled salt and spelt
To crackle in the fire.



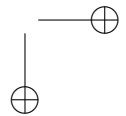
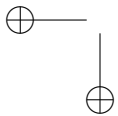


XXIV

INTACTIS OPULENTIOR

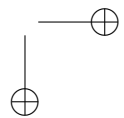
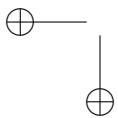
Through Araby and India yield
Their virgin treasures to thy grasping hand,
Though thou usurp both sea and land
Thy stately towers and palaces to build,
Yet on thy topmost pinnacle
The day Fate stands to hammer the last nail,
Thou shalt not free thy soul from dread,
Nor from Death's halter loose thy luckless head.
Happier than thou the Scythian folk
O'er rolling pastures drive their caravans;
Happier the stern Gelonians
Across unboundaried acres urge the yoke
That Nature's unbought bounty earns.
With each new year another tract they range,
And every man in fair exchange
Is husbandman or warrior by turns.
There orphan children need not fear
The grudgings of a jealous stepmother;
No purse-proud heiress rules her spouse,
Nor for a gay adulterer breaks her vows.
A maiden brings her parents' fame
As ample dowry, and her own true faith,
That holds a lover for a shame;
And sin is visited with disgrace and death.

If there be one who hath a care
To heal the murderous frenzy of our race,





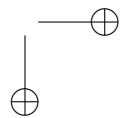
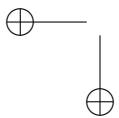
To read upon his statue's base
The FATHER OF THE CITIES, let him dare
To curb the passions of his kind!
Then shall the Future praise him – not Today,
For men to living worth are blind,
And only love it when 'tis rapt away.
What boots the moralist's complaint,
If punishment withholds the chastening knife,
Or what avails the law's restraint
If Conscience guides not to a saner life;
If neither blaze of tropic heat
Nor parching rigours of the Northern plain,
Where snow turns iron 'neath the feet,
Deter the trader in his greed of gain;
If sailors pit their wanton skill
'Gainst Ocean's might, and branding penury
Drives us to welcome infamy
Rather than climb the steep of Virtue's hill?
Our gems, our pearls, our useless gold,
Gauds that the seed of all corruption hold,
Shall we not cast them on the deep,
Or on the Capitolian altars heap,
Amid the plaudits of the throng,
To prove our penitence for our deadly wrong?
Be it our task to smite the root
Of sick desires, that bear such evil fruit.
Our gilded youth are soft, they need
A harder discipline, a stricter course.
Not one of them can sit a horse,
And as for hunting! this degenerate breed
Of molly-coddle nincompoops
Spend all the daytime bowling Greekish hoops,
And half the night with shaky hand
Rattling the dice-box that our laws have banned.
To enrich a worthless heir, meanwhile





The father cheats his partner, bilks his friend:
Up mounts the ever-growing pile –
But still there's something lacking in the end.

LINE 3. Reading *terrenum* and *publicum*.



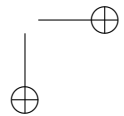
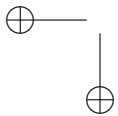


XXV

QUO ME BACCHE

O might of Bacchus, that my being fills,
Whither on new wings of thought dost bear me,
To what strange forests and lonely hills?
Where is the cave shall hear me
Conning great Caesar's praise, till as a star
He shine in Heaven, and Jove's high counsels share?
Glorious my tale, unknown, new-born!
And as a Maenad, that all night hath fared
Sleepless by mountain ways, at break of morn
Hails by the astonishing light unbared
Hebrus, and Thrace all white with snow,
And Rhodope by wild feet trodden, so
With wonder in my heart I rove
This quiet riverside, this empty grove.

Imperious God, whose voice the Naiads hear,
And Bassarids that with their hands can tear
Up by the roots the towering pine,
Not low nor petty is this theme of mine,
But passing mortal wit. How blessèd he
That knows this perilous sweet, to follow thee,
Lenaean, who about thy head dost twine
Green leaves and tendrils of the vine!





XXVI

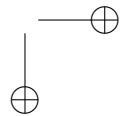
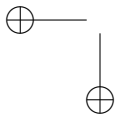
VIXI PUELLIS

Long time a champion in Love's fierce debate,
Dear foe to many a beauty, I retire,
And in this fane of Venus dedicate
My arms and veteran lyre.

Look, sea-born Queen, I lay them on thy floor,
My crowbars and my tarry torches bright,
My hooks and crooks that foiled the bolted door
On many a rascal night.

And in return a last small boon I crave,
Regent of Memphis and the Paphian wave!
Summon the scornful Chloe – raise thy whip –
And give her just one flip.

STANZA 2, LINE 3. The MSS. give *arcus*, but no one has ever explained how Horace used a crossbow against a door. Mr. Oliffe Richmond has lent me his unpublished emendation *uncos*.



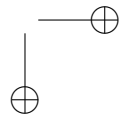
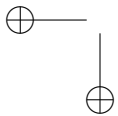


XXVII

IMPIOS PARRAE

When bad men journey, these their omens be:
A hooting owl, a pregnant bitch or vixen,
A dun wolf streaking down the slope that leads
Up to Lanuvium; or a sudden snake,
Slithering from nowhere like an arrow, start
Their horses rearing. I, when those I love
Set forth, will manage better; I shall square
A bird of hopeful augury; the crow
Shall caw his cheerful presage in the East
Before the raven, prophesying storm,
Takes flight to the stagnant marsh. Ah, Galatea,
Live happy where you will, but so long only
As you remember me; no vagrant rook
Nor magpie on the left shall baulk your faring.

