

Whence to return the sailors warned might know,  
And where to bend around the advancing prow.

Their stations then they take, which lots define,  
And on the poops afar the captains shine,  
With gold and purple fitly they arrayed.

The rest are decked with wreaths of poplar made,  
And with their naked well-oiled shoulders gleam.

They dart into the benches like a beam,  
Their sinewy arms to the oars are bent,

Upon the expected signal all intent;  
And throbbing fear and keen desire of fame  
Sap their heart's palpitating o'er-tasked frame.

When the shrill trumpet sounded, instant all  
Shot from their stations; a cry nautical  
Pierces the air; and as their arms they strain,  
The dashed seas foam. They furrows cut amain;  
And, by the oars and the beaks trident scarred,  
In their long wake the liquid plain seems marred.

In two yoke race not so precipitate  
The chariots took the plain, or so elate  
Rush from the goal discharged: nor waving lines  
So shook the charioteer, to lash inclines.