

**GUERBER**  
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THE BOOK OF THE EPIC:  
THE WORLD'S GREAT  
EPICS TOLD IN STORY

**Hélène Guerber**  
**The Book of the Epic: The  
World's Great Epics Told in Story**

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The Book of the Epic: The World's Great Epics Told in Story:*

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# H. A. Guerber

## The Book of the Epic: The World's Great Epics Told in Story

### INTRODUCTION

Every now and then in our reading we come suddenly face to face with *first* things,—the very elemental sources beyond which no man may go. There is a distinct satisfaction in dealing with such beginnings, and, when they are those of literature, the sense of freshness is nothing short of inspiring. To share the same lofty outlook, to breathe the same high air with those who first sensed a whole era of creative thoughts, is the next thing to being the gods' chosen medium for those primal expressions.

All this is not to say that the epic is the oldest form of literary expression, but it is the expression of the oldest literary ideas, for, even when the epic is not at all primitive in form, it deals essentially with elemental moods and ideals. Epical poetry is poetic not because it is metrical and conformative to rhythmical standards,—though it usually is both,—but it is poetry because of the high sweep of its emotional outlook, the bigness of its

thought, the untamed passion of its language, and the musical flow of its utterance.

Here, then, we have a veritable source book of the oldest ideas of the race; but not only that—we are also led into the penetralia of the earliest thought of many separate nations, for when the epic is national, it is true to the earliest genius of the people whose spirit it depicts.

To be sure, much of literature, and particularly the literature of the epic, is true rather to the tone of a nation than to its literal history—by which I mean that Achilles was more really a Greek hero than any Greek who ever lived, because he was the apotheosis of Greek chivalry, and as such was the expression of the Greeks rather than merely a Greek. The Iliad and the Odyssey are not merely epics of Greece—they are Greek.

This is an age of story-telling. Never before has the world turned so attentively to the shorter forms of fiction. Not only is this true of the printed short-story, of which some thousands, more or less new, are issued every year in English, but oral story-telling is taking its deserved place in the school, the home, and among clubs specially organized for its cultivation. Teachers and parents must therefore be increasingly alert, not only to invent new stories, but—this even chiefly—to familiarize themselves with the oldest stories in the world.

So it is to such sources as these race-narratives that all story-telling must come for recurrent inspirations. The setting of each new story may be tinged with what wild or sophisticated

life soever, yet must the narrator find the big, heart-swelling movements and passions and thraldoms and conquests and sufferings and elations of mankind stored in the great epics of the world.

It were a life-labor to become familiar with all of these in their expressive originals; even in translation it would be a titanic task to read each one. Therefore how great is our indebtedness to the ripe scholarship and discreet choice of the author of this "Book of the Epic" for having brought to us not only the arguments but the very spirit and flavor of all this noble array. The task has never before been essayed, and certainly, now that it has been done for the first time, it is good to know that it has been done surpassingly well.

To find the original story-expression of a nation's myths, its legends, and its heroic creations is a high joy—a face-to-face interview with any great first-thing is a big experience; but to come upon whole scores of undefiled fountains is like multiplying the Pierian waters.

Even as all the epics herein collected in scenario were epoch-making, so will the gathering of these side by side prove to be. Literary judgments must be comparative, and now we may place each epic in direct comparison with any other, with a resultant light, both diffused and concentrated, for the benefit of both critics and the general reader.

The delights of conversation—so nearly, alas, a lost art!—consist chiefly in the exchange of varied views on single topics.

So, when we note how the few primal story-themes and plot developments of all time were handled by those who first told the tales in literate form, the satisfaction is proportionate.

One final word must be said regarding the interest of epical material. Heretofore a knowledge of the epics—save only a few of the better known—has been confined to scholars, or, at most, students; but it may well be hoped that the wide perusal of this book may serve to show to the general reader how fascinating a store of fiction may be found in epics which have up till now been known to him only by name.

*J. Berg Esenwein*

"It is in this vast, dim region of myth and legend the sources of the literature of modern times are hidden; and it is only by returning to them, by constant remembrance that they drain a vast region of vital human experience, that the origin and early direction of that literature can be recalled."—Hamilton Wright Mabie.

# FOREWORD

Derived from the Greek *epos*, a saying or oracle, the term "epic" is generally given to some form of heroic narrative wherein tragedy, comedy, lyric, dirge, and idyl are skilfully blended to form an immortal work.

"Mythology, which was the interpretation of nature, and legend, which is the idealization of history," are the main elements of the epic. Being the "living history of the people," an epic should have "the breadth and volume of a river." All epics have therefore generally been "the first-fruits of the earliest experience of nature and life on the part of imaginative races"; and the real poet has been, as a rule, the race itself.

There are almost as many definitions of an epic and rules for its composition as there are nations and poets. For that reason, instead of selecting only such works as in the writer's opinion can justly claim the title of epic, each nation's verdict has been accepted, without question, in regard to its national work of this class, be it in verse or prose.

The following pages therefore contain almost every variety of epic, from that which treats of the deity in dignified hexameters, strictly conforms to the rule "one hero, one time, and one action of many parts," and has "the massiveness and dignity of sculpture," to the simplest idylls, such as the Japanese "White Aster," or that exquisite French mediaeval compound of poetry

and prose, "Aucassin et Nicolette." Not only are both Christian and pagan epics impartially admitted in this volume, but the representative works of each nation in the epic field are grouped, according to the languages in which they were composed.

Many of the ancient epics are so voluminous that even one of them printed in full would fill twenty-four volumes as large as this. To give even the barest outline of one or two poems in each language has therefore required the utmost condensation. So, only the barest outline figures in these pages, and, although the temptation to quote many choice passages has been well-nigh irresistible, space has precluded all save the scantiest quotations.

The main object of this volume consists in outlining clearly and briefly, for the use of young students or of the busy general reader, the principal examples of the time-honored stories which have inspired our greatest poets and supplied endless material to painters, sculptors, and musicians ever since art began.

# THE BOOK OF THE EPIC GREEK EPICS

The greatest of all the world's epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey, are attributed to Homer, or Melesigenes, who is said to have lived some time between 1050 and 850 B.C. Ever since the second century before Christ, however, the question whether Homer is the originator of the poems, or whether, like the Rhapsodists, he merely recited extant verses, has been hotly disputed.

The events upon which the Iliad is based took place some time before 1100 B.C., and we are told the poems of Homer were collected and committed to writing by Pisistratus during the age of Epic Poetry, or second age of Greek literature, which ends 600 B.C.

It stands to reason that the Iliad must have been inspired by or at least based upon previous poems, since such perfection is not achieved at a single bound. Besides, we are aware of the existence of many shorter Greek epics, which have either been entirely lost or of which we now possess only fragments.

A number of these ancient epics form what is termed the Trojan Cycle, because all relate in some way to the War of Troy. Among them is the Cypria, in eleven books, by Stasimus of Cyprus (or by Arctinus of Miletus), wherein is related Jupiter's frustrated wooing of Thetis, her marriage with Peleus,

the episode of the golden apple, the judgment of Paris, the kidnapping of Helen, the mustering of the Greek forces, and the main events of the first nine years of the Trojan War. The Iliad (of which a synopsis is given) follows this epic, taking up the story where the wrath of Achilles is aroused and ending it with the funeral of Hector.

This, however, does not conclude the story of the Trojan War, which is resumed in the "Aethiopia," in five books, by Arctinus of Miletus. After describing the arrival of Penthesilea, Queen of the Amazons, to aid the Trojans, the poet relates her death at the hand of Achilles, who, in his turn, is slain by Apollo and Paris. This epic concludes with the famous dispute between Ajax and Ulysses for the possession of Achilles' armor.

The Little Iliad, whose authorship is ascribed to sundry poets, including Homer, next describes the madness and death of Ajax, the arrival of Philoctetes with the arrows of Hercules, the death of Paris, the purloining of the Palladium, the stratagem of the wooden horse, and the death of Priam.

In the Ilion Persis, or Sack of Troy, by Arctinus, in two books, we find the Trojans hesitating whether to convey the wooden steed into their city, and discover the immortal tales of the traitor Sinon and that of Laocoon. We then behold the taking and sacking of the city, with the massacre of the men and the carrying off into captivity of the women.

In the Nostroi, or Homeward Voyage, by Agias of Troezene, the Atridae differ in opinion; so, while Agamemnon delays his

departure to offer propitiatory sacrifices, Menelaus sets sail for Egypt, where he is detained. This poem also contains the narrative of Agamemnon's return, of his assassination, and of the way in which his death was avenged by his son Orestes.

Next in sequence of events comes the *Odyssey* of Homer (of which a complete synopsis follows), and then the *Telegonia* of Eugammon of Cyrene, in two books. This describes how, after the burial of the suitors, Ulysses renews his adventures, and visits Thesprotia, where he marries and leaves a son. We also have his death, a battle between two of his sons, and the marriage of Telemachus and Circe, as well as that of the widowed Penelope to Telegonus, one of Ulysses' descendants.

Another sequel, or addition to the *Odyssey*, is found in the *Telemachia*, also a Greek poem, as well as in a far more modern work, the French classic, *Télémaque*, written by Fénelon for his pupil the Dauphin, in the age of Louis XIV.

Another great series of Greek poems is the Theban Cycle, which comprises the *Thebais*, by some unknown author, wherein is related in full the story of Oedipus, that of the Seven Kings before Thèbes, and the doings of the Epigoni.

There exist also cyclic poems in regard to the labors of Heracles, among others one called *Oechalia*, which has proved a priceless mine for poets, dramatists, painters, and sculptors.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Alexandra* by Lycophron (270 B.C.), and in a similar

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed account of Oedipus, Heracles, the Argonauts, and the "War of Troy" is given in the author's "Myths of Greece and Rome."

poem by Quintus Smyrnaeus, in fourteen books, we find tedious sequels to the Iliad, wherein Alexander is represented as a descendant of Achilles.

Indeed, the life and death of Alexander the Great are also the source of innumerable epics, as well as of romances in Greek, Latin, French, German, and English. The majority of these are based upon the epic of Callisthenes, 110 A.D., wherein an attempt was made to prove that Alexander descended directly from the Egyptian god Jupiter Ammon or, at least, from his priest Nectanebus.

Besides being told in innumerable Greek versions, the tale of Troy has frequently been repeated in Latin, and it enjoyed immense popularity all throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. It was, however, most beloved in France, where Benoit de St. Maur's interminable "Roman de Troie," as well as his "Roman d'Alexandre," greatly delighted the lords and ladies of his time.

Besides the works based on the story of Troy or on the adventures of Alexander, we have in Greek the Theogony of Hesiod in some 1022 lines, a miniature Greek mythology, giving the story of the origin and the doings of the Greek gods, as well as the Greek theory in regard to the creation of the world.

Among later Greek works we must also note the Shield of Heracles and the Eoiae or Catalogue of the Boetian heroines who gave birth to demi-gods or heroes.

In 194 B.C. Apollonius Rhodius at Alexandria wrote the Argonautica, in four books, wherein he relates the adventures

of Jason in quest of the golden fleece. This epic was received so coldly that the poet, in disgust, withdrew to Rhodes, where, having remodelled his work, he obtained immense applause.

The principal burlesque epic in Greek, the *Bactrachomyomachia*, or *Battle of Frogs and Mice*, is attributed to Homer, but only some 300 lines of this work remain, showing what it may have been.

# THE ILIAD

*Introduction.* Jupiter, king of the gods, refrained from an alliance with Thetis, a sea divinity, because he was told her son would be greater than his father. To console her, however, he decreed that all the gods should attend her nuptials with Peleus, King of Thessaly. At this wedding banquet the Goddess of Discord produced a golden apple, inscribed "To the fairest," which Juno, Minerva, and Venus claimed.

Because the gods refused to act as umpires in this quarrel, Paris, son of the King of Troy, was chosen. As an oracle had predicted before his birth that he would cause the ruin of his city, Paris was abandoned on a mountain to perish, but was rescued by kindly shepherds.

On hearing Juno offer him worldly power, Minerva boundless wisdom, and Venus the most beautiful wife in the world, Paris bestowed the prize of beauty upon Venus. She, therefore, bade him return to Troy, where his family was ready to welcome him, and sail thence to Greece to kidnap Helen, daughter of Jupiter and Leda and wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta. So potent were this lady's charms that her step-father had made all her suitors swear never to carry her away from her husband, and to aid in her recovery should she ever be kidnapped.

Shortly after his arrival at Sparta and during a brief absence of its king, Paris induced Helen to elope with him. On his return the

outraged husband summoned the suitors to redeem their pledge, and collected a huge force at Aulis, where Agamemnon his brother became leader of the expedition. Such was the popularity of this war that even heroes who had taken no oath were anxious to make part of the punitive expedition, the most famous of these warriors being Achilles, son of Thetis and Peleus.

After many adventures the Greeks, landing on the shores of Asia, began besieging the city, from whose ramparts Helen watched her husband and his allies measure their strength against the Trojans. Such was the bravery displayed on both sides that the war raged nine years without any decisive advantage being obtained. At the end of this period, during a raid, the Greeks secured two female captives, which were awarded to Agamemnon and to Achilles in recognition of past services.

Although the above events are treated in sundry other Greek poems and epics,—which no longer exist entire, but form part of a cycle,—"The Iliad," accredited to Homer, takes up the story at this point, and relates the wrath of Achilles, together with the happenings of some fifty days in the ninth year.

*Book I.* After invoking the Muse to aid him sing the wrath of Achilles, the poet relates how Apollo's priest came in person to the Greek camp to ransom his captive daughter, only to be treated with contumely by Agamemnon. In his indignation this priest besought Apollo to send down a plague to decimate the foe's forces, and the Greeks soon learned from their oracles that its ravages would not cease until the maiden was restored to her

father.

Nor will the god's awaken'd fury cease,  
But plagues shall spread, and funeral fires increase,  
Till the great king, without a ransom paid,  
To her own Chrysa send the black-eyed maid.<sup>2</sup>

In a formal council Agamemnon is therefore asked to relinquish his captive, but violently declares that he will do so only in case he receives Achilles' slave. This insolent claim so infuriates the young hero that he is about to draw his sword, when Minerva, unseen by the rest, bids him hold his hand, and state that should Agamemnon's threat be carried out he will withdraw from the war.

Although the aged Nestor employs all his honeyed eloquence to soothe this quarrel, both chiefs angrily withdraw, Agamemnon to send his captive back to her father, and Achilles to sulk in his tent.

It is while he is thus engaged that Agamemnon's heralds appear and lead away his captive. Mindful of Minerva's injunctions, Achilles allows her to depart, but registers a solemn oath that, even were the Greeks to perish, he will lend them no aid. Then, strolling down to the shore, he summons his mother from the watery deep, and implores her to use her influence to avenge his wrongs. Knowing his life will prove short though

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<sup>2</sup> All the quotations from the Iliad are taken from Pope's translation.

glorious, Thetis promises to visit Jupiter on Olympus in his behalf. There she wins from the Father of the Gods a promise that the Greeks will suffer defeat as long as her son does not fight in their ranks,—a promise confirmed by his divine nod. This, however, arouses the wrath and jealousy of Juno, whom Jupiter is compelled to chide so severely that peace and harmony are restored in Olympus only when Vulcan, acting as cup-bearer, rouses the inextinguishable laughter of the gods by his awkward limp.

*Book II.* That night, while all are sleeping, Zeus sends a deceptive dream to Agamemnon to suggest the moment has come to attack Troy. At dawn, therefore, Agamemnon calls an assembly, and the chiefs decide to test the mettle of the Greeks by ordering a return home, and, in the midst of these preparations, summoning the men to fight.

These signs of imminent departure incense Juno and Minerva, who, ever since the golden apple was bestowed upon Venus, are sworn foes of Paris and Troy. In disguise, therefore, Minerva urges Ulysses, wiliest of the Greeks, to silence the clown Thersites, and admonish his companions that if they return home empty-handed they will be disgraced. Only too pleased, Ulysses reminds his countrymen how, just before they left home, a serpent crawled from beneath the altar and devoured eight young sparrows and the mother who tried to defend them, adding that this was an omen that for nine years they would vainly besiege Troy but would triumph in the tenth.

His eloquent reminder, reinforced by patriotic speeches from Nestor and Agamemnon, determines the Greeks to attempt a final attack upon Troy. So, with the speed and destructive fury of a furious fire, the Greek army, whose forces and leaders are all named, sweeps on toward Troy, where Iris has flown to warn the Trojans of their approach.

As on some mountain, through the lofty grove  
The crackling flames ascend and blaze above;  
The fires expanding, as the winds arise,  
Shoot their long beams and kindle half the skies:  
So from the polish'd arms and brazen shields  
A gleamy splendor flash'd along the fields.

It is in the form of one of Priam's sons that this divinity enters the palace, where, as soon as Hector hears the news, he musters his warriors, most conspicuous among whom are his brother Paris, and Aeneas, son of Venus and Anchises.

*Book III.* Both armies now advance toward each other, the Trojans uttering shrill cries like migratory cranes, while the Greeks maintain an impressive silence. When near enough to recognize his wife's seducer, Menelaus rushes forward to attack Paris, who, terrified, takes refuge in the ranks of the Trojan host. So cowardly a retreat, however, causes Hector to express the bitter wish that his brother had died before bringing disgrace upon Troy. Although conscious of deserving reproof, Paris, after reminding his brother all men are not constituted alike, offers

to redeem his honor by fighting Menelaus, provided Helen and her treasures are awarded to the victor. This proposal proves so welcome, that Hector checks the advance of his men and proposes this duel to the Greeks, who accept his terms, provided Priam will swear in person to the treaty.

Meanwhile Iris, in guise of a princess, has entered the Trojan palace and bidden Helen hasten to the ramparts to see the two armies—instead of fighting—offering sacrifices as a preliminary to the duel, of which she is to be the prize. Donning a veil and summoning her attendants, Helen seeks the place whence Priam and his ancient counsellors gaze down upon the plain. On beholding her, even these aged men admit the two nations are excusable for so savagely disputing her possession, while Priam, with fatherly tact, ascribes the war to the gods alone.

These, when the Spartan queen approach'd the tower,  
In secret own'd resistless beauty's power:  
They cried, "No wonder such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms;  
What winning grace! what majestic mien!  
She moves a goddess and she looks a queen!"

Then he invites Helen to sit beside him and name the Greeks he points out, among whom she recognizes, with bitter shame, her brother-in-law Agamemnon, Ulysses the wily, and Ajax the bulwark of Greece. Then, while she is vainly seeking the forms of her twin brothers, messengers summon Priam down-to the plain

to swear to the treaty, a task he has no sooner performed than he drives back to Troy, leaving Hector and Ulysses to measure out the duelling ground and to settle by lot which champion shall strike first.

Fate having favored Paris, he advances in brilliant array, and soon contrives to shatter Menelaus' sword. Thus deprived of a weapon, Menelaus boldly grasps his adversary by his plumed helmet and drags him away, until, seeing her protégé in danger, Venus breaks the fastenings of his helmet, which alone remains in Menelaus' hands. Then she spirits Paris back to the Trojan palace, where she leaves him resting on a couch, and hurries off, in the guise of an old crone, to twitch Helen's veil, whispering that Paris awaits her at home. Recognizing the goddess in spite of her disguise, Helen reproaches her, declaring she has no desire ever to see Paris again, but Venus, awing Helen into submission, leads her back to the palace. There Paris, after artfully ascribing Menelaus' triumph to Minerva's aid, proceeds to woo Helen anew. Meantime Menelaus vainly ranges to and fro, seeking his foe and hotly accusing the Trojans of screening him, while Agamemnon clamors for the immediate surrender of Helen, saving the Greeks have won.

*Book IV.* The gods on Mount Olympus, who have witnessed all, now taunt each other with abetting the Trojans or Greeks, as the case may be. After this quarrel has raged some time, Jupiter bids Minerva go down, and violate the truce; so, in the guise of a warrior, she prompts a Trojan archer to aim at Menelaus a

dart which produces a nominal wound. This is enough, however, to excite Agamemnon to avenge the broken treaty. A moment later the Greek phalanx advances, urged on by Minerva, while the Trojans, equally inspired by Mars, rush to meet them with similar fury. Streams of blood now flow, the earth trembles beneath the crash of falling warriors, and the roll of war chariots is like thunder. Although it seems for a while as if the Greeks are gaining the advantage, Apollo spurs the Trojans to new efforts by reminding them that Achilles, their most dreaded foe, is absent.

*Book V.* Seeing the battle well under way, Minerva now drags Mars out of the fray, suggesting that mortals settle their quarrel unaided. Countless duels now occur, many lives are lost, and sundry miracles are performed. Diomedes, for instance, being instantly healed of a grievous wound by Minerva, plunges back into the fray and fights until Aeneas bids an archer check his destructive career. But this man is slain before he can obey, and Aeneas himself would have been killed by Diomedes had not Venus snatched him away from the battle-field. While she does this, Diomedes wounds her in the hand, causing her to drop her son, whom Apollo rescues, while she hastens off to obtain from Mars the loan of his chariot, wherein to drive back to Olympus. There, on her mother's breast, Venus sobs out the tale of her fright, and, when healed, is sarcastically advised to leave fighting to the other gods and busy herself only with the pleasures of love.

The sire of gods and men superior smiled,

And, calling Venus, thus address'd his child:  
"Not these, O daughter, are thy proper cares,  
Thee milder arts befit, and softer wars;  
Sweet smiles are thine, and kind endearing charms;  
To Mars and Pallas leave the deeds of arms."

Having snatched Aeneas out of danger, Apollo conveys him to Pergamus to be healed, leaving on the battle-field in his stead a phantom to represent him. Then Apollo challenges Mars to avenge Venus' wound, and the fray which ensues becomes so bloody that "Homeric battle" has been ever since the accepted term for fierce fighting. It is because Mars and Bellona protect Hector that the Trojans now gain some advantage, seeing which, Juno and Minerva hasten to the rescue of the Greeks. Arriving on the battle-field, Juno, assuming the form of Stentor (whose brazen tones have become proverbial), directs the Greek onslaught. Meanwhile, instigated by Minerva, Diomedes attacks Mars, who, receiving a wound, emits such a roar of pain that both armies shudder. Then he too is miraculously conveyed to Olympus, where, after exhibiting his wound, he denounces Minerva who caused it. But, although Jupiter sternly rebukes his son, he takes such prompt measures to relieve his suffering, that Mars is soon seated at the Olympian board, where before long he is joined by Juno and Minerva.

*Book VI.* Meanwhile the battle rages, and in the midst of broken chariots, flying steeds, and clouds of dust, we descry Menelaus and Agamemnon doing wonders and hear Nestor

cheering on the Greeks. The Trojans are about to yield before their onslaught, when a warrior warns Hector, and the just returned Aeneas, of their dire peril. After conferring hastily with his friends, Hector returns to Troy to direct the women to implore Minerva's favor, while Aeneas goes to support their men. At the Scaean Gate, Hector meets the mothers, wives, and daughters of the combatants, who, at his suggestion, gladly prepare costly offerings to be borne to Minerva's temple in solemn procession.

Then Hector himself rushes to the palace, where, refusing all refreshment, he goes in quest of Paris, whom he finds in the company of Helen and her maids, idly polishing his armor. Indignantly Hector informs his brother the Trojans are perishing without the walls in defence of the quarrel he kindled, but which he is too cowardly to uphold! Although admitting he deserves reproaches, Paris declares he is about to return to the battle-field, for Helen has just rekindled all his ardor. Seeing Hector does not answer, Helen timidly expresses her regret at having caused these woes, bitterly wishing fate had bound her to a man noble enough to feel and resent an insult. With a curt recommendation to send Paris after him as soon as possible, Hector hastens off to his own dwelling, for he longs to embrace his wife and son, perhaps for the last time.

There he finds none but the servants at home, who inform him that his wife has gone to the watch-tower, whither he now hastens. The meeting between Hector and Andromache, her tender reproaches at the risks he runs, and her passionate

reminder that since Achilles deprived her of her kin he is her sole protector, form the most touching passage in the Iliad. Gently reminding her he must go where honor calls, and sadly admitting he is haunted by visions of fallen Troy and of her plight as a captive, Hector adds that to protect her from such a fate he must fight. But when he holds out his arms to his child, the little one, terrified by the plumes on his helmet, refuses to come to him until he lays it aside. Having embraced his infant son, Hector fervently prays he may grow up to defend the Trojans, ere he hands him back to Andromache, from whom he also takes tender leave.

