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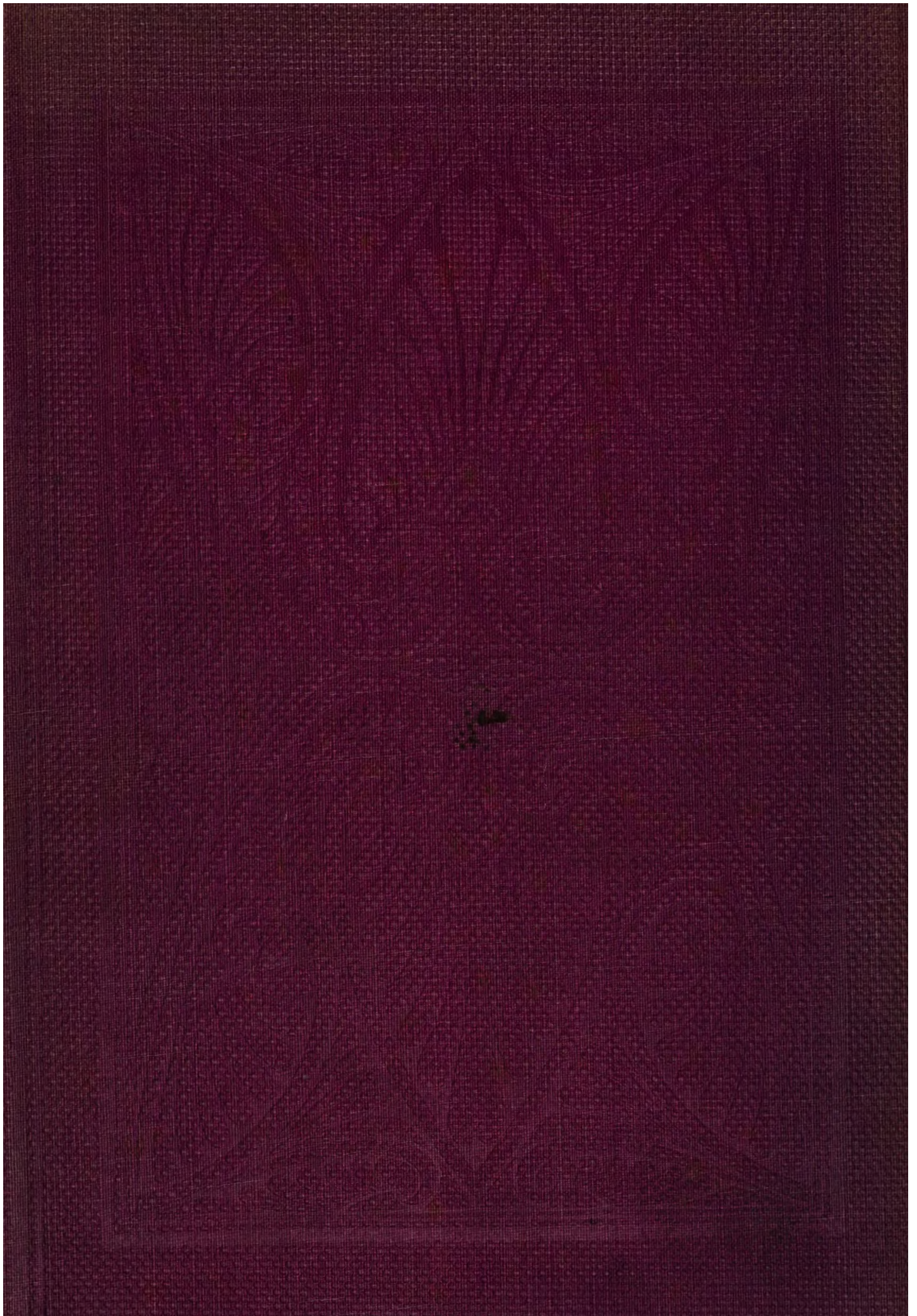
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# HOMER'S ODYSSEY

PART I.



LONDON  
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NEW-STREET SQUARE



# THE ODYSSEY

OF

# HOMER

IN ENGLISH HENDECASYLLABLE VERSE

BY HENRY ALFORD

DEAN OF CANTERBURY

PART I.  
BOOKS I.—XII.



LONDON  
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS  
1861

292 . e . 157 .





TO  
ICHABOD CHARLES WRIGHT, ESQ.,

---

MY DEAR MR. WRIGHT,

You will not have forgotten our discussions in former days concerning the English metre best adapted for rendering Homer. When you see this volume, you will at all events praise me for consistency ; or, it may be, blame me for obstinacy.

My reasons for adhering to my old opinion in favour of the Hendecasyllable are given in the Preface.

I can only say, what real pleasure it gives me to inscribe to you the result of a holiday-task of several pleasant summers ; and wish you life and leisure to prove me wrong, by completing your own version of the Odyssey.

Believe me,

Ever most truly yours,

HENRY ALFORD.

LOUHRIGG COTTAGE, AMBLESIDE,

Oct. 19, 1861.





## P R E F A C E.

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It will hardly be questioned in our days, that a metrical version of Homer ought to fulfil the condition of representing to the English reader the rhythmical flow and cadences of the original. If this be not done, the interest of the subject-matter may indeed be sustained, but the cast of the poem, as a poem, is changed, when it might have been kept. The English metre ought to be such that line may be rendered for line, and the often-recurring epithets and formulæ retained in their places.

Perhaps no English form of metre is capable of always doing this without fail; but this is no reason why we should not approximate to the desired end as nearly as possible. If however we set it before us at all as an object, it would seem that some metres are at once excluded.

## PREFACE.

1. The *Heroic couplet* has its own peculiar laws of cadence, which, whatever variety they may admit, will certainly never allow of adaptation to the flow of the Homeric hexameters. The incommensurability of the two metres may be tested by comparing any passage in Homer and in Pope.

2. *English blank verse*, though more manageable than the rhyming couplet, is yet, in my opinion, totally inadequate to the fulfilment of our above-stated condition. It likewise has its own laws, and would assuredly be altogether violating them, were it to insulate its lines after the manner of the Homeric hexameters. It also labours under this disadvantage, that, ending as it must do with a complete iambic foot, it can never place at the termination of a line a proper name with which an Homeric line terminates, and is thus constrained to break up the verse altogether. And this objection is far more serious than might at first sight appear. It necessitates the alteration of catchwords and formulæ constantly recurring: Odysseus, Athena, Agamemnon, Menelaüs, Achæans, Argeiphontes, Kronion, Enosichthon, and all words like them, disappear from their places, and the metrical "swing" of the narrative is lost.

3. The *Ballad* metre of Chapman has this disad-

## PREFACE.

vantage. If each line be to represent *one* of the original, it is more than enough, and stop-gap epithets must be inserted; if *two*, it is not enough, and omissions must be made, to the prejudice of faithful translation.

4. The *Alexandrine*, or twelve-syllable line, might, it is believed, fulfil the condition as to length, but is liable to the objection above urged against the ten-syllable line, that it ends with an iambus; and, besides, would, in a long poem, be intolerable to the English reader, from its extreme heaviness and want of relief.

5. The *Hexameter* has certainly every consideration in its favour — *but one*. It is right as to length, and as to ending; has a wonderful facility of extension or contraction as used in our language; and above all, it is the metre of the original. Voss's German translation in hexameters represents Homer as nearly perhaps as he is capable of ever being represented in another language. Still, the objection against the hexameter is in my opinion a fatal one. It is *not an English metre*, and it *never will be*. All that has been done to naturalise it has entirely failed. The scholar can read it, and enjoy it; but then it is on account of his knowledge of it in Greek and Latin. But the merely English reader can make nothing of it. And it is obviously to *merely English readers* that we must



## PREFACE.

adapt a version of Homer, however certain we may be that scholars will read and criticise it.\*

6. The *Hendecasyllable*, or eleven-syllable line, is that variety of the ordinary heroic blank verse which is so frequently met with in Shakspeare, having a superfluous syllable over the terminating iambus ; as, for instance, the first, second, and fifth lines in the passage,—

“ It is the curse of kings to be attended  
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant  
To break within the bloody house of life :  
And, on the winking of authority,  
To understand a law ; to know the meaning  
Of dangerous majesty, when perchance it frowns  
More upon humour than advised respect.”

*K. John*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

It seems to me that this line possesses singular felicity for expressing the Homeric hexameter. Its ending is the same ; it admits of being formed into sentences either in lines insulated from one another, or with cadences broken and interwoven ; and it may occasionally, especially in the case of proper names, be expanded so that two short syllables may occupy the time of one long one : *e. g.*

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\* The Hexameter has of late found a graceful and scholarly advocate in Professor Arnold, in his “Three Lectures on translating Homer.” His views have been ably opposed by J. S., in *Fraser’s Magazine* for June 1861 ; and by Professor Blackie, in *Macmillan’s Magazine* for September.

PREFACE.

“ Eurydicë, eldest born of Clymenë’s daughters.” \*  
III. 451.

It has two faults: one, that of monotony, incident I believe of necessity to any metre which shall fulfil the condition above insisted on, and more tolerable in a short line than in a long one; the other, that it is sometimes *too short* to give the full sense of the Greek hexameter, and compels occasionally the clipping of some epithet which I would fain have given.

The following version is line for line. I have not shrunk from incurring the risk of some roughness in the version, if I might in any measure reproduce in our language the very form, and cadences, of the glorious old bard.

Loughrigg Cottage, Ambleside,  
Oct. 19, 1861.

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\* This liberty reaches its climax in the enumeration of the chief Phæacian youths, VIII. 110.

## NOTICE.

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The *Greek* names of persons being retained in this version in preference to the Latin, the following table is given for the use of the English reader.

Kronus . . . .		represents the Latin	Saturn.
Zeus . . . .		” ”	Jupiter.
Herè or Hera . . . .		” ”	Juno.
Athena . . . .		” ”	Minerva.
Aphroditè . . . .		” ”	Venus.
Poseidon . . . .		” ”	Neptune.
Arès . . . .		” ”	Mars.
Demeter . . . .		” ”	Ceres.
Persephonè or Persephoneia . . . .		” ”	Proserpine.
Hephæstus . . . .		” ”	Vulcan.
Artemis . . . .		” ”	Diana.
Leto . . . .		” ”	Latona.
Hermes, or Hermeias . . . .		” ”	Mercury.
Heracles . . . .		” ”	Hercules.
Odysseus . . . .		” ”	Ulysses.
Glaukopis, <i>the grey-eyed</i> . . . .		is a name of	Athena.
Enosichthōn } <i>the earth-shaker</i> . . . .		” ”	Poseidon.
Ennosigæus }			
Argeiphontes, <i>the slayer of Argus</i> . . . .		” ”	Hermes.
Hélius, <i>the sun</i> . . . .		” ”	Apollo.
Hypereion, <i>meaning uncertain</i> . . . .		” ”	Apollo.
Kroneion, <i>son of Kronos</i> . . . .		” ”	Zeus.
Æacides, <i>descendant of Æacus</i> } . . . .		” ”	Achilles.
Pelides, or Peleion, <i>son of Peleus</i> }			
Atrides, <i>son of Atreus</i> . . . .		” ”	{ Agamemnon, and Menelaus.
Laertiades, <i>son of Laertes</i> . . . .		” ”	Odysseus.



# HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

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## I.

TELL of the man, thou Muse, much versed, who widely  
Wandered, when he had sacked Troy's sacred fortress ;  
Many men's towns he saw, and knew their manners ;  
Many the woes he suffered on the ocean,  
To win his life, and safety for his comrades.  
But them he might not rescue, though he loved them ;  
For they were slain amidst their impious daring,  
Fools, who the cattle of the mighty Sun-god  
Devoured,— and He cut short their homeward journey.  
Of all this, Goddess, what thou wilt, inform us.

10

Now all the rest, who 'scaped from dire destruction,  
Were safe at home, from wars and waves delivered ;  
But him alone, for home and consort yearning,  
The goddess-nymph detained, divine Calypso,  
In her smooth caves, and wooed him for her husband.  
But when the period came, in years revolving,  
Destined of heaven his finished course to witness  
In Ithaca (nor then to end his labours,  
Though with friends round him), him the gods compassioned,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

All, save Poseidon : He still raged relentless 20  
Against Odysseus, till he reached his country.  
But He was visiting the far-off Æthiops  
(Æthiops, the last of men, who dwell divided,  
Part by the setting sun, part near the rising),  
Great hecatombs of bulls and lambs partaking.  
There He made merry, feasting ; while the others  
In the Olympian hall of Zeus assembled.  
Then first the sire of men and gods addressed them ;  
For he bethought him of unblamed \* Ægisthus  
Slain by the far-famed son of Agamemnon ; 30  
Whom he, remembering, thus bespoke th' immortals :  
Surely in vain against the gods men murmur,  
Charging on us their ills, while they in folly  
Bring on themselves more mischief than is fated.  
Even thus Ægisthus, against fate, Atrides  
Slew, from the war returned, and took his consort,  
With death before his eyes : for we forwarned him,  
Sending the Argicide, quick-sighted Hermes,  
Neither the chief to slay, nor woo the matron ;  
For from Orestes should arise swift vengeance, 40  
Grown up, and thirsting for his native country.  
Thus Hermes spoke, but did not move Ægisthus,  
Though for his good ; who now for all hath suffered.  
To whom replied Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Great Kronos' son, our sire, supreme of rulers,  
Well hath he earned the ruin that befell him ;

\* This may seem a strange epithet under the circumstances. But Eustathius reminds us that it is due, not to the transaction by which he was best known, but to his previous character ; and thus the folly of his self-induced fate is heightened.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Thus perish all who dare the like offences.  
But for the wise Odysseus bleeds my bosom,  
Unhappy, far from friends long grief enduring  
In that washed isle, the navel of the ocean, 50  
The woodland isle, where dwells the goddess-daughter  
Of cunning Atlas, him who all abysses  
Knows of the sea, and holds the giant pillars  
Which earth and heaven support around: whose daughter  
The wretched chief detains in fruitless anguish.  
Ever with crafty words of soft persuasion  
Wooes she his thoughts from Ithaca; but ever  
Yearning to see the very smoke ascending  
From his dear home, he sighs for death. Unpitied  
Are all his woes of thee, Olympian! Hath Odysseus 60  
By th' Argive ships no grateful offerings done thee  
In the broad Troas? Why thus long afflict him?

Her the cloud-gatherer, Zeus, addrest in answer:  
What utterance hath escaped thy lips, my daughter?  
How can I e'er forget divine Odysseus,  
Who all excels in wisdom, and of all men  
Hath done most offerings to the gods immortal?  
But the earth-god Poseidon rages ever  
Relentless, for the Cyclop, whom he blinded,  
The godlike Polyphemus, first in valour 70  
Of all the Cyclops; whom the nymph Thoösa  
Daughter of Phorcys, lord of sterile ocean,  
Bore in the sea-worn caves to great Poseidon.  
For which offence the angered god Odysseus  
Slays not indeed, but baffles of his country.

But come, let us together join in council  
How he may best return; then ev'n Poseidon

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Of force must stay his wrath, the gods immortal  
Not able to resist, when all oppose him.

To him replied Athena, grey-eyed goddess : 80  
Great Kronos' son, our sire, supreme of rulers,  
If this indeed to the blest gods is pleasing,  
That wise Odysseus should regain his country,  
Send we the Argicide, hest-bearing Hermes,  
To the Ogygian isle, that he may quickly  
Tell to the fair-haired nymph our steadfast counsel,  
Her guest's return ; and speed his homeward journey.  
But I will go to Ithaca, and strengthen  
His son, and breathe new courage in his bosom,  
That he, assembling the long-haired Achæans, 90  
The suitors may dismiss, who vex him daily,  
Slaughtering his sheep and slowly-wending oxen.

Then will I send him to the sandy Pylos  
And Sparta, tidings of his sire to gather,  
And that himself may gain repute by travel.  
She spoke, and on her feet bound her fair sandals,  
Immortal, golden, which o'er ocean bore her  
And o'er the trackless earth, swift as the breezes :  
Then grasped her mighty spear, with brass sharp-pointed,  
Heavy and vast, with which the files she prostrates 100  
Of hero armies, who provoke her anger.  
Thus sped she down the summits of Olympus,  
And on the threshold of Odysseus' palace  
She stood in Ithaca, her long spear grasping,  
To Mentès likened, leader of the Taphians.  
There found she in their pride the suitors, sporting  
With dice before the palace gates, reclining  
On hides of oxen which themselves had slaughtered.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Heralds, and busy servants, moved among them.  
Some in great goblets wine with water mingled; 110  
Some with damp sponges porous cleansed the tables,  
And set forth meats afresh in rich abundance.  
Her first beheld Telemachus the godlike,  
Where, grieved at heart, he sate among the suitors,  
In his mind's eye his father dear beholding,  
When he returning should the suitors scatter,  
And hold his own again with princely honour.  
Thus pondering, from the crowd he spied Athena,  
And straightway sought the gate, at heart indignant  
To see a guest thus kept there; standing near her 120  
He took her hand, the brazen spear receiving,  
And, her addressing, spoke in winged accents:  
Hail, stranger: first partake our cheer, and after,  
When thou hast eaten, tell thy name and errand.  
This said, he led the way: Athena followed.  
When they arrived within the lofty palace,  
He leaned the spear against a taper column,  
Within the fluted hollow: where were others,  
Spears of the patient king, the wise Odysseus:  
Then brought her to a couch, first strewn with carpet 130  
Rich-patterned, and beneath with footstool furnished.  
By her, himself a seat arranged, apart from  
The rest, the suitors: lest, the tumult hearing,  
The guest should loathe his meal amidst the revellers:  
Also that he for his lost sire might question.  
Then poured a maiden water from an ewer,  
Beautiful, golden, o'er a bowl of silver  
Upon their hands, and spread the polished table;  
While the chaste stewardess brought on provision,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Meats various, lavish of her stores abundant. 140  
A carver then placed sundry meats before them  
In plates, and furnished each with golden wine-cups,  
Which soon a herald filled, to each dispensing.  
Then crowded in the suitors, who in order  
Reclined, disposed along the chairs and benches.  
Over the hands of all poured heralds water,  
And maidens heaped before them loaves in baskets ;  
Thus fell they eager to the ready banquet,  
While youths with foaming liquor crowned the goblets.  
When now with meat and drink each soul was sated, 150  
Other employ they sought, the dance and music ;  
For these of feasting are the crown and beauty.  
An herald then a burnished lyre delivered  
To Phemius, who among them by compulsion  
Sung, — and now swept the strings in tuneful prelude.  
Bespoke Telemachus the grey-eyed goddess,  
With head inclined, that others might not hear him :  
Dear stranger, may I speak, and not annoy thee ?  
Thou seest their employ, the lyre and singing :  
No marvel : without cost they waste the substance 160  
Of one, whose white bones in the showers are mouldering  
On inland plain, or tossed by waves in ocean ;  
Him should they spy to Ithaca returning,  
Swiftness of foot would be to all more precious  
Than to be rich in gold and costly garments.  
But he hath miserably died, and never  
Cherish I hope at all, though many tell me  
That he will come : that day we ne'er shall witness.  
But now declare to me, and tell me truly,  
Who art thou ? where thy city and thy parents ? 170

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

On what ship camest thou? by what route sailing?  
What are the crew, and to what place belonging?  
I hardly think by land thou journeyedst hither.  
This also tell me true, that I may know it:  
Art thou a stranger, or some guest of old-time,  
My father's friend? Full many to our palace  
Came once,—for he with men held large acquaintance.

