ARETE:

An Introduction to the Classics

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SELECTIONS FROM *THE REPUBLIC* BY PLATO

BOOKS VI AND VII

504 a "What was it?"

b "We were, I believe, saying that in order to get the finest possible look at these things another and longer road around would be required, and to the man who took it they would become evident, but that proofs on a level with what had been said up to then could be tacked on. And you all said that that would suffice. And so, you see, the statements made at that time were, as it looks to me, deficient in precision. If they were satisfactory to you, only you can tell."

"They were satisfactory to me, within measure," he said. "And it looks as though they were for the others too."

c "My friend," I said, "a measure in such things, which in any way falls short of that which *is*, is no measure at all. For nothing incomplete is the measure of anything. But certain men are sometimes of the opinion that this question has already been adequately disposed of and that there is no need to seek further."

"Easygoingness," he said, "causes quite a throng of men to have this experience."

"Well," I said, "it's an experience a guardian of a city and of laws hardly needs."

"That's likely," he said.

"Well then, my comrade," I said, "such a man must go the longer
d way around and labor no less at study than at gymnastic, or else, as we were just saying, he'll never come to the end of the greatest and most fitting study."

"So these aren't the greatest," he said, "but there is something yet greater than justice and the other things we went through?"

"There is both something greater," I said, "and also even for these very virtues it won't do to look at a sketch, as we did a while ago, but their most perfect elaboration must not be stinted. Or isn't it ridiculous
e to make every effort so that other things of little worth be as precise and pure as can be, while not deeming the greatest things worth the greatest precision?"

"That's a very worthy thought," he said. "However, as to what you mean by the greatest study and what it concerns, do you think anyone is going to let you go without asking what it is?"

"Certainly not," I said. "Just ask. At all events, it's not a few times already that you have heard it; but now you are either not think-
505 a ing or have it in mind to get hold of me again and cause me trouble. I suppose it's rather the latter, since you have many times heard that the *idea* of the good is the greatest study and that it's by availing oneself of it along with just things and the rest that they become useful and beneficial. And now you know pretty certainly that I'm going to say

this and, besides this, that we don't have sufficient knowledge of it. 505 *a*
And, if we don't know it and should have ever so much knowledge of the rest without this, you know that it's no profit to us, just as there would be none in possessing something in the absence of the good. Or do you suppose it's of any advantage to possess everything except *b*
what's good? Or to be prudent about everything else in the absence of the good, while being prudent about nothing fine and good?"

"No, by Zeus," he said. "I don't."

"And, further, you also know that in the opinion of the many the good is pleasure, while in that of the more refined it is prudence."

"Of course."

"And, my friend, that those who believe this can't point out what kind of prudence it is, but are finally compelled to say 'about the good.' "

"And it's quite ridiculous of them," he said.

"Of course, it is," I said, "if they reproach us for not knowing the *c*
good, and then speak as though we did know. For they say it is prudence about the good as though we, in turn, grasped what they mean when they utter the name of the good."

"Very true," he said.

"And what about those who define pleasure as good? Are they any less full of confusion than the others? Or aren't they too compelled to agree that there are bad pleasures?"

"Indeed they are."

"Then I suppose the result is that they agree that the same things are good and bad, isn't it?"

"Of course." *d*

"Isn't it clear that there are many great disputes about it?"

"Of course."

"And what about this? Isn't it clear that many men would choose to do, possess, and enjoy the reputation for things that are opined to be just and fair, even if they aren't, while, when it comes to good things, no one is satisfied with what is opined to be so but each seeks the things that *are*, and from here on out everyone despises the opinion?"

"Quite so," he said.

"Now this is what every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does everything. The soul divines that it is something but is at a loss *e*
about it and unable to get a sufficient grasp of just what it is, or to have a stable trust such as it has about the rest. And because this is so, the soul loses any profit there might have been in the rest. Will we say that even those best men in the city, into whose hands we put everything, must be thus in the dark about a thing of this kind and importance?" 506 *a*

506 a "Least of all," he said.

"I suppose, at least," I said, "that just and fair things, when it isn't known in what way they are good, won't have gotten themselves a guardian who's worth very much in the man who doesn't know this. I divine that no one will adequately know the just and fair things themselves before this is known."

"That's a fine divination of yours," he said.

"Won't our regime be perfectly ordered if such a guardian, one
b who knows these things, oversees it?"

"Necessarily," he said. "But now, Socrates, do you say that the good is knowledge, or pleasure, or something else beside these?"

"Here's a real man!" I said. "It's been pretty transparent all along that other people's opinions about these things wouldn't be enough for you."

"It doesn't appear just to me, Socrates," he said, "to be ready to tell other people's convictions but not your own when you have spent so
c much time occupied with these things."

"And what about this?" I said. "Is it your opinion that it's just to speak about what one doesn't know as though one knew?"

"Not at all as though one knew," he said; "however, one ought to be willing to state what one supposes, as one's supposition."

"What?" I said. "Haven't you noticed that all opinions without knowledge are ugly? The best of them are blind. Or do men who opine something true without intelligence seem to you any different from blind men who travel the right road?"

"No," he said.

"Do you want to see ugly things, blind and crooked, when it's
d possible to hear bright and fair ones from others?"

"No, in the name of Zeus, Socrates," said Glaucon. "You're not going to withdraw when you are, as it were, at the end. It will satisfy us even if you go through the good just as you went through justice, moderation and the rest."

"It will quite satisfy me too, my comrade," I said. "But I fear I'll not be up to it, and in my eagerness I'll cut a graceless figure and have to pay the penalty by suffering ridicule. But, you blessed men, let's
e leave aside for the time being what the good itself is—for it looks to me as though it's out of the range of our present thrust to attain the opinions I now hold about it. But I'm willing to tell what looks like a child of the good and most similar to it, if you please, or if not, to let it go."

"Do tell," he said. "Another time you'll pay us what's due on the father's narrative."

507 a "I could wish," I said, "that I were able to pay and you were able

to receive it itself, and not just the interest, as is the case now. Anyhow, receive this interest and child of the good itself. But be careful that I don't in some way unwillingly deceive you in rendering the account of the interest fraudulent."[31] *507a*

"We'll be as careful as we possibly can," he said. "Just speak."

"Yes," I said, "as soon as I've come to an agreement and reminded you of the things stated here earlier and already often repeated on other occasions."

"What are they?" he said. *b*

"We both assert that there are," I said, "and distinguish in speech, many fair things, many good things, and so on for each kind of thing."

"Yes, so we do."

"And we also assert that there is a fair itself, a good itself, and so on for all the things that we then set down as many. Now, again, we refer them to one *idea* of each as though the *idea* were one; and we address it as that which really *is*."

"That's so."

"And, moreover, we say that the former are seen but not intellected, while the *ideas* are intellected but not seen."

"That's entirely certain."

"With what part of ourselves do we see the things seen?" *c*

"With the sight," he said.

"Isn't it with hearing," I said, "that we hear the things heard, and with the other senses that we sense all that is sensed?"

"Of course."

"Have you," I said, "reflected on how lavish the craftsman of the senses was in the fabrication of the power of seeing and being seen?"

"Not very much," he said.

"Well consider it in this way. Is there a need for another class of thing in addition to hearing and sound in order that the one hear and the other be heard—a third thing in the absence of which the one won't hear and the other won't be heard?" *d*

"No," he said.

"I suppose," I said, "that there are not many other things, not to say none, that need anything of the kind. Or can you tell of any?"

"Not I," he said.

"Don't you notice that the power of seeing and what's seen do have such a need?"

"How?"

"Surely, when sight is in the eyes and the man possessing them tries to make use of it, and color is present in what is to be seen, in the absence of a third class of thing whose nature is specifically directed to

507 e this very purpose, you know that the sight will see nothing and the colors will be unseen."

"What class of thing are you speaking of?" he said.

"It's that which you call light," I said.

"What you say is true," he said.

"Then the sense of sight and the power of being seen are yoked together with a yoke that, by the measure of an *idea* by no *508 a* means insignificant, is more honorable than the yokes uniting other teams, if light is not without honor."

"But, of course," he said, "it's far from being without honor."

"Which of the gods in heaven can you point to as the lord responsible for this, whose light makes our sight see in the finest way and the seen things seen?"

"The very one you and the others would also point to," he said. "For it's plain your question refers to the sun."

"Is sight, then, naturally related to this god in the following way?"

"How?"

"Neither sight itself nor that in which it comes to be—what we *b* call the eye—is the sun."

"Surely not."

"But I suppose it is the most sunlike[32] of the organs of the senses."

"Yes, by far."

"Doesn't it get the power it has as a sort of overflow from the sun's treasury?"

"Most certainly."

"And the sun isn't sight either, is it, but as its cause is seen by sight itself?"

"That's so," he said.

"Well, then," I said, "say that the sun is the offspring of the good I mean—an offspring the good begot in a proportion with itself: as the *c* good is in the intelligible region with respect to intelligence and what is intellected, so the sun is in the visible region with respect to sight and what is seen."

"How?" he said. "Explain it to me still further."

"You know," I said, "that eyes, when one no longer turns them to those things over whose colors the light of day extends but to those over which the gleams of night extend, are dimmed and appear nearly blind as though pure sight were not in them."

"Quite so," he said.

d "But, I suppose, when one turns them on those things illuminated by the sun, they see clearly and sight shows itself to be in these same eyes."

"Surely." *508 d*

"Well, then, think that the soul is also characterized in this way. When it fixes itself on that which is illumined by truth and that which *is*, it intellects, knows, and appears to possess intelligence. But when it fixes itself on that which is mixed with darkness, on coming into being and passing away, it opines and is dimmed, changing opinions up and down, and seems at such times not to possess intelligence."

"Yes, that's the way it seems."

"Therefore, say that what provides the truth to the things known *e* and gives the power to the one who knows, is the *idea* of the good. And, as the cause of the knowledge and truth, you can understand it to be a thing known; but, as fair as these two are—knowledge and truth—if you believe that it is something different from them and still fairer than they, your belief will be right. As for knowledge and truth, just as in the other region it is right to hold light and sight sunlike, but *509 a* to believe them to be sun is not right; so, too, here, to hold these two to be like the good is right, but to believe that either of them is the good is not right. The condition which characterizes the good must receive still greater honor."

"You speak of an overwhelming beauty," he said, "if it provides knowledge and truth but is itself beyond them in beauty. You surely don't mean it is pleasure."

"Hush,[33] Glaucon," I said. "But consider its image still further in this way."

"How?" *b*

"I suppose you'll say the sun not only provides what is seen with the power of being seen, but also with generation, growth, and nourishment although it itself isn't generation."

"Of course."

"Therefore, say that not only being known is present in the things known as a consequence of the good, but also existence and being are in them besides as a result of it, although the good isn't being but is still beyond being, exceeding it in dignity[34] and power."

And Glaucon, quite ridiculously, said, "Apollo, what a demonic *c* excess."

"You," I said, "are responsible for compelling me to tell my opinions about it."

"And don't under any conditions stop," he said, "at least until you have gone through the likeness with the sun, if you are leaving anything out."

"But, of course," I said, "I am leaving out a throng of things."

"Well," he said, "don't leave even the slightest thing aside."

509 c "I suppose I will leave out quite a bit," I said. "But all the same, insofar as it's possible at present, I'll not leave anything out willingly."

"Don't," he said.

d "Well, then," I said, "conceive that, as we say, these two things *are*, and that the one is king of the intelligible class and region, while the other is king of the visible. I don't say 'of the heaven' so as not to seem to you to be playing the sophist with the name.[35] Now, do you have these two forms, visible and intelligible?"

"I do."

"Then, take a line cut in two unequal segments, one for the class that is seen, the other for the class that is intellected—and go on and cut each segment in the same ratio. Now, in terms of relative clarity and obscurity, you'll have one segment in the visible part for

e images. I mean by images first shadows, then appearances produced in

510 a water and in all close-grained, smooth, bright things, and everything of the sort, if you understand."

"I do understand."

"Then in the other segment put that of which this first is the likeness—the animals around us, and everything that grows, and the whole class of artifacts."

"I put them there," he said.

"And would you also be willing," I said, "to say that with respect to truth or lack of it, as the opinable is distinguished from the knowable, so the likeness is distinguished from that of which it is the likeness?"

b "I would indeed," he said.

"Now, in its turn, consider also how the intelligible section should be cut."

"How?"

"Like this: in one part of it a soul, using as images the things that were previously imitated, is compelled to investigate on the basis of hypotheses and makes its way not to a beginning but to an end; while in the other part it makes its way to a beginning[36] that is free from hypotheses,[37] starting out from hypothesis and without the images used in the other part, by means of forms themselves it makes its inquiry through them."

"I don't," he said, "sufficiently understand what you mean here."

c "Let's try again," I said. "You'll understand more easily after this introduction. I suppose you know that the men who work in geometry, calculation, and the like treat as known the odd and the even, the figures, three forms of angles, and other things akin to these in each kind of inquiry. These things they make hypotheses and don't think it worthwhile to give any further account of them to themselves or others,

as though they were clear to all. Beginning from them, they go ahead with their exposition of what remains and end consistently at the object toward which their investigation was directed." *510 d*

"Most certainly, I know that," he said.

"Don't you also know that they use visible forms besides and make their arguments about them, not thinking about them but about those others that they are like? They make the arguments for the sake of the square itself and the diagonal itself, not for the sake of the diagonal they draw, and likewise with the rest. These things themselves *e* that they mold and draw, of which there are shadows and images in water, they now use as images, seeking to see those things themselves, that one can see in no other way than with thought."

"What you say is true," he said. *511 a*

"Well, then, this is the form I said was intelligible. However, a soul in investigating it is compelled to use hypotheses, and does not go to a beginning because it is unable to step out above the hypotheses. And it uses as images those very things of which images are made by the things below, and in comparison with which they are opined to be clear and are given honor."

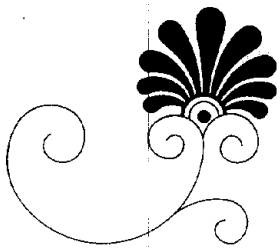
"I understand," he said, "that you mean what falls under geometry and its kindred arts." *b*

"Well, then, go on to understand that by the other segment of the intelligible I mean that which argument itself grasps with the power of dialectic, making the hypotheses not beginnings but really hypotheses—that is, steppingstones and springboards—in order to reach what is free from hypothesis at the beginning of the whole.[38] When it has grasped this, argument now depends on that which depends on this beginning and in such fashion goes back down again to an end; making no use of anything sensed in any way, but using forms themselves, going through forms to forms, it ends in forms too." *c*

"I understand," he said, "although not adequately—for in my opinion it's an enormous task you speak of—that you wish to distinguish that part of what is and is intelligible contemplated by the knowledge of dialectic as being clearer than that part contemplated by what are called the arts. The beginnings in the arts are hypotheses; and although those who behold their objects are compelled to do so with the thought and not the senses, these men—because they don't consider them by going up to a beginning, but rather on the basis of hypotheses—these men, in my opinion, don't possess intelligence *d* with respect to the objects, even though they are, given a beginning, intelligible; and you seem to me to call the habit of geometers and their likes thought and not intelligence, indicating that thought is something between opinion and intelligence."

511 d "You have made a most adequate exposition," I said. "And, along with me, take these four affections arising in the soul in relation to the four segments: intellection in relation to the highest one, and thought in e relation to the second; to the third assign trust, and to the last imagination.[39] Arrange them in a proportion, and believe that as the segments to which they correspond participate in truth, so they participate in clarity."

"I understand," he said. "And I agree and arrange them as you say."



BOOK VII

"Next, then," I said, "make an image of our nature in its education and want of education, likening it to a condition of the following kind. See human beings as though they were in an underground cave-like dwelling with its entrance, a long one, open to the light across the whole width of the cave. They are in it from childhood with their legs and necks in bonds so that they are fixed, seeing only in front of them, unable because of the bond to turn their heads all the way around. Their light is from a fire burning far above and behind them. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a road above, along which see a wall, built like the partitions puppet-handlers set in front of the human beings and over which they show the puppets." *514 a* *b*

"I see," he said.

"Then also see along this wall human beings carrying all sorts of artifacts, which project above the wall, and statues of men and other animals wrought from stone, wood, and every kind of material; as is to be expected, some of the carriers utter sounds while others are silent." *c* *515 a*

"It's a strange image," he said, "and strange prisoners you're telling of."

"They're like us," I said. "For in the first place, do you suppose such men would have seen anything of themselves and one another other than the shadows cast by the fire on the side of the cave facing them?"

515 a "How could they," he said, "if they had been compelled to keep
b their heads motionless throughout life?"

"And what about the things that are carried by? Isn't it the same with them?"

"Of course."

"If they were able to discuss things with one another, don't you believe they would hold that they are naming these things going by before them that they see?"[1]

"Necessarily."

"And what if the prison also had an echo from the side facing them? Whenever one of the men passing by happens to utter a sound, do you suppose they would believe that anything other than the passing shadow was uttering the sound?"

"No, by Zeus," he said. "I don't."

c "Then most certainly," I said, "such men would hold that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of artificial things."

"Most necessarily," he said.

"Now consider," I said, "what their release and healing from bonds and folly would be like if something of this sort were by nature to happen to them. Take a man who is released and suddenly compelled to stand up, to turn his neck around, to walk and look up toward the light; and who, moreover, in doing all this is in pain and, because he is dazzled, is unable to make out those things whose shadows he saw
d before. What do you suppose he'd say if someone were to tell him that before he saw silly nothings, while now, because he is somewhat nearer to what *is* and more turned toward beings, he sees more correctly; and, in particular, showing him each of the things that pass by, were to compel the man to answer his questions about what they are? Don't you suppose he'd be at a loss and believe that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown?"

"Yes," he said, "by far."

e "And, if he compelled him to look at the light itself, would his eyes hurt and would he flee, turning away to those things that he is able to make out and hold them to be really clearer than what is being shown?"

"So he would," he said.

"And if," I said, "someone dragged him away from there by force along the rough, steep, upward way and didn't let him go before he had dragged him out into the light of the sun, wouldn't he be distressed and
516 a annoyed at being so dragged? And when he came to the light, wouldn't he have his eyes full of its beam and be unable to see even one of the things now said to be true?"

"No, he wouldn't," he said, "at least not right away." *516 a*

"Then I suppose he'd have to get accustomed, if he were going to see what's up above. At first he'd most easily make out the shadows; and after that the phantoms of the human beings and the other things in water; and, later, the things themselves. And from there he could turn to beholding the things in heaven and heaven itself, more easily at night—looking at the light of the stars and the moon—than by *b* day—looking at the sun and sunlight."

"Of course."

"Then finally I suppose he would be able to make out the sun—not its appearances in water or some alien place, but the sun itself by itself in its own region—and see what it's like."

"Necessarily," he said.

"And after that he would already be in a position to conclude about it that this is the source of the seasons and the years, and is the steward of all things in the visible place, and is in a certain way the *c* cause of all those things he and his companions had been seeing."

"It's plain," he said, "that this would be his next step."

"What then? When he recalled his first home and the wisdom there, and his fellow prisoners in that time, don't you suppose he would consider himself happy for the change and pity the others?"

"Quite so."

"And if in that time there were among them any honors, praises, and prizes for the man who is sharpest at making out the things that go by, and most remembers which of them are accustomed to pass before, which after, and which at the same time as others, and who is *d* thereby most able to divine what is going to come, in your opinion would he be desirous of them and envy those who are honored and hold power among these men? Or, rather, would he be affected as Homer says and want very much 'to be on the soil, a serf to another man, to a portionless man,'[2] and to undergo anything whatsoever rather than to opine those things and live that way?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose he would prefer to undergo everything *e* rather than live that way."

"Now reflect on this too," I said. "If such a man were to come down again and sit in the same seat, on coming suddenly from the sun wouldn't his eyes get infected with darkness?"

"Very much so," he said.

"And if he once more had to compete with those perpetual prisoners in forming judgments about those shadows while his vision was still dim, before his eyes had recovered, and if the time *517 a* needed for getting accustomed were not at all short, wouldn't he be

517 a the source of laughter, and wouldn't it be said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted, and that it's not even worth trying to go up? And if they were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead up, wouldn't they kill him?"

"No doubt about it," he said.

"Well, then, my dear Glaucon," I said, "this image as a whole b must be connected with what was said before. Liken the domain revealed through sight to the prison home, and the light of the fire in it to the sun's power; and, in applying the going up and the seeing of what's above to the soul's journey up to the intelligible place, you'll not mistake my expectation, since you desire to hear it. A god doubtless knows if it happens to be true. At all events, this is the way the phenomena look to me: in the knowable the last thing to be seen, and c that with considerable effort, is the *idea* of the good; but once seen, it must be concluded that this is in fact the cause of all that is right and fair in everything—in the visible it gave birth to light and its sovereign; in the intelligible, itself sovereign, it provided truth and intelligence —and that the man who is going to act prudently in private or in public must see it."

"I, too, join you in supposing that," he said, "at least in the way I can."

"Come, then," I said, "and join me in supposing this, too, and don't be surprised that the men who get to that point aren't willing to mind the business of human beings, but rather that their souls are al- d ways eager to spend their time above. Surely that's likely, if indeed this, too, follows the image of which I told before."

"Of course it's likely," he said.

"And what about this? Do you suppose it is anything surprising," I said, "if a man, come from acts of divine contemplation to the human evils, is graceless and looks quite ridiculous when—with his sight still dim and before he has gotten sufficiently accustomed to the surrounding darkness—he is compelled in courts or elsewhere to contest about the shadows of the just or the representations of which they are the e shadows, and to dispute about the way these things are understood by men who have never seen justice itself?"

"It's not at all surprising," he said.

518 a "But if a man were intelligent," I said, "he would remember that there are two kinds of disturbances of the eyes, stemming from two sources—when they have been transferred from light to darkness and when they have been transferred from darkness to light. And if he held that these same things happen to a soul too, whenever he saw one that is confused and unable to make anything out, he wouldn't laugh

without reasoning but would go on to consider whether, come from a brighter life, it is in darkness for want of being accustomed, or whether, going from greater lack of learning to greater brightness, it is dazzled by the greater brilliance. And then he would deem the first soul happy for its condition and its life, while he would pity the second. And, if he wanted to laugh at the second soul, his laughing in this case would be less a laugh of scorn than would his laughing at the soul which has come from above out of the light." *518 a* *b*

"What you say is quite sensible," he said.

"Then, if this is true," I said, "we must hold the following about these things: education is not what the professions of certain men assert it to be. They presumably assert that they put into the soul knowledge that isn't in it, as though they were putting sight into blind eyes." *c*

"Yes," he said, "they do indeed assert that."

"But the present argument, on the other hand," I said, "indicates that this power is in the soul of each,[3] and that the instrument with which each learns—just as an eye is not able to turn toward the light from the dark without the whole body—must be turned around from that which *is coming into being* together with the whole soul until it is able to endure looking at that which *is* and the brightest part of that which *is*. And we affirm that this is the good, don't we?" *d*

"Yes."

"There would, therefore," I said, "be an art of this turning around, concerned with the way in which this power can most easily and efficiently be turned around, not an art of producing sight in it. Rather, this art takes as given that sight is there, but not rightly turned nor looking at what it ought to look at, and accomplishes this object."

"So it seems," he said.

"Therefore, the other virtues of a soul, as they are called, are probably somewhat close to those of the body. For they are really not there beforehand and are later produced by habits and exercises, while the virtue of exercising prudence is more than anything somehow more divine, it seems; it never loses its power, but according to the way it is turned, it becomes useful and helpful or, again, useless and harmful. Or haven't you yet reflected about the men who are said to be vicious but wise, how shrewdly their petty soul sees and how sharply it distinguishes those things toward which it is turned, showing that it doesn't have poor vision although it is compelled to serve vice; so that the sharper it sees, the more evil it accomplishes?" *e* *519 a*

"Most certainly," he said.

"However," I said, "if this part of such a nature were trimmed in earliest childhood and its ties of kinship with becoming were cut off—like leaden weights, which eating and such pleasures as well as *b*

519 b their refinements naturally attach to the soul and turn its vision downward—if, I say, it were rid of them and turned around toward the true things, this same part of the same human beings would also see them most sharply, just as it does those things toward which it now is turned."

"It's likely," he said.

"And what about this? Isn't it likely," I said, "and necessary, as a consequence of what was said before, that those who are without education and experience of truth would never be adequate stewards of
c a city, nor would those who have been allowed to spend their time in education continuously to the end—the former because they don't have any single goal in life at which they must aim in doing everything they do in private or in public, the latter because they won't be willing to act, believing they have emigrated to a colony on the Isles of the Blessed[4] while they are still alive?"

"True," he said.

"Then our job as founders," I said, "is to compel the best natures to go to the study which we were saying before is the greatest, to see the
d good and to go up that ascent; and, when they have gone up and seen sufficiently, not to permit them what is now permitted."

"What's that?"

"To remain there," I said, "and not be willing to go down again among those prisoners or share their labors and honors, whether they be slighter or more serious."

"What?" he said. "Are we to do them an injustice, and make them live a worse life when a better is possible for them?"

e "My friend, you have again forgotten," I said, "that it's not the concern of law that any one class in the city fare exceptionally well, but it contrives to bring this about in the city as a whole, harmonizing the citizens by persuasion and compulsion, making them share with one
520 a another the benefit that each is able to bring to the commonwealth. And it produces such men in the city not in order to let them turn whichever way each wants, but in order that it may use them in binding the city together."

"That's true," he said. "I did forget."

"Well, then, Glaucon," I said, "consider that we won't be doing injustice to the philosophers who come to be among us, but rather that we will say just things to them while compelling them besides to care for and guard the others. We'll say that when such men come to be
b in the other cities it is fitting for them not to participate in the labors of those cities. For they grow up spontaneously against the will of the regime in each; and a nature that grows by itself and doesn't owe its rearing to anyone has justice on its side when it is not eager to pay off

the price of rearing to anyone. 'But you we have begotten for yourselves and for the rest of the city like leaders and kings in hives; you have been better and more perfectly educated and are more able to participate in both lives. So you must go down, each in his turn, into the common dwelling of the others and get habituated along with them to seeing the dark things. And, in getting habituated to it, you will see ten thousand times better than the men there, and you'll know what each of the phantoms is, and of what it is a phantom, because you have seen the truth about fair, just, and good things. And thus, the city will be governed by us and by you in a state of waking, not in a dream as the many cities nowadays are governed by men who fight over shadows with one another and form factions for the sake of ruling, as though it were some great good. But the truth is surely this: that city in which those who are going to rule are least eager to rule is necessarily governed in the way that is best and freest from faction, while the one that gets the opposite kind of rulers is governed in the opposite way.'"

"Most certainly," he said.

"Do you suppose our pupils will disobey us when they hear this and be unwilling to join in the labors of the city, each in his turn, while living the greater part of the time with one another in the pure region?"

"Impossible," he said. "For surely we shall be laying just injunctions on just men. However, each of them will certainly approach ruling as a necessary thing—which is the opposite of what is done by those who now rule in every city."

"That's the way it is, my comrade," I said. "If you discover a life better than ruling for those who are going to rule, it is possible that your well-governed city will come into being. For here alone will the really rich rule, rich not in gold but in those riches required by the happy man, rich in a good and prudent life. But if beggars, men hungering for want of private goods, go to public affairs supposing that in them they must seize the good, it isn't possible. When ruling becomes a thing fought over, such a war—a domestic war, one within the family—destroys these men themselves and the rest of the city as well."

"That's very true," he said.

"Have you," I said, "any other life that despises political offices other than that of true philosophy?"

"No, by Zeus," he said. "I don't."

"But men who aren't lovers of ruling must go[5] to it; otherwise, rival lovers will fight."

"Of course."

521 b "Who else will you compel to go to the guarding of the city than the men who are most prudent in those things through which a city is best governed, and who have other honors and a better life than the political life?"

"No one else," he said.

c "Do you want us now to consider in what way such men will come into being and how one will lead them up to the light, just as some men are said to have gone from Hades up to the gods?"[6]

"How could I not want to?" he said.

"Then, as it seems, this wouldn't be the twirling of a shell[7] but the turning of a soul around from a day that is like night to the true day; it is that ascent to what *is* which we shall truly affirm to be philosophy."

"Most certainly."

d "Then mustn't we consider what studies have such a power?"

"Of course."

"What then, Glaucon, would be a study to draw the soul from becoming to being? And, as I speak, I think of this. Weren't we saying that it's necessary for these men to be champions in war when they are young?"[8]

— "Yes, we were saying that."

"Then the study we are seeking must have this further characteristic in addition to the former one."

"What?"

"It mustn't be useless to warlike men."

"Of course, it mustn't," he said, "if that can be."

"Now previously they were educated by us in gymnastic and

e music."

"That was so," he said.

"And gymnastic, of course, is wholly engaged with coming into being and passing away. For it oversees growth and decay in the body."

"It looked that way."

"So it wouldn't be the study we are seeking."

522 a "No, it wouldn't."

"And is music, so far as we described it before?"

"But it," he said, "was the antistrophe[9] to gymnastic, if you remember. It educated the guardians through habits, transmitting by harmony a certain harmoniousness, not knowledge, and by rhythm a certain rhythmicalness. And connected with it were certain other habits, akin to these, conveyed by speeches, whether they were tales or speeches of a truer sort. But as for a study directed toward something

b of the sort you are now seeking, there was nothing of the kind in it."

View sonnets

SONNET XCIV

They that have power to hurt and will do
none, That do not do the thing they most
do show, Who, moving others, are
themselves as stone, Unmoved, cold,
and to temptation slow,
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
And husband nature's riches from
expense; They are the lords and
owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection
meet, The basest weed outbraves
his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

The Holy Bible: King James Version. 2000.

The Psalms

1

The Righteous and the Ungodly

1 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor standeth in the way of sinners,
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD;
and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, Jer. 17.8
that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;
his leaf also shall not wither;
and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
4 The ungodly *are* not so:
but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous:
but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The Holy Bible: King James Version. 2000.

The Psalms 127

Prosperity Comes from the LORD

A Song of degrees for Solomon.

1 Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain
that build it: except the LORD keep the city,
the watchman waketh *but* in vain.
2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,
to eat the bread of sorrows:
for so he giveth his beloved sleep.
3 Lo, children *are* a heritage of the LORD:
and the fruit of the womb *is his* reward.
4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children
of the youth.
5 Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be
ashamed,
but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

The Holy Bible: King James Version. 2000.

The Psalms 137

The Mourning of the Exiles in Babylon

1 By the rivers of Babylon,
there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered
Zion.
2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that
wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying,*
Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.
4 How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?
5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand forget *her cunning. 6* If I do not
remember thee,
let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.
7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of
Jerusalem;
who said, Rase *it,* rase *it,*
even to the foundation thereof.
8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed;
happy *shall he be,* that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Rev. 18.6
9 Happy *shall he be,* that taketh and dasheth thy little ones
against the stones.

John Keats (1795–1821). The Poetical Works of John Keats. 1884.

41. Ode on a Grecian Urn

1.

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

2.

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

3.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

4.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89). Poems. 1918.

7. God’s Grandeur

THE WORLD is charged with the grandeur of God.
  It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
  It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
  And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
  And wears man’s smudge and shares man’s smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
  There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
  Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
  World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Sailing To Byzantium

William Butler Yeats

I

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

Love Calls Us to the Things of This World

BY RICHARD WILBUR

The eyes open to a cry of pulleys,
And spirited from sleep, the astounded soul
Hangs for a moment bodiless and simple
As false dawn.
Outside the open window
The morning air is all awash with angels.

Some are in bed-sheets, some are in blouses,
Some are in smocks: but truly there they are.
Now they are rising together in calm swells
Of halcyon feeling, filling whatever they wear
With the deep joy of their impersonal breathing;

Now they are flying in place, conveying
The terrible speed of their omnipresence, moving
And staying like white water; and now of a sudden
They swoon down into so rapt a quiet
That nobody seems to be there.
The soul shrinks

From all that it is about to remember,
From the punctual rape of every blessèd day,
And cries,
"Oh, let there be nothing on earth but laundry,
Nothing but rosy hands in the rising steam
And clear dances done in the sight of heaven."

Yet, as the sun acknowledges
With a warm look the world's hunks and colors,
The soul descends once more in bitter love
To accept the waking body, saying now
In a changed voice as the man yawns and rises,
"Bring them down from their ruddy gallows;
Let there be clean linen for the backs of thieves;
Let lovers go fresh and sweet to be undone,
And the heaviest nuns walk in a pure floating
Of dark habits,
keeping their difficult balance."

Seamus Heaney (1939-)

Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

Under my window a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

- from Death of a Naturalist (1966)

THE BOOK OF JOB

The Book of Job, named after its protagonist, is an exquisite dramatic poem which treats of the problem of the suffering of the innocent, and of retribution. The contents of the book, together with its artistic structure and elegant style, place it among the literary masterpieces of all time.

Job, an oriental chieftain, pious and upright, richly endowed in his own person and in domestic prosperity, suffers a sudden and complete reversal of fortune. He loses his property and his children; a loathsome disease afflicts his body; and sorrow oppresses his soul. Nevertheless, Job does not complain against God. When some friends visit him to condole with him, Job protests his innocence and does not understand why he is afflicted. He curses the day of his birth and longs for death to bring an end to his sufferings. The debate which ensues consists of three cycles of speeches. Job's friends insist that his plight can only be a punishment for personal wrongdoing and an invitation from God to repentance. Job rejects their inadequate explanation and calls for a response from God himself. At this point the speeches of a youth named Elihu (ch 32—37) interrupt the development.

In response to Job's plea that he be allowed to see God and hear from him the cause of his suffering, God answers, not by justifying his action before men, but by referring to his own omniscience and almighty power. Job is content with this. He recovers his attitude of humility and trust in God, which is deepened now and strengthened by his experience of suffering.

The author of the book is not known; it was composed some time between the 7th and 5th centuries B.C. Its literary form, with speeches, prologue and epilogue disposed according to a studied plan, indicates that the purpose of the writing is didactic. The lesson is that even the just may suffer here, and their sufferings are a test of their fidelity. They shall be rewarded in the end. Man's finite mind cannot probe the depths of the divine omniscience that governs the world. The problems we encounter can be solved by a broader and deeper awareness of God's power, presence (42, 5) and wisdom.

The divisions of the Book of Job are as follows: I. Prologue (1, 1—2, 13). II. First Cycle of Speeches (3, 1—14, 22). III. Second Cycle of Speeches (15, 1—21, 34). IV. Third Cycle of Speeches (22, 1—28, 28). V. Job's Final Summary of His Cause (29, 1—31, 37). VI. Elihu's Speeches (32, 1—37, 24). VII. The Lord's Speech (38, 1—42, 6). VIII. Epilogue (42, 7–17).

I: PROLOGUE

CHAPTER 1

Job's Wealth and Piety. 1 In the land of Uz* there was a blameless and upright man named Job,[a] who feared God and avoided evil. 2 * Seven sons and three daughters were born to him; 3 and he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a great number of work animals, so that he was greater than any of the men of the East.* 4 His sons used to take turns giving feasts, sending invitations to their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 And when each feast had run its course, Job would send for them and sanctify them, rising early and offering holocausts for every one of them. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and blasphemed God in their hearts." This Job did habitually.

6 [b] One day, when the sons of God* came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan also came among them.[c] 7 And the LORD said to Satan, "Whence do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said,[d] "From roaming the earth and patrolling it." 8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job, and that there is no one on earth like him, blameless and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil?" 9 But Satan answered the LORD and said, "Is it for nothing that Job is God-fearing? 10 Have you not surrounded him and his family and all that he has with your protection? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his livestock are spread over the land. 11 [e] But now put forth your hand and touch anything that he has, and surely he will blaspheme you to your face." 12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand upon his person." So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

The First Trial. 13 And so one day, while his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother, 14 a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the

a Jb 2, 3.—b 6ff: Jb 2, 1ff.—c Gn 6, 2. 4; Zec 3, 1; Lk 22, 31; Rv 12, 9.—d 1 Pt 5, 8.—e Jb 2, 5.

1, 1: *Uz:* somewhere in Edom or Arabia. *Job:* a not uncommon name in ancient Semitic circles; its original meaning was "enemy."

1, 2f: The numbers mentioned here indicate Job's great wealth and happiness, external proof of God's friendship.

1, 3: *Men of the East:* that is, east of Palestine.

1, 6: *Sons of God:* angels. *Satan:* literally, "adversary."

from: St. Joseph Edition, New American Bible. (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co.)

asses grazing beside them, [15]and the Sabeans* carried them off in a raid. They put the herdsmen to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." [16]While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "Lightning* has fallen from heaven and struck the sheep and their shepherds and consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you." [17]While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three columns, seized the camels, carried them off, and put those tending them to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." [18]While he was yet speaking, another came and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their eldest brother, [19]when suddenly a great wind came across the desert and smote the four corners of the house. It fell upon the young people and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you." [20]Then Job began to tear his cloak and cut off his hair. He cast himself prostrate upon the ground, [21]and said,

"Naked I came forth from my mother's womb,[f]
and naked shall I go back again.*
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
blessed be the name of the LORD!"

[22]In all this Job did not sin,[g] nor did he say anything disrespectful of God.

CHAPTER 2

The Second Trial. [1]Once again the sons of God[h] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. [2]And the LORD said to Satan, "Whence do you come?" and Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming the earth and patrolling it." [3]And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job, and that there is no one on earth like him, faultless and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil?[i] He still holds fast to his innocence although you incited me against him to ruin him without cause." [4]And Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin!* All that a man has will he give for his life. [5] [j] But now put forth your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and surely he will blaspheme you to your face." [6]And the LORD said to Satan, "He is in your power; only spare his life." [7]So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with severe boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. [8]And he took a potsherd to scrape himself, as he sat among the ashes. [9]Then his wife said to him,[k] "Are you still holding to your innocence? Curse God and die."* [10]But he said to her, "Are even you going to speak as senseless women do? We accept good things from God; and should we not accept evil?" Through all this, Job said nothing sinful.[l]

Job's Three Friends. [11]Now when three of Job's friends heard of all the misfortune that had come upon him, they set out each one from his own place: Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuh, and Zophar from Naamath.* They met and journeyed together to give him sympathy and comfort. [12]But when, at a distance, they lifted up their eyes and did not recognize him, they began to weep aloud; they tore their cloaks and threw dust upon their heads. [13]Then they sat down upon the ground with him seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him; for they saw how great was his suffering.

II: FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES

CHAPTER 3

Job's Plaint. [1]After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. [2]Job spoke out and said:

[3] Perish the day on which I was born,[m]
the night when they said, "The child is a boy!"
[4] May that day be darkness:
let not God above call for it,
nor light shine upon it!
[5] May darkness and gloom claim it,
clouds settle upon it,
the blackness of night affright it!
[6]May obscurity seize that day;
let it not occur among the days of the year,

f Ecc 5, 14; 1 Tm 6, 7.—g Jb 2, 10; Jas 5, 11.—h Jb 1, 6.—i Jb 1, 1.—j Jb 1, 11.—k Jb 19, 17.—l Jb 1, 22; Sir 2, 4; Jas 5, 11.—m Jer 20, 14.

1, 15: *Sabeans:* from southern Arabia.
1, 16: *Lightning:* literally, "God's fire."
1, 21: *Go back again:* to the earth; cf Gn 2, 7; Sir 40, 1.
2, 4: *Skin for skin:* an expression which, as applied to Job, means that he has borne his suffering patiently thus far only because he seeks to avoid greater suffering and to receive greater favors from God.
2, 9: *Curse God and die:* you have nothing to hope for from God and therefore nothing to live for.
2, 11: The names of Job's friends suggest Edomite origin. The Edomites (Ob 8f) and more specifically the Temanites (Jer 49, 7) enjoyed a reputation for wisdom.

nor enter into the count of the months!

7 May that night be barren;
let no joyful outcry greet it!
8 Let them curse it who curse the sea,
the appointed disturbers of Leviathan!*
9 May the stars of its twilight be darkened;
may it look for daylight, but have none,
nor gaze on the eyes of the dawn,
10 Because it kept not shut the doors of the womb
to shield my eyes from trouble!

11 Why did I not perish at birth,[n]
come forth from the womb and expire?
16 Or why was I not buried away like an untimely birth,*
like babes that have never seen the light?
12 Wherefore did the knees receive me?
or why did I suck at the breasts?

13 For then I should have lain down and been tranquil;
had I slept, I should then have been at rest
14 With kings and counselors of the earth
who built where now there are ruins
15 Or with princes who had gold
and filled their houses with silver.

17 There* the wicked cease from troubling,
there the weary are at rest.
18 There the captives are at ease together,
and hear not the voice of the slave driver.
19 Small and great are there the same,
and the servant is free from his master.
20 Why is light given to the toilers,
and life to the bitter in spirit?
21 They wait for death and it comes not;
they search for it rather than for hidden treasures,
22 Rejoice in it exultingly,
and are glad when they reach the grave:
23 Men whose path is hidden from them,
and whom God has hemmed in!

24 For sighing comes more readily to me than food,
and my groans well forth like water.
25 For what I fear overtakes me,
and what I shrink from comes upon me.
26 I have no peace nor ease;
I have no rest, for trouble comes!

CHAPTER 4

Eliphaz's First Speech. 1 Then spoke Eliphaz the Temanite, who said:

2 If someone attempts a word with you, will you mind?
For how can anyone refrain from speaking?
3 Behold, you have instructed many,
and have made firm their feeble hands.
4 Your words have upheld the stumbler;
you have strengthened his faltering knees.
5 But now that it comes to you, you are impatient;
when it touches yourself, you are dismayed.
6 Is not your piety a source of confidence,
and your integrity of life your hope?

7 Reflect now, what innocent person perishes?[o]
Since when are the upright destroyed?
8 As I see it, those who plow for mischief
and sow trouble, reap the same.
9 By the breath of God they perish,[p]
and by the blast of his wrath they are consumed.
10 Though the lion* roars, though the king of beasts cries out,
yet the teeth of the young lions are broken;
11 The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

n Jb 10, 18f.—o Ps 37, 25.—p Ps 18, 16; Is 11, 4; 2 Thes 2, 8.

3, 8: *Leviathan:* in Jb 40, 25, the crocodile; here the reference is probably to a mythological sea monster symbolizing primeval chaos. Cf Jb 9, 13; 26, 13; Pss 74, 13f; 104, 26; Is 27, 1.

3, 16: This verse has been placed between vv 11 and 12 where it probably stood originally. There is reason to believe that here, as well as in several other places in Job, the original order of the poetic lines was accidentally disturbed in the early transmission of the text; so in chapters 12-15; 19-21; 24-31; 34; 36; 38-42. The verse numbers given in such cases are always those of the current Hebrew text, though the arrangement may differ. The footnotes will advise the reader of the difficulties and provide him with further indications for following the progress of thought in the book.

3, 17: *There:* in death.

4, 10: *The lion:* used figuratively here for the violent, rapacious sinner who cannot prevail against God.

12 For a word was stealthily brought to me,*
and my ear caught a whisper of it.
13 In my thoughts during visions of the night,[q]
when deep sleep falls on men,
14 Fear came upon me, and shuddering,
that terrified me to the bones.
15 Then a spirit passed before me,
and the hair of my flesh stood up.
16 It paused, but its likeness I could not discern;
a figure was before my eyes, and I heard a still voice:

17 "Can a man be righteous as against God?[r]
Can a mortal be blameless against his Maker?
18 Lo, he puts no trust in his servants,[s]
and with his angels he can find fault.
19 How much more with those that dwell in houses of clay,
whose foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed more easily than the moth!
20 Morning or evening they may be shattered;
with no heed paid to it, they perish forever.
21 The pegs of their tent are plucked up;
they die without knowing wisdom."

CHAPTER 5

1 Call now! Will anyone respond to you?
To which of the holy ones will you appeal?
2 Nay, impatience kills the fool
and indignation slays the simpleton.

3 I have seen a fool spreading his roots,[t]
but his household suddenly decayed.
4 His children shall be far from safety;
they shall be crushed at the gate*
without a rescuer.
5 What they have reaped the hungry shall eat up;
[or God shall take it away by blight;]
and the thirsty shall swallow their substance.
6 For mischief comes not out of the earth,
nor does trouble spring out of the ground;
7 But man himself begets mischief,
as sparks* fly upward.

8 In your place, I would appeal to God,
and to God I would state my plea.*
10 He gives rain upon the earth
and sends water upon the fields;
11 [u] He sets up on high the lowly,
and those who mourn he exalts to safety.

12 He frustrates the plans of the cunning,
so that their hands achieve no success;
13 He catches the wise in their own ruses,[v]
and the designs of the crafty are routed.

14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
and at noonday they grope as though it were night.
15 But the poor from the edge of the sword
and from the hand of the mighty, he saves.
16 Thus the unfortunate have hope,
and iniquity closes her mouth.

17 Happy is the man whom God reproves!
The Almighty's chastening do not reject.
18 For he wounds, but he binds up;[vv]
he smites, but his hands give healing.
19 Out of six troubles he will deliver you,
and at the seventh* no evil shall touch you.
20 In famine he will deliver you from death,
and in war from the threat of the sword;
21 From the scourge of the tongue you shall be hidden,
and shall not fear approaching ruin.

22 At destruction and want you shall laugh;
the beasts of the earth you need not dread.
23 You shall be in league with the stones of the field,
and the wild beasts shall be at peace with you.

q Jb 33, 15.—r Jb 9, 2; 15, 14ff; 25, 4; Pss 130, 3; 143, 2.—s Jb 15, 15; 2 Pt 2, 4; Jude 6.—t Ps 37, 35f.—u 1 Sm 2, 7f; Ps 113, 7; Lk 1, 52.—v 1 Cor 3, 19.—vv Hos 6, 1f.

4, 12-21: A dramatic presentation of the idea of man's nothingness in contrast to God's greatness.
5, 4: *At the gate:* of the city, where justice was administered.
5, 7: *Sparks:* in Hebrew, "sons of resheph," which the ancient versions took as the name of a bird.
5, 9: Omitted here; it is a duplicate of Jb 9, 10.
5, 19: *Six . . . the seventh:* proverbial expression for any large number; cf Prv 24, 16; Lk 17, 4.

24 And you shall know that your tent is secure;
taking stock of your household, you shall miss nothing.
25 You shall know that your descendants are many,
and your offspring as the grass of the earth.
26 You shall approach the grave in full vigor,
as a shock of grain comes in at its season.
27 Lo, this we have searched out; so it is!
This we have heard, and you should know.

CHAPTER 6

Job's First Reply. 1 Then Job answered and said:

2 Ah, could my anguish but be measured
and my calamity laid with it in the scales,
3 They would now outweigh the sands of the sea!
Because of this I speak without restraint.
4 For the arrows of the Almighty pierce me,[w]
and my spirit drinks in their poison;
the terrors of God are arrayed against me.
5 Does the wild ass bray when he has grass?*
Does the ox low over his fodder?
6 Can a thing insipid be eaten without salt?
Is there flavor in the white of an egg?
7 I refuse to touch them;
they are loathsome food to me.

