

ESSAYS IN TRANSLATION.

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

(Homer's *Iliad*, Book VI.)

PART I.

Thus, having done his duty to his gods
And to his country, Hector sought his home.
Where art and nature vied in loveliness.
Love winged his feet; his home he quickly

found,
But her whom his soul loved he found not
[there,

Her of the snowy arms, Andromache.
For she, with infant child and well-robed

[nurse,
Unto a tower that faced the Grecian camp
Had gone to watch and weep. So Hector

[paused
Upon the threshold, as he left the house,
And made enquiry of the household maids,
"Come now, handmaidens, answer me in

[truth,
Whither white-armed Andromache has gone,
To seek my sisters or my brothers' wives?
Or to Athene's temple where a crowd

Of matrons seek the bright-haired goddess'
[wrath,

To turn to mercy by the strength of tears?"
A trusty servant quickly made response,
"Hector, my lord, right willingly my lips

Shall answer truthfully thy eager quest.
Not to thy sisters or thy brothers' wives,
Nor to Athene's temple where a crowd

Of matrons seek the bright-haired goddess'
[wrath,

To turn to mercy by the strength of tears,
Has gone Andromache; but she has gone
Unto a lofty tower of Ilion

To watch the contest, for bad tidings came
Of Greeks victorious and of Trojans slain;
And, at this moment, like a frenzied one,

She rushes to the rampart, while, behind,
Her darling boy is carried by his nurse."

She ceased; nor waited Hector long, but
[rushed
Forth from the house, along the very way

That he had come, through fair-built Troja's
[streets;
Nor paused he till he reached the Scæan gate

(Through which he meant to hie him to the
[plain).
But here Andromache of queenly dower,

His wife, the daughter of Eëtion,
Who dwelt erstwhile neath Pheacæus' woody
[height,

In Thebe, ruling o'er Cecilian men,
Came running till she met him in the way.
With her, the nurse, who to her bosom held

An innocent-hearted babe, their only son,
His father's joy, in beauty like a star,
Scamandrius named by Hector, but the host

Called him Astyanax, the City's King,
Honouring Hector chief defence of Troy.
And now he looked on him and smiled a smile
That spake his heart more than a thousand

[words;
And called the tears into his mother's eyes.
She, clinging to her husband, grasped his

[hand,
And sobbing "Hector" spoke to him these
[words:—

"Ah! love, thy bravery will be thy bane,
And, seeking glory, thou forgettest him.
And me, ah! hapless me when thou art gone!

Soon, soon, I know it, all the foes of Troy,
Rushing on thee at once, shall take thy life.
And, when I miss thee, it were better far

That I were laid beneath the ground; for I
Shall then have none to comfort me, not one,
But woes on woes, when thou hast left me,

[Hector!
No sire have I, nor gentle mother left;
Him, as thou know'st, the proud Achilles slew,
And razed his fair-built city to the ground,

High-gated Thebe, yet he spoiled him not,
Although he slew him, but, with reverence,
Laid him in glittering arms upon the pyre,

And raised a mound in honour of his name,
Which the hill-nymphs garlanded round with
[elms,

The daughters of the ægis-bearing Zens.
And my seven brothers in one fatal day
Entered the gloomy shades where Pluto

[reigns,
Slain by the ruthless hand that slew my sire;
As, in their native fields, they watched the

[herds
Of kine, slowfooted, and of snowy sheep.
Nor did my queenly mother long survive;
For led a captive to the Grecian camp,

With other spoils, the victor sent her home
For goodly ransom, only to be slain
By the sure shaft of huntress Artemis.

But thou art father, mother, brother, spouse,
My pride, my Hector! Oh! then, pity me!
Stay here and watch with me upon this tower;

Stay, stay, my Hector, go not hence to make
Thy child an orphan and a widow me!
But set the forces by the Fig-tree Hill,

Where the chief risk of hostile entrance lies,
And where the wall is weakest. At that point
Already have the bravest of our foes,

Idomeneus and either Ajax, Diomedæ,
And the two sons of Atreus, made assault,
Whether incited thither by some voice

Prophetic, or high hope of victory.
So stay, my Hector; they will need thee
[here."

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