To him replied Athena, grey-eyed goddess:  
All that thou askest will I tell thee plainly:  
Mentes my name; Anchialus my father 180  
I boast; my subjects, the oar-handling Taphians.  
Hither I sailed with my good ship and comrades,  
In route to foreign lands o'er the dark sea-line,  
To Temesa, for brass; with iron freighted  
My ship stands yonder, from the city distant,  
In the port Rheithron, under woody Neïa.  
We are paternal friends of ancient standing,  
As thou wilt find, asking the aged hero  
Laertes; who, they tell me, shuns the city,  
Living apart upon his fields in sorrow, 190  
With one attendant old, who daily serves him  
With food and drink, when weariness o'ertakes him,  
Creeping along the hill where grows his vineyard.  
Now have I come, on rumour that thy father  
Was here: but this the gods have not yet granted.  
For be thou sure, Odysseus hath not perished,  
But yet alive upon the broad sea lingers  
In wave-washed isle, where hostile men detain him,  
Cruel, in bondage keeping him reluctant.  
Hark—I will now divine thee, as th' Immortals 200  
Inform my spirit, and I deem shall happen,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Myself no prophet, nor in omens skilful :  
Not long from his dear home shall he be absent,  
No not if iron fetters now detain him ;  
He will contrive a way,— so subtle is he.  
But come, declare me this, and tell me truly,  
If thou, thus grown, Odysseus' very son art.  
In head and goodly eyes thou him resemblest ;  
For much and oft we visited each other  
Before he sailed for Troy, whither the Argive  
Leaders departed in their ships embarking.  
Since then we have not met, I and Odysseus.

210

To whom Telemachus replied discreetly :  
Stranger, thy question will I truly answer :  
My mother tells me I am his ; but further  
I say not ; his own sire none knows for certain.  
Would I had been the son of one more favoured,  
Who might have reached old age on his possessions !  
But now the man most evil-starred of all men,  
They say, begat me,—since the truth thou askest.

220

Him then address Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
No parentage obscure the gods ordained thee,  
Born of Penelope, and grown thus comely.  
But now inform me this, and tell me truly :  
What feast is this ? What gathering ? How concerns thee  
This masque, or wedding ?— for no sober banquet  
Seems it to be, so insolently feast they,  
Revelling through the halls : 'twould stir the anger  
Of any modest man such riot seeing.

To whom Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Stranger, since thus thou askest me inquiring,—  
This house might happy have remained and blameless,

230



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

If yet its honoured master were among us ;  
But now the gods have changed and work us evil,  
Who him have made the least renowned of all men.  
Far less should I bewail his death in conflict,  
If with his comrades he in Troy had fallen,  
Or in the arms of friends, the battle ended.  
Then all Achæa would his tomb have builded,  
And I, his son, his glory should inherit.

240

Now hath he perished, sport of blasts, inglorious,  
Unknown, unsought ; a patrimony leaving  
Of tears to me : — nor him alone I grieve for,  
Since now the gods have wrought me other evils :  
For all the chiefs that rule the neighbour islands,  
Woody Zacynthus, Samë, and Dulichium,  
And lords of craggy Ithaca, my mother  
Demand in marriage, and consume our substance.  
The hateful suit denies she not, nor can she  
Its end discern : meanwhile my stores in feasting  
They waste, and soon myself will tear in pieces.

250

To whom indignant thus replied Athena :  
Sorely indeed thine absent sire Odysseus  
Thou lackest, to lay hands on these rude suitors.  
Would he were come, and standing in yon doorway  
With shield and helmet and two spears provided,  
Such as when first I knew him, in our palace  
Right joyous at the banquet, on his journey  
From Ephyrë, from Ilus son of Mermeris,—  
(For thither in his swift bark sailed Odysseus  
In search of deadly poison, which might serve him  
To dip his brass-tipt arrows ; yet from Ilus  
He gat it not, for he heaven's anger dreaded :

260

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

But my sire gave it, for he dearly loved him),—  
Such might Odysseus come among these suitors,  
Swift fate and bitter nuptials would o'ertake them.  
But all this have the gods in their disposal,  
Whether he come or not to take his vengeance  
In this his palace. Thee meantime I counsel  
Some scheme to try, of this rude band to rid thee. 270  
Come now, be wise, and let my words persuade thee :  
To council the Achæans call to-morrow,  
Propound a plan to all—let heaven be witness :  
Dismiss each suitor to his own possessions,  
And let thy mother, if she still on marriage  
Be bent, reseek her puissant father's dwelling ;  
There they must deck the nuptials, and a dowry  
Plenteous prepare, for a loved daughter fitting.  
And for thyself, be led by my suggestion :  
Taking a trusty ship, with rowers twenty, 280  
Go thou in search of thy long-missing father :  
Whether thou learn from men, or vocal omen  
From Zeus inform thee, surest guide to mortals.  
First go to Pylos, ask the godlike Nestor :  
To Sparta then, to bright-haired Menelaüs,  
Who last arrived of the brass-mailed Achæans.  
If of his life and his return thou hearest,  
In that case, though reluctant, one year tarry :  
But if his death thou learn'st by certain tidings,  
Immediate to thy country dear returning, 290  
Build thou his tomb, and funeral honours lavish  
As fits : and on some chief bestow thy mother.  
Then, when thou hast these needful things accomplished,  
Take with thy mind and with thy heart deep counsel,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

How these assembled suitors in thy palace  
By craft or onslaught thou mayst slay ; nor must thou  
Keep childish ways, thyself a child no longer.  
Hearest thou not what glory reaped Orestes  
From all mankind, due vengeance on the murderer  
Taking, Ægisthus, who his father slaughtered ? 300  
And thou, my friend,—I mark thee tall and comely,—  
Be valiant, that posterity may praise thee.  
But I must now my gallant bark revisit,  
And my companions, who begrudge mine absence.  
Let these things be thy care : my words remember.

Her then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Stranger, so lovingly these things advising,  
As father doth his child,—I will be mindful.  
But stay awhile, though hurrying on thy journey,  
That freshened in the bath, and duly rested, 310  
Bearing a present thou mayst seek thy vessel,  
An honoured gift and costly, a memorial  
Such as dear friends bestow on guests in parting.

Him answered then Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Delay me not,—my journey's need is pressing.  
The gift, whate'er thy heart prompts thee to give me,  
Keep thou for my return : and see thou choose it  
Costly and good ; for it shall meet requital.  
Thus speaking, vanished the grey-eyed Athena,  
Swift as a bird flies upward : in his bosom 320  
Courage inspiring, and his sire's remembrance  
More than before : he marked her flight, and awe-struck  
Adored her ; for he knew the heavenly goddess.  
The youth divine then mingled with the suitors.  
To them the bard illustrious sung : in silence

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

They listening sat; his theme, the vexed Achæans,  
Of their return from Troy by Pallas baffled.

From her far chamber heard the tuneful story  
Penelope, wise daughter of Icarius;  
The lofty palace-stair she straight descended, 330  
But not alone: her steps two maidens followed.  
When she, the flower of women, reached the suitors,  
Beside the portal of the well-wrought mansion  
She stood, with glistening veil her cheeks concealing:  
On either side a hand-maid meekly waited.  
Then, shedding tears, she called the heavenly minstrel:  
Phemius, thou knowest many a soothing measure,  
The deeds of gods and men, which poets dwell on:  
From them sing any, and let these in silence  
Sit by and drink: but cease me that sad story 340  
Piteous, which ever in this aching bosom  
Harrows my heart, — such endless grief I cherish  
For my dear lord, whose widely spreading glory  
Is known in Hellas, and the midst of Argos.

Her then Telemachus discreetly answered:  
My mother, why forbid the sweet-voiced minstrel  
From singing as he will? 'Tis not our minstrels  
Who are in fault, — but Zeus himself, who portions  
To men on earth, as he sees fit for each one.  
Blame not then him the Danaan woes for singing: 350  
For by us all that song is most commended  
Which comes with newest relish to the hearers.  
But have thou courage — arm thine heart to bear it:  
For not alone of men Odysseus perished  
In Troy, but many a hero fell beside him.  
So pass within and carry on thy matters,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

The spindle and the loom, and cheer thy maidens  
To ply their works: to men belongeth converse,  
To all, but most to me, who here am ruler.

Awe-struck, she back retired into the palace, 360  
Her son's discreet reply within her pondering: —  
Ascending to her chamber, with her maidens  
She wept Odysseus her dear lord, till slumber  
Sent by Athena sweetly closed her eyelids.  
Then in the darkened halls the suitors clamoured,  
Fain of that couch to be the chosen partners.

To whom Telemachus began in wisdom:  
In insolence unmatched, — my mother's suitors,  
At present let us banquet and be merry:  
Nor let rude noise prevail: 'tis no mean pleasure 370  
Such bard to hear, so godlike in his singing.

But in the morning let us sit in council,  
That I may plainly before all advise you  
This roof to leave, and feast on other banquets,  
Eating your own, — in turn each house frequenting.  
But if this easier seem, and please you rather,  
Reckless to riot upon one man's substance,  
Stay if ye will: — but I will cry for vengeance,  
If Zeus may grant a turn in our sad fortunes:  
Then ye, unrecked, within this house shall perish. 380

He spoke: with lips compressed in stern amazement  
They eyed Telemachus, for this his boldness.

Eupeithes' son, Antinoüs, first addrest him:  
Telemachus, I ween by inspiration  
From heaven thus high thou bear'st thyself, and boastest;  
Only may Kronos' son not make thee ruler  
In sea-girt Ithaca, thine own by birthright.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Antinoüs, though my speech may risk thine anger,  
To reign is all my wish, — may Zeus but grant it. 390  
Is rule among mankind so vile a matter ?  
'Tis no bad thing, to reign : a monarch quickly  
Hath a rich house, and is himself more honoured.  
But there are many princes of the Achæans  
In sea-girt Ithaca, both young and aged :  
Of these let one reign, since divine Odysseus  
Hath perished ; — but my native halls I govern,  
And servants, left me by divine Odysseus.

To him the son of Polybus made answer :  
Telemachus, this lies in heaven's disposal, — 400  
What king in Ithaca shall rule the Achæans : —  
But keep thine own, — be king within thy palace ; —  
Ne'er may he come, who of thy goods reluctant  
Shall thee despoil, while Ithaca is dwelt in.  
But, friend, I wish to ask thee of the stranger,  
Whence was that man, and from what country boasting  
His birth : whence is his race and home paternal ?  
Brought he some tidings of thy father's coming,  
Or hath some private matter brought him hither ?  
Quickly he disappeared, nor further question 410  
Waited ; by looks, I read him no mean person.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Eurymachus, — my sire's return is hopeless :  
No tidings now I trust which speak him coming,  
Nor prophecy regard, if aught my mother  
Demand of prophets whom she summons hither.  
This man was a paternal guest from Taphus,  
Mentes ; the wise Anchialus his father

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, I.

He boasts ; his subjects, the oar-loving Taphians.

Thus spoke he ; but in heart he knew the goddess. 420

They to the dance and pleasant song returning,  
Made merry, and th' approach of evening waited.

Making thus merry, evening's shades o'ertook them  
Then each retired, the bed of slumber seeking.

Telemachus, where in the splendid mansion  
His chamber was built high in place conspicuous,  
There sought his couch, pondering on many matters.

With him went lights, which prudent Eurycleia,  
Daughter of Ops, Peisenor's offspring, carried ;—  
Her once Laertes with his substance purchased, 430

Then in youth's bloom, for twenty oxen bartered,—  
And, like his consort, honoured in his palace ;  
But shunned her bed, wrath from his queen avoiding.

She bore him lights ; for she of all the servants  
Loved him the best, and tended him in childhood.

The portals oped he of the close-built chamber,  
Sat on the couch, and doffed his downy tunic,  
Which to the careful dame he straightway handed.

She smoothing it, and in nice folds disposing,  
Hung on a peg beside the polished bedstead ; 440

Then passing out, the door with ring of silver  
Drew to, and by its thong the bolt suspended.  
There he all night, reclined on softest fleeces,  
Pondered the journey which Athena counselled.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

II.

WHEN gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Straight from his couch Odysseus' son aroused him,  
Clothed, and his sharp sword slung around his shoulder,  
Beneath his smooth feet bound his goodly sandals,  
And left his chamber, godlike in his beauty.  
Then to the shrill-voiced herald gave he orders  
To call to council the long-haired Achæans.

The proclamation made, they gathered quickly.  
When all had now assembled, forth to council  
He went, his bright spear grasping; not untended,— 10  
For two white dogs about his footsteps gambolled.  
Beauty divine upon him shed Athena;  
All gazed admiring: on his throne paternal  
He sate, grey elders yielded him precedence.

First of the throng the hero spoke, Ægyptius,  
Bowed down with age, and rich in gathered wisdom.  
His son beloved had sailed with great Odysseus  
For Ilion, land of beauteous steeds,— the warrior  
Antiphus; him devoured the savage Cyclop,  
In his smooth cave, last morsel of his banquet. 20  
Three more he had;— one with the suitors mingled,  
Eurynomus;— two kept their sire's possessions;  
Yet him forgot he never, inly mourning.

While the tears flowed, he spoke, and thus address them:

Hear me, ye Ithacans, my words observing;  
Ne'er have we met in council or assembly,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Since in the ships embarked divine Odysseus :  
Now, who hath called us? Who hath need so pressing,  
Of younger men, or of our hoary elders?  
Hath he some tidings heard of coming foemen, 30  
And will report what he hath learned before us?  
Or brings some other news of public import?  
Good seems to me his deed : may Zeus accomplish  
To his heart's joy the end that he desireth.

He spoke : rejoiced the son of wise Odysseus,  
Nor long sate silent, but to speak address him :  
I' th' midst he stood : while in his hand a sceptre  
The herald placed, the loyal sage Peisenor.

The aged speaker first of all he answered :  
Old man, not far is he — thou soon shalt know him, 40  
Who summoned you : — *mine* is the sad occasion.  
No tidings have I heard of coming foemen,  
Neither report I bring by me first published,  
Nor other thing of public import speak I :  
The need is mine alone, — my household's sorrow,  
Twofold : — first to have lost a noble parent,  
Who ruled among you gentle as a father : —  
But next and greatest, one which all my household  
Will soon consume, and quite cut off my substance.  
Suitors have wooed my mother all reluctant, 50  
Sons of the men who in this isle are chiefest :  
Afraid are they to seek her father's palace,  
Icarius, that himself may dower his daughter,  
And give in marriage to the man that likes her ;  
But in our house from day to day abiding,  
Oxen and sheep and fatted goats destroying,  
Hold they their banquet, and our dark wine reckless

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Drink up : most part is gone : for there is no man  
As was Odysseus, to ward off the ruin.  
None such am I : — and after days shall call me 60  
Coward, and wanting strength mine own to succour :  
Succour I would, — had I but strength sufficient.  
For deeds are done past bearing, — and my household  
Is vilely perishing : yourselves be judges,  
And fear the ill report of all our neighbours  
Who dwell around : fear too the gods' high anger,  
Lest they against you turn, your deeds beholding.  
I pray you, by Olympian Zeus, and Themis,  
Who gathereth human councils and dissolveth,  
Leave me, my friends : — suffer me in my mourning 70  
Alone to pine : — unless, indeed, Odysseus  
Hath done aught evil to the greaved Achæans,  
And for that ill ye now exact reprisal,  
Stirring up these : — but then it were far better  
Yourselves consumed my treasures and my cattle.  
If ye consumed them, I might hope for justice :  
From street to street throughout the city begging  
We would demand our own till ye restored it :  
But hopeless woes ye now inflict upon me.  
Enraged he spoke, and cast to earth his sceptre ; 80  
While tears burst forth : compassion moved the people.  
All sate in silence, nor did any venture  
In accents harsh Telemachus to answer :  
Antinoüs alone of all addrest him :  
Boaster — insatiate foe — what hast thou uttered  
To our contempt? Surely thou wouldst be jesting.  
Blame not the Achæan suitors for thy sorrows,  
But thy fond mother, with her guileful practice : —



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Now is the third year, — and the fourth approacheth, —  
Since she hath mocked the hopes of the Achæans : 90  
All she encourages — to each a promise  
Sending, while other schemes her mind revolveth.  
Last, this new trick hath she devised against us :  
She wove, a loom erecting in the palace,  
A woof of texture fine, and thus bespoke us :

Ye youths, my suitors, — since divine Odysseus  
Is dead, stay your demands, till I shall finish  
This work, that all my labour be not fruitless, —  
A cerecloth for the hero, old Laertes,  
When the sure fate of tardy death o'ertake him : — 100  
Lest mid the folk the Achæan wives should blame me,  
If he, so wealthy, without shroud be buried.

Thus spoke she : we believed, and stayed our passion.  
What did she then ? By day she wove the garment, —  
At night, by torchlight, all her work undoing.  
So for three years her craft escaped the Achæans :  
But when the fourth came, bringing back the seasons,  
One of her maidens told us, of her knowledge,  
And her we found ravelling the splendid texture.  
Thus, by compulsion, she the work hath finished. 110

To this intent the suitors make thee answer, —  
Know surely thou, and know the Achæans likewise ;  
Send home thy mother : — order her to marry  
Him whom her sire shall choose, and she delight in.  
But if she still, the Achæan youths deceiving,  
Practise these crafts, the prompting of Athena,  
Working her beauteous works and rare devices,  
And making gain, such as no ancient matron  
Hath ever made of the fair-haired Achæans,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Tyro, Alcmena, or the crowned Mycenë,— 120  
For none of these Penelope in wisdom  
Equalled,— I tell thee, it shall nought avail you ;  
So long shall these devour thy house and substance,  
While she this mind maintains, which now within her  
The gods inspire—thus for herself great glory  
Winning,—for thee the loss of great possessions.  
For we disperse not, to our homes or elsewhere,  
Till one she choose and wed among the Achæans.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Antinoüs, her by force I may not banish, 130  
Who bore and nursed me :—and, my father absent,  
Live he or not,—I must refund her dowry  
Back to Icarius, if my will restore her.  
Then will my sire reproach me,— and my mother  
Bring wrath on me, invoking dire Erinnyes  
As she is driven from home,—and evil rumour  
Be mine :—such a command I ne'er will utter.  
But, if your temper our proceedings like not,  
Go from this roof—on other banquets revel,—  
Consume your own, each house in turn frequenting. 140  
Or, if this easier seem, and please you rather,  
Reckless to riot upon one man's substance,  
Stay, if ye will ; but I will cry for vengeance,  
If Zeus may grant a turn in our sad fortunes ;  
Then ye, unrecked, within this house shall perish.