Thus having spoke, the illustrious chief of Troy  
Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.  
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,  
Seared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest.  
With secret pleasure each fond parent smiled  
And Hector hasted to relieve his child,  
The glittering terrors from his brows unbound,  
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground;  
Then kiss'd the child, and, lifting high in air,  
Thus to the gods preferr'd a father's prayer:  
"O thou! whose glory fills the ethereal throne,  
And all ye deathless powers! protect my son!  
Grant him, like me, to purchase just renown,  
To guard the Trojans, to defend the crown,  
Against his country's foes the war to wage,  
And rise the Hector of the future age!

So when triumphant from successful toils  
Of heroes slain he bears the reeking spoils,  
Whole hosts may hail him with deserved acclaim,  
And say, 'This chief transcends his father's fame:'  
While pleased amidst the general shouts of Troy,  
His mother's conscious heart o'erflows with joy."

Then, resuming his helmet, Hector drives out of the Scaean Gate and is joined by his brother Paris, now full of ambition to fight.

*Book VII.* Joyfully the Trojans hail the arrival of both brothers, before whose fierce onslaught the Greeks soon fall back in their turn. Meanwhile Minerva and Apollo, siding with opposite forces, decide to inspire the Trojans to challenge the Greeks to a single fight, and, after doing this, perch upon a tree, in the guise of vultures, to watch the result. Calling for a suspension of hostilities, Hector dares any Greek to fight him, stipulating that the arms of the vanquished shall be the victor's prize, but that his remains shall receive honorable burial. Conscious that none of their warriors—save Achilles—match Hector, the Greeks at first hesitate, but, among the nine who finally volunteer, Ajax is chosen by lot to be the Greek champion. Overjoyed at this opportunity to distinguish himself, Ajax advances with boastful confidence to meet Hector, who, undismayed by his size and truculent speeches, enters into the fight. The duel is, however, not fought to a finish, for the heralds interrupt it at nightfall, pronouncing the champions equal in strength and skill

and postponing its issue until the morrow.

In his elation Ajax offers thanks to Jupiter before attending a banquet, where Nestor prudently advises his friends to fortify their camp by erecting earthworks. While the Greeks are feasting, the Trojans debate whether it would not be wise to apologize for the broken truce and restore Helen and her treasures to the Greeks. But this suggestion is so angrily rejected by Paris that Priam suggests they propose instead an armistice of sufficient length to enable both parties to bury their dead.

At dawn, therefore, Trojan heralds visit Agamemnon's tent to propose a truce, and offer any indemnification save Helen's return. But, although the Greeks consent to an armistice, they feel so confident of success that they refuse all offers of indemnity. Both parties now bury their dead, a sight witnessed by the gods, who, gazing down from Olympus, become aware of the earthen ramparts erected during the night to protect the Greek fleet. This sight prompts Neptune to express jealous fears lest these may eclipse the walls he built around Troy, but Jupiter pacifies him by assuring him he can easily bury them beneath the sand as soon as the war is over.

*Book VIII.* At daybreak Jupiter summons the gods, forbidding them to lend aid to either party, under penalty of perpetual imprisonment in Tartarus. Having decreed this, Jupiter betakes himself to Mount Ida, whence he proposes to watch all that is going on. It is there, at noon, that he takes out his golden balances, and places in opposite scales the fates of Troy and

Greece. A moment later a loud clap of thunder proclaims the day's advantage will remain with the Trojans, whose leader, Hector, is protected by Jupiter's thunder-bolts each time that Diomedes attacks him. This manifestation of divine favor strikes terror in the hearts of the Greeks, but encourages the Trojans. They, therefore, hotly pursue the Greeks to their ramparts, which Hector urges them to scale when the foe seeks refuge behind them.

Seeing the peril of the Greeks, Juno urges Agamemnon to visit Ulysses' tent, and there proclaim, in such loud tones that Achilles cannot fail to overhear him, that their vessels will soon be in flames. Then, fearing for his companions, Agamemnon prays so fervently for aid that an eagle flies over the camp and drops a lamb upon the Greek altar. This omen of good fortune renews the courage of the Greeks, and stimulates the archer Teucer to cause new havoc in the Trojan ranks with his unfailing arrows, until Hector hurls a rock, which lays him low, and rushes into the Greek camp.

Full of anxiety for their protégés, Juno and Minerva forget Jupiter's injunctions, and are about to hurry off to their rescue, when the king of the gods bids them stop, assuring them the Greeks will suffer defeat, until, Patroclus having fallen, Achilles arises to avenge him. When the setting sun signals the close of the day's fight, although the Greeks are still in possession of their tents, the Trojans bivouac in the plain, just outside the trench, to prevent their escape.

*Book IX.* Such anxiety reigns in the Greek camp that Agamemnon holds a council in his tent. There, almost choked by tears, he declares no alternative remains save flight, but Diomedes so hotly contradicts him that the Greeks decide to remain. At Nestor's suggestion, Agamemnon then tries to atone for his insult to Achilles by gifts and apologies, instructing the bearers to promise the return of the captive and to offer an alliance with one of his daughters, if Achilles will only come to their aid. Wending their way through the moonlit camp, these emissaries find Achilles idly listening to Patroclus' music. After delivering the message, Ulysses makes an eloquent appeal in behalf of his countrymen, but Achilles coldly rejoins the Greeks will have to defend themselves as he is about to depart. Such is his resentment that he refuses to forgive Agamemnon, although his aged tutor urges him to be brave enough to conquer himself. Most reluctantly therefore Ulysses and Ajax return, and, although sleep hovers over Achilles' tent, dismay reigns within that of Agamemnon, until Diomedes vows they will yet prove they do not need Achilles' aid.

*Book X.* Exhausted by the day's efforts, most of the Greeks have fallen asleep, when Agamemnon, after conversing for a while with Menelaus, arouses Nestor, Ulysses, and Diomedes to inspect their posts. It is in the course of these rounds that Nestor suggests one of their number steal into the Trojan camp to discover their plans. This suggestion is eagerly seized by Diomedes and Ulysses, who, on their way to the enemy's camp,

encounter Dolon, a Trojan spy, who is coming to find out what they are planning. Crouching among the corpses, Diomedes and Ulysses capture this man, from whom they wring all the information they require, together with exact directions to find the steeds of Rhesus. To secure this prize, Ulysses and Diomedes steal into the Trojan camp, where, after slaying a few sleepers, they capture the steeds and escape in safety, thanks to Minerva's aid. On seeing his friends emerge from the gloom with so glorious a prize, Nestor, who has been anxiously watching, expresses great joy, and invites his companions to refresh themselves after their exertions.

Old Nestor first perceived the approaching sound,  
Bespeaking thus the Grecian peers around:  
"Methinks the noise of trampling steeds I hear,  
Thickening this way, and gathering on my ear;  
Perhaps some horses of the Trojan breed  
(So may, ye gods! my pious hopes succeed)  
The great Tydides and Ulysses bear,  
Return'd triumphant with this prize of war."

*Book XI.* At daybreak Jupiter sends Discord to waken the Greeks and, when they appear in battle array, hurls a thunderbolt as a signal for the fight to begin. Stimulated by Hector's ardor, the Trojans now pounce like ravening wolves upon their foes, but, in spite of their courage, are driven back almost to the Scean Gate. To encourage Hector, however, Jupiter warns him,

that once Agamemnon is wounded the tide will turn. Soon after, a javelin strikes Agamemnon, and Hector, seeing him borne to his tent, urges his men on with new vehemence until he forces back the Greeks in his turn. In the ensuing medley both Diomedes and Ulysses are wounded, and Achilles, moodily lounging on the prow of his ship, sees Nestor bring them into camp. Wishing to ascertain who has been hurt, he sends Patroclus to find out. Thus this warrior learns how many of the Greeks are wounded, and is persuaded to try to induce Achilles to assist their countrymen, or at least to allow his friend to lead his forces to their rescue.

*Book XII.* Although the Trojans are now fiercely trying to enter the Greek camp, their efforts are baffled until Hector, dismounting from his chariot, attacks the mighty wall which the gods are to level as soon as the war is over. Thanks to his efforts, its gates are battered in, and the Trojans pour into the Greek camp, where many duels occur, and where countless warriors are slain on both sides.

*Book XIII.* Having effected an entrance into the camp, the Trojans rush forward to set fire to the ships, hoping thus to prevent the escape of their foes. Perceiving the peril of the Greeks, Neptune, in the guise of a priest, urges them to stand fast.

Then with his sceptre, that the deep controls,  
He touched the chiefs and steel'd their manly souls:  
Strength, not their own, the touch divine imparts,  
Prompts their light limbs, and swells their daring hearts.  
Then, as a falcon from the rocky height,

Her quarry seen, impetuous at the sight,  
Forth-springing instant, darts herself from high,  
Shoots on the wing, and skims along the sky:  
Such, and so swift, the power of ocean flew;  
The wide horizon shut him from their view.

But the advantage does not remain continuously with the Trojans, for Hector is soon beaten back, and, seeing his people's peril, again hotly reviles Paris, whose crime has entailed all this bloodshed.

*Book XIV.* In the midst of the gloom caused by a new irruption of the Trojans in the Greek camp, Nestor hastens to the spot where the wounded Agamemnon, Ulysses, and Diomedes are watching the fight. But, although Agamemnon renews his former suggestion that they depart, Diomedes and Ulysses, scorning it, prepare to return to the fray, in spite of their wounds. This renewal of Greek courage pleases Juno, who, fearing Jupiter will again interfere in behalf of the Trojans, proceeds by coquettish wiles and with the aid of the God of Sleep to lull him into a state of forgetfulness. This feat accomplished, Juno sends Sleep to urge the Greeks to make the most of this respite, and, thus stimulated, they fight on, until Ajax hurls a rock which lays Hector low. But, before he and his companions can secure this victim, Hector is rescued by his men, who speedily convey him to the river, where plentiful bathing soon restores his senses.

*Book XV.* Thus temporarily deprived of a leader, the Trojans fall back to the place where they left their chariots. They are just

mounting in confusion, in order to flee, when Jupiter, rousing from his nap, and realizing how he has been tricked, discharges his wrath upon Juno's head. Hearing her attribute the blame to Neptune, Jupiter wrathfully orders his brother back to his realm and despatches Apollo to cure Hector. Then he reiterates that the Greeks shall be worsted until Patroclus, wearing Achilles' armor, takes part in the fray. He adds that, after slaying his son Sarpedon, this hero will succumb beneath Hector's sword, and that, to avenge Patroclus' death, Achilles will slay Hector and thus insure the fall of Troy.

Once more the Trojans drive back the Greeks, who would have given up in despair had not Jupiter encouraged them by a clap of thunder. Hearing the Trojans again burst into camp, Patroclus rushes out of Achilles' tent and sees Teucer winging one deadly arrow after another among the foe. But, in spite of his skill, and although Ajax fights like a lion at bay, Hector and the Trojans press fiercely forward, torch in hand, to fire the Greek ships.

*Book XVI.* Appalled by this sight, Patroclus rushes back to Achilles, and, after vainly urging him to fight, persuades him to lend him his armor, chariot, and men. But, even while furthering his friend's departure, Achilles charges him neither to slay Hector nor take Troy, as he wishes to reserve that double honor for himself. It is just as the first vessels are enveloped in flames that Patroclus rushes to the rescue of his countrymen. At the sight of a warrior whom they mistake for Achilles, and

at this influx of fresh troops, the Trojans beat a retreat, and the Greeks, fired with new courage, pursue them across the plain and to the very gates of Troy. Such is Patroclus' ardor that, forgetting Achilles' injunctions, he is about to attack Hector, when Sarpedon challenges him to a duel. Knowing this fight will prove fatal to his beloved son, Jupiter causes a bloody dew to fall upon earth, and despatches Sleep and Death to take charge of his remains, which they are to convey first to Olympus to receive a fatherly kiss and then to Lycia for burial. No sooner is Sarpedon slain than a grim fight ensues over his spoil and remains, but while the Greeks secure his armor, his corpse is borne away by Apollo, who, after purifying it from all battle soil, entrusts it to Sleep and Death.

Meantime, renewing his pursuit of the Trojans, Patroclus is about to scale the walls of Troy, when Apollo reminds him the city is not to fall a prey either to him or to his friend. Then, in the midst of a duel in which Patroclus engages with Hector, Apollo snatches the helmet off the Greek hero's head, leaving him thus exposed to his foe's deadly blows. The dying Patroclus, therefore, declares that had not the gods betrayed him he would have triumphed, and predicts that Achilles will avenge his death. Meantime, pleased with having slain so redoubtable a foe, Hector makes a dash to secure Achilles' chariot and horses, but fails because the driver (Automedon) speeds away.

*Book XVII.* On seeing Patroclus fall, Menelaus rushes forward to defend his remains and rescue Achilles' armor from the foe.

Warned of this move, Hector abandons the vain pursuit of Achilles' chariot, and returns to claim his spoil. He has barely secured it when Menelaus and Ajax attack him, and a mad battle takes place over Patroclus' remains, while Achilles' horses weep for the beloved youth who so often caressed them.

*Book XVIII.* No sooner is the death of Patroclus known in Achilles' tent than the female captives wail, while the hero groans so loudly that Thetis hears him. Rising from the depths of the sea, she hurries to his side, regretting his brief life should be marred by so much sorrow. Then, hearing him swear to avenge his friend, she entreats him to wait until the morrow, so she can procure him armor from Vulcan. Having obtained this promise, she hastens off to visit the god and bespeak his aid in behalf of her son.

Meanwhile the Greeks, who are trying to bear away Patroclus' remains, are so hard pressed by the Trojans that Juno sends word Achilles must interfere. Hampered by a lack of armor and by the promise to his mother, the hero ventures only as far as the trench, where, however, he utters so threatening a war-cry that the Trojans flee, and the Greeks are thus able to bring Patroclus' body safely into camp, just as the sun sets and the day's fighting ends.

Having unharnessed their steeds, the Trojans assemble to consider whether it will not be best to retreat within their walls, for they know Achilles will appear on the morrow to avenge Patroclus. But Hector so vehemently insists that they maintain the advantage gained, that they camp on the plain, where Jupiter

predicts his wife's wish will be granted and her favorite Achilles win great glory. It is in the course of that night that Thetis visits Vulcan's forge and in the attitude of a suppliant implores the divine blacksmith to make an armor for her son. Not only does Vulcan consent, but hurries off to his anvil, where he and Cyclops labor to such good purpose that a superb suit of armor is ready by dawn.

*Book XIX.* Aurora has barely risen from the bosom of the sea, when Thetis enters her son's tent, bearing these wonderful weapons. Finding him still weeping over his friend's remains, Thetis urges him to rouse himself and fight. At the sight of the armor she brings, Achilles' ardor is so kindled that he proclaims he will avenge his friend. Pleased to think the Greeks will have the help of this champion, Agamemnon humbly apologizes for the past, proffering gifts and a feast, which latter Achilles refuses to attend as long as Patroclus is unavenged. Before entering into battle, however, our hero implores his divine steeds to do their best, only to be warned by one of them that, although they will save him to-day, the time is fast coming when he too will fall victim to the anger of the gods. Undaunted by this prophecy, Achilles jumps into his chariot and sets out for the fray, uttering his blood-curdling war-cry.

With unabated rage—"So let it be!  
Portents and prodigies are lost on me.  
I know my fate: to die, to see no more  
My much-loved parents and my native shore—

Enough—when heaven ordains, I sink in night:  
Now perish Troy!" He said, and rush'd to fight.

*Book XX.* The gods, assembled on Mount Olympus, are told by Jupiter that, whereas he intends merely to witness the fight, they may all take part in it, provided they remember Achilles is to reap the main honors of the day. Hearing this, the gods dart off to side with Troy and Greece, as their inclinations prompt, and thus take an active part in the battle, for which Jupiter gives the signal by launching a thunder-bolt. Not only do the gods fight against each other on this day, but use all their efforts to second their favorites in every way. Before long, however, it becomes so evident they are merely delaying the inevitable issue, that they agree to withdraw from the field, leaving mortals to settle the matter themselves.

There are vivid descriptions of sundry encounters, including one between Achilles and Aeneas, wherein both heroes indulge in boastful speeches before coming to blows. At one time, when Aeneas is about to get the worst of it, the gods, knowing he is reserved for greater things, snatch him from the battle-field and convey him to a place of safety. Thus miraculously deprived of his antagonist, Achilles resumes his quest for Hector, who has hitherto been avoiding him, but who, seeing one of his brothers fall beneath the Greek's blows, meets him bravely. But, as the moment of Hector's death has not yet come, the gods separate these two fighters, although their hatred is such that, whenever

they catch a glimpse of each other, they rush forward to renew the fight.

*Book XXI.* Fleeing before the Greeks, the Trojans reach the Xanthus River, into which Achilles plunges after them, and where, after killing hosts of victims, he secures a dozen prisoners to sacrifice on his friend's tomb. Hearing Achilles refuse mercy to a young Trojan, and enraged because he has choked his bed with corpses, the River God suddenly rises to chide him, but Achilles is now in so defiant a mood that he is ready to fight even the gods themselves. In spite of his courage he would, however, have been drowned, had not Neptune and Minerva come to his rescue, fighting the waters with fire, and assuring him Hector will soon lie lifeless at his feet.

He ceased; wide conflagration blazing round;  
The bubbled waters yield a hissing sound.  
As when the flames beneath a cauldron rise,  
To melt the fat of some rich sacrifice,  
Amid the fierce embrace of circling fires  
The waters foam, the heavy smoke aspires:  
So boils the imprison'd flood, forbid to flow,  
And choked with vapors feels his bottom glow.

The course of this day's fighting is anxiously watched by old King Priam from the top of the Trojan ramparts, and, when he sees Achilles' forces pursuing his fleeing army across the plain, he orders the gates opened to admit the fugitives, and quickly

closed again so the foe cannot enter too. To facilitate this move, Apollo assumes the guise of Hector and decoys Achilles away from the gates until the bulk of the Trojan army is safe.

*Book XXII.* Meantime the real Hector is stationed beside the gate, and Achilles, suddenly perceiving he has been pursuing a mere phantom, darts with a cry of wrath toward his foe. Seeing him coming, Hector's parents implore him to seek refuge within the walls, but the young man is too brave to accept such a proposal. Still, when he sees the fire in Achilles' eyes, he cannot resist an involuntary recoil, and turning, flees, with Achilles in close pursuit, hurling taunts at him.

These warriors circle the citadel, until the gods, looking on, knowing they can no longer defer Hector's death, but wishing it to be glorious, send Apollo down to urge him to fight. In the guise of one of Hector's brothers, this god offers to aid him, so, thus supported, Hector turns to meet Achilles, with whom before fighting he tries to bargain that the victor shall respect the remains of the vanquished. But Achilles refuses to listen to terms, and in the course of the ensuing duel is ably seconded by Minerva, while Hector, who depends upon his supposed brother to supply him with weapons when he fails, is basely deserted by Apollo.

Seeing him disarmed, Achilles finally deals him a deadly blow, and, although the dying hero tries to abate his resentment, loudly proclaims he shall be a prey to vultures and wolves. Hearing this, Hector curses his conqueror and dies, predicting

Achilles shall be slain by Paris. His victim having breathed his last, Achilles ties him by the heels to his chariot, and then drives off with Hector's noble head trailing in the dust!

Meantime Andromache, busy preparing for her husband's return, is so startled by loud cries that she rushes off to the ramparts to find out what has occurred. Arriving there just in time to see her husband dragged away, she faints at the pitiful sight, and, on coming back to her senses, bewails her sad fate, foresees an unhappy fate for her infant son, and regrets not being able to bury her beloved husband.

*Book XXIII.* On reaching his tent with his victim, Achilles drags it around Patroclus' remains, apostrophizing him and assuring him that twelve Trojans shall be executed on his pyre, while his slayer's body shall be a prey to the dogs. Then, having cast Hector's corpse on the refuse heap, Achilles assembles the Greeks in his tent for a funeral repast, after which they retire, leaving him to mourn. That night he is visited by Patroclus' spirit, which warns him he will soon have to die, and bespeaks funeral rites. This vision convinces Achilles that the human soul does not perish with the body, and impels him to rouse his companions at dawn to erect a huge pyre on the shore, where innumerable victims are to be sacrificed to satisfy his friend's spirit. Then he renews his promise that Hector's body shall be a prey to the dogs, little suspecting that Venus has mounted guard over it, so that no harm may befall it.

In describing the building and lighting of the pyre, the poet

relates how the flames were fanned by opposite winds, depicts the sacrifices offered, the funeral games celebrated, and explains how the ashes were finally placed in an urn, where those of Achilles were in time to mingle with those of his friend.

*Book XXIV.* Although most of the Greek warriors are resting after the strenuous pleasures of the day, Achilles weeps in his tent until daybreak, when he harnesses his horses to his chariot and again drags Hector's body around Patroclus' tomb, little suspecting how Venus and Apollo guard it from all harm. It is only on the twelfth day after Patroclus' death, that the gods interfere in behalf of the Trojans, by sending Iris to Priam to guide him to Achilles' tent, where they assure him his prayers will obtain his son's body. The rainbow goddess not only serves as guide to the mourning father, but brings him unseen into Achilles' tent, where, falling at the hero's feet, the aged Priam sues in such touching terms that the Greek warrior's heart melts and tears stream down his cheeks. Not only does he grant Priam's request, but assures him he is far happier than Peleus, since he still has several sons to cheer him although Hector has been slain.

These words soft pity in the chief inspire,  
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of his sire.  
Then with his hand (as prostrate still he lay)  
The old man's cheek he gently turn'd away.  
Now each by turns indulg'd the gush of woe;  
And now the mingled tides together flow:  
This low on earth, that gently bending o'er;

A father one, and one a son deplore:  
But great Achilles different passions rend,  
And now his sire he mourns, and now his friend.  
The infectious softness through the heroes ran  
One universal solemn shower began;  
They bore as heroes, but they felt as man.

Still guided by Iris, Priam conveys the body of his son back to Troy, where his mother, wife, and the other Trojan women utter a touching lament. Then a funeral pyre is built, and the Iliad of Homer closes with brave Hector's obsequies.

All Troy then moves to Priam's court again,  
A solemn, silent, melancholy train:  
Assembled there, from pious toil they rest,  
And sadly shared the last sepulchral feast.  
Such honors Ilion to her hero paid,  
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.

# THE ODYSSEY

*Book I.* Homer's second great epic covers a period of forty-two days. After the opening invocation he proceeds to relate the adventures of Ulysses. Nearly ten years have elapsed since the taking of Troy, when the gods looking down from Olympus behold him—sole survivor of his troop—stranded on the Island of Calypso. After some mention of the fate of the other Greeks, Jupiter decrees that Ulysses shall return to Ithaca, where many suitors are besieging his wife Penelope. In obedience with this decree, Pallas (Minerva) dons golden sandals—which permit her to flit with equal ease over land and sea—and visits Ithaca, where Ulysses' son, Telemachus, mournfully views the squandering of his father's wealth. Here she is hospitably received, and, after some conversation, urges Telemachus to visit the courts of Nestor and Menelaus to inquire of these kings whether his father is dead.

Telemachus has just promised to carry out this suggestion, when the suitors' bard begins the recital of the woes which have befallen the various Greek chiefs on their return from Troy. These sad strains attract Penelope, who passionately beseeches the bard not to enhance her sorrows by his songs!

Assuming a tone of authority for the first time, Telemachus bids his mother retire and pray, then, addressing the suitors, vows that unless they depart he will call down upon them the

vengeance of the gods. These words are resented by these men, who continue their revelry until the night, when Telemachus retires, to dream of his projected journey.

*Book II.* With dawn, Telemachus rises and betakes himself to the market-place, where in public council he complains of the suitors' depredations, and announces he is about to depart in quest of his sire. In reply to his denunciations the suitors accuse Penelope of deluding them, instancing how she promised to choose a husband as soon as she had finished weaving a winding sheet for her father-in-law Laertes. But, instead of completing this task as soon as possible, she unravelled by night the work done during the day, until the suitors discovered the trick.

