[50] Thus inwardly brooding with heart inflamed, the goddess came to Aeolia, motherland of storm clouds, tracts teeming with furious blasts. Here in his vast cavern, Aeolus, their king, keeps under his sway and with prison bonds curbs the struggling winds and the roaring gales. They, to the mountain’s mighty moans, chafe blustering around the barriers. In his lofty citadel sits Aeolus, sceptre in hand, taming their passions and soothing their rage; did he not so, they would surely bear off with them in wild flight seas and lands and the vault of heaven, sweeping them through space. But, fearful of this, the father omnipotent hid them in gloomy caverns, and over them piled high mountain masses and gave them a king who, under fixed covenant, should be skilled to tighten and loosen the reins at command. Him Juno now addressed thus in suppliant speech:

[65] “Aeolus – for to you the father of gods and king of men has given power to clam and uplift the waves with the wind – a people hateful to me sails the Tyrrhene sea, carrying into Italy Ilium’s vanquished gods. Hurl fury into your winds, sink and overwhelm the ships, or drive the men asunder and scatter their bodies on the deep. Twice seven nymphs have I of wondrous beauty, of whom Deiopea, fairest of form, I will link to you in wedlock, making her yours for ever, that for such service of yours she may spend all her years with you, and make you father of fair offspring.”

[76] Thus answered Aeolus: “Your task, O queen, is to search out your desire; my duty is to do your bidding. To your grace I owe all this my realm, to your grace my sceptre and Jove’s favour; you grant me a couch at the feasts of the gods gods, and make me lord of clouds and storms.”

[81] So he spoke and, turning his spear, smote the hollow mount on its side; when lo! the winds, as if in armed array, rush forth where passage is given, and blow in storm blasts across the world. They swoop down upon the sea, and from its lowest depths upheave it all – East and South winds together, and the Southwester, thick with tempests – and shoreward roll vast billows. Then come the cries of men and creaking of cables. In a moment clouds snatch sky and day from the Trojan’s eyes; black night broods over the deep. From pole to pole it thunders, the skies lighten with frequent flashes, all forebodes the sailors instant death. Straightway Aeneas’ limbs weaken with chilling dread; he groans and, stretching his two upturned hands to heaven, thus cries aloud: “O thrice and four times blest, whose lot it was to meet death before their fathers’ eyes beneath the lofty walls of Troy! O son of Tydeus, bravest of the Danaan race, ah! that I could not fall on the Ilian plains and gasp out this lifeblood at your hand – where, under the spear of Aeacides, fierce Hector lies prostrate, and mighty Sarpedon; where Simois seizes and sweeps beneath his waves so many shields and helms and bodies of the brave!”

[102] As he flings forth such words, a gust, shrieking from the North, strikes full on his sail and lifts the waves to heaven. The oars snap, then the prow swings round and gives the broadside to the waves; down in a heap comes a sheer mountain of water. Some of the seamen hang upon the billow’s crest; to others the yawning sea shows ground beneath the waves; the surges seethe with sand. Three ships the South Wind catches and hurls on hidden rocks – rocks the Italians call the Altars, rising amidst the waves, a huge ridge topping the sea. Three the East forces from the deep into shallows and sandbanks, a piteous sight, dashes on shoals and girds with a mound of sand. One, which bore the Lycians and loyal Orontes, before the eyes of Aeneas a mighty toppling wave strikes astern. The helmsman is dashed out and hurled head foremost, but the ship is thrice on the same spot whirled round and round by the wave and engulfed in the sea’s devouring eddy. Here and there are seen swimmers in the vast abyss, with weapons of men, planks, and Trojan treasure amid the waves. Now the stout ship of Ilioneus, now of brave Achates, and that wherein Abas sailed and that of aged Aletes, the storm has mastered; with side joints loosened, all let in the hostile flood and gape at every seam.

[124] Meanwhile Neptune saw the sea in turmoil of wild uproar, the storm let loose and the still waters seething up from their lowest depths. Greatly troubled was he, and gazing out over the deep he raised a composed countenance above the water’s surface. He sees Aeneas’ fleet scattered over all the sea, the Trojans overwhelmed by the waves and by the falling heavens, nor did Juno’s wiles and wrath escape her brother’s eye. East Wind and West he calls before him, then speaks thus:

[132] “Has pride in your birth so gained control of you? Do you now dare, winds, without command of mine, to mingle earth and sky, and raise confusion thus? Whom I –! But better it is to clam the troubled waves: hereafter with another penalty shall you pay me for your crimes. Speed your flight and bear this word to your king; not to him, but to me were given by lot the lordship of the sea and the dread trident. He holds the savage rocks, home of you and yours, East Wind; in that hall let Aeolus lord it and rule within the barred prison of the winds.”