He spoke : and straightway Zeus two soaring eagles  
Forth from a mountain summit caused to issue ;  
First down the wind awhile they calmly floated,  
Buoyant, their pinions side by side extending ;  
Then, when they reached the forum's busy murmur, 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Whirling aloft, their ample plumes they ruffled,  
Eying the gathered heads, and death foreboding :  
Then, neck and visage rending with their talons,  
Plunged to the right among the streets and houses.  
Seeing the birds, the whole assembly wondered,  
Pondering at heart what thing this sign should follow.  
Then spoke the aged hero, Halitherses,  
Offspring of Mastor : he surpassed all living  
In skill of fowls, and reading signs and omens ;  
Beneficent he spoke, and thus forewarned them : 160

Hear me, ye Ithacans, my words observing ;  
But to the suitors mostly I address me :  
O'er them hangs heavy ruin ; for Odysseus  
Not long shall fail his friends, but ev'n already  
Is somewhere near us, death and fate contriving  
For these : and others too shall share his vengeance,  
Dwellers in sunny Ithaca ; take heed then,  
Before he come, these to disperse ; or let them  
Themselves depart, — for them the safer counsel.  
I speak this not unskilled, but knowing surely : 170  
For I affirm that all to him hath happened  
As I foretold, what time embarked for Ilion  
The Argive chiefs, and with them wise Odysseus ;  
That, with much care, and loss of all his comrades,  
He in the twentieth year, unknown to all men,  
Should home return : — now all will be accomplished.

Him Polybus' son, Eurymachus, taunting answered :  
Dotard, go give thy warnings to thy children  
At thine own home, — lest they should come to mischief ;  
The rest myself can prophesy far better. 180  
Thousands of birds beneath the golden sunlight

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Pass, but not all significant : — Odysseus  
Far off hath perished : would that thou too with him  
Hadst died, and spared us these thy vain forewarnings,  
Spared too, Telemachus in this wrath to foster,  
Looking for some rich gift which he may send thee.  
One thing I tell thee,—and the fact shall prove it ;—  
If thou, experienced thus, one that is younger  
Stir up to insolence by words deceitful,  
First, on himself shall woes accrue more grievous, 190  
Nor shalt thou gain thine end by his successes ;  
And thee, old man, with such a mulct we'll visit,  
That thou shalt paying grieve, and dearly rue it.  
— Thus, before all, Telemachus I counsel :  
Send he his mother to her father's palace ;  
There let them deck the nuptials, and a dowry  
Ample prepare, for a loved daughter fitting.  
Thus only will the sons of the Achæans  
Their suit unwelcome cease ; for no man fear we ;  
No, not Telemachus, with all his mouthing ; — 200  
Nor auguries respect, which to the breezes  
Thou, dotard, preachest ; only more we hate thee.  
This house shall miserably waste, nor justice  
Be done, while she the Achæans' hope of marriage  
Defers : for we, all the long days awaiting,  
For her will still contend, nor seek for others  
Whom each might fitly woo to be his consort.  
Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Eurymachus, and the rest, illustrious suitors,  
On these things urge I my request no longer ; 210  
For these the gods know well, and all the Achæans.  
But give me a swift ship, and comrades twenty,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Who up and down the watery ways may row me.  
For I would Sparta seek, and sandy Pylos,  
To learn some tidings of my long-lost father ;  
Whether I learn from men, or vocal omen  
From Zeus inform me, surest guide to mortals.  
If of his life, and coming, aught I gather,  
Yet one year, though reluctant, will I tarry ;  
But if his death I learn by certain tidings,  
Then will I, to my country dear returning,  
Build him a tomb, and funeral honours lavish  
As fits ; and on some chief bestow my mother.

220

He spoke, and sate ; and next arose among them  
Mentor, companion of the brave Odysseus,  
To whom embarking he his household trusted,  
O'er all to rule, and all things keep in safety.  
Who, for their good desirous, thus address them :

Hear me, ye Ithacans, my words observing :  
Let never sceptre-bearing king henceforward  
Be gentle, bland, and just at heart ; but always  
Unmerciful, of wrongful deeds the doer ;  
Since none is mindful of divine Odysseus  
Of all the folk he ruled, mild as a father.  
No fault have I to find, that these rude suitors  
Their violence should work with all contrivance :  
For their own heads they risk, while they are wasting  
Odysseus' house, for his return not looking ; —  
But you the rest I blame, that ye in silence  
Sit idle by, not ev'n with words restraining  
These suitors, though so few, and ye so many.

230

240

Leocritus, Euenor's offspring, answered :  
Fool, of thy senses reft, what hast thou uttered,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Bidding them us restrain? 'twere no light matter  
Ev'n for such numbers to dispute our feasting.  
For should himself the Ithacan Odysseus,  
On his arrival, us illustrious suitors  
Attempt to drive from feasting in his palace,  
No joy should his arrival long expected  
Bring to his queen: he on this spot should perish 250  
O'erborne by many; such vain words thou speakest.  
But now disperse, each to his own possessions:  
This youth let Mentor urge, and Halitherses,  
And all his father's friends, to take this journey:  
But long I trow will he at home for tidings  
Sit waiting, and the journey ne'er accomplish.

Thus spoke he, and forthwith dismissed the council.  
Each to his home th' assembled people scattered:  
The suitors to the hall of great Odysseus.  
But to the shore the youth apart resorted, 260  
Laved in the foam his hands, and prayed Athena:

Hear me, thou Power, who yesternight our mansion  
Visiting, didst command me on the ocean  
In quest of tidings of my long-lost father  
To voyage:—all this now the Achæans hinder,  
But most the suitors, insolent and hostile.  
He spoke in prayer—when near him came Athena,  
Mentor in person and in voice resembling:  
And, him addressing, spoke in winged accents:

Nor fool nor coward shalt thou prove hereafter, 270  
Telemachus, if there breathes in thee the spirit  
Which thy sire had, both deed and word t' accomplish;  
If so, thy way will not be vain or fruitless:—  
If not—nor is Penelope thy mother,—

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Small hope have I, that thy design shall prosper.  
Not many sons their father's virtues equal :  
Most part fall short, and few indeed surpass them.  
And thou, since thou shalt prove no fool nor coward,  
Nor of Odysseus' prudence quite deserted,  
Mayst hope this matter with success to finish. 280  
Wherefore the suitors' hostile plans regard not :  
Nor wisdom have they on their side, nor justice :  
Nor know they of the death and fated ruin  
Ready in one short day to overwhelm them.  
Not long this promised journey shall be hindered ;  
Such friendship for thy father's sake I bear thee,  
And will thy ship prepare, and be thy comrade.  
But go thou home, and mingle with the suitors,  
Prepare provisions, and pack all in vessels,  
Great jars of wine, and corn, the thews of workmen, 290  
In well-sewn skins ; while I among the people  
A voluntary crew recruit ; this island  
Hath store of ships, both old and newly builded :  
Of these will I select the best and swiftest,  
Which, quickly fitting, we will launch in ocean.

Thus spake Athena, child of Zeus ;— nor longer  
The Prince delayed, her voice divine perceiving,  
But turned his footsteps homeward, heavy-hearted,  
And found the assembled suitors in the palace,  
Goats flaying in the halls, and fat swine roasting. 300  
Straight towards him springing with a laugh, Antinoüs  
Seized on his hand, and by his name addrest him :

Telemachus, proud of speech and soul, let nothing  
Against thee said or done disturb thy spirit ;  
But eat and drink among us as beforetime ;

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

The Achæans for thee all the rest will furnish,  
A ship and chosen crew, that thou mayst quickly  
To Pylos go, for tidings of thy father.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :

Antinoüs, with such roysterers to banquet 310  
Have I no mind, nor doth your mirth delight me.  
Count ye it naught, that ye long since have plundered  
My goods, ye suitors, while I was an infant?  
But now that I am grown, and hear from others  
Sage counsel, and my spirit fires within me,  
I rest not till on you I hurl dark vengeance,  
Whether at Pylos or at home I tarry.

Now go I (no vain boast my promised journey)  
A passenger, — nor ship nor crew possessing 320  
Mine own, — since this to you hath seemed expedient.

Thus, from Antinoüs' hand his own withdrawing,  
He spoke ; the while the suitors decked their banquet,  
With bitter words and scorn his scheme deriding ;  
One youth of bearing proud bespoke his fellows :

Our fate, it seems, Telemachus is plotting :  
Either he aid will bring from sandy Pylos,  
Or else from Sparta ;— burns so fierce his hatred.  
Or else he means to Ephyrë the fertile  
To voyage, that he thence may fetch dark poison,  
Mix in a cup, and send us all to Hadës. 330

His match in insolence, thus spake a second :  
Who knows if, in the hollow ship embarking,  
He distant perish, wandering like Odysseus ?  
Thus upon us would he devolve more labour ;  
His goods must we divide, and to his mother,  
And him who weds her, this his house apportion.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Thus they: while he his father's high-roofed chamber  
Sought out, where treasures lay of gold and silver,  
Garments in chests, and scented oil of olive.  
There ample casks of old sweet wine were standing, 340  
Each with pure liquor, drink for gods, replenished,  
Ranged by the wall in rows; if e'er Odysseus  
Home should return, his toils and sufferings ended.  
Without were folding portals, closely fitted,  
Stapled and bolted: and a faithful guardian  
By night and day preserved them in her wisdom,  
Born of Peisenor's offspring, Eurycleia:  
Whom to the chamber calling, thus address he:

Come, nurse, and draw me out some wine in wine-jars,  
The sweetest, next to that which thou preservest 350  
Thinking on him, the wretched one, if ever  
Odysseus should return, dark fate escaping.  
Fill wine-jars twelve, and fit them all with covers.  
And pack me meal in well-sewn sacks of leather;  
Of mill-bruised meal let there be twenty measures.  
Do it thyself alone, and all together:  
For I this night will fetch them, when my mother  
Up to her chamber climbs, her slumber seeking.  
To Sparta fare I, and to sandy Pylos,  
News, if I may, of my loved sire to gather. 360

Thus spoke he: but the faithful Eurycleia  
Shrieked, and with winged words, weeping, address him:  
Wherefore, dear child, hath this design come on thee?  
Why shouldst thou wish to go so long a journey,  
And all alone, my darling? Thy poor father  
Hath perished doubtless, from his country distant  
In some strange land: and now, while thou art going,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

These suitors will be plotting mischief for thee,  
That thou mayst die, and they divide thy substance.  
Stay here, and keep thine own : 'tis not for thee, child, 370  
On the fierce sea to suffer, and to wander.

Her then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Take courage, nurse ; for not without heaven's counsel  
This plan is formed. But swear, nought to my mother,  
Till the eleventh or twelfth day pass, to utter,  
Or till she ask for me, my journey hearing ;  
Lest she in weeping her fair beauty tarnish.

He spoke, and swore the matron to be secret.  
When she had sworn, and all her oath completed,  
Then she drew off the wine into the wine-jars, 380  
And poured the meal into the well-sewn bottles.  
The Prince departing mingled with the suitors.

Meanwhile new cares employed the grey-eyed goddess :  
Like to Telemachus, she scoured the city,  
Stood by each man, in stirring words exhorting  
All in the evening by the ship to gather.  
Herself of Phronius, son of brave Noëmon,  
Asked a swift bark : her suit he cheerful granted.

Now set the sun, and all the streets were darkened :  
Then to the beach the ship he drew, and in her 390  
All gear arranged which sea-bound vessels carry.  
At the port's end he placed her : round were gathered  
The sturdy crew, each by the goddess prompted.

Then one care more employed grey-eyed Athena :  
Seeking the palace of divine Odysseus,  
There on the suitors poured she balmy slumber,  
Mazed them in drink, and dashed their wine-cups from them.  
They through the city sought their beds, nor longer



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Remained, for sleep weighed heavy on their eyelids.  
Then from the palace front grey-eyed Athena 400  
Summoned Telemachus, and thus address him,  
Mentor in figure and in voice resembling :  
    Telemachus, already sit thy comrades  
All at their oars, thy signal word awaiting.  
Come, let us go, nor longer stay our journey.  
    So speaking, promptly led the way before him  
Pallas Athena; he her footsteps followed.  
When to the ship they came, and to the ocean,  
There on the shore they found their long-haired comrades,  
Whom thus bespoke Telemachus the godlike: 410  
    Come, friends, and ship our stores; for all lie ready  
At home: of this our way nought knows my mother,  
And nought the handmaids: one alone hath heard it.  
    He spoke and led the way: his comrades followed.  
Then bringing all, within the banked galley  
They stowed them, as Odysseus' son directed.  
Then in the ship embarked he, but Athena  
First, in the steerage sitting, and beside her  
Telemachus: the sailors loosed the moorings,  
And leaped on board, and sate upon the benches. 420  
A gentle wind Athena raised behind them,  
A western breeze, that o'er the dark sea murmured.  
Then spoke Telemachus, his comrades ordering  
To raise their tackle; swiftly they obeyed him:  
The fir-tree mast within the appointed hollow  
Lifting they dropped, and stayed with ropes extended:  
And stretched the glittering sails with thongs of leather.  
Then swelled the breeze the mainsail: the dark water  
Fell crashing round the keel as she went onward:

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, II.

Brisk o'er the waves she ran, ploughing the ocean. 430  
Then, all the tackling set throughout the vessel,  
They with sweet wine-draughts crowned their foaming beakers,  
Pouring libations to the gods immortal,  
Chief to the child of Zeus, the grey-eyed goddess.  
Thus all the night, and dawn, the ship ran onward.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

III.

UP rushed the sun, the watery circle leaving,  
Into the gleaming heaven, to light the Immortals,  
And men upon the bounteous earth abiding :  
When they at Pylos, city fair of Neleus,  
Arrived. Upon the shore the people feasted,  
Offering black bulls to dark-haired Enosichthon.  
Nine rows of seats were placed ; in each five hundred  
Sate, and each portion had nine bulls allotted,  
The inwards ate, the thighs in worship burning.  
—Straightway they pushed to land, the sails close furling, 10  
And leaped ashore themselves, and moored their vessel.  
Then disembarked the Prince, Athena leading.  
Him first addressing spoke the grey-eyed goddess :

Telemachus, now all bashful shame must leave thee :  
For therefore hast thou crossed the sea, for tidings  
What land conceals thy sire, what fate hath chanced him.  
Go thou, accost at once the horseman Nestor :  
We know what prudence dwells within his bosom :  
Ask thou himself, that he the truth may tell thee ;  
He will not lie, for he is great in wisdom. 20

Her then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Mentor, how can I go, or how address him ?  
Skill have I none acquired in courtly phrases :  
And shame forbids a youth to accost an elder.

Him then address Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Telemachus, — some words shall thine own wit teach thee,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Others some god suggest : for not unfavoured  
By the blest gods hast thou been born and nourished.

Thus speaking, promptly led the way before him  
Pallas Athena : he her footsteps followed. 30

Soon were the seats and concourse of the Pylians  
Reached, where sate Nestor and his sons : around them  
Spitting the joints, or roasting, toiled their comrades.  
All, when they saw the guests, advanced to meet them,  
And pressed their hands, and seats with promptness offered.

First Nestor's son Peisistratus, approaching,  
Gave both his hand, and placed them at the banquet,  
On softest skins, spread o'er the sands of ocean,  
Near to his sire, and brother Thrasymedes :  
Then portions placed beside them, sweet wine pouring 40  
Into a golden cup, — pledged first, — and called on  
Pallas Athena, child of Zeus the Thunderer :

Pray now, O stranger, to the king Poseidon :  
For his the feast ye found, arriving hither.  
When thou hast prayed and offered due libation,  
Give to thy friend the cup of honeyed liquor,  
To make his offering : he too, if I err not,  
Prays to the gods : for all men need their favour.  
But he is younger, more in age mine equal :  
So first to thee the golden bowl I offer. 50

He ended, in her hands the wine-cup placing.  
Athena, gladdened at his just discretion,  
That first to her the golden bowl he offered,  
Immediate spoke, thus praying to Poseidon :

Hear, girder of the earth, Poseidon : grudge not  
Us praying, this our purpose to accomplish.  
First, glory shed on Nestor and his offspring :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Then to the rest an answer grant propitious,  
To all the Pylians, for this offering splendid.  
Grant too Telemachus and myself to prosper 60  
In that, which brought us in our dark swift vessel.

Thus spoke she praying, and all finished duly :  
Then gave the Prince the fair two-handled goblet,  
Who like petition made to great Poseidon.  
When now the chines were roasted and divided,  
Each on his portion made a plenteous banquet.  
And when with drink and meat each soul was sated,  
Nestor, Gerenian knight, began the converse :

Now is it well to prove, and try by question  
Our guests, now that their hearts with cheer are merry. 70  
Strangers, what are ye? o'er the wat'ry furrows  
Sail ye for gain, or void of purpose cruising  
As pirates o'er the wave, who lawless wander  
Risking their lives, and fraught with harm to others?

Him then the youthful Prince discreetly answered,  
Emboldened : for within his breast Athena  
Breathed courage, for his long lost sire to question,  
And that himself with men might grow in favour.

Great son of Neleus, glory of the Achæans,  
Thou askest whence we are : and I will show thee. 80  
From Ithaca we come, beneath Mount Neïos :  
Our own, no public need hath brought us hither.  
My sire's wide track I seek, some news to gather  
Of the much-tried Odysseus, known to rumour  
As leagued in arms with thee at Troy's destruction.  
Of all the rest who warred against the Trojans,  
Learn we how each by ruthless fate hath perished ;  
His fate alone hath Kronos' son kept secret.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

For none can rightly tell the day he perished,  
Whether on land, stricken by foes in battle, 90  
Or whelmed beneath the waves of Amphitritë.  
Wherefore I seek thy knees, if thou wilt haply  
His bitter end relate me, if thou saw'st it  
With thine own eyes, or hast from other heard it  
On travel; to ill fate his mother bore him.  
Smooth not the tale for my sake, nor for pity,  
But tell me plainly, as thyself hast witnessed.  
I pray thee, if my noble sire Odysseus  
At any time in word or deed hath helped thee  
In Troy, where ye Achæans toiled and suffered; 100  
Be mindful now, and all the truth declare me.