"The work she plied; but, studious of delay,  
By night reversed the labors of the day.  
While thrice the sun his annual journey made,  
The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd;  
Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail:  
The fourth, her maid unfolds the amazing tale.  
We saw as unperceived we took our stand,  
The backward labors of her faithless hand"<sup>3</sup>

They now suggest that Telemachus send Penelope back to her father, but the youth indignantly refuses, and the council closes while he prays for vengeance. That he has not been unheard is proved by the appearance of two eagles, which peck out the eyes

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<sup>3</sup> The quotations of the *Odyssey* are taken from Pope's translation.

of some of the spectators. This is interpreted by an old man as an omen of Ulysses' speedy return, and he admonishes all present to prove faithful, lest they incur a master's wrath.

The assembly having dispersed, Telemachus hastens down to the shore, where Minerva visits him in the guise of his tutor Mentor, and instructs him to arrange for secret departure. Telemachus, therefore, returns to the palace, where the suitors are preparing a new feast. Refusing to join their revels, he seeks his old nurse Eurycleia, to whom he entrusts the provisioning of his vessel, bidding her if possible conceal his departure from Penelope for twelve days. Meantime, in the guise of Telemachus, Minerva scours the town to secure skilful oarsmen, and at sunset has a vessel ready to sail. Then, returning to the palace, she enchains the senses of the suitors in such deep slumber that Telemachus effects his, departure unseen, and embarking with Mentor sets sail, his vessel speeding smoothly over the waves all night.

*Book III.* At sunrise Telemachus reaches Pylos and finds Nestor and his friends offering a sacrifice on the shore. Joining the feasters,—who gather by fifties around tables groaning beneath the weight of nine oxen apiece,—Telemachus makes known his name and errand. In return, Nestor mentions the deaths of Patroclus and Achilles, the taking of Troy, and the Greeks' departure from its shores. He adds that, the gods having decreed they should not reach home without sore trials, half the army lingered behind with Agamemnon to offer propitiatory

sacrifices, while the rest sailed on. Among these were Nestor and Ulysses, but, while the former pressed on and reached home, the latter, turning back to pacify the gods, was seen no more! Since his return, Nestor has been saddened by the death of Agamemnon, slain on his arrival at Mycenae by his faithless wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegistheus. His brother, Menelaus, more fortunate, has recently reached home, having been long delayed in Egypt by contrary winds.

While Nestor recounts these tales, day declines, so he invites Telemachus to his palace for the night, promising to send him on the morrow to Sparta, where he can question Menelaus himself. Although Mentor urges Telemachus to accept this invitation, he declares he must return to the ship, and vanishes in the shape of a bird, thus revealing to all present his divine origin. A sumptuous meal in the palace ensues, and the guest, after a good night, participates at break of day in a solemn sacrifice.

*Book IV.* Riding in a chariot skilfully guided by one of Nestor's sons, Telemachus next speeds on to Sparta, where he finds Menelaus celebrating the marriages of a daughter and son. On learning that strangers have arrived, Menelaus orders every attention shown them, and only after they have been refreshed by food and drink, inquires their errand. He states that he himself reached home only after wandering seven years, and adds that he often yearns to know what has become of Ulysses. At this name Telemachus' tears flow, and Helen, who has just appeared, is struck by his resemblance to his father. When Telemachus admits

his identity, Menelaus and Helen mingle their tears with his, for the memory of the past overwhelms them with sorrow. Then to restore a more cheerful atmosphere, Helen casts "nepenthe" into the wine, thanks to which beneficent drug all soon forget their woes. She next relates how Ulysses once entered Troy in the guise of a beggar, and how she alone recognized him in spite of his disguise. This reminds Menelaus of the time when Ulysses restrained him and the other Greeks in the wooden horse, and when Helen marched around it mimicking the voices of their wives!

Soothed by "nepenthe," all retire to rest, and when morning dawns Telemachus inquires whether Menelaus knows aught of his father. All the information Menelaus vouchsafes is that when he surprised Proteus, counting sea-calves on the island of Pharos, he was told he would reach home only after making due sacrifices in Egypt to appease the gods, that his brother had been murdered on arriving at Mycenae, and that Ulysses—sole survivor of his crew—was detained by Calypso in an island, whence he had no means of escape. The sea-god had further promised that Menelaus should never die, stating that, as husband of Helen and son-in-law of Jupiter, he would enjoy everlasting bliss in the Elysian Fields. Then, after describing the sacrifices which insured his return to Sparta, Menelaus invites Telemachus to tarry with him, although the youth insists he must return home.

Meantime the suitors in Ulysses' palace entertain themselves with games, in the midst of which they learn that Telemachus

has gone. Realizing that if he were dead Penelope's fortunate suitor would become possessor of all Ulysses' wealth, they decide to man a vessel to guard the port and slay Telemachus on his return. This plot is overheard by a servant, who hastens to report it to Penelope. On learning her son has ventured out to sea, she wrings her hands, and reviles the nurse who abetted his departure until this wise woman advises her rather to pray for her son's safe return! While Penelope is offering propitiatory sacrifices, the suitors despatch a vessel in Antinous' charge to lie in wait for the youth. But, during the sleep which overcomes Penelope after her prayers, she is favored by a vision, in which her sister assures her Telemachus will soon be restored to her arms, although she refuses to give her any information in regard to Ulysses.

*Book V.* Aurora has barely announced the return of day to gods and men, when Jupiter assembles his council on Mount Olympus. There Minerva rehearses Ulysses' grievances, demanding that he be at last allowed to return home and his son saved from the suitors' ambush. In reply Jupiter sends Mercury to bid Calypso provide her unwilling guest with the means to leave her shores. Donning his golden sandals, the messenger-god flits to the Island of Ogygia, enters Calypso's wonderful cave, and delivers his message. Although reluctant to let Ulysses depart, Calypso—not daring oppose the will of Jupiter—goes in quest of her guest. Finding him gazing tearfully in the direction of home, she promises to supply him with the means to build a raft which, thanks to the gods, will enable him to reach Ithaca.

After a copious repast and a night's rest, Ulysses fells twenty trees and constructs a raft, in which, after it has been provisioned by Calypso, he sets sail. For seventeen days the stars serve as his guides, and he is nearing the island of Phaeacia, when Neptune becomes aware that his hated foe is about to escape. One stroke of the sea-god's mighty trident then stirs up a tempest which dashes the raft to pieces, and Ulysses is in imminent danger of perishing, when the sea-nymph Leucothea gives him her life-preserving scarf, bidding him cast it back into the waves when it has borne him safely to land! Buoyed up by this scarf, Ulysses finally reaches the shore, where, after obeying the nymph's injunctions, he buries himself in dead leaves and sinks into an exhausted sleep.

Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,  
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung;  
Till the huge surge roll'd off; then backward sweep  
The refluent tides, and plunge him in the deep.  
And when the polypus, from forth his cave  
Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave,  
His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands;  
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands.  
And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,  
The unhappy man; e'en fate had been in vain;  
But all-subduing Pallas lent her power,  
And prudence saved him in the needful hour.

*Book VI.* While Ulysses is thus sleeping, Minerva, in a dream admonishes Nausicaa, daughter of the Phaeacian king, to wash her garments in readiness for her wedding. On awakening, the princess, after bespeaking a chariot with mules to draw the clothes to the washing place, departs with her maids for the shore.

The clothes washed and hung out to dry, the princess and her attendants play ball, until their loud shrieks awaken Ulysses. Veiling his nakedness behind leafy branches, he timidly approaches the maidens, and addresses them from afar. Convinced he is, as he represents, a shipwrecked man in need of aid, the princess provides him with garments, and directs him to follow her chariot to the confines of the city. There he is to wait until she has reached home before presenting himself before her parents, as she does not wish his presence with her to cause gossip in town.

*Book VII.* Having left Ulysses behind her, Nausicaa returns home, where her chariot is unloaded; but shortly after she has retired, Ulysses, guided by Minerva in disguise, enters the town and palace unseen. It is only when, obeying Nausicaa's instructions, he seeks her mother's presence and beseeches her aid, that he becomes visible to all. King and queen gladly promise their protection to the suppliant, who, while partaking of food, describes himself as a shipwrecked mariner and asks to be sent home. After he has refreshed himself, the queen, who has recognized the clothes he wears, learning how he obtained them, delights in her daughter's charity and prudence. Then she and her

husband promise the wanderer their protection before retiring to rest.

*Book VIII.* At daybreak the king conducts his guest to the public square, where Minerva has summoned all the inhabitants. To this assembly Alcinous makes known that a nameless stranger bespeaks their aid, and proposes that after a banquet, where blind Demodocus will entertain them with his songs, they load the suppliant with gifts and send him home.

The projected festive meal is well under way when the bard begins singing of a quarrel between Ulysses and Achilles, strains which so vividly recall happier days that Ulysses, drawing his cloak over his head, gives way to tears. Noting this emotion, Alcinous checks the bard and proposes games. After displaying their skill in racing, wrestling, discus-throwing, etc., the contestants mockingly challenge Ulysses to give an exhibition of his proficiency in games of strength and skill. Stung by their covert taunts, the stranger casts the discus far beyond their best mark, and avers that although out of practice he is not afraid to match them in feats of strength, admitting, however, that he cannot compete with them in fleetness of foot or in the dance. His prowess in one line and frank confession of inferiority in another disarm further criticism, and the young men dance until the bard begins singing of Vulcan's stratagem to punish a faithless spouse.<sup>4</sup>

All the Phaeacians now present gifts to the stranger, who finds

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<sup>4</sup> See chapter on Venus in the author's "Myths of Greece and Rome."

himself rich indeed, but who assures Nausicaa he will never forget she was the first to lend him aid. Toward the close of the festivities the blind bard sings of the wooden horse devised by Ulysses and abandoned on the shore by the retreating Greeks. Then he describes its triumphant entry into Troy, where for the first time in ten years all sleep soundly without dread of a surprise. But, while the too confident Trojans are thus resting peacefully upon their laurels, the Greeks, emerging from this wooden horse, open the gates to their comrades, and the sack of Troy begins! Because the stranger guest again shows great emotion, Alcinous begs him to relate his adventures and asks whether he has lost some relative in the war of Troy?

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd  
To soft affliction all his manly mind:  
Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,  
Industrious to conceal the falling dew:  
But when the music paused, he ceased to shed  
The flowing tear, and raised his drooping head:  
And, lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd,  
He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

*Book IX.* Thus invited to speak, Ulysses, after introducing himself and describing his island home, relates how, the ruin of Troy completed, he and his men left the Trojan shores. Driven by winds to Ismarus, they sacked the town, but, instead of sailing off immediately with their booty as Ulysses urged, tarried there until

surprised by their foes, from whom they were glad to escape with their lives! Tossed by a tempest for many days, the Greek ships next neared the land of the Lotus-Eaters, people who feasted upon the buds and blossoms of a narcotic lotus. Sending three men ashore to reconnoitre, Ulysses vainly awaited their return, finally, mistrusting what had happened, he went in quest of them himself, only to find that having partaken of the lotus they were dead to the calls of home and ambition. Seizing these men, Ulysses conveyed them bound to his ship, and, without allowing the rest to land, sailed hastily away from those pernicious shores.

Before long he came to the land of the Cyclops, and disembarked on a small neighboring island to renew his stock of food and water. Then, unwilling to depart without having at least visited the Cyclops, he took twelve of his bravest men, a skin-bottle full of delicious wine, and set out to find Polyphemus, chief of the Cyclops. On entering the huge cave where this giant pursued his avocation of dairyman, Ulysses and his companions built a fire, around which they sat awaiting their host's return. Before long a huge one-eyed monster drove in his flocks, and, after closing the opening of his cave with a rock which no one else could move, proceeded to milk his ewes and make cheese.

It was only while at supper that he noticed Ulysses and his men, who humbly approached him as suppliants. After shrewdly questioning them to ascertain whether they were alone, believing Ulysses' tale that they were shipwrecked men, he seized and devoured two of them before he lay down to rest. Although sorely

tempted to slay him while he was thus at their mercy, Ulysses refrained, knowing he and his companions would never be able to move the rock.

At dawn the giant again milked his flock, and devoured—as a relish for his breakfast—two more Greeks. Then he easily rolled aside the rock, which he replaced when he and his flock had gone out for the day, thus imprisoning Ulysses and his eight surviving men. During that long day Ulysses sharpened to a point a young pine, and, after hardening this weapon in the fire, secured by lot the helpers he needed to execute his plan. That evening Polyphemus, having finished his chores and cannibal repast, graciously accepted the wine which Ulysses offered him. Pleased with its taste, he even promised the giver a reward if he would only state his name. The wily Ulysses declaring he was called Noman, the giant facetiously promised to eat him last, before he fell into a drunken sleep. Then Ulysses and his four men, heating the pointed pine, bored out the eye of Polyphemus, who howled with pain:

"Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire  
With animating breath the seeds of fire;  
Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,  
And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.  
The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed  
(Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red.  
Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring;  
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.

Urged by some present god, they swift let fall  
The pointed torment on his visual ball.  
Myself above them from a rising ground  
Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.  
As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,  
Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore;  
Urged on all hands it nimbly spins about,  
The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out;  
In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood;  
From the pierced pupil spouts the boiling blood;  
Singed are his brows; the scorching lids grow black;  
The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack."

His fellow-Cyclops, awakened by his cries, gathered without his cave, asking what was the matter. But, hearing him vehemently howl that Noman was hurting him, they all declared he was evidently being punished by the gods and left him to his plight!

When morning came, the groaning Cyclops rolled aside the rock, standing beside it with arms outstretched to catch his prisoners should they attempt to escape. Seeing this, Ulysses tied his men under the sheep, and, clinging to the fleece of the biggest ram, had himself dragged out of the cave. Passing his hand over the backs of the sheep to make sure the strangers were not riding on them, Polyphemus recognized by touch his favorite ram, and feelingly ascribed its slow pace to sympathy with his woes.

The master ram at last approach'd the gate,

Charged with his wool and with Ulysses' fate.  
Him, while he pass'd, the monster blind bespoke:  
"What makes my ram the lag of all the flock?  
First thou wert wont to crop the flowery mead,  
First to the field and river's bank to lead,  
And first with stately step at evening hour  
Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bower.  
Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow  
Thou movest, as conscious of thy master's woe!  
Seest thou these lids that now unfold in vain,  
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train?)  
Oh! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord,  
And would but fate the power of speech afford;  
Soon might'st thou tell me where in secret here  
The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear:  
Swung round and round and dash'd from rock to rock,  
His batter'd brains should on the pavement smoke.  
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,  
While such a monster as vile Noman lives."

Once out of the cave, Ulysses cut the bonds of his men, with whose aid he drove part of Polyphemus' flock on board of his ship, which he had hidden in a cove. He and his companions were scudding safely past the headland where blind Polyphemus idly sat, when Ulysses tauntingly raised his voice to make known his escape and real name. With a cry of rage, the giant flung huge masses of rock in the direction of his voice, hotly vowing his father Neptune would yet avenge his wrongs!

*Book X.* After leaving the island of the Cyclops, Ulysses visited Aeolus, king of the winds, and was hospitably entertained in his cave. In token of friendship and to enable Ulysses to reach home quickly, Aeolus bottled up all the contrary winds, letting loose only those which would speed him on his way. On leaving Aeolus, Ulysses so carefully guarded the skin bottle containing the adverse gales that his men fancied it must contain jewels of great price. For nine days and nights Ulysses guided the rudder, and only when the shores of Ithaca came in sight closed his eyes in sleep. This moment was seized by his crew to open the bottle, whence the captive winds escaped with a roar, stirring up a hurricane which finally drove them back to Aeolus' isle.

"They said: and (oh cursed fate!) the thongs unbound!  
The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round;  
Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,  
The ocean widen'd and the shores withdrew.  
Roused from my fatal sleep, I long debate  
If still to live, or desperate plunge to fate;  
Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,  
Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way."

On seeing them return with tattered sails, Aeolus averred they had incurred the wrath of some god and therefore drove them away from his realm. Toiling at the oar, they reached, after seven days, the harbor of the Laestrigonians, cannibal giants, from whose clutches only a few ships escaped. Sorrowing for their

lost friends, the Greeks next landed in the island of Circe, where Ulysses remained with half his men by the ships, while the rest set out to renew their supplies. This party soon discovered the abode of the enchantress Circe, who, aware of their approach, had prepared a banquet and a magic drug. Enticed by her sweet voice, all the men save one sat down to her banquet, and ate so greedily that the enchantress, contemptuously waving her wand over them, bade them assume the forms of the animals they most resembled! A moment later a herd of grunting pigs surrounded her, pigs which, however, retained a distressing consciousness of their former human estate.

Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat,  
And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat:  
But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,  
With drugs of force to darken all the soul:  
Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,  
And drank oblivion of their native coast.  
Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,  
To hogs transforms them, and the sty receives.  
No more was seen the human form divine;  
Head, face, and members, bristle into swine:  
Still cursed with sense, their minds remain alone,  
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.

This dire transformation was viewed with horror by the man lurking outside, who fled back to the ships, imploring Ulysses

to depart. Unwilling to desert his men, Ulysses on the contrary set out for Circe's dwelling, meeting on the way thither Mercury in disguise, who gave him an herb to annul the effect of Circe's drugs and directed him how to free his companions.

Following these instructions, Ulysses entered Circe's abode, partook of the refreshments offered him, and, when she waved her wand over him, threatened to kill her unless she restored his men to their wonted forms! The terrified Circe not only complied, but detained Ulysses and his companions with her a full year. As at the end of that time the men pleaded to return home, Ulysses told his hostess he must leave. Then she informed him he must first visit the Cimmerian shore and consult the shade of the blind seer Tiresias. The prospect of such a journey greatly alarmed Ulysses, but when Circe had told him just how to proceed, he bravely set out.

Wafted by favorable winds, Ulysses' ship soon reached the country of eternal night. On landing there he dug a trench, and slew the black victims Circe had given him, and with drawn sword awaited the approach of a host of shades, among whom he recognized a man killed by accident on Circe's island, who begged for proper funeral rites. By Circe's order, Ulysses, after allowing the ghost of Tiresias to partake of the victim's blood, learned from him that, although pursued by Neptune's vengeance, he and his men would reach home safely, provided they respected the cattle of the Sun on the island of Trinacria. The seer added that all who attacked them would perish, and that,

even if he should escape death and return home, he would have to slay his wife's insolent suitors before he could rest in peace.

After this had been accomplished, Ulysses was to resume his wanderings until he came to a land where the oar he carried would be mistaken for a winnowing fan. There he was to offer a propitiatory sacrifice to Neptune, after which he would live to serene old age and die peacefully among his own people. His conversation with Tiresias finished, Ulysses interviewed his mother—of whose demise he had not been aware—and conversed with the shades of sundry women noted for having borne sons to gods or to famous heroes.

*Book XI.* This account had been heard with breathless interest by the Phaeacians, whose king now implored Ulysses to go on. The hero then described his interview with the ghost of Agamemnon,—slain by his wife and her paramour on his return from Troy,—who predicted his safe return home, and begged for tidings of his son Orestes, of whom Ulysses knew nought. Ulysses next beheld Achilles, who, although ruler of the dead, bitterly declared he would rather be the meanest laborer on earth than monarch among shades!

"Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,  
Nor think vain words (he cried) can ease my doom.  
Rather I'd choose laboriously to bear  
A weight of woes and breathe the vital air,  
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,  
Than reign the sceptered monarch of the dead."

To comfort him, Ulysses described how bravely his son had fought at the taking of Troy, where he had been one of the men in the wooden horse. The only shade which refused to approach Ulysses was that of Ajax, who still resented his having won the armor of Achilles. Besides these shades, Ulysses beheld the judges of Hades and the famous culprits of Tartarus. But, terrified by the "innumerable nation of the dead" crowding around him, he finally fled in haste to his vessel, and was soon wafted back to Circe's shore.

*Book XII.* There Ulysses buried his dead companion and, after describing his visit to Hades, begged his hostess' permission to depart. Circe consented, warning him to beware of the Sirens, of the threatening rocks, of the monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis on either side of the Messenian Strait, and of the cattle of Trinacria, giving him minute directions how to escape unharmed from all these perils.

Morning having come, Ulysses took leave of Circe, and, on nearing the reef of the Sirens, directed his men to bind him fast to the mast, paying no heed to his gestures, after he had stopped their ears with soft wax. In this way he heard, without perishing, the Sirens' wonderful song, and it was only when it had died away in the distance and the spell ceased that his men unbound him from the mast.

"Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main;

My soul takes wing to meet the heavenly strain;  
I give the sign, and struggle to be free:  
Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea;  
New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,  
Till, dying off, the distant sounds decay:  
Then scudding swiftly from the dangerous ground,  
The deafen'd ears unlock'd, the chains unbound."

Not daring describe to his companions the threatened horrors of Charybdis and Scylla, Ulysses bade his steersman avoid the whirlpool, and, fully armed, prepared to brave the monster Scylla. But, notwithstanding his preparations, she snatched from his galley six men who were seen no more! Although reluctant to land on Trinacria for fear his sailors would steal the cattle of the Sun, Ulysses was constrained to do so to allow them to rest. While they were there, unfavorable winds began to blow, and continued so long that the Greeks consumed all their provisions, and, in spite of their efforts to supply their larder by hunting and fishing, began to suffer from hunger. During one of Ulysses' brief absences the men, breaking their promises, slew some of the bees of the Sun, which although slain moved and lowed as if still alive! Undeterred by such miracles, the men feasted, but, on embarking six days later, they were overtaken by a tempest in which all perished save Ulysses. Clinging to the mast of his wrecked ship, he drifted between Charybdis and Scylla, escaping from the whirlpool only by clinging to the branches at an overhanging fig-tree. Then, tossed by the waves for nine days

longer, Ulysses was finally cast on the isle of Ogygia, whence he had come directly to Phaeacia as already described.

*Book XIII.* Having finished this account of his ten years' wanderings, Ulysses, after banqueting with Alcinous, was conveyed with his gifts to the ship which was to take him home. Then, while he slept in the prow, the skilful Phaeacian rowers entered a sheltered Ithacan bay, where they set sleeper and gifts ashore and departed without awaiting thanks. They were about to re-enter their own port when Neptune, discovering they had taken his enemy home, struck their vessel with his trident, thus transforming it into the galley-shaped rock still seen there to-day.

Meantime Ulysses, awakening, hid his treasures away in a cave. Then, accosted by Minerva in disguise, he gave a fantastic account of himself, to which she lent an amused ear, before assuring him of her identity and of his wife's fidelity. She then reported the insolence of the suitors lying in wait to murder Telemachus at his return, and suggested that Ulysses, in the guise of an aged beggar, should visit his faithful swineherd until time to make his presence known.

*Book XIV.* Transformed by Minerva into a sordid mendicant, Ulysses next visits the swineherd, who sets before him the best he has, complaining that the greedy suitors deplete his herds. This old servant is comforted when the beggar assures him his master will soon return and reports having seen him lately. Ulysses' fictitious account of himself serves as entertainment until the hour for rest, when the charitable swineherd covers his guest with

his best cloak.

*Book XV.* Meantime Minerva, hastening to Sparta, awakens in the heart of the sleeping Telemachus a keen desire to return home, warns him of the suitors' ambush, instructs him how to avoid it, and cautions him on his return to trust none save the women on whose fidelity he can depend. At dawn, therefore, Telemachus, after offering a sacrifice and receiving Menelaus' and Helen's parting gifts, sets out, cheered by favorable omens. Without pausing to visit Nestor,—whose son is to convey his thanks,—Telemachus embarks, and, following Minerva's instructions, lands near the swineherd's hut.

*Book XVI.* The swineherd is preparing breakfast, when Ulysses warns him a friend is coming, for his dogs fawn upon the stranger and do not bark. A moment later Telemachus enters the hut, and is warmly welcomed by his servant, who wishes him to occupy the place of honor at his table. But Telemachus modestly declines it in favor of the aged stranger, to whom he promises clothes and protection as soon as he is master in his own house. Then he bids the swineherd notify his mother of his safe arrival, directing her to send word to Laertes of his return. This man has no sooner gone than Minerva restores Ulysses to more than his wonted vigor and good looks, bidding him make himself known to his son and concert with him how to dispose of the suitors. Amazed to see the beggar transformed into an imposing warrior, Telemachus is overjoyed to learn who he really is. The first transports of joy over, Ulysses advises his son to return

home, lull the suitors' suspicions by specious words, and, after removing all weapons from the banquet hall, await the arrival of his father who will appear in mendicant's guise.

