

and attacked a herd which was driven down to the river. Then the enemy rushed up, and a battle broke out along the river banks. Spears flew back and forward: Eris and Kydoimos, the demons of War, moved among them as they fought, while Ker, the spirit of Death, in blood-stained garments, dragged the dead and wounded men by the feet through the melee.

"And Hephaestus made a field, where ploughmen drove their teams up and down: at the field's edge where they turned a man came up and gave them a cup of wine. And he made a manor at reaping time. The reapers plied their sickles, while the trusses fell behind them and were bound into sheaves by the binders; the king who owned the manor stood watching in silent joy; and his squires prepared a meal under an oak tree beyond. Hephaestus made a vineyard too, with a gay vintage dance; a herd of horned cattle, with drivers and dogs; a pasture ground in a beautiful valley, with sheep, and shepherds, and sheepfolds; and a dancing place, where young men and maidens were dancing, holding one another by the hand, while a divine minstrel sang to his lyre--all these completed the vast picture of all the activities of human life. Round the rim of the shield flowed the Ocean, embracing the whole world.

"That deep sense of the harmony between man and nature, which inspires the description of Achilles' shield, is dominant in Homer's conception of the world. One great rhythm penetrates the moving whole. No day is so full of human striving that the poet forget to tell how the sun rises and sinks above the turmoil, how the toil and battle of the day is succeeded by repose, and how the night which loosens men's limbs in sleep embraces all mortals, Homer is neither a naturalist nor a moralist. He is neither swept away without foothold in the chaotic waves of life, nor standing, a serene observer, on the shore. Physical and spiritual forces are equally real for him. He has a keen and objective insight into human passions. He knows their elemental violence, which overpowers man himself and whirls him away in their grip. But though that force may often seem to overswell its banks, it is always controlled by strong barriers beyond.