To him replied the knight Gerenian Nestor:  
Since thou hast brought to mind, my friend, the misery  
Which in that land, unwearied, we Achæans  
Suffered, and all that we endured on shipboard  
Wandering for prey where'er Achilles led us,  
And all our conflicts under Priam's city, —  
Know thou that there fell slain our best and bravest;  
There lies the martial Ajax, there Achilles,  
There too Patroclus, like a god in counsel: 110  
There my loved son was laid, valiant and blameless,  
Antilochus, swift of foot, in battle famous;  
Many, besides, the woes we suffered; no man  
Could tell them all, of us, whose life is fleeting;  
No, not if five, nor six years here remaining  
Thou shouldst inquire, what sufferings there befell us;  
First wouldst thou, wearied, seek thy native country.  
Nine years' destructive schemes we tried against them  
With varied craft; which Zeus at last scarce prospered.\*

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

There no one to compare in council ventured 120  
With him, who all surpassed in varied wisdom,  
Thy sire, the great Odysseus; if thou truly  
His offspring art:—I gaze on thee admiring,  
For ev'n thy words resemble his—nor lightly  
Might younger men his speech so aptly render.  
Throughout the time, I and divine Odysseus  
Never in moot nor council were at variance;  
But, one in spirit, with our mind and prudence  
Consulted ever for the Argives' welfare.  
But when the town of Priam we had ravaged, 130  
And heav'n the Achæans, homeward turning, scattered:  
Bitter return did Zeus ordain the Argives;  
Not all were prudent, nor regarded justice:  
Wherefore by evil fate did numbers perish,  
Slain by the grey-eyed goddess in her anger,  
Who raised fell strife between the sons of Atreus.  
They to a council all the Achæans calling,  
Ill judged, and out of course, at set of evening,  
(Opprest with wine the multitude assembled)  
Proclaimed the end for which the tribes they gathered. 140  
Then Menelaüs prompted all the Achæans,  
Home to return o'er the broad back of ocean;  
Which pleased not Agamemnon; he the people  
Urged to remain, great hecatombs to offer,  
Whereby to stay Athena's dreaded anger.  
Foolish,—nor knowing what should soon befall him;—  
Not lightly change the immortal gods their purpose.  
Thus they with bitter words each other answering,  
Stood; but the mailed Achæans rushed from council  
With murmurs loud, and bent on plans discordant. 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

That night we rested, evil schemes devising  
Against each other ; Zeus the mischief ripened ; —  
At daybreak, we our ships drew to the water,  
Our wealth embarking, and our deep-zoned women.  
Half of the force tarried behind, remaining  
With Agamemnon, shepherd of the people ;  
Half to their ships betook them : swiftly sped we ;  
Some god had smoothed the monster-teeming ocean.  
At Tenedos arrived, we paid our offerings,  
Eager for home ; but Zeus our way still hindered, 160  
Cruel, who once again fell strife engendered.  
Some turned their rounded ships and made for Ilion,  
Led by Odysseus, deep in crafty counsel,  
To please Atrides, royal Agamemnon ;  
But I, with all the ships which owned me leader,  
Fled, for I knew what evils heaven was storing ;  
Fled the brave son of Tydeus and his comrades ;  
And late, the fair-haired Menelaüs joined us ;  
In Lesbos found he us, our course debating,  
Whether to sail above the rocky Chios 170  
The island Psyria on the left hand coasting,  
Or under Chios, by the windy Mimas.  
Then prayed we Zeus some sign to give ; he heard us,  
And ordered us the wide sea to Eubœa  
To cut, the quickest to escape our danger.  
A whistling breeze sprung up ; our vessels swiftly  
Ran o'er the fishy ways, and at Geræstus  
That night put in ; with thighs of bulls Poseidon  
We honoured, the wide sea in safety traversed.  
The fourth day shone, when their round ships in Argos 180  
Diomedes' crew, the horseman son of Tydeus,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Moored ; but I sailed for Pylos ; nor remitted  
The breeze, since first the god its breath awakened.  
Thus came I uninformed, my son ; nor know I  
Aught of the rest, who live, or who have perished.  
But what I hear, in mine own house abiding,  
That shalt thou know, nor will I aught deny thee.  
The spear-armed Myrmidons, they say, came safely,  
Led by the valiant son of great Achilles ;  
And safely Philoctetes, son of Pœas :

190

Idomeneus to Crete brought all, whom battle  
Had spared, nor did the waves of any rob him.  
Atrides even ye must hear, though distant,  
How he arrived, and fell beneath Ægisthus.  
But signal vengeance hath the slayer suffered ;  
So good it is, to be survived by offspring  
In death ; for thus his son the foe with vengeance  
Pursued, — Ægisthus, who his father murdered.  
And thou, my friend, — I mark thee tall and comely,  
Be brave, that after ages may commend thee.

200

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Great son of Neleus, glory of Achæans,  
Due vengeance hath he wrought, and the Achæans  
Will widely spread his fame, and sing his praises.  
Would that to me the gods vouchsafed the prowess  
To wreak such vengeance on the haughty suitors,  
Who, violent, are plotting mischief for me.  
But no such fortune have the gods decreed me,  
—My sire, nor me ; all must we calmly suffer.

To him replied the knight Gerenian Nestor :  
O friend, since to this matter thou hast led me,  
They say that many suitors of thy mother

210

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Against thy will work evil in thy palace.  
Tell me, by choice submit'st thou, or do thy people  
Hate thee at home, some voice divine obeying ?  
Who knows, if *he* these wrongs on them shall visit,  
Alone arriving, or with all the Achæans ?  
If only thus the grey-eyed goddess loved thee  
As once she loved thy warrior sire Odysseus,  
At Troy, where sufferings sore befell the Achæans ; — 220  
None have I known by heav'n thus plainly favoured  
As he by Pallas, ever near to help him ; —  
Thus loved she thee, and with such care regarded,  
Shortly would these forget their promised nuptials.

To him discreet Telemachus made answer :  
Thy word, I trow, may never be accomplished :  
Too fair the hope : my heart despairs : not even  
If thus the gods were minded, might it happen.

Quickly replied Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Telemachus, what utterance hath escaped thee ? 230  
With ease the gods preserve a man, though distant.  
Far rather would I, many toils enduring,  
Arrive at last in peace at home, than coming  
Die on my hearth, as Agamemnon perished  
By treachery of his consort and Ægisthus.  
But death, that comes to all, not ev'n th' Immortals  
From him they love can ward, when once his portion  
Of endless sleep, foredoomed by Fate, approaches.

Her then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Mentor, of this no more, though deep it move us : 240  
— For him is no return : but the Immortals  
Death and dark fate already have ordained him.  
But one thing else from Nestor would I question,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Since he surpasses all in mind and justice :  
Three generations hath he ruled of mortals,  
They say : and as a god mine eyes regard him.  
O Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me truly,  
How died Atrides, royal Agamemnon ?  
Where then was Menelaüs ? what destruction  
Devised Ægisthus for him, far his stronger ? 250  
Was not his brother at Achæan Argos,  
But wandering far, when he emboldened slew him ?

To him replied the knight Gerenian Nestor :  
All this, my son, I truly will inform thee.  
Thou hast thyself the right solution prompted.  
If, from Troy coming, fair-haired Menelaüs  
Had living found Ægisthus in the palace,  
No tomb of earth would men have raised above him,  
But dogs and birds had torn his carcass, lying  
Far in the field : nor had the Achæan women 260  
Mourned him at all : — so foul his deed of murder.  
But we at Troy, our meed of toils fulfilling,  
Remained : while undisturbed in pastured Argos  
He plied his suit to Agamemnon's consort.  
At first the deed disgraceful Clytæmnestra  
Refused, her better mind discreetly using :  
For the bard too was with her, whom Atrides  
Departing, straitly charged to guard his consort.  
But when approached Ægisthus' fated ruin,  
The minstrel to a desert isle conveyed he, 270  
Leaving him there to ravenous birds a booty :  
Then willing, led her willing to his palace.  
Many the thighs he burnt on holy altars,  
Statues he offered, gold, and costly garments, —

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

This great deed wrought, his utmost hope surpassing.  
Homeward from Troy we came, together sailing,  
Atrides and myself, close-linked in friendship.  
But when we sighted Sunium, Attic foreland,  
Then Menelaüs' pilot bright Apollo  
Struck, with his painless darts, and slew, still grasping 280  
The rudder of the ship as she ran onward, —  
Phrontis, Onetor's son : of men most skilful  
To guide a bark, when tempests swept the ocean.  
Thus was he stayed, though on his journey hasting, —  
His friend to bury, and pay funeral honours.  
But when he too, over the dark sea sailing  
In his smooth ships, to Malea's lofty headland  
Came in his course, all-seeing Zeus misfortune  
Contrived, the breath of all shrill winds outpouring,  
And swelling billows vast, like mountains rolling. 290  
Severing the ships, some far as Crete he scattered,  
Where dwell Cydonians by the streams of Jardan.  
There stands a smooth tall rock into the ocean,  
At the end of Gortys, in the dark blue waters :  
On its left cliff the south great billows dashes  
Towards Phæstus, one small rock their force arresting.  
Thither they came : the crews escaped destruction  
Their ships of purpose on the sea beach leaving,  
Rent by the billows : — but five dark-prowed vessels  
To Egypt drove the tide and furious tempest ; — 300  
Thus he, much substance and much gold collecting,  
Strayed with his ships among the alien nations.  
Meanwhile Ægisthus wrought at home these mischiefs,  
Slaying Atrides, and his people ruling.  
Seven years he reigned in gold-endowed Mycenë ;

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

The eighth brought ruin : for divine Orestes  
Returned from Athens, and the assassin punished,  
Ægisthus, who his father foully murdered.  
This done, the Argive folk he feasted, burying  
His hateful mother and the base Ægisthus.  
That same day came the warrior Menelaüs, 310  
Bringing much wealth in vessels deeply laden.  
And thou, my friend, not long from home be absent,  
Leaving thy treasures, and within thy palace  
Men thus o'erbearing ; lest they, all devouring,  
Divide thy wealth, and this thy way be bootless.  
But first to Menelaüs I advise thee  
To go ; for he hath fresh arrived from nations  
Far distant, where if once the devious tempest  
Have borne a man, return he scarce can look for, 320  
So broad the sea ; not even birds its waters  
In one year cross,— for it is vast and fearful.  
But go, with ship and comrades ; or if rather  
Thou wouldst by land, chariot and horses wait thee,  
And mine own sons, who shall conduct thee willing  
To Sparta, home of fair-haired Menelaüs.  
Pray thou himself the truth exact to tell thee ;  
He will not lie, for great is his discretion.  
He said : while set the sun, and darkness followed.  
Then thus among them spoke the grey-eyed goddess : 330  
All this, old man, in season hast thou spoken :  
But come, the tongues divide, and sweet wine mingle,  
That to Poseidon and the blest Immortals  
Libations made, we seek our rest : already  
Hath light to darkness yielded ; nor are pleasing  
Late banquets to the gods, but timely parting.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

The goddess spoke, and they her words regarded :  
Over the hands of all poured heralds water,  
And youths with foaming liquor crowned the goblets,  
And served to all, first offering from each wine-cup. 340  
Then the tongues burnt they, stood, and made libations.  
This done, and all desire of drinking sated,  
Athena and Telemachus the godlike  
Set forth, returning to their hollow vessel.

But them with words rebuking, Nestor hindered :  
Now Zeus and all the immortal gods forbid it,  
That leaving me, on board ye should betake you,  
As from some needy man in stores deficient,  
Who hath nor cloaks nor blankets in his household,  
Himself and guests to stow in fleecy comfort. 350

But mine are cloaks, and rugs of costly pattern.  
Ne'er shall the son beloved of great Odysseus  
Sleep on his vessel's planks while I am living ;  
And after that, may I leave sons behind me  
To entertain the guests who journey hither.

To him replied Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Well hast thou spoken, friendly sage ; thy bidding  
Telemachus shall do, as best befits him.  
Let him go with thee, and within thy palace  
Repose the night ; but I to my dark vessel 360  
Repair, my crew to cheer, and give due orders :  
For I alone am ripe in age among them :—  
The rest are younger men, from his acquaintance  
Following Telemachus, by choice his comrades.  
There will I sleep to-night by my dark vessel ;  
Then in the morning to the valiant Caucons  
Sail I, a debt to claim, not small, nor recent,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Owed to me there ; but him, thy guest, send forward  
In thine own chariot, with thy son to guide him ;  
And of thy steeds the best and swiftest furnish. 370

Thus speaking, vanished the grey-eyed Athena,  
In eagle's form ; amazement seized the people ;  
Marvelled the ancient chief, her flight beholding ;  
And grasped Telemachus' hand, and thus addrest him :

My friend, I read thee no weak man nor coward,  
Whom the blest gods, thus young, grace with their escort.  
For this of the Olympians is none else than  
Tritogeneia, queen divine of armies,  
Who thy brave sire among the Argives honoured.  
Hail, heavenly queen ! grant me thy suppliant glory, 380  
Myself and children, and mine honoured consort ;  
To thee I vow a broad-faced yearling heifer,  
Untamed, which none beneath the yoke hath broken ;  
Her will I slay, her horns with gold enwrapping.

Thus spake he praying, and Athena heard him.  
Old Nestor then, Gerenian knight, preceded  
His sons, and sons-in-law, to his fair palace.  
Who when they reached the king's abode resplendent,  
In order sate along the thrones and benches.  
For them the ancient king a goblet mingled 390  
Of sweetest wine, which in the eleventh summer  
The stewardess had broached, the lid removing.  
Of this a bowl he mixed, and to Athena  
Outpouring, prayed, the daughter of the Thund'rer.  
This done, and all desire of drinking sated,  
Each one retired, the bed of slumber seeking.  
There on the spot bestowed the knight Gerenian  
Telemachus, loved son of great Odysseus,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

On a carved couch beneath the echoing portal :  
And by him placed Peisistratus the warlike, 400  
Sole of his sons unmarried in his household.  
Himself reposed aloft within the palace,  
His queenly spouse the bed of rest preparing.

When gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Sprung from his couch the knight Gerenian Nestor,  
Came forth, and on the polished thrones of marble  
Sate, which without adorned the lofty portals,  
White, glistening as with oil ; on which aforetime  
Sate Neleus, equal to the gods in council ;  
But he in death had sunk, by Fate o'erpowered. 410  
That seat held Nestor then, stay of the Achæans,  
Grasping his sceptre ; thick his sons around him  
Thronged from their chambers, Echephron and Stratius,  
Perseus, Aretus, godlike Thrasymedes,  
And sixth and last, Peisistratus the hero ; —  
Telemachus led they in and placed beside them.  
Then thus began the knight Gerenian Nestor :

Swiftly, dear sons, your father's wish accomplish,  
That I may first of gods appease Athena,  
Who visibly graced our sacrificial banquet. 420  
One for the heifer to the field betake him,  
That she may quickly come, driven by the herdsman.  
One, to Telemachus' dark ship repairing,  
Fetch all his comrades, save two only, hither :  
And one again the gold-beater Laerces  
Summon, the heifer's horns to wrap with gilding.  
The rest together here remain, and order  
The maids within to spread the splendid banquet,  
Seats, heaps of wood, and water clear providing.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

He spoke, and all were busied : came the heifer 430  
Up from the meadow :—from the balanced vessel  
High-souled Telemachus' comrades :— came the goldsmith  
Armed with his tools, the handicraftsman's weapons,  
Anvil and hammer, and well grasping pincers  
With which to work the gold : came too Athena,  
The sacrifice to share :—the old knight Nestor  
Gave gold, which round the heifer's horns enfolding  
He wrought, the goddess with the sight to gladden.  
It by the horns led Stratius and Echephron :  
In ewer carved with flowers, Aretus water 440  
Brought from the chamber, with his left hand bearing  
Cakes in a basket : warlike Thrasymedes  
Stood, his sharp axe in hand, to strike the heifer.  
Perseus the blood awaited. Ancient Nestor  
Water and cakes first offering, to Athena  
Prayed, the shorn forelock in the fire consuming.  
When all had prayed, and broken cakes cast forward,  
Then Nestor's son, the great-souled Thrasymedes,  
Stood near and struck ; his axe the tendons severed  
Above the neck : the victim fell : loud chanted 450  
The princesses their prayer, and Nestor's consort,  
Eurydicë, eldest born of Clymenë's daughters.  
But they, the heifer from the ground upraising,  
Held, while Peisistratus the throat divided.  
When the black blood had drained, and life the carcass  
Had left, again they laid her down, and duly  
Her thighs dissevered, fat upon them rolling  
In double rank, and flesh above arranging ;  
Then burnt them on cleft wood the aged Nestor,  
Dark wine outpouring : while around the princes 460

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Stood, holding spits prepared. The thighs burnt duly,  
The inwards tasted, all the rest in pieces  
They sliced, and roasted, on their spits transfixing.  
Telemachus meanwhile fair Polycasta  
Bathed, youngest daughter of Neleïan Nestor.  
When she had bathed him and with oil anointed,  
On him a goodly vest she placed, and tunic:  
He left the bath, in beauty like th' Immortals,  
And sate by Nestor's side, the people's shepherd.

The joints, now finished, from the spits removing, 470  
They sate and feasted; noble drawers served them,  
Pouring and handing wine in golden goblets.  
When now desire of meat and drink was sated,  
Among them spoke the knight Gerenian Nestor:

Sons, for Telemachus the fair-maned horses  
Yoke to the car, that he may speed his journey.

He spoke: they heard, and with all haste obeyed him:  
And to the car the swift steeds quickly harnessed.  
In it, the stewardess bread and wine provisioned,  
And viands, such as heav'n-born kings repast on. 480  
Then on the glittering seat Telemachus mounted,  
And by his side Peisistratus the chieftain  
Ascending, grasped the reins, and lashed the coursers,  
Who, nothing loth, flew onward o'er the champain,  
Leaving behind the lofty fort of Pylos.

All day the yoke-beam trembled to their running,  
Till set the sun, and all the ways were darkened.  
Then reached they Pheræ, Diocles' lordly castle,  
Son of Orsilochus, offspring of Alpheius.  
There rested they, with guestly favours treated. 490  
But when gleamed dawn's bright child, rose-fingered morning,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, III.

Yoking the horses and the rich car mounting,  
Forth from the doors they drove, and echoing portals,  
And lashed the steeds, who, nothing loth, flew onwards  
Over a plain corn-clad. And now the journey  
Drew to its close, so well had sped their coursers.  
Then set the sun, and all the ways were darkened.

IV.

To Lacedæmon's caverned valley came they,  
 And sought the towers of warlike Menelaüs.  
 Him found they, many feasting at a marriage  
 Both of his son and daughter, in the palace.  
 Her, to the son of war-renowned Achilles  
 Sent he: in Troy long since betrothed and promised  
 To be his bride,— which now the gods accomplished.  
 Her was he now with steeds and chariots sending  
 To the Myrmidons' famed town, her bridegroom's lieges.  
 His son a Spartan bride, Alector's daughter, 10  
 Wedded,— his late-born, stalwart Megapenthes,  
 A slave his mother; — for the gods to Helen  
 No child had granted since the lovely maiden  
 Hermione, fair as golden Aphrodita.

Thus were they feasting in the high-roofed palace,  
 Neighbours and friends of warlike Menelaüs,  
 Joyous at heart: a bard divine among them  
 Sung to his harp; and in the midst two dancers  
 Whirling around, obeyed the merry music.

Meanwhile the palace gates approaching, stood they, 20  
 They and their steeds: Telemachus the hero,  
 And Nestor's noble son. First Eteoneus  
 Saw them, the trusty slave of Menelaüs:  
 And ran within to tell the people's shepherd,  
 Whom in his ear he spoke with winged accents:  
 There wait two strangers, godlike Menelaüs,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Both heroes, like the race of Zeus, to look on.  
Say, shall we loose for them their wingèd coursers,  
Or send them for their host to seek some other?

Him wrathful answered fair-haired Menelaüs : 30  
Not in time past, Boethoid Eteoneus,  
Wert thou a fool; but now like babe thou pratest.  
Here thou and I, at kindly guest-boards feasted  
Of many men, are safe at home — if only  
Zeus work us no more sorrow; — but go loosen  
Their steeds; and first themselves place at our banquet.

He spoke; nor staid the slave, but summoned others,  
All trusty servants, with him forth to follow.  
The reeking coursers from the yoke unbinding  
Up to the mangers tied they, by them casting 40  
Millet, and handfuls of white barley mixing.  
Against the sunny wall they leaned the chariot,  
And led the guests within; — who gazing wondered  
At the fair palace of the heaven-born monarch.  
For as the sun or moon in all their glory,  
So shone the high-roofed house of Menelaüs.  
When now their eyesight was with gazing sated,  
They laved their limbs in polished baths of marble,  
Bathed by fair slaves, and with fresh oil anointed.  
In tunics clothed, and robes of softest woollen, 50  
They sate by Atreus' son, king Menelaüs.  
Then poured a maiden water from an ewer  
Beautiful, golden, o'er a bowl of silver  
Upon their hands, and spread a polished table;  
While the chaste stewardess brought on provision,  
Meats various, lavish of her stores abundant.  
These, ministrant, a carver placed before them

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

In plates, and furnished each with golden wine-cups.  
Pointing to them, spake fair-haired Menelaüs:

Eat of my meat, and glad your hearts; and after, 60  
When ye have eaten, we will ask, who are ye  
Of men; for yours no unknown race of parents,  
But ye are youths from heaven-born kings descended,  
Who sceptres hold; base men have no such offspring.