But look, beloved, how uproariously
Orion seeks his bed! I but too well
Know the black Adriatic, and what mischief
That innocent-seeming white south wind is up to.
Oh that my enemy would send his wife
And little ones to sea, just at the moment
When Auster in his first blind fury sets
The dark waves in a roar, and shakes the coast
With his prodigious thong. Remember how
Europa to the wily Bull entrusted
Her snowy side, and suddenly grew pale,
For all her bravery, to find herself

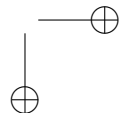
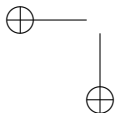


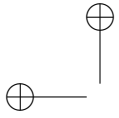


Posting on tides a-bubble with sea monsters –
She, who so late was busy in the fields
Gathering flowers to make the Nymphs a wreath,
Now wildered in the glimmer of night, with nothing
Visible in th' whole wide world but waves and stars.

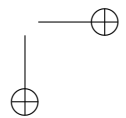
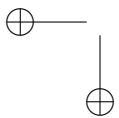
Landing by dawn in hundred-citied Crete,
Much wondering where she was, whence thither brought,*
'O father dear,' she cried, 'O sacred names
Of daughter and of duty, both betrayed!
Alas, when lovely maiden stoops to folly,*
One death is all too little. Am I indeed
A sinner, and awake? or innocent,
And by a dream maligned, that winged its way
Through the false ivory door? O fool, to leave
My flowers for those interminable waves!
Methought I was enamoured of a bull –
How do I loathe him now!* would he were here,
That I might break and bray his villainous horns.
Oh shame to leave my father's hearth! oh shame
To live another hour! If any God
Hear me, I pray him send me naked forth
Mid hungry lions; ere my beauty fades,
While still my cheeks are soft, my flesh still tender,
May tigers rend me limb from savoury limb!
"Thou vile Europa" (I hear my father say)
"Make haste to die! That girdle round thy waist,
Which thou didst well to take with thee, will serve
To string thy neck from yon convenient elm;
Or if these killing rocks arride thee more,
Call a swift wind to dash thee on their jags –
Unless perchance thy royal blood incline thee
To serve some foreign dame, and wind her wool,
Her lord's discarded strumpet."'

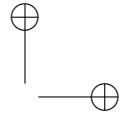
*I hope Eve, Olivia and Titania will not say *Pereant qui nostra ante nos dixerunt*.





She ceased; for lo!
Venus was at her side, and Cupid too,
His bow unstrung, both laughing helplessly.
But soon grown grave, the Goddess thus bespake:
'My dear, I counsel thee, when that bad Bull
Returns and offers thee his horns to bruise,
Be not too harsh with him; for thou shouldst know
That mighty Jove hath taken thee to wife.
Dry then those tears, and learn to hold thyself
Worthily of thy lot; for half the world,
So long as Time endures, shall bear thy name.'





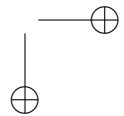
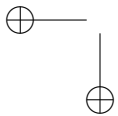
XXVIII

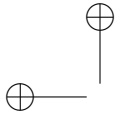
FESTO QUID POTIUS

How better could I celebrate
Old Neptune's feast? Come, Lydia, stir your stumps,
And fetch the Alban from its crate
To storm the castle of your Stoic dumps.
'Tis well past noon, yet you allow yourself,
As though the day stood still for us,
To leave the wine-jar dawdling on the shelf
Where it has stood since Bibulus!

Now for our little concert: I'll begin,
With Neptune and the Nereids' greenish hair,
And then your lyre come chiming in
With Leto and Diana, huntress fair.
Let Venus end our orisons,
Who in the shining Cyclads takes delight,
And visits Paphos with her team of swans;
Then one last hymn to friendly Night.

Bibulus was Consul in 59 B.C. Horace is not actually punning, but one seems to hear the faint voice of the Gnat in *Alice*: 'You might make a joke on that – something about "Bibulus" and "bibulous," you know.'





XXIX

TYRRHENA REGUM

Scion of Tyrrhene kings, my smoothest wine,
Stored in a cask untapt this many a year,
And my best roses, and my shady pine,
And balsam ground on purpose for your hair,

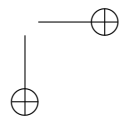
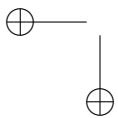
Await your coming. Tear yourself away
From your high window! you have had your fill
Of gazing from afar on Tibur's hill,
And the blue distances of Aefula.

Lay down the burden of your worldly state,
Quit the proud palace that you call your home,
And in my arbour for a while forget
The wealth, the smoke, the din, of gorgeous Rome.

The Great may welcome, when their grandeur palls,
A timely respite; and a neat repast
In a poor neighbour's unupholstered walls
May smooth their wrinkles better than a feast.

Look in the sky, where mounting Cepheus bares
His hidden fire, and Procyon shoots his rays
In anger, while the frenzied Lion glares;
For now the sun brings back the thirsty days,

The weary shepherds and their listless flocks
In Silvan's thorny covert creep to shade,
Or seek the stream that by its arid rocks
Crawls dumb where erst the flickering breezes played.





Yet still you nurse the State both night and day,
And canvass, till all peace of mind is gone,
The plots that may be hatching in Cathay,
Or Bactra, or beside the unruly Don!

'Tis a wise God that hides within the cope
Of deepest night what future time shall bring,
And laughs at mortals who with fear and hope
Perplex their momentary lives. The thing

That lies to hand, dispose: the rest is borne
As on a mighty river, now in peace
Flowing mid-channel to the Etruscan seas,
Now breaking bounds in furious torrent, torn

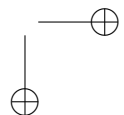
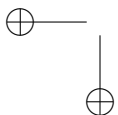
By autumn winds, and rolling in its course
Bruised rocks and trunks uprooted, houses, cattle,
Pell-mell to rack, while hill and forest roars,
Echoing the angry flood that calls to battle

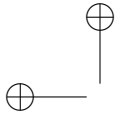
The placid currents. Master of his will,
And happy, he who night by night can say
'Thus far, I have lived': tomorrow come what may!
Whether the Almighty Father choose to fill

His firmament with cloudy skies or blue,
The past is past, nor can he change one jot
Or tittle, nor for all his might undo
The hap that once the passing hour hath brought.

