as the true poetical representative of his time. And this ballad character of the Aeneid is not merely suggested by Mr. Morris’s metre, but by his constant and most Virgilian choice (sometimes amounting to mannerism) of antiquarian language, as well as by the general liveliness and flavour of his diction. Nor does Mr. Morris ever lose sight of the incomparable grace and beauty of soul that inspired Virgil’s verse—into which, indeed, as a few specimens will show immediately, he sometimes reads a new poetical feeling of his own. It may be said, indeed, that the general effect of his work is quite unique, and that, since Dryden, no Englishman has translated Virgil with such insight and sympathy. Dryden has, of course, a power and mastery of his own which enables him at times to deal with Virgil’s grander efforts as perhaps no English poet but Milton (had he attempted it) could have done; and it should also be remembered that a freer play was allowed by poets in Dryden’s time than in our own to the rhetorical element, which is so strong in Virgil. But in the melodious passages of meditation and enjoyment with which the Aeneid abounds Mr. Morris is master of the situation, as the two following specimens will show (vii. 25, viii. 86):—

Now reddened all the sea with rays, and from the heavenly plain
The golden-bud Aurora shone amid her rosy wain.
Then fell the winds, and every air sank down in utter sleep,
And now the shaven ears must strive amid the sluggish deep;
Therewith Aeneas sees a wood rise from the water’s face,
And there it is the Tiber’s flood amidst a pleasant place,
With many a whirling eddy swift and yellowing with sand,
Breaks into sea; and diversely above on either hand
The fowl that love the river bank, and haunt the river bed,
Sweetened the air with plentiful song, and through the thicket fled.
So there Aeneas bids his folk shoreward their bows to lay,
And joyfully he entereth in the stream’s o’ershadowed way.

[second passage omitted]

Much of the chill dread of the opening of Virgil’s Inferno is preserved in the following beautiful passage (vi. 268):—

All dim amid the lonely night on through the dusky they went,
On through the empty house of Dis, the land of nought at all.
E’en as beneath the doubtful moon, when niggard light doth fall
Upon some way amid the woods, when God hath hidden heave, [quotes next 18 lines]
But it is a pity that a translator who, as a rule, cultivates the most scholarly accuracy should repeat a conventional blunder which mars so much of the beauty of the passage, and render fœcibus Orui 'the jaws of hell.' If we are not mistaken, fœcuses means not the jaws but the throat, metaphorically (as in a house) any close passage, and here, the narrow entrance to Orcus. The idea of hell as a monster with jaws was as foreign to Virgil as to the whole of Greek and Roman myth-ology, in which the imagery of the underworld is mostly drawn from houses and cities. And there is another point here to which it may be of interest to draw attention. Does consanguineus Leti sopor mean sleep or lethargy, as has been suggested by an ingenious critic? We incline to think the latter; partly, because sleep has no proper place among the terribles visi formae, partly, also, because the lines under consideration contain an interesting reminiscence of Lucretius, iii. 459, seqq., where disease, sorrow, grief, fear and lethargy are mentioned together:—

His accedit ut videamus, corpus ut ipsum
Suscipere immanis morbos durumque dolorem,
Sec animum aras acris luctumque mutumque
* * * * *
Interdumque gravi lethargo fertur in alnum
Aeternumque soporem oculis mutuo cadentem.3

The argument might not be worth pressing were it not that the sixth Aeneid shows other marked traces of Virgil's study of Lucretius' third book.

Let us now try Mr. Morris in another vein, that of invective. The following is his rendering of Dido's great speech (iv. 365):—

Traitor, no goddess brought thee forth, nor Dardanus was first
Of thine ill race, but Caucus on spiky crags accurst
Begot thee, and Hyrcanian dugs of tigers suckled thee.
Why hide it now, why hold me back, lest greater evil be?

[quotes next 18 lines]

And this of Drances' eloquence (xi. 342):—

A matter dark to none, and which no voice of mine doth need,
Thou counsellest on, sweet king; for all confess in very deed

1 Sleep, the brother of Death.
2 Shapes terrifying to behold.
3 Then follows this, that as the body falls victim to terrible diseases and harsh pain, so the mind falls victim to biting cares, grief and fear. Sometimes, in a heavy lethargy, it is carried off into a deep and eternal sleep, when the eyes and head fall nodding.