He said, and placed a fat ox-chine before them,  
With his own hand, his own peculiar portion.  
Then fell they eager to the ready banquet.  
But when with meat and drink their souls were sated,  
Bespoke Telemachus the son of Nestor,  
His head close leaning lest the rest should hear him: 70

Friend of my spirit, son of Nestor, seest thou  
The gleam of brass around the echoing chambers,  
Of gold and silver, ivory and amber?  
Surely such hall Olympian Zeus inhabits;  
Such wealth is here; I marvel at the vision.

Him speaking heard the fair-haired Menelaüs,  
And straight address them thus in winged accents:

My sons, with Zeus may none contend in splendour;  
Eternal are his halls, his wealth undying.  
Whether of men my state can any rival 80  
I know not; for with toil and wand'rings many  
In the eighth year all this in vessels brought I.  
Cyprus, Phœnicë, Egypt did I visit,  
The Æthiops, Sidonians, and Erembi,  
And Libya, where the lambs at once grow horned.  
Thrice yean the ewes within the yearly cycle;  
Nor lacketh any, be he king or shepherd,  
Of cheese, or flesh, or sweet new milk: but ever

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Throughout the year the flocks their tribute furnish.  
Thus I, in distant parts much wealth collecting, 90  
Wandered : meanwhile another slew my brother  
By secret treachery of his cursèd consort.  
So that with no glad heart rule I this splendour ;  
This from your fathers would ye learn, whoever  
They be : for much I suffered, rich possessions  
Losing, and all my house with treasure furnished.  
Would that a third part only were my portion  
Of all, and those were safe, who then were slaughtered  
In the broad Troas, far from pastured Argos.  
Whom I, regretting and bewailing ever, 100  
Oft, in my palace sitting, for a season  
Satiated my soul with grief ; then for a season  
Repose : short spell of sorrow fills the spirit.  
Far less the rest lament I, though for them too  
I mourn, than one, whose memory taints my slumber  
And food : — for none so suffered of the Achæans  
As toiled and bore Odysseus ; nought procuring  
But sorrow for himself, and woes unending  
For me, his absence mourning : nor aught know we  
Touching his life or death. The old Laertes, 110  
Be sure, bemoans him, — and his prudent consort, —  
And son, whom lately born he left behind him.

He spoke, and in him roused desire for weeping ;  
Some tears he dropt at mention of his father,  
His purple cloak before his eyes outspreading  
With both hands ; not unmarked of Menelaüs, —  
Who in his mind and thought intently pondered,  
Whether to leave him to his sire's remembrance,  
Or first inquire, and utterance give each feeling.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

While thus intent in mind and thought he pondered, 120  
Helen from forth her fragrant high-roofed chamber  
Came, fair as Artemis the golden-spindled ;  
With her Adrestë, with a well wrought footstool :  
Alcippë bore a rug of softest texture ;  
Phylo her silver basket, which Alcandra  
Gave her, the wife of Polybus, who dwelt in  
Ægyptian Thebes, where treasures crowd the mansions.  
Two silver baths he gave to Menelaüs,  
Two silver tripods, and of gold ten talents :  
His wife moreover gave rich gifts to Helen, 130  
A golden distaff, and a fair round basket,  
Of silver, on the rim with gold embellished.  
This bore her handmaid Phylo, and set by her,  
Filled full with thread, already spun : above it  
Was laid the distaff, purple wool containing.  
On couch she sate, beneath with footstool furnished ;  
And then forthwith in words her husband questioned :  
    Know we, O Menelaüs, who these boast them  
To be of mortals, who have sought our palace ?  
Shall I say false, or true ? my spirit prompts me. 140  
Ne'er have I one beheld so like another  
Of men or women (as I gaze, I wonder)  
As this youth to the son of great Odysseus  
Telemachus, whom he left new-born behind him,  
When for my sake, the shameless one, the Achæans  
Thronged to the towers of Troy, fierce war exciting.  
    Her answered then the fair-haired Menelaüs :  
My deeming too with thy conjecture tallies.  
His were such feet and hands : the eye's swift turning  
Is his,—the head, and hair that on it clusters. 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

And when ev'n now Odysseus' name I mentioned,  
Relating how for all he toiled and suffered,  
The youth shed bitter tears, his purple mantle  
With both his hands before his face outspreading.

Then spoke Peisistratus, Nestor's son, in answer :

Divine Atrides, leader of the people,

This is indeed his son, whom thou surmisest ;

But he is modest, and in heart reluctant,

Thus lately come, to open in thy presence

His tale,—whose voice, as of a god, delights us. 160

But me Gerenian Nestor hath commissioned

To come, his escort ; for he fain would see thee,

That thou in word or deed might'st give him counsel.

A son whose sire is absent hath much sorrow

At home, if he have none besides to guard him.

As now my friend : his sire is gone, and no man

Can of his people ward misfortune from him.

Him answering, spake the fair-haired Menelaüs :

O heaven ! a dear friend's son my house hath entered,

Who for my sake hath borne full many a labour ; 170

Him thought I first, beyond all other Argives

To love, if Zeus, the great Olympian ruler,

Over the sea our ships had brought in safety :

A town and home in Argos would I build him,

Himself, his wealth, and son, from Ithaca fetching,

With all his people,—voiding some one city

Of these around, within mine own dominion ;

Then could we much converse : nor other parting

Should sever us, in love and friendship mingling,

Till death's dark cloud had, in its time, enwrapt us. 180

But this my scheme the god with envy frustrates,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Who him, of all, of his return hath baffled.

He spoke : and roused in all desire of weeping ;  
Wept Argive Helen, born of Zeus ; wept also  
Telemachus, and the king, the son of Atreus :  
Nor with dry eyes remained the son of Nestor ;  
He of his lost Antilochus bethought him,  
Slain by the splendid son of glittering Eö ;  
Whom he remembering, spoke in wingëd accents :

Atrides, far beyond the rest of mortals  
Nestor pronounced thee wise, whene'er we mentioned  
Thy name at home, and with each other questioned.  
And now, if aught I say, yield thou compliance.  
Tears are unwelcome at a banquet : morning,  
The daughter of the dawn, will come ; nor grudge I  
Sorrow for them who death and fate have suffered.  
With this alone can we the lost one honour,  
To crop the hair, and wet the cheek with weeping.  
My brother too was slain, and not the weakest  
Among the Argives,— known by thee ; I never  
Met nor beheld, but fame the palm assigns him,  
Antilochus, swift of foot and strong in battle.

Him answering, said the bright-haired Menelaüs,  
Friend, thou hast spoken as a man of wisdom  
Would speak and act, if far in years thine elder.  
Wise is thy sire, and therefore speak'st thou wisely.  
Easy his race to know, to whom Kroneion  
A happy lot hath given in birth and marriage ;  
As now to Nestor hath throughout befallen,  
Honoured old age to reach within his palace,  
And sons to boast both wise and strong in battle.  
But we will leave our mourning, and the banquet

190

200

210

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Again remember ; and our hands in water  
Let them refresh ; and we ev'n till the morning,  
Telemachus and I, will spend in converse.

He spoke : Asphalion on their hands poured water,  
Tried servant of the far-famed Menelaüs.  
Then fell they eager to the ready banquet.  
Meanwhile new cares employed the heaven-born Helen ;  
Into the wine they drank a drug infused she 220  
Bland, anodyne, of woes oblivion bringing,—  
Of which whoe'er hath drunk, in goblet mingled,  
All day no rolling tear his cheek shall moisten,  
Not ev'n if death his father struck and mother,  
Nor if his brother, or his son belovèd  
Were smitten with the sword, and he beheld it.  
Such potent drugs possessed the heaven-born Helen,  
Kindly,—by Polydamna given, Thôn's consort,  
Ægyptian matron ; where the earth in plenty  
Bears drugs, some noxious, some of healing virtue : 230  
There each in skill of medicine all the nations  
Excels, for all the race are Pæon's offspring.

This done, and order given to serve the goblets,  
Straightway she spoke, her words to both addressing :

Atrides, heaven-preserved, and ye, the offspring  
Of worthy sires,—to men in manner various  
Zeus portions good and ill, all power possessing.  
Banquet ye now, in these our halls reclining,  
Pleased with my words ; for I will speak in season.  
Ne'er could I mention *all*, nor rightly number 240  
The thousand toils of sorely-tried Odysseus ;  
But one alone, which he endured, relate I,  
In Troy, where ye Achæans trouble suffered.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Upon himself unseemly stripes inflicting,  
Rags on his shoulders hanging, like a servant  
The broad-wayed city of his foes he entered,  
And hiding his true self, appeared some beggar,  
Far other being in the Achæan vessels.  
Thus veiled, he entered Troy; all eyes deceiving  
But mine; I only through disguises knew him 250  
And called by name; in craft he shunned my presence.  
But when I bathed him, and with oil anointed,  
And clothes put on him, and on oath made promise  
Ne'er to the Trojans to reveal Odysseus  
Till he had reached his ships and tents in safety,—  
He told me all the counsel of the Achæans.  
Thus, with sharp falchion many Trojans slaying,  
Back to the Argives store of news he carried.  
Then shrieked the Trojan women: but my spirit  
Rejoiced; for in my heart I longed already 260  
For home, and mourned the woe which Aphrodita  
Brought me, when thither from my home she bore me,  
Leaving my child, and bridal-bed, and husband,  
In nought deficient, wit, nor manly beauty.  
Her answering, spoke the fair-haired Menelaüs:  
All this, my wife, hast thou in season spoken.  
Of many have I tried the mind and counsel,  
Heroic men, — and many lands have travelled,  
But with mine eyes ne'er have I seen another  
As was th' enduring heart of loved Odysseus. 270  
Such deed he did and suffered, strong of purpose,  
Within the plank-wrought horse, wherein were sitting  
The Argive chiefs, bearers of fate to Trojans.  
Thither cam'st thou, by some bad influence prompted,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Some god, who sought to bring the Trojans glory.  
Thy steps Deiphobus the godlike followed.  
Thrice circledst thou, our hollow ambush handling :  
Thrice calledst thou by name the Danaan heroes,  
Likening thy voice to every Argive's consort ;  
While I, Tydides, and divine Odysseus, 280  
Sat in the midst, and heard thee how thou calledst.  
We both, in strong emotion, yearned immediate  
To issue forth, or from within to answer :  
But wise Odysseus stopped our eager purpose.  
Then all the rest, the sons of the Achæans,  
In silence sat : but Anticlus to answer  
Alone desired ; — when o'er his mouth Odysseus  
Firmly with both hands pressed, and saved the Achæans, —  
Thus pressing, till Athena bore thee from us.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered : 290  
Menelaus, care of heaven, the people's leader,  
The more's the grief : from him might nought destruction  
Ward off, — no, not a heart of steel within him.  
But come, our beds prepare us, that in season  
We with sweet sleep, reclining, may refresh us.

He spoke, and Argive Helen bid her handmaids  
Beneath the porch a couch to place, and blankets  
Purple to strew, carpets o'er those arranging,  
And over all, soft coverlets of woollen.  
They from the house with torch in hand proceeded, 300  
And laid the bed : the guests an herald ushered.  
Thus in the palace vestibule they rested,  
Telemachus, and the prince the son of Nestor.  
Atrides slept aloft within the mansion,  
And by him long-robed Helen, flower of women.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

When gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Sprung from his bed the warlike Menelaüs,  
Clothed, and his sharp sword slung across his shoulder,  
Beneath his smooth feet bound his goodly sandals,  
And left his chamber, godlike in his beauty ; 310  
Then by Telemachus sat, and spoke, and named him :

What need hath brought thee to fair Lacedæmon,  
Hero Telemachus, o'er the broad-backed ocean ?  
Public, or private ? this declare me truly.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered :  
Menelaüs, care of heaven, the people's leader,  
I came, if of my sire thou news couldst furnish.  
My house is wasted, — spent my rich possessions :  
Full are my halls of hostile men, who ever 320  
Slay my fat sheep and slowly-wending oxen,  
In insolence unmatched, my mother's suitors.  
Wherefore I seek thy knees, if thou wilt haply  
His bitter end relate me, if thou saw'st it  
With thine own eyes, or hast from other heard it  
On travel ; — to ill fate his mother bore him.  
Smooth not the tale for my sake, nor for pity,  
But tell me plainly, as thyself hast witnessed.  
I pray thee, if my noble sire Odysseus  
In word or deed at any time hath helped thee  
In Troy, where ye Achæans toiled and suffered, 330  
Be mindful now, and all the truth declare me.

Then, much in wrath, replied the fair-haired monarch :  
Ye gods ! in a brave warrior's bed aspire they  
To lie, themselves no manly strength possessing.  
As when some hind in lair of mighty lion,  
Her new-born sucking fawns hath laid to slumber, —



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Browsing the uplands and the grassy valleys  
She strays,— but he at last his den reenters,  
And dam and young with death relentless visits;  
So shall Odysseus these, with death relentless. 340

Would, father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo,  
That such he were as once in fair-walled Lesbos,  
With Philomelus' son he strove in wrestling,  
Gallantly threw him, all the Achæans gladdening ;  
Such might Odysseus come among these suitors,  
Swift fate and bitter nuptials should o'ertake them.  
But what thou askest,— nought will I thee answer  
Beside the truth evasive, nor deceive thee ;  
But as the truthful sea-god old informed me,  
Thus will I tell thee, not a word concealing. 350

In Egypt, when I sped my homeward journey,  
For lack of offerings due the gods detained me ;  
The gods, who of their laws will have men mindful.  
Amid the wave-washed ocean lies an island,  
Off Egypt's coast, Pharos by name ; so distant,  
As a smooth ship might in a day accomplish,  
Should breezes shrill astern her voyage favour.  
In it a harbour, where their balanced vessels  
Men launch to sea, with clear fresh water furnished.  
There twenty days the gods detained me, nor did 360  
Breezes to seaward blow, which might with swiftness  
Conduct our ships across the broad-backed ocean.  
And now our stores were spent, and strength exhausted,  
Had not a goddess pitied and preserved me,  
Daughter of truthful Proteus the old sea-god,  
Eidothea ; for her mind I touched with pity :  
Alone she found me straying from my comrades ;

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

For they all day about the island wandering,  
Fished with curved hooks; gaunt hunger pinched their  
bellies.

She standing near me, spoke a word, and called me : 370

Thou art a fool, O stranger, or a madman,  
Or giv'st up all from choice, and sufferest gladly,—  
So long this isle detains thee, no expedient  
Discovering,— and thy comrades' spirit fails them.

She spoke; and I in answer thus address her :

Whoe'er of goddesses thou art, I tell thee,  
I stay not here by choice, but of th' Immortals  
Who dwell in heaven, some one, I trow, have angered.  
But do thou tell me, for the gods know all things,  
Which of th' Immortals keeps me from my journey, 380  
And how I best may cross the fishy waters.

I spoke; and thus the nymph divine made answer :

All this, O stranger, truly will I tell thee :  
Here haunts an ancient truth-declaring sea-god,  
Immortal, the Egyptian Proteus, skilled in  
All caverns of the sea, Poseidon's servant :  
Him they report my father who begat me.  
If thou canst him, in ambush lying, capture,  
He will declare thy way, and journey's stages,  
And how thou best mayst cross the fishy waters: 390  
And also, Care of heaven, if thou desirest,  
What in thine house of good or ill hath happened,  
While thou on wanderings long and sore art absent.

She spoke; and I in answer thus address her :

Tell me thyself the Ancient's place of hiding,  
Lest seeing, or foreknowing, he avoid me ;  
Hard is a god for mortal man to master

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV

I spoke; and thus the nymph divine made answer:  
All this, O stranger, will I tell thee truly.  
Soon as the sun hath reached heaven's middle region, 400  
Comes from the waves the old truth-telling sea-god  
Under the western breeze, with black slime covered,  
And in the slippery caves on land reposes.  
Round him the seals, fair Halosydna's offspring,  
Sleep in a crowd, from the grey surf emerging,  
Breathing salt odour of the depths of ocean.  
Thither I'll lead thee at the break of morning,  
And will recline thee duly. Of thy comrades  
Choose three, the best among thy bank'd vessels.  
Now will I all the Ancient's tricks unfold thee. 410  
First, he will count his seals, his rounds performing:  
Then, when he all has numbered, and inspected,  
I' th' midst he'll lie, — as with his flock a shepherd.  
Him when thou thus reclining first beholdest,  
Then straightway let your care be force and prowess,  
To hold him fast, though striving to escape thee.  
All changes he will try, — whate'er things creeping  
Go on the earth, — and fire divine, and water:  
Yet hold him fast the more, and press him firmly.  
But when at last himself in words shall ask thee, 420  
Appearing such as ye beheld him slumbering,  
Then loose thy grasp, the Ancient One releasing.  
Ask him what god in anger thus detains thee, —  
And how thou best may cross the fishy waters.

She said, and dived beneath the foaming ocean:  
I to my ships, where deep in sand they rested,  
Returned, and as I went my heart much pondered.  
When to the sea I came and to my vessel,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

We cooked our meal, and night divine came on us :  
Then on the sea-beach lay we down to slumber. 430  
When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Then by the margin of the wide-wayed ocean  
Went I, much praying to the gods : and comrades  
Chose three, whom in all projects most I trusted.  
The nymph the while, the sea's wide bosom entering,  
Four skins of seals brought with her from the ocean :  
All were new flayed : with guile her sire she baffled.  
Then in the sea-sand scooping beds sufficient,  
She sate : and we approached and stood beside her.  
All she received, o'er each a skin disposing. 440  
Foul was our watch to keep ; for sorely plagued us  
The sea-bred sealskins with their curséd odour :  
Who loves for bedfellow an ocean monster ?  
But the nymph saved us, remedy glad providing.  
Ambrosia placed she under each man's nostril  
Divinely sweet, the seals' foul smell removing.  
Thus all the morn with patient mind we waited.  
Then came the seals to land in crowds, and laid them  
In ranks to sleep along the ocean border.  
At noon the Old-one came, and found assembled 450  
His blubbery flock : inspected them, and counted.  
Us first of all he numbered, nought suspecting  
Of treachery,—then disposed himself to slumber.  
Shouting we straightway forward rushed, and on him  
Laid hands ; nor did his crafty wiles escape him :  
First he became a lion, maned and bearded,  
And then by turns a snake, a boar, a leopard ;  
Then water, — then a tree with lofty branches :  
While we with mind enduring firmly held him.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

But when the Old-one, versed in craft, grew weary, 460  
At last, in words inquiring, he address't me :

What god, thou son of Atreus, hath advised thee  
Thus wily to ensnare me? What thine errand?