Fortune, exulting in her ruthless trade,
Indulging her pert humour to the end,
Juggles the favourites her caprice has made,
One day an enemy, the next a friend.

She stays? I bless her: preens her wings to fly?
I arm myself in my good character,
And giving her flash favours the go-by,
To honest Poverty my faith transfer.

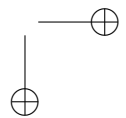
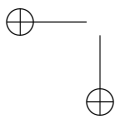


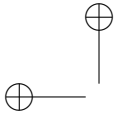


'Tis not my manner, when the yard-arms creak
In tropic gales, and waves like mountains rise,
To grovel, or with babbling vows to seek
Exemption for my Tyrian merchandise

From the harsh toll of the extortionate seas;
No, for 'tis then the Heavenly Twins will keep
Watch on my cockle-boat, and bid the breeze
Waft me to safety o'er the surging deep.

STANZA 2. I apologize for omitting from the landscape an intractable item,
'the ridges of the patricide Telegonus.'



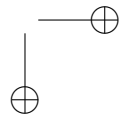
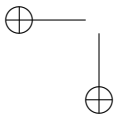


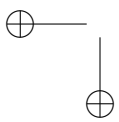
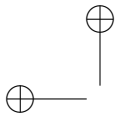
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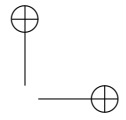
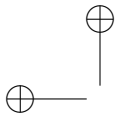
EXEGI MONUMENTUM

Now stands my tower four-square, outlasting bronze,
O'ertopping the tall pyramids of kings;
Nor eating rain can rot nor violent gale
One stone dislodge, though Time's eternal flight
Leave century on century behind.
Not all of me shall die; one part shall cheat
The cerements, nor my gathering fame abate
While Rome endures, and hushed in holy awe
Pontiff and Vestal mount her citadel.

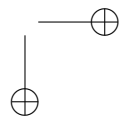
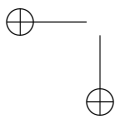
Be this my praise: that by the rushing stream
Of Aufidus, where pastoral Daunus ruled
His thirsty plain, I grew from low to strong,
And on the rude Italian pipe first breathed
Aeolian numbers. Rise, Melpomene!
Assume thy state, and in the accomplished task
Well pleased, with Delphian laurel bind my brow.

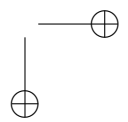
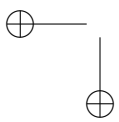
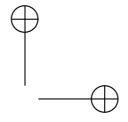
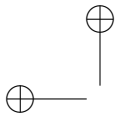






BOOK FOUR



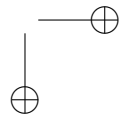
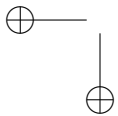


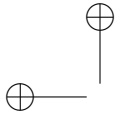


I

INTERMISSA VENUS

Have mercy, Venus! long ago
Dismissed thy service, must I arm again?
I am not what I was, ah no!
In those far days of Cynara's happy reign.
Stern Mother of the darling Loves, forbear
On this tough war-horse in his fiftieth year
To lay thy delicate commands.
Back to the youngsters, whose beseeching hands
Recall thee! If thou seek a heart
Will be a credit to thy flaming dart,
Bid those bright roosting swans of thine convey thee
To Maximus, who all thy due can pay thee –
A noble youth, the City's pride,
Accomplished, handsome, generous to plead
The poor man's cause against his neighbour's greed,
Well graced to bear thy banner far and wide;
And on the day that with thy aid divine
He makes his lavish rival look a fool,
He vows thee by the Alban pool
A Parian image in a cedar shrine.
There shall thy marble nostrils breathe
Rich incense fuming from the bowl beneath,
And there the Bercynthian flute,
Commingled sweet with pipe and lute,
Engage thine ear, while on the ground
White feet of boys and gentle girls resound

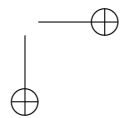
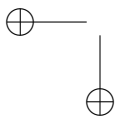




With triple stamp in the true Salian measure,
Dancing to do thy Godhead pleasure.

But I – alack! in neither he nor she,
Nor waning hope of kindred heart’s response,
I take delight, nor wine, nor company,
Nor rosy garlands for my ageing sconce.
But yet – but yet – ah, Ligurinus, why
Do these slow tears run down my cheek?
Why does my voice in sudden silence break
To shame my wit, and in mid-sally die?
Still in the visions of the night
I clasp thee, still the lovely phantom fades
Over the plains and tides in mocking flight,
Still my pursuing arms evades.

Cynara. This form, which looks prettier than the Latin *Cinara*, has been sealed of English poetry by Ben Jonson and Ernest Dowson.





II

PINDARUM QUISQUIS

He who essays to rival Pindar's fame
On wax-bound wings like Icarus mounts the sky,
Who when the sun shone toppled from on high
 Into the sea that bears his name.

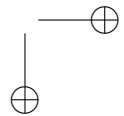
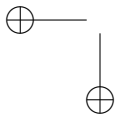
For as a mountain torrent swift and strong
By rainfall swoln o'erflows his banks and roars
Down the ravine, so deep-mouth'd Pindar pours
 The surge and fury of his song,

Meet with Apollo's laurel to be crowned,
Whether in lofty dithyramb he reach
Past range of mortal knowledge, in new speech
 And numbers by no precept bound;

Or tell of Gods, and Kings of God-born blood
Descended, that in vengeful justice slew
Flame-breath'd Chimera, and the monstrous crew
 Of Centaurs who their law withstood;

Or of those youths the Elean palm enskies,
Boxer or gallant horseman, he indite,
Whose happy fame their hundred statues bright
 Less than his song immortalize;

Or whether, to console a sorrowing bride,
Of her young warrior's valour, strength, and faith
He makes a golden star, nor suffers Death
 In cold oblivion to hide.