While father and son are thus laying their plans, Telemachus' vessel reaches port, where the suitors mourn the escape of their victim. They dare not, however, attack Telemachus openly, for fear of forfeiting Penelope's regard, and assure her they intend to befriend him. Meantime, having delivered his message to his mistress, the swineherd returns to his hut, where he spends the evening with Telemachus and the beggar, little suspecting the latter is his master.

*Book XVII.* At daybreak Telemachus hastens back to the palace, whither the swineherd is to guide the stranger later in the day, and is rapturously embraced by his mother. After a brief interview, Telemachus sends her back to her apartment to efface the trace of her tears, adding that he is on his way to the market-place to meet a travelling companion whom he wishes to entertain. After welcoming this man with due hospitality, Telemachus gives his mother an account of his trip. While he is thus occupied, Ulysses is wending his way to the palace, where he arrives just as the suitors' wonted revels reach their height. But as he enters the court-yard, his favorite hunting dog expires for joy on recognizing him.

He knew his lord;—he knew, and strove to meet;  
In vain he strove to crawl and kiss his feet;

Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes,  
Salute his master and confess his joys.  
Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul:  
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole;  
Stole unperceived: he turn'd his head, and dried  
The drop humane.

Humbly making the rounds of the tables like the beggar he seems, Ulysses is treated kindly by Telemachus, but grossly insulted by the suitors, one of whom, Antinous, actually flings a stool at him. Such a violation of the rights of hospitality causes some commotion in the palace, and so rouses the indignation of Penelope that she expresses a wish to converse with the beggar, who may have heard of her absent spouse.

*Book XVIII.* Meantime Ulysses has also come into conflict with the town-beggar (Irus), a lusty youth, who challenges him to fight. To his dismay, Ulysses displays such a set of muscles on laying aside his robe that the insolent challenger wishes to withdraw. He is, however, compelled by the suitors to fight, and is thoroughly beaten by Ulysses, whose strength arouses the suitors' admiration. Then, in reply to their questions, Ulysses favors them with another of those tales which do far more honor to his imagination than to his veracity.

Meantime Penelope indulges in a nap, during which Minerva restores all her youthful charms. Then she descends into the hall, to chide Telemachus for allowing a stranger to be insulted beneath his father's roof. She next remarks that she foresees she

will soon have to choose a husband among the suitors present, as it is only too evident Ulysses is dead, and, under pretext of testing their generosity, induces them all to bestow upon her gifts, which she thriftily adds to her stores. Beside themselves with joy at the prospect that their long wooing will soon be over, the suitors sing and dance, until Telemachus advises them to return home.

*Book XIX.* The suitors having gone, Ulysses helps Telemachus remove all the weapons, while the faithful nurse mounts guard over the palace women. Secretly helped by Minerva, father and son accomplish their task, and are sitting before the fire when Penelope comes to ask the beggar to relate when and how he met Ulysses. This time the stranger gives so accurate a description of Ulysses, that Penelope, wishing to show him some kindness, summons the old nurse to bathe his feet. Because she herself dozes while this homely task is being performed, she is not aware that the old nurse recognizes her master by a scar on his leg, and is cautioned by him not to make his presence known.

Deep o'er his knee in seam'd, remain'd the scar:  
Which noted token of the woodland war  
When Euryclea found, the ablution ceased;  
Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand released:  
The mingled fluids from the base redound;  
The vase reclining floats the floor around!  
Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express'd  
Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.  
Her fluttering words in melting murmurs died;

At length abrupt—"My son!—my king!" she cried.

Her nap ended, Penelope resumes her conversation with the beggar, telling him she has been favored by a dream portending the death of the suitors. Still, she realizes there are two kinds of dreams,—those that come true issuing from Somnus' palace by the gate of horn, while deceptive dreams pass through an ivory gate. After providing for the beggar's comfort, Penelope retires, and as usual spends most of the night mourning for her absent partner.

*Book XX.* Sleeping beneath the portico on the skins of the animals slain to feast the horde of suitors, Ulysses sees the maids slip out of the palace to join the suitors, who have wooed them surreptitiously. Then he falls asleep and is visited by Minerva, who infuses new strength and courage in his veins. At dawn Ulysses is awakened by Telemachus, and soon after the house is once more invaded by the suitors, who with their own hands slay the animals provided for their food. Once more they display their malevolence by ill treating the beggar, and taunt Telemachus, who apparently pays no heed to their words.

*Book XXI.* Meantime Minerva has prompted Penelope to propose to the suitors to string Ulysses' bow and shoot an arrow through twelve rings. Armed with this weapon, and followed by handmaids bearing bow, string, and arrows, Penelope appears in the banquet-hall, where the suitors eagerly accept her challenge. But, after Antinous has vainly striven to bend the bow, the others

warily try sundry devices to ensure its pliancy.

Meantime, noticing that the swineherd and one of his companions—upon whose fidelity he counts—have left the hall, Ulysses follows them, makes himself known by means of his scar, and directs them what to do. Then, returning into the hall, he silently watches the suitors' efforts to bend the bow, and, when the last has tried and failed, volunteers to make the attempt, thereby rousing general ridicule. All gibes are silenced, however, when the beggar not only spans the bow, but sends his first arrow through the twelve rings. At the same time the faithful servants secure the doors of the apartment, and Telemachus, darting to his father's side, announces he is ready to take part in the fray.

*Book XXII.*

Then fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;  
Strip'd of his rags, he blazed out like a god.  
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,  
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store;  
Before his feet the rattling shower he threw,  
And thus, terrific, to the suitor-crew:  
"One venturous game this hand hath won to-day;  
Another, princes! yet remains to play:  
Another mark our arrow must attain.  
Phoebus, assist! nor be the labor vain."  
Swift as the word the parting arrow sings;  
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings.  
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!  
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl:

E'en then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath;  
Changed to the deep, the bitter draught of death!  
For fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?  
And fate to numbers, by a single hand?  
Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon pass'd,  
And pierced his neck. He falls, and breathes his last.

Grimly announcing his second arrow will reach a different goal by Apollo's aid, Ulysses shoots the insolent Antinous through the heart and then begins to taunt and threaten the other suitors. Gazing wildly around them for weapons or means of escape, these men discover how cleverly they have been trapped. One after another now falls beneath the arrows of Ulysses, who bids his son hasten to the storeroom and procure arms for them both as there are not arrows enough to dispose of his foes. Through Telemachus' heedlessness in leaving the doors open, the suitors contrive to secure weapons too, and the fight in the hall rages until they all have been slain. Then the doors are thrown open, and the faithless maids are compelled to remove the corpses and purify the room, before they are hanged!

*Book XXIII.* The old nurse has meantime had the privilege of announcing Ulysses' safe return to his faithful retainers, and last of all to the sleeping Penelope. Unable to credit such tidings,—although the nurse assures her she has seen his scar,—Penelope imagines the suitors must have been slain by some god who has come to her rescue. She decides, therefore, to go down and congratulate her son upon being rid of those who preyed

upon his wealth. Seeing she does not immediately fall upon his father's neck, Telemachus hotly reproaches her, but she rejoins she must have some proof of the stranger's identity and is evidently repelled by his unprepossessing appearance. Hearing this, Ulysses suggests that all present purify themselves, don fresh garments, and partake of a feast, enlivened by the songs of their bard. While he is attended by the old nurse, Minerva sheds upon him such grace that, when he reappears, looking like a god, he dares reproach Penelope for not recognizing him. Then, hearing her order that his bed be removed to the portico, he hotly demands who cut down the tree which formed one of its posts? Because this fact is known only to Penelope and to the builder of the bed, she now falls upon Ulysses' neck, begging his pardon. Their joy at being united is marred only by Ulysses' determination soon to resume his travels, and pursue them until Tiresias' prediction has been fulfilled. That night is spent in mutual confidences in regard to all that has occurred during their twenty years' separation, and when morning dawns Ulysses and his son go to visit Laertes.

*Book XXIV.* Mindful of his office as conductor of souls to Hades, Mercury has meanwhile entered the palace of Ulysses, and, waving his wand, has summoned the spirits of the suitors, who, uttering plaintive cries, follow him down to the infernal regions.

Cyllenius now to Pluto's dreary reign

Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!  
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,  
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,  
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day,  
Points out the long uncomfortable way.  
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent  
Thin hollow screams, along the deep descent.  
As in the cavern of some rifted den,  
Where flock nocturnal bats and birds obscene,  
Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,  
They move, and murmurs run through all the rock:  
So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts;  
And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.

There they overhear Ajax giving Achilles a minute account of his funeral,—the grandest ever seen,—and when questioned describe Penelope's stratagem in regard to the Web and to Ulysses' bow.

Meanwhile Ulysses has arrived at his father's farm, where the old man is busy among his trees. To prepare Laertes for his return, Ulysses relates one of his fairy tales ere he makes himself known. Like Penelope, Laertes proves incredulous, until Ulysses points out the trees given him when a child and exhibits his scar.

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,  
His heart within him melts; his knees sustain  
Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone  
Support him, round the loved Ulysses thrown:

He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd:  
Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

To celebrate their reunion, a banquet is held, which permits the Ithacans to show their joy at their master's return. Meanwhile the friends of the suitors, having heard of the massacre, determine to avenge them by slaying father and son. But, aided by Minerva and Jupiter, these two heroes present so formidable an appearance, that the attacking party concludes a treaty, which restores peace to Ithaca and ends the Odyssey.

# LATIN EPICS

Latin literature took its source in the Greek, to which it owes much of its poetic beauty, for many of its masterpieces are either translations or imitations of the best Greek writings. There have been, for instance, numerous translations of the Iliad and Odyssey, the first famous one being by the "father of Roman dramatic and epic poetry," Livius Andronicus, who lived in the third century B.C. He also attempted to narrate Roman history in the same strain, by composing an epic of some thirty-five books, which are lost.

Another poet, Naevius, a century later composed the Cyprian Iliad, as well as a heroic poem on the first Punic war (*Bellum Punicum*), of which only fragments have come down to us. Then, in the second century before our era, Ennius made a patriotic attempt to sing the origin of Rome in the *Annales* in eighteen books, of which only parts remain, while Hostius wrote an epic entitled *Istria*, which has also perished. Lucretius' epic "On the Nature of Things" is considered an example of the astronomical or physical epic.

The Augustan age proved rich in epic poets, such as Publius Terentius Varro, translator of the *Argonautica* and author of a poem on Julius Caesar; Lucius Varius Rufus, whose poems are lost; and, greatest of all, Virgil, of whose latest and greatest work, the *Aeneid*, a complete synopsis follows. Next to this

greatest Latin poem ranks Lucan's *Pharsalia*, wherein he relates in ten books the rivalry between Caesar and Pompey, while his contemporary Statius, in his *Thebais* and unfinished *Achilleis*, works over the time-honored cycles of Thèbes and Troy. During the same period Silius Italicus supplied a lengthy poem on the second Punic war, and Valerius Flaccus a new translation or adaptation of the *Argonautica*.

In the second century of our own era Quintus Curtius composed an epic on Alexander, and in the third century Juvencus penned the first Christian epic, using the Life of Christ as his theme. In the fifth century Claudianus harked back to the old Greek myths of the battle of the Giants and of the Abduction of Persephone, although by that time Christianity was well established in Italy. From that epoch Roman literature practically ceased to exist, for although various attempts at Latin epics were made by mediaeval poets, none of them proved of sufficient merit to claim attention here.

# THE AENEID

*Book I.* After stating he is about to sing the deeds of the heroic ancestor of the Romans, Virgil describes how, seven years after escaping from burning Troy, Aeneas' fleet was overtaken by a terrible storm off the coast of Africa. This tempest, raised by the turbulent children of Aeolus at Juno's request, threatened before long to destroy the Trojan fleet. But, disturbed by the commotion overhead and by Aeneas' frantic prayers for help, Neptune suddenly arose from the bottom of the sea, angrily ordered the winds back to their cave, and summoned sea-nymphs and tritons to the Trojans' aid. Soon, therefore, seven of the vessels came to anchor in a sheltered bay, where Aeneas landed with his friend Achates. While reconnoitring, they managed to kill seven stags with which to satisfy the hunger of the men, whom Aeneas further cheered by the assurance that they were the destined ancestors of a mighty people.

Meantime Venus, beholding the plight of her son Aeneas, had hastened off to Olympus to remind Jupiter of his promise to protect the remnant of the Trojan race. Bestowing a kiss, the King of the Gods assured her that after sundry vicissitudes Aeneas would reach Italy, where in due time his son would found Alba Longa. Jupiter added a brief sketch of what would befall this hero's race, until, some three hundred years after his death, one of his descendants, the Vestal Ilia, would bear twin sons to

Mars, god of War. One of these, Romulus, would found the city of Rome, where the Trojan race would continue its heroic career and where Caesar would appear to fill the world with his fame.

"From Troy's fair stock shall Caesar rise,  
The limits of whose victories  
Are ocean, of his fame the skies."<sup>5</sup>

Having thus quieted Venus' apprehensions in regard to her son, Jupiter directed Mercury to hasten off to Carthage so as to warn Dido she is to receive hospitably the Trojan guests.

After a sleepless night Aeneas again set out with Achates to explore, and encountered in the forest his goddess mother in the guise of a Tyrian huntress. In respectful terms—for he suspected she was some divinity in disguise—Aeneas begged for information and learned he has landed in the realm of Dido. Warned in a vision that her brother had secretly slain her husband and was plotting against her life, this Tyrian queen had fled from Tyre with friends and wealth, and, on reaching this part of Africa, had, thanks to the clever device of a bull's hide, obtained land enough to found the city of Byrsa or Carthage. In return Aeneas gave the strange huntress his name, relating how the storm had scattered all his vessels save the seven anchored close by. To allay his anxiety in regard to his friends, Venus assured him that twelve swans flying overhead were omens of the safety of

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<sup>5</sup> All the quotations in this article are from Virgil's Aeneid, Conington's translation.

his ships, and it was only when she turned to leave him that Aeneas recognized his mother, who, notwithstanding his desire to embrace her, promptly disappeared.

The two Trojans now walked on in the direction she indicated until dazzled by the beauty of the new city of Carthage, which was rising rapidly, thanks to the activity of Dido's subjects. In its centre stood a wonderful temple, whose brazen gates were decorated with scenes from the War of Troy. Hidden from all eyes by a divine mist, Aeneas and Achates tearfully gazed upon these reminders of the glories past and mingled with the throng until Queen Dido appeared.

She was no sooner seated upon her throne than she summoned into her presence some prisoners just secured, in whom Aeneas recognized with joy the various captains of his missing ships. Then he overheard them bewail the storm which robbed them of their leader, and was pleased because Dido promised them entertainment and ordered a search made for their chief.

The right moment having come, the cloud enveloping Aeneas and Achates parted, and Dido thus suddenly became aware of the presence of other strangers in their midst. Endowed by Venus with special attractions so as to secure the favor of the Libyan queen, Aeneas stepped gracefully forward, made himself known, and, after paying due respect to the queen, joyfully greeted his comrades. Happy to harbor so famous a warrior, Dido invited Aeneas to a banquet in her palace, an invitation he gladly accepted, charging Achates to hasten back to the ships

to announce their companions' safety and to summon Iulus or Ascanius to join his father. To make quite sure Aeneas should captivate Dido's heart, Venus now substituted Cupid for Iulus, whom she meantime conveyed to one of her favorite resorts. It was therefore in the guise of the Trojan prince that Cupid, during the banquet, caressingly nestled in Dido's arms and stealthily effaced from her heart all traces of her former husband's face, filling it instead with a resistless passion for Aeneas, which soon impelled her to invite him to relate his escape from Troy.

*Book II.* With the eyes of all present upon him, Aeneas related how the Greeks finally devised a colossal wooden horse, wherein their bravest chiefs remained concealed while the remainder of their forces pretended to sail home, although they anchored behind a neighboring island to await the signal to return and sack Troy. Overjoyed by the departure of the foe, the Trojans hastened down to the shore, where, on discovering the huge wooden horse, they joyfully proposed to drag it into their city as a trophy. In vain their priest, Laocoon, implored them to desist, hurling his spear at the horse to prove it was hollow and hence might conceal some foe. This daring and apparent sacrilege horrified the Trojans, who, having secured a Greek fugitive in a swamp near by, besought him to disclose what purpose the horse was to serve. Pretending to have suffered great injustice at the Greeks' hands, the slave (Sinon) replied that if they removed the wooden horse into their walls the Trojans would greatly endanger the safety of their foes, who had left it on the shore to propitiate

Neptune. Enticed by this prospect, the Trojans proved more eager than ever to drag the horse into their city, even though it necessitated pulling down part of their walls. Meantime part of the crowd gathered about Laocoon who was to offer public thanks on the sea-shore, but, even while he was standing at the altar, attended by his sons, two huge serpents arose out of the sea and, coiling fiercely around priest and both acolytes, throttled them in spite of their efforts.

He strains his strength their knots to tear,  
While gore and slime his fillets smear,  
And to the unregardful skies  
Sends up his agonizing cries.

On seeing this, the horror-struck Trojans immediately concluded Laocoon was being punished for having attacked the wooden horse, which they joyfully dragged into Troy, although the prophet-princess, Cassandra, besought them to desist, foretelling all manner of woe.

Night now fell upon the city, where, for the first time in ten years, all slept peacefully without fear of surprise. At midnight Sinon released the captive Greeks from the wooden steed, and, joined by their companions, who had noiselessly returned, they swarmed all over the undefended city. Aeneas graphically described for Dido's benefit his peaceful sleep, when the phantom of the slaughtered Hector bade him arise and flee with his family, because the Greeks had already taken

possession of Troy! At this moment loud clamors awakened him, confirming what he had just heard in dream. Aeneas immediately rushed to the palace to defend his king, he and his men stripping the armor from fallen Greeks to enable them to get there unmolested. Still, they arrived only in time to see Achilles' son rush into the throne-room and cruelly murder the aged Priam after killing his youngest son. They also beheld the shrieking women ruthlessly dragged off into captivity, Cassandra wildly predicting the woes which would befall the Greek chiefs on their way home.

Ah see! the Priameian fair,  
Cassandra, by her streaming hair  
Is dragged from Pallas' shrine,  
Her wild eyes raised to Heaven in vain—  
Her eyes, alas! for cord and chain  
Her tender hands confine.

The fall of aged Priam and the plight of the women reminding Aeneas of the danger of his own father, wife, and son, he turned to rush home. On his way thither he met his mother, who for a moment removed the mortal veil from his eyes, to let him see Neptune, Minerva, and Juno zealously helping to ruin Troy. Because Venus passionately urged her son to escape while there was yet time, Aeneas, on reaching home, besought his father Anchises to depart, but it was only when the old man saw a bright flame hover over the head of his grandson, Iulus, that

he realized heaven intended to favor his race and consented to leave. Seeing him too weak to walk, his son bade him hold the household goods, and carried him off on his back, leading his boy by the hand and calling to his wife and servants to follow. Thus burdened, Aeneas reached a ruined fane by the shore, only to discover his beloved wife was missing. Anxiously retracing his footsteps, he encountered her shade, which bade him cease seeking for her among the living and hasten to Hesperia, where a new wife and home awaited him.

"Then, while I dewed with tears my cheek  
And strove a thousand things to speak,  
She melted into night:  
Thrice I essayed her neck to clasp:  
Thrice the vain semblance mocked my grasp,  
As wind or slumber light."

Thus enlightened in regard to his consort's fate and wishes, Aeneas hastened back to his waiting companions, and with them prepared to leave the Trojan shores.

*Book III.* Before long Aeneas' fleet landed on the Thracian coast, where, while preparing a sacrifice, our hero was horrified to see blood flow from the trees he cut down. This phenomenon was, however, explained by an underground voice, relating how a Trojan was robbed and slain by the inhabitants of this land, and how trees had sprung from the javelins stuck in his breast.

Unwilling to linger in such a neighborhood, Aeneas sailed

to Delos, where an oracle informed him he would be able to settle only in the land whence his ancestors had come. Although Anchises interpreted this to mean they were to go to Crete, the household gods informed Aeneas, during the journey thither, that Hesperia was their destined goal. After braving a three-days tempest, Aeneas landed on the island of the Harpies, horrible monsters who defiled the travellers' food each time a meal was spread. They not only annoyed Aeneas in this way, but predicted, when attacked, that he should find a home only when driven by hunger to eat boards.

"But ere your town with walls ye fence,  
Fierce famine, retribution dread  
For this your murderous violence,  
Shall make you eat your boards for bread."

Sailing off again, the Trojans next reached Epirus, which they found governed by Helenus, a Trojan, for Achilles' son had already been slain. Although Hector's widow was now queen of the realm where she had been brought a captive, she still mourned for her noble husband, and gladly welcomed the fugitives for his sake. It was during the parting sacrifice that Helenus predicted that, after long wanderings, his guests would settle in Italy, in a spot where they would find a white sow suckling thirty young. He also cautioned Aeneas about the hidden dangers of Charybdis and Scylla, and bade him visit the Cumaean Sibyl, so as to induce her, if possible, to lend him her aid.

Restored and refreshed by this brief sojourn among kinsmen, Aeneas and his followers resumed their journey, steering by the stars and avoiding all landing in eastern or southern Italy which was settled by Greeks. After passing Charybdis and Scylla unharmed, and after gazing in awe at the plume of smoke crowning Mt. Aetna, the Trojans rescued one of the Greeks who had escaped with Ulysses from the Cyclops' cave but who had not contrived to sail away.

To rest his weary men, Aeneas finally landed at Drepanum, in Sicily, where his old father died and was buried with all due pomp. It was shortly after leaving this place, that Aeneas' fleet had been overtaken by the terrible tempest which had driven his vessels to Dido's shore.

So King Aeneas told his tale  
While all beside were still,  
Rehearsed the fortunes of his sail  
And fate's mysterious will:  
Then to its close his legend brought  
And gladly took the rest he sought.

*Book IV.* While Aeneas rested peacefully, Dido's newborn passion kept her awake, causing her at dawn to rouse her sister Anna, so as to impart to her the agitated state of her feelings. Not only did Anna encourage her sister to marry again, but united with her in a prayer to which Venus graciously listened, although Juno reminded her that Trojans and Carthaginians were destined

to be foes. Still, as Goddess of Marriage, Juno finally consented that Aeneas and Dido be brought together in the course of that day's hunt.

We now have a description of the sunrise, of the preparations for the chase, of the queen's dazzling appearance, and of the daring huntsmanship of the false Iulus. But the brilliant hunting expedition is somewhat marred in the middle of the day by a sudden thunderstorm, during which Aeneas and Dido accidentally seek refuge in the same cave, where we are given to understand their union takes place. So momentous a step, proclaimed by the hundred-mouthed Goddess of Fame, rouses the ire of the native chiefs, one of whom fervently hopes Carthage may rue having spared these Trojan refugees. This prayer is duly registered by Jupiter, who further bids Mercury remind Aeneas his new realm is to be founded in Italy and not on the African coast!

Thus divinely ordered to leave, Aeneas dares not disobey, but, dreading Dido's reproaches and tears, he prepares to depart secretly. His plans are, however, detected by Dido, who vehemently demands, how he dares forsake her now? By Jupiter's orders, Aeneas remains unmoved by her reproaches, and sternly reminds her that he always declared he was bound for Italy. So, leaving Dido to brood over her wrongs, Aeneas hastens down to the shore to hasten his preparations for departure. Seeing this, Dido implores her sister to detain her lover, and, as this proves vain, orders a pyre erected, on which she places all the objects

Aeneas has used.

That night the gods arouse Aeneas from slumber to bid him sail without taking leave of the Tyrian queen. In obedience to this command, our hero cuts with his sword the rope which moors his vessel to the Carthaginian shore, and sails away, closely followed by the rest of his fleet. From the watch-tower at early dawn, Dido discovers his vanishing sails, and is so overcome by grief that, after rending "her golden length of hair" and calling down vengeance upon Aeneas, she stabs herself and breathes her last in the midst of the burning pyre. The Carthaginians, little expecting so tragical a denouement, witness the agony of their beloved queen in speechless horror, while Anna wails aloud. Gazing down from heaven upon this sad scene, Juno directs Iris to hasten down and cut off a lock of Dido's hair, for it is only when this mystic ceremony has been performed that the soul can leave the body. Iris therefore speedily obeys, saying:

"This lock to Dis I bear away  
And free you from your load of clay:"  
So shears the lock: the vital heats  
Disperse, and breath in air retreats.