He spoke; and I in answer thus address't him :  
Ancient, thou know'st (why thus dissembling ask me?)  
How on this island I am kept, nor rescue  
Can find; and all my spirit faints within me.  
But now inform me, — for the gods know all things, —  
Which of th' Immortals binds me from my journey,  
And how I best may cross the fishy waters. 470

I spoke; and he in answer thus address't me :  
Yea, but thou shouldst to Zeus and all th' Immortals  
Have offerings brought when thou embark'dst, that quickly  
Thou mightst thy country reach, the dark sea crossing :  
For fate to see thy friends will not permit thee,  
Nor well-built house and native land to visit,  
Till to the stream of Egypt's heaven-swelled river  
Thou hast again resorted, and large offerings  
Made to th' immortal gods, the heavenly rulers,  
Who then shall give thee the return thou seekest. 480

He spoke; but all my spirit sunk within me,  
That I was doomed again o'er the dark ocean  
To sail to Egypt, journey long and irksome ;  
But even thus, with further words I plied him :

This, Ancient, will I do, as thou commandest.  
But come now, tell me, and inform me truly; —  
Came in their vessels scathless all the Achæans,  
When Nestor left, and I, from Troy departing?  
By bitter death on board did any perish,  
Or by his friends, when he the war had ended? 490



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

I spoke; and he in answer thus addrest me :  
Why ask me this, Atrides? 'Tis not fitting  
For thee to know, nor search my mind : from weeping  
Not long wilt thou refrain, when all thou learnest.  
— Many are lost, and many left remaining :—  
Two leaders only of the mailed Achæans  
On the return have died (the fight, thou knewest):  
And one, alive, on the broad ocean lingers.  
Ajax hath perished with his long-oared vessels ;  
First on the great Gyræan rocks Poseidon 500  
Drove him ashore, and rescued from the waters.  
Now were he saved, though hateful to Athena,  
Had he not impious words in folly uttered, —  
That, spite of heaven, he would the gulf of ocean  
Escape. Him heard Poseidon loudly vaunting ;  
Then in his stalwart hands his trident seizing  
Struck the Gyræan rock, and rent it : one part  
Stood firm ; the fragment toppled to the waters  
On which sat Ajax, boasting in his phrensy,  
And bore him down along the foaming billows. 510  
[Thus perished he, the salt sea-water gulping.\*]  
Thy brother safe escaped, dark fate avoiding,  
In his smooth ships, preserved by Hera's favour.  
But when he neared the lofty Malean headland,  
A sudden tempest seized his sails and drove him  
Far o'er the fishy ocean, sighing deeply,  
To th' utmost point of land, where dwelt Thyestes

\* The genuineness of this line was doubted by the ancient critics. But the objection to it, as stated by Eustathius, rather affected its apparently trifling sense, than its support by MS. authority.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Of yore, but then Thyestes' son, Ægisthus.\*  
But when thence also safe return was granted,  
And the gods changed the breeze and brought them home-  
ward, 520  
Joyful he stepped upon the soil paternal,  
Embraced the shore, and kissed it, while the warm tears  
Fell thickly from him, to behold his country.  
But him descried the scout, whom on his watch-tower  
Ægisthus' craft had placed, and wages promised,  
Two golden talents: — a whole year he watched there,  
Lest unobserved the king in arms surprise them.  
Whom seeing, to his chief he bore the tidings.  
Then straight a treacherous plot contrived Ægisthus:  
Twenty best men among the people placed he 530  
In ambush, and bid others spread the banquet;  
Then went to meet the royal Agamemnon  
With steeds and chariots, direful treason plotting.  
Him nought suspecting, he brought home, and slew him  
At table, as an ox before the manger.  
Nor was one left of all Atrides' followers,  
Nor of Ægisthus': in those halls they perished.  
He ended: all my spirit sunk within me;  
And on the sand I sat and wept; nor longer  
Desired my heart to live and see the sunlight. 540  
But when, in anguish wallowing, I was sated,  
The old truth-telling sea-god thus address me:  
Do not, Atrides, thus long time unceasing

\* The geographical difficulties of this account are insuperable. It is plainly inconsistent with itself, representing Agamemnon as driven by a tempest to his own home, and then as *returning to that very home*.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Lament, for nought it profits thee ; but quickly  
Make trial, how to reach thy native country.  
Alive perchance thou'lt find him ; or Orestes  
Hath slain him first, and thou must tend his burial.

He spoke : my heart and spirit in my bosom  
Revived again, and cheered me, though in sorrow ;  
And him addressing, spoke I wingëd accents : 550

Of these, I know ; but of a third man tell me,  
Who yet alive is held in the broad ocean,  
[\* Or dead ; of him inform me, though in sorrow.]

I spoke ; and he in answer thus address me :  
Laertes' son,— in Ithaca is his dwelling ; —  
Him saw I in an island, warm tears shedding,  
Guest of the nymph Calypso, who detains him  
Perforce ; nor can he gain his native country,  
Having no ships with oarage, nor companions,  
To be his bearers o'er the broad-backed ocean. 560

—Thine own lot is not, heav'n-cared Menelaüs,  
To die and bow to fate in pastured Argos :  
But to th' Elysian plain, and earth's far limits,  
Shall the gods send thee, where dwells Rhadamanthus  
The golden-haired : there life of man is sweetest ;  
There never snow, nor winter comes, nor tempest ;  
But the sweet music of the breathing zephyr  
Ever from ocean rising, brings refreshment ;  
Because thou Helen hast, and art to heav'n related.

Thus speaking, dived he in the foaming ocean, 570

\* The genuineness of this verse is doubted, mainly from its seeming inconsistency with what Proteus above said. But it has been well remarked, that it was the custom of the old poets to fill out their sentences with these alternatives, even when they have no significance.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

I to my vessels, with my godlike comrades,  
Repaired; much by the way my heart was troubled.  
But when we reached our vessels and the ocean,  
And cooked our meal, and welcome night came on us,  
On the sea-margin we reclined in slumber.  
When gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
First to the sea divine we drew our vessels,  
In the trimmed ships the masts and sails disposing:  
The crew embarking sat along the benches,  
And struck the foaming waves with measured oarage. 580  
Again in Egypt's heaven-descended river  
I moored my ships, and perfect hecatombs offered.  
Then, when I had appeased th' Immortals' anger,  
A tomb, for lasting fame, to Agamemnon  
I built, and homeward sailed. The gods fair breezes  
Vouchsafed, which quickly to my country bore me.

But come now, rest thou here within my palace  
Till that th' eleventh or twelfth day overtake thee;  
Then will I with fair gifts dismiss thee nobly,  
A polished chariot, and three steeds; and after 590  
A beauteous cup, that thou mayst pour libations  
To the blest gods, and me each day remember.

Him then Telemachus discreetly answered:  
Do not, Atrides, here long time detain me;  
A whole year gladly would I with thee tarry,  
Nor ever feel regret of home or parents:  
So much, to thy discourse and tidings listening,  
Delight I: — but ere this my comrades weary  
In divine Pylos, while thou here detain'st me.  
The gift thou giv'st me, plate, or treasure make it: 600  
Steeds take I not to Ithaca, but leave them

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

A glory for thyself: a plain thou rulest,  
Broad, rich in lotus and in sedge; where flourish  
Both wheat and maize, and broad white fields of barley.  
In Ithaca are no wide roads, nor meadows,  
But hills of goat-walk, fairer far than pastures.  
None of our isles hath coursing ground or meadow,  
In all the sea; and Ithaca least among them.

He ended. Smiled the warrior Menelaüs,  
And seized him by the hand, and spoke, and named him: 610  
Noble descent, dear child, thy speech betokens;  
Wherefore the change I make: the power is with me.  
Of all the gifts that in my house are treasured,  
That will I give thee which is best and fairest:  
A cup I give thee, richly carved; — of silver  
The whole, with gold around the margin plated:  
Hephæstus' work; by Phædimus presented,  
The hero-king of Sidon, when his palace  
Lodged me returning: this I freely give thee.

Thus they such things conversed with one another, 620  
Then to the feast in the king's halls repaired they.  
Some brought them sheep, refreshing wine brought others:  
Their wives, with fair-fringed robes, prepared the banquet.  
Thus they the meal made ready in the palace.

Meanwhile, before Odysseus' hall, the suitors  
Sported with dice, and with the javelin throwing,  
On the smoothed pavement where before they revelled.  
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus the godlike,  
Their chiefs, were there, and all in valour bravest.  
To them Noëmon, Phronius' son, approaching, 630  
Addressed Antinoüs with enquiring accents:  
Know we, or are we uninformed, Antinoüs,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

When comes Telemachus from sandy Pylos?  
My ship he took, for which I have occasion  
To cross to level Elis, where for breeding  
Twelve mares are mine, and mules in labour patient,  
Their foals untamed; and I would go and break them.

Thus spoke he; but they trembled, for they vaunted  
He was not gone to Neleïan Pylos, only  
Hidden at home,—by the flock, or with the swineherd. 640

Him then bespoke Eupheithes' son, Antinoüs:  
Tell me the truth — when went he, and who with him  
Followed? choice youths of Ithaca, or servants  
From his own house? How could he this accomplish?  
This also truly tell, that I may know it:  
Did he of thy dark ship by force deprive thee,  
Or didst thou lend it, by himself requested?

To him Noëmon, Phronius' son, made answer:  
Willing I lent it: otherwise could any,  
When such a man, with anxious schemes to further, 650  
Requests? 'Twere hard to meet him with refusal.  
The youths, who next to us are best and bravest,  
He took: and I observed embark as captain  
Mentor, or some god, to his form resembled.  
This is the marvel: here beheld I Mentor  
But yesternorn: but then he sailed for Pylos.

He spoke; and to his father's house departed.  
Amazement seized the minds of both his hearers:  
The suitors gathered round, their pastimes leaving.  
Eupheithes' son, Antinoüs, then addrest them 660  
In grief: his dark soul to the brim with anger  
Was full: his eyes with flashing fire were lighted:

Gods! what a deed hath proudly been accomplished!

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

This voyage of the Prince, which we made light of:  
From us, so many, this young child escaping  
Hath launched a ship and comrades brave selected.  
He will to worse things grow; but may the Thunderer  
His power destroy, before he breed us mischief.  
But come, give me a ship and comrades twenty,  
That I may watch him coming, and lay ambush 670  
In the strait between our isle and craggy Samos,  
So will his tour of search have bitter ending.

He spoke: they all applauded and encouraged.  
Then rising up, they sought Odysseus' palace.

Not long Penelope of the plan lacked knowledge,  
Which in their hearts the suitors framed in secret:  
The herald Medon told her, who their converse  
Heard by the hall, while they within were plotting,  
And ran to tell the queen within the palace.  
Him o'er the threshold crossing thus address she: 680

Wherefore, O herald, have the suitors sent thee?  
To tell the handmaids of divine Odysseus  
To stay their works, and serve for them the banquet?  
Would they might never elsewhere woo nor gather,  
But now their last and final meal partake of, —  
Ye, who assembling spend in waste much substance,  
Goods of Telemachus, — nor from your fathers  
Have heard in former days, when ye were children,  
What man among your sires was great Odysseus,  
Who wrought no harm in word or deed to any 690  
Among the people, which as king he might do, —  
Showing his wrath to one, to others favour.

Yet he wronged none, no not the worst and poorest: —  
But all unworthy deeds your haughty spirit

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Exhibits, nor of favours past is mindful.

Her answered Medon, full of wisest counsel:

I would, O queen, this were our worst affliction: —

Another, greater far, and more destructive

The suitors plot: which may Kroneion frustrate.

With the sharp sword Telemachus to murder

700

As he returns: — for he to seek his father

Is gone to Pylos fair, and Lacedæmon.

He spoke: but her knees dropped, and spirit fainted:

Long time her speech was gone: then filled her eyelids

With tears, and choking sobs her utterance hindered.

At length in words replying, she addrest him:

Herald, why went my child? Him ill beseemeth

In swift ships to embark, which are as horses

To men at sea, to cross the spacious waters.

Was it, that ev'n his name from men might perish?

710

Her answered Medon, full of wisest counsel:

I know not, if some god excited, or his own mind

Prompted to go to Pylos for some tidings

Of his sire's return, or by what fate he perished.

He spoke, and through Odysseus' halls departed.

But her possessed heart-rending grief, nor cared she

On seat to sit, though many thronged the mansion:

But on the threshold sank of the wrought chamber,

Bitterly weeping: and her women round her

Wept, young and old, all that were in the palace.

720

To whom Penelope, words with sobbing mingled:

Listen, dear women: for the gods have giv'n me

More sorrows, than mine equals have befallen: —

Who first have lost mine husband, lion-hearted,

In every virtue all the Greeks surpassing,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Renowned in Hellas, and the midst of Argos.  
And now my son beloved the storms have carried  
From home inglorious, nor his flight perceived I:  
Cruel, not even ye from sleep remembered  
Me to awaken, though ye knew it plainly, 730  
When he departed for his hollow vessel.  
For had I known him such a voyage planning,  
He should have stayed, though eager for his journey,  
Or here have left me dead within the palace.  
But let one hasten here the old man Dolius,  
My servant, whom my father gave me hither coming,  
Who keeps my garden rich in trees: that straightway  
He may Laertes seek, and all this tell him,  
That he some counsel in his mind devising  
May to the people-wail, whose fierce intention 740  
Would him destroy, and all Odysseus' offspring.  
Her answered then her loved nurse Eurycleia:  
Dear lady, slay me with the ruthless falchion,  
Or leave me in thine house: I'll not deceive thee:  
All this I knew: and gave him, as he ordered,  
Corn, and sweet wine: but a great oath he swore me,  
Not to inform thee till the twelfth day rose, or  
Thou missedst him, and heardst his journey's rumour,  
Lest thou in weeping thy fair beauty tarnish.  
But bathe thyself, and with clean robes adorn thee, 750  
And to thy chamber mounting with thy maidens,  
Pray to Athena, daughter of the Thunderer,  
That she from death hereafter may preserve him.  
Grieve not the sire, already grieved: I think not  
That by the happy gods Acrisius' offspring  
Is wholly hated: but there shall survive yet

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

One, who the halls may hold, and lands far distant.

She spoke : her cries she lulled, and stanch'd her weeping.  
She bathed herself, and with clean robes adorned her,  
And to her chamber mounted with her maidens, 760  
Cakes duly offered, and besought Athena :

Child of the Thunderer, maid unconquered, hear me.  
If ever in his palace wise Odysseus  
Hath burnt to thee fat thighs of sheep or oxen,  
Think on them now, and save my son from danger :  
And from him keep the suitors, proud and cruel.

She prayed, and wept : her prayer the goddess answered.  
Clamoured the suitors through the shadowy mansion :  
When of the boastful youths one thus address'd them :  
Surely the much-wooed queen one from among us 770  
Prepares to wed, her son's doom nought suspecting.  
Such words one spoke : but all the truth they knew not.  
Then from the midst with words Antinoüs chid them :  
Rash utterers ! shun all words of vaunting folly,  
Lest some should hear, and in your halls report them.  
But come, in silence rising, let us perfect  
The scheme, which firm in all our minds is purposed.

He spoke, and twenty men, their best, selected :  
Who for the beach and their swift ship departed.  
First to the deep sea drew they down their vessel, 780  
In her dark hull the mast and sails bestowing :  
Then in their thongs the oars in order rested,  
Each in its place, and the white sails extended.  
Their weapons next the eager servants brought them :  
Her moored they in the surf, themselves embarking ;  
And made their meal, and for the evening waited.

But wise Penelope, shut within her chamber,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

Lay without food, from meat and drink abstaining,  
Casting, if death her son should safe escape from,  
Or should be crushed beneath the haughty suitors. 790  
As doubts some lion, midst a crowd of hunters  
At bay, who draw their fraudulent ring around him ;  
So pondering, came oblivious sleep upon her ;  
She lay and slept, each joint relaxed in slumber.

Meanwhile new cares employed the grey-eyed goddess :  
A shade she formed, in woman's likeness fashioned,  
The steadfast daughter of the brave Icarius,  
Eumelus' wife, his state in Pheræ holding.  
This sent she to the halls of great Odysseus,  
If the sad queen, yet mourning and bewailing, 800  
She might from cries dissuade, and tearful anguish.  
By the bolt-thong she entered in the chamber,  
Stood o'er her head, and thus in words address her :  
Sleep'st thou, Penelope, by grief distracted ?  
Trust me, the happy gods do not permit thee  
To weep, or grieve : for thou again shalt welcome  
Thy son : he is not by the gods forgotten.

To whom the wise Penelope made answer,  
Yet in the dreamy portals slumbering sweetly :  
Why, sister, hast thou come ? Not oft beforetime 810  
Camest thou, dwelling in a home far distant :  
And now thou bidst me cease my tears, and sorrow  
Abundant, which consume my heart and spirit ;  
Who first have lost mine husband, lion-hearted,  
In every virtue all the Greeks surpassing,  
Renowned in Hellas and the midst of Argos ;  
And now my son in hollow ship hath left me,  
Foolish, unskilled in labour and in commerce :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IV.

For him my grief that greater loss surpasses,  
For him I tremble, lest aught ill befall him 820  
Among the folk he visits, or on ocean.  
For many foes are plotting mischief for him,  
Eager to slay him ere he reach his country.

Her answering, thus address the airy shadow:  
Cheer up, nor let thy thoughts too much distress thee;  
An escort with thy son is gone, whom many  
Have prayed to stand beside them, strong and mighty,  
Pallas Athena, who thy grief compassions,  
And me hath sent to speak thee words of comfort.

Then thus the wise Penelope made answer: 830  
Art thou a goddess, or with gods conversing,  
Tell me of him, that wretched one, some tidings,  
If he yet lives and looks upon the sunshine,  
Or hath already died, and dwells with Hadës.

Her answering, thus address the airy shadow:  
Of him I will not now my speech continue,  
Lives he, or dies: to speak vain words is evil.

It spoke, and by the door-bolt lightly vanished  
Into the breezes. Then arose from slumber  
Icarius' daughter, in her spirit solaced, 840  
So clear a dream in the still night was sent her.  
Meanwhile the suitors sailed the wat'ry pathways,  
Swift death to Telemachus in their counsels bearing.

In the mid-ocean lies a rock-girt island,  
Midway 'twixt Ithaca and craggy Samos,  
The little Asteris, where are ports for mooring.  
There waited him in ambush the Achæans.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

V.

MORN from the nuptial couch of grand Tithonus  
Came forth, to light th' undying Ones, and mortals.  
Flocked to their thrones the gods; and first among them  
High-thundering Zeus, of whom the power is greatest.  
To them Athena spoke Odysseus' sorrows,  
Mindful, — his sojourn with the nymph deploring:

O father Zeus, and other gods immortal,  
Let never sceptre-bearing king henceforward  
Be gentle, bland, and just at heart: but always  
Unmerciful, of wrongful deeds the doer: 10  
Since none is mindful of divine Odysseus  
Of all the folk he ruled, mild as a father.  
But in an isle he lies, fierce sorrow suffering,  
Home of the nymph Calypso, who detains him  
Constrainedly, nor may he reach his country.  
For his are no well-rowing ships, nor comrades,  
Who may convey him o'er the broad-backed ocean.  
And now his son to slay is their intention,  
As he returns: for tidings of his father  
He seeks, at Pylos and at Lacedæmon. 20

Her the cloud-gatherer Zeus address in answer:  
What utterance hath escaped thy lips, my daughter?  
Was it not thou thyself that plann'dst this counsel,  
That them Odysseus should arriving punish?  
And, for Telemachus, guard thou him safely,—  
Thou canst,— that he may scathless reach his country,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

And the suitors, unsped, homeward steer their vessel.