Strong are the gales, Antonius, that uplift
The Theban swan when to explore the sky
He spreads aloft his shining pinions: I,
Like the small Matine bee, in thrift

And care laborious gathering for the hive
From many a grove on Tibur's watered hill
Her sweets of thyme and sage, with patient skill
My miniature songs contrive.

Be thine the task in higher mood to boast
Great Caesar's conquering arms, when wreathed with bay
He drives before him down the Sacred Way
The truculent Sygambrian host,

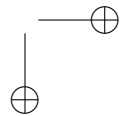
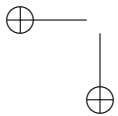
– Caesar, in whom the richest gift we hold
That e'er by bounteous Fate to earth was given,
Nor could a fairer boon descend from heaven,
Though Time brought back the Age of Gold.

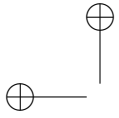
Be thine to greet the joyful hour when Rome,
Her heart's one prayer fulfilled, comes out to play,
And court and busy mart keep holiday
Because at last our Prince is home!

Then, if I too may add my mite of song,
My voice shall bear its humbler part, and cry
Hail to the risen sun of victory,
My feet shall follow with the throng

That led by thee salutes the blest return,
When all the folk with never-ending shouts
Of Triumph! Triumph! tire their thousand throats,
And incense on the altars burn.

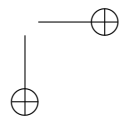
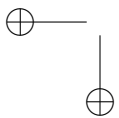
Thy offering, ten apiece of bulls and kine
Shall furnish forth: I, less ambitiously,
Am at this present fattening on my lea
A new-weaned calf to serve for mine.





His horns are sprouting on his baby head,
Curved like the moon's her third night in the skies,
And one white mark he has, between the eyes:
The rest of him all tawny red.

STANZAS 3-6 distinguish the four kinds of Pindar's poems, the Dithyramb, the Paean, the Epinikion, and the Threnos, or as we should say Elegy. Only the Epinikia have come down to us.



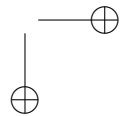
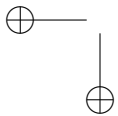


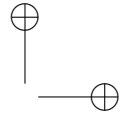
III

QUEM TU MELPOMENE

Him on whose birth with tranquil benison,
Melpomene, thy brooding eye hath shone,
No Isthmian contest shall renown,
No mettled coursers bear him past the goal,
No feat of arms with Delian laurel crown,
Nor for his might that cast proud monarchs down
Display him to the Capitol.
No, 'tis the leafy groves and waters clear
Of Tibur, whispering in his boyish ear
Wafts of Aeolian song, shall frame his soul.

In Earth's first city, Rome, the rising youth
Have deemed me fit to enrol among the bards
Their study and their love rewards,
And Envy snarls no more his poison tooth.
Fair mistress of the cithern's golden shell,
Thou at whose word the fishes of the sea
Might sing as sweet as swans, 'tis all to thee,
Pierian Muse, and to thy powerful spell
I owe my guerdon, that the throng
Point as I pass, and stay their steps to admire
The minstrel of the Roman lyre:
All thine my fame, all thine my song.





IV

QUALEM MINISTRUM

Like to the wingèd courier of the levin,
Whom when he bore bright Ganymede on high
King Jove, acknowledging his fealty,
Made suzerain over the fowls of heaven:

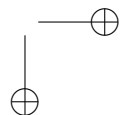
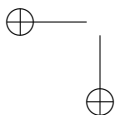
Whom first his youth and strength inherited
Thrust from the nest, unversed in exercise,
Apt pupil of the vernal gales to shed
His fledgeling fears, and practise in the skies

New efforts: next upon the bleating fold
To swoop; and now, full-grown in appetite
Of feast and fray, with iron grip to hold
Huge serpents writhing 'neath his talon's might;

Or as a roe intent on pasture sweet,
Witless of peril, on a sudden spies
A lion from his tawny mother's teat
Just driven, and reads her doom in his fierce eyes,

Thus did the Rhaetians on their alps behold
Drusus advancing in his wrath; but soon
Those haughty tribes, wide-famed for conquests old,
By the young captain's measures beaten down,

Perceived what valour may adorn a mind
By Nature dowered, by genial influence trained
Under a roof heaven-blest, what heights be gained
When Caesar rears a Claudius for mankind;





For good is born of good, and brave of brave,
Alike in man and beast: great bulls and steeds
Beget great scions; no fierce eagle breeds
A timid dove, nor warrior a slave.

Yet discipline the native power must mould,
Precept and rule confirm the willing breast;
Let Conduct flinch, and slack her guiding hold,
Vice finds his way, and brings to shame the best.

What debt thou owest to the Claudian race
Learn, Rome, from red Metaurus, Hasdrubal
Destroyed, that shining hour that pierced the pall
Of darkness hung o'er Latium – hour of grace,

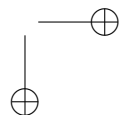
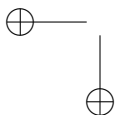
The first that on our fearful hazard smiled,
What time the African through our fortresses
Ran riot like flame through torches, or the wild
East wind careering o'er Sicilian seas.

Thenceforth the Roman youth from strength to strength
By heaven-spiced travail grew, till every fane
The Punic hordes had wasted held at length
Its shrine restored, its God erect again;

Till thus spake Hannibal in his sore plight:
'Fierce wolves our foemen are, poor brockets we,
Chasing, forsooth, a quarry 'twere the height
Of victory to baffle and to flee.

The dauntless breed that quit Troy's burning fires
And o'er the stormy Tuscan waters bore
Their holy things, their babes and aged sires,
To refuge on the far Ausonian shore,

Like some great oak on woody Algidus
Whose spreading boughs the ruthless axe hath shorn,
Draw strength from wounds, prosperity from loss,
Courageous in despair, in death new-born.