*Book V.* Sailing on, Aeneas, already dismayed by the smoke rising from the Carthaginian shore, is further troubled by rapidly gathering clouds. His weather-wise pilot, Palinurus, suggests that, since "the west is darkening into wrath," they run into the Drepanum harbor, which they enter just one year after Anchises'

death. There they show due respect to the dead by a sacrifice, of which a serpent takes his tithe, and proceed to celebrate funeral games. We now have a detailed account of the winning of prizes for the naval, foot, horse and chariot races, and the boxing and archery matches.

While all the men are thus congenially occupied, the Trojan women, instigated by Juno in disguise, set fire to the ships, so they need no longer wander over seas they have learned to loathe. One of the warriors, seeing the smoke, raises the alarm, and a moment later his companions dash down to the shore to save their ships. Seeing his fleet in flames, Aeneas wrings his hands, and prays with such fervor that a cloudburst drenches his burning vessels. Four, however, are beyond repair; so Aeneas, seeing he no longer has ship-room for all his force, allows the Trojans most anxious to rest to settle in Drepanum, taking with him only those who are willing to share his fortunes.

Before he leaves, his father's ghost appears to him, bidding him, before settling in Latium, descend into Hades by way of Lake Avernus, and visit him in the Elysian Fields to hear what is to befall his race.

When Aeneas leaves Drepanum on the next day, his mother pleads so successfully in his behalf that Neptune promises to exact only one life as toll.

"One life alone shall glut the wave;  
One head shall fall the rest to save."

*Book VI.* Steering to Cumae, where the Sibyl dwells, Aeneas seeks her cave, whose entrance is barred by bronzen gates, on which is represented the story of Daedalus,—the first bird man,—who, escaping from the Labyrinth at Crete, gratefully laid his wings on this altar. We are further informed that the Sibyl generally wrote her oracles on separate oak leaves, which were set in due order in her cave, but which the wind, as soon as the doors opened, scattered or jumbled together, so that most of her predictions proved unintelligible to those who visited her shrine. After a solemn invocation, Aeneas besought her not to baffle him by writing on oak leaves, and was favored by her apparition and the announcement that, after escaping sundry perils by land and sea and reddening the Tiber with blood, he would, thanks to Greek aid, triumph over his foes and settle in Latium with a new bride. Undaunted by the prospect of these trials, Aeneas besought the Sibyl to guide him down to Hades, to enable him to visit his father, a journey she flatly refused to undertake, unless he procured the golden bough which served as a key to that region, and unless he showed due respect to the corpse of his friend. Although both conditions sounded mysterious when uttered, Aeneas discovered, on rejoining his crew, that one of his Trojans had been slain. After celebrating his funeral, our hero wandered off into a neighboring forest, where some doves—his mother's birds—guided him to the place where grew the golden bough he coveted.

Armed with this talisman and escorted by the Sibyl, Aeneas, by way of Lake Avernus, entered the gloomy cave which formed the entrance to Hades. Following the flying footsteps of his mystic guide, he there plunged into the realm of night, soon reaching the precinct of departed souls, where he saw innumerable shades. Although he immediately crossed the river in Charon's leaky punt, many spirits were obliged to wait a hundred years, simply because they could not pay for their passage. Among these unfortunates Aeneas recognized his recently drowned pilot, who related how he had come to his death and by what means he was going to secure funeral honors.

In spite of the three-headed dog and sundry other grewsome sights, Aeneas and his guide reached the place where Minos holds judgment over arriving souls, and viewed the region where those who died for love were herded together. Among these ghosts was Dido, but, although Aeneas pityingly addressed her, she sullenly refused to answer a word. Farther on Aeneas came to the place of dead heroes, and there beheld brave Hector and clever Teucer, together with many other warriors who took part in the Trojan War.

After allowing him to converse a brief while with these friends, the Sibyl vouchsafed Aeneas a passing glimpse of Tartarus and of its great criminals, then she hurried him on to the Elysian Fields, the home of "the illustrious dead, who fighting for their country bled," to inquire for Anchises. The visitors were immediately directed to a quiet valley, where they found

the aged Trojan, pleasantly occupied contemplating the unborn souls destined to pass gradually into the upper world and animate the bodies of his progeny. On beholding his son, who, as at Drepanum, vainly tried to embrace him, Anchises revealed all he had learned in regard to life, death, and immortality, and gave a synopsis of the history of Rome for the next thousand years, naming its great worthies, from Romulus, founder of Rome, down to Augustus, first emperor and ruler of the main part of the world.

This account of the glories and vicissitudes of his race takes considerable time, and when it is finished the Sibyl guides Aeneas back to earth by one of the two gates which lead out of this dismal region. Pleased with having accomplished his errand so successfully and duly encouraged by all he has learned, Aeneas returns to his fleet and sets sail for the home he is so anxious to reach.

*Book VII.* We now skirt with Aeneas the west coast of Italy, sail past Circe's island, and see his ships driven up the winding Tiber by favorable winds. On his first landing the Muse Erato rehearses for our benefit the history of the Latins, whose royal race, represented at present by Latinus, claims to descend from Saturn. Although Latinus has already betrothed his daughter Lavinia to Turnus, a neighboring prince, he is favored by an omen at the moment when the Trojans land. On seeking an interpretation of this sign, he learns he is not to bestow his daughter upon Turnus, but is to reserve her hand for a stranger,

whose descendants will be powerful indeed.

Meantime the Trojans feast upon meat which is served to each man on a wheaten cake. Young Iulus, greedily devouring his, exclaims playfully that he is so hungry he has actually eaten the board on which his meal was spread! Hearing these significant words, his happy father exclaims they have reached their destined goal, since the Harpies' terrifying prophecy has been fulfilled.

"Hail, auspicious land!" he cries,  
"So long from Fate my due!  
All hail, ye Trojan deities,  
To Trojan fortunes true!  
At length we rest, no more to roam.  
Here is our country, here our home."

Then the Trojans begin to explore, and, discovering Latinus' capital, send thither an embassy of a hundred men, who are hospitably entertained. After hearing all they have to say, Latinus assures them that men of his race once migrated from Asia, and that the gods have just enjoined upon him to bestow his daughter upon a foreign bridegroom. When he proposes to unite Lavinia to Aeneas, Juno, unable to prevent a marriage decreed by Fate, tries to postpone it by infuriating Amata, mother of the bride, and causing her to flee into the woods with her daughter.

Not satisfied with one manifestation of power, Juno despatches Discord to ask Turnus if he will tamely allow his promised bride to be given to another man? Such a taunt is

sufficient to determine hot-headed Turnus to make war, but, as a pretext is lacking, one of the Furies prompts Iulus to pursue and wound the pet stag of a young shepherdess called Sylvia. The distress of this rustic maid so excites her shepherd brothers that they fall upon the Trojans, who, of course, defend themselves, and thus the conflict begins. Having successfully broken the peace, Discord hastens back to Juno, who, seeing Latinus would fain remain neutral, compels him to take part in the war by opening with her own hand the gates of the temple of Janus. Here the poet recites the names of the various heroes about to distinguish themselves on either side, specially mentioning in the Rutules' force Mezentius, his son Lausus, and the Volscian maid Camilla, who prefers the stirring life of a camp to the peaceful avocations of her sex.

*Book VIII.* Because Turnus is reinforced by many allies, Aeneas is anxious to secure some too, and soon sets out to seek the aid of Evander, king of Etruria, formerly a Greek. On his way to this realm, Aeneas perceives on the banks of the Tiber a white sow with thirty young, which he sacrifices to the gods in gratitude for having pointed out to him the spot where his future capital will rise. On reaching the Etruscan's stronghold, Aeneas readily secures the promise of a large contingent of warriors, who prepare to join him under the command of Pallas, son of the king. He then assists at a great Etruscan banquet in honor of one of Hercules' triumphs, and while he is sleeping there his mother, Venus, induces her blacksmith husband, Vulcan, to make him a

suit of armor.

Dawn having appeared, Evander entertains his guests with tales, while his son completes his preparations. Aeneas' departure, however, is hastened by Venus, who warns her son that his camp is in danger when she delivers to him the armor she has procured. This is adorned by many scenes in the coming history of Rome, among which special mention is made of the twins suckled by the traditional wolf, of the kidnapping of the Sabines, and of the heroic deeds of Cocles, Cloelia, and Manlius, as well as battles and festivals galore.<sup>6</sup>

*Book IX.* Meantime, obedient to Turnus' orders, the Rutules have surrounded the Trojan camp and set fire to Aeneas' ships. But, as Fate has decreed these vessels shall be immortal, they sink beneath the waves as soon as the flames touch them, only to reappear a moment later as ocean-nymphs and swim down the Tiber to warn Aeneas of the danger of his friends. This miracle awes the foe, until Turnus boldly interprets it in his favor, whereupon the Rutules attack the foreigners' camp so furiously that the Trojans gladly accept the proposal made by Nisus and Euryalus to slip out and summon Aeneas to return.

Stealing out of the Trojan camp by night, these two heroes bravely thread their way through their sleeping foes, killing sundry famous warriors as they go, and appropriating choice bits of their spoil. Leaving death in their wake, the two Trojans pass through the enemy's ranks and finally enter a forest, where they

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<sup>6</sup> See the author's "Story of the Romans."

are pursued by a troop of the Volscians, who surround and slay Euryalus. But, although Nisus first manages to escape from their hands, he returns to defend his comrade and is slain too. The Volscians therefore bear two bloody heads to the Rutules camp to serve as their war standards on the next day. It is thus that Euryalus' mother becomes aware of the death of her son, whom she mourns in touching terms.

"Was it this, ah me,  
I followed over land and sea?  
O slay me, Rutules! if ye know  
A mother's love, on me bestow  
The tempest of your spears!  
Or thou, great Thunderer, pity take,  
And whelm me 'neath the Stygian lake,  
Since otherwise I may not break  
This life of bitter tears!"

To recount all the deeds of valor performed on this day would require much space, but, although Mars inspires the party of Aeneas with great courage, it is evidently on the verge of defeat when Jupiter orders Turnus to withdraw.

*Book X.* Having convoked his Olympian council, Jupiter forbids the gods to interfere on either side, and decrees that the present quarrel shall be settled without divine aid. Hearing this, Venus vehemently protests that, having promised her son should found a new realm in Italy, he is bound to protect

him, while Juno argues with equal force that the Trojans should be further punished for kidnapping Helen. Silencing both goddesses, Jupiter reiterates his orders and dissolves the assembly.

The scene now changes back to earth, where the Trojans, closely hemmed in by foes, long for Aeneas' return. He, on his way back, encounters the sea-nymphs, who explain they were once his ships and bid him hasten and rescue his son. Thus admonished, Aeneas hurries back, to take part in a battle where many heroic deeds are performed, and where Turnus, Mezentius, and Lausus prove bravest on the enemy's side, although they find their match in Aeneas, Pallas, and Iulus. Among the brilliant duels fought, mention must be made of one between Pallas and Turnus, where notwithstanding his courage the Trojan prince succumbs. After stripping his companion of his armor, Turnus abandons his corpse to his friends, who mourn to think that he lost his life while helping them. Vowing to avenge him, Aeneas next attacks his foe with such fury that it seems as if Turnus' last day has come, but Juno pleads so eloquently in his behalf, that, although Fate has decreed he shall perish, she grants him brief respite.

To preserve Turnus from the deadly blows of the real Aeneas, Juno causes him to pursue a phantom foe on board a ship, whose moorings she loosens, thus setting him adrift upon the Tiber. Perceiving only then how he has been tricked, Turnus threatens to slay himself, but is restrained by Juno, who after

awhile allows him to land and return to the battle. Thus deprived of his principal foe, Aeneas ranges over the battle-field, where he wounds Mezentius and kills Lausus. Seeing his beloved son is gone, Mezentius is so anxious to die that he now offers an unresisting throat to Aeneas, who slays him on the spot.

"One boon (if vanquished foe may crave  
The victor's grace) I ask—a grave.  
My wrathful subjects round me wait:  
Protect me from their savage hate,  
And let me in the tomb enjoy  
The presence of my slaughtered boy."

*Book XI.* Having made a trophy of the enemies' spoil, Aeneas, even before proceeding to bury his own comrades, adorns the body of Pallas and sends it back to Etruria. Then he bargains with Turnus' ambassadors for a twelve-days truce, during which both parties celebrate pompous funerals, the finest of all being that of Pallas.

Hoping to check further bloodshed, Latinus now proposes a peace, whose terms Aeneas is willing to accept, but which Turnus angrily rejects since they deprive him of his promised bride. The conflict is therefore resumed, and the next interesting episode refers to Camilla, the warrior maid, whose father when she was only a babe tied her to the shaft of his spear and flung her across a torrent he was unable to stem with her in his arms. Having thus saved her from the enemy's clutches, this father taught Camilla

to fight so bravely, that she causes dire havoc among the Trojans before she dies, using her last breath to implore Turnus to hasten to the rescue.

"Go: my last charge to Turnus tell,  
To haste with succor, and repel  
The Trojans from the town—farewell."  
She spoke, and speaking, dropped her rein,  
Perforce descending to the plain.  
Then by degrees she slips away  
From all that heavy load of clay:  
Her languid neck, her drowsy head  
She droops to earth, of vigor sped:  
She lets her martial weapons go:  
The indignant soul flies down below.

*Book XII.* Unappeased by Latinus' reiterated assertions that he is bestowing Lavinia upon a stranger merely to obey the gods, or by the entreaties in which Amata now joins, Turnus still refuses peace. More fighting therefore ensues, during which Aeneas is wounded in the thigh. While his leech is vainly trying to stanch his blood, Venus drops a magic herb into the water used for bathing his wounds and thus miraculously cures him. Plunging back into the fray, which becomes so horrible that Amata brings Lavinia home and commits suicide, Turnus and Aeneas finally meet in duel, but, although Juno would fain interfere once more in behalf of her protégé, Jupiter refuses to allow it. But he grants

instead his wife's petition that the Trojan name and language shall forever be merged into that of the Latin race.

"Let Latium prosper as she will,  
Their thrones let Alban monarchs fill;  
Let Rome be glorious on the earth,  
The centre of Italian worth;  
But fallen Troy be fallen still,  
The nation and the name."

Toward the end of this momentous encounter, during which both heroes indulged in sundry boastful speeches, a bird warns Turnus that his end is near, and his sister Juturna basely deserts him. Driven to bay and deprived of all other weapons, Turnus finally hurls a rock at Aeneas, who, dodging this missile, deals him a deadly wound. Turnus now pitifully begs for mercy, but the sight of Pallas' belt, which his foe proudly wears, so angers Aeneas that, after wrathfully snatching it from him, he deals his foe the deadly blow which ends this epic.

"What! in my friend's dear spoils arrayed  
To me for mercy sue?  
'Tis Pallas, Pallas guides the blade:  
From your cursed blood his injured shade  
Thus takes atonement due."  
Thus as he spoke, his sword he drave  
With fierce and fiery blow  
Through the broad breast before him spread:

The stalwart limbs grow cold and dead:  
One groan the indignant spirit gave,  
Then sought the shades below.

# FRENCH EPICS

The national epic in France bears the characteristic name of *Chanson de Geste*, or song of deed, because the *trouvères* in the north and the *troubadours* in the south wandered from castle to castle singing the prowesses of the lords and of their ancestors, whose reputations they thus made or ruined at will.

In their earliest form these *Chansons de Geste* were invariably in verse, but in time the most popular were turned into lengthy prose romances. Many of the hundred or more *Chansons de Geste* still preserved were composed in the northern dialect, or *langue d'oïl*, and, although similar epics did exist in the *langue d'oc*, they have the "great defect of being lost," and only fragments of *Flamença*, etc., now exist.

There are three great groups or cycles of French epics: first the Cycle of France, dealing specially with Charlemagne,—the champion of Christianity,—who, representing Christ, is depicted surrounded by twelve peers instead of twelve disciples. Among these, to carry out the scriptural analogy, lurks a traitor, Ganelon; so, in the course of the poems, we are favored with biblical miracles, such as the sun pausing in its course until pagans can be punished, and angels appearing to comfort dying knights. The finest sample of this cycle is without doubt the famous *Chanson de Roland*, of which a complete synopsis follows. Other remarkable examples of this cycle are *Aliscans*, *Raoul de*

Cambrai, Garin le Lorrain, Guillaume d'Orange, Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon, Ogier le Danois, etc.

Even the character of the hero varies from age to age, for whereas Charlemagne in the *Chanson de Roland*—which dates perhaps as far back as the tenth century—is a heroic figure, he becomes during later periods, when vassals rise up against their overlords,—an object of contempt and ridicule. A marked example of this latter style of treatment is furnished by *Les Quatre Fils d'Aymon*.<sup>7</sup>

The second group, or cycle of Brittany, animated by a chivalrous spirit, and hence termed court epic, finds its greatest exponent in the poet Chrestien de Troyes, whose hero Arthur, King of Brittany, gathers twelve knights around his table, one of whom, Mordred, is to prove traitor. The principal poems of this cycle are *Launcelot du Lac*, *Ivain le Chevalier au Lion*, *Erec and Enide*, *Merlin*, *Tristan*, and *Perceval*. These poems all treat of chivalry and love, and introduce the old pagan passion-breeding philtre, as well as a whole world of magic and fairies. These epics will be noticed at greater length when we treat of the English versions of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, because many of the poems have been reworked in modern English and are hence most popular in that language.

Besides the *Chansons de Geste* pertaining to various phases of this theme, the Breton cycle includes many shorter works termed *lais*, which also treat of love, and were composed by Marie de

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<sup>7</sup> See the author's "Legends of the Middle Ages."

France or her successors. The best known of all these "canta-fables" is the idyllic Aucassin et Nicolette, of which a full account is embodied in this volume.

One of the best samples of the domestic epic in this cycle is the twelfth century Amis and Amiles, in which two knights, born and baptized on the same day, prove so alike as to become interchangeable. Still, brought up in separate provinces, Amis and Amiles meet and become friends only when knighted by Charlemagne, whose graciousness toward them rouses the jealousy of the felon knight Hardré. When Charlemagne finally offers his niece to Amiles (who, through modesty, passes her on to Amis), the felon accuses the former of treacherously loving the king's daughter Bellicent, and thereupon challenges him to fight. Conscious of not being a traitor, although guilty of loving the princess, Amiles dares not accept this challenge, and changes places with Amis, who personates him in the lists. Because Amis thus commits perjury to rescue his friend from a dilemma, he is in due time stricken with leprosy, deserted by his wife, and sorely ill treated by his vassals. After much suffering, he discovers his sole hope of cure consists in bathing in the blood of the children which in the meanwhile have been born to Amiles and to his princess-wife. When the leper Amis reluctantly reveals this fact to his friend Amiles, the latter, although broken-hearted, unhesitatingly slays his children. Amis is immediately cured, and both knights hasten to church together to return thanks and inform the mother of the death of her little ones. The princess

rushes to their chamber to mourn over their corpses, only to discover that meantime they have been miraculously restored to life! This story is very touchingly told in the old *Chanson*, which contains many vivid and interesting descriptions of the manners of the time.

In this cycle are also included *Gérard de Roussillon*, *Hugues Capet*, *Macaire* (wherein occurs the famous episode of the Dog of Montargis), and *Huon de Bordeaux*, which latter supplied Shakespeare, Wieland, and Weber with some of the dramatis personae of their well-known comedy, poem, and opera. We must also mention what are often termed the Crusade epics, of which the stock topics are quarrels, challenges, fights, banquets, and tournaments, and among which we note *les Enfances de Godefroi*, *Antioche*, and *Tudela's Song of the Crusade against the Albigenses*.

The third great cycle is known as *Matière de Rome la grand*, or as the antique cycle. It embodies Christianized versions of the doings of the heroes of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, *Thebais*, *Alexandreid*, etc. In their prose forms the *Roman de Thèbes*, *Roman de Troie*, and *Roman d'Alexandre* contain, besides, innumerable mediaeval embellishments, among others the first mention in French of the quest for the Fountain of Youth.

Later on in French literature we come across the animal epic, or *Roman du Renard*, a style of composition which found its latest and most finished expression in Germany at the hands of Goethe, and the allegorical epic, *Le Roman de la Rose*,

wherein abstract ideas were personified, such as Hope, Slander (Malebouche), Danger, etc.

There are also epic poems based on *Le Combat des Trente* and on the doings of Du Guesclin. Ronsard, in his *Franciade*, claims the Franks as lineal descendants from Francus, a son of Priam, and thus connects French history with the war of Troy, just as Wace, in the Norman *Roman de Rou*, traces a similar analogy between the Trojan Brutus and Britain. Later French poets have attempted epics, more or less popular in their time, among which are *Alaric* by Scudéri, *Clovis* by St. Sorlin, and two poems on *La Pucelle*, one by Chapelain, and the other by Voltaire.

Next comes *la Henriade*, also by Voltaire, a half bombastic, half satirical account of Henry IV's wars to gain the crown of France. This poem also contains some very fine and justly famous passages, but is too long and too artificial, as a whole, to please modern readers.

The most popular of all the French prose epics is, without dispute, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, or account of Telemachus' journeys to find some trace of his long-absent father Ulysses.

*Les Martyrs* by Chateaubriand, and *La Légende des Siècles* by Victor Hugo, complete the tale of important French epics to date.

# THE SONG OF ROLAND<sup>8</sup>

*Introduction.* The earliest and greatest of the French epics, or chansons de geste, is the song of Roland, of which the oldest copy now extant is preserved in the Bodleian Library and dates back to the twelfth century. Whether the Tuoldus (Théroulde) mentioned at the end of the poem is poet, copyist, or mere reciter remains a matter of conjecture.

The poem is evidently based on popular songs which no longer exist. It consists of 4002 verses, written in langue d'oïl, grouped in stanzas or "laissez" of irregular length, in the heroic pentameter, having the same assonant rhyme, and each ending with "aoi," a word no one has succeeded in translating satisfactorily. It was so popular that it was translated into Latin and German (1173-1177), and our version may be the very song sung by Taillefer at the battle of Hastings in 1066.

It has inspired many poets, and Roland's death has been sung again by Goethe, Schiller, Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, Berni, Bornier, etc. History claims that French armies, once in the reign of Dagobert and once in that of Charlemagne, were attacked and slaughtered in the Pyrenees, but not by the Saracens. Besides, Charlemagne's secretary, Eginhart, briefly mentions in his chronicles that in 778, Roland, prefect of the Marches of

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<sup>8</sup> Another version of this story can be found in the author's "Legends of the Middle Ages."

Brittany, was slain there.<sup>9</sup> Although the remainder of the story has no historical basis, the song of Roland is a poetical asset we would not willingly relinquish.

**PART I. A COUNCIL HELD BY KING MARSILE AT SARAGOSSA.—The Song of Roland opens with the statement that, after spending seven years in Spain, Charlemagne is master of all save the city of Saragossa.**

The king, our Emperor Carlemaine,  
Hath been for seven full years in Spain.  
From highland to sea hath he won the land;  
City was none might his arm withstand;  
Keep and castle alike went down—  
Save Saragossa the mountain town.<sup>10</sup>

It is in Saragossa that King Marsile, holding an open-air council, informs his followers he no longer has men to oppose to the French. When he inquires what he shall do, the wisest of his advisers suggests that, when might fails, craft can gain the day. Therefore, he moots sending gifts to Charlemagne, with a promise to follow him to France to do homage and receive baptism. Even should Charlemagne exact hostages, this councillor volunteers to give his own son, arguing it is better a few should fall than Spain be lost forever. This advice is adopted

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<sup>9</sup> See the author's "Story of Old France."

<sup>10</sup> All the quotations in this chapter are from John O'Hagen's translation of the "Song of Roland."

by Marsile, who then despatches bearers of olive branches and gifts to Charlemagne.