He spoke, and thus address his dear son Hermes :  
Hermes—in all things thou our orders bearest,—  
Tell to the fair-haired nymph our steadfast counsel, 30  
The return of vexed Odysseus ;— that he leave her,  
Not by the help of gods, nor yet of mortals ;  
But on a rope-bound raft, after much suffering,  
He on the twentieth day must fertile Scheria  
Reach, the Phæacians' land, of men most godlike.  
They shall with honours, like a god, adorn him,  
And in a ship to his dear country forward,  
Giving him store of brass, and gold, and vestments  
Plenteous,— far more than e'er from Troy Odysseus  
Had brought, uninjured with his prey arriving. 40  
Thus is his fate his own to see, and welcome  
His high-roofed mansion, and his native country.

He spoke, nor Argeiphontes stayed obedience ;  
But straight beneath his feet bound his fair sandals  
Immortal, golden, which o'er ocean bore him  
And o'er the trackless earth, swift as the breezes.  
His rod he took, with which he charms the eyelids  
Of whom he will, and wakes again from slumber.  
This grasping, flew the mighty Argeiphontes :  
Pieria reached, from air he plunged in ocean, 50  
Then skimmed the wave, to wingëd seagull likened,  
Which in the darksome gulfs, in quest of fishes,  
Wets its thick feathers with the salt sea-water :  
So seeming, Hermes swept the crowding billows.  
But when he neared the isle, at first far distant,  
Then from the dark blue sea on land arriving  
He walked, till a vast cave he reached, where sojourned

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

The fair-haired goddess : her he found within it.  
Blazed on the hearth a fire, and far the odour  
Of fissile cedar and of pine the island 60  
Perfumed. Within, the nymph, with clear voice singing,  
Speeding the loomwork, wove with golden shuttle.  
High waved in air around the cave a forest,  
Alder, and poplar, and the scented cypress.  
There birds of ample wing their eyries builded,  
Both owls and kites and long-tongued daws, by nature  
Marine, whose work is in the ocean waters.  
Round the smooth cavern's mouth its arms extended  
A vine luxuriant hung with goodly clusters ;  
And four trim fountains gushed with limpid water, 70  
Each near the rest its devious way pursuing.  
Rich meads around, with violets rank, and parsley,  
Flourished : a god immortal, there arriving  
Might stand and gaze, and be in heart delighted.  
There stood and gazed the herald Argeiphontes.  
But when he all things in his mind had pondered,  
In the broad cave he entered ; nor at meeting  
Did not Calypso, nymph divinest, know him :  
For not unrecognised are gods immortal  
Each by the other, though far distant dwelling. 80  
But not within found he great-souled Odysseus :  
He on the shore sate weeping, where beforetime  
Wasting his heart with tears and groans and sorrows  
He wept, and gazed across the tossing billows.  
Then asked Calypso, nymph divine, of Hermes,  
As on a couch of beauty rare she placed him :  
Hermes the golden-staved, why hither com'st thou,  
Revered and loved ? Few were thy former visits.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Speak thine intent ; my wish is its performance,  
If I have power, or others, to fulfil it. 90

But first come in, that I may entertain thee.

The goddess spoke, and by him placed a table,  
Ambrosia-laden ; and red nectar mingled.

Thus ate and drank the herald Argeiphontes.

When he had dined, with food his spirit sating,  
Then her in words addressing thus he answered :

Goddess, of me a god thou ask'st the reason

Why I have come ; and I will truly tell thee.

Zeus bid me hither come, myself not willing :

For who unbid would cross the vast salt-water 100

Unbounded, with no city near, where mortals

Do honours to the gods and chosen offerings ?

But the fixed counsel of the mighty Thund'rer

No other god can e'er evade or frustrate.

He saith, that with thee dwells a man most wretched

Of all, who fought around the town of Priam

Nine years, and in the tenth the city sacking

Homeward returned ; but on their way Athena

Angered, who sent ill winds and rolling billows.

Then all the rest, his brave companions, perished, 110

But him the driving wind and waves brought hither ;

Him bids he thee with all speed home to hasten :

Fate wills him not here, far from friends, to perish,

But once again to see his own decrees him,

And greet his high-roofed halls, and native country.

He spoke : divine of nymphs, Calypso trembled,

And him addressing, spoke in winged accents :

Cruel are ye, O gods, of all most jealous,

Who grudge us goddesses to wed with mortals

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Openly, and as loving husbands take them. 120  
Thus rosy-fingered Eös chose Orion,  
Until ye gods who live at ease grew jealous,  
And golden-throned chaste Artemis in Ortygia  
Smote him at length with painless darts, and slew him.  
Thus lovely-tressed Demeter with Iasion,  
Yielding to love, in marriage-rites commingled  
In a deep-furrowed field; nor long unknowing  
Was Zeus, who with white lightning struck, and slew him.  
So now ye envy me my mortal husband.  
Him saved I, to his keel in danger clinging, 130  
Alone; for his swift ship with the white lightning  
Zeus struck, and shattered midst the dark blue waters;  
Then all the rest, his brave companions, perished,  
But him the driving wind and waves brought hither.  
Him loved I well and cherished,—and had purposed  
Undying and for ever young to make him.  
But since the counsel of the mighty Thund'rer  
No other god can e'er evade or frustrate,  
Away with him, if Zeus demand and bid it,  
O'er the vast sea: but I shall no way send him; 140  
Mine are no ships with oars, nor gallant sailors  
Who may escort him o'er the broad-backed ocean.  
But I will gladly prompt, nor hide my counsel,  
How he may reach his country's shore in safety.  
Her then address the herald Argeiphontes:  
Dismiss him thus, the wrath of Zeus avoiding;  
Lest he enraged hereafter treat thee harshly.  
This said, departed mighty Argeiphontes.  
But she, the nymph divine, to great Odysseus  
Went, when she heard the heav'n-delivered message. 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Him found she sitting on the shore : nor ever  
Were his eyes dry from tears, his sweet life wasting  
In weeping for his home, in her no longer  
Delighting. By constraint at night he slumbered  
In the smooth caverns, loath, beside her willing ;  
But on the rocks and sands by day reclining,  
With tears and groans and wails rending his spirit,  
Over the barren ocean, weeping, gazed he.

Then, standing near, the nymph divine addrest him :  
Wretched one, weep no more, nor let thy lifetime 160  
Be shortened ; at length dismiss I thee in earnest.  
But come, long timbers cutting, hew and fit thee  
A spacious raft, and fix thee planks upon it  
Above, that o'er the dark sea it may bear thee.  
Then I within it bread will stow, and water  
And wine, to hold thy strength and ward off hunger,  
And garments give, and a fair breeze behind thee,  
That thou unhurt mayst reach thy native country,  
If the gods will, the spacious heav'n possessing,  
Who us surpass both in device and judgment. 170  
She spoke ; but the much-tried Odysseus shuddered,  
And her addressing, spoke in wing'd accents :

Some other thing thou plann'st than my safe voyage,  
O nymph, that bidst me on a raft cross over  
The ocean, dread and vast ; which not ev'n vessels  
Can pass, though swift and trim, with winds propitious.  
Despite thy words, no raft will I embark on,  
Unless thou, goddess, a great oath wilt swear me,  
That thou wilt plot against me no fresh evil.

He spoke : the nymph divine, Calypso, smiling, 180  
Soothed with her hand, and by his name addrest him :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Thou art a knave, in slander not untutored  
So harsh a speech thy caution bids thee utter.  
Witness thou, earth, and spacious heav'n above us,  
And deep-down wave of Styx, which oath the greatest  
Is, and most fearful to the gods immortal,  
That no new evil I will plot against thee,  
But such things think and tell thee, which, should ever  
Like need befall, I for myself would counsel.  
For my intent is just, nor is my spirit 190  
Of iron in my breast, but full of pity.

Thus spoke, and led the way the heavenly goddess  
Quick moving; he her steps immortal followed.  
The goddess and the man the smooth cave entered,  
Where he upon the sea whence rose up Hermes  
Sat down, and by him placed the nymph all viands,  
Both meat and drink, which mortal men partake of.  
Herself sat o'er against divine Odysseus,  
By maidens with ambrosia served and nectar.  
Thus fell they eager to the ready banquet. 200  
But when with meat and drink desire was solaced,  
Calypso, nymph divine, began the converse:

Heaven-born Laertes' son, much-versed Odysseus,  
Thus homeward to thy native land beloved  
Wilt thou at once depart? Farewell, and prosper:  
But if thou knew'st within, how many sorrows  
Fate hath ordained thee ere thou reach thy country,  
Here wouldst thou stay, with me this home possessing,  
And be immortal, much as thou desirest  
Thy spouse to see, for whom thou longest ever. 210  
Surely than her thou wilt not worse pronounce me  
In beauty, or race: nor can it be that mortals

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Should with immortals match in form and beauty.

Her answering, spake the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Goddess divine, forgive me this : well know I  
How far the wise Penelope in all things  
Falls short of thee, in beauty, and in presence ;  
Being mortal, — thou immortal and unfading.  
But notwithstanding, all my days desire I  
Home to return, and mine own land to visit. 220

If on the dark blue sea some god should wreck me,  
With firm heart in my breast I will endure it :  
Much have I borne ere now, and much have laboured,  
With waves and wars ; let this the past resemble.

He said : then set the sun, and darkness followed.  
They two, the cavern's deep recesses entering,  
Dallied in love, reposed beside each other.

When gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Straightway his cloak and tunic donned Odysseus :  
The nymph her silver-woven robe cast on her, 230  
Graceful and light, and round her waist a girdle,  
Fair, golden ; on her head a veil she fastened,  
And then devised the way for great Odysseus.  
First, fitted to his hand, an axe she gave him  
Of brass, with double edge, and in it fastened  
A well wrought haft of olive, closely fitting ;  
Then a chip-axe, well polished. Next she led him  
To the island's verge, where tall trees once were growing,  
Alder and poplar, and the pine sky-reaching,  
Now dead and dry, which might more buoyant bear him. 240  
When she had shown him where tall trees were standing,  
Then home returned Calypso, nymph divinest.  
But he felled timber, and the work went swiftly.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Twenty he threw in all, and lopped their branches,  
And featly smoothed, and by the straight rule levelled.  
Then augers brought Calypso, nymph divinest :  
With which he bored them, fitting each to other ;  
And with long nails and cramps his raft he fastened.  
Large as a workman joins the spacious bottom  
Of some broad merchantman, a well-skilled shipwright ; 250  
So broad his raft constructed wise Odysseus.  
With planks for flooring, on thick girders fitted,  
He fashioned it, and with long bulwarks finished.  
A mast he made, and sailyard to it suited,  
And formed a rudder also for her guidance ;  
And fenced her round about with mats of osier,  
To break the waves,— and framed thick woodwork o'er them.  
Then brought him linen the fair nymph Calypso,  
To make him sails, which also well he fashioned,  
Yard-ropes, and rigging-ropes, and sheet-ropes, binding : 260  
Then levered her on rollers to the ocean.  
The fourth day rose, and all his work was finished.  
On the fifth, Calypso, nymph divine, dismissed him,  
Fresh bathed, and newly clothed in fragrant garments.  
One skin of purple wine on board provided  
The goddess,— one of water, vast ; provisions  
Stowed in a sack, wherein was store of nurture :  
And sent behind a breeze, harmless and gentle.  
Glad to the wind his sail outspread Odysseus,  
And featly steered her, at the rudder sitting ; 270  
Nor e'er did slumber fall upon his eyelids,  
Still on the Pleiads gazing, and Boötes,  
Late-setting,— and the Bear, the Wain by others  
Surnamed, which makes its round, Orion watching,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

And, sole of stars, ne'er dips in Ocean's waters :  
For it Calypso, nymph divine, enjoined him  
To keep in sailing to the left hand ever.

For seventeen days he sailed across the ocean ;  
And on the eighteenth saw the shadowy mountains  
Of the Phæacians' land, that toward him trended, 280  
Rise like a shield upon the misty ocean.

Him Enosichthon, from the Ethiops coming,  
Saw from the Solyman hills afar, and marked him  
O'er ocean sailing. In his heart grew anger ;  
He shook his head, and with his spirit communed :  
O heaven ! the gods have lightly changed their counsel  
Touching Odysseus, while I absent tarried.  
For the Phæacians' land he nears, where fate is  
He shall o'erpass the mass of woe that waits him.  
But still mine arm shall work him store of sorrow. 290

He said, and gathered clouds, and stirred the ocean,  
Grasping his trident, and the blasts excited  
Of all the winds ; and with dark vapours covered  
Both land and sea ; from heaven black night descended ;  
Eurus and Notus blew, fierce-driving Zephyr,  
And Boreas, born of frost, huge billows rolling.

Then sunk Odysseus' knees, and failed his spirit ;  
And in dismay thus with his heart conversed he :

Wretch that I am, what death shall now befall me ?  
I fear that all the goddess spoke shall happen, 300  
Who said, on sea, before I reached my country,  
Woes I should suffer ; and now all shall be so :  
With clouds so dark is Zeus the heaven surrounding,  
And ocean troubling ; and the blasts grow fiercer  
Of all the winds : now is destruction certain.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Thrice blest and more the Danaans, who then perished  
In the broad Troy, for favour of the Atridæ!  
Would that I there had died, and fate had suffered,  
In that day, when in thickest ranks the Trojans  
Hurled spears against me round the dead Peleion : \* 310  
Then were I buried, and my fame the Achæans  
Had spread : but now inglorious death awaits me.

Thus speaking, from above a huge wave struck him  
With fearful crash, his raft in eddies whirling.  
Far from the raft he fell, the tiller casting  
Forth from his hands ; short snapped his mast, by violence  
Of fierce commingling winds in tempest straining.  
Far in the ocean fell both sail and sailyard.  
Himself the wave held long submerged : nor could he  
His head lift up from the great billow's dashing, 320  
Weighed downward by Calypso's gift, his garments.  
At length he rose, and from his mouth rejected  
The brine, which down his head abundant trickled ;  
Yet not even thus distressed, his raft forgot he :  
But following through the waves, he grasped it firmly :—  
In the midst he sate, destructive fate escaping.  
Her the great billows hither drove and thither :  
As when autumnal Boreas o'er the champain  
Drives the light thorns, which scud in clinging clusters ;  
So o'er the sea she hither drove and thither. 330  
Now Notus tossed her for a sport to Boreas,  
Now Eurys yielded up the chase to Zephyr.

Him beheld Cadmus' child, fair-ankled Ino,  
Leucothea, who once was vocal maiden,

\* Achilles, son of Peleus.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

But now in ocean's depths divinely honoured.  
She pitied him, thus wandering in his sorrows :  
And from the deep emerged, to sea-gull likened,  
Sat on the knotted raft, and spoke her counsel :

Wretched one ! wherefore is the dread Poseidon  
Thus wroth with thee, and works thee endless mischief? 340  
He shall not kill thee, though he much desire it.  
This do :—thou seemest nought to lack in prudence :—  
Strip off these clothes : leave to the winds thy vessel  
To drift : and with thine hands by swimming make for  
Phæacia, where thy fate escape permits thee.  
And this belt also bind beneath thy bosom,  
Immortal : fear not suffering nor destruction.  
But when the dry land with thine hands thou touchest,  
Taking it off, into the dark sea cast it  
Far from the shore, thyself thy sight averting. 350

Thus as she spoke, the belt the goddess gave him,  
And back dived downward in the billowy waters,  
In sea-gull's form : the black wave closed behind her.

Then pondered long divine much-tried Odysseus,  
And, in dismay, thus with his heart conversed he :

Wretch that I am ! I fear lest some Immortal  
Plot guile for me, to leave my raft advising :  
But this I will not ; by mine eyes, far distant  
Appeared the land, where I to fly was counselled.  
This will I do, which seems to me the wisest : 360  
Long as hold firm these timbers by their lashings,  
Will I remain, and here the worst will suffer.  
But when the blast shall rend my raft asunder,  
Then will I swim :—no better counsel have I.  
While thus in spirit and in heart he pondered,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

A vast wave sent the earthshaker Poseidon,  
Dire, ruthless, right above, and smote him headlong.  
As a brisk breeze a heap of chaff disperses,  
The dry husks wafting here and there at pleasure,—  
Thus her long spars it scattered: but Odysseus 370  
One spar bestrode, as on his steed a horseman,  
And doffed his clothes, gift of divine Calypso.  
Straightway the belt he bound beneath his bosom:  
Prone on the sea he fell, his hands outstretching,  
Intent to swim. Him saw king Enosichthon,  
And shook his head, with his own heart conversing:  
Thus o'er the ocean drift, much woe enduring,  
Until thou mingle with heaven-nourished mortals:  
But not even thus thy crimes shall bring thee profit.  
He said, and lashed his silky-coated horses, 380  
And came to Ægæ, to his gorgeous palace.  
Then other cares employed divine Athena:  
Of all the winds beside she bound the pathways,  
Commanding all to stop, and rest in slumber;  
But the swift Boreas roused to drive the billows,  
Till the divine Odysseus, death escaping,  
With the Phæacian sea-farers should mingle.  
Two nights and days upon the vasty billows  
He floated; oft his heart foresaw destruction. 389  
But when the bright-haired morn brought in the third day,  
Then ceased at length the wind, and calm and breezeless  
The air became; and land now saw he near him,  
Eagerly looking, on a huge wave lifted.  
As when to sons a father's life is granted,  
Balm to their hearts,— who lay in painful sickness,  
Long wasting, with some adverse Power afflicting,—



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Whom, watched and loved, the gods from pain deliver ;  
So hailed the sight of shore and woods Odysseus,  
And eager swam, the land to tread desiring.  
When now he reached within the hail of voices, 400  
Hoarse on the cliffs he heard the billows dashing ;  
For up the rocks abrupt the great waves blustered  
Furiously cast ; and all with spray was shrouded.  
No harbours were there, rest for ships, nor calm bays,  
But beetling headlands, rocks, and cliffs continuous.  
Then sunk Odysseus' knees, and failed his spirit ;  
And in dismay thus with his heart he communed :  
    Alas ! when Zeus hath given me land unhopèd for  
To see, and all this gulf is passed in safety,  
No landing from the hoary sea behold I : 410  
Sharp rocks defend the shore, round which the breakers  
Dash roaring, and sheer spring the smooth cliffs upward :  
The sea is deep in-shore, nor can a resting  
Be gained with both my feet, to scape from danger :  
Lest while I land, against the stony cliff-side  
A great wave dash me, and my death th' attempt be.  
But if I further swim, bent to discover  
Some surfy beach, or harbour from the ocean,  
I fear, lest once again the tempest take me,  
And bear me groaning o'er the fishy waters ; 420  
Or from the sea the god some ocean-monster  
Send, such as Amphitritë feeds abundant :  
For well I know the dread Earthshaker's anger.  
Thus as he pondered in his mind and spirit,  
Straight on the rocky coast a huge wave bore him.  
Then had his skin been torn, and limbs all broken,  
Had not the grey-eyed goddess prompted counsel :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

With both hands rushing on a sharp rock seized he,  
And, groaning, held it, till the wave should pass him.  
Thus shunned he it ; but the same, backward rushing, 430  
Struck him with force, and cast him far in ocean.

