

THE VISION OF AENEAS

(On the night of the fall of Troy the ghost of Hector appears to Aeneas, apprizes him of the city's doom, and vaguely foretells to him his future destiny.)

Aeneid 2. vv. 268-295. *Tempus erat—*

It was the time when o'er man's soul, with toil and care bespent,
Steals heavy sleep, that blessed boon by kindly heaven sent.
In dreamland's realm before mine eyes, lo, Hector's form appears,
With visage sad, while from his eyes rains down a flood of tears.
All foul with bloody dust he seemed, as then when borne along
Behind the Car: still swollen his feet where pierced the cruel thong.
Ah me, in what dire plight he seemed! How changed he met my sight
From that heroic prince we met returning from the fight,
Clad in Achilles' shield and spear, rent from the foeman slain,
Or when he burnt the ships and came in triumph home again.
A matted beard he had, and hair all foul and stiff with gore;
Still had he too the wounds he got his city's walls before.
In eager haste I thus begin, while tears my cheeks bedew,
The hero to address, and sad words from my heart I drew:
"O light of fair Dardania. Troy's hope e'er sure and fast:
What long delay has hindered thee? O Hector, whence at last
Long looked for com'st thou now? With what glad eyes we see thy
face,
When down to bitter death have gone so many of thy race;
When all the city groans beneath the throes of war. Yet say
What cause has marred those features fair? In what grim fray
Hast thou received these wounds?" No answering word to these
vain cries,
But sad, as from a heart deep-troubled, thus the ghost replies:
"Fly, heaven-born hero, fly. Escape the advancing flames. The foe
Holds sway within the walls: Troy's once high mounting towers
lie low.
Enough has now been done by thee for King and fatherland:
Had Troy's defence been human power, it had been this right hand.
Thy city's holy relics now thy Troy commits to thee—
The gods who ruled thy home: them take to share thy destiny.
For them trace wide a city's walls upon a distant shore,
Where thou shalt found another home thy long sea-wanderings
o'er."

J. L.