8 Oh, that I might have my request,
and that God would grant what I long for:
9 Even that God would decide to crush me,
that he would put forth his hand and cut me off!
10 Then I should still have consolation
and could exult through unremitting pain,
because I have not transgressed the commands of the Holy One.
11 What strength have I that I should endure,
and what is my limit that I should be patient?
12 Have I the strength of stones,
or is my flesh of bronze?
13 Have I no helper,[x]
and has advice deserted me?
14 A friend owes kindness to one in despair,
though he have forsaken the fear of the Almighty.

15 My brethren are undependable as a brook,
as watercourses that run dry in the wadies;
16 Though they may be black with ice,
and with snow heaped upon them,
17 Yet once they flow, they cease to be;
in the heat, they disappear from their place.
18 Caravans turn aside from their routes;
they go into the desert and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema* search,
the companies of Sheba have hopes;
20 They are disappointed, though they were confident;
they come there and are frustrated.

21 It is thus that you have now become for me;
you see a terrifying thing and are afraid.
22 Have I asked you to give me anything,
to offer a gift for me from your possessions,
23 Or to deliver me from the enemy,
or to redeem me from oppressors?
24 Teach me, and I will be silent;
prove to me wherein I have erred.
25 How agreeable are honest words;
yet how unconvincing is your argument!
26 Do you consider your words as proof,
but the sayings of a desperate man as wind?
27 You would even cast lots for the orphan,
and would barter away your friend!

28 Come, now, give me your attention;
surely I will not lie to your face.
29 Think it over; let there be no injustice.
Think it over; I still am right.
30 Is there insincerity on my tongue,
or cannot my taste discern falsehood?

w Ps 88, 17.—x Jb 19, 14f.

6, 5f: Job would not complain if his life were as pleasant to him as fodder to a hungry animal; but his life is as disagreeable as insipid food. *White of an egg:* thus the obscure Hebrew has been understood in Jewish tradition; some render it "mallow juice."
6, 19: *Tema:* in northwest Arabia. *Sheba:* see note on Jb 1, 15.

CHAPTER 7

[1] [y] Is not man's life on earth a drudgery?*
Are not his days those of a hireling?
[2] He is a slave who longs for the shade,
a hireling who waits for his wages.
[3] So I have been assigned months of misery,
and troubled nights have been told off for me.
[4] If in bed I say, "When shall I arise?"
then the night drags on;
I am filled with restlessness until the dawn.
[5] My flesh is clothed with worms and scabs;[z]
my skin cracks and festers;
[6] My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle;
they come to an end without hope.
[7] Remember that my life is like the wind;[a]
I shall not see happiness again.
[8] The eye that now sees me shall no more behold me;
as you look at me, I shall be gone.
[9] As a cloud dissolves and vanishes,[b]
so he who goes down to the nether world shall come up no more.
[10] He shall not again return to his house;
his place shall know him no more.
[11] My own utterance I will not restrain;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
[12] * Am I the sea, or a monster of the deep,
that you place a watch over me?*
Why have you set me up as an object of attack?
or why should I be a target for you?
[13] When I say, "My bed shall comfort me,
my couch shall ease my complaint,"
[14] Then you affright me with dreams
and with visions terrify me,
[15] So that I should prefer choking
and death rather than my pains.
[16] I waste away: I cannot live forever;[c]
let me alone, for my days are but a breath.
[17] What is man, that you make much of him,
or pay him any heed?
[18] You observe him with each new day[d]
and try him at every moment!
[19] How long will it be before you look away from me,
and let me alone long enough to swallow my spittle?
[20] Though I have sinned, what can I do to you,
O watcher of men?
[21] Why do you not pardon my offense,
or take away my guilt?
For soon I shall lie down in the dust;
and should you seek me I shall then be gone.

CHAPTER 8

Bildad's First Speech. [1] Bildad the Shuhite spoke out and said:

[2] How long will you utter such things?
The words from your mouth are like a mighty wind!
[3] Does God pervert judgment,[e]
and does the Almighty distort justice?
[4] If your children have sinned against him
and he has left them in the grip of their guilt,
[5] Still, if you yourself have recourse to God
and make supplication to the Almighty,
[6] Should you be blameless and upright,
surely now he will awake for you
and restore your rightful domain;
[7] Your former state will be of little moment,
for in time to come you will flourish indeed.
[8] If you inquire of the former generations,
and give heed to the experience of the fathers[f]
[9] (As we are but of yesterday and have no knowledge,
because our days on earth are but a shadow),[g]
[10] Will they not teach you and tell you
and utter their words of understanding?

y Jb 14, 14.—z Jb 2, 7f.—a Pss 8, 5; 144, 3.—b 9f: Jb 10, 21; 14, 10ff; 2 Sm 12, 23; 14, 14; Wis 2, 1.—c Jb 14, 1ff. 5.—d Ps 17, 3.—e Jb 34, 10ff.—f Dt 4, 32; 32, 7.—g Jb 14, 2; Pss 102, 12; 109, 23; 144, 4; Wis 2, 5.

7, 1: *Drudgery:* taken by some to refer to military service; cf also Jb 14, 14.
7, 12: An allusion in poetic imagery to primeval chaos as a monstrous ocean vanquished by God at the world's creation.
7, 12-21: Job now speaks, not to his friends, but to God.

11 Can the papyrus grow up without mire?*
Can the reed grass flourish without water?
12 While it is yet green and uncut,
it withers quicker than any grass.
13 So is the end of everyone who forgets God,
and so shall the hope of the godless man perish.
14 His confidence is but a gossamer thread
and his trust is a spider's web.
15 He shall rely upon his family, but it shall not last;
he shall cling to it, but it shall not endure.
16 He is full of sap before sunrise,
and beyond his garden his shoots go forth;
17 About a heap of stones are his roots entwined;
among the rocks he takes hold.
18 Yet if one tears him from his place,
it will disown him: "I have never seen you!"
19 There he lies rotting beside the road,
and out of the soil another sprouts.
20 Behold, God will not cast away the upright;
neither will he take the hand of the wicked.
21 Once more will he fill your mouth with laughter,
and your lips with rejoicing.
22 They that hate you shall be clothed with shame,
and the tent of the wicked shall be no more.

CHAPTER 9

Job's Second Reply. 1 Then Job answered and said:

2 I know well that it is so;
but how can a man be justified before God?
3 Should one wish to contend with him,
he could not answer him once in a thousand times.
4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength;
who has withstood him and remained unscathed?
5 He removes the mountains before they know it;
he overturns them in his anger.
6 He shakes the earth out of its place, [h]
and the pillars beneath it tremble.
7 He commands the sun, and it rises not;
he seals up the stars.
8 He alone stretches out the heavens[i]
and treads upon the crests of the sea.
9 He made the Bear and Orion,
the Pleiades and the constellations of the south;
10 He does great things past finding out,
marvelous things beyond reckoning.
11 Should he come near me, I see him not;
should he pass by, I am not aware of him;
12 Should he seize me forcibly, who can say him nay?
Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"
13 He is God and he does not relent;
the helpers of Rahab* bow beneath him.
14 How much less shall I give him any answer,
or choose out arguments against him!
15 Even though I were right, I could not answer him,[j]
but should rather beg for what was due me.
16 If I appealed to him and he answered my call,
I could not believe that he would hearken to my words;
17 With a tempest he might overwhelm me,
and multiply my wounds without cause;
18 He need not suffer me to draw breath,
but might fill me with bitter griefs.
19 If it be a question of strength, he is mighty;
and if of judgment, who will call him to account?
20 Though I were right, my own mouth might condemn me;[k]
were I innocent, he might put me in the wrong.
21 Though I am innocent, I myself cannot know it;
I despise my life.
22 It is all one! therefore I say:

h Jb 26, 11.—i Ps 104, 2; Is 40, 22.—j Jb 10, 15.—k Jb 15, 6.

8, 11ff: As marsh plants need water, so man needs God. These verses are taken by some as a quotation from the teaching of the forefathers; cf v 10.
9, 13: *Rahab:* cf Jb 26, 12. See note on Ps 89, 11.

Both the innocent and the wicked he
destroys.[l]
23 When the scourge slays suddenly,
he laughs at the despair of the inno-
cent.
24 The earth is given into the hands of the
wicked;
he covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not he, who then is it?
25 My days are swifter than a runner,
they flee away; they see no happi-
ness;[m]
26 They shoot by like skiffs of reed,
like an eagle swooping upon its prey.
27 If I say: I will forget my complaining,
I will lay aside my sadness and be of
good cheer,
28 Then I am in dread of all my pains;
I know that you* will not hold me in-
nocent.
29 If I must be accounted guilty,
why then should I strive in vain?
30 If I should wash myself with snow
and cleanse my hands with lye,
31 Yet you would plunge me in the ditch,
so that my garments would abhor me.
32 For he is not a man like myself, that I
should answer him,
that we should come together in judg-
ment.
33 Would that there were an arbiter be-
tween us,
who could lay his hand upon us both
34 and withdraw his rod from me.
Would that his terrors did not frighten
me;
35 that I might speak without being
afraid of him.
Since this is not the case with me,
1 * I loathe my life.[n]

CHAPTER 10

I will give myself up to complaint;
I will speak from the bitterness of my
soul.
2 I will say to God: Do not put me in the
wrong!
Let me know why you oppose me.
3 Is it a pleasure for you to oppress,
to spurn the work of your hands,
and smile on the plan of the wicked?
4 Have you eyes of flesh?
Do you see as man sees?
5 Are your days as the days of a mortal,[o]
and are your years as a man'
lifetime,
6 That you seek for guilt in me
and search after my sins,
7 Even though you know that I am no
wicked,[p]
and that none can deliver me out o
your hand?
8 Your hands have formed me an
fashioned me;
will you then turn and destroy me?
9 Oh, remember that you fashioned m
from clay?[q]
Will you then bring me down to dus
again?
10 Did you not pour me out as milk,
and thicken me like cheese?
11 With skin and flesh you clothed me,
with bones and sinews knit me to
gether.
12 Grace and favor you granted me,
and your providence has preservec
my spirit.
13 Yet these things you have hidden ir
your heart;
I know that they are your purpose:
14 If I should sin, you would keep a watc
against me,
and from my guilt you would not ab-
solve me.
15 If I should be wicked, alas for me!
if righteous, I dare not hold up my
head,
filled with ignominy and sodden with
affliction!
16 Should it lift up, you hunt me like a
lion:
repeatedly you show your wondrous
power against me,
17 You renew your attack upon me
and multiply your harassment of me;
in waves your troops come against me.
18 Why then did you bring me forth from
the womb?[r]
I should have died and no eye have
seen me.
19 I should be as though I had never lived;
I should have been taken from the
womb to the grave.
20 Are not the days of my life few?
Let me alone, that I may recover a lit-
tle

l Eccl 9, 2.—m Jb 7, 6.—n Jb 9, 21.—o Jb 36, 26.—p Jb 2, 3. 9; Dt 32, 39; Wis 16, 15.—q Jb 4, 19; 33, 6; Gn 2, 7; 3, 19; Ps 146, 4.—r Jb 3, 3. 11.

9, 28-31: *You:* refers to God.
10, 1: *I loathe my life:* this is the first verse of ch 10.

21 Before I go whence I shall not return,[s]
to the land of darkness and of gloom,
22 The black, disordered land
where darkness is the only light.

CHAPTER 11

Zophar's First Speech. 1 And Zophar the Naamathite spoke out and said:

2 Should not the man of many words be answered,
or must the garrulous man necessarily be right?
3 Shall your babblings keep men silent,
and shall you deride and no one give rebuke?
4 Shall you say: "My teaching is pure,
and I am clean in your sight"?
5 But oh, that God would speak,
and open his lips against you,
6 And tell you that the secrets of wisdom
are twice as effective:
So you might learn that God
will make you answer for your guilt.

7 Can you penetrate the designs of God?[t]
Dare you vie with the perfection of the Almighty?
8 It is higher than the heavens; what can you do?
It is deeper than the nether world; what can you know?
9 It is longer than the earth in measure,
and broader than the sea.
10 If he seize and imprison
or call to judgment, who then can say him nay?
11 For he knows the worthlessness of men
and sees iniquity; will he then ignore it?
12 Will empty man then gain understanding,
and the wild jackass[u] be made docile?

13 If you set your heart aright
and stretch out your hands toward him,
14 If you remove all iniquity from your conduct,
and let not injustice dwell in your tent,
15 Surely then you may lift up your face in innocence;
you may stand firm and unafraid.
16 For then you shall forget your misery,
or recall it like waters that have ebbed away.
17 Then your life shall be brighter than the noonday;
its gloom shall become as the morning,
18 And you shall be secure, because there is hope;
you shall look round you and lie down in safety,[v]
19 and you shall take your rest with none to disturb.
Many shall entreat your favor,
20 but the wicked, looking on, shall be consumed with envy.
Escape shall be cut off from them,
they shall wait to expire.

CHAPTER 12

Job's Third Reply. 1 Then Job replied and said:

2 No doubt you are the intelligent folk,
and with you wisdom shall die!
3 But I have intelligence as well as you;[w]
for who does not know such things as these?
4 I have become the sport of my neighbors:*
"The one whom God answers when he calls upon him,
the just, the perfect man," is a laughingstock;[x]
5 The undisturbed esteem my downfall a disgrace
such as awaits unsteady feet;
6 Yet the tents of robbers are prosperous,
and those who provoke God are secure.

7 But now ask the beasts to teach you,
and the birds of the air to tell you;
8 Or the reptiles on earth to instruct you,
and the fish of the sea to inform you.
9 Which of all these does not know
that the hand of God has done this?
10 In his hand is the soul of every living thing,[y]
and the life breath of all mankind.
11 Does not the ear judge words
as the mouth tastes food?[z]
12 So with old age is wisdom,[a]
and with length of days understanding.

s Jb 7, 9f; 16, 22.—t Rom 11, 33.—u Jb 39, 5-8.—v Lv 26, 6; Ps 4, 9.—w Jb 13, 2; 15, 9.—x Jb 21, 3; 30, 1.—y Acts 17, 28.—z Jb 34, 3.—a Jb 32, 7.

12, 4f: The Hebrew is somewhat obscure, but the general sense is that the wicked mock at the pious when the latter appear to be abandoned by God; cf Ps 22, 7ff; Mt 27, 39-43.

13 With him are wisdom and might;
his are counsel and understanding.
14 If he breaks a thing down, there is no rebuilding;[b]
if he imprisons a man, there is no release.
15 He holds back the waters and there is drought;[c]
he sends them forth and they overwhelm the land.
18 He loosens the bonds imposed by kings
and leaves but a waistcloth to bind the king's own loins.*
21 He breaks down the barriers of the streams
19 and lets their never-failing waters flow away.

16 With him are strength and prudence;
the misled and the misleaders are his.
17 He sends counselors away barefoot,
and of judges he makes fools.
20 He silences the trusted adviser,
and takes discretion from the aged.
22 The recesses of the darkness he discloses,
and brings the gloom forth to the light.
23 He makes nations great and he destroys them;
he spreads peoples abroad and he abandons them.
24 He takes understanding from the leaders of the land,
25 till they grope in the darkness without light;
he makes them stagger like drunken men.

CHAPTER 13

1 Lo, all this my eye has seen;
my ear has heard and perceived it.
2 What you know, I also know;[d]
I fall not short of you.
3 But I would speak with the Almighty;[e]
I wish to reason with God.
4 You are glossing over falsehoods
and offering vain remedies, every one of you!
5 Oh, that you would be altogether silent!
This for you would be wisdom.

6 Hear now the rebuke I shall utter
and listen to the reproof from my lips.
7 Is it for God that you speak falsehood?
Is it for him that you utter deceit?
8 Is it for him that you show partiality?
Do you play advocate on behalf of God?
9 Will it be well when he shall search you out?
Would you impose on him as one does on men?
10 He will openly rebuke you
if even in secret you show partiality.
11 Surely will his majesty affright you
and the dread of him fall upon you.

12 Your reminders are ashy maxims,
your fabrications are mounds of clay.
13 Be silent, let me alone! that I may speak
and give vent to my feelings.
14 I will carry my flesh between my teeth,
and take my life in my hand.*
15 Slay me though he might,[f] I will wait for him;
I will defend my conduct before him.
16 And this shall be my salvation,
that no impious man can come into his presence.

17 Pay careful heed to my speech,
and give my statement a hearing.
18 Behold, I have prepared my case,[g]
I know that I am in the right.
19 If anyone can make a case against me,
then I shall be silent and die.
20 These things only do not use against me,*
then from your presence I need not hide:
21 Withdraw your hand far from me,
and let not the terror of you frighten me.
22 Then call me, and I will respond;
or let me speak first, and answer me.

23 What are my faults and my sins?
My misdeeds and my sins make known to me!
24 Why do you hide your face[h]
and consider me your enemy?
25 Will you harass a wind-driven leaf,
or pursue a withered straw?
26 For you draw up bitter indictments against me,

b Rv 3, 7.—c Gn 7, 11-24.—d Jb 12, 3; 15, 9.—e Jb 23, 4.—f Jb 27, 5.—g Jb 33, 9.—h Jb 19, 11; 33, 10.

12, 18: *Waistcloth . . . loins:* he reduces kings to the condition of slaves, who wear only a cloth wrapped about the waist.

13, 14: The second half of the verse is a common biblical expression for risking one's life; cf Jgs 12, 3; 1 Sm 19, 5; 28, 21; Ps 119, 109; the first half of the verse must have a similar meaning. Job is so confident of his innocence that he is willing to risk his life by going to judgment with God.

13, 20: From here to the end of chapter 14, Job pleads his case, addressing God rather than his three friends.

and punish in me the faults of my youth.
27 You put my feet in the stocks;
you watch all my paths
and trace out all my footsteps.

CHAPTER 14

1 Man born of woman
is short-lived and full of trouble,[i]
2 Like a flower that springs up and fades,[j]
swift as a shadow that does not abide.
3 Upon such a one will you cast your eyes
so as to bring him into judgment before you,
28 Though he wears out like a leather bottle,
like a garment that the moth has consumed?*
4 Can a man be found who is clean of defilement?[k]
There is none, 5however short his days.
You know the number of his months;
you have fixed the limit which he cannot pass.
6 Look away from him and let him be,
while, like a hireling, he completes his day.
7 For a tree there is hope,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again
and that its tender shoots will not cease.
8 Even though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the dust,
9 Yet at the first whiff of water it may flourish again
and put forth branches like a young plant.
10 But when a man dies, all vigor leaves him;[l]
when man expires, where then is he?
11 As when the waters of a lake fail,
or a stream grows dry and parches,
12 So men lie down and rise not again.
Till the heavens are no more, they shall not awake,
nor be roused out of their sleep.[m]
13 Oh, that you would hide me in the nether world
and keep me sheltered till your wrath is past;
would fix a time for me, and then remember me!
14 When a man has died, were he to live again,
all the days of my drudgery I would wait,[n]
until my relief should come.
15 You would call, and I would answer you;
you would esteem the work of your hands.
16 Surely then you would count my steps,[o]
and not keep watch for sin in me.
17 My misdeeds would be sealed up in a pouch*
and you would cover over my guilt.
18 But as a mountain falls at last
and its rock is moved from its place,
19 As waters wear away the stones
and floods wash away the soil of the land
so you destroy the hope of man.
20 You prevail once for all against him and he passes on;
with changed appearance you send him away.
21 If his sons are honored, he is not aware of it;
if they are in disgrace, he does not know about them.
22 Only his own flesh pains him,
and his soul grieves for him.

III: SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES

CHAPTER 15

Second Speech of Eliphaz. 1Then Eliphaz the Temanite spoke and said:

2 Should a wise man answer with airy opinions,
or puff himself up with wind?
3 Should he argue in speech which does not avail,
and in words which are to no profit?
4 You in fact do away with piety,
and you lessen devotion toward God,
5 Because your wickedness instructs your mouth,
and you choose to speak like the crafty.

i Jb 10, 20; 15, 14; Pss 39, 5f; 89, 46; Wis 2, 1.—j Jb 8, 9; Pss 90, 6; 102, 12; 103, 15; 109, 23; 144, 4; Is 40, 6f; Jas 1, 10.—k Ps 51, 4. 7.—l Jb 20, 7.—m Jb 7, 10.—n Jb 7, 1.—o Jb 31, 4; 34, 21.

14, 28: This verse has been transposed from ch 13.
14, 17: *Sealed up in a pouch:* hidden away and forgotten.

6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I;[p]
your own lips refute you.
7 Are you indeed the first-born of mankind,
or were you brought forth before the hills?
8 Are you privy to the counsels of God,[q]
and do you restrict wisdom to yourself?
9 What do you know that we do not know?[r]
What intelligence have you which we have not?
10 There are gray-haired old men among us
more advanced in years than your father.
11 Are the consolations of God not enough for you,
and speech that deals gently with you?
12 Why do your notions carry you away,
and why do your eyes blink,
13 So that you turn your anger against God
and let such words escape your mouth!
14 What is a man that he should be blameless,[s]
one born of woman that he should be righteous?[t]
15 If in his holy ones God places no confidence,[u]
and if the heavens are not clean in his sight,
16 How much less so is the abominable, the corrupt:
man, who drinks in iniquity like water!
17 I will show you, if you listen to me;
what I have seen I will tell—
18 What wise men relate
and have not contradicted since the days of their fathers,
19 To whom alone the land was given,
when no foreigner moved among them.
20 The wicked man is in torment all his days,
and limited years are in store for the tyrant;
21 The sound of terrors is in his ears;
when all is prosperous, the spoiler comes upon him.
22 He despairs of escaping the darkness,
and looks ever for the sword;
23 A wanderer, food for the vultures,
he knows that his destruction is imminent.
24 By day the darkness fills him with dread;
distress and anguish overpower him.
25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God
and bade defiance to the Almighty,
26 One shall rush sternly upon him
with the stout bosses of his shield,
like a king prepared for the charge.
27 Because he has blinded himself with his crassness,
padding his loins with fat,
28 He shall dwell in ruinous cities,
in houses that are deserted,
That are crumbling into clay
29 with no shadow to lengthen over the ground.
He shall not be rich, and his possessions shall not endure;
31 for vain shall be his bartering.
30 A flame shall wither him up in his early growth,
and with the wind his blossoms shall disappear.
32 His stalk shall wither before its time,
and his branches shall be green no more.
33 He shall be like a vine that sheds its grapes unripened,
and like an olive tree casting off its bloom.
34 For the breed of the impious shall be sterile,[v]
and fire shall consume the tents of extortioners.
35 They conceive malice and bring forth emptiness;[w]
they give birth to failure.*

p Jb 9, 20.—q Jb 11, 7; Wis 9, 13; Jer 23, 18; Rom 11, 34; 1 Cor 2, 11. 16.—r Jb 12, 3; 13, 2.—s 14ff: Jb 25, 4ff.—t Jb 14, 4.—u Jb 4, 18f.—v Wis 3, 11. 18.—w Ps 7, 15; Is 59, 4.—x Jb 12, 3.

15, 35: *They give birth to failure:* their wicked plans yield nothing but futile results. Cf Ps 7, 15; Is 59, 4.

CHAPTER 16

Job's Fourth Reply. 1 Then Job answered and said:

2 I have heard this sort of thing many times.[x]
Wearisome comforters are you all!
3 Is there no end to windy words?
Or what sickness have you that you speak on?
4 I also could talk as you do,
were you in my place.

I could declaim over you,
or wag my head at you;
5 I could strengthen you with talk,
or shake my head with silent lips.
6 If I speak, this pain I have will not be checked;
if I leave off, it will not depart from me.

7 But now that I am exhausted and stunned,
all my company has closed in on me.
8 As a witness there rises up
my traducer, speaking openly against me;
9 I am the prey his wrath assails,
he gnashes his teeth against me.
My enemies lord it over me;
10 their mouths are agape to bite me.
They smite me on the cheek insultingly;
they are all enlisted against me.
11 God has given me over to the impious;
into the clutches of the wicked he has cast me.
12 I was in peace, but he dislodged me;
he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces.

He has set me up for a target;
13 his arrows strike me from all directions,
He pierces my sides without mercy,
he pours out my gall upon the ground.
14 He pierces me with thrust upon thrust;
he attacks me like a warrior.
15 I have fastened sackcloth over my skin,
and have laid my brow in the dust.
16 My face is inflamed with weeping
and there is darkness over my eyes,
17 Although my hands are free from violence,
and my prayer is sincere.

18 O earth, cover not my blood,
nor let my outcry come to rest!*
19 Even now, behold, my witness* is in heaven,
and my spokesman is on high.
20 My friends it is who wrong me;
before God my eyes drop tears,
21 That he may do justice for a mortal in his presence
and decide between a man and his neighbor.
22 For my years are numbered now,
and I am on a journey from which I shall not return.

CHAPTER 17

1 My spirit is broken, my lamp of life extinguished;
my burial is at hand.
2 I am indeed mocked,
and, as their provocation mounts, my eyes grow dim.
3 Grant me one to offer you a pledge on my behalf:*
who is there that will give surety for me?
4 You darken their minds to knowledge;
therefore they do not understand.
5 My lot is described as evil,
6 and I am made a byword of the people;[y]
their object lesson I have become.
7 My eye has grown blind with anguish,
and all my frame is shrunken to a shadow.
8 Upright men are astonished at this,
and the innocent aroused against the wicked.
9 Yet the righteous shall hold to his way,
and he who has clean hands increase in strength.
10 But turn now, and come on again;
for I shall not find a wise man among you!
11 My days are passed away, my plans are at an end,
the cherished purposes of my heart.
12 Such men change the night into day;
where there is darkness they talk of approaching light.
13 If I look for the nether world as my dwelling,
if I spread my couch in the darkness,
14 If I must call corruption "my father,"
and the maggot "my mother" and "my sister,"
15 Where then is my hope,
and my prosperity, who shall see?
16 Will they descend with me into the nether world?
Shall we go down together into the dust?

CHAPTER 18

Bildad's Second Speech. 1 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied and said:

y Jb 30, 9.

16, 18: As the blood of those who were unjustly slain cries to heaven for vengeance (Gn 4, 10; Ez 24, 6-9), so Job's sufferings demand redress.

16, 19: *Witness:* refers either to God or, more probably, to Job's prayer.

17, 3: Addressed to God; v 10 to Job's friends.

2 When will you put an end to words?
Reflect, and then we can have discussion.
3 Why are we accounted like the beasts,
their equals in your sight?
4 You who tear yourself in your anger,*
shall the earth be neglected on your account
[or the rock be moved out of its place]?

5 Truly, the light of the wicked is extinguished;
no flame brightens his hearth.
6 The light is darkened in his tent;
in spite of him, his lamp goes out.[z]
7 His vigorous steps are hemmed in,
and his own counsel casts him down.

8 For he rushes headlong into a net,
and he wanders into a pitfall.
9 A trap seizes him by the heel,
and a snare lays hold of him.
10 A noose for him is hid on the ground,
and the toils for him on the way.

11 On every side terrors affright him;[a]
they harry him at each step.
12 Disaster is ready at his side,
13 the first-born of death* consumes his limbs.
14 Fiery destruction lodges in his tent,
and marches him off to the king of terrors.*
He is plucked from the security of his tent;
15 over his abode brimstone is scattered.

16 Below, his roots dry up,
and above, his branches wither.
17 His memory perishes from the land,[b]
and he has no name on the earth.
18 He is driven from light into darkness,
and banished out of the world.

19 He has neither son nor grandson among his people,
nor any survivor where once he dwelt.
20 They who come after shall be appalled at his fate;
they who went before are struck with horror.

21 So is it then with the dwelling of the impious man,
and such is the place of him who knows not God!

z Jb 21, 17; Prv 13, 9; 24, 20.—a Jb 15, 20-24; 27, 20.—b Ps 34, 17; Prv 2, 22; 10, 7.—c Jb 30, 20.—d Jb 13, 24; 33, 10.—e Jb 6, 13.—f Jb 2, 9.—g Sir 6, 8.

18, 4: Job himself is portrayed as having the heedless rage of wild beasts, despite which God does not forsake the usual course of Divine Providence.
18, 13: *First-born of death:* that is, disease, plague.
18, 14: *The king of terrors:* of the nether world, death; however, the Hebrew is obscure.

CHAPTER 19

Job's Fifth Reply. 1 Then Job answered and said:

2 How long will you vex my soul,
grind me down with words?
3 These ten times you have reviled me,
have assailed me without shame!
4 Be it indeed that I am at fault
and that my fault remains with me.
5 Even so, if you would vaunt yourselves against me
and cast up to me my reproach,
6 Know then that God has dealt unfairly with me,
and compassed me round with his net.
7 If I cry out "Injustice!" I am not heard.[c]
I cry for help, but there is no redress.
8 He has barred my way and I cannot pass;
he has veiled my path in darkness;
9 He has stripped me of my glory,
and taken the diadem from my brow.
10 He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone;
my hope he has uprooted like a tree.
11 His wrath he has kindled against me;
he counts me among his enemies.[d]
12 His troops advance as one man;
they build up their road to attack me,
and they encamp around my tent.
13 My brethren have withdrawn from me,[e]
and my friends are wholly estranged.
14 My kinsfolk and companions neglect me,
and my guests have forgotten me.
15 Even my handmaids treat me as a stranger;
I am an alien in their sight.
16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer,
though in my speech I plead with him.
17 My breath is abhorred by my wife;[f]
I am loathsome to the men of my family.
18 The young children, too, despise me;
when I appear, they speak against me.
19 All my intimate friends hold me in horror;
those whom I loved have turned against me![g]

20 My bones cleave to my skin,
and I have escaped with my flesh between my teeth.*
21 Pity me, pity me, O you my friends,
for the hand of God has struck me!
22 Why do you hound me as though you were divine,*
and insatiably prey upon me?

23 Oh, would that my words were written down![h]
Would that they were inscribed in a record:*
24 That with an iron chisel and with lead they were cut in the rock forever!
25 But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives,*
and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust;[i]
27 Whom I myself shall see:
my own eyes, not another's, shall behold him,
26 And from my flesh I shall see God;
my inmost being is consumed with longing.

28 But you who say, "How shall we persecute him,
seeing that the root of the matter is found in him?"
29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves,
for these crimes deserve the sword;
that you may know that there is a judgment.

CHAPTER 20

Zophar's Second Speech. 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite spoke and said:

3 A rebuke which puts me to shame I hear,
2 and because of this I am disturbed.
So now my thoughts provide me with an answer,
and from my understanding a spirit gives me a reply.

4 Do you not know this from olden time,
since man was placed upon the earth,
5 That the triumph of the wicked is short
and the joy of the impious but for a moment?[j]
6 Though his pride mount up to the heavens
and his head reach to the clouds,
7 Yet he perishes forever like the fuel of his fire,
and the onlookers say, "Where is he?"[k]
8 Like a dream he takes flight and is not found again;
he fades away like a vision of the night.
9 The eye which saw him does so no more;
nor shall his dwelling again behold him.
11 Though his frame is full of youthful vigor,
this shall lie with him in the dust.
12 Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth,
and he hides it under his tongue,
13 Though he retains it and will not let it go
but keeps it still within his mouth,
14 Yet in his stomach the food shall turn;
it shall be venom of asps inside him.
15 The riches he swallowed he shall disgorge;
God shall compel his belly to disown them.
16 The poison of asps he shall drink in;
the viper's fangs shall slay him.
17 He shall see no streams of oil,*
no torrents of honey or milk.
18 Restoring his gains, he shall not enjoy them;
though his wealth increases, he shall not rejoice.
19 Because he has oppressed the poor,
and stolen a patrimony he had not built up,
21 Therefore his prosperity shall not endure,
10 and his hands shall yield up his riches.[l]
20 Though he has known no quiet in his greed,
his treasures shall not save him.[m]
22 [n] When he abounds to overflowing, he

h Jb 31, 35.—i 25ff: Phil 3, 20; Ti 2, 13.—j Jb 21, 13; Ps 37, 35f.—k Jb 14, 10; Ps 37, 10. 36.—l Jb 27, 14.—m Eccl 5, 9; Lk 12, 20.—n Jb 15, 20-35.

19, 20: *With my flesh between my teeth:* meaning perhaps that Job has been reduced to such an extremity that he scarcely has thin lips over his teeth. But the current Hebrew text of this line is probably corrupt.

19, 22: *Divine:* possessing God's attributes of judgment and authority to punish.

19, 23f: Job regards what he is about to say as so important that he wishes it recorded in a permanent manner.

19, 25. 27: The meaning of this passage is obscure because the original text has been poorly preserved and the ancient versions do not agree among themselves. It is certain that Job expresses his belief in a future vindication by God (called here in the Hebrew "Goel"), but the time and manner of this vindication are undefined. In the Vulgate Job is made to indicate a belief in physical resurrection after death, but the Hebrew and the other ancient versions are less specific.

20, 17: *Oil:* olive oil, one of the main agricultural products of Palestine, a land proverbially rich in *honey* and *milk*.

shall be brought into straits,
and nought shall be left of his goods.
23 God shall send against him the fury of his wrath
and rain down his missiles of war upon him.
24 Should he escape the iron weapon,
the bow of bronze shall pierce him through;
25 The dart shall come out of his back;
terrors shall fall upon him.
26 Complete darkness is in store for him;
the fire which shall consume him needs not to be fanned.[o]
27 The heavens shall reveal his guilt,
and the earth shall rise up against him.
28 The flood shall sweep away his house
with the waters that run off in the day of God's anger.
29 This is the portion of a wicked man,
and the heritage appointed him by God.[p]

CHAPTER 21

Job's Sixth Reply. 1 Then Job said in reply:

2 At least listen to my words,[q]
and let that be the consolation you offer.
3 Bear with me while I speak;
and after I have spoken, you can mock!
4 Is my complaint toward man?
And why should I not be impatient?
5 Look at me and be astonished,
put your hands over your mouths.
6 When I think of it, I am dismayed,
and horror takes hold on my flesh.
7 Why do the wicked survive,
grow old, become mighty in power?[r]
8 Their progeny is secure in their sight;
they see before them their kinsfolk and their offspring.
9 Their homes are safe and without fear,
nor is the scourge of God upon them.
10 Their bulls gender without fail;
their cows calve and do not miscarry.
11 These folks have infants numerous as lambs,
and their children dance.
12 They sing to the timbrel and harp,
and make merry to the sound of the flute.
13 They live out their days in prosperity,
and tranquilly go down to the nether world.[s]
14 Yet they say to God, "Depart from us,[t]
for we have no wish to learn your ways!
15 What is the Almighty that we should serve him?
And what gain shall we have if we pray to him?"[u]
16 If their happiness is not in their own hands
and if the counsel of the wicked is repulsive to God,[v]
17 How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?
How often does destruction come upon them,
the portion he allots in his anger?
18 Let them be like straw before the wind,
and like chaff which the storm snatches away!
19 May God not store up the man's misery for his children;
let him requite the man himself so that he feels it,
20 Let his own eyes see the calamity,
and the wrath of the Almighty let him drink!
21 For what interest has he in his family after him,
when the number of his months is finished?
23 One dies in his full vigor,
wholly at ease and content;
24 His figure is full and nourished,
and his bones are rich in marrow.
25 Another dies in bitterness of soul,
having never tasted happiness.
26 Alike they lie down in the dust,
and worms cover them both.
27 Behold, I know your thoughts,
and the arguments you rehearse against me.
28 For you say, "Where is the house of the magnate,
and where the dwelling place of the wicked?"
29 Have you not asked the wayfarers
and do you not recognize their monuments?
30 Nay, the evil man is spared calamity when it comes;
32 and on the day he is carried to the grave
31 Who will charge him with his conduct to his face,

o Dt 32, 22.—p Jb 27, 13.—q Jb 13, 17.—r Jb 12, 6; Pss 37, 35; 73, 3; Eccl 8, 14; Jer 12, 1f; Mal 3, 14f.—s Jb 34, 20.—t Jb 22, 17.—u Mal 3, 14.—v Jb 22, 18.

and for what he has done who will repay him?
33 Sweet to him are the clods of the valley,
and over him the funeral mound keeps watch,
While all the line of mankind follows him,
and the countless others who have gone before.
34 How then can you offer me vain comfort,
while in your answers perfidy remains?

IV: THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES

CHAPTER 22

Eliphaz's Third Speech. 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 Can a man be profitable to God?[w]
Though to himself a wise man be profitable!
22 Can anyone teach God knowledge,
seeing that he judges those on high?*
3 Is it of advantage to the Almighty if you are just?[x]
Or is it a gain to him if you make your ways perfect?
4 Is it because of your piety that he reproves you—
that he enters with you into judgment?
5 Is not your wickedness manifold?
Are not your iniquities endless?
6 You have unjustly kept your kinsmen's goods in pawn,*
left them stripped naked of their clothing.[y]
7 To the thirsty you have given no water to drink,
and from the hungry you have withheld bread;
8 As if the land belonged to the man of might,
and only the privileged were to dwell in it.
9 You have sent widows away empty-handed,
and the resources of orphans you have destroyed.[z]
10 Therefore snares are round about you,[a]
and a sudden terror causes you dismay,
11 Or darkness, in which you cannot see;
a deluge of waters covers you.
12 Does not God, in the heights of the heavens,[b]
behold the stars, high though they are?
13 Yet you say, "What does God know?[c]
Can he judge through the thick darkness?
14 Clouds hide him so that he cannot see;
he walks upon the vault of the heavens!"
15 Do you indeed keep to the ancient way trodden by worthless men,
16 Who were snatched away before their time;
whose foundations a flood swept away?
17 These men said to God, "Depart from us!"
and, "What can the Almighty do to us?"
18 [Yet he had filled their houses with good things![d]
But far be from me the mind of the impious!]*
19 The just look on and are gladdened,
and the innocent deride them:[e]
20 "Truly these have been destroyed where they stood,
and such as were left, fire has consumed!"
21 Come to terms with him to be at peace.
In this shall good come to you:
22 Receive instruction from his mouth,
and lay up his words in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored;
if you put iniquity far from your tent,
24 And treat raw gold like dust,
and the fine gold of Ophir* as pebbles from the brook,
25 Then the Almighty himself shall be your gold
and your sparkling silver.
26 For then you shall delight in the Almighty
and you shall lift up your face toward God.

w Jb 9, 2.—x Jb 35, 7.—y Jb 24, 3; Dt 24, 6. 17; Ez 18, 12. 16.—z Dt 24, 17; 27, 19.—a Jb 18, 8ff.—b Jb 11, 8.—c 13f: Pss 10, 11; 73, 11; 94, 7; Is 29, 15; Ez 8, 12; 9, 9.—d Jb 21, 16.—e Ps 107, 42.

22, 22: *Those on high:* the angels. (This verse has been transposed from ch 21.)

22, 6ff: This criticism of Job by Eliphaz is altogether untrue, but it is made to dramatize the latter's argument that God always acts justly when he causes someone to suffer. Verse 8 is misplaced.

22, 18: A gloss, taken partly from Jb 21, 16.

22, 24: *Ophir:* cf note to Ps 45, 10.

27 You shall entreat him and he will hear you,[f]
and your vows you shall fulfill.
28 When you make a decision, it shall succeed for you,
and upon your ways the light shall shine.
29 For he brings down the pride of the haughty,
but the man of humble mien he saves.[g]
30 God delivers him who is innocent;
you shall be delivered through cleanness of hands.[h]

CHAPTER 23

Job's Seventh Reply. 1 Again Job answered and said:

2 Though I know my complaint is bitter,
his hand is heavy upon me in my groanings.
3 Oh, that today I might find him,
that I might come to his judgment seat!
4 I would set out my cause before him,
and fill my mouth with arguments;
5 I would learn the words with which he would answer,
and understand what he would reply to me.
6 Even should he contend against me with his great power,
yet, would that he himself might heed me!
7 There the upright man might reason with him,
and I should once and for all preserve my rights.

8 But if I go to the east, he is not there;
or to the west, I cannot perceive him;
9 Where the north enfolds him, I behold him not;
by the south he is veiled, and I see him not.
10 Yet he knows my way;
if he proved me, I should come forth as gold.[i]
11 My foot has always walked in his steps;
his way I have kept and have not turned aside.
12 From the commands of his lips I have not departed;
the words of his mouth I have treasured in my heart.
13 But he has decided, and who can say him nay?
What he desires, that he does.[j]
14 For he will carry out what is appointed for me;
and many such things may yet be in his mind.
15 Therefore am I dismayed before him;
when I take thought, I fear him.
16 Indeed God has made my courage fail;
the Almighty has put me in dismay.
17 Yes, would that I had vanished in darkness,
and that thick gloom were before me to conceal me.

CHAPTER 24

1 Why are not times set by the Almighty,
and why do his friends not see his days?*
2 The wicked remove landmarks;
they steal away herds and pasture them.
3 The asses of orphans they drive away;
they take the widow's ox for a pledge.
4 They force the needy off the road;
all the poor of the land are driven into hiding.
5 Like wild asses in the desert, these go forth
to their task of seeking food;
The steppe provides food for the young among them;
6 they harvest at night in the untilled land.
7 They pass the night naked, without clothing,
for they have no covering against the cold;
8 They are drenched with the rain of the mountains,
and for want of shelter they cling to the rock.
11 Between the rows they press out the oil;
they glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
They tread the wine presses, yet suffer thirst,

f Jb 33, 26.—g Ps 138, 6; Prv 29, 23; Mt 23, 12; Lk 1, 52; Jas 4, 10; 1 Pt 5, 5.—h Jb 17, 9; Ps 18, 21. 25.—i Ps 66, 10; Prv 17, 3; Mal 3, 3; 1 Pt 1, 7.—j Jb 42, 2; Pss 115, 3; 135, 6.

24, 1: Why does not God favor his friends by the speedy punishment of his enemies? (The text and order of verses in this chapter are not certain; note the omission of v 9 which duplicates words of vv 2-4.)

10 and famished are those who carry the sheaves.
12 From the dust the dying groan,
and the souls of the wounded cry out
[yet God does not treat it as unseemly].
13 There are those who are rebels against the light;[k]
they know not its ways;
they abide not in its paths.
14 When there is no light the murderer rises,
to kill the poor and needy.
15 The eye of the adulterer watches for the twilight;[l]
he says, "No eye will see me."
In the night the thief roams about,
and he puts a mask over his face;
16 in the dark he breaks into houses.
By day they shut themselves in;
none of them know the light,
17 for daylight they regard as darkness.*

* * *

18 Their portion in the land is accursed,
20 and wickedness is splintered like wood.
19. 21. .....
22 To him who rises without assurance of his life
23 he gives safety and support.
He sustains the mighty by his strength,
and his eyes are on their ways.
24 They are exalted for a while, and then they are gone;
they are laid low and, like all others, are gathered up;
like ears of grain they shrivel.

* * *

25 If this be not so, who will confute me,
and reduce my argument to nought?

CHAPTER 25

Bildad's Third Speech. 1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 Dominion and awesomeness are his who brings about harmony in his heavens.
3 Is there any numbering of his troops?*
Yet to which of them does not his light extend?
4 How can a man be just in God's sight,[m]
or how can any woman's child be innocent?
5 Behold, even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not clear in his sight.
6 How much less man, who is but a maggot,
the son of man, who is only a worm?[n]

CHAPTER 26

Job's Reply. 1 Then Job spoke again and said:*

2 What help you give to the powerless,
what strength to the feeble arm!
3 How you counsel, as though he had no wisdom;
how profuse is the advice you offer!
4 With whose help have you uttered those words,
and whose is the breath that comes forth from you?[o]
5 The shades* beneath writhe in terror,[p]
the waters, and their inhabitants.
6 Naked before him is the nether world,*
and Abaddon has no covering.[q]
7 He stretches out the North* over empty space,
and suspends the earth over nothing at all;
8 He binds up the waters in his clouds,
yet the cloud is not rent by their weight;
9 He holds back the appearance of the full moon
by spreading his clouds before it.
10 He has marked out a circle* on the surface of the deep[r]
as the boundary of light and darkness.

k Jn 3, 19f.—l Prv 7, 9f.—m Jb 4, 17ff; 9, 2.—n Jb 4, 19; 15, 16.—o Gn 2, 7.—p Prv 9, 18.—q Ps 139, 7-12.—r Jb 38, 8-11; Prv 8, 29.

24, 17: The asterisks which follow this verse mark off a passage (vv 18-24) which cannot be ascribed to Job with certainty. Vv 17-24 are in general poorly preserved; and much of vv 18-21 has not been translated because these verses are obscure. St. Jerome renders them as follows: "(18) He is light upon the face of the water, cursed be his portion on the earth; let him not walk by the way of vineyards. (19) Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat, and his sin even to hell. (20) Let mercy forget him; may worms be his sweetness; let him be remembered no more, but be broken in pieces as an unfruitful tree. (21) For he has fed the barren that bears not, and to the widow he has done no good."

25, 3: *His troops:* the heavenly hosts, the stars or the angels. *His light:* compare the wording in Jb 24, 13: *those who are rebels against the light.*

26, 1-14: Probably to be read as Job's reply to Bildad's short speech. Some, however, would make it the reply to Zophar (Jb 27, 13-21); it would thus lead up to the poem of ch 28.

26, 5: *Shades:* the dead in Sheol, the nether world; cf Pss 6, 6; 88, 11.

26, 6: *Nether world:* cf note to Ps 6, 6. *Abaddon:* Hebrew for "(place of) destruction," a synonym for *nether world;* cf Jb 28, 22; Rv 9, 11.

26, 7: *The North:* used here as a synonym for the firmament, the heavens; cf Is 14, 13.

26, 10: *Circle:* the horizon of the ocean which serves as the boundary for the activity of light and darkness.

11 The pillars of the heavens tremble[s]
and are stunned at his thunderous rebuke;
12 By his power he stirs up the sea,
and by his might he crushes Rahab;*
13 With his angry breath he scatters the water,
and he hurls the lightning against it relentlessly;
His hand pierces the fugitive dragon*
as from his hand it strives to flee.[t]
14 Lo, these are but the outlines of his ways,
and how faint is the word we hear!

CHAPTER 27

Job's Reply

11 I will teach you the manner of God's dealings,
and the way of the Almighty I will not conceal.
2 As God lives,* who withholds my deserts,[u]
the Almighty, who has made bitter my soul,
3 So long as I still have life in me
and the breath of God is in my nostrils,
4 My lips shall not speak falsehood,
nor my tongue utter deceit!
5 Far be it from me to account you right;
till I die I will not renounce my innocence.[v]
6 My justice I maintain and I will not relinquish it;
my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.
7 Let my enemy be as the wicked
and my adversary as the unjust!
8 For what can the impious man expect
when he is cut off,
when God requires his life?
9 Will God then attend to his cry
when calamity comes upon him?
10 Will he then delight in the Almighty
and call upon him constantly?
12 Behold, you yourselves have all seen it;
why then do you spend yourselves in idle words!