Not with more swift rebound did Hydra rear
Her severed heads to foil Alcides' hand,
Not any more miraculous growth appear
In Echionian Thebes or Colchian land.

Would'st drown them deep? more glorious they arise:
In arms hast crushed them? with a mightier host
They front their conqueror, and in high emprise
Win laurels for their wives and sons to boast.

No more, no more to Carthage shall I send
Proud heralds of glad tidings. Hasdrubal
Is fall'n, and with him all the hope and all
The glory of our name; this is the end.'

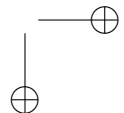
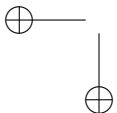
What task shall be too hard, what scope too wide
For Claudian hands to compass, if great Jove
Foster and guard them from his throne above,
And through war's turmoil Caesar's wisdom guide?

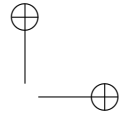
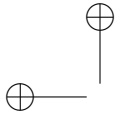
Nero Claudius Drusus, better known by the title Germanicus conferred on him after his death, was stepson to Augustus, and younger brother of the future Emperor Tiberius. It was his ancestor, Gaius Claudius Nero, who defeated Hasdrubal at the battle of the Metaurus, 207 B.C. Horace rings the changes on the three names, Drusus, Nero, and Claudius; but 'Nero' is compromised for the translator by associations of which he knew nothing!

I have omitted from the fifth and sixth stanzas four ridiculous lines in which the poet excuses himself, on the ground that we are not meant to know everything, from seeking the reason why the Rhaetians arm their right hands with Amazonian axes. If Horace did not write them, it is only fair to leave them out: if he did, it is only kind.

The last stanza but three refers to the warriors who sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Jason in Colchis and by Cadmus at Thebes. Here Horace gives full play to his peculiar sonority, which I am powerless to reproduce in English.

It is a moot point whether the last stanza (in which Augustus is not named) is spoken by Hannibal or by the author. My own feeling is that Horace wished to round-off the Ode with a brief utterance of his own, as he did at the end of Juno's speech in *Justum et tenacem* (III.III).





V

DIVIS ORTE BONIS

Sole guardian of the Roman State,
Best gift of bounteous Heaven, why thus late
Thy coming? Think upon thy promise sworn
To the assembled Fathers, and return!

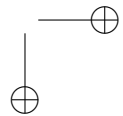
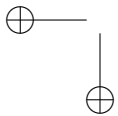
For when thy countenance bends its light
Upon the folk to bless their aching sight,
'Tis like the dawn of Spring; more sweetly run
The days, more fosteringly shines the sun;

And as a doting mother craves
Her sailor whom beyond the Cretan waves
The jealous South from his loved hearth detains
Till Autumn hath forbid the watery plains,

– Vows, prayers and tears in vain she plies,
Nor from the harbour turns her ugly eyes –
Even so with faithful yearning smitten, Rome
Calls her too-long-delaying Caesar home.

The ox in safety roams the field,
Where mellow Ceres aids fair Plenty's yield,
Swift ships o'er unmolested waters fly,
Faith leaves no chink for watchful Calumny;

Our homes are chaste and undefiled,
The father sees his image in the child;
Manners and Law chase evil from the land,
And guilt with chastisement goes hand in hand.





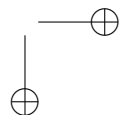
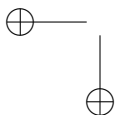
While Caesar reigns, who fears the broods
That teem in rough Germania's dismal woods,
Or Parthian cavaliers, or Scythians frore,
Or fiery champions of Hiberian war?

Each man in his own valley joins
His widow elms in wedlock with his vines,
Then hasting homeward for his toil's reward
Instals thee patron of his modest board,

Paying his dues of prayer and song
And wine poured forth, enrolling thee among
His household deities, as the Greeks of old
Honoured great Castor and Alcides bold.

'Long may thy rule make holiday
For the Hesperian land!' thy lieges say,
Sober at dawn, and with our wine at night
When 'neath the waves the sun withdraws his light.

To attempt a version of this piece is to enter into Horace's feelings when Maecenas bespoke yet another ode in praise of Augustus. Perhaps the compassion which the reader must entertain for the poet may be extended to the translator, who hopes he has not overcharged the flat conception and strangely slovenly execution of the original. For the Loves of the Trees in the eighth stanza, see the note on II.xv.





VI

DIVE QUEM PROLES

Horace is rehearsing a choir of patrician boys and girls in the *Carmen Saeculare* which he was commissioned to write for the centenary festival of 17 B.C.

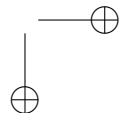
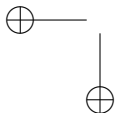
Apollo, by whose hand the boasted brood
Of Niobe, and Tityos ravisher,
Were smitten down, and he who came so near
To vanquish Troy in battle proud –

Achilles, first of men, no match for thee,
Though from her cavern Thetis gave her son
A spear imbued with magic of the sea
To shake the towers of Ilion!

He, as a pine the biting axe hath hewed,
Or cypress by the furious East o'erthrown,
In majesty brought low fell where he stood,
And in Troy's dust his neck laid down.

No trickster he, to pass the leaguered wall
Crouched in the Horse, feigned gift to Pallas' shrine,
Surprise the jubilant townsmen at their wine,
And dash the feast in Priam's hall.

Frank was his barbarous rigour, stern to doom
His miserable captives; he had given
The tenderest babes to the Argive flames, him even
Yet sleeping in his mother's womb,





Had not the Almighty Father, by thy pleas
And Venus' soft cajoling moved to grace,
Vouchsafed Aeneas favouring auspices
The walls of his new town to trace.