*Council held by Charlemagne at Cordova.* The Saracen emissaries find the French emperor seated on a golden throne in an orchard, his peers around him, watching the martial games of fifty thousand warriors. After receiving Marsile's message, Charlemagne dismisses the ambassadors for the night, promising answer on the morrow. When he bids his courtiers state their opinions, Roland impetuously declares that, as Marsile has tricked them once, it would not become them to believe him now. His step-father, Ganelon, thereupon terms him a hot-headed young fool, and avers he prizes his own glory more than his fellow-men's lives. The wisest among Charlemagne's advisers, however, Duke Naimés, argues that the Saracen's offers of submission should be met half-way, and, as the remainder of the French agree with him, Charlemagne calls for a messenger to bear his acceptance to Marsile. Although Roland, Oliver, and Naimés eagerly sue for this honor, Charlemagne, unwilling to spare his peers, bids them appoint a baron. When Roland suggests his step-father, Ganelon—who deems the expedition hazardous—becomes so angry that he reviles his step-son in the emperor's presence, vowing the youth is maliciously sending him to his death, and muttering he will have revenge. These violent threats elicit Roland's laughter, but Charlemagne checks the resulting quarrel by delivering message and emblems of office to Ganelon. To the dismay of all present, he, however, drops

the glove his master hands him, an accident viewed as an omen of ill luck. Then, making speedy preparations and pathetically committing wife and son to the care of his countrymen, Ganelon starts out, fully expecting never to return.

*The Embassy and the Crime of Ganelon.* On his way to Saragossa, Ganelon converses with the Saracens, who express surprise that Charlemagne—whom they deem two hundred years old—should still long for conquest. In return Ganelon assures them his master will never cease fighting as long as Roland is one of his peers, for this knight is determined to conquer the world. The Saracens, noticing his bitter tone, now propose to rid Ganelon of his step-son, provided he will arrange that Roland command the rear-guard of the French army. Thus riding along, they devise the plot whereby this young hero is to be led into an ambush in the Valley of Roncevaux (Roncesvalles), where, by slaying him, they will deprive Charlemagne of his main strength.

"For whoso Roland to death shall bring,  
From Karl his good right arm will wring,  
The marvellous host will melt away,  
No more shall he muster a like array."

Arriving in the presence of the Saracen king, Ganelon reports Charlemagne ready to accept his offers, provided he do homage for one half of Spain and abandon the other to Roland. Because Ganelon adds the threat that, should this offer be refused, Charlemagne proposes to seize Saragossa and bear Marsile a

prisoner to Aix, the Saracen king angrily orders the execution of the insolent messenger. But the Frenchmen's truculent attitude forbids the guards' approach, and thus gives the ambassadors a chance to inform Marsile that Ganelon has promised to help them to outwit Charlemagne by depriving him of his most efficient general. Hearing this, Marsile's anger is disarmed; and he not only agrees to their plan to surprise Roland while crossing the Pyrenees, but sends Ganelon back laden with gifts.

On rejoining his master at the foot of the mountains, Ganelon delivers the keys of Saragossa, and reports that the caliph has sailed for the East, with one hundred thousand men, none of whom care to dwell in a Christian land. Hearing this, Charlemagne, imagining his task finished, returns thanks to God, and prepares to wend his way back to France, where he expects Marsile to follow him and do homage for Spain.

Karl the Great hath wasted Spain,  
Her cities sacked, her castles ta'en;  
But now "My wars are done," he cried,  
"And home to gentle France we ride."

*The Rear-guard and Roland Condemned to Death.* On the eve of his return to "sweet France," Charlemagne's rest is disturbed by horrible dreams, in one of which Ganelon breaks his lance, while in the other wild animals are about to attack him. On awaking from this nightmare, Charlemagne divides his army so as to thread his way safely through the narrow passes of the

mountains, arranging that a force shall remain twenty miles in his rear to make sure he shall not be surprised by the foe. When he inquires to whom this important command shall be entrusted, Ganelon eagerly suggests that, as Roland is the most valiant of the peers, the task be allotted to him. Anxious to keep his nephew by him, Charlemagne resents this suggestion, but, when he prepares to award the post to some one else, Roland eagerly claims it, promising France shall lose nothing through him.

"God be my judge," was the count's reply,  
"If ever I thus my race belie.  
But twenty thousand with me shall rest,  
Bravest of all your Franks and best;  
The mountain passes in safety tread,  
While I breathe in life you have nought to dread."

Because it is patent to all that his step-father proposed his name through spite, Roland meaningly remarks that he at least will not drop the insignia of his rank, and in proof thereof proudly clutches the bow Charlemagne hands him, and boastfully declares twelve peers and twenty thousand men will prove equal to any emergency.

Fully armed and mounted on his steed (Veillantif), Roland, from an eminence, watches the vanguard of the French army disappear in the mountain gorges, calling out to the last men that he and his troop will follow them soon! This vanguard is led by Charlemagne and Ganelon, and, as it passes on, the heavy tramp

of the mailed steeds causes the ground to shake, while the clash of the soldiers' arms is heard for miles around. They have already travelled thirty miles and are just nearing France, whose sunny fields the soldiers greet with cries of joy, when Duke Naimés perceives tears flowing down the emperor's cheeks, and learns that they are caused by apprehension for Roland.

High were the peaks, and the valleys deep,  
The mountains wondrous dark and steep;  
Sadly the Franks through the passes wound,  
Fully fifteen leagues did their tread resound.  
To their own great land they are drawing nigh,  
And they look on the fields of Gascony.  
They think of their homes and their manors there,  
Their gentle spouses and damsels fair.  
Is none but for pity the tear lets fall;  
But the anguish of Karl is beyond them all.  
His sister's son at the gates of Spain  
Smites on his heart, and he weeps amain.

The evident anxiety of Charlemagne fills the hearts of all Frenchmen with nameless fear, and some of them whisper that Ganelon returned from Saragossa with suspiciously rich gifts. Meantime Roland, who has merely been waiting for the vanguard to gain some advance, sets out to cross the mountains too; where, true to his agreement with Ganelon, Marsile has concealed a force of one hundred thousand men, led by twelve Saracen

generals, who are considered fully equal to the French peers, and who have vowed to slay Roland in the passes of Roncevaux.

**PART II. PRELUDE TO THE GREAT BATTLE.** It is only when the Saracen army is beginning to close in upon the French, that the peers become aware of their danger. Oliver, Roland's bosom friend, the first to descry the enemy, calls out that this ambush is the result of Ganelon's treachery, only to be silenced by Roland, who avers none shall accuse his step-father without proof. Then, hearing of the large force approaching, Roland exclaims, "Cursed be he who flees," and admonishes all present to show their mettle and die fighting bravely.

*The Pride of Roland.* Because the enemies' force so greatly outnumbers theirs, Oliver suggests that Roland sound his horn to summon Charlemagne to his aid; but, unwilling to lose any glory, this hero refuses, declaring he will strike one hundred thousand such doughty blows with his mighty sword (Durendal), that all the pagans will be laid low.

"Roland, Roland, yet wind one blast!  
Karl will hear ere the gorge be passed,  
And the Franks return on their path full fast."  
"I will not sound on mine ivory horn:  
It shall never be spoken of me in scorn,  
That for heathen felons one blast I blew;  
I may not dishonor my lineage true.  
But I will strike, ere this fight be o'er,

A thousand strokes and seven hundred more,  
And my Durindana shall drip with gore.  
Our Franks will bear them like vassals brave.  
The Saracens flock but to find a grave."

In spite of the fact that Oliver thrice implores him to summon aid, Roland thrice refuses; so his friend, perceiving he will not yield, finally declares they must do their best, and adds that, should they not get the better of the foe, they will at least die fighting nobly. Then Archbishop Turpin—one of the peers—assures the soldiers that, since they are about to die as martyrs, they will earn Paradise, and pronounces the absolution, thus inspiring the French with such courage that, on rising from their knees, they rush forward to earn a heavenly crown.

Riding at their head, Roland now admits to Oliver that Ganelon must have betrayed them, grimly adding that the Saracens will have cause to rue their treachery before long. Then he leads his army down the valley to a more open space, where, as soon as the signal is given, both friends plunge into the fray, shouting their war-cry ("Montjoie").

*The Medley.* In the first ranks of the Saracens is a nephew of Marsile, who loudly boasts Charlemagne is about to lose his right arm; but, before he can repeat this taunt, Roland, spurring forward, runs his lance through his body and hurls it to the ground with a turn of his wrist. Then, calling out to his men that they have scored the first triumph, Roland proceeds to do tremendous execution among the foe. The poem describes many

of the duels which take place,—for each of the twelve peers specially distinguishes himself,—while the Saracens, conscious of vastly superior numbers, return again and again to the attack. Even the archbishop fights bravely, and Roland, after dealing fifteen deadly strokes with his lance, resorts to his sword, thus meeting the Saracens at such close quarters that every stroke of his blade hews through armor, rider, and steed.

At the last it brake; then he grasped in hand  
His Durindana, his naked brand.  
He smote Chernubles' helm upon,  
Where, in the centre, carbuncles shone:  
Down through his coif and his fell of hair,  
Betwixt his eyes came the falchion bare,  
Down through his plated harness fine,  
Down through the Saracen's chest and chine,  
Down through the saddle with gold inlaid,  
Till sank in the living horse the blade,  
Severed the spine where no joint was found,  
And horse and rider lay dead on ground.

In spite of Roland's doughty blows, his good sword suffers no harm, nor does that of Oliver (Hauteclaire), with which he does such good work that Roland assures him he will henceforth consider him a brother. Although the French slay the pagans by thousands, so many of their own warriors fall, that, by the time they have repulsed the first Saracen division, only sixty of

Roland's men remain alive.

All nature seems to feel the terrible battle raging in the valley of Roncevaux, for a terrible storm breaks forth, in France, where, hearing the roll of the thunder, seeing the flash of the lightning, and feeling the earth shake beneath their feet, the French fear the end of the world has come. These poor warriors are little aware that all this commotion is due to "nature's grief for the death of Roland."

Now a wondrous storm o'er France hath passed,  
With thunder-stroke and whirlwind's blast;  
Rain unmeasured, and hail, there came,  
Sharp and sudden the lightning's flame;  
And an earthquake ran—the sooth I say,  
From Besançon city to Wissant Bay;  
From Saint Michael's Mount to thy shrine, Cologne,  
House unrifted was there none.  
And a darkness spread in the noontide high—  
No light, save gleams from the cloven sky.  
On all who saw came a mighty fear.  
They said, "The end of the world is near."  
Alas, they spake but with idle breath,—  
'Tis the great lament for Roland's death.

*The Horn.* During the brief respite allowed them, Roland informs Oliver that he wishes to notify Charlemagne that France has been widowed of many men. In reply, Oliver rejoins that no Frenchman will leave this spot to bear such a message,

seeing all prefer death and honor to safety! Such being the case, Roland proposes to sound his horn, whereupon Oliver bitterly rejoins, had his friend only done so at first, they would have been reinforced by now, and that the emperor can no longer reach them in time. He can, however, avenge them and give them an honorable burial, Roland argues, and he and his friend continue bickering until the archbishop silences them, bidding Roland blow his horn. Placing Olifant to his lips, the hero, after drawing a powerful breath, blows so mighty a blast that it re-echoes thirty miles away.

This sound, striking Charlemagne's ear, warns him that his army is in danger, although Ganelon insists Roland is hunting. While blowing a second blast, Roland makes so mighty an effort that he actually bursts the blood-vessels in his temples, and the Frenchmen, hearing that call, aver with awe that he would never call that way unless in dire peril. Ganelon, however, again insists that his step-son is in no danger and is merely coursing a hare.

With deadly travail, in stress and pain,  
Count Roland sounded the mighty strain.  
Forth from his mouth the bright blood sprang,  
And his temples burst for the very pang.

On and onward was borne the blast,  
Till Karl hath heard as the gorge he passed,  
And Naimes and all his men of war.  
"It is Roland's horn," said the Emperor,

"And, save in battle, he had not blown."

With blood pouring from mouth and ears, Roland sounds his horn a third and last time, producing so long and despairing a note, that Naimes vows the French must be at the last extremity, and that unless they hurry they will not find any alive! Bidding all his horns sound as a signal that he is coming, Charlemagne—after ordering Ganelon bound and left in charge of the baggage train—leads his men back to Spain to Roland's rescue.

As the day is already far advanced, helmets and armors glitter beneath the rays of the setting sun as the Frenchmen spur along, tears coursing down their cheeks, for they apprehend what must have befallen Roland, who was evidently suffering when he blew that third blast!

*The Rout.* Meanwhile, casting his eyes over the battle-field, now strewn with corpses, Roland mourns his fallen companions, praying God to let their souls rest in Paradise on beds of flowers. Then, turning to Oliver, he proposes that they fight on as long as breath remains in their bodies, before he plunges back into the fray, still uttering his war-cry.

By this time the French are facing a second onslaught of the pagans, and Roland has felled twenty-four of their bravest fighters before Marsile challenges him to a duel. Although weak and weary, Roland accepts, and with his first stroke hews off the Saracen's right hand; but, before he can follow this up with a more decisive blow, Marsile is borne away by his followers.

Seeing their master gallop off towards Spain, the remainder of the Saracens, crying that Charlemagne's nephew has triumphed, cease fighting and flee. Thus, fifty thousand men soon vanish in the distance, leaving Roland temporary master of the battlefield, which he knows the emperor will reach only after he has breathed his last.

*The Death of Oliver.* Although the Saracens have fled, some Moors remain to charge the Frenchmen, whom they wish to annihilate before Charlemagne can arrive. Once more, therefore, Roland urges his followers to do their best, cursing those who dream of yielding. Not daring approach the small handful of doughty Frenchmen, the pagans attack them from a distance with lance, arrow, and spear, tauntingly crying Charlemagne will have no cause to pride himself upon having appointed them to guard his rear! Mortally wounded by one of these spears, Oliver, blindly cutting down the foes nearest him, bids Roland hasten to his rescue, as it won't be long before they part. Seeing the stream of blood which flows from his friend's wounds and catching a glimpse of his livid face, Roland so keenly realizes Oliver's end is near that he swoons in his saddle. The wounded man, no longer able to see, meanwhile ranges wildly around the battlefield, striking madly right and left. In doing so he runs against Roland, and, failing to recognize him, deals him so powerful a blow that he almost kills him. Gently inquiring why his friend thus attacks one he loves, Roland hears Oliver gasp, "I hear you, friend, but do not see you. Forgive me for having struck you,"—

a more than ample apology,—ere he dies.

See Roland there on his charger swooned,  
Olivier smitten with his death wound.  
His eyes from bleeding are dimmed and dark,  
Nor mortal, near or far, can mark;  
And when his comrade beside him pressed,  
Fiercely he smote on his golden crest;  
Down to the nasal the helm he shred,  
But passed no further, nor pierced his head.  
Roland marvelled at such a blow,  
And thus bespake him soft and low:  
"Hast thou done it, my comrade, wittingly?  
Roland who loves thee so dear, am I,  
Thou hast no quarrel with me to seek."  
Olivier answered, "I hear thee speak,  
But I see thee not. God seeth thee.  
Have I struck thee, brother? Forgive it me."  
"I am not hurt, O Olivier;  
And in sight of God, I forgive thee here."  
Then each to other his head has laid,  
And in love like this was their parting made.

On seeing that his friend has passed away, the heart-broken Roland again swoons in his saddle, but his intelligent steed stands still until his master recovers his senses. Gazing around him, Roland now ascertains that only two other Frenchmen are still alive, and, seeing one of them severely wounded, he binds up

his cuts before plunging back into the fray, where he accounts for twenty-five pagans, while the archbishop and the wounded soldier dispose of eleven more.

*Charlemagne Approaches.* The last Frenchmen are fighting madly against a thousand Moors on foot and four thousand on horseback, when the spears flung from a distance lay low the wounded man and deal a mortal wound to the archbishop. But, even while dying, Turpin joins Roland in declaring they must continue to fight, so that when the emperor finds their bodies he can see they have piled hundreds of corpses around them. This resolve is carried out, however, only at the cost of dire suffering, for the archbishop is dying and Roland's burst temples cause him intense pain. Nevertheless, he once more puts his horn to his lips, and draws from it this time so pitiful a blast that, when it reaches the ears of Charlemagne, he woefully exclaims: "All is going ill; my nephew Roland will die to-day, for the sound of his horn is very weak!"

Again bidding his sixty thousand trumpets sound, the emperor urges his troops to even greater speed, until the noise of his horns and the tramp of his steeds reaches the pagans' ears and admonishes them to flee. Realizing that, should Roland survive, the war will continue, a few Moors make a final frantic attempt to slay him before fleeing. Seeing them advance for a last onslaught, Roland—who has dismounted for a moment—again bestrides his steed and, accompanied by the staggering archbishop, bravely faces them. They, however, only fling missiles from a distance,

until Roland's shield drops useless from his hand and his steed sinks lifeless beneath him! Then, springing to his feet, Roland defies these cowardly foes, who, not daring to linger any longer, turn and flee, crying that Roland has won and Spain is lost unless the emir comes to their rescue!

*The Last Blessing of the Archbishop.* While the pagans are spurring towards Saragossa, Roland remains on the battle-field, for, having lost his steed and being mortally wounded, he cannot attempt to pursue them. After tenderly removing the archbishop's armor, binding up his wounds, and placing him comfortably on the ground, Roland brings him the twelve peers, so he can bless them for the last time. Although Archbishop Turpin admonishes him to hasten, Roland is so weak, that he slowly and painfully collects the corpses from mountain and valley, laying them one by one at the feet of the archbishop, who, with right hand raised, bestows his blessing. While laying Oliver at Turpin's feet, Roland faints from grief, so the prelate painfully raises himself, and, seizing the hero's horn, tries to get down to the brook to bring him some water. Such is his weakness, however, that he stumbles and falls dead, face to the ground, before he can fulfil his kindly intention.

On recovering consciousness and seeing nothing save corpses around him, Roland exults to think that Charlemagne will find forty dead Saracens for every slain Frenchman! Then, feeling his brain slowly ooze out through his ears, Roland—after reciting a prayer for his dead companions—grasps his sword in one hand

and his horn in the other, and begins to climb a neighboring hill. He tries to reach its summit because he has always boasted he would die face toward the enemy, and he longs to look defiance toward Spain until the end.

Painfully reaching the top of this eminence, Roland stumbles and falls across a Saracen, who has been feigning death to escape capture. Seeing the dreaded warrior unconscious, this coward seizes his sword, loudly proclaiming he has triumphed; but, at his first touch, Roland—recovering his senses—deals him so mighty a blow with his horn, that the Saracen falls with crushed helmet and skull. Having thus recovered his beloved Durendal, Roland, to prevent its again falling into the enemy's hands, vainly tries to break it by hewing at the rocks around him, but, although he uses all the strength he has left to deal blows that cut through the stone, the good sword remains undinted. Full of admiration, Roland then recalls the feats Durendal has enabled him to perform, and, lying down on the grass, places beneath him sword and horn, so as to defend them dead as well as alive! Then, having confessed his sins and recited a last prayer, Roland holds out his glove toward heaven, in token that he surrenders his soul to God, and begs that an angel be sent to receive it from his hand. Thus, lying beneath a pine, his face toward Spain, his last thoughts for France and for God, Roland dies in the presence of the angels, who bear his soul off to Paradise.

Roland feeleth his hour at hand;

On a knoll he lies towards the Spanish land.  
With one hand beats he upon his breast:  
"In thy sight, O God, be my sins confessed.  
From my hour of birth, both the great and small,  
Down to this day, I repent of all."  
As his glove he raises to God on high,  
Angels of heaven descend him nigh.

**PART III. REPRISALS.** Roland has barely breathed his last when Charlemagne arrives on the battle-field and, gazing around him, perceives nothing but corpses. Receiving no answer to his repeated call for the twelve peers, Charlemagne groans it was not without cause he felt anxious and mourns that he was not there to take part in the fray. He and his men weep aloud for their fallen companions, and twenty thousand soldiers swoon from grief at the sight of the havoc which has been made!

Still, only a few moments can be devoted to sorrow, for Duke Naimes, descriing a cloud of dust in the distance, eagerly suggests that if they ride on they can yet overtake and punish the foe! Detailing a small detachment to guard the dead, Charlemagne orders the pursuit of the Saracens, and, seeing the sun about to set, prays so fervently that daylight may last, that an angel promises he shall have light as long as he needs it. Thanks to this miracle, Charlemagne overtakes the Saracens just as they are about to cross the Ebro, and, after killing many, drives the rest into the river, where they are drowned.

It is only when the last of the foe has been disposed of that the sun sets, and, perceiving it is too late to return to Roncevaux that night, Charlemagne gives orders to camp on the plain. While his weary men sleep peacefully, the emperor himself spends the night mourning for Roland and for the brave Frenchmen who died to defend his cause, so it is only toward morning that he enjoys a brief nap, during which visions foreshadow the punishment to be inflicted upon Ganelon and all who uphold him.

In the mead the Emperor made his bed,  
With his mighty spear beside his head,  
Nor will he doff his arms to-night,  
But lies in his broidered hauberk white.  
Laced is his helm, with gold inlaid.  
Girt on Joyeuse, the peerless blade,  
Which changes thirty times a day  
The brightness of its varying ray.

Meanwhile the wounded Marsile has returned to Saragossa, where, while binding up his wounds, his wife comments it is strange no one has been able to get the better of such an old man as Charlemagne, and exclaims the last hope of the Saracens now rests in the emir, who has just landed in Spain.

At dawn the emperor returns to Roncevaux, and there begins his sad search for the bodies of the peers. Sure Roland will be found facing the foe, he seeks for his corpse in the direction of

Spain, and, discovering him at last on the little hill, swoons from grief. Then, recovering his senses, Charlemagne prays God to receive his nephew's soul, and, after pointing out to his men how bravely the peers fought, gives orders for the burial of the dead, reserving only the bodies of Roland, Oliver, and the archbishop, for burial in France.

The last respects have barely been paid to the fallen, when a Saracen herald summons Charlemagne to meet the emir. So the French mount to engage in a new battle.

Such is the stimulus of Charlemagne's word's and of his example, that all his men do wonders. The aged emperor himself finally engages in a duel with the emir, in the midst of which he is about to succumb, when an angel bids him strike one more blow, promising he shall triumph. Thus stimulated, Charlemagne slays the emir, and the Saracens, seeing their leader slain, flee, closely pursued by the Frenchmen, who enter Saragossa in their wake. There, after killing all the men, they pillage the town.

On discovering that Marsile has meantime died of his wound, Charlemagne orders his widow to France, where he proposes to convert her through the power of love. The remainder of the pagans are compelled to receive baptism, and, when Charlemagne again wends his way through the Pyrenees, all Spain bows beneath his sceptre.

At Bordeaux, Charlemagne deposits upon the altar of St. Severin, Roland's Olifant, filled with gold pieces, before personally escorting the three august corpses to Blaye, where he

sees them interred, ere he hurries on to Aix-la-Chapelle to judge Ganelon.

*The Chastisement of Ganelon.* On arriving in his palace, Charlemagne is confronted by Alda or Aude, a sister of Oliver, who frantically questions: "Where is Roland who has sworn to take me to wife?" Weeping bitterly, Charlemagne informs her his nephew is no more, adding that she can marry his son, but Aude rejoins that, since her beloved is gone, she no longer wishes to live. These words uttered, she falls lifeless at the emperor's feet.<sup>11</sup>

From Spain the emperor made retreat,  
To Aix in France, his kingly seat;  
And thither, to his halls, there came,  
Alda, the fair-and gentle dame.  
"Where is my Roland, sire," she cried,  
"Who vowed to take me for his bride?"  
O'er Karl the flood of sorrow swept;  
He tore his beard, and loudly wept.  
"Dear sister, gentle friend," he said,  
"Thou seekest one who lieth dead:  
I plight to thee my son instead,—  
Louis, who lord of my realm shall be."  
"Strange," she said, "seems this to me.  
God and His angels forbid that I  
Should live on earth if Roland die."  
Pale grew her cheek—she sank amain,  
Down at the feet of Carlemaine.

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<sup>11</sup> See the author's "Legends of the Rhine."

So died she. God receive her soul!  
The Franks bewail her in grief and dole.

The time having come for the trial, Ganelon appears before his judges, laden with chains and tied to a stake as if he were a wild beast. When accused of depriving Charlemagne of twenty thousand Frenchmen, Ganelon retorts he did so merely to avenge his wrongs, and hotly denies having acted as a traitor. Thirty of his kinsmen sustain him in this assertion, one of them even volunteering to meet the emperor's champion in a judicial duel. As the imperial champion wins, Ganelon and his relatives are adjudged guilty, but, whereas the latter thirty are merely hanged, the traitor himself is bound to wild horses until torn asunder.

Having thus done justice, Charlemagne informs his courtiers they are to attend the baptism of a Saracen lady of high degree, who is about to be received into the bosom of the church.