* * *

13 * This is the portion of a wicked man
from God,
the inheritance an oppressor receives from the Almighty:[w]
14 Though his children be many, the sword is their destiny.
His offspring shall not be filled with bread.
15 His survivors, when they die, shall have no burial,
and their widows shall not be mourned.
16 Though he heap up silver like dust
and store away mounds of clothing,
17 What he has stored the just man shall wear,
and the innocent shall divide the silver.
18 He builds his house as of cobwebs,
or like a booth put up by the vinekeeper.
19 He lies down a rich man, one last time;
he opens his eyes and nothing remains to him.[x]
20 Terrors rush upon him by day;
at night the tempest carries him off.
21 The storm wind seizes him and he disappears;
it sweeps him out of his place.*

* * *

CHAPTER 28

The Inaccessibility of Wisdom

1 There is indeed a mine for silver,*
and a place for gold which men refine.
2 Iron is taken from the earth,
and copper is melted out of stone.
4 .....
5 The earth, though out of it comes forth bread,
is in fiery upheaval underneath.

s Jb 9, 6.—t Is 27, 1.—u Jb 34, 5.—v Jb 2, 3. 9; 13, 15; 33, 9.—w Jb 20, 4-29.—x Pss 49, 18; 76, 6.

26, 12: *Rahab:* cf Jb 9, 13; see note on Ps 89, 11.

26, 13: *The fugitive dragon:* the same term occurs in Is 27, 1 in apposition to Leviathan; see note on Jb 3, 8. This is actually Jb 27, 22.

27, 2-12: This is probably to be read as Job's reply to Zophar's speech of Jb 27, 13-21. In the current Hebrew text the heading for this chapter (Jb 27, 1, here omitted) is identical with Jb 29, 1; we should expect rather such a heading as in Jb 21, 1; 23, 1; 26, 1.

27, 13-21: This is probably to be read as Zophar's third speech. The asterisks are present to indicate it is not likely that the sacred writer intended these words to be ascribed to Job.

27, 21: The Hebrew has two more verses: v 22 (read above with Jb 26, 13); and v 23, which is a variant form of v 21.

28, 1-28: Note the changed order of verses; v 4 is uncertain.

This chapter contains a beautifully vivid description of that Wisdom which is beyond the attainment of creatures; known only to God, it is reflected in the order and majesty of his creation. Man, however, can, in a way, participate in this Wisdom by fearing the Lord and avoiding evil. Scholars are not agreed regarding the authorship of this poem, though it is altogether worthy of the author of the Book of Job. Used here as a counterpoise to ch 3 at the beginning of the dialogue, it may have been first conceived as an independent poem.

6 Its stones are the source of sapphires,
and there is gold in its dust.

12 But whence can wisdom be obtained,
and where is the place of understanding?[y]
13 Man knows nothing to equal it,
not is it to be had in the land of the living.
15 Solid gold cannot purchase it,
not can its price be paid with silver.[z]
16 It cannot be bought with gold of Ophir,*
with the precious onyx or the sapphire.
17 Gold or crystal cannot equal it,
nor can golden vessels reach its worth.
18 Neither coral nor jasper should be thought of;
it surpasses pearls and 19 Arabian topaz.

20 Whence, then, comes wisdom,
and where is the place of understanding?
21 It is hid from the eyes of any beast;
from the birds of the air it is concealed.
7 The path to it no bird of prey knows,
nor has the hawk's eye seen that path.
8 The proud beasts have not trodden it,
nor has the lion gone that way.
14 The abyss declares, "It is not in me";
and the sea says, "I have it not."
22 Abaddon* and Death say,
"Only by rumor have we heard of it."

23 God knows the way to it;[a]
it is he who is familiar with its place.[b]
24 For he beholds the ends of the earth
and sees all that is under the heavens.
3 He has set a boundary for the darkness;
to the farthest confines he penetrates.
9 He sets his hand to the flinty rock,
and overturns the mountains at their foundations.
10 He splits channels in the rocks;
his eyes behold all that is precious.
11 He probes the wellsprings of the streams,
and brings hidden things to light.
25 He has weighed out the wind,
and fixed the scope of the waters;
26 When he made rules for the rain
and a path for the thunderbolts,[c]
27 Then he saw wisdom and appraised it,
gave it its setting, knew it through and through.
28 And to man he said:
Behold, the fear of the LORD is wisdom;
and avoiding evil is understanding.[d]

V: JOB'S FINAL SUMMARY OF HIS CAUSE

CHAPTER 29

1 Job took up his theme anew and said:
2 Oh, that I were as in the months past!
as in the days when God watched over me,[e]
3 While he kept his lamp shining above my head,
and by his light I walked through darkness;
4 As I was in my flourishing days,
when God sheltered my tent;
5 When the Almighty was yet with me,
and my children were round about me;
6 When my footsteps were bathed in milk,
and the rock flowed with streams of oil;*
7 When I went forth to the gate of the city
and set up my seat in the square—
8 Then the young men saw me and withdrew,
while the elders rose up and stood;
9 The chief men refrained from speaking
and covered their mouths with their hands;[f]
10 The voice of the princes was silenced,
and their tongues stuck to the roofs of their mouths.
21 For me they listened and waited;
they were silent for my counsel.
22 Once I spoke, they said no more,
but received my pronouncement drop by drop.
23 They waited for me as for the rain;
they drank in my words like the spring rains.
24 When I smiled on them they were reassured;

y Eccl 7, 24f; Bar 3, 14f. 29-33.—z Prv 3, 14; 8, 10f. 19; 16, 16; Wis 7, 7-11.—a 23-27: Prv 8, 22-31.—b Prv 2, 6; Sir 1, 1; Jas 1, 5.—c Jb 38, 25; Prv 3, 20.—d Ps 111, 10; Prv 1, 7; 9, 10; Sir 1, 16.—e Jb 1, 10.—f Wis 8, 10ff.

28, 16: *Ophir:* cf note to Ps 45, 10.
28, 22: *Abaddon:* cf note to Jb 26, 6.
29, 6: Hyperbole to express abundance; see note on Jb 20, 17.

25 mourners took comfort from my cheerful glance.
I chose out their way and presided;
I took a king's place in the armed forces.

11 Whoever heard of me blessed me;
those who saw me commended me.
12 For I rescued the poor who cried out for help,
the orphans, and the unassisted;
13 The blessing of those in extremity came upon me,
and the heart of the widow I made joyful.
14 I wore my honesty like a garment;
justice was my robe and my turban.
15 I was eyes to the blind,
and feet to the lame was I;
16 I was a father to the needy;
the rights of the stranger I studied,
17 And I broke the jaws of the wicked man;
from his teeth I forced the prey.
18 Then I said: "In my own nest I shall grow old;
I shall multiply years like the phoenix.*
19 My root is spread out to the waters;
the dew rests by night on my branches.
20 My glory is fresh within me,
and my bow is renewed in my hand!"

CHAPTER 30

1 But now they hold me in derision
who are younger in years than I;[g]
Whose fathers I should have disdained
to rank with the dogs of my flock.
2 Such strength as they had, to me meant nought;
they were utterly destitute.
3 In want and hunger was their lot,[h]
they who fled to the parched wastelands:
4 They plucked saltwort* and shrubs;
the roots of the broom plant were their food.
5 They were banished from among men,
with an outcry like that against a thief—
6 To dwell on the slopes of the wadies,
in caves of sand and stone;
7 Among the bushes they raised their raucous cry;
under the nettles they huddled together.
8 Irresponsible, nameless men,
they were driven out of the land.

9 Yet now they sing of me in mockery;
I am become a byword among them.[i]
10 They abhor me, they stand aloof from me,
they do not hesitate to spit in my face!
11 Indeed, they have loosed their bonds;
they lord it over me,
and have thrown off restraint in my presence.
12 To subvert my paths they rise up;
they build their approaches for my ruin.
13 To destroy me, they attack with none to stay them;
14 as through a wide breach they advance.
Amid the uproar they come on in waves;
15 over me rolls the terror.
My dignity is borne off on the wind,
and my welfare vanishes like a cloud.
18 One with great power lays hold of my clothing;*
by the collar of my tunic he seizes me:
19 He has cast me into the mire;
I am leveled with the dust and ashes.

20 I cry to you, but you do not answer me;[j]
you stand off and look at me,
21 Then you turn upon me without mercy
and with your strong hand you buffet me.
22 You raise me up and drive me before the wind;
I am tossed about by the tempest.

23 Indeed I know you will turn me back in death
to the destined place of everyone alive.[k]

g Jb 12, 4; 19, 18.—h Jb 3-8; Jb 24, 5f.—i Jb 17, 6.—j Jb 19, 7.—k Heb 9, 27.

29, 18: *Phoenix:* a legendary bird which, after several centuries of life, consumed itself in fire, then rose from its ashes in youthful freshness. This meaning, originally intended in the Greek, later came to mean "palm tree." Some render the Hebrew as "sand."

30, 4: *Saltwort:* found in salt marshes and very sour to the taste; eaten by the extremely poor as a cooked vegetable. *Broom plant:* the juniper or brushwood; cf Ps 120, 4; a figure of bitterness and poverty, because of its bitter-tasting roots which are practically inedible.

30, 18-23: Job here refers to God's stern treatment of him.

24 Yet should not a hand be held out
to help a wretched man in his calamity?
25 Or have I not wept for the hardships of others;
was not my soul grieved for the destitute?[l]
26 Yet when I looked for good, then evil came;
when I expected light, then came darkness.
16 My soul ebbs away from me;
27 days of affliction have overtaken me.
17 My frame takes no rest by night;
my inward parts seethe and will not be stilled.
28 I go about in gloom, without the sun;
I rise up in public to voice my grief.
29 I have become the brother of jackals,
companion to the ostrich.
30 My blackened skin falls away from me;
the heat scorches my very frame.
31 My harp is turned to mourning,
and my reed pipe to sounds of weeping.

CHAPTER 31

2 But what is man's lot from God above,
his inheritance from the Almighty on high?
3 Is it not calamity for the unrighteous,
and woe for evildoers?
4 Does he not see my ways,
and number all my steps?[m]
6 Let God weigh me in the scales of justice;
thus will he know my innocence![n]
5 If I have walked in falsehood*
and my foot has hastened to deceit;
7 If my steps have turned out of the way,
and my heart has followed my eyes,
or any stain clings to my hands,
8 Then may I sow, but another eat of it,
or may my planting be rooted up!
38 If my land has cried out against me
till its very furrows complained;
39 If I have eaten its produce without payment
and grieved the hearts of its tenants;
40 Then let the thistles grow instead of wheat
and noxious weeds instead of barley!
1 If I have made an agreement with my eyes*
and entertained any thoughts against a maiden;
9 If my heart has been enticed toward a woman,
and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door;
10 Then may my wife grind for another,
and may others cohabit with her!
11 For that would be heinous,
a crime to be condemned;[o]
12 A fire that should burn down to the abyss
till it consumed all my possessions to the roots.[p]
13 Had I refused justice to my manservant
or to my maid, when they had a claim against me,
14 What then should I do when God rose up;
what could I answer when he demanded an account?
15 Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
Did not the same One fashion us before our birth?
16 If I have denied anything to the poor,[q]
or allowed the eyes of the widow to languish
17 While I ate my portion alone,
with no share in it for the fatherless,
18 Though like a father God has reared me from my youth,
guiding me even from my mother's womb—
19 If I have seen a wanderer without clothing,
or a poor man without covering,
20 Whose limbs have not blessed me
when warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
21 If I have raised my hand against the innocent
because I saw that I had supporters at the gate—*
22 Then may my arm fall from the shoulder,
my forearm be broken at the elbow!
23 For the dread of God will be upon me,
and his majesty will overpower me.

l Jb 29, 12-16.—m Jb 14, 16; 34, 21; Ps 139, 3; Prv 5, 21.—n Jb 23, 10.—o Ex 20, 14; Lv 20, 10; Dt 22, 22.—p Sir 9, 8f.—q 16-23: Jb 29, 12-16.

31, 5-34: Job's final protestation of his innocence.
31, 1. 9: Note the gradation: avoidance of sinful glances and thoughts against a maiden; desire for another's wife.
31, 21: *Gate:* cf notes on Jb 5, 4; Ru 4, 1.

24 Had I put my trust in gold
or called fine gold my security;
25 Or had I rejoiced that my wealth was great,
or that my hand had acquired abundance—
26 Had I looked upon the sun as it shone,[r]
or the moon in the splendor of its progress,*
27 And had my heart been secretly enticed
to waft them a kiss with my hand;
28 This too would be a crime for condemnation;
for I should have denied God above.[s]
29 Had I rejoiced at the destruction of my enemy
or exulted when evil fell upon him,[t]
30 Even though I had not suffered my mouth to sin
by uttering a curse against his life—
31 Had not the men of my tent exclaimed,
"Who has not been fed with his meat!"*
32 Because no stranger lodged in the street,
but I opened my door to wayfarers—
33 Had I, out of human weakness, hidden my sins
and buried my guilt in my bosom*
34 Because I feared the noisy multitude
and the scorn of the tribes terrified me—
then I should have remained silent,
and not come out of doors!
35 Oh, that I had one to hear my case,
and that my accuser would write out his indictment![u]
36 Surely, I should wear it on my shoulder*
or put it on me like a diadem;
37 Of all my steps I should give him an account;
like a prince* I should present myself before him.

This is my final plea; let the Almighty answer me!

The words of Job are ended.

VI: ELIHU'S SPEECHES

CHAPTER 32

1 Then the three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous[v] in his own eyes. 2 [w] But the anger of Elihu,* son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was kindled. He was angry with Job for considering himself rather than God to be in the right. 3 [x] He was angry also with the three friends because they had not found a good answer and had not condemned Job. 4 But since these men were older than he, Elihu bided his time before addressing Job. 5 When, however, Elihu saw that there was no reply in the mouths of the three men, his wrath was inflamed. 6 So Elihu, son of Barachel the Buzite, spoke out and said:

I am young and you are very old;
therefore I held back and was afraid
to declare to you my knowledge.
7 Days should speak, I thought,
and many years teach wisdom![y]
8 But it is a spirit in man,[z]
the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding.
9 It is not those of many days who are wise,
nor the aged who understand the right.
10 Therefore I say, hearken to me;
let me too set forth my knowledge!
11 Behold, I have waited for your discourses,
and have given ear to your arguments.
12 Yes, I followed you attentively
as you searched out what to say;
And behold, there is none who has convicted Job,
not one of you could refute his statements.

r 26f: Dt 4, 19.—s Dt 17, 2-7.—t Prv 24, 17.—u Jb 19, 23; 23, 3-7.—v Jb 33, 9.—w Jb 13, 18; 27, 6; 34, 5; 35, 2.—x Jb 22, 5.—y Jb 12, 12.—z Jb 33, 4.

31, 26ff: Job never sinned by worshiping the sun or the moon; *waft them a kiss:* an act of idolatrous worship.

31, 31: The members of his household will testify to his hospitality.

31, 33f: Job's present protest is made, not in spite of hidden sins which he had been unwilling to disclose, but out of genuine innocence.

31, 36: *On my shoulder:* i.e., boldly, proudly.

31, 37: *Like a prince:* not as a frightened criminal. *Final plea:* literally, "Tau," the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet; in the current Hebrew text this line is in v 35, while the following one ends v 40.

32, 2: *Elihu* means "My God is he." This speaker was from Buz, which, according to Jer 25, 23, was near Tema and Dedan. A young man, he impetuously and impatiently upbraids Job for his boldness toward God, and the three friends for not successfully answering Job. He undertakes to defend God's absolute justice and to explain more clearly why there is suffering. While fundamentally his position is the same as that of the three friends, he does locate more definitely, though not perfectly, the place of suffering in the divine plan.

13 Yet do not say, "We have met wisdom.*
God may vanquish him but not man!"
14 For had he addressed his words to me,
I should not then have answered him
as you have done.
15 They are dismayed, they make no more
reply;
words fail them.
16 Must I wait? Now that they speak no
more,
and have ceased to make reply,
17 I too will speak my part;
I also will show my knowledge!
18 For I am full of matters to utter;
the spirit within me compels me.
19 Like a new wineskin with wine under
pressure,
my bosom is ready to burst.
20 Let me speak and obtain relief;
let me open my lips, and make reply.
21 I would not be partial to anyone,
nor give flattering titles to any.
22 For I know nought of flattery;
if I did, my Maker would soon take
me away.

CHAPTER 33

1 Therefore, O Job, hear my discourse,
and hearken to all my words.
2 Behold, now I open my mouth;
my tongue and my voice form words.
3 I will state directly what is in my mind,
my lips shall utter knowledge sincerely;
4 For the spirit of God has made me,
the breath of the Almighty keeps me
alive.[a]
5 If you are able, refute me;
draw up your arguments and stand
forth.
6 Behold I, like yourself, have been taken
from the same clay by God.[b]
7 Therefore no fear of me should dismay
you,
nor should my presence weigh heavily upon you.
8 But you have said in my hearing,
as I listened to the sound of your
words:
9 "I am clean and without transgression;
I am innocent; there is no guilt in
me.[c]
10 Yet he invents pretexts against me
and reckons me as his enemy.[d]
11 He puts my feet in the stocks;
he watches all my ways!"[e]
12 In this you are not just, let me tell you;
for God is greater than man.
13 Why, then, do you make complaint
against him
that he gives no account of his doings?[f]
14 For God does speak, perhaps once,
or even twice, though one perceive it
not.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
[when deep sleep falls upon men]
as they slumber in their beds,
16 It is then he opens the ears of men
and as a warning to them, terrifies
them;
17 By turning man from evil
and keeping pride away from him,
18 He withholds his soul from the pit
and his life from passing to the grave.
19 Or a man is chastened on his bed by
pain
and unceasing suffering within his
frame,
20 So that to his appetite food becomes repulsive,
and his senses reject the choicest
nourishment.[g]
21 His flesh is wasted so that it cannot be
seen,
and his bones, once invisible, appear;
22 His soul draws near to the pit,
his life to the place of the dead.
23 If then there be for him an angel,*
one out of a thousand, a mediator,
To show him what is right for him
and bring the man back to justice,
24 He will take pity on him and say,
"Deliver him from going down to the
pit;
I have found him a ransom."
25 Then his flesh shall become soft as a
boy's;
he shall be again as in the days of his
youth.
26 He shall pray and God will favor him;
he shall see God's face with rejoicing.[h]
27 He shall sing before men and say,

a Jb 32, 8.—b Jb 31, 15.—c Jb 10, 7; 13, 18; 27, 5f; 29, 14; 32, 1; 34, 5.—d Jb 13, 24; 19, 11.—e Jb 13, 27; 31, 4.—f Jb 31, 35.—g Jb 6, 7.—h Jb 22, 26-29.

32, 13: *Met wisdom:* in Job's arguments.
33, 23: *Angel:* one of the thousands who stand between God and man as intermediaries, reminding man of his duties and giving God an account of their fulfillment.

"I sinned and did wrong,
yet he has not punished me accordingly.
28 He delivered my soul from passing to the pit,
and I behold the light of life."
29 Lo, all these things God does,
twice, or thrice, for a man,
30 Bringing back his soul from the pit
to the light, in the land of the living.
31 Be attentive, O Job; listen to me!
Be silent and I will speak.
32 If you have aught to say, then answer me.
Speak out! I should like to see you justified.
33 If not, then do you listen to me;
be silent while I teach you wisdom.

CHAPTER 34

1 Then Elihu continued and said:
2 Hear, O wise men, my discourse,
and you that have knowledge, hear me!
3 For the ear tests words,
as the taste does food.[i]
4 Let us discern for ourselves what is right;
let us learn between us what is good.
5 For Job has said, "I am innocent,
but God has taken what is my due.[j]
6 Notwithstanding my right I am set at nought;
in my wound the arrow rankles, sinless though I am."[k]
7 What man is like Job?
He drinks in blasphemies like water,
8 Keeps company with evildoers
and goes along with wicked men,
9 When he says, "It profits a man nought
that he is pleasing to God."[l]
10 Therefore, men of understanding, hearken to me:
far be it from God to do wickedness;
far from the Almighty to do wrong![m]
11 Rather, he requites men for their conduct,
and brings home to a man his way of life.[n]
12 Surely, God cannot act wickedly,
the Almighty cannot violate justice.[o]
13 Who gave him government over the earth,
or who else set all the land in its place?[p]
14 If he were to take back his spirit to himself,
withdraw to himself his breath,
15 All flesh would perish together,
and man would return to the dust.[q]
16 Now, do you, O Job, hear this!
Hearken to the words I speak!
17 Can an enemy of justice indeed be in control,
or will you condemn the supreme Just One,
18 Who says to a king, "You are worthless!"
and to nobles, "You are wicked!"
19 Who neither favors the person of princes,
nor respects the rich more than the poor?
For they are all the work of his hands;[r]
20 in a moment they die, even at midnight.[s]
He brings on nobles, and takes them away,
removing the powerful without lifting a hand;
21 For his eyes are upon the ways of man,
and he beholds all his steps.
22 There is no darkness so dense
that evildoers can hide in it.
25 Therefore he discerns their works;
he turns at night and crushes them.
23 For he forewarns no man of his time
to come before God in judgment.
24 Without a trial he breaks the mighty,[t]
and sets others in their stead,
27 Because they turned away from him
and heeded none of his ways,
28 But caused the cries of the poor to reach him,
so that he heard the plea of the afflicted.
29 If he remains tranquil, who then can condemn?*
If he hides his face, who then can behold him?
30 .....
31 When anyone says to God,
"I was misguided; I will offend no more.

i Jb 12, 11.—j Jb 33, 9f.—k Jb 9, 20.—l Jb 9, 22f. 30f; 21, 15; 35, 3.—m Jb 36, 23.—n Ps 62, 13; Prv 24, 12; Mt 16, 27; Rom 2, 6; 2 Cor 5, 10; Rv 22, 12.—o Jb 8, 3.—p Jb 38, 4-7.—q Jb 10, 9.—r Dt 10, 17; 2 Chr 19, 7; Wis 6, 7; Acts 10, 34; Rom 2, 11; Eph 6, 9; Col 3, 25; 1 Pt 1, 17.—s Jb 21, 3.—t Ps 2, 9.

34, 26. 29f: The extant Hebrew text of these verses contains several added phrases which either represent duplication or are very obscure.

32 Teach me wherein I have sinned;
if I have done wrong, I will do so no more,"
33 Would you then say that God must punish,
since you reject what he is doing?
It is you who must choose, not I;
speak, therefore, what you know.
34 Men of understanding will say to me,
every wise man who hears my views:
35 "Job speaks without intelligence,
and his words are without sense."[u]
36 Let Job be tried to the limit,
since his answers are those of the impious;
37 For he is adding rebellion to his sin
by brushing off our arguments
and addressing many words to God.

CHAPTER 35

1 Then Elihu proceeded and said:

2 Do you think it right to say,
"I am just rather than God"?[v]
3 To say, "What does it profit me;
what advantage have I more than if I had sinned?"[w]
4 I have words for a reply to you*
and your three companions as well.
5 Look up to the skies and behold;
regard the heavens high above you.
6 If you sin, what injury do you do to God?
Even if your offenses are many, how do you hurt him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give him,
or what does he receive from your hand?[x]
8 Your wickedness can affect only a man like yourself;
and your justice only a fellow human being.
9 In great oppression men cry out;
they call for help because of the power of the mighty,
10 Saying, "Where is God, my Maker,
who has given visions in the night,
11 Taught us rather than the beasts of the earth,
and made us wise rather than the birds of the heavens?"
12 Though thus they cry out, he answers not
against the pride of the wicked.
13 But it is idle to say God does not hear
or that the Almighty does not take notice.
14 Even though you say that you see him not,*
the case is before him; with trembling should you wait upon him.
15 But now that you have done otherwise,
God's anger punishes,
nor does he show concern that a man will die.
16 Yet Job to no purpose opens his mouth,
and without knowledge multiplies words.[y]

CHAPTER 36

1 Elihu proceeded further and said:

2 Wait yet a little and I will instruct you,
for there are still words to be said on God's behalf.
3 I will bring my knowledge from afar,
and to my Maker I will accord the right.
4 For indeed, my theme cannot fail me:
the one perfect in knowledge I set before you.
5 Behold, God rejects the obstinate in heart,*
he preserves not the life of the wicked,
6 He withholds not the just man's rights,
but grants vindication to the oppressed[z]
7 And with kings upon thrones
he sets them, exalted forever.[a]
8 Or if they are bound with fetters
and held fast by bonds of affliction,
9 Then he makes known to them what they have done
and their sins of boastful pride.
10 He opens their ears to correction
and exhorts them to turn back from evil.
11 If they obey and serve him,
they spend their days in prosperity,
their years in happiness.

u Jb 35, 16; 38, 2; 42, 3.—v Jb 32, 2.—w Jb 34, 9.—x Jb 22, 3; 41, 2; Lk 17, 10; Rom 11, 35.—y Jb 34, 35; 38, 2; 42, 3.—z Ps 72, 4. 12f.—a Ps 113, 7f.

35, 4: *A reply to you:* Elihu refers to Job's statement that the innocent suffer as much as the wicked, and especially to Eliphaz's words in Jb 22, 2f.

35, 14f: The text here is uncertain. It seems to indicate that Job should have realized God's indifference is only apparent, and that, because he has not done so, God will punish him.

36, 5-21: Perhaps this section should be read between vv 6 and 7 of chapter 34.

12 But if they obey not, they perish;
they die for lack of knowledge.*

13 The impious in heart lay up anger for themselves;
they cry not for help when he enchains them;
14 Therefore they expire in youth,
and perish among the reprobate.*
15 But he saves the unfortunate through their affliction,
and instructs them through distress.
16–20 ..... *
21 Take heed, turn not to evil;
for you have preferred carousal to affliction.

22 Behold, God is sublime in his power.
What teacher is there like him?
23 Who prescribes for him his conduct,
or who can say, "You have done wrong"?[b]
24 Remember, you should extol his work,
which men have praised in song.
25 All men contemplate it;
man beholds it from afar.

26 Lo, God is great beyond our knowledge;
the number of his years is past searching out.
27 He holds in check the waterdrops
that filter in rain through his mists,
28 Till the skies run with them
and the showers rain down on mankind.
31 For by these* he nourishes the nations,
and gives them food in abundance.

b Jb 34, 10; Is 40, 13.—c Ps 148, 17.

36, 12: *Knowledge:* practical wisdom in serving God, which they lack because they refused it when warned (cf v 10).
36, 14: *Reprobate:* cf Dt 23, 18f.
36, 16-20: The Hebrew text here is in disorder. The Vulgate has: "(16) Therefore he will give you most ample salvation from the narrow mouth which has no foundations beneath it; but the repose of your table will be filled with fatness. (17) Your case has been judged as that of the wicked; case and judgment you will receive. (18) Let no wrath, then, overcome you, that you oppress anyone; nor let numerous gifts mislead you. (19) Lay down your greatness without tribulation, and all who are mighty in strength. (20) Do not draw out the night, that people may go in place of them."
36, 31: *These:* refers to *the showers* of v 28, if the verse order indicated above is correct.
36, 29f: Because of the uncertainty of the text, no translation of these verses has received unanimous approval from exegetes.
37, 2: *Voice:* the thunder.
37, 9: *Chamber:* where it was popularly believed storms were kept enclosed.
37, 12: *Their rounds:* of *rain* (Jb 36, 27), of *clouds* (Jb 36, 29f), of *lightning* and *thunder* (Jb 36, 32f), of *snow* (Jb 37, 6), of *winds* (Jb 37, 9).

29.30 Lo! he spreads the clouds in layers
as the carpeting of his tent.*
32 In his hands he holds the lightning,
and he commands it to strike the mark.
33 His thunder speaks for him
and incites the fury of the storm.

CHAPTER 37

1 At this my heart trembles
and leaps out of its place,
2 To hear his angry voice*
as it rumbles forth from his mouth!
3 Everywhere under the heavens he sends it,
with his lightning, to the ends of the earth.
4 Again his voice roars—
the majestic sound of his thunder.
5 He does great things beyond our knowing;
wonders past our searching out.
6 For he says to the snow, "Fall to the earth";
likewise to his heavy, drenching rain.
7 He shuts up all mankind indoors;
8 the wild beasts take to cover
and remain quietly in their dens.

9 Out of its chamber* comes forth the tempest;
from the north winds, the cold.
10 With his breath God brings the frost,
and the broad waters become congealed.[c]
11 With hail, also, the clouds are laden,
and they scatter their flashes of light.
12 He it is who changes their rounds,* according to his plans,
in their task upon the surface of the earth,
13 whether for punishment or mercy, as he commands.

14 Hearken to this, O Job!
Stand and consider the wondrous works of God!
15 Do you know how God lays his commands upon them,
and makes the light shine forth from his clouds?
16 Do you know how the clouds are banked,
the wondrous work of him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 You, whom the streams of water fail
when a calm from the south comes over the land,

18 Do you spread out with him the firmament of the skies,
hard as a brazen mirror?*
19 Teach us then what we shall say to him;
we cannot, for the darkness, make our plea.
20 Will he be told about it when I speak,
or when a man says he is being destroyed?*
21 Nay, rather, it is as the light which men see not
while it is obscured among the clouds,
till the wind comes by and sweeps the clouds away.*
22 From the North the splendor comes,*
surrounding God's awesome majesty!
23 The Almighty! we cannot discover him,
pre-eminent in power and judgment;
his great justice owes no one an accounting.
24 Therefore men revere him,
though none can see him, however wise their hearts.

VII: THE LORD'S SPEECH

CHAPTER 38

1 Then the LORD* addressed Job out of the storm and said:

2 Who is this that obscures divine plans
with words of ignorance?
3 Gird up your loins* now, like a man;
I will question you, and you tell me the answers![d]
4 Where were you when I founded the earth?
Tell me, if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its size; do you know?
Who stretched out the measuring line for it?
6 Into what were its pedestals sunk,
and who laid the cornerstone,
7 While the morning stars sang in chorus
and all the sons of God* shouted for joy?

8 And who shut within doors the sea,
when it burst forth from the womb;[e]
9 When I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling bands?
10 When I set limits for it
and fastened the bar of its door,
11 And said: Thus far shall you come but no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stilled!

12 Have you ever in your lifetime commanded the morning
and shown the dawn its place
13 For taking hold of the ends of the earth,
till the wicked are shaken from its surface?
14 The earth is changed as is clay by the seal,
and dyed as though it were a garment;
15 But from the wicked the light is withheld,
and the arm of pride is shattered.

16 Have you entered into the sources of the sea,
or walked about in the depths of the abyss?
17 Have the gates of death been shown to you,
or have you seen the gates of darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all:
19 Which is the way to the dwelling place of light,
and where is the abode of darkness,
20 That you may take them to their boundaries
and set them on their homeward paths?
21 You know, because you were born before them,
and the number of your years is great!*

d Jb 40, 2.—e Gn 1, 9.

37, 18: *The firmament . . . mirror:* the ancients thought of the sky as a ceiling above which were the "upper waters" (cf Gn 1, 6f; 7, 11); when this ceiling became as hard as metal, the usual rain failed to fall on the earth (cf Lv 26, 19; Dt 28, 23).

37, 20: Will an angel bring this to God's attention?

37, 21: Even though God seems not to know our circumstances, he does know them, just as surely as the sun shines, unseen by man, behind the clouds.

37, 22: Now the storms of doubt and ignorance disappear, and *from the North,* used here as a symbol for God's mysterious abode, comes *the splendor* of the manifestation of God's majestic ways.

38, 1: Now the Lord enters the debate and addresses two discourses (38—39 and 40—41) to Job, in which he speaks of his wisdom and power, which are altogether beyond the capacity of Job, who therefore should never dare to demand a reason for the divine actions. *Out of the storm:* frequently the background of the appearances of the Lord in the Old Testament; cf Pss 18; 50; Na 1, 3; Hb 3.

38, 3: *Gird up your loins:* prepare for combat—figuratively, be ready to defend yourself in debate.

38, 7: *Sons of God:* angels; cf Jb 1, 6.

38, 21: Divine irony.

22 Have you entered the storehouse of the snow,
and seen the treasury of the hail
23 Which I have reserved for times of stress,
for the days of war* and of battle?
24 Which way to the parting of the winds,
whence the east wind spreads over the earth?

25 Who has laid out a channel for the downpour
and for the thunderstorm a path
26 To bring rain to no man's land,
the unpeopled wilderness;
27 To enrich the waste and desolate ground
till the desert blooms with verdure?

28 Has the rain a father;
or who has begotten the drops of dew?
29 Out of whose womb comes the ice,
and who gives the hoarfrost its birth in the skies,
30 When the waters lie covered as though with stone
that holds captive the surface of the deep?

31 Have you fitted a curb to the Pleiades,*
or loosened the bonds of Orion?
32 Can you bring forth the Mazzaroth in their season,
or guide the Bear with its train?
33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens;
can you put into effect their plan on the earth?

34 Can you raise your voice among the clouds,
or veil yourself in the waters of the storm?*
35 Can you send forth the lightnings on their way,
or will they say to you, "Here we are"?*

37 Who counts the clouds in his wisdom?
Or who tilts the water jars of heaven
38 So that the dust of earth is fused into a mass
and its clods made solid?

39 Do you hunt the prey for the lioness
or appease the hunger of her cubs
40 While they crouch in their dens,
or lie in wait in the thicket?
36 Who puts wisdom in the heart,
and gives the cock its understanding?*
41 Who provides nourishment for the ravens
when their young ones cry out to God,[f]
and they rove abroad without food?

CHAPTER 39

1 Do you know about the birth of the mountain goats,
watch for the birth pangs of the hinds,
2 Number the months that they must fulfill,
and fix the time of their bringing forth?
3 They crouch down and bear their young;
they deliver their progeny in the desert.
4 When their offspring thrive and grow,
they leave and do not return.

5 Who has given the wild ass his freedom,
and who has loosed him from bonds?
6 I have made the wilderness his home
and the salt flats his dwelling.
7 He scoffs at the uproar of the city,
and hears no shouts of a driver.
8 He ranges the mountains for pasture,
and seeks out every patch of green.

9 Will the wild ox consent to serve you,
and to pass the nights by your manger?
10 Will a rope bind him in the furrow,
and will he harrow the valleys after you?
11 Will you trust him for his great strength
and leave to him the fruits of your toil?
12 Can you rely on him to thresh out your grain
and gather in the yield of your threshing floor?

[f] Ps 147, 9.

38, 22f: *Hail . . . of war:* thus God used a hailstorm to rout Joshua's foes in the battle of Gibeon; cf Jos 10, 11; Sir 46, 5.
38, 31f: *Pleiades . . . Orion . . . Bear:* cf Jb 9, 9. *Mazzaroth:* it is uncertain what astronomical group is meant by this Hebrew word; perhaps a southern constellation (cf Jb 9, 9).
38, 34: *Veil yourself . . . storm:* wrap yourself in a cloud, as God comes in a theophany; cf Ps 18, 12.
38, 35: *Here we are:* at your service.
38, 36: *Understanding:* the reflection of divine Wisdom discernible in the created animal instincts of the *cock.*

13 The wings of the ostrich* beat idly;
her plumage is lacking in pinions.
14 When she leaves her eggs on the ground*
and deposits them in the sand,
15 Unmindful that a foot may crush them,
that the wild beasts may trample them,
16 She cruelly disowns her young
and ruthlessly makes nought of her brood;
17 For God has withheld wisdom from her
and has given her no share in understanding.
18 Yet in her swiftness of foot
she makes sport of the horse and his rider.
19 Do you give the horse his strength,*
and endow his neck with splendor?
20 Do you make the steed to quiver
while his thunderous snorting spreads terror?
21 He jubilantly paws the plain
and rushes in his might against the weapons.
22 He laughs at fear and cannot be deterred;
he turns not back from the sword.
23 Around him rattles the quiver,
flashes the spear and the javelin.
24 Frenzied and trembling he devours the ground;
he holds not back at the sound of the trumpet,
25 but at each blast he cries, "Aha!"
Even from afar he scents the battle,
the roar of the chiefs and the shouting.
26 Is it by your discernment that the hawk soars,
that he spreads his wings toward the south?
27 Does the eagle fly up at your command
to build his nest aloft?
28 On the cliff he dwells and spends the night,
on a spur of the cliff or the fortress.
29 From thence he watches for his prey;
his eyes behold it afar off.
30 His young ones greedily drink blood;
where the slain are, there is he.[g]

CHAPTER 40

1 The LORD then said to Job:

2 Will we have arguing with the Almighty
by the critic?
Let him who would correct God give answer![h]

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 Behold, I am of little account; what can I answer you?
I put my hand over my mouth.
5 Though I have spoken once, I will not do so again;
though twice, I will do so no more.

6 Then the LORD addressed Job out of the storm and said:

7 Gird up your loins now, like a man.
I will question you, and you tell me the answers!
8 Would you refuse to acknowledge my right?
Would you condemn me that you may be justified?

9 Have you an arm like that of God,
or can you thunder with a voice like his?
10 Adorn yourself with grandeur and majesty,
and array yourself with glory and splendor.
11 Let loose the fury of your wrath;
12 tear down the wicked and shatter them.
Bring down the haughty with a glance;
13 bury them in the dust together;
in the hidden world imprison them.
14 Then will I too acknowledge
that your own right hand can save you.

15 See, besides you I made Behemoth,*
that feeds on grass like an ox.
16 Behold the strength in his loins,
and his vigor in the sinews of his belly.
17 He carries his tail like a cedar;
the sinews of his thighs are like cables.
18 His bones are like tubes of bronze;
his frame is like iron rods.

19 He came at the beginning of God's ways,

g Mt 24, 28; Lk 17, 37.—h Jb 38, 3.

39, 13: *The wings of the ostrich* cannot raise her from the ground, but they help her to run swiftly.
39, 14ff: It was popularly believed that, because the ostrich laid her eggs on the sand, she was thereby cruelly abandoning them; cf Lam 4, 3.
39, 19-25: The famous description of a war horse.
40, 15: *Behemoth:* the hippopotamus.

and was made the taskmaster of his fellows;
20 For the produce of the mountains is brought to him,
and of all wild animals he makes sport.
21 Under the lotus trees he lies,
in coverts of the reedy swamp.
22 The lotus trees cover him with their shade;
all about him are the poplars on the bank.
23 If the river grows violent, he is not disturbed;
he is tranquil though the torrent surges about his mouth.
24 Who can capture him by his eyes,
or pierce his nose* with a trap?
25 Can you lead about Leviathan* with a hook,
or curb his tongue with a bit?
26 Can you put a rope into his nose,
or pierce through his cheek with a gaff?
27 Will he then plead with you, time after time,
or address you with tender words?
28 Will he make an agreement with you
that you may have him as a slave forever?
29 Can you play with him, as with a bird?
Can you put him in leash for your maidens?
30 Will the traders bargain for him?
Will the merchants* divide him up?
31 Can you fill his hide with barbs,
or his head with fish spears?
32 Once you but lay a hand upon him,
no need to recall any other conflict!

CHAPTER 41

2 Is he not relentless when aroused;
who then dares stand before him?*
1 Whoever might vainly hope to do so
need only see him to be overthrown.
3 Who has assailed him and come off safe—
who under all the heavens?
4 I need hardly mention his limbs,
his strength, and the fitness of his armor.
5 Who can strip off his outer garment,
or penetrate his double corselet?
6 Who can force open the doors of his mouth,
close to his terrible teeth?
7 Rows of scales are on his back,
tightly sealed together;
8 They are fitted each so close to the next
that no space intervenes;
9 So joined one to another
that they hold fast and cannot be parted.

10 When he sneezes, light flashes forth;
his eyes are like those of the dawn.
11 Out of his mouth go forth firebrands;
sparks of fire leap forth.
12 From his nostrils issues steam,
as from a seething pot or bowl.
13 His breath sets coals afire;
a flame pours from his mouth.
14 Strength abides in his neck,
and terror leaps before him.

15.16 His heart is hard as stone:
his flesh, as the lower millstone.
17 When he rises up, the mighty are afraid;
the waves of the sea fall back.*
18 Should the sword reach him, it will not avail;
nor will the spear, nor the dart, nor the javelin.
19 He regards iron as straw,
and bronze as rotten wood.
20 The arrow will not put him to flight;
slingstones used against him are but straws.
21 Clubs he esteems as splinters;
he laughs at the crash of the spear.

22 His belly is sharp as pottery fragments;
he spreads like a threshing sledge upon the mire.
23 He makes the depths boil like a pot;
the sea he churns like perfume in a kettle.
24 Behind him he leaves a shining path;
you would think the deep had the hoary head of age.
25 Upon the earth there is not his like,
intrepid he was made.
26 All, however lofty, fear him;
he is king over all proud beasts.

40, 24: *Eyes . . . nose:* the only exposed parts of the submerged beast.
40, 25: *Leviathan* here is the crocodile. But cf Jb 3, 8.
40, 30: *Merchants:* literally, "Canaanites," whose reputation for trading was so widespread that their name came to be used for merchants; cf Prv 31, 24. The meaning of this verse is that the crocodile is too powerful a creature to be sold like common fish.
41, 2: *Before him:* some read, "before me," i.e., God; also in v 3.
41, 17: The text here is uncertain.

CHAPTER 42

[1]Then Job answered the LORD and said:

[2] I know that you can do all things,*
and that no purpose of yours can be hindered.
[3] I have dealt with great things that I do not understand;
things too wonderful for me, which I cannot know.[i]
[5] I had heard of you by word of mouth,
but now my eye has seen you.
[6] Therefore I disown what I have said,
and repent in dust and ashes.

VIII: EPILOGUE

Job's Restoration. [7]And it came to pass after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and with your two friends;* for you have not spoken rightly concerning me, as has my servant Job. [8]Now, therefore, take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up a holocaust for yourselves; and let my servant Job pray for you;* for his prayer I will accept, not to punish you severely. For you have not spoken rightly concerning me, as has my servant Job." [9]Then Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, went and did as the LORD had commanded them. And the LORD accepted the intercession of Job.

[10]Also, the LORD restored the prosperity of Job, after he had prayed for his friends; the LORD even gave to Job twice as much as he had before. [11]Then all his brethren and his sisters came to him, and all his former acquaintances, and they dined with him in his house. They condoled with him and comforted him for all the evil which the LORD had brought upon him; and each one gave him a piece of money* and a gold ring.

[12] *j* Thus the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his earlier ones. For he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. [13]And he had seven sons and three daughters, [14]of whom* he called the first Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. [15]In all the land no other women were as beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance* among their brethren. [16]After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years;* and he saw his children, his grandchildren, and even his great-grandchildren.[k] [17]Then Job died, old and full of years.

i Jb 34, 35; 35, 16; 38, 2.—j Jb 1, 3.—k Jb 5, 25f.

42, 2-6: In the current Hebrew text, this final utterance of Job is interrupted by words ascribed to God (vv 3f) which are in large part a duplication of Jb 38, 2f.

42, 7: The three friends of Job (Elihu is ignored in the Epilogue) are criticized by the Lord because they had (even though in good faith) leveled false charges against him.

42, 8: Job becomes the intercessor for his friends, as were other great Old Testament characters, e.g., Abraham and Moses, and as our Lord would be, whom he prefigured. *Seven:* a symbolic number.

42, 11: *A piece of money:* the term is the same as that used in Gn 33, 19; Jos 24, 32. *Gold ring:* for the nose or ear.

42, 14: Job's daughters had names symbolic of their charms: *Jemimah,* dove; *Keziah,* precious perfume (cf Ps 45, 9); *Keren-happuch,* cosmetic jar—more precisely, a container for a black powder that was used like modern mascara.

42, 15: Ordinarily daughters did not inherit property unless there were no sons; cf Nm 27, 1-11.

42, 16: As his other rewards were *twice as much as he had before* (v 10), so Job's *hundred and forty years* were double the expected span of human life; cf Ps 90, 10.

THE DOCTOR'S waiting room, which was very small, was almost full when the Turpins entered and Mrs. Turpin, who was very large, made it look even smaller by her presence. She stood looming at the head of the magazine table set in the center of it, a living demonstration that the room was inadequate and ridiculous. Her little bright black eyes took in all the patients as she sized up the seating situation. There was one vacant chair and a place on the sofa occupied by a blond child in a dirty blue romper who should have been told to move over and make room for the lady. He was five or six, but Mrs. Turpin saw at once that no one was going to tell him to move over. He was slumped down in the seat, his arms idle at his sides and his eyes idle in his head; his nose ran unchecked.

Mrs. Turpin put a firm hand on Claud's shoulder and said in a voice that included anyone who wanted to listen, "Claud, you sit in that chair there," and gave him a push down into the vacant one. Claud was florid and bald and sturdy, somewhat shorter than Mrs. Turpin, but he sat down as if he were accustomed to doing what she told him to.

Mrs. Turpin remained standing. The only man in the room besides Claud was a lean stringy old fellow with a rusty hand spread out on each knee, whose eyes were closed as if he were asleep or dead or pretending to be so as not to get up and offer her his seat. Her gaze settled agreeably on a well-dressed grey-haired lady whose eyes met hers and whose expression said: if that child belonged to me, he would have some manners and move over—there's plenty of room there for you and him too.

Claud looked up with a sigh and made as if to rise.

"Sit down," Mrs. Turpin said. "You know you're not supposed to stand on that leg. He has an ulcer on his leg," she explained.

Claud lifted his foot onto the magazine table and rolled his trouser leg up to reveal a purple swelling on a plump marble-white calf.

"My!" the pleasant lady said. "How did you do that?"

"A cow kicked him," Mrs. Turpin said.

"Goodness!" said the lady.

Claud rolled his trouser leg down.

"Maybe the little boy would move over," the lady suggested, but the child did not stir.

"Somebody will be leaving in a minute," Mrs. Turpin said. She could not understand why a doctor—with as much money as they made charging five dollars a day to just stick their head in the hospital door and look at you—couldn't afford a decent-sized waiting room. This one was hardly bigger than a garage. The table was cluttered with limp-looking magazines and at one end of it there was a big green glass ash tray full of cigaret butts and cotton wads with little blood spots on them. If she had had anything to do with the running of the place, that would have been emptied every so often. There were no chairs against the wall at the head of the room. It had a rectangular-shaped panel in it that permitted a view of the office where the nurse came and went and the secretary listened to the radio. A plastic fern in a gold pot sat in the opening and trailed its fronds down almost to the floor. The radio was softly playing gospel music.

Just then the inner door opened and a nurse with the highest stack of yellow hair Mrs. Turpin had ever seen put her face in the crack and called for the next patient. The woman sitting beside Claud grasped the two arms of her chair and hoisted herself up; she pulled her dress free from her legs and lumbered through the door where the nurse had disappeared.

Mrs. Turpin eased into the vacant chair, which held her tight as a corset. "I wish I could reduce," she said, and rolled her eyes and gave a comic sigh.

"Oh, *you* aren't fat," the stylish lady said.

"Ooooo I am too," Mrs. Turpin said. "Claud he eats all he wants to and never weighs over one hundred and seventy-five pounds, but me I just look at something good to eat and I gain some weight," and her stomach and shoulders shook with laughter. "You can eat all you want to, can't you, Claud?" she asked, turning to him.