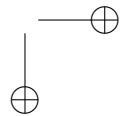
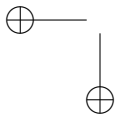
Clear-voiced instructor of the tuneful Nine,
Smooth-brow'd Agyieus, who in Lycian dews
Dost bathe thy tresses, lend thine aid benign
To uphold the younger Daunian Muse.

'Twas Phoebus granted me the sacred fire,
The skill of melody, the poet's name.
Fair youths and damsels of my novice choir,
Best heirs of Rome's ancestral fame,

Wards of the Delian Queen, whose arrows fleet
Subdue the stags and lynxes to her sway!
Keep strict the Lesbian measure, and obey
My downward finger's guiding beat,

While in your ritual song ye duly praise
Latona's son, and her who rules the night,
Ripening the corn, and with her crescent light
Fulfil the monthly round of days.

Each maid hereafter, wedded many a year,
Shall tell the tale: 'In the great thanksgiving
I chanted with the rest, while Heaven gave ear,
And Horace 'twas who bade me sing.'





VII

DIFFUGERE NIVES

The snows are away, once more the grass in the field
shows green,

And the leaves in the wood;

Earth's livery's changed, and now the stream's low
banks are seen

In the dwindling flood.

Naked the Nymphs and the Graces, no longer fearing
the cold,

Dance in the flowers;

The new year prophesies death, as the sweet days
growing old

Die hours by hours.

Zephyrs breathe warm on the frost; then Summer
treads upon Spring,

But her triumph is vain,

So soon does Autumn return with his ripe fruits,
only to bring

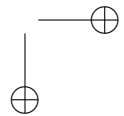
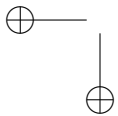
Numb Winter again.

These wounds of the wheeling skies are healed by
the moons in their flying:

Man, once he is laid

Where father Aeneas and proud rich Tullus and
Ancus are lying,

Is dust and a shade.



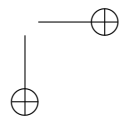
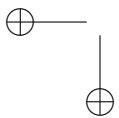


To-day we are here upon earth; to-morrow, who
knows where?

'Tis as Heaven commands;
The things thou hast gladdened thy heart with, how
soon will thy greedy heir
Let slip through his hands!

Once thy hour comes, Torquatus, and Minos from
his throne
Assigns thy lot,
The storied race, the golden tongue, the deeds that
shone
Shall avail thee not.

To snatch Hippolytus in vain Diana strove
From the nether deeps,
And wrapt in Lethe's chains, for all strong Theseus'
love,
Pirithous sleeps.

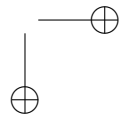
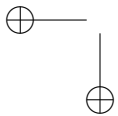




VIII

DONAREM PATERAS

If I were rich, it would be pleasant
To cheer my friends with many a handsome present,
As bronzes, basons – tripods too,
Old prizes of the Grecian games; and you,
Dear Censorinus, should receive the best
Of all my gifts, were I possessed
Of these and suchlike objects of *virtù*:
A painting by Parrhasius, or maybe
A piece of Scopas' statuary
(Those twain with magic skill endowed
To limn or carve both man and god).
But not for us these toys: I can't supply 'em,
And you, if you had need of them, could buy 'em!
Your taste is for the poet's lays,
And those I can both furnish and appraise.
'Tis not on tablets in the public squares
That good men's virtues live to after-years;
And how, if not in books recorded,
Would eminent merit be rewarded?
What should we know of Romulus,
Though Mars and Ilia gave him birth,
If total silence had obscured his worth?
Sunk in the Styx the fame of Aeacus
Had perished, had not mighty bards
With favouring influence of immortal words
Enshrined him in the Hesperides.





Without the Muse, the noblest hero dies:
Blest with her aid, he mounts the skies.
Thus after all his labours Hercules
At Jove's sought-after banquet takes his ease;
'Tis thus the Twins became a star that saves
Tossed vessels from the furious waves,
And Bacchus in his vineleaf garland grants
The supplications of his ministrants.

There can be no doubt that something has gone wrong with this piece, if only because having 34 lines it breaks the invariable rule by which Horace's odes are divisible into quatrains. I have acted on A. W. Verrall's proposal to excise lines 15-20, putting a full stop after *bonis* in 14, and a question-mark after *tuleris* in 22. This treatment presents difficulties of its own, but it has at any rate the advantage of doing away with six lines which teem with mistakes in history and mythology and faults of style and metre.





IX

NE FORTE CREDAS

Think not these words of mine shall die,
That born by Aufidus' far-echo'd stream
In unaccustomed modes of art I frame
For chords with meet response to accompany.

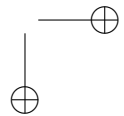
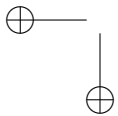
Though first Maeonian Homer shine
In fame, not therefore dimmed is Pindar's fire,
Nor unesteemed the Cean's mighty line,
Alcaeus' clarion or Stesichorus' lyre.

Still as of old Anacreon sings
His playful melodies no years can stale,
Still breathes and burns to-day the amorous tale
That Sappho whispered to the Aeolian strings.

Long before Helen, many a queen
Had broke her vows for an adulterer
Because he dazed her with his curling hair,
His princely train, his mantle's golden sheen.

Many another Teucer sped
Cydonian arrows, and an older Troy
Was leaguered, and in fiery battle joy
Many an Idomeneus and Diomed

Desetved the Muses' benisons;
Not Hector only nor Deiphobus
Gave blow for blow in combat perilous
Adventuring for wife or little ones.





Unmatched is Agamemnon's fame,
Not so his might; but in the dark of years
Unwept and unremembered lie his peers,
Because no heaven-graced poet sang their name.