The men of Bavaria and Allemaine,  
Norman and Breton return again,  
And with all the Franks aloud they cry,  
That Gan a traitor's death shall die.  
They bade be brought four stallions fleet;  
Bound to them Ganelon, hands and feet:  
Wild and swift was each savage steed,  
And a mare was standing within the mead;  
Four grooms impelled the coursers on,—  
A fearful ending for Ganelon.  
His every nerve was stretched and torn,

And the limbs of his body apart were borne;  
The bright blood, springing from every vein,  
Left on the herbage green its stain.  
He dies a felon and recreant:  
Never shall traitor his treason vaunt.

*End of the Song.* Having thus punished the traitor and converted the heathen, Charlemagne, lying in his chamber one night, receives a visit from the angel Gabriel, who bids him go forth and do further battle against the pagans. Weary of warfare and longing for rest, the aged emperor moans, "God, how painful is my life!" for he knows he must obey.

When the emperor's justice was satisfied,  
His mighty wrath did awhile subside.  
Queen Bramimonde was a Christian made.  
The day passed on into night's dark shade;  
As the king in his vaulted chamber lay,  
Saint Gabriel came from God to say,  
"Karl, thou shalt summon thine empire's host,  
And march in haste to Bira's coast;  
Unto Impha city relief to bring,  
And succor Vivian, the Christian king.  
The heathens in siege have the town essayed,  
And the shattered Christians invoke thine aid."  
Fain would Karl such task decline.  
"God! what a life of toil is mine!"  
He wept; his hoary beard he wrung.

Here ends the Song of Théroulde.

# AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

Who would list to the good lay  
Gladness of the captive grey?  
'Tis how two young lovers met,  
Aucassin and Nicolette,  
Of the pains the lover bore  
And the sorrow he outwore,  
For the goodness and the grace,  
Of his love, so fair of face.

Sweet the song, the story sweet,  
There is no man hearkens it,  
No man living 'neath the sun,  
So outwearied, so foredone,  
Sick and woful, worn and sad,  
But is healèd, but is glad.

'Tis so sweet.

So say they, speak they, tell they the tale.<sup>12</sup>

This popular mediaeval ballad is in alternate fragments of verse and prose, and relates how the Count of Valence made desperate war against the Count of Biaucaire, a very old and frail man, who saw that his castle was in imminent danger of being

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<sup>12</sup> All the quotations in this chapter are from Andrew Lang's version of "Aucassin and Nicolette."

taken and sacked. In his distress, this old lord besought his son Aucassin, who so far had taken no interest in the war, to go forth and fight. The youth, however, refused to do so, saying his heart was wrapped up in love for Nicolette, a fair slave belonging to a captain in town. This man, seeing the delicacy of his slave and realizing she must belong to some good family, had her baptized and treated her as if she were an adopted daughter.

On account of Nicolette's lowly condition, Aucassin's father refuses to listen when the young man proposes to marry her, and sternly bids him think of a wife better suited, to his rank. The young lover, however, vehemently insists that Nicolette is fit to be an empress, and vows he will not fight until he has won her for his own. On seeing how intractable this youth is, the father beseeches the owner of the slave to clap her in prison, so that Aucassin will not be able to get at her in any way.

Heart-broken to think that his lady-love is undergoing captivity in his behalf, Aucassin spends his time moping. To induce him to fight, his father finally promises that if he will go forth and drive away the foe he will be allowed to see Nicolette and kiss her. The prospect of such a reward so fires the young hero, that he sallies forth, routs the besiegers, and, seizing the Count of Valence, brings him back a prisoner. On entering the castle, he immediately begins to clamor for Nicolette, but his father now declares he would rather see the maiden burned as a witch than to let his son have anything more to do with her. Hearing this, Aucassin indignantly declares such being the case

he will free his prisoner, an act of generosity which infuriates his father, who hopes to be enriched by the count's ransom. To punish Aucassin, the Count of Biaucaire now thrusts him into prison, but, although the lovers are sharing the same fate, they languish apart, and, therefore, spend all their time lamenting.

One night, when the moon is shining bright, Nicolette, who has heard she is likely to be brought to trial and burned, decides to effect her escape. As the old woman who mounts guard over her is fast asleep, she softly ties together her sheets and towels, and, fastening them to a pillar, lets herself down by the window into the garden, from whence she timidly steals out into the night.

The poem now artlessly describes Nicolette's beauty as she trips over the dewy grass, her tremors as she slips through the postern gate, and her lingering at the foot of the tower where her lover is imprisoned. While pausing there, Nicolette overhears his voice lamenting, and, thrusting her head into an aperture in the wall, tells him that she is about to escape and that as soon as she is gone they will set him free. To convince her lover that it is she who is talking, Nicolette cuts off a golden curl, which she drops down into his dungeon, repeating that she must flee. But Aucassin beseeches her not to go, knowing a young maid is exposed to countless dangers out in the world, and vehemently declares he would die were any one to lay a finger upon her. He adds that she alone shall be his wife, and that the mere thought of her belonging to any one else is unendurable. This declaration of love cheers poor Nicolette, who is so entranced by

her lover's words that she fails to notice the approach of a patrol. A young sentinel, however, peering down from the walls, touched by Nicolette's beauty and by the plight of these young lovers, warns them of their danger. But not daring to speak openly to Nicolette, he chants a musical warning, which comes just in time to enable her to hide behind a pillar. There she cowers until the guards pass by, then, slipping down into dry moat,—although it is a perilous undertaking,—she painfully climbs up its other side and seeks refuge in a neighboring forest, where, although the poem informs us there are "beasts serpentine," she feels safer than in town.

It is while wandering in this wilderness that Nicolette runs across some shepherds, whom she bribes to go and tell Aucassin a wild beast is ranging through the forest, and that he should come and slay it as soon as possible. Having thus devised means to entice her lover out of Biaucaire, Nicolette wanders on until she reaches a lovely spot, where she erects a rustic lodge, decking it with the brightest flowers she can find, in hopes that her lover, when weary of hunting, will rest beneath its flowery roof, and guess that it was erected by her fair hands.

Meantime the Count of Biaucaire, hearing Nicolette has vanished, sets his son free, and, seeing him sunk in melancholy, urges him to go out and hunt, thinking the exercise may make him forget the loss of his beloved. Still, it is only when shepherds come and report that a wild beast is ranging through the forest, that the youth mounts his steed and sallies forth, his father little

suspecting that instead of tracking game, he is bent on seeking traces of his beloved.

Ere long Aucassin encounters an old charcoal-burner, to whom he confides his loss, and who assures him such a sorrow is nothing compared to his own. On discovering that the poor man's tears can be stayed with money, Aucassin bestows upon him the small sum he needs, receiving in return the information that a lovely maiden has been seen in the forest. Continuing his quest, Aucassin comes in due time to the flowery bower, and, finding it empty, sings his love and sorrow in tones that reach Nicolette's ear. Then, dismounting from his horse to rest here for the night, Aucassin manages to sprain his shoulder. Thereupon Nicolette steals into the bower and takes immediate measures to mitigate the pain.

The mere fact that Nicolette is beside him helps Aucassin to forget everything else, and it is only after the first raptures are over, that they decide not to linger in the forest, where the Count of Biaucaire will soon find and separate them. To prevent such a calamity, they decide to depart together, and, as there is no extra steed for Nicolette to ride, her lover lifts her up on his horse before him, clasping her tight and kissing her repeatedly as they gallop along.

Aucassin the Franc, the fair,  
Aucassin of yellow hair,  
Gentle knight, and true lover,  
From the forest doth he fare,

Holds his love before him there,  
Kissing cheek, and chin, and eyes;  
But she spake in sober wise,  
"Aucassin, true love and fair,  
To what land do we repair?"  
"Sweet my love, I take no care,  
Thou art with me everywhere!"  
So they pass the woods and downs,  
Pass the villages and towns,  
Hills and dales and open land,  
Came at dawn to the sea sand,  
Lighted down upon the strand,  
Beside the sea.

Thus the lovers travel all night, reach the sea-shore at dawn, and wander along it, arms twined around each other, while their weary steed follows them with drooped head.

At sunrise a vessel nears the shore, upon which they embark to get out of reach of the wrath of the Count of Biaucaire. The vessel, however, is soon overtaken by a terrible tempest, which, after tossing it about for seven days, drives it into the harbor of Torelore. This is the mediaeval "topsy-turvy land," for on entering the castle Aucassin learns that the king is lying abed, because a son has been born to him, while the queen is at the head of the army fighting! This state of affairs so incenses Aucassin, that armed with a big stick he enters the king's room, gives him a good beating, and wrings from him a promise that no man in his

country will ever lie abed again when a child is born, or send his wife out to do hard work. Having effected this reform in the land of Torelore, Aucassin and Nicolette dwell there peacefully, for three years, at the end of which time the castle is taken by some Saracens. They immediately proceed to sack it, carrying off its inmates to sell them as slaves. Bound fast, Aucassin and Nicolette are thrust into separate ships, but, although these are going to the same port, a sudden tempest drives the vessel in which Aucassin lies to the shore of Biaucaire. There the people capture it, and finding their young master, set him free, and invite him to take possession of his castle, for, his father having died during his absence, he is now master of all he surveys.

Meantime Nicolette, landing at Carthage, discovers that this is her native town, and recognizes in her captors—her father and brothers. They are so overjoyed at recovering this long-lost sister that they propose to keep her with them, but Nicolette assures them she will never be happy until she rejoins Aucassin. Meantime she learns to play on the viol, and, when she has attained proficiency on this instrument, sets out in the guise of a wandering minstrel to seek her beloved. Conveyed by her brothers to the land of Biaucaire, Nicolette, soon after landing, hears that Aucassin, who has recently returned, is sorely bewailing the loss of his beloved. Presenting herself before Aucassin,—who does not recognize her owing to the disguise,—Nicolette plays so charmingly that she draws tears from his eyes. Then she begs to know his sorrows, and, on hearing he has lost

his lady-love, suggests he woo the king of Carthage's daughter. Loudly averring he will never woo any one save Nicolette, Aucassin turns sadly away, whereupon the strolling minstrel assures him he shall see his beloved before long. Although it seems impossible to Aucassin that this prediction should be verified, Nicolette has little difficulty in fulfilling her promise, for, hastening back to her old home, she obtains some of her own clothes, and, thus restored to her wonted appearance, presents herself before the delighted Aucassin, who, overjoyed to see her once more, clasps her rapturously to his heart.

The ballad adds that the two lovers, united for good and all, lived happy ever after, and were an example to all faithful lovers in the beautiful land of Biaucaire.

Many years abode they there,  
Many years in shade or sun,  
In great gladness and delight.  
Ne'er had Aucassin regret,  
Nor his lady Nicolette.  
Now my story all is done—  
Said and sung!

# SPANISH EPICS

Literature was born in Spain only when the Christians began to reconquer their country from the Moors. The first literary efforts therefore naturally reflected a warlike spirit, and thus assumed the epic form. Very few of these poems still exist in their original shape save the Poema del Cid, the great epic treasure of Spain, as well as the oldest monument of Spanish literature. Besides this poem, there exist fragments of epics on the Infantes of Lara and on Fernan Gonzales, and hints of others of which no traces now remain. These poems were popularized in Spain by the juglares, who invented Bernardo del Carpio so as to have a hero worthy to offset to the Roland of the jongleurs,—their French neighbors. But the poems about this hero have all perished, and his fame is preserved only in the prose chronicles. In the Cronica rimada of the thirteenth century, we discover an account of the Cid's youth, together with the episode where he slays Ximena's father, which supplied Corneille with the main theme of his tragedy.

The Spaniards also boast of a thirteenth century poem of some twenty-five hundred stanzas on the life of Alexander, a fourteenth century romance about Tristan, and the chivalric romance of Amadis de Gaule, which set the fashion for hosts of similar works, whose popularity had already begun to wane when Cervantes scotched all further attempts of this sort by turning

the chivalric romance into ridicule in his *Don Quixote*.

The Spaniards also cultivated the epic ballad, or *romanceros*, previous to the Golden Age of their literature (1550-1700), drawing their subjects from the history or legends of France and Spain, and treating mainly of questions of chivalry and love. Arthur, the Round Table, and the Quest for the Holy Grail, were their stock subjects, previous to the appearance of *Amadis de Gaule*, a work of original fiction remodelled and extended in the fifteenth century by Garcia Ordonez de Montalvo. During the Golden Age, Spain boasts more than two hundred artificial epics, treating of religious, political, and historical matters. Among these the *Auracana* of Erzilla, the *Argentina* of Centenera, and the *Austriada* of Rufo can be mentioned. Then Velasco revived the *Aeneid* for his countrymen's benefit, and religious themes such as Azevedo's *Creacion del Munde* became popular.

The latest of the Spanish epics is that of Saavedra, who, in his *El Moro Exposito*, has cleverly revived the old Spanish legend of the Infantes of Lara. It is, however, the *Cid* which is always quoted as Spain's representative epic.

# THE CID

This poem, of some three thousand seven hundred lines, is divided into two cantos-and was written about 1200. It is a compilation from extant ballads in regard to the great Spanish hero Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, born between 1030 and 1040, whose heroic deeds were performed at the time when the Christian kings were making special efforts to eject the Moors, who had invaded Spain three hundred years before.

The first feat mentioned relates that Rodrigo's father, having been insulted by Don Gomez, pined at the thought of leaving this affront unavenged, until his son, who had never fought before, volunteered to defend him. Not only did Rodrigo challenge and slay Don Gomez, but cutting off his head bore it to his father as a proof that his enemy was dead, a feat which so pleased the old gentleman that he declared Rodrigo should henceforth be head of the family.

After thus signaling himself, Rodrigo was suddenly called upon to face five Moorish kings who had been making sallies into Castile. Not only did he defeat them, but took them prisoners, thereby winning from them the title by which he is commonly known, of "The Cid" or "The Lord."

Shortly after this Donna Ximena, daughter of Don Gomez, appeared before King Ferrando demanding satisfaction for her father's death, and consenting to forego revenge only on

condition that Rodrigo would marry her. The young hero having assented, the couple were united in the presence of the king, after which Rodrigo took his beautiful bride to his mother, with whom he left her until he had earned the right to claim her by distinguishing himself in some way.

It seems that Ferrando of Castile was then disputing from the king of Aragon the possession of Calahorra, a frontier town. Both monarchs decided to settle their difference by a duel, stipulating that the town should belong to the party whose champion triumphed.

Ferrando having selected Rodrigo as his champion, our hero set out to meet his opponent, delaying on the way long enough to rescue a leper from a bog. Then, placing this unfortunate on his horse before him, Rodrigo bore him to an inn, where, in spite of the remonstrances of his followers, he allowed the leper to share his bed and board. That night, while lying beside his loathsome bed-fellow, Rodrigo suddenly felt a cold breath pass through him, and, on investigating, discovered that his companion was gone. He beheld in his stead St. Lazarus, who proclaimed that, since Rodrigo had been so charitable, he would meet with prosperity, and might know whenever he felt a cold shiver run down his spine that it was an omen of success. Thus encouraged, Rodrigo rode on to take part in the duel, but he had been so delayed that the battle call had already sounded, and Alvar Fanez, his cousin, was preparing to fight in his stead. Bidding his cousin step aside, Rodrigo entered the lists, and soon won Calahorra for Ferrando.

Pleased with what Rodrigo had done, the king now showered honors upon him, which so aroused the jealousy of the courtiers that they began to conspire with the Moors to ruin him. It happened, however, that they addressed their first proposals to the very kings whom Rodrigo had conquered, and who proved loyal enough to send him word of the plot. On discovering the treachery of the courtiers, the king banished them, but the wife of Don Garcia pleaded so eloquently with the Cid, that he furnished the banished man with letters of introduction to one of the Moorish kings, who, to please his conqueror, bestowed the city of Cabra upon him.

Although treated with such generosity, Don Garcia proved ungrateful, and even tried to cheat the Moors. Hearing this, the Cid, siding with his former enemies, came into their country to take away from Don Garcia the city which had been allotted for his use.

During one of Ferrando's absences from home, the Moors invaded one of his provinces, whereupon Rodrigo, in retaliation, besieged the city of Coimbra. While he was thus engaged his army suffered so much from lack of provisions that it finally seemed as if he would have to give up his undertaking. But the monks, who had advised the Cid to besiege the city, now came to his rescue, and by feeding his army from their own stores enabled Rodrigo to recover another town from the pagans.

Delighted with this new accession of territory, Ferrando knighted Rodrigo, who meantime had added to his title of the

Cid that of Campeador, "the champion," and hereafter was often mentioned as "the one born in a fortunate hour." In addition, the king bestowed upon Rodrigo the governorship of the cities of Coimbra and Zamorra, which were to be reoccupied by Christians.

Shortly after this, the Pope demanded that Ferrando do homage to the empire, but the king rejoined that Spain was independent and therefore refused to obey. Hearing that large forces were marching against him to compel him to submit, Ferrando placed the Cid at the head of an army, and our hero not only defeated the enemy at Tobosa, but won so brilliant a victory that the Pope never ventured to renew his demands.

Feeling death draw near, Ferrando divided his realm between his sons, who became kings of Castile, Leon, and Galicia, and bestowed upon his daughters the cities of Zamorra and Toro. Although disappointed not to inherit the whole realm, the eldest prince, Don Sancho, dared not oppose his father's will, until one of his brothers proceeded to dispossess one of their sisters. Under the plea that the promise made to their father had already been broken, Don Sancho now set out to conquer the whole realm, but proved so unfortunate in his first battle as to fall into his brother's hands. There he would have remained for the rest of his life, had not the Cid delivered him, taken his captor, and confiscated his realm in Sancho's behalf. Hearing this, the third king, Alfonso, clamored for his share of his brother's spoil, and, as none was allotted him, declared war in his turn. In this campaign Sancho

proved victorious only when the Cid fought in his behalf, and the struggle resulted in the imprisonment of Alfonso, who would have been slain had not his sister asked that he be allowed to enter a monastery. From there Alfonso soon effected his escape, and hastened to seek refuge among the Moors at Toledo.

Don Sancho, having meantime assumed all three crowns, became anxious to dispossess his sister of Zamorra. But the Cid refused to take part in so unchivalrous a deed, and thereby so angered the king that he vowed he would exile him. When the Cid promptly rejoined that in that case he would hasten to Toledo and offer his services to Alfonso to help him recover all he had lost, Sancho repented and apologized. He did not, however, relinquish his project of despoiling his sister of Zamorra, but merely dispensed the Cid from accompanying him.

Because Zamorra was well defended by Vellido Dolfos,—the princess' captain,—King Sancho was not able to take it. He so sorely beset the inhabitants, however, that Vellido Dolfos resolved to get the better of him by strategy. Feigning to be driven out of the city, he secretly joined Don Sancho, and offered to deliver the city into his hands if the king would only accompany him to a side gate. Notwithstanding adverse omens, the credulous Sancho, believing him, rode off, only to meet his death at the postern gate, inside of which his murderer immediately took refuge.

On learning that his master has been slain, the Cid hastened to avenge him, and, as Sancho had left no heir, proclaimed Alfonso

his successor. We are told that this young prince had already heard of his brother's death through a message from his sister, and, fearing the Moors would not allow him to depart for good, had merely asked permission to visit his kin. The wary Moorish king consented, but only on condition Alfonso would promise never to attack him or his sons, should he become king.

When Alfonso arrived at Zamorra, all the Spaniards readily did homage to him save the Cid, who refused to have anything to do with him until he had solemnly sworn he had no share in his brother's death. To satisfy the Cid, therefore, Alfonso and twelve of his men took a threefold oath in the church of Burgos; but it is said Alfonso never forgave the humiliation which the Cid thus inflicted upon him.

The new monarch proved to be a wise ruler for the kingdoms of Leon, Castile, Galicia, and Portugal. He was not without his troubles, however, for shortly after his succession the Cid quarrelled with one of his nobles. Next the Moorish kings became disunited and Alfonso's former host summoned him to his aid. Not only did Alfonso assist this king of Toledo, but invited him into his camp, where he forced him to release him from the promise made on leaving his city. Not daring to refuse while in the power of the Christians, the Moorish king reluctantly consented, and was surprised and delighted to hear Alfonso immediately renew the oath, for, while not willing to be friends with the Moors under compulsion, he had no objection to enter into an alliance with them of his own free will.

Not long after this the king of Navarre sent forth his champion to challenge one of Alfonso's, the stake this time being three castles which the Cid won. But the Moors, taking advantage of the Cid's illness which followed this battle, rose up against Alfonso, who was compelled to wage war against them. In this campaign he would have fallen into the enemy's hands had not the Cid risen from his sick-bed to extricate him from peril! By this time the renown of the Cid was so great, that people in speaking of him invariably termed him "the Perfect One," thereby arousing such jealousy among the courtiers, that they persuaded Alfonso his subject was trying to outshine him! In anger the king decreed Rodrigo's immediate banishment, and, instead of allowing him the customary thirty days to prepare for departure, threatened to put him to death were he found within the land nine days later! As soon as the Cid informed his friends he was banished, one and all promised to follow wherever he went, as did his devoted cousin Alvar Fanez.

It is at this point that the present poem of the Cid begins, for the ballads covering the foregoing part of the Cid's life exist only in a fragmentary state. We are told that the decree of banishment proved a signal for the courtiers to plunder the hero's house, and that the Cid gazing sadly upon its ruins exclaimed, "My enemies have done this!" Then, seeing a poor woman stand by, he bade her secure her share, adding that for his part he would henceforth live by pillaging the Moors, but that the day would come when he would return home laden with honors.

On his way to Burgos the Cid was somewhat cheered by good omens, and was joined by so many knights in quest of adventure that no less than sixty banners fluttered behind him. A royal messenger had, however, preceded him to this city, to forbid the people to show him hospitality and to close his own house against him. The only person who dared inform the Cid of this fact was a little maid, who tremblingly reported that he was to be debarred from all assistance.

"O thou that in a happy hour didst gird thee with the sword,  
It is the order of the king; we dare not, O my lord!  
Sealed with his royal seal hath come his letter to forbid  
The Burgos folk to open door, or shelter thee, my Cid.  
Our goods, our homes, our very eyes, in this are all at stake;  
And small the gain to thee, though we meet ruin for thy sake.  
Go, and God prosper thee in all that thou dost undertake."<sup>13</sup>

Pausing at the church only long enough to say a prayer, the Cid rode out of the gates of Burgos and camped on a neighboring hill, where his nephew Martin Antolinez brought him bread and wine, declaring he would henceforth share the Cid's fortunes in defiance of the king. It was to this relative that the Cid confided the fact that he was without funds and must raise enough money to defray present expenses. Putting their heads together, these two then decided to fill two huge chests with sand, and offer

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<sup>13</sup> All the quotations in this chapter are taken from translation, of "The Cid" by Ormsby.

them to a couple of Jews in Burgos for six hundred marks, stating the chests contained treasures too heavy and valuable to be taken into exile, and assuring them that, if they solemnly pledged themselves not to open the chests for a year, they could then claim them, provided the Cid had not redeemed them in the meanwhile. Trusting to the Cid's word and hoping to enrich themselves by this transaction, the Jews gladly lent the six hundred marks and bore away the heavy chests.

Having thus secured the required supplies, the Cid proceeded to San Pedro de Cardena, where he entrusted his wife Ximena and two daughters to the care of the prior, leaving behind him funds enough to defray all their expenses. Then, although parting with his family was as hard as "when a finger-nail is torn from the flesh," the Cid rode away, crossing the frontier just as the nine days ended. He was there greatly cheered by a vision of the angel Gabriel, who assured him all would be well with him.

The prayer was said, the mass was sung, they mounted to depart;

My Cid a moment stayed to press Ximena to his heart:

Ximena kissed his hand, as one distraught with grief was she:

He looked upon his daughters: "These to God I leave," said he;

"Unto our lady and to God, Father of all below;

He knows if we shall meet again:—and now, sirs, let us go."

As when the finger-nail from out the flesh is torn away,  
Even so sharp to him and them the parting pang that day.  
Then to his saddle sprang my Cid, and forth his vassals led;  
But ever as he rode, to those behind he turned his head.