Claud only grinned.

"Well, as long as you have such a good disposition," the stylish lady said, "I don't think it makes a bit of difference what size you are. You just can't beat a good disposition."

Next to her was a fat girl of eighteen or nineteen, scowling into a thick blue book which Mrs. Turpin saw was entitled *Human Development*. The girl raised her head and directed her scowl at Mrs. Turpin as if she did not like her looks. She appeared annoyed that anyone should speak while she tried to read. The poor girl's face was blue with acne and Mrs. Turpin thought how pitiful it was to have a face like that at that age. She gave the girl a friendly smile but the girl only scowled the harder. Mrs. Turpin herself was fat but she had always had good skin, and, though she was forty-seven years old, there was not a wrinkle in her face except around her eyes from laughing too much.

Next to the ugly girl was the child, still in exactly the same position, and next to him was a thin leathery old woman in a cotton print dress. She and Claud had three sacks of chicken feed in their pump house that was in the same print. She had seen from the first that the child belonged with the old woman. She could tell by the way they sat—kind of vacant and white-trashy, as if they would sit there until Doomsday if nobody called and told them to get up. And at right angles but next to the well-dressed pleasant lady was a lank-faced woman who was certainly the child's mother. She had on a yellow sweat shirt and wine-colored slacks, both gritty-looking, and the rims of her lips were stained with snuff. Her dirty yellow hair was tied behind with a little piece of red paper ribbon. Worse than niggers any day, Mrs. Turpin thought.

The gospel hymn playing was, "When I looked up and He looked down," and Mrs. Turpin, who knew it, supplied the last line mentally, "And wona these days I know I'll we-eara crown."

Without appearing to, Mrs. Turpin always noticed people's feet. The well-dressed lady had on red and grey suede shoes to match her dress. Mrs. Turpin had on her good black patent leather pumps. The ugly girl had on Girl Scout shoes and heavy socks. The old woman had on tennis shoes and the white-trashy mother had on what appeared to be bedroom slippers, black straw with gold braid threaded through them—exactly what you would have expected her to have on.

Sometimes at night when she couldn't go to sleep, Mrs. Turpin would occupy herself with the question of who she

would have chosen to be if she couldn't have been herself. If Jesus had said to her before he made her, "There's only two places available for you. You can either be a nigger or white-trash," what would she have said? "Please, Jesus, please," she would have said, "just let me wait until there's another place available," and he would have said, "No, you have to go right now and I have only those two places so make up your mind." She would have wiggled and squirmed and begged and pleaded but it would have been no use and finally she would have said, "All right, make me a nigger then—but that don't mean a trashy one." And he would have made her a neat clean respectable Negro woman, herself but black.

Next to the child's mother was a red-headed youngish woman, reading one of the magazines and working a piece of chewing gum, hell for leather, as Claud would say. Mrs. Turpin could not see the woman's feet. She was not white-trash, just common. Sometimes Mrs. Turpin occupied herself at night naming the classes of people. On the bottom of the heap were most colored people, not the kind she would have been if she had been one, but most of them; then next to them—not above, just away from—were the white-trash; then above them were the home-owners, and above them the home-and-land owners, to which she and Claud belonged. Above she and Claud were people with a lot of money and much bigger houses and much more land. But here the complexity of it would begin to bear in on her, for some of the people with a lot of money were common and ought to be below she and Claud and some of the people who had good blood had lost their money and had to rent and then there were colored people who owned their homes and land as well. There was a colored dentist in town who had two red Lincolns and a swimming pool and a farm with registered white-face cattle on it. Usually by the time she had fallen asleep all the classes of people were moiling and roiling around in her head, and she would dream they were all crammed in together in a box car, being ridden off to be put in a gas oven.

"That's a beautiful clock," she said and nodded to her right. It was a big wall clock, the face encased in a brass sunburst.

"Yes, it's very pretty," the stylish lady said agreeably. "And right on the dot too," she added, glancing at her watch.

The ugly girl beside her cast an eye upward at the clock, smirked, then looked directly at Mrs. Turpin and smirked again. Then she returned her eyes to her book. She was obviously the lady's daughter because, although they didn't look anything alike as to disposition, they both had the same shape of face and the same blue eyes. On the lady they sparkled pleasantly but in the girl's seared face they appeared alternately to smolder and to blaze.

What if Jesus had said, "All right, you can be white-trash or a nigger or ugly"!

Mrs. Turpin felt an awful pity for the girl, though she thought it was one thing to be ugly and another to act ugly.

The woman with the snuff-stained lips turned around in her chair and looked up at the clock. Then she turned back and appeared to look a little to the side of Mrs. Turpin. There was a cast in one of her eyes. "You want to know wher you can get you one of themther clocks?" she asked in a loud voice.

"No, I already have a nice clock," Mrs. Turpin said. Once somebody like her got a leg in the conversation, she would be all over it.

"You can get you one with green stamps," the woman said. "That's most likely wher he got hisn. Save you up enough, you can get you most anythang. I got me some joo'ry."

Ought to have got you a wash rag and some soap, Mrs. Turpin thought.

"I get contour sheets with mine," the pleasant lady said.

The daughter slammed her book shut. She looked straight in front of her, directly through Mrs. Turpin and on through the yellow curtain and the plate glass window which made the wall behind her. The girl's eyes seemed lit all of a sudden with a peculiar light, an unnatural light like night road signs give. Mrs. Turpin turned her head to see if there was anything going on outside that she should see, but she could not see anything. Figures passing cast only a pale shadow through the curtain. There was no reason the girl should single her out for her ugly looks.

"Miss Finley," the nurse said, cracking the door. The gum-chewing woman got up and passed in front of her and Claud

and went into the office. She had on red high-heeled shoes.

Directly across the table, the ugly girl's eyes were fixed on Mrs. Turpin as if she had some very special reason for disliking her.

"This is wonderful weather, isn't it?" the girl's mother said.

"It's good weather for cotton if you can get the niggers to pick it," Mrs. Turpin said, "but niggers don't want to pick cotton any more. You can't get the white folks to pick it and now you can't get the niggers—because they got to be right up there with the white folks."

"They gonna *try* anyways," the white-trash woman said, leaning forward.

"Do you have one of those cotton-picking machines?" the pleasant lady asked.

"No," Mrs. Turpin said, "they leave half the cotton in the field. We don't have much cotton anyway. If you want to make it farming now, you have to have a little of everything. We got a couple of acres of cotton and a few hogs and chickens and just enough white-face that Claud can look after them himself."

"One thang I don't want," the white-trash woman said, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. "Hogs. Nasty stinking things, a-gruntin and a-rootin all over the place."

Mrs. Turpin gave her the merest edge of her attention. "Our hogs are not dirty and they don't stink," she said. "They're cleaner than some children I've seen. Their feet never touch the ground. We have a pig-parlor—that's where you raise them on concrete," she explained to the pleasant lady, "and Claud scoots them down with the hose every afternoon and washes off the floor." Cleaner by far than that child right there, she thought. Poor nasty little thing. He had not moved except to put the thumb of his dirty hand into his mouth.

The woman turned her face away from Mrs. Turpin. "I know I wouldn't scoot down no hog with no hose," she said to the wall.

You wouldn't have no hog to scoot down, Mrs. Turpin said to herself.

"A-gruntin and a-rootin and a-groanin," the woman muttered.

"We got a little of everything," Mrs. Turpin said to the

pleasant lady. "It's no use in having more than you can handle yourself with help like it is. We found enough niggers to pick our cotton this year but Claud he has to go after them and take them home again in the evening. They can't walk that half a mile. No they can't. I tell you," she said and laughed merrily, "I sure am tired of buttering up niggers, but you got to love em if you want em to work for you. When they come in the morning, I run out and I say, 'Hi yawl this morning?' and when Claud drives them off to the field I just wave to beat the band and they just wave back." And she waved her hand rapidly to illustrate.

"Like you read out of the same book," the lady said, showing she understood perfectly.

"Child, yes," Mrs. Turpin said. "And when they come in from the field, I run out with a bucket of icewater. That's the way it's going to be from now on," she said. "You may as well face it."

"One thang I know," the white-trash woman said. "Two thangs I ain't going to do: love no niggers or scoot down no hog with no hose." And she let out a bark of contempt.

The look that Mrs. Turpin and the pleasant lady exchanged indicated they both understood that you had to *have* certain things before you could *know* certain things. But every time Mrs. Turpin exchanged a look with the lady, she was aware that the ugly girl's peculiar eyes were still on her, and she had trouble bringing her attention back to the conversation.

"When you got something," she said, "you got to look after it." And when you ain't got a thing but breath and britches, she added to herself, you can afford to come to town every morning and just sit on the Court House coping and spit.

A grotesque revolving shadow passed across the curtain behind her and was thrown palely on the opposite wall. Then a bicycle clattered down against the outside of the building. The door opened and a colored boy glided in with a tray from the drug store. It had two large red and white paper cups on it with tops on them. He was a tall, very black boy in discolored white pants and a green nylon shirt. He was chewing gum slowly, as if to music. He set the tray down in the office opening next to the fern and stuck his head through

to look for the secretary. She was not in there. He rested his arms on the ledge and waited, his narrow bottom stuck out, swaying slowly to the left and right. He raised a hand over his head and scratched the base of his skull.

"You see that button there, boy?" Mrs. Turpin said. "You can punch that and she'll come. She's probably in the back somewhere."

"Is thas right?" the boy said agreeably, as if he had never seen the button before. He leaned to the right and put his finger on it. "She sometime out," he said and twisted around to face his audience, his elbows behind him on the counter. The nurse appeared and he twisted back again. She handed him a dollar and he rooted in his pocket and made the change and counted it out to her. She gave him fifteen cents for a tip and he went out with the empty tray. The heavy door swung to slowly and closed at length with the sound of suction. For a moment no one spoke.

"They ought to send all them niggers back to Africa," the white-trash woman said. "That's wher they come from in the first place."

"Oh, I couldn't do without my good colored friends," the pleasant lady said.

"There's a heap of things worse than a nigger," Mrs. Turpin agreed. "It's all kinds of them just like it's all kinds of us."

"Yes, and it takes all kinds to make the world go round," the lady said in her musical voice.

As she said it, the raw-complexioned girl snapped her teeth together. Her lower lip turned downwards and inside out, revealing the pale pink inside of her mouth. After a second it rolled back up. It was the ugliest face Mrs. Turpin had ever seen anyone make and for a moment she was certain that the girl had made it at her. She was looking at her as if she had known and disliked her all her life—all of Mrs. Turpin's life, it seemed too, not just all the girl's life. Why, girl, I don't even know you, Mrs. Turpin said silently.

She forced her attention back to the discussion. "It wouldn't be practical to send them back to Africa," she said. "They wouldn't want to go. They got it too good here."

"Wouldn't be what they wanted—if I had anythang to do with it," the woman said.

"It wouldn't be a way in the world you could get all the niggers back over there," Mrs. Turpin said. "They'd be hiding out and lying down and turning sick on you and wailing and hollering and raring and pitching. It wouldn't be a way in the world to get them over there."

"They got over here," the trashy woman said. "Get back like they got over."

"It wasn't so many of them then," Mrs. Turpin explained.

The woman looked at Mrs. Turpin as if here was an idiot indeed but Mrs. Turpin was not bothered by the look, considering where it came from.

"Nooo," she said, "they're going to stay here where they can go to New York and marry white folks and improve their color. That's what they all want to do, every one of them, improve their color."

"You know what comes of that, don't you?" Claud asked.

"No, Claud, what?" Mrs. Turpin said.

Claud's eyes twinkled. "White-faced niggers," he said with never a smile.

Everybody in the office laughed except the white-trash and the ugly girl. The girl gripped the book in her lap with white fingers. The trashy woman looked around her from face to face as if she thought they were all idiots. The old woman in the feed sack dress continued to gaze expressionless across the floor at the high-top shoes of the man opposite her, the one who had been pretending to be asleep when the Turpins came in. He was laughing heartily, his hands still spread out on his knees. The child had fallen to the side and was lying now almost face down in the old woman's lap.

While they recovered from their laughter, the nasal chorus on the radio kept the room from silence.

"You go to blank blank
And I'll go to mine
But we'll all blank along
To-geth-ther,
And all along the blank
We'll hep eachother out
Smile-ling in any kind of
Weath-ther!"

Mrs. Turpin didn't catch every word but she caught enough to agree with the spirit of the song and it turned her thoughts sober. To help anybody out that needed it was her philosophy of life. She never spared herself when she found somebody in need, whether they were white or black, trash or decent. And of all she had to be thankful for, she was most thankful that this was so. If Jesus had said, "You can be high society and have all the money you want and be thin and svelte-like, but you can't be a good woman with it," she would have had to say, "Well don't make me that then. Make me a good woman and it don't matter what else, how fat or how ugly or how poor!" Her heart rose. He had not made her a nigger or white-trash or ugly! He had made her herself and given her a little of everything. Jesus, thank you! she said. Thank you thank you thank you! Whenever she counted her blessings she felt as buoyant as if she weighed one hundred and twenty-five pounds instead of one hundred and eighty.

"What's wrong with your little boy?" the pleasant lady asked the white-trashy woman.

"He has a ulcer," the woman said proudly. "He ain't give me a minute's peace since he was born. Him and her are just alike," she said, nodding at the old woman, who was running her leathery fingers through the child's pale hair. "Look like I can't get nothing down them two but Co' Cola and candy."

That's all you try to get down em, Mrs. Turpin said to herself. Too lazy to light the fire. There was nothing you could tell her about people like them that she didn't know already. And it was not just that they didn't have anything. Because if you gave them everything, in two weeks it would all be broken or filthy or they would have chopped it up for lightwood. She knew all this from her own experience. Help them you must, but help them you couldn't.

All at once the ugly girl turned her lips inside out again. Her eyes were fixed like two drills on Mrs. Turpin. This time there was no mistaking that there was something urgent behind them.

Girl, Mrs. Turpin exclaimed silently, I haven't done a thing to you! The girl might be confusing her with somebody else. There was no need to sit by and let herself be intimidated.

"You must be in college," she said boldly, looking directly at the girl. "I see you reading a book there."

The girl continued to stare and pointedly did not answer.

Her mother blushed at this rudeness. "The lady asked you a question, Mary Grace," she said under her breath.

"I have ears," Mary Grace said.

The poor mother blushed again. "Mary Grace goes to Wellesley College," she explained. She twisted one of the buttons on her dress. "In Massachusetts," she added with a grimace. "And in the summer she just keeps right on studying. Just reads all the time, a real book worm. She's done real well at Wellesley; she's taking English and Math and History and Psychology and Social Studies," she rattled on, "and I think it's too much. I think she ought to get out and have fun."

The girl looked as if she would like to hurl them all through the plate glass window.

"Way up north," Mrs. Turpin murmured and thought, well, it hasn't done much for her manners.

"I'd almost rather to have him sick," the white-trash woman said, wrenching the attention back to herself. "He's so mean when he ain't. Look like some children just take natural to meanness. It's some gets bad when they get sick but he was the opposite. Took sick and turned good. He don't give me no trouble now. It's me waitin to see the doctor," she said.

If I was going to send anybody back to Africa, Mrs. Turpin thought, it would be your kind, woman. "Yes, indeed," she said aloud, but looking up at the ceiling, "it's a heap of things worse than a nigger." And dirtier than a hog, she added to herself.

"I think people with bad dispositions are more to be pitied than anyone on earth," the pleasant lady said in a voice that was decidedly thin.

"I thank the Lord he has blessed me with a good one," Mrs. Turpin said. "The day has never dawned that I couldn't find something to laugh at."

"Not since she married me anyways," Claud said with a comical straight face.

Everybody laughed except the girl and the white-trash.

Mrs. Turpin's stomach shook. "He's such a caution," she said, "that I can't help but laugh at him."

The girl made a loud ugly noise through her teeth.

Her mother's mouth grew thin and tight. "I think the worst thing in the world," she said, "is an ungrateful person. To have everything and not appreciate it. I know a girl," she said, "who has parents who would give her anything, a little brother who loves her dearly, who is getting a good education, who wears the best clothes, but who can never say a kind word to anyone, who never smiles, who just criticizes and complains all day long."

"Is she too old to paddle?" Claud asked.

The girl's face was almost purple.

"Yes," the lady said, "I'm afraid there's nothing to do but leave her to her folly. Some day she'll wake up and it'll be too late."

"It never hurt anyone to smile," Mrs. Turpin said. "It just makes you feel better all over."

"Of course," the lady said sadly, "but there are just some people you can't tell anything to. They can't take criticism."

"If it's one thing I am," Mrs. Turpin said with feeling, "it's grateful. When I think who all I could have been besides myself and what all I got, a little of everything, and a good disposition besides, I just feel like shouting, 'Thank you, Jesus, for making everything the way it is!' It could have been different!" For one thing, somebody else could have got Claud. At the thought of this, she was flooded with gratitude and a terrible pang of joy ran through her. "Oh thank you, Jesus, Jesus, thank you!" she cried aloud.

The book struck her directly over her left eye. It struck almost at the same instant that she realized the girl was about to hurl it. Before she could utter a sound, the raw face came crashing across the table toward her, howling. The girl's fingers sank like clamps into the soft flesh of her neck. She heard the mother cry out and Claud shout, "Whoa!" There was an instant when she was certain that she was about to be in an earthquake.

All at once her vision narrowed and she saw everything as if it were happening in a small room far away, or as if she were looking at it through the wrong end of a telescope.

Claud's face crumpled and fell out of sight. The nurse ran in, then out, then in again. Then the gangling figure of the doctor rushed out of the inner door. Magazines flew this way and that as the table turned over. The girl fell with a thud and Mrs. Turpin's vision suddenly reversed itself and she saw everything large instead of small. The eyes of the white-trashy woman were staring hugely at the floor. There the girl, held down on one side by the nurse and on the other by her mother, was wrenching and turning in their grasp. The doctor was kneeling astride her, trying to hold her arm down. He managed after a second to sink a long needle into it.

Mrs. Turpin felt entirely hollow except for her heart which swung from side to side as if it were agitated in a great empty drum of flesh.

"Somebody that's not busy call for the ambulance," the doctor said in the off-hand voice young doctors adopt for terrible occasions.

Mrs. Turpin could not have moved a finger. The old man who had been sitting next to her skipped nimbly into the office and made the call, for the secretary still seemed to be gone.

"Claud!" Mrs. Turpin called.

He was not in his chair. She knew she must jump up and find him but she felt like some one trying to catch a train in a dream, when everything moves in slow motion and the faster you try to run the slower you go.

"Here I am," a suffocated voice, very unlike Claud's, said.

He was doubled up in the corner on the floor, pale as paper, holding his leg. She wanted to get up and go to him but she could not move. Instead, her gaze was drawn slowly downward to the churning face on the floor, which she could see over the doctor's shoulder.

The girl's eyes stopped rolling and focused on her. They seemed a much lighter blue than before, as if a door that had been tightly closed behind them was now open to admit light and air.

Mrs. Turpin's head cleared and her power of motion returned. She leaned forward until she was looking directly into the fierce brilliant eyes. There was no doubt in her mind that the girl did know her, knew her in some intense and personal

way, beyond time and place and condition. "What you got to say to me?" she asked hoarsely and held her breath, waiting, as for a revelation.

The girl raised her head. Her gaze locked with Mrs. Turpin's. "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog," she whispered. Her voice was low but clear. Her eyes burned for a moment as if she saw with pleasure that her message had struck its target.

Mrs. Turpin sank back in her chair.

After a moment the girl's eyes closed and she turned her head wearily to the side.

The doctor rose and handed the nurse the empty syringe. He leaned over and put both hands for a moment on the mother's shoulders, which were shaking. She was sitting on the floor, her lips pressed together, holding Mary Grace's hand in her lap. The girl's fingers were gripped like a baby's around her thumb. "Go on to the hospital," he said. "I'll call and make the arrangements."

"Now let's see that neck," he said in a jovial voice to Mrs. Turpin. He began to inspect her neck with his first two fingers. Two little moon-shaped lines like pink fish bones were indented over her windpipe. There was the beginning of an angry red swelling above her eye. His fingers passed over this also.

"Lea' me be," she said thickly and shook him off. "See about Claud. She kicked him."

"I'll see about him in a minute," he said and felt her pulse. He was a thin grey-haired man, given to pleasantries. "Go home and have yourself a vacation the rest of the day," he said and patted her on the shoulder.

Quit your pattin me, Mrs. Turpin growled to herself.

"And put an ice pack over that eye," he said. Then he went and squatted down beside Claud and looked at his leg. After a moment he pulled him up and Claud limped after him into the office.

Until the ambulance came, the only sounds in the room were the tremulous moans of the girl's mother, who continued to sit on the floor. The white-trash woman did not take her eyes off the girl. Mrs. Turpin looked straight ahead at nothing. Presently the ambulance drew up, a long dark

shadow, behind the curtain. The attendants came in and set the stretcher down beside the girl and lifted her expertly onto it and carried her out. The nurse helped the mother gather up her things. The shadow of the ambulance moved silently away and the nurse came back in the office.

"That there girl is going to be a lunatic, ain't she?" the white-trash woman asked the nurse, but the nurse kept on to the back and never answered her.

"Yes, she's going to be a lunatic," the white-trash woman said to the rest of them.

"Po' critter," the old woman murmured. The child's face was still in her lap. His eyes looked idly out over her knees. He had not moved during the disturbance except to draw one leg up under him.

"I thank Gawd," the white-trash woman said fervently, "I ain't a lunatic."

Claud came limping out and the Turpins went home.

As their pick-up truck turned into their own dirt road and made the crest of the hill, Mrs. Turpin gripped the window ledge and looked out suspiciously. The land sloped gracefully down through a field dotted with lavender weeds and at the start of the rise their small yellow frame house, with its little flower beds spread out around it like a fancy apron, sat primly in its accustomed place between two giant hickory trees. She would not have been startled to see a burnt wound between two blackened chimneys.

Neither of them felt like eating so they put on their house clothes and lowered the shade in the bedroom and lay down, Claud with his leg on a pillow and herself with a damp washcloth over her eye. The instant she was flat on her back, the image of a razor-backed hog with warts on its face and horns coming out behind its ears snorted into her head. She moaned, a low quiet moan.

"I am not," she said tearfully, "a wart hog. From hell." But the denial had no force. The girl's eyes and her words, even the tone of her voice, low but clear, directed only to her, brooked no repudiation. She had been singled out for the message, though there was trash in the room to whom it might justly have been applied. The full force of this fact struck her only now. There was a woman there who was ne-

glecting her own child but she had been overlooked. The message had been given to Ruby Turpin, a respectable, hard-working, church-going woman. The tears dried. Her eyes began to burn instead with wrath.

She rose on her elbow and the washcloth fell into her hand. Claud was lying on his back, snoring. She wanted to tell him what the girl had said. At the same time, she did not wish to put the image of herself as a wart hog from hell into his mind.

"Hey, Claud," she muttered and pushed his shoulder.

Claud opened one pale baby blue eye.

She looked into it warily. He did not think about anything. He just went his way.

"Wha, whasit?" he said and closed the eye again.

"Nothing," she said. "Does your leg pain you?"

"Hurts like hell," Claud said.

"It'll quit terreckly," she said and lay back down. In a moment Claud was snoring again. For the rest of the afternoon they lay there. Claud slept. She scowled at the ceiling. Occasionally she raised her fist and made a small stabbing motion over her chest as if she was defending her innocence to invisible guests who were like the comforters of Job, reasonable-seeming but wrong.

About five-thirty Claud stirred. "Got to go after those niggers," he sighed, not moving.

She was looking straight up as if there were unintelligible handwriting on the ceiling. The protuberance over her eye had turned a greenish-blue. "Listen here," she said.

"What?"

"Kiss me."

Claud leaned over and kissed her loudly on the mouth. He pinched her side and their hands interlocked. Her expression of ferocious concentration did not change. Claud got up, groaning and growling, and limped off. She continued to study the ceiling.

She did not get up until she heard the pick-up truck coming back with the Negroes. Then she rose and thrust her feet in her brown oxfords, which she did not bother to lace, and stumped out onto the back porch and got her red plastic bucket. She emptied a tray of ice cubes into it and filled it half full of water and went out into the back yard.

Every afternoon after Claud brought the hands in, one of the boys helped him put out hay and the rest waited in the back of the truck until he was ready to take them home. The truck was parked in the shade under one of the hickory trees.

"Hi yawl this evening?" Mrs. Turpin asked grimly, appearing with the bucket and the dipper. There were three women and a boy in the truck.

"Us doin nicely," the oldest woman said. "Hi you doin?" and her gaze stuck immediately on the dark lump on Mrs. Turpin's forehead. "You done fell down, ain't you?" she asked in a solicitous voice. The old woman was dark and almost toothless. She had on an old felt hat of Claud's set back on her head. The other two women were younger and lighter and they both had new bright green sun hats. One of them had hers on her head; the other had taken hers off and the boy was grinning beneath it.

Mrs. Turpin set the bucket down on the floor of the truck. "Yawl hep yourselves," she said. She looked around to make sure Claud had gone. "No. I didn't fall down," she said, folding her arms. "It was something worse than that."

"Ain't nothing bad happen to you!" the old woman said. She said it as if they all knew that Mrs. Turpin was protected in some special way by Divine Providence. "You just had you a little fall."

"We were in town at the doctor's office for where the cow kicked Mr. Turpin," Mrs. Turpin said in a flat tone that indicated they could leave off their foolishness. "And there was this girl there. A big fat girl with her face all broke out. I could look at that girl and tell she was peculiar but I couldn't tell how. And me and her mama were just talking and going along and all of a sudden WHAM! She throws this big book she was reading at me and . . ."

"Naw!" the old woman cried out.

"And then she jumps over the table and commences to choke me."

"Naw!" they all exclaimed, "naw!"

"Hi come she do that?" the old woman asked. "What ail her?"

Mrs. Turpin only glared in front of her.

"Somethin ail her," the old woman said.

"They carried her off in an ambulance," Mrs. Turpin continued, "but before she went she was rolling on the floor and they were trying to hold her down to give her a shot and she said something to me." She paused. "You know what she said to me?"

"What she say?" they asked.

"She said," Mrs. Turpin began, and stopped, her face very dark and heavy. The sun was getting whiter and whiter, blanching the sky overhead so that the leaves of the hickory tree were black in the face of it. She could not bring forth the words. "Something real ugly," she muttered.

"She sho shouldn't said nothin ugly to you," the old woman said. "You so sweet. You the sweetest lady I know."

"She pretty too," the one with the hat on said.

"And stout," the other one said. "I never knowed no sweeter white lady."

"That's the truth befo' Jesus," the old woman said. "Amen! You des as sweet and pretty as you can be."

Mrs. Turpin knew just exactly how much Negro flattery was worth and it added to her rage. "She said," she began again and finished this time with a fierce rush of breath, "that I was an old wart hog from hell."

There was an astounded silence.

"Where she at?" the youngest woman cried in a piercing voice.

"Lemme see her. I'll kill her!"

"I'll kill her with you!" the other one cried.

"She b'long in the sylum," the old woman said emphatically. "You the sweetest white lady I know."

"She pretty too," the other two said. "Stout as she can be and sweet. Jesus satisfied with her!"

"Deed he is," the old woman declared.

Idiots! Mrs. Turpin growled to herself. You could never say anything intelligent to a nigger. You could talk at them but not with them. "Yawl ain't drunk your water," she said shortly. "Leave the bucket in the truck when you're finished with it. I got more to do than just stand around and pass the time of day," and she moved off and into the house.

She stood for a moment in the middle of the kitchen. The

dark protuberance over her eye looked like a miniature tornado cloud which might any moment sweep across the horizon of her brow. Her lower lip protruded dangerously. She squared her massive shoulders. Then she marched into the front of the house and out the side door and started down the road to the pig parlor. She had the look of a woman going single-handed, weaponless, into battle.

The sun was a deep yellow now like a harvest moon and was riding westward very fast over the far tree line as if it meant to reach the hogs before she did. The road was rutted and she kicked several good-sized stones out of her path as she strode along. The pig parlor was on a little knoll at the end of a lane that ran off from the side of the barn. It was a square of concrete as large as a small room, with a board fence about four feet high around it. The concrete floor sloped slightly so that the hog wash could drain off into a trench where it was carried to the field for fertilizer. Claud was standing on the outside, on the edge of the concrete, hanging onto the top board, hosing down the floor inside. The hose was connected to the faucet of a water trough nearby.

Mrs. Turpin climbed up beside him and glowered down at the hogs inside. There were seven long-snouted bristly shoats in it—tan with liver-colored spots—and an old sow a few weeks off from farrowing. She was lying on her side grunting. The shoats were running about shaking themselves like idiot children, their little slit pig eyes searching the floor for anything left. She had read that pigs were the most intelligent animal. She doubted it. They were supposed to be smarter than dogs. There had even been a pig astronaut. He had performed his assignment perfectly but died of a heart attack afterwards because they left him in his electric suit, sitting upright throughout his examination when naturally a hog should be on all fours.

A-gruntin and a-rootin and a-groanin.

"Gimme that hose," she said, yanking it away from Claud. "Go on and carry them niggers home and then get off that leg."

"You look like you might have swallowed a mad dog," Claud observed, but he got down and limped off. He paid no attention to her humors.

Until he was out of earshot, Mrs. Turpin stood on the side of the pen, holding the hose and pointing the stream of water at the hind quarters of any shoat that looked as if it might try to lie down. When he had had time to get over the hill, she turned her head slightly and her wrathful eyes scanned the path. He was nowhere in sight. She turned back again and seemed to gather herself up. Her shoulders rose and she drew in her breath.

"What do you send me a message like that for?" she said in a low fierce voice, barely above a whisper but with the force of a shout in its concentrated fury. "How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved and from hell too?" Her free fist was knotted and with the other she gripped the hose, blindly pointing the stream of water in and out of the eye of the old sow whose outraged squeal she did not hear.

The pig parlor commanded a view of the back pasture where their twenty beef cows were gathered around the hay-bales Claud and the boy had put out. The freshly cut pasture sloped down to the highway. Across it was their cotton field and beyond that a dark green dusty wood which they owned as well. The sun was behind the wood, very red, looking over the paling of trees like a farmer inspecting his own hogs.

"Why me?" she rumbled. "It's no trash around here, black or white, that I haven't given to. And break my back to the bone every day working. And do for the church."

She appeared to be the right size woman to command the arena before her. "How am I a hog?" she demanded. "Exactly how am I like them?" and she jabbed the stream of water at the shoats. "There was plenty of trash there. It didn't have to be me.

"If you like trash better, go get yourself some trash then," she railed. "You could have made me trash. Or a nigger. If trash is what you wanted why didn't you make me trash?" She shook her fist with the hose in it and a watery snake appeared momentarily in the air. "I could quit working and take it easy and be filthy," she growled. "Lounge about the sidewalks all day drinking root beer. Dip snuff and spit in every puddle and have it all over my face. I could be nasty.

"Or you could have made me a nigger. It's too late for me

to be a nigger," she said with deep sarcasm, "but I could act like one. Lay down in the middle of the road and stop traffic. Roll on the ground."

In the deepening light everything was taking on a mysterious hue. The pasture was growing a peculiar glassy green and the streak of highway had turned lavender. She braced herself for a final assault and this time her voice rolled out over the pasture. "Go on," she yelled, "call me a hog! Call me a hog again. From hell. Call me a wart hog from hell. Put that bottom rail on top. There'll still be a top and bottom!"

A garbled echo returned to her.

A final surge of fury shook her and she roared, "Who do you think you are?"

The color of everything, field and crimson sky, burned for a moment with a transparent intensity. The question carried over the pasture and across the highway and the cotton field and returned to her clearly like an answer from beyond the wood.

She opened her mouth but no sound came out of it.

A tiny truck, Claud's, appeared on the highway, heading rapidly out of sight. Its gears scraped thinly. It looked like a child's toy. At any moment a bigger truck might smash into it and scatter Claud's and the niggers' brains all over the road.

Mrs. Turpin stood there, her gaze fixed on the highway, all her muscles rigid, until in five or six minutes the truck reappeared, returning. She waited until it had had time to turn into their own road. Then like a monumental statue coming to life, she bent her head slowly and gazed, as if through the very heart of mystery, down into the pig parlor at the hogs. They had settled all in one corner around the old sow who was grunting softly. A red glow suffused them. They appeared to pant with a secret life.

Until the sun slipped finally behind the tree line, Mrs. Turpin remained there with her gaze bent to them as if she were absorbing some abysmal life-giving knowledge. At last she lifted her head. There was only a purple streak in the sky, cutting through a field of crimson and leading, like an extension of the highway, into the descending dusk. She raised her hands from the side of the pen in a gesture hieratic and profound. A visionary light settled in her eyes. She saw the streak

as a vast swinging bridge extending upward from the earth through a field of living fire. Upon it a vast horde of souls were rumbling toward heaven. There were whole companies of white-trash, clean for the first time in their lives, and bands of black niggers in white robes, and battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping and leaping like frogs. And bringing up the end of the procession was a tribe of people whom she recognized at once as those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the God-given wit to use it right. She leaned forward to observe them closer. They were marching behind the others with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. They alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away. She lowered her hands and gripped the rail of the hog pen, her eyes small but fixed unblinkingly on what lay ahead. In a moment the vision faded but she remained where she was, immobile.

At length she got down and turned off the faucet and made her slow way on the darkening path to the house. In the woods around her the invisible cricket choruses had struck up, but what she heard were the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah.

The Histories of Herodotus

Translated by

Henry Cary

With a Critical and Biographical Introduction
by Basil L. Gildersleeve

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HERODOTUS

BOOK I

CLIO

THIS is a publication of the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in order that the actions of men may not be effaced by time, nor the great and wondrous deeds displayed by both Greeks and barbarians[1] deprived of renown—and among the rest, for what cause they waged war upon each other.

The learned among the Persians assert that the Phœnicians were the original authors of the quarrel; for that they having migrated from that which is called the Red Sea to the Mediterranean,[2] and having settled in the country which they now inhabit, forthwith applied themselves to distant voyages; and that having exported Egyptian and Assyrian merchandise, they touched at other places, and also at Argos. Now Argos at that period in every respect surpassed all those states which are now comprehended under the general appellation of Greece.[3] They say, that on their arrival at Argos, the Phœnicians exposed their merchandise to sale, and that on the fifth or sixth day after their arrival, and when they had almost disposed of their cargo, a great number of women came down to the sea-shore, and among them the king's daughter, whose name, as the Greeks also say, was Io, daughter of Inachus.

[1] By barbarians the Greeks meant all who were not sprung from themselves—all foreigners.

[2] The Phœnicians passed over-land from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, which in the text and in other Grecian writers is called "this sea."

[3] The region known by the name of Hellas or Greece, in the time of Herodotus, was, previous to the Trojan war, and indeed long afterward, only discriminated by the names of its different inhabitants. Homer speaks of the Danaans, Argives, Achaians, etc., but never gives these people the general name of Greeks.—Larcher.

They add, that while these women were standing near the stern of the vessel, and were bargaining for such things as most pleased them, the Phœnicians, having exhorted one another, made an attack upon them; and that most of the women escaped, but that Io, with some others, was seized; and that they, having hurried them on board, set sail for Egypt. Thus the Persians say that Io went to Egypt, not agreeing herein with the Phœnicians; and that this was the beginning of wrongs. After this, that certain Grecians (for they are unable to tell their name), having touched at Tyre in Phœnicia, carried off the king's daughter Europa. These must have been Cretans. Thus far they say that they had only retaliated; but that after this the Greeks were guilty of the second provocation; for that having sailed down in a vessel of war [1] to Æa, a city of Colchis on the river Phasis, when they had accomplished the more immediate object of their expedition, they carried off the king's daughter Medea; and that the King of Colchis, having despatched a herald to Greece, demanded satisfaction for the rape, and the restitution of the princess; but the Greeks replied, that as they of Asia had not given any satisfaction for the rape of Io, neither would they give any to them. They say too, that in the second generation after this, Alexander, the son of Priam, having heard of these events, was desirous of obtaining a wife from Greece by means of violence, being fully persuaded that he should not have to give satisfaction, for that the Greeks had not done so. When therefore he had carried off Helen, they say that the Greeks immediately sent messengers to demand her back again, and require satisfaction for the rape; but that they, when they brought forward these demands, objected to them the rape of Medea; that they who had not themselves given satisfaction, nor made it when demanded, now wished others to give it to themselves. Thus far then they say that there had only been rapes from each other; but that after this the Greeks were greatly to blame, for that they levied war against Asia before the Asiatics did upon Europe. Now, to carry off women by violence the Persians think is the act of wicked men, but to trouble one's self about avenging them when so carried off is the act of foolish ones; and to pay no regard to them when carried off, of wise men: for that it is clear, that if they had not been willing, they could not have been carried

[1] "In a long vessel." The long vessels were vessels of war; the round vessels, merchantmen and transports.

NOTE.—The small figures in the headlines refer to the paragraphing of Baehr.

off. Accordingly, the Persians say, that they of Asia made no account of women that were carried off; but that the Greeks for the sake of a Lacedæmonian woman assembled a mighty fleet, and then having come to Asia overthrew the empire of Priam. That from this event they had always considered the Greeks as their enemies: for the Persians claim Asia and the barbarous nations that inhabit it as their own, and consider Europe and the people of Greece as totally distinct.

Such is the Persian account; and to the capture of Troy they ascribe the beginning of their enmity to the Greeks. As relates to Io, the Phœnicians do not agree with this account of the Persians: for they affirm that they did not use violence to carry her into Egypt; but that she had connection at Argos with the master of a vessel, and when she found herself pregnant, she, through dread of her parents, voluntarily sailed away with the Phœnicians to avoid detection. Such, then, are the accounts of the Persians and Phœnicians. I, however, am not going to inquire whether the facts were so or not; but having pointed out the person whom I myself know to have been the first guilty of injustice toward the Greeks, I will then proceed with my history, touching as well on the small as the great estates of men: for of those that were formerly powerful many have become weak, and some that were powerful in my time were formerly weak. Knowing therefore the precarious nature of human prosperity, I shall commemorate both alike.

Crœsus was a Lydian by birth, son of Alyattes, and sovereign of the nations on this side the river Halys. This river, flowing from the south [1] between the Syrians [2] and Paphlagonians, empties itself northward into the Euxine Sea. This Crœsus was the first of the barbarians whom we know of that subjected some of the Greeks to the payment of tribute, and formed alliances with others. He subdued the Ionians and Æolians, and the Dorians settled in Asia, and he formed an alliance with the Lacedæmonians; but before the reign of Crœsus all the Greeks were free; for the incursion of the Cimmerians [3] into Ionia, which was before the time of Crœsus, was not for the purpose of subjecting states, but an invasion for plunder. The government, which formerly belonged to the Heraclidæ, passed in the following manner to the family

[1] The Halys had two branches, one flowing from the east, the other from the south: Herodotus speaks only of the southern one.

[2] Syria was at that time the name of Cappadocia.

[3] The incursion here spoken of occurred in the reign of the Lydian Ardys.

of Crœsus, who were called Mermnadæ. Candaules, whom the Greeks call Myrsilus, was tyrant of Sardis, and a descendant of Alcæus, son of Hercules. For Agron, son of Ninus, grandson of Belus, great-grandson of Alcæus, was the first of the Heraclidæ who became King of Sardis; and Candaules, son of Myrsus, was the last. They who ruled over this country before Agron were descendants of Lydus, son of Atys, from whom this whole people, anciently called Mæonians, derived the name of Lydians. The Heraclidæ, descended from a female slave of Jardanus and Hercules, having been intrusted with the government by these princes, retained the supreme power in obedience to the declaration of an oracle; they reigned for twenty-two generations, a space of five hundred and five years, the son succeeding to the father to the time of Candaules, son of Myrsus. This Candaules was enamoured of his own wife, and being so, thought that she was by far the most beautiful of all women. Now being of this opinion—Gyges, son of Dascylus, one of his body-guard, happened to be his especial favourite, and to him Candaules confided his most important affairs, and moreover extolled the beauty of his wife in exaggerated terms. In lapse of time (for Candaules was fated to be miserable) he addressed Gyges as follows: "Gyges, as I think you do not believe me when I speak of my wife's beauty (for the ears of men are naturally more incredulous than their eyes), you must contrive to see her naked." But he, exclaiming loudly, answered: "Sire, what a shocking proposal do you make, bidding me behold my queen naked! With her clothes a woman puts off her modesty. Wise maxims have been of old laid down by men; from these it is our duty to learn: among them is the following, 'Let every man look to the things that concern himself.' I am persuaded that she is the most beautiful of her sex, but I entreat of you not to require what is wicked." Saying thus, Gyges fought off the proposal, dreading lest some harm should befall himself: but the king answered: "Gyges, take courage, and be not afraid of me, as if I desired to make trial of you, by speaking thus, nor of my wife, lest any harm should befall you from her. For from the outset I will so contrive that she shall not know she has been seen by you. I will place you behind the open door of the apartment in which we sleep; as soon as I enter my wife will come to bed; by the entrance stands a chair; on this she will lay her garments one by one as she takes them off, and then she will give you an opportunity to look at her at your leisure; but when she steps from the chair to the bed, and you are at her back, be

careful that she does not see you as you are going out by the door." Gyges therefore, finding he could not escape, prepared to obey. And Candaules, when it seemed to be time to go to bed, led him to the chamber, and the lady soon afterward appeared, and Gyges saw her enter and lay her clothes on the chair: when he was at her back, as the lady was going to bed, he crept secretly out, but she saw him as he was going away. Perceiving what her husband had done, she neither cried out through modesty nor appeared to notice it, purposing to take vengeance on Candaules; for among the Lydians and almost all the barbarians it is deemed a great disgrace even for a man to be seen naked.

At the time, therefore, having shown no consciousness of what had occurred, she held her peace, and as soon as it was day, having prepared such of her domestics as she knew were most to be trusted, she sent for Gyges. He, supposing that she knew nothing of what had happened, came when he was sent for, for he had been before used to attend whenever the queen sent for him. When Gyges came, the lady thus addressed him: "Gyges, I submit two proposals to your choice: either kill Candaules and take possession of me and of the Lydian kingdom, or expect immediate death, so that you may not, from your obedience to Candaules in all things, again see what you ought not. It is necessary that he who planned this, or that you who have seen me naked, and have done what is not decorous, should die." Gyges for a time was amazed at what he heard; but afterward he implored her not to compel him to make such a choice. He, however, could not persuade, but saw a necessity imposed on him, either to kill his master Candaules or die himself by the hands of others; he chose, therefore, to survive, and made the following inquiry: "Since you compel me to kill my master against my will, tell me how we shall lay hands on him." She answered: "The assault shall be made from the very spot whence he showed me naked; the attack shall be made on him while asleep." When they had concerted their plan, on the approach of night he followed the lady to the chamber: then (for Gyges was not suffered to depart, nor was there any possibility of escape, but either he or Candaules must needs perish), she, having given him a dagger, concealed him behind the same door: and after this, when Candaules was asleep, Gyges having crept stealthily up and slain him, possessed himself both of the woman and of the kingdom. Of this event, also, Archilochus [1]

[1] Archilochus was one of the earliest writers of iambics. All that remains of his writing is to be met with in Brunck's "Analecta."

the Parian, who lived about the same time, has made mention in a trimeter iambic poem. Thus Gyges obtained the kingdom, and was confirmed in it by the oracle at Delphi. For when the Lydians resented the murder of Candaules, and were up in arms, the partisans of Gyges and the other Lydians came to the following agreement, that if the oracle should pronounce him king of the Lydians, he should reign; if not, he should restore the power to the Heraclidæ. The oracle answered accordingly, and so Gyges became king. But the Pythian added this, "that the Heraclidæ should be avenged on the fifth descendant of Gyges." Of this prediction neither the Lydians nor their kings took any notice until it was actually accomplished.

Thus the Mermnadæ, having deprived the Heraclidæ, possessed themselves of the supreme power. Gyges having obtained the kingdom, sent many offerings to Delphi; for most of the silver offerings at Delphi are his: and besides the silver, he gave a vast quantity of gold; and among the rest, what is especially worthy of mention, the bowls of gold, six in number, were dedicated by him: these now stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, and are thirty talents in weight; though, to say the truth, this treasury does not belong to the people of Corinth, but to Cypselus, son of Eetion. This Gyges is the first of the barbarians whom we know of that dedicated offerings at Delphi; except Midas, son of Gordius, King of Phrygia, for Midas dedicated the royal throne, on which he used to sit and administer justice, a piece of workmanship deserving of admiration. This throne stands in the same place as the bowls of Gyges. This gold and silver which Gyges dedicated is by the Delphians called Gygian, from the name of the donor. Now this prince, when he obtained the sovereignty, led an army against Miletus and Smyrna, and took the city of Colophon; but as he performed no other great action during his reign of eight and thirty years, we will pass him over, having made this mention of him. I will proceed to mention Ardys, the son and successor of Gyges. He took Priene, and invaded Miletus. During the time that he reigned at Sardis, the Cimmerians, being driven from their seats by the Scythian nomads, passed into Asia, and possessed themselves of all Sardis except the citadel.

When Ardys had reigned forty-nine years, his son Sadyattes succeeded him, and reigned twelve years; and Alyattes succeeded Sadyattes. He made war upon Cyaxares, a descendant of Deioces, and upon the Medes. He drove the Cimmerians out of Asia; took Smyrna, which was founded

all the offerings at Delphi. It was made by Glaucus the Chian, who first invented the art of inlaying iron.

After the death of Alyattes, his son Crœsus, who was then thirty-five years of age, succeeded to the kingdom. He attacked the Ephesians before any other Grecian people. The Ephesians, being besieged by him, consecrated their city to Diana, by fastening a rope from the temple to the wall. The distance between the old town, which was then besieged, and the temple is seven stadia. Crœsus then attacked these the first, and afterward the several cities of the Ionians and Æolians one after another, alleging different pretences against different states, imputing graver charges against those in whom he was able to discover greater causes of blame, and against some of them alleging frivolous pretences. After he had reduced the Grecians in Asia to the payment of tribute, he formed a design to build ships and attack the Islanders. But when all things were ready for the building of ships, Bias of Priene (or, as others say, Pittacus of Mitylene), arriving at Sardis, put a stop to his ship-building, by making this reply, when Crœsus inquired if he had any news from Greece: "O king, the Islanders are enlisting a large body of cavalry, with intention to make war upon you and Sardis." Crœsus, thinking he had spoken the truth, said, "May the gods put such a thought into the Islanders as to attack the sons of the Lydians with horse." The other answering said: "Sire, you appear to wish above all things to see the Islanders on horseback upon the continent; and not without reason. But what can you imagine the Islanders more earnestly desire, after having heard of your resolution to build a fleet in order to attack them, than to catch the Lydians at sea, that they may revenge on you the cause of those Greeks who dwell on the continent, whom you hold in subjection?" It is related, that Crœsus was very much pleased with the conclusion, and that, being convinced (for he appeared to speak to the purpose), he put a stop to the ship-building, and made an alliance with the Ionians that inhabit the islands.