Virtue that shines not before men
Is little better than ignoble ease.
Ah, Lollius! I would not have my pen
Leave you unpraised, nor blank Oblivion seize

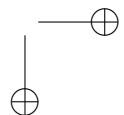
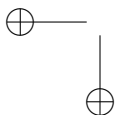
On your high exploits. You possess
A mind that in a true and steady light
Views men and things, and in the varied stress
Of good or doubtful fortune judges right;

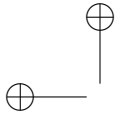
A mind which scourges knave and fool,
Which keeps no traffic with the wealth that moulds
All things to its greedy will, a mind whose rule
Is no brief twelve-month consulship, but holds

Whene'er an honest magistrate
Prefers the just to the expedient way,
Scorns the rich caitiff's bribe, and soon or late,
Routing the hosts of evil, wins the day.

Who is the happy man? not he
Who owns the earth; to him that name be given
Who knows to use aright the gifts of Heaven,
And bravely bear the stings of poverty;

Who dreads dishonour worse than death,
Confronts disaster with unflinching eye,
And when stern Duty calls upon his faith,
For friend or country has no fear to die.

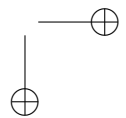
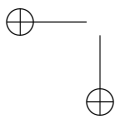




X

O CRUDELIS ADHUC

Fair scornful youth, you little think, now you are lord of all,
How soon those lips will roughen, those wavy ringlets fall,
That hue that now excels the rose depart, and in its place
Reveal a Ligurinus with a beard upon his face!
How soon you will be gazing in your too trusty glass
Wit wonder at the change that has so quickly come to pass,
And sigh: 'What I am feeling now, would I had felt it then,
Or else that with my present mind I had those cheeks again.'





XI

EST MIHI NONUM

Come, Phyllis, to my feast! I have a barrel
Of Alban nine years old, and a green bed
Of parsley for the wreaths, and laurel
In plenty to set-off your shining head.

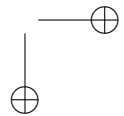
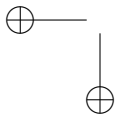
The silver has been polished till the rooms
Smile forth their welcome, and to left and right
My deedy staff of maids and grooms
Run bustling to make ready for to-night.

My altar, draped in pious greenery,
Gloats on its lamb, and from the chimney-stack
Flames quiver up into the sky
Under the grimy smoke-wreaths eddying black.

But why, you ask me, why all this to-do?
I'll tell you: 'tis the Ides we celebrate,
That annually cut in two
Bright April, month of Venus; 'tis a date

Of import, and to me more justly dear
Than my own birthday almost; for this day
Brings my Maecenas once a year
Another stage upon his lifelong way.

Forget young Telephus – he's for your betters!
A more exalted fair has ousted you,
And bound him in her charming fetters –
An heiress, and I'm told a bad lot too.

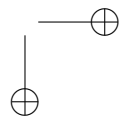
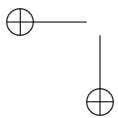




When Hope goes towering, think of Phaëthon,
Burnt to a cinder when he soared too high;
Remember, next, Bellerophon,
Flung by his angered courser from the sky.

By these grave warnings learn, in your own sphere
To seek a mate more fitting – not to cast
Your looks too skyward. Come, my dear,
To your old friend, of all his loves the last.

(It isn't likely that my heart will beat
Again for any woman). You'll be bringing
Your lute, the voice I find so sweet,
And a new song; we'll rout black care with singing.





XII

JAM VERIS COMITES

Now the fresh breeze from Thrace, Spring's herald, blows
The bellied sails across the calming wave;
The fields unfreeze, no more the rivers rave,
Disburdened of their winter snows.

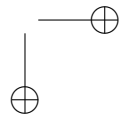
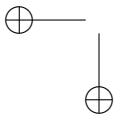
The mournful chantress builds her nest, and sings
Of Itys, and the eternal shame she brought
On the proud line of Cecrops, when she wrought
Dark vengeance on the savage kings.

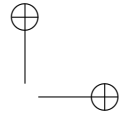
Now in the tender grass the shepherds try
Their pipes among the woolly flocks, to please
The God who joys in sheepcotes and the leas
And shaded hills of Arcady.

A thirsty time! the days will soon be hot;
But if, old hanger-on of gilded youth,
Virgilius! you propose to quench your drouth
With Formian, you must pay your scot.

A modest agateful of nard shall bring
A cask from out the bowels of the earth
To warm your cockles with fresh hope and mirth,
And ease your troubles of their sting.

If this attracts you, come! but bring your wares.
Be well assured, it is not my design
To make you free of my expensive wine
Like your unthrifty millionaires;

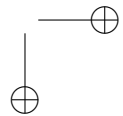
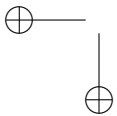


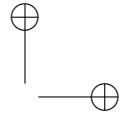


So leave your ledgers, banish melancholy,
Remembering you will get no drink in Hell.
Take a day off from prudence: it is well
To give a timely hour to folly.

It is unfortunate that the friend who figures in this piece should have been called Virgilius, for the name has led several modern scholars, headed by Bentley, to identify him with Virgil. The tradition of the Scholiasts gives no countenance to such a view; and it is blasphemous to suppose that Horace would have addressed this cheery and entirely inappropriate banter to the beloved poet – dead six years before the Fourth Book was published – of whom he had written with such tenderness and veneration in *Sic te diva* (I.III) and *Quis desiderio* (I.XXIV).

Procne (some say Philomela), daughter of Cecrops King of Athens and wife of Tereus King of Thrace, punished her husband for the attempted rape of her sister Philomela (some say Procne) by serving-up her own little son Itys at a banquet. In the sequel Procne was turned into a swallow and Philomela into a nightingale. Horace calls the murderess merely *infelix avis*, which might apply to either sister, but seems more suggestive of the nightingale. I have followed him in the poetic licence of putting Tereus into the plural, which happened to suit us both.