[142] Thus he speaks, and swifter than his word he clams the swollen seas, puts to flight the gathered clouds, and brings back the sun. Cymothoë and Triton with common effort thrust the ships from the sharp rock; the god himself levers them up with his trident, opens the vast quicksands, allays the flood, and on light wheels glides over the topmost waters. And as, when ofttimes in a great nation tumult has risen, the base rabble rage angrily, and now brands and stones fly, madness lending arms; then, if perchance they set eyes on a man honoured for noble character and service, they are silent and stand by with attentive ears; with speech he sways their passion and soothes their breasts: just so, all the roar of ocean sank, soon as the Sire, looking forth upon the waters and driving under a clear sky, guides his steeds and, flying onward, gives reins to his willing car.

[157] The wearied followers of Aeneas strive to run for the nearest shore and turn towards the coast of Libya. There in a deep inlet lies a spot, where an island forms a harbour with the barrier of its side, on which every wave from the main is broken, then parts into receding ripples. On either side loom heavenward huge cliffs and twin peaks, beneath whose crest far and wide is the stillness of sheltered water; above, too, is a background of shimmering woods with an overhanging grove, black with gloomy shade. Under the brow of the fronting cliff is a cave of hanging rocks; within are fresh water and seats in living stone, a haunt of Nymphs. Here no fetters imprison weary ships, no anchor holds them fast with hooked bite. Here, with seven ships mustered from all his fleet. Aeneas takes shelter; and, disembarking with earnest longing for the land, the Trojans gain the welcome beach and stretch their brine-drenched limbs upon the shore. At once Achates struck a spar from flint, caught the fire in leaves, laid dry fuel about, and waved the flame amid the tinder. Then, wearied with their lot, they take out the corn of Ceres, spoiled by the waves, with the tools of Ceres, and prepare to parch the rescued grain in the fire and crush it under the stone.

[180] Meanwhile Aeneas climbs a peak and seeks a full view far and wide over the deep, if he may but see aught of storm-tossed Antheus and his Phrygian galleys, or of Capys or the arms of Caïcus on the high stern. There is no ship in sight; he descries three stags straying on the shore; whole herds follow behind these and in long line graze down the valley. Thereon he stopped and seized in his hand his bow and swift arrows, the arms borne by faithful Achates; and first he lays low the leaders themselves, their heads held high with branching antlers, then routs the herd and all the common sort, driving them with his darts amid the leafy woods. Nor does the stay his hand till seven huge forms he stretches victoriously on the ground, equal in number to his ships. Then he seeks the harbour and divides them among all his company. Next he shares the wine, which good Acestes had stowed in jars on the Trinacrian shore, and hero-like had given at parting; and, speaking thus, clams their sorrowing hearts:

[198] “O comrades – for ere this we have not been ignorant of misfortune – you who have suffered worse, this also God will end. You drew near to Scylla’s fury and her deep-echoing crags; you have known, too, the rocks of the Cyclopes; recall your courage and banish sad fear. Perhaps even this distress it will some day be a joy to recall. Through varied fortunes, through countless hazards, we journey towards Latium, where fate promises a home of peace. There it is granted that Troy’s realm shall rise again; endure, and live for a happier day.”

[208] Such words he spoke, while sick with deep distress he feigns hope on his face, and deep in his heart stifles his anguish. The others prepare the spoil, the feast that is to be; they flay the hides from the ribs and lay bare the flesh; some cut it into pieces and impale it, still quivering, on spits; others set cauldrons on the shore and feed them with fire. Then with food they revive their strength, and stretched along the grass take their fill of old wine and fat venison. When hunger was banished by the feast and the board was cleared, in long discourse they yearn for their lost comrades, between hope and fear uncertain whether to deem them still alive, or bearing the final doom and hearing no more when called. More than the rest does loyal Aeneas in silence mourn the loss now of valiant Orontes, now of Amycus, the cruel doom of Lycus, brave Gyas, and brave Cloanthus.

Translated by H.R. Fairclough