In course of time nearly all the nations that dwelt within the river Halys, except the Cilicians and Lycians, were subdued; for Crœsus held all the rest in subjection: and they were the following: the Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybians, Paphlagonians, Thracians, both the Thynians and Bithynians, Carians, Ionians, Dorians, Æolians, and Pamphylians. When these nations were subdued, and Crœsus had added them to the Lydians, all the other wise men of that time, as each had opportunity, came from Greece

to Sardis, which had then attained to the highest degree of prosperity; and among them Solon, an Athenian, who, having made laws for the Athenians at their request, absented himself for ten years, having sailed away under pretence of seeing the world, that he might not be compelled to abrogate any of the laws he had established: for the Athenians could not do it themselves, since they were bound by solemn oaths to observe for ten years whatever laws Solon should enact for them. Solon, therefore, having gone abroad for these reasons, and for the purpose of observation, arrived in Egypt at the court of Amasis, and afterward at that of Crœsus at Sardis. On his arrival he was hospitably entertained by Crœsus, and on the third or fourth day, by order of the king, the attendants conducted him round the treasury, and showed him all their grand and costly contents; and when he had seen and examined everything sufficiently, Crœsus asked him this question: "My Athenian guest, your great fame has reached even to us, as well of your wisdom as of your travels, how that as a philosopher you have travelled through various countries for the purpose of observation; I am therefore desirous of asking you, who is the most happy man you have seen?" He asked this question, because he thought himself the most happy of men. But Solon, speaking the truth freely, without any flattery, answered, "Tellus the Athenian." Crœsus, astonished at his answer, eagerly asked him, "On what account do you deem Tellus the happiest?" He replied: "Tellus, in the first place, lived in a well-governed commonwealth; had sons who were virtuous and good; and he saw children born to them all, and all surviving: in the next place, when he had lived as happily as the condition of human affairs will permit, he ended his life in a most glorious manner. For coming to the assistance of the Athenians in a battle with their neighbours of Eleusis, he put the enemy to flight, and died nobly. The Athenians buried him at the public charge in the place where he fell, and honoured him greatly."

When Solon had aroused the attention of Crœsus by relating many and happy circumstances concerning Tellus, Crœsus, expecting at least to obtain the second place, asked whom he had seen next to him. "Cleobis," said he, "and Biton, for they, being natives of Argos, possessed a sufficient fortune, and had withal such strength of body that they were both alike victorious in the public games. And moreover the following story is related of them: when the Argives were celebrating a festival of Juno, it was necessary that their mother should be drawn to the temple in a chariot; the oxen

did not come from the field in time, and the young men therefore, being pressed for time, put themselves beneath the yoke, and drew the car in which their mother sat; and having conveyed it forty-five stadia, they reached the temple. After they had done this in sight of the assembled people, a most happy termination was put to their lives; and in them the Deity clearly showed that it is better for a man to die than to live. For the men of Argos, who stood round, commended the strength of the youths, and the women blessed her as the mother of such sons; but the mother herself, transported with joy both on account of the action and its renown, stood before the image and prayed that the goddess would grant to Cleobis and Biton, her own sons, who had so highly honoured her, the greatest blessing man could receive. After this prayer, when they had sacrificed and partaken of the feast, the youths fell asleep in the temple itself, and never awoke more, but met with such a termination of life. Upon this the Argives, in commemoration of their piety, caused their statues to be made and dedicated at Delphi." Thus Solon adjudged the second place of felicity to these youths. But Crœsus, being enraged, said, "My Athenian friend, is my happiness then so slighted by you as nothing worth, that you do not think me of so much value as private men?" He answered: "Crœsus, do you inquire of me concerning human affairs—of me, who know that the divinity is always jealous, and delights in confusion? For in lapse of time men are constrained to see many things they would not willingly see, and to suffer many things they would not willingly suffer. Now I put the term of man's life at seventy years; these seventy years then give twenty-five thousand two hundred days, without including the intercalary month; and if we add that month [1] to every other year, in order that the seasons arriving at the proper time may agree, the intercalary months will be thirty-five more in the seventy years, and the days of these months will be one thousand and fifty. Yet in all this number of twenty-six thousand two hundred and fifty days, that compose these seventy years, one day produces nothing exactly the same as another. Thus, then, O Crœsus, man is altogether the sport of fortune. You appear to me to be master of immense treasures, and king of many nations; but as relates to what you inquire of me, I can not say till I hear you have ended your life happily. For

[1] If the first number 25,200 is correct, it follows that the year was 360 days; if the number of intercalary days was 1,050 in 70 years, there will be altogether 26,259, which will give 375 days to the year; so that in spite of the precaution the seasons will be confused.—Larcher.

the richest of men is not more happy than he that has a sufficiency for a day unless good fortune attend him to the grave, so that he ends his life in happiness. Many men who abound in wealth are unhappy; and many who have only a moderate competency are fortunate. He that abounds in wealth, and is yet unhappy, surpasses the other only in two things; but the other surpasses the wealthy and the miserable in many things. The former, indeed, is better able to gratify desire, and to bear the blow of adversity. But the latter surpasses him in this; he is not indeed equally able to bear misfortune or satisfy desire, but his good fortune wards off these things from him; and he enjoys the full use of his limbs, he is free from disease and misfortune, he is blessed with good children and a fine form, and if, in addition to all these things, he shall end his life well, he is the man you seek, and may justly be called happy; but before he die we ought to suspend our judgment, and not pronounce him happy, but fortunate. Now it is impossible for any one man to comprehend all these advantages: as no one country suffices to produce everything for itself, but affords some and wants others, and that which affords the most is the best; so no human being is in all respects self-sufficient, but possesses one advantage, and is in need of another; he therefore who has constantly enjoyed the most of these, and then ends his life tranquilly, this man, in my judgment, O king, deserves the name of happy. We ought therefore to consider the end of everything, in what way it will terminate; for the Deity having shown a glimpse of happiness to many, has afterward utterly overthrown them." When he spoke thus to Crœsus, Crœsus did not confer any favour on him, and holding him in no account, dismissed him; for he considered him a very ignorant man, because he overlooked present prosperity, and bade men look to the end of everything.

After the departure of Solon, the indignation of the gods fell heavily upon Crœsus, probably because he thought himself the most happy of all men. A dream soon after visited him while sleeping, which pointed out to him the truth of the misfortunes that were about to befall him in the person of one of his sons. For Crœsus had two sons, of whom one was grievously afflicted, for he was dumb; but the other, whose name was Atys, far surpassed all the young men of his age. Now the dream intimated to Crœsus that he would lose this Atys by a wound inflicted by the point of an iron weapon; he, when he awoke, and had considered the matter with himself, dreading the dream, provided a wife for his son; and

who had been the murderer of his own brother, and the murderer of his purifier, when all was silent round the tomb, judging himself the most heavily afflicted of all men, killed himself on the tomb. Crœsus, bereaved of his son, continued disconsolate for two years.

Some time afterward, the overthrow of the kingdom of Astyages, son of Cyaxares, by Cyrus, son of Cambyses, and the growing power of the Persians, put an end to the grief of Crœsus; and he began to consider whether he could by any means check the growing power of the Persians before they became formidable. After he had formed this purpose, he determined to make trial as well of the oracles in Greece as of that in Libya; and sent different persons to different places, some to Delphi, some to Abæ of Phocis, and some to Dodona; others were sent to Amphiaraus and Trophonius, and others to Branchidæ of Milesia: these were the Grecian oracles to which Crœsus sent to consult. He sent others also to consult that of Ammon in Libya. And he sent them different ways, designing to make trial of what the oracles knew; in order that if they should be found to know the truth, he might send a second time to inquire whether he should venture to make war on the Persians. He despatched them to make trial of the oracles with the following orders: that computing the days from the time of their departure from Sardis, they should consult the oracles on the hundredth day, by asking what Crœsus, son of Alyattes, and king of the Lydians, was then doing; and that they should bring him the answer of each oracle in writing. Now what were the answers given by the other oracles, is mentioned by none; but no sooner had the Lydians entered the Temple of Delphi to consult the god, and ask the question enjoined them, than the Pythian answered in hexameter verse: "I know the number of the sands, and the measure of the sea; I understand the dumb, and hear him that does not speak; the savour of the hard-shelled tortoise boiled in brass with the flesh of lamb strikes on my senses; brass is laid beneath it, and brass is put over it." The Lydians, having written down this answer of the Pythian, returned to Sardis. And when the rest, who had been sent to other places, arrived bringing the answers, Crœsus, having opened each of them, examined their contents; but none of them pleased him. When, however, he heard that from Delphi, he immediately adored it, and approved of it, being convinced that the oracle at Delphi alone was a real oracle, because it had discovered what he had done. For when he had sent persons to consult the different oracles,

watching the appointed day, he had recourse to the following contrivance: having thought of what it was impossible to discover or guess at, he cut up a tortoise and a lamb, and boiled them himself together in a brazen caldron, and put on it a cover of brass. Such then was the answer given to Crœsus from Delphi: as regards the answer of the oracle of Amphiaraus, I can not say what answer it gave to the Lydians, who performed the accustomed rites at the temple; for nothing else is related than that he considered this also to be a true oracle.

After this he endeavoured to propitiate the god at Delphi by magnificent sacrifices; for he offered three thousand head of cattle of every kind fit for sacrifice, and having heaped up a great pile, he burned on it beds of gold and silver, vials of gold, and robes of purple and garments; hoping by that means more completely to conciliate the god: he also ordered all the Lydians to offer to the god whatever he was able. When the sacrifice was ended, having melted down a vast quantity of gold, he cast half bricks from it, of which the longest were six palms in length, the shortest three, and in thickness one palm: their number was one hundred and seventeen; four of these, of pure gold, weighed each two talents and a half; the other half bricks of pale gold weighed two talents each. He made also the figure of a lion of fine gold, weighing ten talents. This lion, when the Temple of Delphi was burned down, fell from the half bricks, for it had been placed on them; and it now lies in the treasury of the Corinthians, weighing six talents and a half; for three talents and a half were melted from it. Crœsus, having finished these things, sent them to Delphi, and with them these following: two large bowls, one of gold, the other of silver: that of gold was placed on the right hand as one enters the temple, and that of silver on the left; but these also were removed when the temple was burned down; and the golden one, weighing eight talents and a half and twelve minæ, is placed in the treasury of Clazomenæ; the silver one, containing six hundred amphoræ, lies in a corner of the vestibule, and is used by the Delphians for mixing the wine on the Theophanian festival. The Delphians say it was the workmanship of Theodorus the Samian; and I think so too, for it appears to be no common work. He also sent four casks of silver, which stand in the treasury of the Corinthians; and he dedicated two lustral vases, one of gold, the other of silver: on the golden one is an inscription, "OF THE LACEDÆMONIANS," who say that it was their offering, but wrongfully, for this also was given by Crœsus: a cer-

tain Delphian made the inscription, in order to please the Lacedæmonians; I know his name, but forbear to mention it. The boy, indeed, through whose hand the water flows, is their gift; but neither of the lustral vases. At the same time Crœsus sent many other offerings without an inscription: among them some round silver covers; and moreover a statue of a woman in gold three cubits high, which the Delphians say is the image of Crœsus's baking woman; and to all these things he added the necklaces and girdles of his wife.

These were the offerings he sent to Delphi; and to Amphiaraus, having ascertained his virtue and sufferings, he dedicated a shield all of gold, and a lance of solid gold, the shaft as well as the points being of gold; and these are at Thebes in the Temple of Ismenian Apollo.

To the Lydians appointed to convey these presents to the temples, Crœsus gave it in charge to inquire of the oracles whether he should make war on the Persians, and if he should unite any other nation as an ally. Accordingly, when the Lydians arrived at the places to which they were sent, and had dedicated the offerings, they consulted the oracles, saying: "Crœsus, King of the Lydians and of other nations, esteeming these to be the only oracles among men, sends these presents in acknowledgment of your discoveries; and now asks, whether he should lead an army against the Persians, and whether he should join any auxiliary forces with his own?" Such were their questions; and the opinions of both oracles concurred, foretelling "that if Crœsus should make war on the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire"; and they advised him to engage the most powerful of the Grecians in his alliance. When Crœsus heard the answers that were brought back, he was beyond measure delighted with the oracles; and fully expecting that he should destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he again sent to Delphi, and having ascertained the number of the inhabitants, presented each of them with two staters of gold. In return for this, the Delphians gave Crœsus and the Lydians the right to consult the oracle before any others, and exemption from tribute, and the first seats in the temple, and the privilege of being made citizens of Delphi, to as many as should desire it in all future time. Crœsus having made these presents to the Delphians, sent a third time to consult the oracle. For after he had ascertained the veracity of the oracle, he had frequent recourse to it. His demand now was, whether he should long enjoy the kingdom, to which the Pythian gave this answer: "When a mule shall become King of the Medes, then, tender-footed

Lydian, flee over pebbly Hermus, nor tarry, nor blush to be a coward." With this answer, when reported to him, Crœsus was more than ever delighted, thinking that a mule should never be King of the Medes instead of a man, and consequently that neither he nor his posterity should ever be deprived of the kingdom. In the next place he began to inquire carefully who were the most powerful of the Greeks whom he might gain over as allies; and on inquiry found that the Lacedæmonians and the Athenians excelled the rest, the former being of Dorian, the latter of Ionic descent: for these were in ancient times the most distinguished, the latter being a Pelasgian, the other an Hellenic nation; the latter had never emigrated, but the former had very often changed their seat; for under the reign of Deucalion they inhabited the country of Phthiotis; and in the time of Dorus, the son of Hellen, the country at the foot of Ossa and Olympus, called Histiæotis: when they were driven out of Histiæotis by the Cadmæans, they settled on Mount Pidnus, at a place called Macednum; thence they again removed to Dryopis; and at length coming into Peloponnesus, were called Dorians.

What language the Pelasgians used I can not with certainty affirm; but if I may form a conjecture from those Pelasgians who now exist, and who now inhabit the town of Crestona above the Tyrrhenians, and who were formerly neighbours to those now called Dorians, and at that time occupied the country at present called Thessaliotis: and if I may conjecture from those Pelasgians settled at Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont, and who once dwelt with the Athenians, and whatever other cities, which, though really Pelasgian, have changed their name; if, I say, I may be permitted to conjecture from these, the Pelasgians spoke a barbarous language. And if the whole Pelasgian body did so, the Attic race, being Pelasgic, must at the time they changed into Hellenes have altered their language. For neither do the Crestonions use the same language with any of their neighbours, nor do the people of Placia, but both use the same language; by which it appears they have taken care to preserve the character of the language they brought with them into those places. The Hellenic race, however, as appears to me, from the time they became a people have used the same language: though, when separated from the Pelasgians, they were at first insignificant, yet from a small beginning they have increased to a multitude of nations, chiefly by a union with many other barbarous nations. Wherefore it appears to me that the Pelasgic race, being barbarous, never increased to any great extent.

tory. From that time the Argians, cutting off their hair, which they had before been compelled to wear long, enacted a law, which was confirmed by a curse, that no Argian should suffer his hair to grow, nor any woman wear ornaments of gold, till they should recover Thyrea. On the other hand, the Lacedæmonians made a contrary law, enjoining all their people to wear long hair, which they had never done before. As to Othryades, who was the only one that survived of the three hundred, they say that, being ashamed to return to Sparta when all his fellow-soldiers had perished, he put an end to himself at Thyrea. When the affairs of the Spartans were in this condition, the Sardian ambassador arrived, and requested them to assist Crœsus, who was besieged in Sardis; they no sooner heard the ambassador's report than they made preparations to succour him. But when they were prepared to set out, and their ships were ready, another message reached them that the citadel of the Lydians was taken, and Crœsus made prisoner; they accordingly, deeming it a great misfortune, desisted from their enterprise.

Sardis was taken in the following manner: on the fourteenth day after Crœsus had been besieged, Cyrus sent horsemen throughout his army, and proclaimed that he would liberally reward the man who should first mount the wall; upon this several attempts were made, and as often failed, until after the rest had desisted, a Mardian, whose name was Hyrœades, endeavoured to climb that part of the citadel where no guard was stationed, because there did not appear to be any danger that it would be taken at that part, for on that side the citadel was precipitous and impracticable. Round this part alone, Meles, a former King of Sardis, had not brought the lion which his concubine bore to him, though the Telmessians had pronounced that if the lion were carried round the wall Sardis would be impregnable; but Meles, having caused it to be carried round the rest of the wall, where the citadel was exposed to assault, neglected this, as altogether unassailable and precipitous: this is the quarter of the city that faces Mount Tmolus. Now this Hyrœades, the Mardian, having seen a Lydian come down this precipice the day before, for a helmet that had rolled down, and carry it up again, noticed it carefully, and reflected on it in his mind; he thereupon ascended the same way, followed by divers Persians, and when great numbers had gone up, Sardis was thus taken, and the whole town plundered.

The following incidents befell Crœsus himself: he had a son of whom I have before made mention, who was in other

respects proper enough, but dumb. Now, in the time of his former prosperity, Crœsus had done everything he could for him, and among other expedients had sent to consult the oracle of Delphi concerning him; but the Pythian gave him this answer: "O Lydian born, king of many, very foolish Crœsus, wish not to hear the longed-for voice of thy son speaking within thy palace: it were better for thee that this should be far off; for he will first speak in an unhappy day." When the city was taken, one of the Persians, not knowing Crœsus, was about to kill him: Crœsus, though he saw him approach, from his present misfortune, took no heed of him, nor did he care about dying by the blow; but this speechless son of his, when he saw the Persian advancing against him, through dread and anguish, burst into speech, and said, "Man, kill not Crœsus." These were the first words he ever uttered; but from that time he continued to speak during the remainder of his life. So the Persians got possession of Sardis, and made Crœsus prisoner, after he had reigned fourteen years, being besieged fourteen days, and lost his great empire, as the oracle had predicted. The Persians, having taken him, conducted him to Cyrus; and he, having heaped up a great pile, placed Crœsus upon it, bound with fetters, and with him fourteen young Lydians, designing either to offer this sacrifice to some god, as the first fruits of his victory, or wishing to perform a vow; or perhaps, having heard that Crœsus was a religious person, he placed him on the pile for the purpose of discovering whether any deity would save him from being burned alive. He accordingly did what has been related: it is added that when Crœsus stood upon the pile, notwithstanding the weight of his misfortunes, the words of Solon recurred to him, as spoken by inspiration of the deity, that no living man could be justly called happy. When this occurred to him, it is said that after a long silence he recovered himself, and uttering a groan, thrice pronounced the name of Solon: that when Cyrus heard him, he commanded his interpreters to ask Crœsus whom it was he called upon; that they drew near and asked him, but Crœsus for some time kept silence: but at last, being constrained to speak, said, "I named a man whose discourses I more desire all tyrants might hear than to be possessor of the greatest riches." When he gave them this obscure answer, they again inquired what he said: and when they persisted in their inquiries, and were very importunate, he at length told them that Solon, an Athenian, formerly visited him, and having viewed all his treasures, made no account of them; telling, in a word, how

everything had befallen him as Solon had warned him, though his discourse related to all mankind as much as to himself, and especially to those who imagine themselves happy. They say that Crœsus gave this explanation, and that the pile being now kindled, the outer parts began to burn; and that Cyrus, informed by the interpreters of what Crœsus had said, relented, and considering that being but a man, he was yet going to burn another man alive, who had been no way inferior to himself in prosperity, and moreover, fearing retribution, and reflecting that nothing human is constant, commanded the fire to be instantly extinguished, and Crœsus, with those who were about him, to be taken down; and that they with all their endeavours were unable to master the fire. It is related by the Lydians that Crœsus, perceiving that Cyrus had altered his resolution, when he saw every man endeavouring to put out the fire, but unable to get the better of it, shouted aloud, invoking Apollo, and besought him, if ever any of his offerings had been agreeable to him, to protect and deliver him from the present danger: they report that he with tears invoked the god, and that on a sudden clouds were seen gathering in the air, which before was serene, and that a violent storm burst forth and vehement rain fell and extinguished the flames; by which Cyrus, perceiving that Crœsus was beloved by the gods, and a good man, when he had had him taken down from the pile, asked him the following question: "Who persuaded you, Crœsus, to invade my territories, and to become my enemy instead of my friend?" He answered: "O king, I have done this for your good, but my own evil fortune, and the god of the Greeks who encouraged me to make war is the cause of all. For no man is so void of understanding as to prefer war before peace; for in the latter, children bury their fathers, in the former, fathers bury their children. But, I suppose, it pleased the gods that these things should be so."

He thus spoke, and Cyrus, having set him at liberty, placed him by his own side, and showed him great respect; and both he and all those that were with him were astonished at what they saw. But Crœsus, absorbed in thought, remained silent; and presently turning round and beholding the Persians sacking the city of the Lydians, he said, "Does it become me, O king, to tell you what is passing through my mind, or to keep silence on the present occasion?" Cyrus bade him say with confidence whatever he wished; upon which Crœsus asked him, saying, "What is this vast crowd so earnestly employed about?" He answered, "They are sacking

your city, and plundering your riches." "Not so," Crœsus replied; "they are neither sacking my city nor plundering my riches, for they no longer belong to me, but they are ravaging what belongs to you." The reply of Crœsus attracted the attention of Cyrus; he therefore ordered all the rest to withdraw, and asked Crœsus what he thought should be done in the present conjuncture. He answered: "Since the gods have made me your servant, I think it my duty to acquaint you, if I perceive anything deserving of remark. The Persians, who are by nature overbearing, are poor. If, therefore, you permit them to plunder and possess great riches, you may expect the following results: whoso acquires the greatest possessions, be assured, will be ready to rebel. Therefore, if you approve what I say, adopt the following plan: place some of your body-guard as sentinels at every gate, with orders to take the booty from all those who would go out, and to acquaint them that the tenth must of necessity be consecrated to Jupiter; thus you will not incur the odium of taking away their property, and they, acknowledging your intention to be just, will readily obey." Cyrus, when he heard this, was exceedingly delighted, as he thought the suggestion a very good one; having therefore commended it highly, and ordered his guards to do what Crœsus suggested, he addressed Crœsus as follows: "Crœsus, since you are resolved to display the deeds and words of a true king, ask whatever boon you desire on the instant." "Sir," he answered, "the most acceptable favour you can bestow upon me is to let me send my fetters to the god of the Grecians, whom I have honoured more than any other deity, and to ask him if it be his custom to deceive those who deserve well of him." Cyrus asked him what cause he had to complain that induced him to make this request: upon which Crœsus recounted to him all his projects, and the answers of the oracles, and particularly the offerings he had presented; and how he was incited by the oracle to make war against the Persians. When he had said this, he again besought him to grant him leave to reproach the god with these things. But Cyrus, smiling, said, "You shall not only receive this boon from me, but whatever else you may at any time desire." When Crœsus heard this, he sent certain Lydians to Delphi with orders to lay his fetters at the entrance of the temple, and to ask the god if he were not ashamed to have encouraged Crœsus by his oracles to make war on the Persians, assuring him that he would put an end to the power of Cyrus, of which war such were the first fruits (commanding them at these words to show the fetters), and

at the same time to ask if it were the custom of the Grecian gods to be ungrateful. When the Lydians arrived at Delphi, and had delivered their message, the Pythian is reported to have made this answer: "The god himself even can not avoid the decrees of fate; and Crœsus has atoned the crime of his ancestor in the fifth generation,[1] who, being one of the body-guard of the Heraclidæ, was induced by the artifice of a woman to murder his master, and to usurp his dignity, to which he had no right. But although Apollo was desirous that the fall of Sardis might happen in the time of the sons of Crœsus, and not during his reign, yet it was not in his power to avert the fates; but so far as they allowed he accomplished, and conferred the boon on him; for he delayed the capture of Sardis for the space of three years. Let Crœsus know, therefore, that he was taken prisoner three years later than the fates had ordained: and in the next place, he came to his relief when he was upon the point of being burned alive. Then, as to the prediction of the oracle, Crœsus had no right to complain; for Apollo foretold him that if he made war on the Persians he would subvert a great empire; and had he desired to be truly informed, he ought to have sent again to inquire whether his own or that of Cyrus was meant. But since he neither understood the oracle nor inquired again, let him lay the blame on himself. And when he last consulted the oracle, he did not understand the answer concerning the mule; for Cyrus was that mule; inasmuch as he was born of parents of different nations, the mother superior, but the father inferior. For she was a Mede, and daughter of Astyages, King of Media; but he was a Persian, subject to the Medes, and though in every respect inferior, married his own mistress." The Pythian gave this answer to the Lydians, and they carried it back to Sardis, and reported it to Crœsus, and he, when he heard it, acknowledged the fault to be his, and not the god's. Such is the account of the kingdom of Crœsus, and the first subjection of Ionia.

Many other offerings were also consecrated by Crœsus in Greece, besides those already mentioned. For at Thebes of Bœotia there is a golden tripod, which he dedicated to Ismenian Apollo; and in Ephesus, the golden heifers, and several of the pillars; and in the Pronæa at Delphi a large golden shield. All these were in existence in my day; but others have been lost. The offerings he dedicated in Branchis, a city of

[1] Crœsus was the fifth descendant of Gyges, if we include the two extremes; for the house of the Mermnadæ was as follows: Gyges, Ardys, Sadyattes, Alyattes, Crœsus.

ans supported it with constancy; but when they saw the evil still continuing they sought for remedies, and some devised one thing, some another; and at that time the games of dice, hucklebones, ball, and all other kinds of games except draughts, were invented, for the Lydians do not claim the invention of this last. And having made these inventions to alleviate the famine, they employed them as follows: they used to play one whole day that they might not be in want of food; and on the next, they ate and abstained from play; thus they passed eighteen years; but when the evil did not abate, on the contrary became still more virulent, their king divided the whole people into two parts, and cast lots which should remain and which quit the country, and over that part whose lot it should be to stay he appointed himself king; and over that part which was to emigrate he appointed his own son, whose name was Tyrrhenus. Those to whose lot it fell to leave their country went down to Smyrna, built ships, and having put all their movables which were of use on board, set sail in search of food and land, until having passed by many nations, they reached the Ombrici, where they built towns, and dwell to this day. From being called Lydians, they changed their name to one after the king's son, who led them out; from him they gave themselves the appellation of Tyrrhenians. The Lydians then were reduced under the power of the Persians.

My history hence proceeds to inquire who Cyrus was that overthrew the power of Crœsus, and how the Persians became masters of Asia. In which narration I shall follow those Persians who do not wish to magnify the actions of Cyrus, but to relate the plain truth; though I am aware that there are three other ways of relating Cyrus's history. After the Assyrians had ruled over upper Asia five hundred and twenty years, the Medes first began to revolt from them; and they it seems, in their struggle with the Assyrians for liberty, proved themselves brave men, and having shaken off the yoke, became free; afterward the other nations also did the same as the Medes. When all throughout the continent were independent, they were again reduced under a despotic government in the following manner: There was among the Medes a man famous for wisdom, named Deioces, son of Phraortes. This Deioces, aiming at absolute power, had recourse to the following plan: the Medes were at that time distributed in villages, and Deioces, who was already highly esteemed in his own district, applied himself with great zeal to the exercise of justice; and this he did, since great lawlessness prevailed

throughout the whole of Media, and he knew that injustice and justice are ever at variance. The Medes of the same village, observing his conduct, chose him for their judge; and he, constantly keeping the sovereign power in view, showed himself upright and just. By this conduct he acquired no slight praise from his fellow-citizens, so much so that the inhabitants of other villages, hearing that Deioces was the only one who judged uprightly, having before met with unjust sentences, when they heard of him, gladly came from all parts to Deioces, in order to submit their quarrels to his decision; and at last they would commit the decision to no one else. In the end, when the number of those who had recourse to him continually increased as men heard of the justice of his decisions, Deioces, seeing the whole devolved upon himself, would no longer occupy the seat where he used to sit to determine differences, and refused to act as judge any more, for that it was of no advantage to him to neglect his own affairs, and spend the day in deciding the quarrels of others. Upon this, rapine and lawlessness growing far more frequent throughout the villages than before, the Medes called an assembly and consulted together about the present state of things, but, as I suspect, the partisans of Deioces spoke to the following purpose: "Since it is impossible for us to inhabit the country if we continue in our present condition, let us constitute a king over us, and so the country will be governed by good laws, and we ourselves shall be able to attend to our business, nor be any longer driven from our homes by lawlessness." By some such words they persuaded them to submit to a kingly government. Upon their immediately putting the question, whom they should appoint king, Deioces was unanimously preferred and commended; so that at last they agreed that he should be their king. But he required them to build him a palace suitable to the dignity of a king, and guards for the security of his person. The Medes accordingly did so; and built him a spacious and strong palace in the part of the country that he selected, and permitted him to choose guards for his person out of all the Medes. Being thus possessed of the power, he compelled the Medes to build one city, and having carefully adorned that, to pay less attention to the others. And as the Medes obeyed him in this also, he built lofty and strong walls, which now go under the name of Ecbatana,[1] one placed in a circle within the other; and this fortification is so contrived that each circle was raised above the other by the height of the battlements

[1] For the Scripture account of Ecbatana, see Judith, i: 1–4.

only. The situation of the ground, rising by an easy ascent, was very favourable to the design. But that which was particularly attended to is, that there being seven circles altogether, the king's palace and the treasury are situated within the innermost of them. The largest of these walls is about equal in circumference to the city of Athens; the battlements of the first circle are white, of the second black, of the third purple, of the fourth blue, of the fifth bright red. Thus the battlements of all the circles are painted with different colours; but the last two have their battlements plated, the one with silver, the other with gold.

Deioces then built these fortifications for himself, and round his own palace; and he commanded the rest of the people to fix their habitations round the fortification. And when all the buildings were completed he, for the first time, established the following regulations: that no man should be admitted to the king's presence, but every one should consult him by means of messengers, and that none should be permitted to see him; and, moreover, that it should be accounted indecency for any to laugh or spit before him. He established such ceremony about his own person, for this reason, that those who were his equals, and who were brought up with him, and of no meaner family, nor inferior to him in manly qualities, might not, when they saw him, grieve and conspire against him; but that he might appear to be of a different nature to them who did not see him. When he had established these regulations, and settled himself in the tyranny, he was very severe in the distribution of justice. And the parties contending were obliged to send him their cases in writing, and he having come to a decision, on the cases so laid before him, sent them back again. This then was his plan in reference to matters of litigation. And all other things were regulated by him: so that if he received information that any man had injured another, he would presently send for him, and punish him in proportion to his offence; and for this purpose he had spies and eavesdroppers in every part of his dominions.

Now Deioces collected the Medes into one nation, and ruled over that. The following are the tribes of the Medes: the Busæ, Parataceni, Struchates, Arizanti, Budii, and the Magi. Such are the tribes of the Medes. Deioces had a son, Phraortes, who, when his father died, after a reign of fifty-three years, succeeded him in the kingdom; but having so succeeded, he was not content to rule over the Medes only, but, having made war on the Persians, he attacked them and

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.
He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.
He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.
He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.
He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.
He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.
He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.
He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.
He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.
He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:
For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:
For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences
For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:
For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:
For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare,

That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The 56 signatures on the Declaration appear in the positions indicated:

Column 1

Georgia:
- Button Gwinnett
- Lyman Hall
- George Walton

Column 2

North Carolina:
- William Hooper
- Joseph Hewes
- John Penn

South Carolina:
- Edward Rutledge
- Thomas Heyward, Jr.
- Thomas Lynch, Jr.
- Arthur Middleton

Column 3

Massachusetts:
John Hancock

Maryland:
Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia:
George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Thomas Jefferson
Benjamin Harrison
Thomas Nelson, Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carter Braxton

Column 4

Pennsylvania:
- Robert Morris
- Benjamin Rush
- Benjamin Franklin
- John Morton
- George Clymer
- James Smith
- George Taylor
- James Wilson
- George Ross

Delaware:
- Caesar Rodney
- George Read
- Thomas McKean

Column 5

New York:
- William Floyd
- Philip Livingston
- Francis Lewis
- Lewis Morris

New Jersey:
- Richard Stockton
- John Witherspoon
- Francis Hopkinson
- John Hart
- Abraham Clark

Column 6

New Hampshire:
- Josiah Bartlett
- William Whipple

Massachusetts:
- Samuel Adams
- John Adams
- Robert Treat Paine
- Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island:
- Stephen Hopkins
- William Ellery

Connecticut:
- Roger Sherman
- Samuel Huntington
- William Williams
- Oliver Wolcott

New Hampshire:
- Matthew Thornton

as people might do at Megara. A vulgar person will do all these kinds of things not for the sake of the beautiful, but to make a show of wealth, and thinking that he will make himself wondrous by these means, and will spend little on things on which one ought to spend a lot, and a lot where one ought to spend little. A chintzy person will come up short in everything, and even when spending the greatest amounts, will spoil the beauty of the result over something small, hesitating over whatever
30 he does and looking for a way to spend the least, complaining about even that, and believing that he is doing more in every case than he needs to. These active conditions of the soul, then, are vices, but they do not bring reproach since they are not harmful to one's neighbor nor especially disgraceful.

Chapter 3. Greatness of soul,[85] even from its name, seems to be concerned with great things, and let us first take up what sort of great
1123b things they are; it makes no difference whether one examines the active condition or the person answering to the active condition. Now the person who seems to be great-souled is one who considers himself worthy of great things, and is worthy of them, for one who does so not in accordance with his worth is foolish, and among those who answer to the description of virtue there is no one who is foolish or senseless. So the great-souled person is the one described, for someone who is worthy of little and considers himself worthy of that is sensible, but not great-souled, for greatness of soul is present in something great, just as beauty is present in a body of full size, while small people can be elegant and well-proportioned but not beautiful. But someone who considers himself worthy of great things, but is unworthy, is vain, though not everyone is vain who considers his worth to be greater than it is. But someone is small-souled who considers his worth to be less
10 than it is, whether he is worthy of great or moderate things, or even if, being worthy of little, he considers himself worthy of still less. And

[85] *Megalopsuchia* is translated sometimes as "pride," sometimes as "high-mindedness," but either of these choices misses at least half its meaning, while "magnanimity" shifts the problem into Latin and carries the wrong connotation. In the *Posterior Analytics*, 97b 14-26, Aristotle raises the possibility that it might be a word used in two distinct ways, referring to people like Achilles who do not tolerate insults, but also to people like Socrates who do not care about either good fortune or bad fortune. Even if that is true, one use might be primary while the other is derivative from it. Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 212, takes greatness of soul to be the aristocrat's attitude of contempt for anyone who is not himself, assumed with irony by the low-born Socrates as a piece of one-upsmanship. But the truly great soul might have a standard of worth that has nothing to do with personal superiority. In his treatment of magnificence, Aristotle accepts a popular standard of judgment and purifies it dialectically, shifting its focus from how much is spent to how it is spent, and from the self-display of the spender to the enhancement of common life. Something similar happens with greatness of soul.

most small-souled of all would seem to be the one who is worthy of great things, for what would he do if he were not worthy of that much? So while the great-souled person is an extreme by reason of magnitude, he is a mean by reason of doing things the way one ought, for he assesses himself in accord with his worth, while the others exceed or fall short of theirs.

Now if one who is great-souled considers himself worthy of great things and is worthy of them, and is especially one who considers himself worthy of the greatest things, there would be one thing that these involve most. But worth is spoken of in relation to external goods, and we would set down as greatest of these the one that we assign to the gods, and at which people of high standing aim most of all, and which is the prize given for the most beautiful deeds; and of this kind is honor, for this is the greatest of external goods.[86] So the great-souled person is concerned with honors and acts of dishonor in the way one ought to be. But even without an argument it appears that great-souled people are concerned with honors, for it is honor most of all of which they consider themselves worthy, and honor that is in accord with their worth. But the small-souled person falls short in relation both to himself and to the honor claimed by the great-souled person, while the vain person is excessive in relation to himself, though not in relation to the great-souled man.

And the one who is great-souled, if in fact he is worthy of the greatest honors, must be the best human being; for the one who is better is always worthy of more, and the one who is best is worthy of what is greatest. Therefore it is necessary for one who is great-souled in the true sense to be good, and what is great in each virtue would seem to belong to someone who is great-souled. And it would by no means be fitting for someone great-souled to run away with wildly swinging arms, or to be unjust. Why would someone to whom nothing is great do anything shameful? And for one who examines the virtues each by each, it would obviously be completely ridiculous for someone who is great-souled not to be good. Nor would he be worthy of honor if he were base, since honor is the prize for virtue,

[86] Although this clause is stated without qualification, it is a conclusion found by looking at the way people attempt to bestow or attain something that a being of the highest worth would be worthy of. Soon, at 1124a 19 below, a shred of doubt will be attached to this conclusion that no external good excels honor. and at 1159a 25-26 the reason for this will be found; at 1169b 8-10, that conclusion will be overturned. The dialectical examination of all goods began at 1104b 30-31 with a broadly comprehensive list, that was narrowed down at 1110b 9-11; the consideration of external goods begins with a plausible opinion about the greatest of them, that eventually breaks down under the weight of other evidence. These are two of the ways dialectic proceeds, and in these instances the two strands of inquiry come to be woven together.

and is allotted to those who are good. Greatness of soul, then, seems to be a certain kind of adornment of the virtues, since it makes them greater, and does not come about without them. For this reason it is difficult to be great-souled in truth, for it is not possible without the beauty that belongs to goodness.[87]

Someone who is great-souled, then, is especially concerned with honors and acts of dishonor; such a person will be moderately pleased at honors that are great and come from serious people, taking them as hitting the mark of what is due, or even less than is due, since there could be no honor worthy of complete virtue, though he will accept them nonetheless, since they have nothing greater to offer him. But he will have utter disdain for honor that comes from random people or is for minor matters, since it is not these of which he is worthy, and he will have a similar attitude toward acts of dishonor, since they will not justly apply to him. And while, as was said, someone who is great-souled is especially concerned with honors, he will surely also hold himself moderately toward wealth and power and every sort of good fortune and bad fortune, however it may come about, and will be neither overjoyed when in good fortune nor overly distressed when in bad fortune. For he is not even that way about honor, though he takes it to be the greatest thing, for power and wealth are chosen on account of honor—at any rate those who have them want to be honored for them—and to that person for whom even honor is a small thing, the other things are small as well. That is why great-souled people seem to be arrogant.[88]

But the things that come from good fortune also seem to contribute toward greatness of soul, for those who are well born consider themselves worthy of honor, and so do those who are powerful or rich,

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[87] As at 1099a 5-7, Aristotle plays on the self-congratulatory name the Athenian aristocracy used for itself, but it has by this point in the inquiry acquired a serious meaning. So too, the "adornment" (*kosmos*), which for the magnificent person was his house (1123a 7), is now seen as the sense of worth that comes from virtue of character rather than from money or empty self-esteem. Greatness of soul is the first of four virtues that Aristotle will find to require the presence of all the virtues of character. (See also 1129b 25-27, 1144b 30-1145a 2, and 1157a 18-19, 29-31.) It is a persistent theme of the Platonic dialogues that any virtue presupposes all virtue.

[88] This paragraph is a masterpiece of Aristotle's dialectic. If greatness of soul centers around worth, its concern with honor cannot be simply for the sake of honor. If honor is desired on account of worth, honor itself is measured and limited. Honor was found to be the greatest of *external* goods (and even then only provisionally on the basis of a certain kind of evidence), and now it is seen to be a small thing when measured against the inner knowledge of worth that is unmoved by and contemptuous of inappropriate honor and undeserved dishonor. Those who look down on others are given the opportunity, by this argument, to look down on their own excesses.

since they are in a superior position, and everything that is superior in respect to something good is held in higher honor. This is why things of this sort make people more great-souled, since they are honored by some people, but in accordance with truth, only someone good is honorable, and someone to whom both belong is considered more worthy of honor. But those who, without virtue, have the sort of good things that come from fortune consider themselves worthy of great things unjustly, and are not rightly called great-souled, since there is no worth or greatness of soul without complete virtue. But those who have goods of that sort also become arrogant and insolent, for without virtue it is not easy to carry off one's good fortune harmoniously, but not being able to carry it off, and believing that they are superior to others, they look down on them, even while they themselves act in whatever way they happen to. For they mimic the great-souled person without being similar to him, and do this in the ways they can; so while they do not do the things that come from virtue, they look down on other people. For the great-souled person looks down on others justly (since he holds his opinion truly), but most people are disdainful at random.

A great-souled person, because he holds few things in high honor, is not someone who takes small risks or is passionately devoted to taking risks, but he is someone who takes great risks, and when he does take a risk he is without regard for his life, on the ground that it is not on just any terms that life is worth living. And he is the sort of person who does favors but is ashamed to have them done for him, since the former belongs to one who is superior, but the latter to one who has someone superior to him. And he is apt to do a favor of greater worth in return, since in that way the one who did the first favor will be left owing something to him, and will be the one who gained a benefit. And great-souled people seem to remember favors they have done, but not those which were done for them (since the one the favor is done for is lesser than the one who does it, and he wants to have the upper position), and they hear about the former with pleasure, but are displeased by hearing about the latter. And that is why Thetis does not tell Zeus about the favors she did for him, nor did the Spartans tell the Athenians, but spoke of the favors done them.[89]

And it is characteristic of a great-souled person to ask for help

[89] In the *Iliad*, at I, 503-4, Thetis barely alludes to the time she saved Zeus, a story her son had heard from her in detail many times (I, 393-407). Thucydides, in *The Peloponnesian War*, IV, 17-20, reports a speech made in Athens by Spartan representatives after the stunning defeat they had suffered on Pylos; they make no mention of the fact that they had saved Athens from the tyrant Hippias ninety years earlier, but talk about the gratitude Athens will gain by sparing its enemies now. This speech, which Aristotle may have known in other versions, seems close to what he describes here.

from no one, or only reluctantly, but to assist others eagerly, and to be highhanded toward those of high station or good fortune, but moderate toward those of a middle station, since it is difficult and dignified to be superior to the former, but easy with the latter, and to stand on one's dignity with the former is not bad manners, but among lowly people it is bad form, as it would be to act tough toward the weak. It is also characteristic of such a person not to go after things held in popular esteem, nor those in which other people are pre-eminent, and to be a slow starter and full of delay, except where there is great honor or a great deed, and to be inclined to do few things, but great and notable ones. And he is necessarily open in hating and open in loving (for concealing such things belongs to one who is fearful, as does having less concern for truth than for people's opinion), and speaks and acts openly (for he is freespoken on account of being contemptuous of others' opinions, and truthful, except for those occasions when he is not because he is being ironic[90] toward ordinary people), and is not capable of leading his life to suit anyone else, other than a friend, since that is fit for a slave, which is why all flatterers are servile and lowly people are flatterers.

Nor is a great-souled person much given to wonder, since nothing is great to him. Nor is he apt to bear grudges, for it is not characteristic of one who is great-souled to remember things against anyone, not of any sort and especially not wrongs, but rather to overlook them. Nor is he a gossip, for he will not talk either about himself or about anyone else, since he is not concerned to be praised himself or for others to be blamed, so again he is not apt to give praise, and by the same token he does not bother to speak ill even of his enemies, except to insult them. He least of all is apt to complain about necessities or small matters, or to ask for help, since to be that way would imply that he took them seriously. He is the sort of person who possesses beautiful and useless things, rather than things that are productive and beneficial, since that is more suited to one who is self-sufficient. And a great-souled person seems to have a slow way of moving, a deep voice, and a steady way of speaking, since a person who takes few things seriously is not anxious, and one who thinks nothing is great is not intense, but shrillness and haste are results of these qualities.[91]

[90] This "gracious" vice belonged distinctively to Socrates. (See 1127b 22-31.) It comes under the general heading of not acting tough toward the weak, but it was not only people of humble station whom Socrates treated ironically. In Plato's *Gorgias*, Socrates is more frank with Polus, who is young and foolish, and still more so with Callicles, who is very young and insolent, than he is with Gorgias, one of the most admired and smug men in Greece. As tends to be the case with irony, one can never be sure where that of Socrates starts or stops.

[91] This final touch seems to some readers to be made tongue-in-cheek, and the picture above of someone who is annoyed to be reminded that he ever needed

Such is the great-souled person, while the one who comes up short is small-souled, and the one who goes to excess is vain. Now even these do not seem to be people with vices (since they do not do harm), but people who are in error. For the small-souled person, while being worthy of good things, deprives himself of the things he deserves, and seems to have something bad about him from his not considering himself worthy of what is good, or to be ignorant of himself, since he would have reached out for the things he was worthy of if they were good. Such people, though, are not thought to be fools, but too hesitant, but such an opinion seems to make them even worse, for the various sorts of people aim at the things that are in accord with their worth, but these stand aside from beautiful actions and pursuits as though they were unworthy, and likewise go without external goods. But vain people are foolish and ignorant of themselves, and are that way openly, for they stake a claim to things that are held in honor when they are not worthy of them, and then they are refuted. And they adorn themselves with clothes and fashion and things of that sort, and want it to be obvious that the trappings of good fortune belong to them, and talk about these things as though they were going to be honored on account of them. But smallness of soul is positioned more opposite to greatness of soul than vanity is, since it both occurs more and is worse.

So greatness of soul is concerned with great honor, as was said.

Chapter 4. But it appears that there is also a virtue concerned with honor, as was mentioned in the first remarks,[92] which would seem to stand toward greatness of soul pretty much as generosity stands toward magnificence. For they both stand apart from what is great, but give us the disposition one ought to have toward what is moderate or small, and just as there is a mean condition in the getting and giving of money, and also an excess and a deficiency, so too in reaching out for honor there is what is greater and what is less than it ought to be, as well as that which comes from where it ought and in the way it ought. For we blame the one who has a passion for honor both for going after honor more than one ought and for aiming at getting it from where one ought not, and we blame the one who lacks the passion for honor for not choosing to gain

help may seem a defect of character, but it should be remembered that virtues are mean conditions of feeling as well as of inclinations to action. On the whole, Aristotle seems to prefer a well-grounded sense of worth and dignity, even if it has a comic side, to a sense of modesty and shame, which he thinks adults ought to have outgrown (1128b 15-21). He definitely counts greatness of soul a virtue, though he seems to rank it lowest of those virtues around which various people organize their whole lives. And this last sentence gives the clearest mark of the person of serious moral stature (*ho spoudaios*), taking few things seriously, and shows how the word grows to have the opposite of its root meaning of one who is anxious, urgent, or full of haste.

[92] In Bk. II, Chap. 7, the first sketch of the virtues of character, at 1107 24-31.

honor even for beautiful acts. But there are times when we praise the one who has the passion for honor as manly and passionately devoted to the beautiful, and the one who lacks the passion for honor as moderate and sensible, just as we said in the first remarks. For it is clear that, since being "passionately devoted to such-and-such" is spoken of in more than one sense, we do not always apply being passionately devoted to honor to the same thing, but use it either in praising what is more than most people have or in blaming what is more than it ought to be. And since the mean condition is without a name, the extremes seem to dispute as though over deserted territory. But in things in which there is excess and deficiency, there is also a mean, and people do reach out
20 for honor both more and less than one ought, so that it is also possible to do so as one ought; what is praised, then, is this active condition of the soul, which is the nameless mean concerning honor. In relation to the passion for honor it appears as a lack of the passion for honor, but in relation to the lack of the passion for honor it appears as a passion for honor, and in relation to them both it is in a certain way both. This seems to be so in connection with the other virtues also, but here it is the extremes that appear to be the opposites since the mean does not have a name.