Entering the land of the Moors with a force of three hundred men, the Cid immediately proceeded to take a castle and to besiege the city of Alcocer. But this town resisted so bravely, that after fifteen weeks the Cid decided to effect by strategy the entrance denied by force. Feigning discouragement, he, therefore, left his camp, whereupon the inhabitants immediately poured out of the city to visit it, leaving the gates wide open behind them. The Cid, who was merely hiding near by, now cleverly cut off their retreat and thus entered Alcocer through wide-open gates.

No sooner did the Moors learn that the Cid had conquered this important place, than they hastened to besiege it, cutting off the water supply, to compel the Christians to come out. To prevent his men from perishing of thirst, the Cid made so vigorous a sortie that he not only drove the enemy away, but captured their baggage, thus winning so much booty that he was able to send thirty caparisoned steeds to Alfonso, as well as rich gifts in money to his wife. In return, the bearer of these welcome tokens was informed by King Alfonso that Rodrigo would shortly be pardoned and recalled.

Meanwhile the Cid, leaving Alcocer, had taken up his abode on the hill near Medina, which still bears his name. Thence

he proceeded to the forest of Tebar, where he again fought so successfully against the Moors that he compelled the city of Saragossa to pay tribute to him. Rumors of these triumphs enticed hundreds of Castilian knights to join him, and with their aid he outwitted all the attempts the Moors made to regain their lost possessions. We are also told that in one of these battles the Cid took prisoner Don Ramon, who refused to eat until free. Seeing this, the Cid took his sword, Colada, and promised to set him and his kinsmen free if they would only eat enough to have strength to depart. Although doubtful whether this promise would be kept, Don Ramon and his follows partook of food and rode away, constantly turning their heads to make sure that they were not pursued.

He spurred his steed, but, as he rode, a backward glance  
he bent,

Still fearing to the last my Cid his promise would repent:  
A thing, the world itself to win, my Cid would not have done:  
No perfidy was ever found in him, the Perfect One.

As some of his subjects were sorely persecuted by the Moors, Alfonso now sent word to the Cid to punish them, a task the hero promised to perform, provided the king would pledge himself never again to banish a man without giving him thirty days' notice, and to make sundry other wise reforms in his laws. Having thus secured inestimable boons for his fellow-countrymen, the Cid proceeded to besiege sundry Moorish castles, all of which

he took, winning thereby much booty. Having thus served his monarch, the Cid was recalled in triumph to Castile, where he was told to keep all he had won from the Moors. In return the Cid helped Alfonso to secure Toledo, seeing the king with whom this king had sworn alliance was now dead. It was while the siege of this city was taking place that Bishop Jerome was favored by a vision of St. Isidro, who predicted they would take the city, a promise verified in 1085, when the Cid's was the first Christian banner to float above its walls. Our hero now became governor of this town, but, although he continued to wage war against the Moors, his successes had made the courtiers so jealous that they induced the king to imprison Ximena and her daughters.

Perceiving he was no longer in favor at court, the Cid haughtily withdrew, and, when Alfonso came down into Valencia, demanding that the cities which had hitherto paid tribute to his subject should now do so to him, the Cid retaliated by invading Alfonso's realm. None of the courtiers daring to oppose him, Alfonso had cause bitterly to repent of what he had done, and humbly assured his powerful subject he would never molest him again. Ever ready to forgive an ungrateful master, the Cid withdrew, and for a time king and subject lived in peace.

Although the Cid had permitted the Moors to remain in the cities he had conquered, they proved rather restive under the Christian yoke, and guided by Abeniaf finally told the Moors in Northern Africa that if they would only cross the sea they would deliver Valencia into their hands. But this conspiracy soon

became known to the Moors who favored the Cid, and they immediately notified him, holding their town which was in dire peril for twelve days.

To keep his promise, Abeniaf finally hauled some of the Moors up over the walls by means of ropes, and the presence of these foes in their midst compelled the Moors who favored the Cid to leave the city in disguise, thus allowing Abeniaf and his allies to plunder right and left and even to murder the Moorish king. This done, Abeniaf himself assumed the regal authority, and began to govern the city in such an arbitrary way that he soon managed to offend even his own friends.

Meantime the Moors who had fled rejoined the Cid, and, when they reported what had occurred, Rodrigo wrote to Abeniaf, reproaching him for his treachery and demanding the surrender of the property he had left in town. Because Abeniaf replied that his allies had taken possession of it, the Cid termed him a traitor and swore he would secure revenge. Thereupon our hero set out with an army, and, finding himself unable to take the city by assault, began to besiege it, pulling down the houses in the suburbs to secure necessary materials to construct his camp. Then he began a systematic attack on the city, mastering one of its defences after another, and carrying on the siege with such vigor that he thereby won additional glory. All the Moorish captives taken were sent out through his lines into the open country, where they were invited to pursue their agricultural avocations, and assured protection, provided they would pay

tribute of one-tenth of the produce of their lands.

Meantime the people in the besieged city suffered so sorely from hunger, that they finally sent word they would treat with the Cid if he would allow Abeniaf and his followers to leave the country unharmed. The Cid having consented to this proposal, the invading Moors withdrew to Morocco, whence, however, they soon returned in increased numbers to recapture Valencia and take their revenge upon Abeniaf, who had proved treacherous to them too. To check the advance of this foe, the Cid flooded the country by opening the sluices in the irrigation canals, and the invaders, fancying themselves in danger of drowning, beat a hasty retreat. Because Abeniaf took advantage of these circumstances to turn traitor again, the Cid besieged him in Valencia for nine months, during which the famine became so intense that the inhabitants resorted to all manner of expedients to satisfy their hunger.

Throughout this campaign the Cid ate his meals in public, sitting by himself at a high table and assigning the one next him to the warriors who won the most distinction in battle. This table was headed by Alvar Fanez, surrounded by the most famous knights. A notorious coward, pretending to have done great deeds, advanced one day to claim a seat among the heroes. Perceiving his intention, the Cid called him to come and sit with him, whereupon the knight became so elated that when he again found himself on the field of battle he actually did wonders! Seeing his efforts, the Cid generously encouraged him and, after

he had shown himself brave indeed, publicly bade him sit with the distinguished knights.

The city of Valencia having finally opened its gates, the Cid marched in with a train of provision-wagons, for he longed to relieve the starving. Then, sending for the principal magistrates, he expressed commiseration for their sufferings, adding that he would treat the people fairly, provided they proved loyal in their turn. But, instead of occupying the city itself, he and the Christians returned to the suburbs, enjoining upon the Moorish governor to maintain order among his people, and slay none but Abeniaf, who had proved traitor to all.

Soon after, seeing that the Moors and Christians would never be able to live in peace within the same enclosure, the Cid appointed another place of abode for the Moors. Then he and his followers marched into Valencia, which they proceeded to hold, in spite of sundry attempts on the part of the Moors to recover possession of so important a stronghold.

When the Moorish king of Seville ventured to attack the Cid, he and his thirty thousand men experienced defeat and many of his force were drowned in the river while trying to escape. Such was the amount of spoil obtained in this and other battles, that the Cid was able to make his soldiers rich beyond their dreams, although by this time he had a very large force, for new recruits constantly joined him during his wars with the Moors.

As the Cid had vowed on leaving home never to cut his beard until recalled, he was now a most venerable-looking man, with

a beard of such length that it had to be bound out of his way by silken cords whenever he wanted to fight. Among those who now fought in the Cid's ranks was Hieronymo (Jerome), who became bishop of Valencia, and who, in his anxiety to restore the whole land to Christian rule, fought by the Cid's side, and invariably advised him to transform all captured mosques into Christian churches.

But lo! all armed from head to heel the Bishop Jerome shows;

He ever brings good fortune to my Cid where'er he goes.

"Mass have I said, and now I come to join you in the fray;

To strike a blow against the Moor in battle if I may,

And in the field win honor for my order and my hand.

It is for this that I am here, far from my native land.

Unto Valencia did I come to cast my lot with you,

All for the longing that I had to slay a Moor or two.

And so, in warlike guise I come, with blazoned shield, and lance,

That I may flesh my blade to-day, if God but give the chance.

Then send me to the front to do the bidding of my heart:

Grant me this favor that I ask, or else, my Cid, we part!"

Now that he had a fixed abiding place, the Cid bade Alvar Fanez and Martin Antolinez carry a rich present to Don Alfonso, and obtain his permission to bring his wife and daughters to Valencia. The same messengers were also laden with a reward for the Abbot of St. Pedro, under whose protection the Cid's family

had taken refuge, and with funds to redeem the chests of sand from the Jews at Burgos, begging their pardon for the deception practised upon them and allowing them higher interest than they could ever have claimed. Not only did the messengers gallantly acquit themselves of this embassy, but boasted everywhere of the five pitched battles the Cid had won and of the eight towns now under his sway.

On learning that the Cid had conquered Valencia, Alfonso expressed keen delight, although his jealous courtiers did not hesitate to murmur they could have done as well! The monarch also granted permission to Donna Ximena and her daughters to join the Cid, and the three ladies set out with their escorts for Valencia. Nine miles outside this city, the Cid met them, mounted on his steed Bavioca, which he had won from the Moors, and, joyfully embracing wife and daughters, welcomed them to Valencia, where from the top of the Alcazar he bade them view the fertile country which paid tribute to him.

But, three months after the ladies' arrival, fifty thousand Moors crossed over from Africa to recover their lost territory. Hearing this, the Cid immediately laid in a stock of provisions, renewed his supplies of ammunition, and inspected the walls and engines of his towns to make sure they could resist. These preparations concluded, he told his wife and daughters they should now see with their own eyes how well he could fight! Soon after the Moors began besieging the city (1102), the Cid arranged that some of his troops should slip out and attack them

from behind while he faced them. By this stratagem the Moors were caught between opposing forces, and overestimating their numbers fled in terror, allowing the Cid to triumph once more, although he had only four thousand men to oppose to their fifty thousand! Thanks to this panic of the Moors the Cid collected such huge quantities of booty, that he was able to send a hundred fully equipped horses to King Alfonso, as well as the tent which he had captured from the Moorish monarch. These gifts not only pleased Alfonso, but awed and silenced the courtiers, among whom were the Infantes of Carrion, who deemed it might be well to sue for the Cid's daughters, since the father was able to bestow such rich gifts. Having reached this decision, these scheming youths approached the king, who, counting upon his vassals' implicit obedience to his commands, promised they should marry as they wished.

When the bearers of the Cid's present, therefore, returned to Valencia, they bore a letter wherein Alfonso bade the Cid give his daughters in marriage to the Infantes of Carrion. Although this marriage suited neither the old hero nor his wife, both were far too loyal to oppose the king's wishes, and humbly sent word they would obey.

Then the Cid graciously went to meet his future sons-in-law. They were escorted to the banks of the Tagus by Alfonso himself, who there expressed surprise at the length of the Cid's beard, and seemed awed by the pomp with which he was surrounded, for at the banquet all the chief men ate out of dishes of gold and no one

was asked to use anything less precious than silver. Not only did the Cid assure his future sons-in-law that his daughters should have rich dowries, but, the banquet ended, escorted them back to Valencia, where he entertained them royally.

The wedding festivities lasted fifteen days, but even after they were over the Infantes of Carrion tarried in Valencia, thus giving the Cid more than one opportunity to regret having bestowed his daughters' hands upon youths who possessed neither courage nor nobility of character. While the young men were still lingering in Valencia, it happened one afternoon—while the Cid lay sleeping in the hall—that a huge lion, kept in the court-yard for his amusement, escaped from its keepers. While those present immediately rushed forward to protect the sleeper, the Cid's sons-in-law, terrified at the sight of the monster, crept one beneath the hero's couch and the other over a wine-press, thus soiling his garments so he was not fit to be seen. At the lion's roar the Cid awoke. Seeing at a glance what had occurred, he sprang forward, then, laying a powerful hand on the animal's mane, compelled him to follow him out of the hall, and thrust him ignominiously back into his cage.

Because the Infantes had so plainly revealed their cowardice, people made fun of them, until they roused their resentment to such an extent that, when the Moors again threatened Valencia, they offered to go forth and defend the Cid. This show of courage simply delighted the old hero, who sallied forth accompanied by both sons-in-law and by the bishop, who was a mighty fighter.

Although most of the warriors present did wonders on this occasion, the Infantes of Carrion were careful not to run any risk, although one of them purchased a horse which a soldier had won from the Moors, and shamelessly passed it off as his own trophy. Pleased to think this son-in-law had so distinguished himself, the Cid complimented him after the battle, where he himself had slain so many Moors and won so much booty that he was able to send another princely present to Alfonso. Perceiving they were still objects of mockery among the followers of the Cid, the Infantes now begged permission to take their wives home, although their real intention was to make these helpless girls pay for the insults they had received. Although the Cid little suspected this fact, he regretfully allowed his daughters to depart, and tried to please his sons-in-law by bestowing upon them the choice swords, Tizona and Colada, won in the course of his battles against the Moors.

Two days' journey from Valencia the Infantes prepared to carry out the revenge they had planned, but while conferring in regard to its details were overheard by a Moor, who, vowing he would have nothing to do with such cowards, left them unceremoniously. Sending on their main troops with a cousin of the girls, Felez Munoz, who served as their escort, the Infantes led their wives into a neighboring forest, where, after stripping them, they beat them cruelly, kicked them with their spurs, and abandoned them grievously wounded and trembling for their lives. When the Infantes rejoined their suite minus their

wives, Felez Munoz, suspecting something was wrong, rode back hastily, and found his cousins in such a pitiful plight that they were too weak to speak. Casting his own cloak about the nearly naked women, he tenderly bore them into a thicket, where they could lie in safety while he watched over them all night, for he did not dare leave them to go in quest of aid. At dawn he hurried off to a neighboring village and secured help. There, in the house of a kind man, the poor ladies were cared for, while their cousin hastened on to apprise the Cid of what had occurred.

Meantime the Infantes had met Alvar Fanez conveying to the king another present, and, on being asked where were their wives, carelessly rejoined they had left them behind. Ill pleased with such a report, Alvar Fanez and his troops hurried back in quest of the ladies, but found nothing save traces of blood, which made them suspect foul play. On discovering what had really happened to the Cid's daughters, Alvar Fanez hurried on to deliver the present to the king, and indignantly reported what treatment the Cid's daughters had undergone at the hands of the bridegrooms the king had chosen for them, informing him that since he had made the marriage it behooved him to see justice done. Horrified on hearing what had occurred, Alfonso summoned the Cortes, sending word to the Cid and to the Infantes to appear before it at Toledo three months hence.

Meantime the Cid, learning what had befallen his poor girls, hastened to them, took them home, and, hearing that the king himself would judge his case, decided to abide by the decision

of the Cortes. At the end of the third month, therefore, the Cid's followers—who had preceded him—erected in the royal hall at Toledo the ivory seat he had won at Valencia, and Alfonso himself openly declared the Cid quite worthy to occupy a throne by his side, seeing no one had ever served him as well as the man whom the courtiers were always trying to belittle. The day for the solemn session having dawned, the Cid entered the hall, followed by a hundred knights, while the Infantes of Carrion appeared there with equal numbers, being afraid of an attack. When summoned to state his wrongs, the Cid quietly rose from his ivory throne, declaring that, having bestowed upon the Infantes two swords of great price, he demanded their return, since, as they refused to have anything more to do with his daughters, he could no longer consider them his sons. All present were amazed at the mildness of the Cid's speech and at his demanding merely the return of his swords, and the Infantes, glad to be let off so easily, promptly resigned both weapons into the Cid's hand. With his precious swords lying across his lap, the Cid now declared that having also given the Infantes large sums of money he wished those returned also, and, although the young men objected, the court sentenced them to pay the sum the Cid claimed. Both of these demands having been granted, the Cid next required satisfaction for the treatment the Infantes had inflicted upon his daughters, eloquently describing to the Cortes the cruelty and treachery used.

"So please your Grace! once more upon your clemency I call;

A grievance yet remains untold, the greatest grief of all.

And let the court give ear, and weigh the wrong that hath been done.

I hold myself dishonored by the lords of Carrion.

Redress my combat they must yield; none other will I take.

How now, Infantes! what excuse, what answer do ye make?

Why have ye laid my heartstrings bare? In jest or earnest say,

Have I offended you? and I will make amends to-day.

"My daughters in your hands I placed the day that forth ye went,

And rich in wealth and honors from Valencia were ye sent.

Why did ye carry with you brides ye loved not, treacherous curs?

Why tear their flesh in Corpes wood with saddle-girths and spurs,

And leave them to the beasts of prey? Villains throughout were ye!

What answer ye can make to this 'tis for the court to see."

When the Cid added that Alfonso was responsible for these unfortunate marriages, the monarch admitted the fact, and asked what the Infantes of Carrion could say in their own defence. Insolently they declared the Cid's daughters not worthy to mate with them, stating they had, on the whole, treated them better

than they deserved by honoring them for a time with their attentions.

Had not the Cid forbidden his followers to speak until he granted permission, these words would have been avenged almost as soon as uttered. But, forgetting his previous orders, the aged Cid now demanded of Pero Mudo (Dumby) why he did not speak, whereupon this hero boldly struck one of the Infantes' party and challenged them all to fight.

Thus compelled to settle the difficulty by a judicial duel, the king bade the Infantes and their uncle be ready to meet the Cid's champions in the lists on the morrow. The poem describes the encounter thus:

The marshals leave them face to face and from the lists are gone;

Here stand the champions of my Cid, there those of Carrion;  
Each with his gaze intent and fixed upon his chosen foe,

Their bucklers braced before their breasts, their lances pointing low,

Their heads bent down, as each man leans above his saddle-bow.

Then with one impulse every spur is in the charger's side,  
And earth itself is felt to shake beneath their furious stride;  
Till, midway meeting, three with three, in struggle fierce they lock,

While all account them dead who hear the echo of the shock.

The cowardly Infantes, having been defeated, publicly

confessed themselves in the wrong, and were ever after abhorred, while the Cid returned to Valencia with the spoils wrung from his adversaries, and proudly presented to his wife and daughters the three champions who had upheld their cause.

He who a noble lady wrongs and casts aside—may he  
Meet like requital for his deeds, or worse, if worse there be.  
But let us leave them where they lie—their meed is all men's  
scorn.

Turn we to speak of him that in a happy hour was born.  
Valencia the Great was glad, rejoiced at heart to see  
The honoured champions of her lord return in victory.

Shortly after this the Cid's pride was further salved by proposals of marriage from the princes of Aragon and Navarre, and thus his descendants in due time sat upon the thrones of these realms.

And he that in a good hour was born, behold how he hath  
sped!  
His daughters now to higher rank and greater honor wed:  
Sought by Navarre and Aragon for queens his daughters  
twain;  
And monarchs of his blood to-day upon the thrones of Spain.

Five years now elapsed during which the Cid lived happy, honored by all and visited by embassies even from distant Persia. But the Cid was now old and felt his end near, for St. Peter visited

him one night and warned him that, although he would die in thirty days, he would triumph over the Moors even after life had departed.

This assurance was most comforting, for hosts of Moors had suddenly crossed the seas and were about to besiege Valencia. Trusting in St. Peter's warning, the Cid made all his preparations for death, and, knowing his followers would never be able to hold the city after he was gone, bade them keep his demise secret, embalm his body, bind it firmly on his steed Bavioca, and boldly cut their way out of the city with him in their van.

Just as had been predicted, the Cid died on the thirtieth day after his vision, and, his corpse having been embalmed as he directed, his followers prepared to leave Valencia. To the amazement of the Moors, the gates of the city they were besieging were suddenly flung open wide, and out sallied the Christians with the Cid in their midst. The mere sight of this heroic leader caused such a panic, that the little troop of six hundred Christian knights safely conveyed their dead chief and his family through the enemy's serried ranks to Castile. Other detachments led by the bishop and Gil Diaz then drove these Moors back to Africa after securing immense spoil.

Seeing Valencia abandoned, the Moors whom the Cid had established without the city returned to take possession of their former houses, on one of which they discovered an inscription stating that the Cid Campeador was dead and would no longer dispute possession of the city.

Meantime the funeral procession had gone on to the Monastery of St. Pedro de Cardena, where the Cid was buried, as he requested, and where his marvellously preserved body sat in his ivory throne ten years, before it was placed in its present tomb.

For two years and a half the steed Bavioca was reverently tended by the Cid's followers, none of whom, however, ever presumed to bestride him. As for Ximena, having mounted guard over her husband's remains four years, she finally died, leaving grandchildren to rule over Navarre and Aragon.

And so his honor in the land grows greater day by day.  
Upon the feast of Pentecost from life he passed away.  
For him and all of us the Grace of Christ let us implore.  
And here ye have the story of my Cid Campeador.

# PORTUGUESE EPICS

Portuguese literature, owing to its late birth, shows little originality. Besides, its earliest poems are of a purely lyrical and not of an epical type. Then, too, its reigning family being of Burgundian extraction, it borrowed its main ideas and literary material from France. In that way Charlemagne, the Arthurian romances, and the story of the Holy Grail became popular in Portugal, where it is even claimed that Amadis de Gaule originated, although it received its finished form in Spain.

The national epic of Portugal is the work of Luis de Camoëns, who, inspired by patriotic fervor, sang in *Os Lusíadas* of the discovery of the eagerly sought maritime road to India. Of course, Vasco da Gama is the hero of this epic, which is described *in extenso* further on.

In imitation of Camoëns, sundry other Portuguese poets attempted epics on historical themes, but none of their works possess sufficient merits to keep their memory green.

During the sixteenth century, many versions of the prose epics or romances of chivalry were rife, Amadis de Gaule and its sequel, *Palmerina d'Inglaterra*, being the most popular of all.

Later on Meneses composed, according to strict classic rules, a tedious epic entitled *Henriqueida*, in praise of the monarch Henry, and de Macedo left *O Oriente*, an epical composition which: enjoyed a passing popularity.

# THE LUSIAD

*Introduction.* The author of the Portuguese epic, Luis de Camoëns, was born at Lisbon in 1524. Although his father, commander of a warship, was lost at sea during his infancy, his mother contrived to give him a good education, and even sent him to the University at Coimbra, where he began to write poetry. After graduating Camoëns served at court, and there incurred royal displeasure by falling in love with a lady his majesty chose to honor with his attentions. During a period of banishment at Santarem, Camoëns began the *Lusiad*, *Os Lusíades*, an epic poem celebrating Vasco da Gama's journey to India in 1497<sup>14</sup> and rehearsing with patriotic enthusiasm the glories of Portuguese history. Owing to its theme, this epic, which a great authority claims should be termed "the Portugade," is also known as the Epic of Commerce or the Epic of Patriotism.

After his banishment Camoëns obtained permission to join the forces directed against the Moors, and shortly after lost an eye in an engagement in the Strait of Gibraltar. Although he distinguished himself as a warrior, Camoëns did not even then neglect the muse, for he reports he wielded the pen with one hand and the sword with the other.

After this campaign Camoëns returned to court, but, incensed

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<sup>14</sup> See the author's "Story of the Thirteen Colonies."

by the treatment he received at the hands of jealous courtiers, he soon vowed his ungrateful country should not even possess his bones, and sailed for India, in 1553, in a fleet of four vessels, only one of which was to arrive at its destination, Goa.

While in India Camoëns sided with one of the native kings, whose wrath he excited by imprudently revealing his political tendencies. He was, therefore, exiled to Macao, where for five years he served as "administrator of the effects of deceased persons," and managed to amass a considerable fortune while continuing his epic. It was on his way back to Goa that Camoëns suffered shipwreck, and lost all he possessed, except his poem, with which he swam ashore.

Sixteen years after his departure from Lisbon, Camoëns returned to his native city, bringing nothing save his completed epic, which, owing to the pestilence then raging in Europe, could be published only in 1572. Even then the *Lusiad* attracted little attention, and won for him only a small royal pension, which, however, the next king rescinded. Thus, poor Camoëns, being sixty-two years old, died in an almshouse, having been partly supported since his return by a Javanese servant, who begged for his master in the streets of Lisbon.

Camoëns' poem *Os Lusíades*, or the *Lusitanians* (i.e., Portuguese), comprises ten books, containing 1102 stanzas in heroic iambics, and is replete with mythological allusions. Its outline is as follows:

*Book I.* After invoking the muses and making a ceremonious

address to King Sebastian, the poet describes how Jupiter, having assembled the gods on Mount Olympus, directs their glances upon Vasco da Gama's ships plying the waves of an unknown sea, and announces to them that the Portuguese, who have already made such notable maritime discoveries, are about to achieve the conquest of India.

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