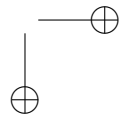
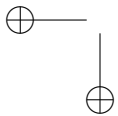


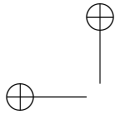


XIII

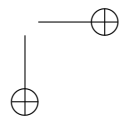
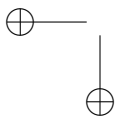
AUDIVERE LYCE

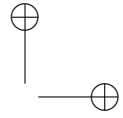
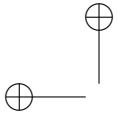
The Gods have heard me, Lyce, heard my prayer!
Lyce, the Gods have heard me! You grow old,
 Yet still you would seem fair,
And vainly ply your piteous tricks to hold
Reluctant Cupid with your tipsy singing;
But that new harp-player, the lovely Greek,
 Has him already winging
To keep fond watch on her soft spring-time cheek.
For Cupid has no use, ungallant fellow,
For last year's Christmas-trees, and flies away
 Now that your teeth are yellow,
Your forehead puckered, and your hair gone gray
Under the dye. No Tyrian purple bright
Nor sparkling orient jewels can recall
 One day, one vanished night,
Once sealed in Time's unalterable scroll.
Where is the beauty fled? ah Gods above!
The glow, the grace? what have you now of her –
 Of her, whose breath was love,
Who stole me from myself? whose only peer
Was that sweet Cynara, lodestar of all eyes,
And to all memories dear; but surly Fate,
 Harsh baffler of surmise,
To Cynara gave all too brief a date –





To Lyce, the long years of an old crow,
That so our lusty youth on mockery bent
Might quiz the sorry show,
The once-bright torch in guttered ashes spent.





XIV

QUAE CURA PATRUM

With what heaped dignities or long renown,
By pen or chisel to ages handed down,
Shall Fathers or Quirites celebrate
Thy matchless service to the State,

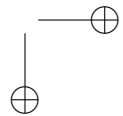
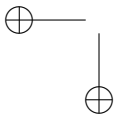
Augustus, mightiest lord, whose fame hath run
Throughout all lands of men that know the sun:
Whose martial power those tribes so lately felt
That on their savage hills had dwelt

Witless of Latin laws? for armed by thee
Drusus with double toll of victory
O'erthrew the swift-foot Brennians and the fell
Genaunians in their citadel

Built high on formidable alps; meantime
The elder Claudius, in thy strength sublime,
Joined battle, and with happy augur
Smote the huge Rhaetians hip and thigh,

While all admired that with relentless wrath
On hearts by Freedom schooled to scorn of death
He poured destruction in the field of Mars,
As, when aloft the Sister Stars

Shine through torn clouds, impetuous Auster raves,
And harries with fierce blast the tameless waves,
Even so he cleft the hostile ranks, and rode
His quivering steed through fire and blood.





Like Aufidus, that o'er the Apulian plains
Rolls his broad stream, when swoln with summer rains
He whets his rage and with uplifted horn
Devises deluge on the corn,

So Claudius with mighty legions massed
Overwhelmed the barbarous foemen, first and last,
And foot by foot advancing without scathe
Mowed at his ease the tottering swathe.

But thine the counsel, thine the armed array,
And thine the favouring Gods; for since the day
When suppliant Egypt yielded up her ports
And palace's deserted courts,

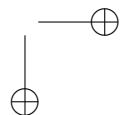
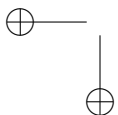
Fortune, three lustres wavering, veered no more,
But stamping thee her choice for lord of war
Confirmed thee in the eternity of fame
Wherewith thy conquests deck thy name.

Thee the arrogant Cantabrian, thee the Mede,
Thee the far Indian and wild Scythian breed
Acknowledges as shield and halidom
Of Italy and queenly Rome.

Thee Nile, who hides the secret of his springs,
Hister, and Tigris, bath of Eastern kings,
And thee the monster-ridden seas adore
That round the coasts of Britain roar.

Thou the proud lands of death-defying Gaul
And fields of grim Hiberia dost enthrall;
Their arms put by, the fierce Sygambrian folk,
Subdued to peace, thy name invoke.

For the Claudian brothers see the note on III.iv. The callous totalitarian cruelty of the fifth stanza is the worst blot on Horace's poetical character.





XV

PHOEBUS VOLENTEM

Or stricken fields and conquered towns I planned
High singing; but Apollo on his lyre
 Twangled a warning, not to aspire
So high, nor risk my skiff too far from land.

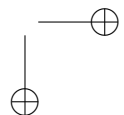
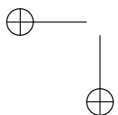
Thine Age, great Caesar, to our fields restores
Their fatness; now in Jove's avengèd shrine
 Once more the captured eagles shine
That blazed our shame on Parthia's temple doors,

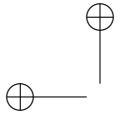
And Janus' Gates of War stand shut. Thy rein
Hath curbed the froward passions that brought
 Our honour and our pride to nought,
And to the ancient arts we turn again

Which nursed the strength of Italy, and spread
Far forth her empire's majesty and fame,
 Emblazoning the Latin name
From the sun's rising to his western bed.

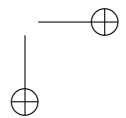
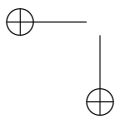
Under thy guardian hand, no storm of hate
Shall banish peace, no kindred blood outpoured,
 Nor wrath, fell anvil of the sword,
Mover of woeful strife in city and state.

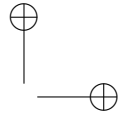
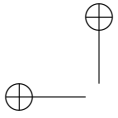
No tribe that drinks of Danube or of Don,
Nor Tartar fire nor Persian treachery,
 The Julian edict shall defy;
No Thracian highland but thy sway shall own.





And we, on work-a-day and holy days,
Blessing good Bacchus for his gifts of mirth,
 With wives and children round our hearth,
Paying the Gods their due of prayer and praise,
Will sing our storied names with rites of yore
And jocund harmony of voice and lyre,
 Telling of Troy and our great sire
Whom bounteous Venus to Anchises bore.





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