Chapter 5. Gentleness is a mean condition concerning anger. While the mean is nameless, and the extremes are pretty much so too, we are applying the word gentleness to the mean, though its meaning inclines toward the deficiency, since that has no name. The excess might be called
30 a certain kind of irritability, since the feeling is anger, though the things that cause it to be present are many and varied. Now someone who is angered at things and at people one ought to be angered at, and also as and when and for as long as one ought to be, is praised, so this would be a gentle person, if in fact gentleness is praised. For a gentle person means someone who is undisturbed and not led by his passions, but who becomes severe in the way, and in those circumstances, and for as
1126a long a time, as reason prescribes, but such a person seems to err more on the side of deficiency, since one who is gentle is not inclined to take revenge, but is more apt to forgive. But the deficiency, whether it is a certain slowness to anger, or whatsoever it may be, is blamed. For those who do not get angry at things one ought to get angry at seem to be foolish, as do those who do not get angry as one ought, or when or at whom one ought, for they seem not to perceive it and not to be pained, since they do not get angry and are not apt to defend themselves. For holding back when one is being foully insulted, and overlooking it when it happens to those close to one, is slavish.

The excess also occurs in all respects (namely, getting angry at
10 people one ought not to get angry at, and in circumstances in which one ought not, and more than one ought, and more quickly, and for a longer time), though surely not all of them are present in the same person.

For this would not be able to happen, since a bad thing destroys even itself, and if it were complete in all respects it would become unbearable. Irritable people, then, get angry quickly at people one ought not to get angry at, or in circumstances in which one ought not, and more than one ought, but they stop being angry quickly, which is the best quality they have. And this follows with them because they do not hold anger in, but insofar as their anger is open on account of its sharpness, they retaliate, then leave off. Hotheaded people are sharp-tempered to excess, and irritable toward everything and everyone; hence the name. Bitter people resist letting go, and are angry for a long time, for 20
they hold on to their rage; but an end comes when one retaliates, for revenge puts an end to anger, introducing a pleasure that replaces the pain. But when this does not happen, such people carry a burden, for since they are not open about it, no one else helps persuade them out of it, and the anger within oneself needs time to soften. People of this sort are the most troublesome to themselves and to those most dear to them. And we speak of as harsh those who treat people severely on grounds upon which one ought not, or more than one ought, or for a longer time, and do not reconcile without revenge or punishment. We place the excess more opposite to gentleness, since it also occurs more, 30
for it is more human to take revenge, and harsh people are worse for living with.

And what was said in the earlier remarks[93] is clear also from what is being said, for it is not easy to determine how and with whom and in what circumstances and for how much time one ought to be angry, and at what point one does so rightly or goes astray. But the person who deviates a little is not blamed, whether the deviation is toward the more or toward the less, for sometimes we praise those who underdo 1126b
it and call them gentle, while sometimes we call those who are harsh manly, as people capable of ruling. But for deviating how much and in what way one is to be blamed is not easy to give an account of by a formulation, for such things are in the particulars, and the judgment is in the perceiving. But this much is clear at any rate, that the mean active condition is praised, in accord with which we get angry with the people whom one ought to get angry with, on the grounds on which one ought, as one ought, and all such things, while the kinds of excess and deficiency are blamed, to a small extent when they occur slightly, to a greater extent when they occur more, and to a great extent when they occur to a considerable degree. It is clear, then, that one must hold to the mean active condition. So let the active conditions connected with 10
anger have been discussed.

Chapter 6. In social relations, in living with others, and in sharing

[93] See 1109b 14-26, where anger is the example used to show that, even if hitting the mean is difficult, turning back from the extremes is always right.

life seem to be necessary. So there are three mean conditions in life that have been spoken of, and all are concerned with sharing in certain words and actions. They differ in that one is concerned with truth and the others with pleasure, and of those concerned with pleasure, one is present in playful situations and the other in social occasions throughout the rest of life.

Chapter 9. It is not appropriate to speak about a sense of shame[96] as if it were a virtue, for it seems more like a feeling than like an active condition. It is defined, at any rate, as a certain kind of fear of a bad reputation, and it ends up being pretty much the same as a fear concerned with terrifying things, for people who are ashamed blush, while those who are afraid of death turn pale. Both, then, appear to be bodily in some way, which seems to belong more to a feeling than to an active condition. The feeling is not fitting at every time of life, but only in the young. For we think it necessary for those at that time of life to have a sense of shame because, since they live by feeling, they err in many ways, but are held back by shame. And we praise those among the young who display shame, but no one would praise an older person for being filled with shame, since we think he ought not to do anything to which shame applies.

For shame does not belong to decent people, if it comes about for base acts (since one ought not to do such things, and if some things are truly shameful, while others are so according to opinion, it makes no difference, since neither sort ought to be done, and so shame ought not to be felt); and it belongs to someone base to be the sort of person to do any of the things that are shameful. And to be such as to be ashamed if one does anything of that sort, and for that reason think that one is a decent person, is absurd, since shame is for willing acts, but a decent person would never willingly do things that are base. A sense of shame could be something decent only hypothetically, since if one were to do those things, one would be ashamed, but this is not the way it works with virtues. And if shamelessness, or not being ashamed to do shame-

[96] A sense of shame (*aidôs*) is a respectful attitude that holds one back from something. In the *Odyssey* its meaning ranges from modesty about nakedness or grief (VI, 220; VIII, 86), to reverent fear of the gods (IX, 269), to loving respect for a king. In this work, Aristotle uses it for the sensitivity to praise and blame that sends Hector and Diomedes into battle (1116a 27-29), and for the innate love of the beautiful that is a precondition for virtue (1179b 7-13). It is not simply a feeling, since all shame involves thinking (see *Topics*, 126a 8), but neither is it as deliberately chosen or willingly acquiesced in as the active states of character by which we take responsibility for our responses to our feelings (1105b 25-26, 1114b 22-23). Aristotle does not regard as distinct in kind the intense shame (*aischunê*) that makes someone blush and the milder attitude that shows itself as a difficulty in raising one's eyes to meet those of another (see *Rhetoric*, 1384a 35-b 1), the up-from-under look that was always seen in pictures of Diana Spencer.

ful things, is base, that doesn't make it any more the case that someone who is ashamed of doing such things is decent. Self-restraint[97] is not a virtue either, but something mixed, but this will be shown about it in a later section. But now let us speak about justice.

BOOK V

Chapter 1. About justice and injustice, one must consider exactly 1129a
what sort of actions they turn out to be concerned with, and what sort of mean condition justice is, and what something just is a mean between. And let our examination be along the same line of inquiry as the preceeding discussions. Now we see that everyone intends justice to mean the sort of active condition of the soul out of which people are inclined to perform just actions and out of which they act justly and want what is just, and in the same way everyone speaks of injus- 10
tice as the active condition out of which people act unjustly and want what is unjust. Hence, for us too, let these things be set down first as in an outline. For it is not the same way with active conditions as with kinds of knowledge and capacities,[98] since the same capacity or kind of knowledge seems to belong to opposite things, while one active condition does not belong to things that are opposite; for example, one does not do opposite things out of health, but only healthy things, for we speak of walking in a healthy way when one walks as a healthy person would.

Often, then, one opposite active condition is discerned from its opposite, while active conditions are often discerned from those in whom they are present, for if being in good shape is something evi-
dent, then also being in bad shape becomes evident, and being in good 20
shape is evident from those who are in good shape, and the things conducive to being in good shape are evident from that. For if being in good shape is having firm flesh, then necessarily being in bad shape is having flabby flesh, and what is conducive to being in good shape is what produces firmness in flesh. And it follows for the most part that if

[97] Self-restraint (*en-krateia*), which will be discussed in Bk. VII, Chaps. 1-10, is the condition of someone for whom each temptation requires a new effort of resistance. In the virtue of temperance (*sôphrosunê*), a stable equilibrium of character has been formed, in which one is neither enslaved to desire nor constantly restraining it.

[98] The word here translated as capacity (*dunamis*) is translated in Bk. II, Chap. 5, as predisposition. These are two main types of potencies, not mere potentialities but inner states that press toward outward manifestation. In Bk. IX (Θ), Chap. 2, of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle explains the distinction as dependent on involving or not involving reason. A doctor has the capacity to cause disease or death as well as restore health and preserve life, because the knowledge of the latter includes a knowledge of their opposites. But a predisposition is an irrational potency, and an active condition is a cultivated and chosen state of the soul, that incline the one who has them in only one direction.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Contents

Part I

1

Soon as the siege and assault had ceased at Troy,
the burg broken and burnt to brands and ashes,
the traitor who trammels of treason there wrought
was tried for his treachery, the foulest on earth.
It was Aeneas the noble and his high kin
who then subdued provinces, lords they became,
well-nigh of all the wealth in the Western Isles:
forth rich Romulus to Rome rapidly came,
with great business that burg he builds up first,
and names it with his name, as now it has;
Ticius to Tuscany, and townships begins;
Langobard in Lombardy lifts up homes;
and fared over the French flood Felix Brutus
on many banks all broad Britain he settles
then,
where war and wreck and wonder
betimes have worked within,
and oft both bliss and blunder
have held sway swiftly since.

2

And when this Britain was built by this baron rich,
bold men were bred therein, of battle beloved,
in many a troubled time turmoil that wrought.
More flames on this fold have fallen here oft
than any other I know of, since that same time.
But of all that here built, of Britain the kings,
ever was Arthur highest, as I have heard tell.
And so of earnest adventure I aim to show,
that astonishes sight as some men do hold it,
an outstanding action of Arthur's wonders.
If you will list to this lay but a little while,
I'll tell it straight, as I in town heard it,
with tongue;
as it was said and spoken
in story staunch and strong,
with linked letters loaded,
as in this land so long.

3

This king lay at Camelot nigh on Christmas
with many lovely lords, of leaders the best,
reckoning of the Round Table all the rich brethren,
with right ripe revel and reckless mirth.
There tourneyed tykes by times full many,
jousted full jollily these gentle knights,
then carried to court, their carols to make.
For there the feast was alike full fifteen days,
with all the meat and mirth men could devise:
such clamour and glee glorious to hear,
dear din in the daylight, dancing of nights;
all was happiness high in halls and chambers
with lords and ladies, as liked them all best.
With all that's well in the world were they together,
the knights best known under the Christ Himself,
and the loveliest ladies that ever life honoured,
and he the comeliest king that the court rules.
For all were fair folk and in their first age
still,
the happiest under heaven,
king noblest in his will;
that it were hard to reckon
so hardy a host on hill.

4

While New Year was so young it was new come in,
that day double on the dais was the dole served,
for the king was come with knights into the hall,
and chanting in the chapel had chimed to an end.
Loud cry was there cast of clerics and others,
Noel nurtured anew, and named full oft;
and see the rich run forth to render presents,
yelled their gifts on high, yield them to hand,
argued busily about those same gifts.
Ladies laughed out loud, though they had lost,
while he that won was not wrath, that you'll know.
All this mirth they made at the meal time.
When they had washed well they went to be seated,
the best of the barons above, as it seemed best;
with Guinevere, full gaily, gracing their midst,
dressed on the dais there, adorned all about –
splendid silk by her sides, and sheer above
of true Toulouse, of Tartar tapestries plenty,
that were embroidered, bright with the best gems
that might be price-proved with pennies
any a day.
the comeliest to descry
glanced there with eyen grey;
a seemlier ever to the sight,
sooth might no man say.

5

But Arthur would not eat till all were served,
he was so joyous a youth, and somewhat boyish:
he liked his life lively, he loved the less
either to long lie idle or to long sit,
so busied him his young blood and his brain wild.
And also another matter moved him so,
that he had nobly named he would never eat
on such dear days, before he had been advised,
of some adventurous thing, an unknown tale,
of some mighty marvel, that he might believe,
of ancestors, arms, or other adventures;
or else till someone beseeched for some sure knight
to join with him in jousting, in jeopardy to lay,
lay down life for life, allow each to the other,
as fortune might favour them, a fair advantage.
This was the king's custom when he in court was,
at each fine feast among his many friends
in hall.
Therefore with fearless face
he stands straight and tall;
full lively at that New Year
much mirth he makes with all.

8

6

Thus there stands straight and tall the king himself,
talking at the high table of trifles full courtly.
There good Gawain was graced by Guinevere beside,
and Agravain *a la dure main* on the other side sits,
both the king's sister-sons and full sure knights;
Bishop Baldwin above, he begins the table,
and Ywain, Urien's son, ate alongside him.
These sat high on the dais and deftly served,
and many another sat sure at the side-tables.
Then the first course came with crack of trumpets,
with many a banner full bright that thereby hung;
new noise of kettledrums and noble pipes,
wild warbles and wide wakened echoes,
that many a heart full high heaved at their notes.
Dainties drawn in therewith of full dear meats,
foods of the freshest, and in such files of dishes
they find no room to place them people before
and to set the silver that holds such servings
on cloth.
Each his load as he liked himself,
there ladled and nothing loath;
Every two had dishes twelve,
good beer and bright wine both.

7

Now will I of their service say you no more,
for each man may well know no want was there
another noise full new neared with speed,
that would give the lord leave to take meat.
For scarce was the noise not a while ceased,
and the first course in the court duly served,
there hales in at the hall door a dreadful man,
the most in the world's mould of measure high,
from the nape to the waist so swart and so thick,
and his loins and his limbs so long and so great
half giant on earth I think now that he was;
but the most of man anyway I mean him to be,
and that the finest in his greatness that might ride,
for of back and breast though his body was strong,
both his belly and waist were worthily small,
and his features all followed his form made
and clean.
Wonder at his hue men displayed,
set in his semblance seen;
he fared as a giant were made,
and over all deepest green.

8

And all garbed in green this giant and his gear:
a straight coat full tight that stuck to his sides,
a magnificent mantle above, masked within
with pelts pared pertly, the garment agleam
with blithe ermine full bright, and his hood both,
that was left from his locks and laid on his shoulders;
neat, well-hauled hose of that same green
that clung to his calves and sharp spurs under
of bright gold, on silk stockings rich-barred,
and no shoes under sole where the same rides.
And all his vesture verily was bright verdure,
both the bars of his belt and other bright stones,
that were richly rayed in his bright array
about himself and his saddle, on silk work,
it were tortuous to tell of these trifles the half,
embroidered above with birds and butterflies,
with gay gaudy of green, the gold ever inmost.
The pendants of his harness, the proud crupper,
his bridle and all the metal enamelled was then;
the stirrups he stood on stained with the same,
and his saddle bows after, and saddle skirts,
ever glimmered and glinted all with green stones.
The horse he rode on was also of that hue,
certain:
A green horse great and thick,
a steed full strong to restrain,
in broidered bridle quick –
to the giant he brought gain.

9

Well garbed was this giant geared in green,
and the hair of his head like his horse's mane.
Fair fanned-out flax enfolds his shoulders;
A beard big as a bush over his breast hangs,
that with the haul of hair that from his head reaches
was clipped all round about above his elbows,
that half his hands thereunder were hid in the wise
of a king's broad cape that's clasped at his neck.
The mane of that mighty horse was much alike,
well crisped and combed, with knots full many
plaited in thread of gold about the fair green,
here a thread of the hair, and there of gold.
The tail and his forelock twinned, of a suit,
and bound both with a band of a bright green,
dressed with precious stones, as its length lasted;
then twined with a thong, a tight knot aloft,
where many bells bright of burnished gold ring.
Such a man on a mount, such a giant that rides,
was never before that time in hall in sight of human
eye.
He looked as lightning bright,
said all that him descried;
it seemed that no man might
his mighty blows survive.

10

And yet he had no helm nor hauberk, neither,
nor protection, nor no plate pertinent to arms,
nor no shaft, nor no shield, to strike and smite,
but in his one hand he held a holly branch,
that is greatest in green when groves are bare,
and an axe in his other, one huge, monstrous,
a perilous spar to expound in speech, who might.
The head of an ell-rod its large length had,
the spike all of green steel and of gold hewn,
the blade bright burnished with a broad edge
as well shaped to sheer as are sharp razors.
The shaft of a strong staff the stern man gripped,
that was wound with iron to the wand's end,
and all engraved with green in gracious workings;
a cord lapped it about, that linked at the head,
and so around the handle looped full oft,
with tried tassels thereto attached enough
on buttons of the bright green broidered full rich.
This stranger rides in and the hall enters,
driving to the high dais, danger un-fearing.
Hailed he never a one, but high he overlooked.
The first word that he spoke: 'Where is,' he said,
'the governor of this throng? Gladly I would
see that soul in sight and with himself speak
reason.'
On knights he cast his eyes,
And rolled them up and down.
He stopped and studied ay
who was of most renown.

13

11

There was a looking at length the man to behold,
for each man marvelled what it might mean
for a rider and his horse to own such a hue
as grew green as the grass and greener it seemed,
than green enamel on gold glowing the brighter.
All studied that steed, and stalked him near,
with all the wonder of the world at what he might do.
for marvels had they seen but such never before;
and so of phantom and fairie the folk there it deemed.
Therefore to answer was many a knight afraid,
and all stunned at his shout and sat stock-still
in a sudden silence through the rich hall;
as all had slipped into sleep so ceased their noise
and cry.
I think it not all in fear,
but some from courtesy;
to let him all should revere
speak to him firstly.

12

Then Arthur before the high dais that adventure beholds,
and, gracious, him reverenced, a-feared was he never,
and said: ‘Sir, welcome indeed to this place,
the head of this house, I, Arthur am named.
Alight swiftly adown and rest, I thee pray,
and what thy will is we shall wait after.’
‘Nay, so help me,’ quoth the man, ‘He that on high sits:
to wait any while in this way, it was not my errand.
But as the light of thee, lord, is lifted so high,
and thy burg and thy barons the best, men hold,
strongest under steel gear on steeds to ride,
the wisest and worthiest of the world’s kind,
proof to play against in other pure sports,
and here is shown courtesy, as I have heard said,
so then I wandered hither, indeed, at this time.
You may be sure by this branch that I bear here
that I pass by in peace and no plight seek.
For were I found here, fierce, and in fighting wise,
I had a hauberk at home and a helm both,
a shield and a sharp spear, shining bright,
and other weapons to wield, I well will, too;
but as I wish no war, I wear the softer.
But if you be as bold as all bairns tell,
you will grant me goodly the gift that I ask
by right.’
Arthur answered there,
and said: ‘Sir courteous knight,
if you crave battle bare,
here fails you not the fight.’

15

13

‘Nay, follow I no fight, in faith I thee tell.
About on these benches are but beardless children;
if I were clasped in armour on a high steed,
here is no man to match me, his might so weak.
From thee I crave in this court a Christmas gift,
for it is Yule and New Year, and here many young men.
If any so hardy in this house holds himself,
is so bold of blood, hot-brained in his head,
that dare staunchly strike a stroke for another,
I shall give him as gift this weapon so rich,
this blade, that is heavy enough to handle as he likes,
and I will bear the first blow, as bare as I sit.
If any friend be so fell as to fare as I say,
Leap lightly to me; latch on to this weapon –
I quit claim for ever, he keeps it, his own.
And I will stand his stroke straight, on this floor,
if you will grant me the gift to give him another,
again;
and yet give him respite
a twelvemonth and a day.
Now hurry, let’s see aright
dare any herein aught say.’

16

14

If he had stunned them at first, stiller were then
all the host in the hall, the high and the low.
The man on his mount he turned in his saddle,
and roundly his red eyes he rolled about,
bent his bristling brows, burning green,
waving his beard about waiting who would rise.
When none would come to his call he coughed full high,
and cleared his throat full richly, ready to speak:
‘What, is this Arthur’s house,’ quoth the horseman then,
‘that all the rumour runs of, through realms so many?
Where now your superiority and your conquests,
your grinding down and your anger, your great words?
Now is the revel and the renown of the Round Table
overthrown with the word of a wanderer’s speech,
for all duck down in dread without dint of a blow!’
With this he laughed so loud that the lord grieved;
the blood shot for shame into his fair face
and there,
he waxed as wrath as wind;
so did all that there were.
The king, so keen by kind,
then stood that strong man near.

15

And said: ‘Horseman, by heaven you ask as a fool,
and as a folly you fain, to find it me behoves.
I know no guest that’s aghast at your great words.
Give me now your weapon, upon God’s name,
and I shall bear you the boon you’d be having.’
lightly he leaped to him and caught at his hand;
then fiercely the other fellow on foot alighted.
Now has Arthur his axe, and the helm grips,
and strongly stirs it about, to strike with a thought.
The man before him drew himself to full height,
higher than any in the house by a head and more.
With stern face where he stood he stroked his beard,
and with fixed countenance tugged at his coat,
no more moved or dismayed by mighty blows
than if any man to the bench had brought him a drink
of wine.
Gawain, that sat by the queen,
to the king he did incline:
‘I beseech in plain speech
that this mêlée be mine’

16

‘Would you, worthiest lord,’ quoth Gawain to the king,
‘bid me bow from this bench and stand by you there,
that I without villainy might void this table,
and if my liege lady liked it not ill,
I would come counsel you before your court rich.
For I think it not seemly, as it is true known,
that such an asking is heaved so high in your hall,
that you yourself are tempted, to take it to yourself,
while so many bold men about you on benches sit,
that under heaven, I hope, are none higher of will,
nor better of body on fields where battle is raised.
I am the weakest, I know, and of wit feeblest.
least worth the loss of my life, who’d learn the truth.
Only inasmuch as you are my uncle, am I praised:
No bounty but your blood in my body I know.
And since this thing is folly and naught to you falls,
and I have asked it of you first, grant it to me;
and if my cry be not comely, let this court be free
of blame.’
Nobles whispered around,
and after counselled the same,
to free the king and crown,
and give Gawain the game.

19

17

Then commanded the king the knight for to rise,
and he readily up-rose and prepared him fair,
knelt down before the king, and caught the weapon;
and he lightly left it him, and lifted up his hand
and gave him God's blessing, and gladly him bade
that his heart and his hand should hardy be, both.
'Take care, cousin,' quoth the king, 'how you set on,
and if you read him aright, readily I trow,
that you shall abide the blow he shall bring after.'
Gawain goes to the giant, with weapon in hand,
and boldly abides him, never bothered the less.
Then to Sir Gawain says the knight in the green:
'Re-affirm we our oaths before we go further.
First I entreat you, man, how are you named,
that tell me truly, then, so trust it I may.'
'In God's faith,' quoth the good knight, 'Gawain am I,
that bear you this buffet, whatever befalls after,
and at this time twelvemonth take from thee another
with what weapon you wilt, and no help from any
alive.'
The other replies again:
'Sir Gawain, may I so thrive,
if I am not wondrous fain
for you this blow to drive.'

20

18

‘By God,’ quoth the green knight, ‘Sir Gawain, I like
That I’ll face first from your fist what I found here.
And you have readily rehearsed, with reason full true,
clearly all the covenant that I the king asked,
save that you shall secure me, say, by your troth,
that you shall seek me yourself, where so you think
I may be found upon field, and fetch you such wages
as you deal me today before this dear company.’
‘Where should I seek,’ quoth Gawain, ‘where is your place?
I know nothing of where you walk, by Him that wrought me,
nor do I know you, knight, your court or your name.
But teach me truly the track, tell me how you are named,
and I shall wind all my wit to win me thither;
and that I swear you in truth, and by my sure honour.’
‘That is enough this New Year, it needs no more,’
quoth the giant in the green to courteous Gawain:
‘if I shall tell you truly, when you have tapped me
and you me smoothly have smitten, I swiftly you teach,
of my house and my home and my own name.
Then may you find how I fare, and hold to your word;
and if I spend no speech, then it speeds you the better,
for you may linger in your land and seek no further –
but oh!
Take now your grim steel to thee,
and see how you fell oaks.’
‘Gladly, sir, indeed,’
quoth Gawain; his axe he strokes.

21

19

The green knight on his ground graciously stands:
with a little lean of the head, flesh he uncovers;
his long lovely locks he laid over his crown,
and let the naked neck to the stroke show.
Gawain gripped his axe and glanced it on high,
his left foot on the field before him he set,
letting it down lightly light on the naked,
that the sharp of the steel sundered the bones,
and sank through the soft flesh, sliced it in two,
that the blade of the bright steel bit in the ground.
The fair head from the frame fell to the earth,
that folk flailed it with their feet, where it forth rolled;
the blood burst from the body, the bright on the green.
Yet nevertheless neither falters nor falls the fellow,
but stoutly he started forth on strong shanks,
and roughly he reached out, where the ranks stood,
latched onto his lovely head, and lifted it so;
and then strode to his steed, the bridle he catches,
steps into stirrup and strides him aloft,
and his head by the hair in his hand holds.
and as steady and staunch him in his saddle sat
as if no mishap had him ailed, though headless now
instead.
He twined his trunk about,
that ugly body that bled;
many of him had doubt,
ere ever his speech was said.

22

20

For the head in his hand he holds up even,
towards the dearest on dais addresses the face;
and it lifted its eyelids, and looked full wide,
and made this much with its mouth, as you may now hear;
‘Look, Gawain, be you geared to go as you promised,
and look out loyally till you me, lord, find,
as you swore oath in this hall, these knights hearing.
To the green chapel you go, I charge you, to find
such a dint as you dealt – deserved you have –
to be readily yielded on New Year’s morn.
The knight of the green chapel, men know me as, many;
therefore to find me, if you fain it, you’ll fail never.
Come then, or be called recreant it behoves you.’
With a rough rasping the reins he twists,
hurled out the hall door, his head in his hand,
that the fire of the flint flew from fleet hooves.
to what land he came no man there knew,
no more than they knew where he had come from
what then?
The king and Gawain there
at that green man laugh and grin;
yet broadcast it was abroad
as a marvel among those men.

23

21

Though Arthur the high king at heart had wonder,
he let no semblance be seen, but said aloud
to the comely queen, with courteous speech:
‘Dear dame, today dismay you never;
well become us these crafts at Christmas,
larking at interludes, to laugh and to sing
among the courtly carols of lords and ladies.
Nevertheless my meat I may now me address,
for I have seen my marvel, I may not deny.’
He glanced at Sir Gawain and graciously said:
‘Now sir, hang up your axe that has hewn enough.’
And it adorned the dais, hung on display,
where all men might marvel and on it look,
and by true title thereof to tell the wonder.
Then they went to the board these two together,
the king and the godly knight, and keen men them served
of all dainties double, as dearest might fall,
with all manner of meat and minstrelsy both.
Full well they whiled that day till it worked its end
on land
Now think well, Sir Gawain,
lest by peril unmanned,
this adventure to sustain,
you have taken in hand.

24

Part II

22

This gift of adventure has Arthur thus on the first
of the young year, for he yearned exploits to hear.
Though words were wanting when they went to sit,
now are they stoked with stern work, fullness to hand.
Gawain was glad to begin those games in hall,
yet if the end be heavy, have you no wonder;
though men be merry in mind when they have strong ale,
a year turns full turn, and yields never a like;
the form of its finish foretold full seldom.
For this Yuletide passed by, and the year after,
and each season slips by pursuing another:
after Christmas comes crabbed Lenten time,
that forces on flesh fish and food more simple.
But then the weather of the world with winter it fights,
cold shrinks down, clouds are uplifted,
shining sheds the rain in showers full warm,
falls upon fair flats, flowers there showing.
Both ground and groves green is their dress,
birds begin to build and brightly sing they
the solace of the soft summer ensuing after
on bank;
and blossoms bloom to blow
by hedges rich and rank,
while noble notes do flow
in woodland free and frank.

23

After, in season of summer with the soft winds,
when Zephyrus sighs himself on seeds and herbs;
well-away is the wort that waxes out there,
when the dunking dew drops from the leaves,
biding a blissful blush of the bright sun.
But then hies Harvest and hardens it soon,
warns it before the winter to wax full ripe;
then drives with drought the dust for to rise,
from the face of the field to fly full high;
wild wind from the welkin wrestles the sun,
the leaves lance then from linden, light on the ground,
and all grey is the grass, that green was ere;
then all ripens and rots, that rose up at first.
And thus wears the year into yesterdays many,
and winter walks again, as the world's way is,
I gauge,
till Michaelmas moon
threatens a wintry age.
Then thinks Gawain full soon,
of his wearisome voyage.

24

Yet till All-Hallows with Arthur he lingers,
and he made a feast on that day for the knight's sake,
with much revel and rich of the Round Table.
Knights full courteous and comely ladies,
all for love of that lad in longing they were;
but nevertheless they named nothing but mirth,
many joyless for that gentle soul jokes made there.
For, after meat, with mourning he makes to his uncle,
and speaks his departure, and openly says:
'Now, liege lord of my life, I ask you leave.
You know the cost in this case, care I no more
to tell you the trial thereof, naught but a trifle;
but I am bound to bear it, be gone, and tomorrow,
to seek the giant in the green, as God will me guide.'
Then the best of the burg were brought together,
Ywain and Eric and others full many,
Sir Dodinal le Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence,
Lancelot and Lionel and Lucan the Good,
Sir Bors and Sir Bedivere, big men both,
and many other men, with Mador de la Porte.
All this courtly company came the king near,
for to counsel the knight, with care in their hearts.
There was much dark dolefulness deep in the hall,
that so worthy as Gawain should wend on that errand,
to endure a dreadful dint, and no more with sword
wander.
The knight made yet good cheer,
and said: 'Why should I falter?
Such destinies foul or fair
what can men do but suffer?'

27

25

He dwelt there all that day, and dressed on the morn,
asks early for his arms, and all were they brought.
First a crimson carpet, cast over the floor,
and much was the gilded gear that gleamed thereon.
The strong man steps there, and handles the steel,
dressed in a doublet of silk of Turkestan,
and then a well-crafted cape, clasped at the top,
that with a white ermine was trimmed within.
Then set they the plate shoes on his strong feet,
his legs lapped in steel with lovely greaves,
with knee-pieces pinned thereto, polished full clean,
about his knees fastened with knots of gold;
then the cuisses, that cunningly enclosed
his thick-thewed thighs, attached with thongs;
and then the hauberk linked with bright steel rings
over rich wear, wrapped round the warrior;
and well-burnished bracelets over both arms,
elbow-pieces good and gay, and gloves of plate,
and all the goodly gear that should bring him gain
that tide;
with rich coat armour,
his gold spurs set with pride,
girt with a blade full sure
with silk sword-belt at his side.

28

26

When he was hasped in armour, his harness was rich;
the least laces or loops gleamed with gold.
So harnessed as he was he hears the Mass,
offered and honoured at the high altar,
then he comes to the king and his companions,
takes his courteous leave of lords and ladies;
and they him kiss and convey, commend him to Christ.
By then Gringolet was game, girt with a saddle
that gleamed full gaily with many gold fringes,
everywhere nailed full new, for that noted day;
the bridle barred about, with bright gold bound;
the apparel of the breast-guard and proud skirts,
crupper, caparison, in accord with the saddle-bows;
and all was arrayed with rich red gold nails,
that all glittered and glinted as gleam of the sun.
Then hefts he the helm, and hastily it kisses,
that was strongly stapled and stuffed within.
It was high on his head, clasped behind,
with a light covering over the face-guard,
embroidered and bound with the best gems
on broad silken border, and birds on the seams,
such as parrots painted preening between,
turtle-doves, true-love knots, so thick entailed
as many burdened with it had been seven winters
in town.
The circlet of greater price
that embellished his crown,
of diamonds all devised
that were both bright and brown.

29

27

Then they showed him the shield that was of shining gules,
with the pentangle painted there in pure gold hues.
He brandishes it by the baldric, casts it about his neck,
that suited the wearer seemly and fair.
And why the pentangle applies to that prince noble,
I intend to tell, though I tarry more than I should.
It is a sign Solomon settled on some while back,
in token of truth, by the title that it has,
for it is a figure that has five points,
and each line overlaps and locks with another,
and everywhere it is endless, and English call it
over all the land, as I here, the Endless Knot.
For so it accords with this knight and his bright arms,
forever faithful in five ways, and five times so,
Gawain was for good known, and, as purified gold,
void of every villainy, with virtues adorned
all, so.
And thus the pentangle new
he bore on shield and coat,
as title of trust most true
and gentlest knight of note.

28

First he was found faultless in his five senses,
and then failed never the knight in his five fingers,
and all his trust in the field was in the five wounds
that Christ caught on the cross, as the creed tells.
And wheresoever this man in mêlée was stood,
his first thought was that, over all other things,
all his force in fight he found in the five joys
that holy Heaven's Queen had of her child;
for this cause the knight fittingly had
on the inner half of his shield her image painted,
that when he beheld her his boldness never failed.
The fifth five that I find the knight used
was Free-handedness and Friendship above all things;
his Continence and Courtesy corrupted were never,
and Piety, that surpasses all points – these pure five
were firmer founded in his form than another.
Now all these five-folds, forsooth, were fused in this knight,
and each one joined to another that none end had,
and fixed upon five points that failed never,
never confused on one side, nor sundered neither,
without end at any angle anywhere, I find,
wherever its guise begins or glides to an end.
Therefore on his shining shield shaped was the knot
royally with red gold upon red gules,
thus is the pure pentangle called by the people
of lore.

Now geared was Gawain gay,
lifted his lance right there,
and gave them all good day –
as he thought, for evermore.

31

29

He struck the steed with the spurs, and sprang on his way
so strongly the stone-fire sparked out thereafter.
All that saw the seemly sight sighed in their hearts,
and said softly the same thing all to each other,
in care of that comely knight: ‘By Christ, ‘tis pity,
that you, lord, shall be lost, who art of life noble!
To find his fellow in field, in faith, is not easy.
Warily to have wrought would wiser have been,
to have dealt yon dear man a dukedom of worth.
A loyal leader of this land’s lances in him well seems,
and so had better have been than brought to naught,
beheaded by an elvish man, out of arrogant pride.
Who knew any king ever such counsel to take
as knights in altercations in Christmas games?’
Well was the water warm much wept from eyen,
when that seemly sire spurred from the court
that day.
He made no delay,
but swiftly went his way;
Many a wild path he strayed,
so the books do say.

32

30

Now rides this knight through the realm of Logres,
Sir Gawain, in God's name, yet no game it thought.
Oft friendless alone he lay long a-nights,
where he found no fare that he liked before him.
He had no friend but his steed by furze and down,
and no one but God to speak with on the way,
till that he neared full nigh to northern Wales.
All the Isle of Anglesey on the left hand he held,
and fared over the fords by the forelands,
over at Holyhead, till he reached the bank
in the wilderness of Wirral – few thereabouts
that either God or other with good heart loved.
And ever he asked as he fared, of fellows he met,
if they had heard any word of a knight in green,
on any ground thereabout, of the green chapel;
and all met him with nay, that never in their lives
saw they ever a sign of such a one, hued
in green.
The knight took pathways strange
by many a bank un-green;
his cheerfulness would change,
ere might that chapel be seen.

33

31

Many cliffs he over-clambered in countries strange,
far flying from his friends forsaken he rides.
at every twist of the water where the way passed
he found a foe before him, or freakish it were,
and so foul and fell he was beholden to fight.
So many marvels by mountain there the man finds,
it would be tortuous to tell a tenth of the tale.
Sometimes with dragons he wars, and wolves also,
sometimes with wild woodsmen haunting the crags,
with bulls and bears both, and boar other times,
and giants that chased after him on the high fells.
had he not been doughty, enduring, and Duty served,
doubtless he had been dropped and left for dead,
for war worried him not so much but winter was worse,
when the cold clear water from the clouds shed,
and froze ere it fall might to the fallow earth.
Near slain by the sleet he slept in his steel
more nights than enough in the naked rocks,
where clattering from the crest the cold burn runs,
and hung high over his head in hard icicles.
Thus in peril and pain, and plights full hard
covers the country this knight till Christmas Eve
alone.
The knight that eventide
to Mary made his moan,
to show him where to ride,
and guide him to some home.

34

32

By a mount in the morn merrily he rides
into a forest full deep, wonderfully wide,
high hills on either hand, and woodlands under
of hoar oaks full huge a hundred together.
The hazel and the hawthorn were tangled and twined,
with rough ragged moss ravelled everywhere,
with many birds un-blithe upon bare twigs,
that piteously they piped for pinch of the cold.
The gallant on Gringolet glides them under
through many a marsh and mire, a man alone,
full of care lest to his cost he never should
see the service of that Sire, that on that self night,
of a bright maid was born, our burden to quell.
And therefore sighing he said; ‘I beseech thee, Lord,
and Mary, that is mildest mother so dear,
of some harbour where highly I might hear Mass,
and thy Matins tomorrow, meekly I ask,
and thereto promptly I pray my Pater and Ave
and Creed.’
He rode as he prayed,
And cried for his misdeeds;
He crossed himself always,
And said: ‘Christ’s Cross me speed!’

35

33

Now he had signed himself times but three,
when he was aware in the wood of a wall in a moat,
above a level, on high land locked under boughs
of many broad set boles about by the ditches:
a castle the comeliest that ever knight owned,
perched on a plain, a park all about,
with a pointed palisade, planted full thick,
encircling many trees in more than two miles.
The hold on the one side the knight assessed,
as it shimmered and shone through the shining oaks.
Then humbly has off with his helm, highly he thanks
Jesus and Saint Julian, that gentle are both,
that courtesy had him shown, and his cry hearkened.
'Now hospitality,' he said, 'I beseech you grant!'
Then goads he on Gringolet, with his gilded heels,
and he by chance there has chosen the chief way,
that brought the man bravely to the bridge's end
in haste.
The drawbridge was upraised,
the gates were firm and fast,
the walls were well arrayed –
it trembled at no wind's blast.

36

34

The knight stuck to his steed, that hugged the bank,
of the deep double ditch driven round the place.
The wall washed in the water wonderfully deep,
and then a full huge height it haled up aloft,
of hard hewn stone to the entablature,
embedded under the battlements in best style;
and there were turrets full tall towering between,
with many lovely loopholes clean interlocked:
a better barbican that knight never beheld.
And innermost he beheld a hall full high,
towers trim between, crenellated full thick,
fair finials that fused, and fancifully long,
with carven copes, cunningly worked.
Chalk white chimneys he descried enough,
on tower rooftops that gleamed full white.
So many painted pinnacles powdered there
among castle crenellations, clustered so thick,
that pared out of paper purely it seemed.
the fair knight on the horse it fine enough thought,
if he might contrive to come the cloister within,
to harbour in that hostel while Holy Day lasted,
all content.
He called and soon there came
a porter pure pleasant.
From the wall his errand he craved,
and hailed the knight errant.

37

35

‘Good sir,’ quoth Gawain, ‘will you do my errand
to the high lord of this house, harbour to crave?’
‘Yes, by Saint Peter,’ quoth the porter, ‘for I believe
That you’ll be welcome to dwell as long as you like.’
Then the welcomer on the wall went down swiftly,
and folk freely him with, to welcome the knight.
They let down the great drawbridge and dignified
knelt down on their knees upon the cold earth
to welcome this knight as they thought the worthiest way.
They yielded him the broad gate, opened wide,
and he them raised rightly and rode over the bridge.
Several then seized his saddle, while he alighted,
and then strong men enough stabled his steed.
Knights and their squires came down then
for to bring this bold man blithely to hall,
When he lifted his helmet, they hastened forward
to heft it from his hand, the guest to serve;
his blade and his blazon both they took.
then hailed he full handily the host each one,
and many proud men pressed close, that prince to honour.
All clasped in his noble armour to hall they him brought,
where a fair fire on a hearth fiercely flamed.
Then the lord of that land left his chamber
for to meet with manners the man on the floor.
He said: ‘You are welcome to dwell as you like.
What is here, is all your own, to have at your will
and wield you.
‘*Graunt merci*,’ quoth Gawain,
‘May Christ reward it you.’
As friends that meet again
Each clasped the other true.

38

36

Gawain gazed on the gallant that goodly him greet,
and thought him a brave baron that the burg owned,
a huge man in truth, and mature in his years;
broad, bright was his beard and all beaver-hued,
stern, striding strongly on stalwart shanks,
face fell as the fire, and free of his speech;
and well he seemed to suit, as the knight thought,
the leading a lordship, along of lords full good.
The chief him led to a chamber, expressly commands
a lord be delivered to him, him humbly to serve;
and there were brave for his bidding a band of men,
that brought him to a bright bower, the bedding was noble,
of curtains of clear silk with clean gold hems,
and coverlets full curious with comely panels,
of bright ermine above embroidered sides,
curtains running on cords, red gold rings,
tapestries tied to the wall, of Toulouse, Turkestan,
and underfoot, on the floor, that followed suit.
There he was disrobed, with speeches of mirth,
the burden of his mail and his bright clothes.
Rich robes full readily retainers brought him,
to check and to change and choose of the best.
Soon as he held one, and hastened therein,
that sat on him seemly, with spreading skirts,
verdant in his visage Spring verily seemed
to well nigh everyone, in all its hues,
glowing and lovely, all his limbs under,
that a comelier knight never Christ made,
they thought.
However he came here,
it seemed that he ought
to be prince without peer
on fields where fell men fought.

39

37

A chair before the chimney, where charcoal burned,
graciously set for Gawain, was gracefully adorned,
coverings on quilted cushions, cunningly crafted both.
And then a mighty mantle was on that man cast
of a brown silk, embroidered full rich,
and fair furred within with pelts of the best –
the finest ermine on earth – his hood of the same.
And he sat on that settle seemly and rich,
and chafed himself closely, and then his cheer mended.
Straightway a table on trestles was set up full fair,
clad with a clean cloth that clear white showed,
the salt-cellars, napkins and silvered spoons.
The knight washed at his will, and went to his meat.
Servants him served seemly enough
with several soups, seasoned of the best,
double bowlfuls, as fitting, and all kinds of fish,
some baked in bread, some browned on the coals,
some seethed, some in stews savoured with spices,
and sauces ever so subtle that the knight liked.
While he called it a feast full freely and oft
most politely, at which all spurred him on politely
again:
'This penance now you take,
after it shall amend.'
That man much mirth did make,
for the wine to his head did tend.

40

38

Then they sparred and parried in precious style
with private points put to the prince himself,
so he conceded courteously of that court he came,
where noble Arthur is headman himself alone,
that is the right royal king of the Round Table;
and that it is Gawain himself that in that house sits,
come there at Christmas, as chance has him driven.
When the lord learned what prince that he there had,
loud laughed he thereat, so delightful he thought it,
and all the men in that manse made it a joy
to appear in his presence promptly that time,
who all prize and prowess and purest ways
appends to his person, and praised is ever;
above all men upon earth his honour is most.
Each man full softly said to his neighbour:
'Now shall we see show of seemliest manners
and the faultless phrases of noble speaking.
What superior speech is, unasked we shall learn,
since we have found this fine master of breeding.
God has given us of his goodly grace forsooth,
that such a guest as Gawain grants us to have,
when barons blithe at His birth shall sit
and sing.
The meaning of manners here
this knight now shall us bring.
I hope whoever may hear
Shall learn of love-making.'

41

39

When the dinner was done and the diners risen,
it was nigh on the night that the time was near.
Chaplains to the chapel took their course,
ringing all men, richly, as they rightly should,
to the holy evensong of that high eventide.
The lord goes thereto and the lady as well;
into a comely enclosure quietly she enters.
Gawain gaily goes forth and thither goes soon;
the lord grasps him by the gown and leads him to sit,
acknowledges him with grace, calls him by name,
and said he was the most welcome man in the world;
and he thanked him thoroughly, they clasped each other,
and sat with sober seeming the service through.
Then liked the lady to look on the knight;
and came from the close with many fine women.
She was the fairest in feature, in flesh and complexion,
and in compass and colour and ways, of all others,
and fairer than Guinevere, as the knight thought.
He strode through the chancel to squire the dame.
Another lady her led by the left hand,
who was older than her, and aged it seemed,
and highly honoured with her men about her.
Not alike though to look on those ladies were,
for if the one was fresh, the other was withered:
rich red in this one distinguished her,
rough wrinkled cheeks on that other, in rolls.
Kerchiefs on this one, with many clear pearls,
her breast and her bright throat bare displayed
shone sweeter than snow that’s shed on the hills;
that other swathed with a wimple wound at the throat,
clothed to her swarthy chin with chalk-white veils,
her forehead folded in silk, enveloped everywhere,
ringed and trellised with trefoils about,
that naught was bare of the lady but the black brows,
the two eyen and nose, the naked lips,

42

and those were sorry to see, and somewhat bleary –
a great lady on earth a man might her call,
by God!
Her body was short and thick,
her buttocks big and broad;
Much sweeter a sweet to lick
the one at her side for sure.

40

When Gawain gazed on that gracious-looking girl,
with leave asked of the lord he went to meet them.
The elder he hails, bowing to her full low;
the lovely-looking he laps a little in his arms,
he kisses her courteously and nobly he speaks.
They crave his acquaintance, and he quickly asks
to be their sworn servant, if they themselves wished.
They take him between them, and talking they lead him
to a chamber, to the chimney, and firstly they ask for
spices, which men unstintingly hastened to bring,
and the winning wine with them, every time.
The lord laughing aloft leaps full oft,
minding that mirth be made and many a time,
nobly lifted his hood, and on a spear hung it,
and wished him to win the worth and honour thereof
who most mirth might move at that Christmastide.
‘And I shall swear, by my faith, to strive with the best
before I lose the hood, with the help of my friends.’
Thus with laughing words the lord makes all merry,
for to gladden Sir Gawain with games in the hall
that night.
Till, when it was time,
the lord demanded light.
Gawain his way did find
To bed as best he might.

44

41

On the morn, when each man minds that time
the dear Lord for our destiny to die was born,
joy waxes in each house in the world for His sake.
So did it there on that day with dainties many:
both when major and minor meals were eaten
deft men on the dais served of the best.
The old ancient wife highest she sits;
the lord, so I believe, politely beside her.
Gawain and the sweet lady together they sat
in the midst, as the masses came together;
and then throughout the hall, as seemed right,
each man in his degree was graciously served.
There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy,
that it would be a trouble for me to tell all,
and however perchance I pined to make my point.
But yet I know Gawain and the sweet lady
such comfort of their company caught together
through their dear dalliance of courtly words,
with clean courteous chat, closed from filth,
their play surpassed every princely game with which it compares.
Kettledrums and trumpets,
much piping there of airs;
Each man minded his,
and those two minded theirs.

45

42

Much mirth was there driven that day and another,
and a third as thickly thronged came in thereafter;
The joy of St John's Day was gentle to hear,
and was the last of the larking, the lords thought.
There were guests set to go on the grey morn,
so they stayed wonderfully waking and wine drank,
dancing the day in with noble carols.
At the last, when it was time, they took their leave,
each one to wend on his way into strange parts.
Gawain gave them good day, the good man grasps him,
and leads him to his own chamber, the chimney beside,
and there he grips him tight, heartily thanks him
for the fine favour that he had shown him,
so to honour his house on that Christmastide,
and embellish his burg with his bright cheer.
'Indeed, sir, while I live, I am the better
for Gawain being my guest at God's own feast.'
'Graunt merci, sir,' quoth Gawain, 'in good faith it's yours,
all the honour is your own – the High King requite you!
And I am here, at your will, to work your behest,
as I am beholden to do, in high things and low,
by right.'
The lord was at great pains
To keep longer the knight;
To him answers Gawain
That by no means he might.

46

43

Then the lord aimed full fair at him, asking
what daring deed had him driven at that dear time
so keenly from the king's court to stray all alone,
before the holy holiday was haled out of town.
'Forsooth, sir,' quoth the knight, 'you say but the truth,
a high errand and a hasty had me from those halls,
for I am summoned myself to seek for a place,
with no thought in the world where to go find it.
I would not dare fail find it by New Year's morning
for all the land in Logres, so me our Lord help!
So, sir, this request I make of you here,
that you tell me true if ever you tale heard
of the green chapel, on what ground it stands,
and of the knight that keeps it, the colour of green.
There was established by statute a pact us between
both to meet at that mark, if I should live;
and of that same New Year but little is wanting,
and I would look on that lord, if God would let me,
more gladly, by God's Son, than any goods gain.
So, indeed, by your leave, it behoves me to go.
Now to work this business I've barely three days,
and it's fitter I fall dead than fail of my errand.'
Then, laughing, quoth the lord: 'Now stay, it behoves you,
for I'll teach you the trysting place ere the term's end.
The green chapel upon ground grieve for no more;
but you shall be in your bed, sir, at your ease,
while day unfolds, and go forth on the first of the year,
and come to that mark at mid-morn, to act as you wish
and when.
Dwell until New Year's Day,
and rise and ride on then.
You shall be shown the way;
it is not two miles hence.'

44

Then was Gawain full glad, and gleefully he laughed:
‘Now I thank you thoroughly beyond all things;
now achieved is my goal, I shall at your will
dwell here, and do what else you deem fit.’
Then the lord seized him and set him beside,
and the ladies had fetched, to please him the better.
There was seemly solace by themselves still.
The lord lofted for love notes so merry,
as one that wanted his wits, nor knew what he did.
Then he cried to the knight, calling aloud:
‘You have deemed to do the deed that I bid.
Will you hold to this promise here and now?’
‘Yes, sire, indeed,’ said the knight and true,
‘While I bide in your burg, I’m at your behest.’
‘As you have travelled,’ quoth the lord, ‘from afar,
and since then waked with me, you are not well served
neither of sustenance nor of sleep, surely I know.
You shall linger in your room and lie there at ease
tomorrow till Mass, and then to meat wend
when you will, with my wife, that with you shall sit
and comfort you with company, till I come to court:
time spend,
And I shall early rise;
a-hunting will I wend.’
Gawain thinks it wise,
as is fitting to him bends.

48

45

‘And further,’ quoth the lord, ‘a bargain we’ll make:
whatsoever I win in the wood is worthily yours;
and whatever here you achieve, exchange me for it.
Sweet sir, swap we so – swear it in truth –
whether, lord, that way lies worse or better.’
‘By God,’ quoth Gawain the good, ‘I grant it you,
and that you lust for to play, like it methinks.’
‘Who’ll bring us a beverage, this bargain to make?’
so said the lord of that land. They laughed each one,
they drank and dallied and dealt in trifles,
these lords and ladies, as long as they liked;
and then with Frankish faring, full of fair words,
they stopped and stood and softly spoke,
kissing full comely and taking their leave.
By many lively servants with flaming torches,
each brave man was brought to his bed at last
full soft.
To bed yet ere they sped,
repeating the contract oft;
the old lord of that spread
could keep a game aloft.

49

Part III

46

Full early before the day the folk were risen;
Guests who would go their grooms they called on,
and they busied them briskly the beasts to saddle,
tightening their tackle, trussing their baggage.
The richest ready themselves to ride all arrayed,
leaping up lightly, latched onto their bridles,
each rode out by the way that he most liked.
The beloved lord of the land was not the last
arrayed for the riding, with ranks full many;
ate a sop hastily, when he had heard Mass,
with horns to the hunting field he hastens away.
By the time that daylight gleamed upon earth,
he with his knights on high horses were.
Then the cunning hunters coupled their hounds,
unclosed the kennel door and called them out,
blew briskly on their bugles three bare notes;
braches bayed therefore, and bold noise made,
and men chastised and turned those that chasing went,
a hundred of hunters, as I have heard tell,
of the best.
To station, keepers strode,
huntsmen leashes off-cast;
great rumpus in that wood
there rose with their good blasts.

47

At the first call of the quest quaked the wild;
deer drove for the dales, darting for dread,
hied to the high ground, but swiftly they were
stayed by the beaters, with their stout cries.
They let the harts with high branched heads have way,
the brave bucks also with their broad antlers;
for the noble lord had bidden that in close season
no man there should meddle with those male deer.
The hinds were held back with a ‘Hey’ and a ‘Ware!’
The does driven with great din to the deep coves.
There might men see, as they loosed, the slanting of arrows;
at each winding of the wood whistled a flight,
that bit into brown flanks, with broad blade-heads.
What screaming and bleeding, by banks they lay dying,
and ever the hounds in a rush hard on them followed,
hunters with high horn-calls hastened them after,
with such a crack and cry as cliffs were bursting.
What wild beasts so escaped the men shooting
were all dragged down and rent by the new reserves,
when hunted from high ground, and harried to water.
The lads were so skilled at the lower stations,
and the greyhounds so great, that gripped so quickly
and dragged them down, as swift I swear,
as sight.
In bliss without alloy
the lord does spur or alight,
and passes that day with joy
and so to the dark night.

51

48

Thus larks the lord by linden-wood eaves,
while Gawain the good man gaily abed lies,
lurks till the daylight gleams on the walls,
under canopy full clear, curtained about.
And as in slumber he lay, softly he heard
a little sound at his door, and it slid open;
and he heaves up his head out of the clothes,
a corner of the curtain he caught up a little,
and watches warily to make out what it might be.
It was the lady, the loveliest to behold,
that drew the door after her full silent and still,
and bent her way to the bed; and the knight ashamed,
laid him down again lightly and feigned to sleep.
And she stepped silently and stole to his bed,
caught up the curtain and crept within,
and sat her full softly on the bedside
and lingered there long, to look when he wakened.
The lord lay low, lurked a full long while,
compassing in his conscience what this case might
mean or amount to, marvelling in thought.
But yet he said to himself: ‘More seemly it were
to descry with speech, in a space, what she wishes.’
Then he wakened and wriggled and to her he turned,
and lifted his eyelids and let on he was startled,
and signed himself with his hand, as with prayer, to be
safer.

With chin and cheek full sweet,
both white and red together,
full graciously did she greet,
lips light with laughter.

52

49

‘Good morning, Sir Gawain,’ said that sweet lady,
‘You are a sleeper unsafe, that one may slip hither.
Now are you taken in a trice, lest a truce we shape,
I shall bind you in your bed, that you may trust.’
All laughing the lady made her light jests.
‘Good morrow, sweet,’ quoth Gawain the blithe,
‘I shall work your will, and that I well like,
for I yield me swiftly and sue for grace;
and that is the best, to my mind, since behoves I must.’
And thus he jested again with much blithe laughter.
‘But would you, lovely lady, but grant me leave
and release your prisoner and pray him to rise,
I would bound from this bed and dress me better,
I should discover more comfort in speaking with you.’
‘Nay, forsooth, beau sire,’ said that sweet,
‘You shall not rise from your bed. I charge you better:
I shall wrap you up here on this other side,
and then chat with my knight whom I have caught;
for I know well, indeed, Sir Gawain you are,
that all the world worships, wherever you ride.
Your honour, your courtesy, is nobly praised
among lords, among ladies, all who life bear.
And now you are here, indeed, and we on our own;
my lord and his lords are far off faring,
other knights are abed, and my ladies also,
the door drawn and shut with a strong hasp.
And since I have in this house him who all like,
I shall work my time well, while it lasts,
with a tale.
Your are welcome to my body,
Your pleasure to take all;
I must by necessity
your servant be, and shall.’

53

50

‘In good faith,’ quoth Gawain, ‘a gain’s that me thinks,
though I be not now him of whom you are speaking;
to reach to such reverence as you rehearse here,
I am all ways unworthy, I know well myself.
By God, I’d be glad though if you thought it fit
in speech or service that I might set myself
to the pleasing of your worth – that were a pure joy.’
‘In good faith, Sir Gawain,’ quoth the sweet lady,
‘The worth and the prowess that pleases all others,
if I slighted or thought light of it, that were little grace;
but there are ladies enough that would far rather
have you, dear man, to hold, as I have you here,
to dally dearly in your delightful words,
comfort themselves and ease their cares,
than make much of the treasure and gold they have.
But as I love that same Lord that the heavens rules,
I have wholly in my hand what all desire
through grace.’
She made him thus sweet cheer,
who was so fair of face;
the knight with speeches clear
answered her every case.

54

51

‘Madam,’ quoth the merry man, ‘Mary give you grace,
for I have found, in good faith, your friendship is noble.
Others gain full much of other folks praise for their deeds,
but the deference they deal me is undeserved in my case.
It is honour to you that naught but good you perceive.’
‘By Mary,’ quoth the lady, ‘methinks it otherwise;
for were I worth all the wonder of women alive,
and all the wealth of the world were in my hand,
and I should bargain to win myself a brave lord,
with the qualities that I know of you, knight, here,
of beauty and debonair and blithe seeming,
that I hearkened to ere now and have here found true,
then should no errant on earth before you be chosen.’
‘Indeed, lady,’ quoth the knight, ‘you have done much better;
but I am proud of the value you place on me,
and, solemnly your servant, my sovereign I hold you,
and your knight I become, and Christ reward you!’
Thus they mulled many matters till mid-morn passed,
and ever the lady let fall that she loved him much;
yet the knight held to his guard, and acted full fair.
‘Though I were loveliest lady,’ so her mind had it,
‘the less is there love in his load’ – for his fate he sought
that one,
the stroke that should him cleave,
and it must needs be done.
The lady then sought to leave,
he granting her that boon.

55

52

Then she gave him good day, with a laughing glance,
and stunned him as she stood there, with cutting words:
‘May He who speeds each speech reward you this sport!
But that you should be Gawain, it baffles the mind.’
‘Wherefore?’ quoth the knight, and urgently asked,
fearful lest he had failed in forms of politeness.
But the lady blessed him and spoke as follows:
‘One gracious as Gawain is rightly held to be,
with courtesy contained so clear in himself,
could not lightly have lingered so long with a lady,
but he had craved a kiss out of courtesy,
with some trifling touch at some tale’s end.’
Then quoth Gawain: ‘Indeed, let it be as you like;
I shall kiss at your command, as befits a knight,
and further, lest I displease you, so plead no more.’
She comes nearer at that, and catches him in her arms,
leans lovingly down, and the lord kisses.
They graciously commend to Christ one another;
and she goes out at the door with not a word more;
And he readies himself to rise and hurries anon,
calls to his chamberlain, chooses his clothes,
going forth, when he is ready, blithely to Mass.
And then he went to the noble meal that awaited,
and made merry all day till the moonrise,
at games.
Was never knight fairer sung
between two such noble dames,
the elder and the young;
much joy had they of the same.

56

53

And ever the lord of the land intent on his games,
hunted, in holts and heath, for barren hinds,
Such a sum he there slew by the set of sun,
of does and other deer, it were deemed a wonder.
Then fiercely they flocked in, folk at the last,
and quickly of the quenched deer a heap they made.
The noblest sped there with servants enough,
gathered the quarry greatest in flesh that were there,
and had them deftly undone as custom demands.
Some that were there searched them in assay,
and two fingers of fat they found on the feeblest.
Then they slit the slot, and seized the first stomach,
shaved it with sharp knives, and knotted the sheared.
Then lopped off the four limbs and rent off the hide,
next broke they the belly, the bowels out-taking,
deftly, lest they undid and destroyed the knot.
They gripped the gullet, and swiftly severed
the weasand from the windpipe and whipped out the guts.
Then sheared out the shoulders with their sharp knives,
hauled them through a little hole, left the sides whole.
Then they slit up the breast and broke it in twain.
And again at the gullet one then began
rending all readily right to the fork,
voiding the entrails, and verily thereafter
all the membranes by the ribs readily loosened.
So too they cleared to the backbone, rightly,
even down to the haunch that hangs from the same,
and heaved it all up whole and hewed it off there.
and that they properly call the *numbles*, I deem,
by kind.
At the fork then of the thighs
they loose the lappets behind;
to hew it in two they hie,
by the backbone it to unbind.

57

54

Both the head and the neck they hewed off then,
and after sundered the sides swift from the chine,
and the ravens' fee they cast into a grove.
Then they skewered each thick flank by the ribs,
and hung each up by the hocks of the haunches,
every fellow taking his fee as it fell to him.
On a skin of the fair beast fed they their hounds
with the liver and lights, and the stomach lining,
and bread bathed in blood blent there among.
Boldly they blew the kill their hounds a-baying;
then rode home with the flesh tightly packed,
stalwartly sounding out many stout notes.
As the daylight was done, the company came
to the comely castle, where our knight bides
all still,
in bliss by bright fire set.
The lord is come from the hill;
when Gawain with him is met,
there they but joy as they will.

55

Then the lord commanded all be summoned to the hall,
both the ladies, aloft, to descend with their maids.
Before all the folk on the floor, he bid men
verily his venison to bring there before him;
and all gaily in courtesy Gawain he called,
and tells over the tally of full fat beasts,
shows him the fine flesh shorn from the ribs.
‘How does this sport please you? Have I won praise?
Have I won thanks, thoroughly served by my craft?’
‘Yes, indeed,’ quoth the other, ‘here spoils are fairest
of all I have seen this seven-year in season of winter.’
‘And I give all this to you, Gawain,’ quoth the man then,
‘for according to covenant you may call it your own.’
‘That is so,’ quoth the knight, ‘I say you the same:
what I have worthily won this house within,
shall with as good a will be worthily yours.’
And he clasps his fair neck his arms within,
and kisses him in as comely a way as he can:
‘Take you there my prize, I received no more;
I would grant it all, though it were greater.’
‘That is good,’ quoth the lord, ‘many thanks therefore.
This may be the better gift, if you would tell me
where you won this same prize by your own wits.’
‘That was not pledged,’ quoth he, ‘ask me no more;
for you have taken what’s due, none other to you
I owe.’
They laughed and made blithe
with words worth praise, and so
to supper then side by side,
with dainties in plenty go.

59

56

And then by the chimney in chamber sitting,
servants brought to them choice wines oft,
and in their banter they agreed in that morn
to fulfil the same bond they had made before:
what chance might betide, their prize to exchange,
each new thing they named, at night when they met.
They made accord of this covenant before all the court;
and beverage was brought forth in banter at this time.
Then they lovingly took their leave at the last,
each man at his leaving going brisk to his bed.
When the cock had crowed and cackled but thrice,
the lord leapt from his bed, the liegemen each one,
so that meat and a Mass were swiftly delivered,
the company off to the wood, ere daylight sprang,
to the chase.
Proudly with huntsmen and horns
through wilds they passed apace,
uncoupled among the thorns,
the hounds ran headlong race.

60

57

Soon they called for a search by the marsh-side,
the huntsman urged on the first hounds up,
wild cries he uttered with wondrous noise.
The hounds that heard him hastened there swiftly,
and fell as fast to the trail, forty at once.
Then such a baying and clamour of gathered hounds
rose that the rocks rang out all about.
Huntsmen harried them with horn and by mouth;
then all in a pack they swung together
between a pool in that place and a cruel crag.
On a knoll by a cliff, at the marsh side,
where the rough rock had ruggedly fallen,
they sped to the finding, the huntsmen after.
They surrounded the crag and the knoll both,
while they made sure they had well within
the beast that was bayed at, there, by their bloodhounds.
Then they beat at the bushes and bade him rise up,
and he savagely swung athwart the huntsmen –
a most splendid boar it was, rushed out there,
solitary through age, long split from the herd,
but he was still mighty, the greatest of boars,
full grim when he grunted. Then grieved many
for three hounds at first thrust he felled to the earth,
and sped him forth at great speed all unscathed.
The hunt hallooed ‘Hi!’ full loud, and cried ‘Hey! Hey!
and horns to mouths, hastily recalled them.
Many were the merry cries of men and of hounds
that brisk chased the boar, with barking and clamour,
to quell,
Full oft he bides at bay
and downs the dogs pell-mell;
he harries the hounds, and they
full piteously yowl and yell.

61

58

Shaping to shoot him some shoved through then,
hurling their arrows at him, hitting him often;
but their points were parried by bristling flanks,
and their barbs would not bite there in his brow,
though the smooth shaft were shattered in pieces,
the head skipped away wherever it hit.
but when by dint of dire strokes they damaged him,
then, maddened by baiting, he rushes the men,
hurts them full heavily as forth he hies,
and many were awed at that and drew backwards.
But the lord on a lithe horse lunges after him,
as knight bold in the battle his bugle he blows,
rallied the hounds as he rode through rank thicket,
pursuing this wild swine till the sun had set.
The day with these same deeds they passed in this wise,
while our courteous knight lay in his bed,
Gawain gladly at home, in gear full rich
of hue.
The lady did not forget,
to come to greet him too;
full early she him beset
to seek a change of mood.

62

59

She came to the curtain and peeped at the knight.
Sir Gawain welcomed her courteously first,
and she answered him again eager her words,
sits herself soft by his side, and sweetly she laughs,
and with a loving look she led with these words:
‘Sir, if you be Gawain, it’s a wonder methinks,
why one so well disposed always to good,
knows not how to manage his manners in company,
and if any teach you to know them, you cast them from mind.
You have swiftly forgot what but yesterday I taught
with all the truest tokens of talk that I could.’
‘What is that?’ quoth the knight, ‘Indeed I know not.
If it be truth that you breathe, the blame is mine own.’
‘Yet I taught you of kissing.’ quoth the fair dame,
‘where countenance is fair, quick make your claim;
that becomes every knight that courtesy uses.’
‘Unsay,’ quoth that brave man, ‘my dear, that speech,
for that I dare not do, lest I were denied;
if I were spurned, I’d be wrong, indeed, to have proffered.’
‘By my faith,’ quoth the lady, ‘you cannot be spurned;
you are strong enough to constrain by strength, if you like,
if any were so villainous as to deny you.’
‘Yes, by God,’ quoth Gawain, ‘true is your speech,
but threats do never thrive in the land where I live,
nor any gift that is given without a good will.
I am at your command, to kiss when you like;
you may lip when you will, and leave when you wish
in a space.’
The lady bends her adown
and sweetly she kisses his face;
much speech they there expound
of love, its grief and grace.

63

60

‘I would know of you, knight,’ that lady then said,
‘if you are not angered by this, what is the reason
that so young and lively a one as you at this time,
so courteous, so knightly, as widely you’re known
(and from all chivalry to choose, the chief things praised
are the laws of loyal love, and the lore of arms;
for in telling those tales of the truest of knights,
all the title and text of their works is taken
from how lords hazard their lives for loyal love,
endured for that duty’s sake dreadful trials,
and after with valour avenged, and void their cares,
brought bliss to the bower by bounties their own)
and you, the knight, the noblest child of your age,
your high fame and honour told everywhere,
why I have sat by yourself here separately twice,
yet heard I never that your head held even a word
that ever belonged to love, the less nor the more.
And you, that are so courteous and coy of your vows,
ought, to a young thing, to yearn to show
and teach some tokens of true love’s craft
What! Are you ignorant, who garner all praise,
or else do you deem me too dull to heed your dalliance?
For shame!
I come hither single and sit
to learn of you some game;
do teach me of your wit,
while my lord is away.’

64

61

‘In good faith,’ quoth Gawain, ‘may God reward you!
Great is the gladness, and pleasure to me,
that so worthy as you should wind her way hither,
at pains with so poor a man as to sport with your knight
with any show of favour – it sets me at ease.
But to take on the travail myself of expounding true love,
and touch on the themes of the texts and tales of arms
to you who, I know well, wield more skill
in that art, by half, than a hundred of such
as I am or ever shall be, on this earth where I live –
that were a manifold folly, my dear, by my troth.
I would your wishes work if ever I might,
as I am highly beholden, and evermore will
be servant to yourself, so save me God!’
Thus that lady framed her questions and tempted him oft,
for to win him to woe, whatever else she thought of;
but he defended himself so fairly no fault it seemed,
no evil on either hand, nor did they know aught
but bliss.
They laughed and larked full long;
at the last she did him kiss,
farewell was on her tongue,
and went her way, with this.

65

62

Then bestirs him the knight and rises for Mass,
and then the dinner was done and duly served.
The knight with the ladies larked all day,
but the lord of the land gallops full oft,
hunts the ill-fated swine, that surges by banks
and bites the best of his hounds' backs asunder
biding at bay, till bowmen bettered him,
made him head for the open, for all he could do,
so fast flew the arrows where those folk gathered.
But yet at times the bravest he made to start,
till at the last so weary he was he could not run,
but, with best haste he might, to a hole he wins
in the bank, by a rock where runs the burn.
He got the bank at his back, began to scrape,
the froth foamed from his mouth foul at the corners,
and he whet his white tusks. It was irksome then
to the all the beaters so bold that by him stood
to harass him from afar, but nigh him no man
dared go.
He had hurt so many before
that all were then full loath
to be torn by his tusks once more,
that was fierce and frenzied both.

66

63

Till the lord came himself, urged on his horse,
saw the boar bide at bay, his men beside.
He alights lively adown, leaves his courser,
brings out a bright blade and boldly strides forth,
fast through the ford, where the fell foe bides.
The wild beast was wary of one with a weapon in hand,
his bristles rose high, so fiercely he snorts
that folk feared for the lord, lest worst him befell.
The swine straight away set on the man,
that the baron and boar were both in a heap,
in the white water. The worst had the creature,
For the man marked him well, as they first met,
set the sharp point firm in its chest-hollow,
hit him up to the hilt, so the heart burst asunder,
and he yielded him snarling, downstream was swept
outright.
A hundred hounds him rent,
that bravely could him bite;
beaters brought him to bank
and the dogs to death, in fight.

64

There was blowing the kill on many brave horns,
hallooing on high as loud as men might;
Hounds bayed at the beast, as bid by their masters,
who of that hard chase were the chief huntsmen.
Then a man who was wisest in woodcraft
with loving care to undo the beast begins:
first he hews off his head and sets it on high,
then rends him roughly along the ridge of his back,
brings out the bowels, and broils them on coals,
with bread blent therewith his hounds rewards.
Then he breaks out the brawn in broad bright slabs,
and has out the entrails, as is seemly and right;
attaches the two halves wholly together,
and then on a strong stake stoutly them hangs.
Now with this same swine they set off for home;
the boar's head was borne before the baron himself,
who felled him down by the ford through force of his hand
so strong.
Till he saw Sir Gawain
in the hall it seemed full long;
he calls, and he comes again
for the dues that to him belong.

68

65

The lord, full loud he cried, laughed merrily
when he saw Sir Gawain; and with joy he speaks.
The good ladies were summoned, the household gathered;
he shows him the boar's sides, and shapes him the tale
of the largeness and length, the malignity also,
of the war on the wild swine in woods where he fled.
So the other knight full nobly commended his deeds,
and praised it, the great merit that he had proved;
for such brawn from a beast, the brave knight said,
nor such flanks on a swine he'd not seen before.
Then they handled the huge head, the knight gave praise,
and showed horror at it, for the lord to hear.
'Now Gawain,' quoth the good man, 'this game is your own,
by a firm and fast promise, as in faith you know.'
'That is true,' quoth the knight, 'and as surely true
is that all I got I shall give you again, by my troth.'
He clasped the lord at the neck and gently kissed him,
and after that of the same he again served him there.
'Now are we even quit,' quoth the knight, 'this eventide,
of all the covenants made here, since I came hither,
by law.'
The lord said: 'By Saint Giles,
you are the best that I know;
you'll be rich in a while,
if your trade continues so.'

69

66

Then they set up tables on trestles aloft,
casting cloths on them. Clear light then
wakened the walls, waxen torches
servants set, and served food all about.
Much gladness and glee gushed out therein
round the fire on the floor, and in fulsome wise
at the supper and after, many noble songs,
such as Christmas carols and dances new,
with all manner of mirth that man may tell of,
and ever our courteous knight the lady beside.
Such sweetness to that man she showed all seemly,
with secret stolen glances, that stalwart knight to please,
that all wondering was the man, and wrath with himself;
but he could not out of breeding spurn her advances,
but dealt with her daintily, howsoever the deed might
be cast.
When they had dallied in hall
as long as their will might last,
to chamber the lord him called,
and to the hearth they passed.

67

And there they drank and debated and decided anew
to act on the same terms on New Year's Eve;
but the knight craved leave to go forth on the morn,
for it was nearing the time when he must go.
The lord persuaded him not to, pressed him to linger,
and said: 'As I am true, I pledge you my troth
you shall gain the Green Chapel, and render your dues,
sir, by New Year's light, long before prime.
And so go lie in your room and take your ease,
and I shall hunt in the holt and hold to the covenant,
exchanging what has chanced, when I spur hither;
for I have tested you twice, and faithful I find you.
Now: "third time pays all," think on that tomorrow;
Make we merry while we may, and mind only joy,
for a man may find sorrow whenever he likes.'
This was graciously granted and Gawain lingered;
Blithely they brought him drink, and bed-wards they went
with light.

Sir Gawain lies down and sleeps
full still and soft all night;
the lord who to woodcraft keeps,
rises early and bright.

71

68

After Mass a morsel he and his men took;
merry was the morning, his mount he summoned.
All the men that a-horse were followed him after,
ready set on their steeds before the hall gates.
Fairest of fair was the field, for the frost clung.
In red ruddiness on wrack rises the sun,
and, full clear, casts the clouds from the welkin.
Huntsmen unleashed the hounds by a holt side;
rocks in woods rang out with the cry of the horns.
some hounds fell to the track where the fox lurked,
oft traversing the trail by dint of their wiles.
A little one cried scent, the huntsman to him called;
his fellows fell to, panting full thick,
running forth in a rabble on the right track.
And fox frisked before them; they found him soon,
and when they had him in sight pursued him fast,
marking him clearly with wrathful noise;
and he twists and turns through many a tangled grove,
doubles back and hearkens by hedges full often.
At the last by a little ditch he leaps over a thicket,
steals out full silent by the side of a valley,
thinks to slip from the wood by guile, from the hounds.
Then he came, ere he knew it, to a fine hunt-station,
where three hounds in a cleft threaten him together,
all grey.
There he started aside
and boldly he did stray;
with all the woe in life,
to the wood he went away.

69

Then was it lively delight to list to the hounds,
when all the meet had met him, mingled together.
Such curses at that sight rained down on his head
as if all the clinging cliffs clattered down in a heap.
Here was he hallooed when huntsmen met him,
loud was he greeted with snarling speech;
there he was threatened and called thief often,
and ever the hounds at his tail, that he might not tarry.
Oft he was rushed at when he made for the open,
and often swerved back again, so wily was Reynard.
and so he led them astray, the lord and his liegemen,
in this manner by mountains till after mid-morning,
while the honoured knight at home happily slept
within the comely curtains, on that cold morn.
But the lady for love could get no sleep,
nor could the purpose impair pitched in her heart,
but rose up swiftly, and took herself thither
in a merry mantle, that reached the earth,
that was furred full fine with purest pelts;
without coif on her head, but the noblest gems
traced about her hair-net by twenties in clusters;
her fair face and her throat shown all naked,
her breast bare before, and her back the same.
She came in by the chamber door and closed it after,
threw open a window and to the knight called,
and roundly thus rebuked him with her rich words
with cheer:
‘Ah! Man, how can you sleep?
This morning is so clear.’
He was in slumber deep,
and yet he could her hear.

73

70

In heavy depths of dreaming murmured that noble,
as one that was troubled with thronging thoughts,
of how destiny would that day deal him his fate
at the Green Chapel, where he must meet his man,
bound there to bear his buffet without more debate.
But when he had fully recovered his wits,
he started from dreaming and answered in haste.
The lovely lady with laughter so sweet,
bent over his fair face and fully him kissed.
He welcomed her worthily with noble cheer;
he saw her so glorious and gaily attired,
so faultless of feature and of such fine hue,
bright welling joy warmed all his heart.
With sweet smiling softly they slip into mirth,
that to all bliss and beauty, that breaks between them,
they win.
They spoke in words full good,
much pleasure was therein;
in great peril would have stood,
kept not Mary her knight from sin.

71

For that peerless princess pressed him so closely,
urged him so near the edge, he felt it behoved him
either to bow to her love, or with loathing refuse her.
He cared for his courtesy, lest he were churlish,
and more for the mischief if he should work sin
and be traitor to that lord who held the dwelling.
‘God shield us!’ quoth the knight, ‘that must not befall!’
With loving laughter a little he put aside
all the special pleading that sprang from her mouth.
Quoth beauty to the brave: ‘Blame you deserve,
if you love not that live lady that you lie next,
who above all of the world is wounded in heart,
unless you have a leman, a lover, that you like better,
and firm of faith to that fair one, fastened so hard
that you list not to loose it – and that I believe.
If that you tell me that truly, I pray you;
by all the lovers alive, hide not the truth
with guile.’
The knight said: ‘By Saint John,’
and gentle was his smile
‘In faith I love no one,
nor none will love the while.’

75

72

‘These words,’ said the lady, ‘are the worst words of all;
but I am answered forsooth, so that it grieves me.
Kiss me now gently, and I shall go hence;
I may but mourn upon earth, a maid that loves much.’
Sighing she stooped down, and sweetly him kissed,
and then she severs from him, and says as she stands:
‘Now, dear, at this our parting set me at ease:
give me something, a gift, if only your glove,
that I may think of you, man, my mourning to lessen.’
‘Now indeed,’ quoth the knight, ‘I would I had here
the dearest thing, for your sake, I own in the world,
for you have deserved, forsooth, and in excess,
a richer reward, by rights, than I might reckon;
but as a love-token, this would profit you little.
It is not to your honour to have at this time
a glove of Gawain’s giving to treasure;
and I am here on an errand in lands unknown,
and have no servants with sacks of precious things.
I dislike this, my lady, for your sake, at this time;
but each man must do as he must, take it not ill
nor pine.’
‘Nay, knight of high honours,’
quoth that love-some lady fine,
‘though I shall have naught of yours,
yet shall you have of mine.’

73

She proffered him a rich ring of red gold work,
with a sparkling stone glittering aloft,
that blazed brilliant beams like the bright sun;
know you well that it's worth was full huge.
But the knight refused it and he readily said:
'I'll no gifts, before God, my dear, at this time;
I have none to give you, nor naught will I take.'
She offered it him eagerly, yet he her gift spurned,
and swore swiftly his oath that he would not seize it;
and she grieved he refused her, and said thereafter:
'Since you reject my ring, too rich it may seem,
for you would not be so high beholden to me,
I shall give you my girdle: that profits you less.'
She loosed a belt lightly that lay round her sides,
looped over her kirtle beneath her bright mantle.
Gear it was of green silk and with gold trimmed,
at the edges embroidered, with finger-stitching;
and that she offered the knight, and blithely besought
that he would take it though it were unworthy.
but he said he might have nigh him in no wise
neither gold nor treasure, ere God sent him grace,
to achieve the errand he had chosen there.
'And therefore, I pray you, be not displeased,
and let your gift go, for I swear it I can never
you grant.
To you I am deeply beholden,
your kindness is so pleasant,
and ever in heat and cold, then
I'll be your true servant.'

77

74

‘Now do you shun this silk,’ said the lady,
‘because it is simple in itself? And so it may seem.
Lo! It is slight indeed, and so is less worthy.
But whoso knew the worth woven therein
he would hold it in higher praise, perchance;
for whatever man is girt with this green lace,
while he has it closely fastened about him,
there is no man under heaven might hew him,
for he may not be slain by any sleight upon earth.’
Then the knight thought, and it came to his heart,
it was a jewel for the jeopardy judged upon him,
when he gained the Green Chapel, his fate to find;
if he might slip past un-slain, the sleight were noble.
Then he indulged her suit, and told her to speak.
And she pressed the belt on him urging it eagerly;
and he granted it, and she gave it him with goodwill,
and besought him, for her sake, never to reveal it,
but loyally conceal it from her lord. The knight agrees
that no one should know of it, indeed, but they two,
betimes.
He thanked her as he might,
with all his heart and mind.
By then the gallant knight,
she had kissed three times.

78

75

Then took she her leave and left him there,
for more of that man she might not get.
When she is gone, Sir Gawain attires himself,
rises and dresses himself in noble array,
lays aside the love-lace the lady gave him,
hides it full handily where he might find it.
Then swiftly to the chapel took he his way,
privately approached a priest, and there prayed him
that he would enlighten his life and teach him better
how his soul might be saved when he went hence.
Then he shrove himself fully, eschewed his misdeeds
the major and minor, and mercy beseeches,
and calls on the priest for absolution;
and he absolved him surely and left him so pure
that Doomsday yet might be declared on the morn.
And then he made himself merry among the fair ladies,
with comely carols and all manner of joy,
more than ever before that day, till the dark night,
in bliss.
Each one had courtesy there
of him, and said: ‘He is
the merriest he was ever
since he came hither, ere this.’

79

76

Now long in that leisure there let him abide!
Yet is the lord on his land, pursuing his sport.
He has done for the fox that he followed so long.
As he spurred through a spinney to spy the shrew,
there where he heard the hounds harry him on,
Reynard came rushing through the rough grove,
and all the rabble in a race, right at his heels.
The lord, aware of the wild thing, warily waits,
and brandishes his bright blade, drives at the beast.
And it shunned the sharp edge and sought to retreat;
but a hound rushed at him, before ere he might,
and right before the horse's feet they fell on him all
and worried the wily one with a wrathful noise.
The lord swiftly alighted then and latched on,
raised him full suddenly out of the ravening mouths,
holds him high over his head, halloos full loud,
while there bayed at him many brave hounds.
Huntsmen hied them thither with horns full many,
sounding the rally aright till they saw their lord.
When his noble company had all come in,
all that ever bore bugle blew at once,
and all the others hallooed who had no horn.
It was the merriest meet that ever men heard,
the ripe roar raised there for Reynard's soul from every man's throat.
Their hounds they then reward,
Their heads they fondle and stroke;
and then they take Reynard
and strip him of his coat.

80

77

And then they hurry for home, for it was nigh night,
striking up strongly on their stout horns.
The lord alights at last at his much-loved home,
finds fire upon hearth, the knight there beside,
Sir Gawain the good who glad was withal –
for among the ladies he was joyfully beloved.
He wore a gown of blue that reached to the ground.
His surcoat suited him well, all soft with fur,
and his hood of the same hung from his shoulder,
trimmed all with ermine were both all about.
He met with the lord in the midst of the floor,
and all with joy did him greet, and gladly he said:
'I shall fulfil the first our contract now,
that we settled so speedily sparing no drink.'
Then he clasped the lord and kissed him thrice,
as strongly and steadily as he well could.
'By Christ,' quoth the other, 'you've found much luck
in transacting this trade, if your profit was good.'
'You need not care about profit,' quick quoth the other,
'as I've promptly paid over the profit I took.'
'Marry,' quoth the other, 'my own falls behind,
for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got
but this foul fox fell – the fiend take such goods! –
and that's a poor price to pay for such precious things
as you so have given me here, three such kisses
so good.'
'Enough,' quoth Sir Gawain,
'I thank you, by the Rood.'
And how the fox was slain
the lord told as they stood.

81

78

With mirth and minstrelsy, with meals at will,
they made as merry as any men might,
with laughter of ladies, and jesting with words.
Gawain and the good man so glad are they both:
must be, lest the diners are drunkards or dotards.
Both master and men played many jokes,
till the time it was come that they must sever;
his men at the last must go to their beds.
Then humbly his leave of the lord at first
takes the noble knight, and fairly him thanks:
‘For such a splendid sojourn as I have had here,
your honour at this high feast, the High King reward you!
I would give myself as one of your men, if you so like;
but I must needs, as you know, move on tomorrow,
if you’ll grant me a guide to show, as you promised,
the way to the Green Chapel, as God wills for me
to be dealt on New Year’s day the doom my fate brings.’
‘In good faith,’ quoth the good man, ‘by my goodwill
all that ever I promised you, I shall hold ready.’
Then he assigned him a servant to show him the way
and conduct him through the hills, so he’d not delay,
and faring through forest and thickset the shortest way
he’d weave.
The lord Gawain did thank,
such honour he did receive.
Then of the ladies of rank
the knight must take his leave.

79

With sad care and kissing he spoke to them still,
and full heartfelt thanks he pressed on them:
and they yielded him again replies the same,
commending him to Christ then with frozen sighs.
So from the company he courteously parts;
each man that he met, he gave him his thanks
for his service and for the solicitous care
that they had shown busied about him in serving;
and all were as sorry to sever from him there
as if they had dwelt nobly with that knight ever.
Then the lads with lights led him to his chamber,
and blithely brought him to bed to be at his rest.
If he did not sleep soundly, I dare say nothing,
for he had much on the morrow to mind, if he would,
in thought.
Let him lie there quite still,
he is near what he sought;
and quiet you a while until
I tell you of all that they wrought.

Part IV

80

Now nears the New Year and the night passes,
the day drives away dark, as the Deity bids.
But wild weather awoke in the world outside,
clouds cast cold keenly down to the earth,
with wind enough from the north, to flail the flesh.
The snow sleeted down sharp, and nipped the wild;
the whistling wind wailed from the heights
and drove each dale full of drifts full great.
The knight listened full well, as he lay in his bed.
Though he closes his lids, full little he sleeps;
with each cock that crew he well knew his tryst.
Deftly he dressed himself, ere the day sprang,
for there was a lighted lamp gleamed in his chamber.
He called to his servant who promptly replied,
and bade him bring coat of mail and saddle his mount;
the man rises up and fetches him his clothes,
and attires Sir Gawain in splendid style.
First he clad him in clothes to ward off the cold,
and then in his harness, that burnished was kept,
both his belly-armour and plate, polished full bright,
the rings of his rich mail-coat rubbed free of rust;
and all was as fresh as at first, and he to give thanks
was glad.
He had put on each piece
and in bright armour clad ;
fairest from here to Greece,
his steed to be brought he bade.

81

While he wound himself in the most splendid weeds –
his coat-armour with its badge of clear deeds,
set out upon velvet, with virtuous stones
embellished and bound about it, embroidered seams,
and fair lined within with fine furs –
yet he forgot not the lace, the lady's gift;
that Gawain did not fail of, for his own good.
when he had bound the blade on his smooth haunches,
then he wound the love-token twice him about,
swiftly swathed it about his waist sweetly that knight.
The girdle of green silk that gallant well suited,
upon that royal red cloth that rich was to show.
But it was not for its richness he wore this girdle,
nor for pride in the pendants, though polished they were,
and though the glittering gold gleamed at the ends,
but to save himself when it behoved him to suffer,
to abide baneful stroke without battling with blade
or knife.
With that the knight all sound,
goes swift to risk his life;
all the men of renown
he thanks, prepares for strife.

85

82

Then was Gringolet readied, that was huge and great,
and had been stabled snugly and in secure wise;
he was eager to gallop, that proud horse then.
The knight went to him and gazed at his coat,
and said soberly to himself, and swore by the truth:
‘Here are many, in this motte, that of honour think.
The man who maintains it, joy may he have!
The fair lady through life may love her befall!
Thus if they for charity cherish a guest,
and hold honour in their hand, the Lord them reward
who upholds the heavens on high, and also you all!
And if I should live for any while upon earth,
I would grant you some reward readily, if I might.’
Then steps he into the stirrup and strides aloft.
His man showed him his shield; on shoulder he slung it,
gives spur to Gringolet with his gilded heels,
and he starts forth on the stones – pausing no longer
to prance.
His servant to horse got then,
who bore his spear and lance.
‘This castle to Christ I commend:
May he grant it good chance!’

86

83

The drawbridge was let down, and the broad gates
unbarred and flung open upon both sides.
The knight blessed himself swiftly, and passed the boards;
praised the porter kneeling before the prince,
who gives him God and good-day, that Gawain He save;
and goes on his way with his one man,
who shall teach him the path to that perilous place
where the grievous blow he shall receive.
They brushed by banks where boughs were bare,
they climbed by cliffs where clung the cold.
the heavens were up high, but ugly there-under
mist moved on the moors, melted on mountains,
each hill had a hat, a mist-mantle huge.
Brooks boiled and broke their banks about,
sheer shattering on shores where they down-flowed.
Well wild was the way where they by woods rode,
till it was soon time that the sun in that season
does rise.
They were on a hill full high,
the white snow lay beside;
the man that rode him by
bade his master abide.

84

‘For I have brought you hither, sir, at this time,
and now you are not far from that noted place
that you have sought and spurred so specially after.
But I must say, forsooth, that since I know you,
and you are a lord full of life whom I well love,
if you would hark to my wit, you might do better.
The place that you pace to full perilous is held;
there lives a man in that waste, the worst upon earth,
for he is strong and stern and loves to strike,
and more man he is than any upon middle-earth,
and his body bigger than the best four
that are in Arthur’s house, Hector, or others.
He makes it so to chance at the Green Chapel,
that none passes by that place so proud in arms
that he but does him to death by dint of his hand;
for he is a mighty man, and shows no mercy,
for be it churl or chaplain that rides by the chapel,
monk or priest of the Mass, or any man else,
he is as quick to kill him, as to live himself.
Therefore I say, as true as you sit in the saddle,
come there, and you will be killed, if he has his way,
trust me truly in that, though you had twenty lives
to spend.
He has lived here of yore,
and battled to great extent.
Against his blows full sore,
you may not yourself defend.’

88

85

‘Therefore, good Sir Gawain, let him alone,
and go by some other way, for God’s own sake!
Course some other country where Christ might you speed.
And I shall hie me home again, and undertake
that I shall swear by God and all his good saints –
so help me God and the Holy things, and oaths enough –
that I shall loyally keep your secret, and loose no tale
that ever you fled from any man that I know of.’
‘Grant merci,’ quoth Gawain, and galled he said:
‘It is worthy of you, man, to wish for my good,
and loyally keep my secret I know that you would.
But, keep it ever so quiet, if I passed here,
and fled away in fear, in the form that you tell of,
I were a cowardly knight, I might not be excused.
For I will go to the chapel, whatever chance may befall,
and talk with that same fellow in whatever way I wish,
whether it’s weal or woe, as fate may to me
behave.
Though he be a stern fellow
to manage, armed with a stave,
full well does the Lord know
His servants how to save.’

89

86

‘Marry!’ quoth the other man, ‘now you spell it out
that you will take all your own trouble on yourself,
if you will lose your life, I’ll not you delay.
Have your helm here on your head, your spear in your hand,
and ride down this same track by yon rock side,
till you’re brought to the bottom of the wild valley,
then look a little on the level, to your left hand,
and you shall see in that vale that selfsame chapel
and the burly giant on guard that it keeps.
Now farewell, in God’s name, Gawain the noble!
For all the gold in the ground I’d not go with you,
nor bear fellowship through this forest one foot further.’
With that the man in the wood tugs at his bridle,
hits his horse with his heels as hard as he might,
leaps away over the land, and leaves the knight there
alone.
‘By God’s self,’ quoth Gawain,
‘I will neither weep nor groan;
to God’s will I bend again
and I am sworn as His own.’

90

87

So he gives spur to Gringolet and picks up the path,
pushing on through, by a bank, at the side of a wood,
rode down the rough slope right to the dale.
And then he gazed all about, and wild it seemed,
and saw no sign of shelter anywhere near,
but high banks and steep upon either side,
and rough rugged crags with gnarled stones;
so the sky seemed to be grazed by their barbs.
Then he halted and reined in his horse awhile,
and scanned all about this chapel to find.
He saw no such thing either side, and thought it quite strange,
save a little mound, as it were, off in a field,
a bald barrow by a bank beside the burn,
by a force of the flood that flowed down there;
the burn bubbled therein as if it were boiling.
The knight urges on his mount and comes to the mound,
alights there lightly, and ties to a lime-tree
the reins of his horse round a rough branch.
Then he goes to the barrow, and about it he walked,
debating with himself what it might be.
It had a hole at each end and on either side,
and was overgrown with grass in great knots;
and all was hollow within, naught but an old cave,
or a crevice of an old crag – he could not distinguish
it well.
'Who knows, Lord,' quoth the gentle knight
'whether this be the Green Chapel?
Here might about midnight
the Devil his Matins tell!'

91

88

‘Now indeed,’ quoth Gawain, ‘desolation is here;
this oratory is ugly, with weeds overgrown;
well is it seemly for the man clad in green
to deal his devotion here in the devil’s wise.
Now I feel it’s the Fiend, in my five senses,
who set me this meeting to strike at me here.
This is a chapel of mischance – bad luck it betide!
It is the most cursed church that ever I came to.’
With high helm on his head, his lance in his hand,
he roamed up to the roof of that rough dwelling.
Then he heard from that high hill, from a hard rock
beyond the brook, on the bank, a wondrous brave noise.
What! It clanged through the cliff as if it would cleave it,
as if on a grindstone one ground a great scythe.
What! It whirred and whetted, as water in a mill.
What! It rushed and rang, revolting to hear.
Then ‘By God,’ quoth Gawain, ‘this here I believe
is arranged to reverence me, to greet rank
by rote.
‘Let God’s will work! “Alas” –
will help me not a mote.
My life though it be lost
I dread no wondrous note.’

92

89

Then the knight called out loud on high;
‘Who stands in this stead, my tryst to uphold?
For now is good Gawain grounded right here.
If any man wills aught, wind hither fast,
either now or never his needs to further.’
‘Abide,’ quoth one on the bank above his head,
‘and you shall have all in haste I promised you once.’
Yet he then turned to his tumult swiftly a while,
and at whetting he worked, ere he would alight.
And then he thrust by a crag and came out by a hole,
whirling out of the rocks with a fell weapon,
a Danish axe new honed, for dealing the blow,
with a biting blade bow-bent to the haft,
ground on a grindstone, four feet broad –
no less, by that love-lace gleaming full bright.
And the giant in green was garbed as at first,
both the looks and the legs, the locks and the beard,
save that firm on his feet he finds his ground,
sets the haft to the stones and stalks beside it.
When he came to the water, he would not wade,
he hopped over on his axe and boldly he strides,
blazing with wrath, on a bit of field broad about
in snow.
Sir Gawain the man did greet,
he bowed to him, nothing low;
the other said: ‘Now, Sir Sweet,
men may trust your word, I owe.’

93

90

‘Gawain,’ quoth the green man, ‘God may you guard!
Indeed you are welcome, knight, to my place,
and you have timed your travel as true man should.
And you know the covenant pledged between us:
at this time twelvemonth gone you took what befell,
that I should at this New Year promptly requite.
And we are in this valley verily alone;
here are no ranks to sever us, serve as you will.
Heft your helm off your head, and have here your pay.
Ask no more debate than I did of you then
when you whipped off my head at a single blow.’
‘Nay, by God,’ quoth Gawain, ‘who lent me a soul,
I shall bear you no grudge for the grief that befalls.
Strike but the one stroke, and I shall stand still
and offer no hindrance, come work as you like,
I swear.’
He leant down his neck, and bowed,
and showed the white flesh all bare,
as if he were no way cowed;
for to shrink he would not dare.

94

91

Then the man in green readies him swiftly,
girds up his grim blade, to smite Gawain;
with all the strength in his body he bears it aloft,
manages it mightily as if he would mar him.
Had he driven it down as direly as he aimed,
one had been dead of the deed who was dauntless ever.
But Gawain glanced at the grim blade sideways,
as it came gliding down on him to destroy him,
and his shoulders shrank a little from the sharp edge.
The other man with a shrug the slice withholds,
and then reproves the prince with many proud words:
'You are not Gawain,' quoth the man, 'held so great,
that was never afraid of the host by hill or by vale,
for now you flinch for fear ere you feel harm.
Such cowardice of that knight have I never heard.
I neither flinched nor fled, friend, when you let fly,
nor cast forth any quibble in King Arthur's house.
My head flew off, at my feet, yet fled I never;
yet you, ere any harm haps, are fearful at heart.
And I ought to be branded the better man, I say,
therefore.'
Quoth Gawain: 'I flinched once,
Yet so will I no more;
Though if my head fall on the stones,
I cannot it restore.'

95

92

‘Be brisk, man, by your faith, and bring me to the point.
Deal me my destiny and do it out of hand,
for I shall stand your stroke, and start no more
till your axe has hit me – have here my troth.’
‘Have at you, then,’ quoth the other, and heaves it aloft
and glares as angrily as if he were mad.
He menaces him mightily, but touches him not,
swiftly withholding his hand ere it might hurt.
Gawain gravely it bides and moves not a muscle,
but stands still as a stone or the stump of a tree
that is riven in rocky ground with roots a hundred.
Then merrily again he spoke, the man in green:
‘So now you have your heart whole, it me behoves.
Hold you safe now the knighthood Arthur gave you,
and keep your neck from this cut, if ever it may!’
Gawain full fiercely with anger then said:
‘Why, thrash on, you wild man, threaten no longer;
it seems your heart is warring with your own self.’
‘Forsooth,’ quoth the other, ‘so fiercely you speak,
I’ll not a moment longer delay your errand
I vow.’
Then he takes up his stance to strike
pouts lips and puckers his brow;
Nothing there for him to like
who hopes for no rescue now.

96

93

Up the weapon lifts lightly, is let down fair,
and the blade's border beside the bare neck.
Though heaved heavily it hurt him not more,
but nicked him on the one side, and severed the skin.
The sharp edge sank in the flesh through the fair fat,
so that bright blood over his shoulders shot to the earth.
And when the knight saw his blood blotting the snow,
he spurted up, feet first, more than a spear-length,
seized swiftly his helm and on his head cast it,
shrugged with his shoulders his fine shield under,
broke out his bright sword, and bravely he spoke –
never since he was a babe born of his mother
had he ever in this world a heart half so blithe –
'Back man, with your blade, and brandish no more!
I have received a stroke in this place without strife,
and if you offer another I'll readily requite you
and yield it you swiftly again – of that be you sure –
as foe.
But one stroke to me here falls;
the covenant stated so,
arranged in Arthur's halls,
so lay your weapon, now, low!'

94

The other then turned away and on his axe rested,
set the haft to the earth and leant on the head,
and looked at the lord who held to his ground,
how doughty, and dread-less, enduring he stands
armed, without awe; in his heart he him liked.
Then he spoke merrily in a mighty voice,
and with a ringing roar to the knight he said:
‘Bold man be not so fierce in this field.
No man here has mistreated you, been unmannerly,
nor behaved but by covenant at King’s court made.
I hit with a stroke, and you have it, and are well paid;
I release you from the rest of all other rights.
If I had been livelier, a buffet perchance
I could have worked more wilfully, to bring you anger.
First I menaced you merrily with a single feint,
and rent you with no riving cut, rightly offered
for the pledge that we made on the very first night;
for you truthfully kept troth and dealt with me true,
all the gain you gave me, as good men should.
The next blow for the morn, man, I proffered;
you kissed my fair wife, the kisses were mine.
For both these days I brought you but two bare feints,
without scathe.
Truth for the truth restore,
then man need dread no wraith.
On the third you failed for sure,
and so took that blow, in faith.’

98

95

‘For it is mine that you wear, that same woven girdle;
my own wife gave it you, I know it well forsooth.
Now, know I well your kisses and conduct too,
and the wooing of my wife; I wrought it myself.
I sent her to test you, and truly I think you
the most faultless man that was ever afoot.
As a pearl beside whitened pea is more precious,
so is Gawain, in good faith, beside other good knights.
But here sir you lacked a little, wanting in loyalty;
but that was for no wily work, nor wooing neither,
but for love of your life – so I blame you the less.’
The other strong man in study stood a great while,
so aggrieved that for grief he grimaced within.
All the blood of his breast burnt in his face,
that he shrank for shame at all the man said.
The first words the knight could frame on that field:
‘Curse upon cowardice and covetousness both!
In you are villainy and vice that virtue distress.’
Then he caught at the knot and pulled it loose,
and fair flung the belt at the man himself:
‘Lo! There’s the falseness, foul may it fall!
For fear of your knock cowardice me taught
to accord with covetousness, forsake my kind,
the largesse and loyalty that belongs to knights.
Now am I faulted and false, and ever a-feared;
from both treachery and untruth come sorrow
and care!
I confess to you knight, here, still,
my fault in this affair;
let me understand your will,
and henceforth I shall beware.’

99

96

Then laughed that other lord and lightly said:
‘I hold it happily made whole, the harm that I had;
You are confessed so clean, cleared of your faults,
and have done penance plain at the point of my blade,
I hold you absolved of that sin, as pure and as clean,
as though you were never at fault since first you were born.
And I give you, sir, the girdle that is gold-hemmed.
As it is green as my gown, Sir Gawain, you may
think upon this same trial when you throng forth
among princes of price, and this the pure token
of the test at the Green Chapel to chivalrous knights.
And you shall this New Year come back to my castle,
and we shall revel away the remnant of this rich feast
I mean’
Thus urged him hard the lord,
and said: ‘With my wife, I ween,
we shall bring you in accord,
who was your enemy keen.’

100

97

‘Nay, forsooth,’ quoth the knight, and seized his helm
doffed it deliberately, and dealt his thanks:
‘I have sojourned enough. May luck you betide,
and may He yield you reward that rewards all men!
And commend me to the courteous, your comely wife,
both the one and the other, my honoured ladies,
that thus their knight with a trick have cunningly beguiled.
But it is no wonder for a fool to run mad
and through wiles of woman be won to sorrow.
For so was Adam on earth with one beguiled,
and Solomon with many such, Samson too –
Delilah dealt him his doom – and David thereafter
was blinded by Bathsheba, and suffered much ill.
Since these were wounded with wiles, it were wise
to love them well and believe them not, if a lord could.
For these were the finest formerly, favoured by fate
excellently of all those under heaven’s rule
ill used;
And all these were beguiled
with women that they used.
If I am now beguiled
I think I should be excused.’

101

98

‘For your girdle,’ quoth Gawain, ‘God reward you!
That I will wear with good will, not for the white gold,
nor the stuff, the silk, nor the slender pendants,
its worth, nor richness, nor for the fine working;
but as a sign of my sin I shall see it often
when I ride in renown, remorseful, remembering
the fault and the frailty of perverse flesh,
how it tends to entice to the tarnish of sin.
And thus when pride shall stir me in prowess of arms,
one look at this love-lace shall lower my heart.
But one thing I would you pray, displease you never:
Since you are lord of yonder land where I lingered
Say you by your knighthood – may He reward you
that upholds the heavens and on high sits –
how you tell your true name, and then no more?’
‘That shall I tell you truly,’ quoth the other then,
‘Bertilak de Hautdesert I am in this land,
through might of Morgan la Faye, that dwells in my house,
and is mistress of magic, by crafts well learned
the mysteries of Merlin, many has she taken,
for she has dealt in depths full dearly sometime
with that excellent sage, and that know all your knights
at home.
Morgan the Goddess
therefore is now her name;
none has such high haughtiness
that she cannot make full tame.’

102

99

‘She sent me in this same wise to your wide hall
for to assay its pride, test if all that were truth
that runs on the great renown of the Round Table.
She worked all this wonder your wits to ravel,
to grieve Guinevere and to bring her to die
aghast at that same ghoul with his ghostly speech
with his head in his hand before the high table.
That is she that is at home, the ancient lady;
she is even your aunt, Arthur’s half-sister,
daughter of Tintagel’s Duchess that dear Uther after
had Arthur upon, who now is your king.
Therefore, sir, I entreat you, come to your aunt,
make merry in my house. My men do love you,
and I wish you as well, man, by my faith,
as any man under God, for your great truth.’
Yet Gawain denied him, nay, he would in no way.
They clasped and kissed, commending each other
to the Prince of Paradise, parted in the cold where
they stood.
Gawain on steed I ween
to the King goes fast as he could,
and the man in the emerald green
whithersoever he would.

103

100

Wild ways in the world Gawain now rides,
on Gringolet, he whom grace had gifted with life.
Often he harboured in houses, and often outside,
had adventures much in the vales, often vanquisher,
that I do not at this time intend to recall.
The hurt was all whole that he had in his neck,
and the bright belt he bore all thereabout,
obliquely, as a baldric, bound at his side,
tied under his left arm, the lace, with a knot,
as token he was tainted with guilt of his fault.
And so he comes to the court, all safe and sound.
Delight dawned in that dwelling when the great knew
that good Gawain was come; and thought it gain.
The King kisses the knight, and the queen also,
and then many staunch knights sought to salute him,
to know how he had fared; and faithfully he tells
confessing all the cost of the cares he had suffered –
what chanced at the chapel, the cast of its lord,
the love of the lady, the lace at the last.
The nick in the neck he naked them showed,
that he had for his lie, from the lord's hands,
in blame.
He was pained he must tell,
he groaned for grief at the same;
blood ran to his face pell-mell,
when he showed the mark, for shame.

101

‘Lo, Lord!’ quoth the knight, and handled the lace,
‘This is the belt of blame I bear at my neck,
this is the hurt and the harm that I have learned
through the cowardice and covetousness I caught there.
This is the token of the untruth I am taken in,
and I must needs it wear while I may last.
For none may hide harm done, and go unscathed,
for where it is once attached depart will it never.’
The King comforts the knight, and all the court also,
laughing loudly thereat, and lovingly agreeing,
those lords and ladies that belonged to the Table,
that each born to the brotherhood, a baldric should have,
a belt, oblique him about, of a bright green,
and that for the sake of the knight, the same hue.
For it was accorded to the renown of the Round Table,
and he that had it was honoured, evermore after,
as is borne out by the best book of romance.
Thus in Arthur’s day this adventure was tried,
the books of Brutus thereof bear witness.
Since Brutus, the bold baron, first bent hither,
after the siege and assault had ceased at Troy,
there is,
many an adventure born
befallen such, ere this.
Now who bears the crown of thorn,
May He bring us to his bliss! **AMEN**.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE

105

Barn Burning

THE STORE in which the Justice of the Peace's court was sitting smelled of cheese. The boy, crouched on his nail keg at the back of the crowded room, knew he smelled cheese, and more: from where he sat he could see the ranked shelves close-packed with the solid, squat, dynamic shapes of tin cans whose labels his stomach read, not from the lettering which meant nothing to his mind but from the scarlet devils and the silver curve of fish—this, the cheese which he knew he smelled and the hermetic meat which his intestines believes he smelled coming in intermittent gusts momentary and brief between the other constant one, the smell and sense just a little of fear because mostly of despair and grief, the old fierce pull of blood. He could not see the table where the Justice sat and before which his father and his father's enemy (*our enemy* he thought in that despair; *ourn! mine and hisn both! He's my father!*) stood, but he could hear them, the two of them that is, because his father had said no word yet:

"But what proof have you, Mr. Harris?"

"I told you. The hog got into my corn. I caught it up and sent it back to him. He had no fence that would hold it. I told him so, warned him. The next time I put the hog in my pen. When he came to get it I gave him enough wire to patch up his pen. The next time I put the hog up and kept it. I rode down to his house and saw the wire I gave him still rolled on to the spool in his yard. I told him he could have the hog when he paid me a dollar pound fee. That evening a nigger came with the dollar and got the hog. He was a strange nigger. He said, 'He say to tell you wood and hay kin burn.' I said, 'What?' 'That whut he say to tell you,' the nigger said. 'Wood and hay kin burn.' That night my barn burned. I got the stock out but I lost the barn."

"Where is the nigger? Have you got him?"

"He was a strange nigger, I tell you. I don't know what became of him."

"But that's not proof. Don't you see that's not proof?"

"Get that boy up here. He knows." For a moment the boy thought too that the man meant his older brother until Harris said, "Not him. The little one. The boy," and, crouching, small for his age, small and wiry like his father, in patched and faded jeans even too small for him, with straight, uncombed, brown hair and eyes gray and wild as storm scud, he saw the men between himself and the table part and become a lane of grim faces, at the end of which he saw the Justice, a shabby, collarless, graying man in spectacles, beckoning him. He felt no floor under his bare feet; he seemed to walk beneath the palpable weight of the grim turning faces. His father, stiff in his black Sunday coat donned not for the trial but for the moving, did not even look at him. *He*

aims for me to lie, he thought, again with that frantic grief and despair. *And I will have to do hit.*

"What's your name, boy?" the Justice said.

"Colonel Sartoris Snopes," the boy whispered.

"Hey?" the Justice said. "Talk louder. Colonel Sartoris? I reckon anybody named for Colonel Sartoris in this country can't help but tell the truth, can they?" The boy said nothing. *Enemy! Enemy!* he thought; for a moment he could not even see, could not see that the Justice's face was kindly nor discern that his voice was troubled when he spoke to the man named Harris: "Do you want me to question this boy?" But he could hear, and during those subsequent long seconds while there was absolutely no sound in the crowded little room save that of quiet and intent breathing it was as if he had swung outward at the end of a grape vine, over a ravine, and at the top of the swing had been caught in a prolonged instant of mesmerized gravity, weightless in time.

"No!" Harris said violently, explosively. "Damnation! Send him out of here!" Now time, the fluid world, rushed beneath him again, the voices coming to him again through the smell of cheese and sealed meat, the fear and despair and the old grief of blood:

"This case is closed. I can't find against you, Snopes, but I can give you advice. Leave this country and don't come back to it."

His father spoke for the first time, his voice cold and harsh, level, without emphasis: "I aim to. I don't figure to stay in a country among people who . . ." he said something unprintable and vile, addressed to no one.

"That'll do," the Justice said. "Take your wagon and get out of this country before dark. Case dismissed."

His father turned, and he followed the stiff black coat, the wiry figure walking a little stiffly from where a

Confederate provost's man's musket ball had taken him in the heel on a stolen horse thirty years ago, followed the two backs now, since his older brother had appeared from somewhere in the crowd, no taller than the father but thicker, chewing tobacco steadily, between the two lines of grim-faced men and out of the store and across the worn gallery and down the sagging steps and among the dogs and half-grown boys in the mild May dust, where as he passed a voice hissed:

"Barn burner!"

Again he could not see, whirling; there was a face in a red haze, moonlike, bigger than the full moon, the owner of it half again his size, he leaping in the red haze toward the face, feeling no blow, feeling no shock when his head struck the earth, scrabbling up and leaping again, feeling no blow this time either and tasting no blood, scrabbling up to see the other boy in full flight and himself already leaping into pursuit as his father's hand jerked him back, the harsh, cold voice speaking above him: "Go get in the wagon."

It stood in a grove of locusts and mulberries across the road. His two hulking sisters in their Sunday dresses and his mother and her sister in calico and sunbonnets were already in it, sitting on and among the sorry residue of the dozen and more movings which even the boy could remember—the battered stove, the broken beds and chairs, the clock inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which would not run, stopped at some fourteen minutes past two o'clock of a dead and forgotten day and time, which had been his mother's dowry. She was crying, though when she saw him she drew her sleeve across her face and began to descend from the wagon. "Get back," the father said.

"He's hurt. I got to get some water and wash his . . ."

"Get back in the wagon," his father said. He got in too, over the tail-gate. His father mounted to the seat where the older brother already sat and struck the gaunt mules two savage blows with the peeled willow, but without heat. It was not even sadistic; it was exactly that same quality which in later years would cause his descendants to over-run the engine before putting a motor car into motion, striking and reining back in the same movement. The wagon went on, the store with its quiet crowd of grimly watching men dropped behind; a curve in the road hid it. *Forever* he thought. *Maybe he's done satisfied now, now that he has* . . . stopping himself, not to say it aloud even to himself. His mother's hand touched his shoulder.

"Does hit hurt?" she said.

"Naw," he said. "Hit don't hurt. Lemme be."

"Can't you wipe some of the blood off before hit dries?"

"I'll wash tonight," he said. "Lemme be, I tell you."

The wagon went on. He did not know where they were going. None of them ever did or ever asked, because it was always somewhere, always a house of sorts waiting for them a day or two days or even three days away. Likely his father had already arranged to make a crop on another farm before he . . . Again he had to stop himself. He (the father) always did. There was something about his wolflike independence and even courage when the advantage was at least neutral which impressed strangers, as if they got from his latent ravening ferocity not so much a sense of dependability as a feeling that his ferocious conviction in the rightness of

his own actions would be of advantage to all whose interest lay with his.

That night they camped, in a grove of oaks and beeches where a spring ran. The nights were still cool and they had a fire against it, of a rail lifted from a nearby fence and cut into lengths—a small fire, neat, niggard almost, a shrewd fire; such fires were his father's habit and custom always, even in freezing weather. Older, the boy might have remarked this and wondered why not a big one; why should not a man who had not only seen the waste and extravagance of war, but who had in his blood an inherent voracious prodigality with material not his own, have burned everything in sight? Then he might have gone a step farther and thought that that was the reason: that niggard blaze was the living fruit of nights passed during those four years in the woods hiding from all men, blue or gray, with his strings of horses (captured horses, he called them). And older still, he might have divined the true reason: that the element of fire spoke to some deep mainspring of his father's being, as the element of steel or of powder spoke to other men, as the one weapon for the preservation of integrity, else breath were not worth the breathing, and hence to be regarded with respect and used with discretion.

But he did not think this now and he had seen those same niggard blazes all his life. He merely ate his supper beside it and was already half asleep over his iron plate when his father called him, and once more he followed the stiff back, the stiff and ruthless limp, up the slope and on to the starlit road where, turning, he could see his father against the stars but without face or depth—a shape black, flat, and bloodless as though cut from tin in the iron folds of the frockcoat which had not been made

for him, the voice harsh like tin and without heat like tin:

"You were fixing to tell them. You would have told him." He didn't answer. His father struck him with the flat of his hand on the side of the head, hard but without heat, exactly as he had struck the two mules at the store, exactly as he would strike either of them with any stick in order to kill a horse fly, his voice still without heat or anger: "You're getting to be a man. You got to learn. You got to learn to stick to your own blood or you ain't going to have any blood to stick to you. Do you think either of them, any man there this morning, would? Don't you know all they wanted was a chance to get at me because they knew I had them beat? Eh?" Later, twenty years later, he was to tell himself, "If I had said they wanted only truth, justice, he would have hit me again." But now he said nothing. He was not crying. He just stood there. "Answer me," his father said.

"Yes," he whispered. His father turned.

"Get on to bed. We'll be there tomorrow."

Tomorrow they were there. In the early afternoon the wagon stopped before a paintless two-room house identical almost with the dozen others it had stopped before even in the boy's ten years, and again, as on the other dozen occasions, his mother and aunt got down and began to unload the wagon, although his two sisters and his father and brother had not moved.

"Likely hit ain't fitten for hawgs," one of the sisters said.

"Nevertheless, fit it will and you'll hog it and like it," his father said. "Get out of them chairs and help your Ma unload."

The two sisters got down, big, bovine, in a flutter of cheap ribbons; one of them drew from the jumbled

wagon bed a battered lantern, the other a worn broom. His father handed the reins to the older son and began to climb stiffly over the wheel. "When they get unloaded, take the team to the barn and feed them." Then he said, and at first the boy thought he was still speaking to his brother: "Come with me."

"Me?" he said.

"Yes," his father said. "You."

"Abner," his mother said. His father paused and looked back—the harsh level stare beneath the shaggy, graying, irascible brows.

"I reckon I'll have a word with the man that aims to begin tomorrow owning me body and soul for the next eight months."

They went back up the road. A week ago—or before last night, that is—he would have asked where they were going, but not now. His father had struck him before last night but never before had he paused afterward to explain why; it was as if the blow and the following calm, outrageous voice still rang, repercussed, divulging nothing to him save the terrible handicap of being young, the light weight of his few years, just heavy enough to prevent his soaring free of the world as it seemed to be ordered but not heavy enough to keep him footed solid in it, to resist it and try to change the course of its events.

Presently he could see the grove of oaks and cedars and the other flowering trees and shrubs where the house would be, though not the house yet. They walked beside a fence massed with honeysuckle and Cherokee roses and came to a gate swinging open between two brick pillars, and now, beyond a sweep of drive, he saw the house for the first time and at that instant he forgot

his father and the terror and despair both, and even when he remembered his father again (who had not stopped) the terror and despair did not return. Because, for all the twelve movings, they had sojourned until now in a poor country, a land of small farms and fields and houses, and he had never seen a house like this before. *Hit's big as a courthouse* he thought quietly, with a surge of peace and joy whose reason he could not have thought into words, being too young for that: *They are safe from him. People whose lives are a part of this peace and dignity are beyond his touch, he no more to them than a buzzing wasp: capable of stinging for a little moment but that's all; the spell of this peace and dignity rendering even the barns and stable and cribs which belong to it impervious to the puny flames he might contrive* . . . this, the peace and joy, ebbing for an instant as he looked again at the stiff black back, the stiff and implacable limp of the figure which was not dwarfed by the house, for the reason that it had never looked big anywhere and which now, against the serene columned backdrop, had more than ever that impervious quality of something cut ruthlessly from tin, depthless, as though, sidewise to the sun, it would cast no shadow. Watching him, the boy remarked the absolutely undeviating course which his father held and saw the stiff foot come squarely down in a pile of fresh droppings where a horse had stood in the drive and which his father could have avoided by a simple change of stride. But it ebbed only for a moment, though he could not have thought this into words either, walking on in the spell of the house, which he could even want but without envy, without sorrow, certainly never with that ravening and jealous rage which unknown to him walked in the ironlike black

coat before him: *Maybe he will feel it too. Maybe it will even change him now from what maybe he couldn't help but be.*

They crossed the portico. Now he could hear his father's stiff foot as it came down on the boards with clocklike finality, a sound out of all proportion to the displacement of the body it bore and which was not dwarfed either by the white door before it, as though it had attained to a sort of vicious and ravening minimum not to be dwarfed by anything—the flat, wide, black hat, the formal coat of broadcloth which had once been black but which had now that friction-glazed greenish cast of the bodies of old house flies, the lifted sleeve which was too large, the lifted hand like a curled claw. The door opened so promptly that the boy knew the Negro must have been watching them all the time, an old man with neat grizzled hair, in a linen jacket, who stood barring the door with his body, saying, "Wipe yo foots, white man, fo you come in here. Major ain't home nohow."

"Get out of my way, nigger," his father said, without heat too, flinging the door back and the Negro also and entering, his hat still on his head. And now the boy saw the prints of the stiff foot on the doorsill and saw them appear on the pale rug behind the machinelike deliberation of the foot which seemed to bear (or transmit) twice the weight which the body compassed. The Negro was shouting "Miss Lula! Miss Lula!" somewhere behind them, then the boy, deluged as though by a warm wave by a suave turn of carpeted stair and a pendant glitter of chandeliers and a mute gleam of gold frames, heard the swift feet and saw her too, a lady—perhaps he had never seen her like before either—in a gray, smooth gown with lace at the throat and an apron tied at the waist and the sleeves turned back, wiping

cake or biscuit dough from her hands with a towel as she came up the hall, looking not at his father at all but at the tracks on the blond rug with an expression of incredulous amazement.

"I tried," the Negro cried. "I tole him to . . ."

"Will you please go away?" she said in a shaking voice. "Major de Spain is not at home. Will you please go away?"

His father had not spoken again. He did not speak again. He did not even look at her. He just stood stiff in the center of the rug, in his hat, the shaggy iron-gray brows twitching slightly above the pebble-colored eyes as he appeared to examine the house with brief deliberation. Then with the same deliberation he turned; the boy watched him pivot on the good leg and saw the stiff foot drag round the arc of the turning, leaving a final long and fading smear. His father never looked at it, he never once looked down at the rug. The Negro held the door. It closed behind them, upon the hysteric and indistinguishable woman-wail. His father stopped at the top of the steps and scraped his boot clean on the edge of it. At the gate he stopped again. He stood for a moment, planted stiffly on the stiff foot, looking back at the house. "Pretty and white, ain't it?" he said. "That's sweat. Nigger sweat. Maybe it ain't white enough yet to suit him. Maybe he wants to mix some white sweat with it."

Two hours later the boy was chopping wood behind the house within which his mother and aunt and the two sisters (the mother and aunt, not the two girls, he knew that; even at this distance and muffled by walls the flat loud voices of the two girls emanated an incorrigible idle inertia) were setting up the stove to prepare a meal, when he heard the hooves and saw the linen-clad man on a fine sorrel mare, whom he recognized even before

he saw the rolled rug in front of the Negro youth following on a fat bay carriage horse—a suffused, angry face vanishing, still at full gallop, beyond the corner of the house where his father and brother were sitting in the two tilted chairs; and a moment later, almost before he could have put the axe down, he heard the hooves again and watched the sorrel mare go back out of the yard, already galloping again. Then his father began to shout one of the sisters' names, who presently emerged backward from the kitchen door dragging the rolled rug along the ground by one end while the other sister walked behind it.

"If you ain't going to tote, go on and set up the wash pot," the first said.

"You, Sarty!" the second shouted. "Set up the wash pot!" His father appeared at the door, framed against that shabbiness, as he had been against that other bland perfection, impervious to either, the mother's anxious face at his shoulder.

"Go on," the father said. "Pick it up." The two sisters stooped, broad, lethargic; stooping, they presented an incredible expanse of pale cloth and a flutter of tawdry ribbons.

"If I thought enough of a rug to have to git hit all the way from France I wouldn't keep hit where folks coming in would have to tromp on hit," the first said. They raised the rug.

"Abner," the mother said. "Let me do it."

"You go back and git dinner," his father said. "I'll tend to this."

From the woodpile through the rest of the afternoon the boy watched them, the rug spread flat in the dust beside the bubbling wash pot, the two sisters stooping over it with that profound and lethargic reluctance,

while the father stood over them in turn, implacable and grim, driving them though never raising his voice again. He could smell the harsh homemade lye they were using; he saw his mother come to the door once and look toward them with an expression not anxious now but very like despair; he saw his father turn, and he fell to with the axe and saw from the corner of his eye his father raise from the ground a flattish fragment of field stone and examine it and return to the pot, and this time his mother actually spoke: "Abner. Abner. Please don't. Please, Abner."

Then he was done too. It was dusk; the whippoorwills had already begun. He could smell coffee from the room where they would presently eat the cold food remaining from the mid-afternoon meal, though when he entered the house he realized they were having coffee again probably because there was a fire on the hearth, before which the rug now lay spread over the backs of the two chairs. The tracks of his father's foot were gone. Where they had been were now long, water-cloudy scoriations resembling the sporadic course of a Lilliputian mowing machine.

It still hung there while they ate the cold food and then went to bed, scattered without order or claim up and down the two rooms, his mother in one bed, where his father would later lie, the older brother in the other, himself, the aunt, and the two sisters on pallets on the floor. But his father was not in bed yet. The last thing the boy remembered was the depthless, harsh silhouette of the hat and coat bending over the rug and it seemed to him that he had not even closed his eyes when the silhouette was standing over him, the fire almost dead behind it, the stiff foot prodding him awake. "Catch up the mule," his father said.

When he returned with the mule his father was standing in the black door, the rolled rug over his shoulder. "Ain't you going to ride?" he said.

"No. Give me your foot."

He bent his knee into his father's hand, the wiry, surprising power flowed smoothly, rising, he rising with it, on to the mule's bare back (they had owned a saddle once; the boy could remember it though not when or where) and with the same effortlessness his father swung the rug up in front of him. Now in the starlight they retraced the afternoon's path, up the dusty road rife with honeysuckle, through the gate and up the black tunnel of the drive to the lightless house, where he sat on the mule and felt the rough warp of the rug drag across his thighs and vanish.

"Don't you want me to help?" he whispered. His father did not answer and now he heard again that stiff foot striking the hollow portico with that wooden and clocklike deliberation, that outrageous overstatement of the weight it carried. The rug, hunched, not flung (the boy could tell that even in the darkness) from his father's shoulder, struck the angle of wall and floor with a sound unbelievably loud, thunderous, then the foot again, unhurried and enormous; a light came on in the house and the boy sat, tense, breathing steadily and quietly and just a little fast, though the foot itself did not increase its beat at all, descending the steps now; now the boy could see him.

"Don't you want to ride now?" he whispered. "We kin both ride now," the light within the house altering now, flaring up and sinking. *He's coming down the stairs now*, he thought. He had already ridden the mule up beside the horse block; presently his father was up behind him and he doubled the reins over and slashed the

mule across the neck, but before the animal could begin to trot the hard, thin arm came round him, the hard, knotted hand jerking the mule back to a walk.

In the first red rays of the sun they were in the lot, putting plow gear on the mules. This time the sorrel mare was in the lot before he heard it at all, the rider collarless and even bareheaded, trembling, speaking in a shaking voice as the woman in the house had done, his father merely looking up once before stooping again to the hame he was buckling, so that the man on the mare spoke to his stooping back:

"You must realize you have ruined that rug. Wasn't there anybody here, any of your women . . ." He ceased, shaking, the boy watching him, the older brother leaning now in the stable door, chewing, blinking slowly and steadily at nothing apparently. "It cost a hundred dollars. But you never had a hundred dollars. You never will. So I'm going to charge you twenty bushels of corn against your crop. I'll add it in your contract and when you come to the commissary you can sign it. That won't keep Mrs. de Spain quiet but maybe it will teach you to wipe your feet off before you enter her house again."

Then he was gone. The boy looked at his father, who still had not spoken or even looked up again, who was now adjusting the logger-head in the hame.

"Pap," he said. His father looked at him—the inscrutable face, the shaggy brows beneath which the gray eyes glinted coldly. Suddenly the boy went toward him, fast, stopping as suddenly. "You done the best you could!" he cried. "If he wanted hit done different why didn't he wait and tell you how? He won't git no twenty bushels! He won't git none! We'll get hit and hide hit! I kin watch . . ."

"Did you put the cutter back in that straight stock like I told you?"

"No, sir," he said.

"Then go do it."

That was Wednesday. During the rest of that week he worked steadily, at what was within his scope and some which was beyond it, with an industry that did not need to be driven nor even commanded twice; he had this from his mother, with the difference that some at least of what he did he liked to do, such as splitting wood with the half-size axe which his mother and aunt had earned, or saved money somehow, to present him with at Christmas. In company with the two older women (and on one afternoon, even one of the sisters), he built pens for the shoat and the cow which were a part of his father's contract with the landlord, and one afternoon, his father being absent, gone somewhere on one of the mules, he went to the field.

They were running a middle buster now, his brother holding the plow straight while he handled the reins, and walking beside the straining mule, the rich black soil shearing cool and damp against his bare ankles, he thought *Maybe this is the end of it. Maybe even that twenty bushels that seems hard to have to pay for just a rug will be a cheap price for him to stop forever and always from being what he used to be;* thinking, dreaming now, so that his brother had to speak sharply to him to mind the mule: *Maybe he even won't collect the twenty bushels. Maybe it will all add up and balance and vanish—corn, rug, fire; the terror and grief, the being pulled two ways like between two teams of horses —gone, done with for ever and ever.*

Then it was Saturday; he looked up from beneath the mule he was harnessing and saw his father in the

black coat and hat. "Not that," his father said. "The wagon gear." And then, two hours later, sitting in the wagon bed behind his father and brother on the seat, the wagon accomplished a final curve, and he saw the weathered paintless store with its tattered tobacco- and patent-medicine posters and the tethered wagons and saddle animals below the gallery. He mounted the gnawed steps behind his father and brother, and there again was the lane of quiet, watching faces for the three of them to walk through. He saw the man in spectacles sitting at the plank table and he did not need to be told this was a Justice of the Peace; he sent one glare of fierce, exultant, partisan defiance at the man in collar and cravat now, whom he had seen but twice before in his life, and that on a galloping horse, who now wore on his face an expression not of rage but of amazed unbelief which the boy could not have known was at the incredible circumstance of being sued by one of his own tenants, and came and stood against his father and cried at the Justice: "He ain't done it! He ain't burnt . . ."

"Go back to the wagon," his father said.

"Burnt?" the Justice said. "Do I understand this rug was burned too?"

"Does anybody here claim it was?" his father said. "Go back to the wagon." But he did not, he merely retreated to the rear of the room, crowded as that other had been, but not to sit down this time, instead, to stand pressing among the motionless bodies, listening to the voices:

"And you claim twenty bushels of corn is too high for the damage you did to the rug?"

"He brought the rug to me and said he wanted the tracks washed out of it. I washed the tracks out and took the rug back to him."

"But you didn't carry the rug back to him in the same condition it was in before you made the tracks on it."

His father did not answer, and now for perhaps half a minute there was no sound at all save that of breathing, the faint, steady suspiration of complete and intent listening.

"You decline to answer that, Mr. Snopes?" Again his father did not answer. "I'm going to find against you, Mr. Snopes. I'm going to find that you were responsible for the injury to Major de Spain's rug and hold you liable for it. But twenty bushels of corn seems a little high for a man in your circumstances to have to pay. Major de Spain claims it cost a hundred dollars. October corn will be worth about fifty cents. I figure that if Major de Spain can stand a ninety-five-dollar loss on something he paid cash for, you can stand a five-dollar loss you haven't earned yet. I hold you in damages to Major de Spain to the amount of ten bushels of corn over and above your contract with him, to be paid to him out of your crop at gathering time. Court adjourned."

It had taken no time hardly, the morning was but half begun. He thought they would return home and perhaps back to the field, since they were late, far behind all other farmers. But instead his father passed on behind the wagon, merely indicating with his hand for the older brother to follow with it, and crossed the road toward the blacksmith shop opposite, pressing on after his father, overtaking him, speaking, whispering up at the harsh, calm face beneath the weathered hat: "He won't git no ten bushels neither. He won't git one. We'll . . ." until his father glanced for an instant down at him, the face absolutely calm, the grizzled eyebrows

tangled above the cold eyes, the voice almost pleasant, almost gentle:

"You think so? Well, we'll wait till October anyway."

The matter of the wagon—the setting of a spoke or two and the tightening of the tires—did not take long either, the business of the tires accomplished by driving the wagon into the spring branch behind the shop and letting it stand there, the mules nuzzling into the water from time to time, and the boy on the seat with the idle reins, looking up the slope and through the sooty tunnel of the shed where the slow hammer rang and where his father sat on an upended cypress bolt, easily, either talking or listening, still sitting there when the boy brought the dripping wagon up out of the branch and halted it before the door.

"Take them on to the shade and hitch," his father said. He did so and returned. His father and the smith and a third man squatting on his heels inside the door were talking, about crops and animals; the boy, squatting too in the ammoniac dust and hoof-parings and scales of rust, heard his father tell a long and unhurried story out of the time before the birth of the older brother even when he had been a professional horsetrader. And then his father came up beside him where he stood before a tattered last year's circus poster on the other side of the store, gazing rapt and quiet at the scarlet horses, the incredible poisings and convolutions of tulle and tights and the painted leers of comedians, and said, "It's time to eat."

But not at home. Squatting beside his brother against the front wall, he watched his father emerge from the store and produce from a paper sack a segment

of cheese and divide it carefully and deliberately into three with his pocket knife and produce crackers from the same sack. They all three squatted on the gallery and ate, slowly, without talking; then in the store again, they drank from a tin dipper tepid water smelling of the cedar bucket and of living beech trees. And still they did not go home. It was a horse lot this time, a tall rail fence upon and along which men stood and sat and out of which one by one horses were led, to be walked and trotted and then cantered back and forth along the road while the slow swapping and buying went on and the sun began to slant westward, they—the three of them—watching and listening, the older brother with his muddy eyes and his steady, inevitable tobacco, the father commenting now and then on certain of the animals, to no one in particular.

It was after sundown when they reached home. They ate supper by lamplight, then, sitting on the doorstep, the boy watched the night fully accomplish, listening to the whippoorwills and the frogs, when he heard his mother's voice: "Abner! No! No! Oh, God. Oh, God. Abner!" and he rose, whirled, and saw the altered light through the door where a candle stub now burned in a bottle neck on the table and his father, still in the hat and coat, at once formal and burlesque as though dressed carefully for some shabby and ceremonial violence, emptying the reservoir of the lamp back into the five-gallon kerosene can from which it had been filled, while the mother tugged at his arm until he shifted the lamp to the other hand and flung her back, not savagely or viciously, just hard, into the wall, her hands flung out against the wall for balance, her mouth open and in her face the same quality of hopeless despair as had been

in her voice. Then his father saw him standing in the door.

"Go to the barn and get that can of oil we were oiling the wagon with," he said. The boy did not move. Then he could speak.

"What . . ." he cried. "What are you . . ."

"Go get that oil," his father said. "Go."

Then he was moving, running, outside the house, toward the stable: this the old habit, the old blood which he had not been permitted to choose for himself, which had been bequeathed him willy nilly and which had run for so long (and who knew where, battening on what of outrage and savagery and lust) before it came to him. *I could keep on,* he thought. *I could run on and on and never look back, never need to see his face again. Only I can't. I can't,* the rusted can in his hand now, the liquid sploshing in it as he ran back to the house and into it, into the sound of his mother's weeping in the next room, and handed the can to his father.

"Ain't you going to even send a nigger?" he cried. "At least you sent a nigger before!"

This time his father didn't strike him. The hand came even faster than the blow had, the same hand which had set the can on the table with almost excruciating care flashing from the can toward him too quick for him to follow it, gripping him by the back of his shirt and on to tiptoe before he had seen it quit the can, the face stooping at him in breathless and frozen ferocity, the cold, dead voice speaking over him to the older brother who leaned against the table, chewing with that steady, curious, sidewise motion of cows:

"Empty the can into the big one and go on. I'll catch up with you."

"Better tie him up to the bedpost," the brother said.

"Do like I told you," the father said. Then the boy was moving, his bunched shirt and the hard, bony hand between his shoulder-blades, his toes just touching the floor, across the room and into the other one, past the sisters sitting with spread heavy thighs in the two chairs over the cold hearth, and to where his mother and aunt sat side by side on the bed, the aunt's arms about his mother's shoulders.

"Hold him," the father said. The aunt made a startled movement. "Not you," the father said. "Lennie. Take hold of him. I want to see you do it." His mother took him by the wrist. "You'll hold him better than that. If he gets loose don't you know what he is going to do? He will go up yonder." He jerked his head toward the road. "Maybe I'd better tie him."

"I'll hold him," his mother whispered.

"See you do then." Then his father was gone, the stiff foot heavy and measured upon the boards, ceasing at last.

Then he began to struggle. His mother caught him in both arms, he jerking and wrenching at them. He would be stronger in the end, he knew that. But he had no time to wait for it. "Lemme go!" he cried. "I don't want to have to hit you!"

"Let him go!" the aunt said. "If he don't go, before God, I am going up there myself!"

"Don't you see I can't?" his mother cried. "Sarty! Sarty! No! No! Help me, Lizzie!"

Then he was free. His aunt grasped at him but it was too late. He whirled, running, his mother stumbled forward on to her knees behind him, crying to the nearer sister: "Catch him, Net! Catch him!" But that was too late too, the sister (the sisters were twins, born

at the same time, yet either of them now gave the impression of being, encompassing as much living meat and volume and weight as any other two of the family) not yet having begun to rise from the chair, her head, face, alone merely turned, presenting to him in the flying instant an astonishing expanse of young female features untroubled by any surprise even, wearing only an expression of bovine interest. Then he was out of the room, out of the house, in the mild dust of the starlit road and the heavy rifeness of honeysuckle, the pale ribbon unspooling with terrific slowness under his running feet, reaching the gate at last and turning in, running, his heart and lungs drumming, on up the drive toward the lighted house, the lighted door. He did not knock, he burst in, sobbing for breath, incapable for the moment of speech; he saw the astonished face of the Negro in the linen jacket without knowing when the Negro had appeared.

"De Spain!" he cried, panted. "Where's . . ." then he saw the white man too emerging from a white door down the hall. "Barn!" he cried. "Barn!"

"What?" the white man said. "Barn?"

"Yes!" the boy cried. "Barn!"

"Catch him!" the white man shouted.

But it was too late this time too. The Negro grasped his shirt, but the entire sleeve, rotten with washing, carried away, and he was out that door too and in the drive again, and had actually never ceased to run even while he was screaming into the white man's face.

Behind him the white man was shouting, "My horse! Fetch my horse!" and he thought for an instant of cutting across the park and climbing the fence into the road, but he did not know the park nor how high the vine-massed fence might be and he dared not risk it.

So he ran on down the drive, blood and breath roaring; presently he was in the road again though he could not see it. He could not hear either: the galloping mare was almost upon him before he heard her, and even then he held his course, as if the very urgency of his wild grief and need must in a moment more find him wings, waiting until the ultimate instant to hurl himself aside and into the weed-choked roadside ditch as the horse thundered past and on, for an instant in furious silhouette against the stars, the tranquil early summer night sky which, even before the shape of the horse and rider vanished, strained abruptly and violently upward: a long, swirling roar incredible and soundless, blotting the stars, and he springing up and into the road again, running again, knowing it was too late yet still running even after he heard the shot and, an instant later, two shots, pausing now without knowing he had ceased to run, crying "Pap! Pap!", running again before he knew he had begun to run, stumbling, tripping over something and scrabbling up again without ceasing to run, looking backward over his shoulder at the glare as he got up, running on among the invisible trees, panting, sobbing, "Father! Father!"

At midnight he was sitting on the crest of a hill. He did not know it was midnight and he did not know how far he had come. But there was no glare behind him now and he sat now, his back toward what he had called home for four days anyhow, his face toward the dark woods which he would enter when breath was strong again, small, shaking steadily in the chill darkness, hugging himself into the remainder of his thin, rotten shirt, the grief and despair now no longer terror and fear but just grief and despair. *Father. My father*, he thought. "He was brave!" he cried suddenly, aloud but not loud,

no more than a whisper: "He was! He was in the war! He was in Colonel Sartoris' cav'ry!" not knowing that his father had gone to that war a private in the fine old European sense, wearing no uniform, admitting the authority of and giving fidelity to no man or army or flag, going to war as Malbrouck himself did: for booty—it meant nothing and less than nothing to him if it were enemy booty or his own.

The slow constellations wheeled on. It would be dawn and then sun-up after a while and he would be hungry. But that would be tomorrow and now he was only cold, and walking would cure that. His breathing was easier now and he decided to get up and go on, and then he found that he had been asleep because he knew it was almost dawn, the night almost over. He could tell that from the whippoorwills. They were everywhere now among the dark trees below him, constant and inflectioned and ceaseless, so that, as the instant for giving over to the day birds drew nearer and nearer, there was no interval at all between them. He got up. He was a little stiff, but walking would cure that too as it would the cold, and soon there would be the sun. He went on down the hill, toward the dark woods within which the liquid silver voices of the birds called unceasing—the rapid and urgent beating of the urgent and quiring heart of the late spring night. He did not look back.

John Donne

A Valediction: forbidding mourning

AS virtuous men passe mildly away,
And whisper to their soules, to goe,
Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
The breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
T'were prophanation of our joyes
To tell the layetie our love.

Moving of th'earth brings harmes and feares,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheares,
Though greater farre, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers love
(Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.

Our two soules therefore, which are one,
Though I must goe, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiffe twin compasses are two,
Thy soule the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the'other doe.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth rome,
It leanes, and hearkens after it,
And growes erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to mee, who must
Like th'other foot, obliquely runne;
Thy firmnes makes my circle just,
And makes me end, where I begunne.

THE CANONIZATION.

by John Donne

FOR God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love ;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout ;
My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout ;
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve ;
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his Honour, or his Grace ;
Or the king's real, or his stamp'd face
Contemplate ; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas ! alas ! who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drown'd?
Who says my tears have overflow'd his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Call's what you will, we are made such by love ;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find th' eagle and the dove.
The phoenix riddle hath more wit
By us ; we two being one, are it ;
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tomb or hearse
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse ;
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms ;
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns, all shall approve
Us canonized for love ;

And thus invoke us, "You, whom reverend love
Made one another's hermitage ;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage ;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
Into the glasses of your eyes ;
So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize—
Countries, towns, courts beg from above
A pattern of your love."

John Keats (1795–1821). The Poetical Works of John Keats. 1884.

40. Ode to a Nightingale

1.

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

3.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

5.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

6.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

7.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath

Charm’d magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

8.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toil me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam’d to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now ’tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965). Prufrock and Other Observations. 1920.

1. The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

LET us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question….
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;

Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: “How his hair is growing thin!”)
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: “But how his arms and legs are thin!”)
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
  So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
  And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
  And should I then presume?
  And how should I begin?
. . . . . .
Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets

And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?…

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.
. . . . . .
And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep … tired … or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
  Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
  That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
  "That is not it at all,
  That is not what I meant, at all."
. . . . . .
No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old … I grow old …
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Birches

WHEN I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust—
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
But I was going to say when Truth broke in
With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
(Now am I free to be poetical?)
I should prefer to have some boy bend them
As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
Whose only play was what he found himself,
Summer or winter, and could play alone.
One by one he subdued his father's trees
By riding them down over and over again
Until he took the stiffness out of them,
And not one but hung limp, not one was left
For him to conquer. He learned all there was
To learn about not launching out too soon
And so not carrying the tree away
Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
To the top branches, climbing carefully
With the same pains you use to fill a cup
Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

The Second Coming

by W. B. Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

About "The Second Coming"

Among other things, "The Second Coming" takes its imagery from Yeats's book, *A Vision*, a zodiac of sorts that he developed with his wife through "visitations" and automatic writing. Yeats claimed that she was often inhabited by spirits who came in order to describe a universal system of cyclical birth, based around a turning gyre.