As when a polypus from its moist chamber  
Is drawn, upon its feet hang frequent pebbles ;  
Thus from his hardy hands, the sharp rock grasping,  
Skin-strips were torn ; and him the great wave covered.  
Then wretched, past his fate, had died Odysseus,  
Had not grey-eyed Athena given him wisdom ;—  
Emerging,— where the waves to shoreward tumble,  
He swam along, eying the land, to find out  
Some surfy beach, or harbour from the ocean. 440

But when to a fair river's mouth in swimming  
He came, where seemed to him the safest landing,—  
All smooth of rocks, and from the winds defended,—  
The fresh stream feeling, thus in spirit prayed he :

Hear, King, whoe'er thou art ; much wished, I reach thee  
From ocean, great Poseidon's wrath escaping.  
Pitied is he, even by gods immortal,  
Whoe'er of men a wanderer comes, as I now  
Come to thy stream, and clasp thy knees, much wearied.  
Pity me, King ; thy suppliant I profess me. 450

He spake ; the god his current stopped, the billows  
Appeased, before him made a calm, and brought him  
Safe to the river's mouth. Both knees he bended,  
And his two arms ; his strength was spent in swimming.  
Swelled was his whole skin, and from mouth and nostrils  
Ran the salt water ; reft of breath, and speechless,  
Fainting he lay ; for length of toil subdued him.  
When once again he breathed, and sense recovered,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

Loosed he the girdle which the goddess gave him,  
And in the river, seaward flowing, cast it. 460  
Seaward the eddies bore it; quickly Ino  
Clasped it with friendly hand. Then from the river  
Creeping among the reeds, the bland earth kissed he;  
And in dismay thus with his heart he communed:  
Alas, what waits me now? Where end my sufferings?  
If this sad night I spend here by the river,  
Will not the bitter frost and dew together,  
Faint as I am, my life's small remnant conquer?  
For at the dawn there breathe cold blasts from rivers.  
But if the hill I seek, and shady forest, 470  
And on the thick leaves sleep,— if cold and weary  
I gain some respite and sweet sleep come o'er me,  
I fear lest I become for beasts a portion.  
He spoke, but thinking deemed this best and wisest:  
So sought the wood, where near the stream he found it  
Clothing a hill: two bushes crept he under,  
Which grew together; lentisk one, one olive.  
Them neither pierced the blast of winds damp-blowing,  
Nor sun struck through them with his bright rays glitter-  
ing,  
Nor rain made way between; so thick the branches 480  
Twined with each other:— beneath which Odysseus  
Crept, with his willing hands a bed preparing,  
Ample; for lay of leaves a heap abundant,  
Enough, two men, or three to serve for shelter  
In winter time, even when the cold is sharpest.  
Which seen, rejoiced divine much-tried Odysseus;  
In the midst he lay, thick leaves above him heaping.  
As when one hides a torch in blackened embers

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, V.

At some farm's limit, where dwell none for neighbours,  
Saving the spark, lest far he have to fetch it:—  
Thus in the leaves Odysseus hid : Athena  
Poured slumber on his eyes, soonest to ease him 490  
From cruel toil, — his willing eyelids closing.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

VI.

THUS slumbered there divine much-tried Odysseus  
Buried in sleep and toil. Meanwhile Athena  
Repaired to the Phæacians' town and people :  
Who foretime dwelt in broad-plained Hypereia  
Near to the Cyclops, men of pride and plunder,  
Who ravaged them, and proved in might their stronger.  
Then led them forth Nausithoüs the godlike,  
And settled them in Scheria, far from all men :  
Walls round their city built, and houses founded  
And temples for the gods ; and lands divided. 10  
But he by fate subdued had sunk to Hadës :  
And now Alcinoüs reigned, from heaven taught wisdom.  
Whose palace then the grey-eyed goddess seeking,  
The safe return contrived of great Odysseus.  
To the wrought chamber went she, where the damsel  
Slept, like in form and beauty to th' Immortals,  
Nausicaä, the great Alcinoüs' daughter :  
With her two maids, in beauty like the Graces,  
One at each doorpost, — the closed doors between them.  
She, like a breeze the damsel's bed approaching, 20  
Stood o'er her head, and thus in words address her,  
Like to the daughter of the shipman Dymas,  
Her childhood's friend, in whom her soul delighted :  
To whom resembled, spoke the grey-eyed goddess :  
Nausicaä, void of thought thy mother bore thee.  
Uncared for lie thy garments, fair and wondrous,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

And yet thy wedding near, when thou must wear them  
Spotless, and find for those who grace thy nuptials :  
For thus alone will good report adorn thee  
Of men, and thou thy parents' hearts wilt gladden. 30  
But let us go at dawn of day and wash them ;  
And I will follow with thee, that thou quicker  
Despatch : — not long shalt thou remain a virgin :  
Already woo thee youths, the best reputed  
Of the Phæacians, whence thyself thou springest.  
But come, incite thy father, with the morrow  
Mules and a car to yoke, which may thy girdles  
Convey, and robes, and shawls of texture glossy ;  
And for thyself 'twere nobler, than to journey  
On foot ; the washings from the town are distant. 40

Thus having said, the grey-eyed goddess vanished  
To Olympus, where they say the gods dwell ever  
In safety : never wind disturbs, nor wets it  
Shower, nor floats near the snow : but cloudless æther  
Invests the top, and white light plays around it.  
There dwell the blessed gods in joy for ever.  
Thither Glaucopis flew, the damsel counselled.

The bright-throned morning came, and roused from slum-  
ber  
Gay-robed Nausicaä : she her dream remembered,  
And sought the house to tell it to her parents, 50  
Her father dear and mother : within she found them :  
The one upon the hearth beside her maidens  
The sea-blue distaff turned : the other met she  
Forth from the doors to join the princes going  
To council, where the chief Phæacians waited :  
Then standing near, her father dear address she :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

Dearest papa \*, wilt thou for me a chariot  
Prepare, high and well hung, that I my garments  
May in the river cleanse, which lie neglected ?  
Thyself behoves it, with the princes sitting 60  
To judge, with vestments clear thy state enrobing.  
And five dear sons are in thy palace dwelling,—  
Two wedded are, and three in youth still flourish :  
Who ever wish, clad in new-washen garments,  
To join the dance ; and mine is all the labour.

Thus spoke she, fearing to her sire her nuptials  
To name : but he guessed all, and thus made answer :  
Neither the mules, child, nor aught else I grudge thee :  
Go, and the servants shall a car make ready  
High and well hung, with carrying platform fitted. 70

He spoke, and bid his slaves, who straight obeyed him :  
And yoked without for mules a fair-wheeled carriage,  
And brought the mules, and to the car they joined them.  
A glittering vestment from her chamber brought she,  
And in the polished chariot duly laid it :  
Then in a chest her mother placed provisions  
Various, and added meats, and wine inserted  
In leathern skin (the car the damsel mounted) :  
And gave in golden cruse sweet oil of olive,  
If with her damsels she should fain anoint her. 80  
Then the whip took she, and the reins bedizened :  
And lashed them on : loud neighed the mules at starting.  
In running matched, they with her garments drew her,  
But not alone ; for with her went her maidens.

When now they reached the river's beauteous current,

\* The word is Homer's, not mine. — Ed.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

There were old bays for washing, and much water  
O'er them ran clear, to cleanse deep stains sufficient.  
Then first the mules they loosened from the chariot,  
And turned them by the river's brink to wander  
Eating the sweet sedge-grass : then from the chariot 90  
Handed the clothes, and in the dark stream plunged them :  
And trode them quickly, with each other vying.  
When they had washed them, every stain removing,  
In rows they stretched them by the shore, where chiefly  
The sea-surf breaking landward washed the pebbles.  
Then they, first bathing, and with oil anointing,  
Their meal partook upon the river's margin,  
Waiting, till in the sunbeam dried the garments.  
But when with food themselves and maids were sated,  
They played at ball, aside their fillets laying, 100  
While led Nausicaä's voice a tuneful measure.  
As Artemis among the hills, chase-loving,  
Tajgetus' long ridge, or Erymanthus,  
Disports herself, boars and swift stags pursuing ;  
And with her, nymphs, daughters of Zeus the Thunderer,  
Sport in the field, and Leto's heart rejoices ;  
Far above all her head and brow she carries,  
And easily is known, though all are lovely :  
So midst her fair attendants shone the virgin.  
But when she now was homeward back returning, 110  
The mules were yoked, and the fair garments folded,—  
Then other cares employed grey-eyed Athena :  
That Odysseus might awake, and see the maiden,  
Who might to the Phæacian town conduct him.  
A ball the queen threw, aiming at a maiden ;  
The maid it missed, and plunged in the deep current.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

Loud screamed they all ; divine Odysseus wakened,  
And, sitting up, thus questioned with his spirit :  
Ah me ! what mortal men this land inhabit ?  
Lawless are they and wild, knowing no justice, 120  
Or loving strangers, and the gods revering ?  
For round me came the shout of female voices,  
Nymphs, who possess the lofty heads of mountains,  
And founts of rivers, and grass-teeming meadows.  
Or am I near the haunts of speaking mortals ?  
Come, I will try myself, that I may know it.

Thus speaking, from the wood came great Odysseus,  
But from a tree a leafy branch first gathered,  
The parts where shame abides from sight to cover.  
As mountain lion in his strength confiding, 130  
Stalks forth from rain and tempest fresh : his eyeballs  
Flash fire ; in search he goes of sheep, or oxen,  
Or pastured hinds, as appetite invites him,  
On the well-guarded sheepfold too, designing :  
Thus went Odysseus, with the fair-tressed damsels  
To mix, though naked : for stern want compelled him.  
Savage he seemed to them, with salt all covered :  
They fled dispersed along the sands far distant :  
Only Alcinoüs' daughter stayed : Athena  
Put courage in her breast, and terror banished. 140  
Steadfast she stood ; and pondering stayed Odysseus,  
Suppliant to clasp the knees of the fair damsel,  
Or at a distance thus, in soothing accents  
Pray her the town to show, and give him clothing.  
But thinking thus, it seemed the best and wisest  
At distance thus to pray in soothing accents ;  
Lest if he clasped her knees, the nymph resent it.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

Thus gently then and blandly he address her :

Queen, I adore thee : art thou god, or mortal ?  
If of the gods thou art, who heav'n inhabit, 150  
To Artemis, daughter of Zeus all-powerful  
Thy look, thy size, thy gait, I mostly liken :  
But if of mortals one, on earth abiding,  
Thrice blest thy father, and thy reverend mother,  
Thrice blest thy brothers ; all their spirits surely  
Ever with joy on thine account are lightened  
Seeing so fair a branch the dance adorning.  
But bless'd is that youth beyond all others,  
Who with gifts laden to his home shall bring thee :  
For never have mine eyes such beauty witnessed 160  
In man or woman ; while I gaze, I wonder.  
In Delos once, beside Apollo's altar,  
Such branch of verdant palm beheld I growing ;  
For thither too I came, by many followed,  
The way which should afflictions grievous bring me :  
Thus seeing it my spirit was astounded  
Long time : for ne'er from earth upsprung such scion  
Thus I admire thee, lady, awe-struck : fearing  
To clasp thy knees : — for mine is bitter sorrow.  
But yesterday the dark blue sea escaped I : 170  
Days twenty have the waves and tempests borne me  
From the isle Ogygia : now fate casts me hither,  
Here too new woes to suffer : for I think not  
They yet will cease ere much the gods accomplish.  
But, queen, show pity : after all my labours  
Thee first I see : for of mankind none other  
Have I beheld, who hold this land and city.  
Show me the town, and linen give to clothe me,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

If garment thou hadst with thee, hither coming.  
May the gods give thee all thine heart desireth, 180  
Husband and home, and sweet accord within it :  
For nothing better is, nor richer treasure,  
Than when together dwell in sweet accordance  
Husband and spouse : then rue the foes that hate them,  
Then friends rejoice, and wide their honour reaches.

Then thus white-armed Nausicaä made answer :  
Stranger,— since fool nor coward thou appearest,—  
Olympian Zeus to men allotteth fortune,  
To bad and good, as he sees fit for each man ;  
He hath these woes ordained, and thou must bear them. 190  
But now, since thou hast reached our land and city,  
Nor clothing, nor aught else shall be refused thee,  
Which suppliant befits, needy and outcast.  
The town I'll show, and name to thee the people.  
Phæacian men possess this land and city ;  
And I of great Alcinoüs am the daughter,  
Who of Phæacia holds the sway and sceptre.

She spoke, and to her fair-tressed damsels shouted :  
Stay, maidens ; whither flee ye, this man seeing ?  
Think ye him one to hostile race belonging ? 200  
There is no living man, nor ever can be,  
Who to the land of us Phæacians cometh  
With hostile aim : dear are we to the Immortals,  
And dwell apart amidst the tossing ocean,  
Extreme, nor with us mix the rest of mortals.  
But this man, hither come, is some poor wanderer,  
Whom we must cherish ; for from Zeus come all such,  
Strangers and needy ; small are gifts and precious.  
Give meat and drink, my maidens, to the stranger,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

And in some calm nook of the river bathe him. 210

She spoke : they stood, and each the other summoned,  
And set Odysseus in a nook, as ordered

Nausicaä, daughter of the great Alcinöus :

And by him garments placed, a cloak and tunic :

And brought in golden cruse smooth oil of olive ;

And bid him wash in the clear river's current.

Then spoke divine Odysseus to the maidens :

Stand at a distance, maidens, while unaided

I from my shoulders wash the salt, anointing

With oil ; for long my skin such care hath wanted. 220

But before you I will not wash ; it shames me

Naked to stand among fair-tressèd damsels.

He spoke : they stood aloof, the princess warning.

Then in the river purged divine Odysseus

The salt which clothed his back and spacious shoulders,

And from his head wiped off the crust of ocean.

When now he all had washed, and had anointed,

He donned the clothes, gift of the spotless virgin.

Him made Athena daughter of the Thunderer,

Higher to see, and broader, — and smooth tresses 230

Bestowed, like hyacinthine blooms in colour.

As when some workman skilled plates gold on silver,

Who by Hephæstus taught and by Athena,

In various arts fair workmanship produces, —

So on his head and shoulders poured she beauty.

Then sate he on the shore, apart withdrawing,

Beaming with manly grace : the virgin marked him,

And thus anon bespoke her fair-tressed maidens :

Listen, ye white-armed maidens, what I utter :

Not without all the gods, who hold Olympus, 240

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

Hath this man reached divine Phæacia's island.  
Beforetime seemed he to me all uncomely,  
But now the gods who dwell in heaven resembleth.  
Would that such person might be called my husband,  
Here dwelling,— and to dwell here still might please him.  
But, maidens, meat and drink afford the stranger.  
She spoke: they heard her and obeyed her promptly;  
And meat and drink set forth beside Odysseus.  
Then ate and drank divine much-tried Odysseus  
Eagerly, for 'twas long since food he tasted. 250

Meanwhile new schemes employed the white-armed princess:  
Folding the robes, on the fair car she placed them,  
And yoked the strong-hoofed mules, herself ascending,  
And called Odysseus, and in words address him:  
Come, stranger, seek the town, that I may guide thee  
To my wise father's halls, where I thee promise  
Thou shalt behold the best of the Phæacians.  
But do thou thus;— thou seem'st not to lack wisdom;  
While we the fields and rustics' labours traverse,  
Among my maids, behind the mules and chariot 260  
Follow thou quickly: I will lead the journey.  
But when we reach the town, round which high bastions  
Are built, and on each side a goodly haven  
With narrow entrance; balanced ships the harbour  
Defend, each by its shed in safety sheltered:—  
There stands the forum, round Poseidon's precinct,  
Fitted with stones shaped smoothly from the quarry:  
There of dark vessels they prepare the tackle,  
Cables and sails,— and oars to roundness polish:  
For bow nor quiver the Phæacians care for, 270  
But masts and oars of ships, and well-trimmed vessels;

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

In which rejoicing, the grey sea they traverse.  
Whose ill report I shun, lest any after  
Mock me ; — for high in spirit are the people : —  
And thus some say, my foe, surmising wrongly :  
Who here Nausicaä follows, tall and comely ?  
Where found she him ? no doubt she brings an husband.  
Sure she hath fetched some wanderer from his vessel,  
Of far-off race ; for near us dwell no neighbours :  
Or, at her prayer, some god in her delighting 290  
From heaven hath come, and all her days shall have her.  
Better, had she by seeking found an husband  
Elsewhere : for thus her people's youths she injures,  
Who, many and noble, in Phæacia woo her.  
Thus will they say, and thus reproach will taint me.  
Yea, and such deeds blame I in other maiden,  
Who, by her loving parents unpermitted,  
Consorts with men, before her public marriage.  
But, stranger, my advice receive, that quickly  
Thou from my sire mayst gain an escort homeward. 290  
Mark near the road Athena's grove of poplars,  
A fountain in the midst, and fair mead round it :  
There is my father's plat, and bounteous vineyard,  
Just within hail of voices from the city.  
There sit and wait awhile, till we the city  
Shall have attained, and reached my father's palace.  
But when our way accomplished thou shalt reckon,  
Then the Phæacian city seek, and ask for  
The palace of my sire, the great Alcinoüs :  
Easily known it is : a child may tell thee. 300  
For not in form the same are built the houses  
Of the Phæacians, as my sire's high palace.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VI.

But when the house and outer court admit thee,  
Traverse with speed the hall, that thou my mother  
Mayst find : she sits upon the hearth by firelight,  
Turning the sea-blue distaff, sight of wonder,  
Beside a column, with her maids behind her.  
Hard by the same my father's throne is stationed,  
On which he godlike sits amidst his wine-cups.  
Him passing by, my mother's knees embrace thou 310  
Suppliant, that thou the day of thy returning  
Mayst see, however far thy home be distant.  
Should she at heart to thee be kindly minded,  
Then mayst thou hope thy friends to see, and visit  
Thy well-built house, and thine own native country.

Thus speaking, with the jewelled whip she started  
The mules, who swiftly left the river's current.  
Well ambled they, their hoofs in concert beating,  
And so she drove, that they on foot might follow,  
Odysseus and her maids, — the whip well tempering. 320  
Now set the sun, and they the grove arrived at  
Of great Athena, where Odysseus halted.  
Straightway the daughter of high Zeus besought he :  
Hear me, thou child of thundering Zeus, unconquered,  
Now grant my prayer, as ne'er before thou grantedst,  
In my distress, wherewith the Earth-god vexed me : —  
May these Phæacians love and pity show me.

He spoke in prayer, and him heard great Athena ;  
But showed him not herself, for yet she revered  
Her father's brother ; who relentless raged at 330  
Godlike Odysseus, till he reached his country.



VII.

WHILE thus besought divine much-trying Odysseus,  
 Far as the town the mules the damsel carried.  
 When now she reached her father's splendid palace,  
 She stayed them in the porch; around, her brothers  
 Thronged, tall and godlike, who from off the chariot  
 Loosened the mules, and took within the garments.  
 She to her chamber went; the bright fire kindled  
 Eurymedusa, Apeiræan matron,  
 Whom from Apeira brought the balanced vessels:  
 Her for Alcinoüs they reserved, the ruler 10  
 Of all Phæacia, whom as god they honoured.  
 She nursed white-armed Nausicaä in the palace;  
 And kindled now her fire, within the meal preparing.  
 Then made Odysseus for the town; Athena  
 Round him a thick mist shed, his project favouring;  
 Lest of the proud Phæacians any meeting  
 Should gibe with words, and vex with searching questions.  
 But when the beauteous city he was entering,  
 Then met his steps Athena, grey-eyed goddess,  
 In form a virgin young, a pitcher holding; 20  
 By him she stood, and he with words addrest her:  
 My child, wilt thou the hero's palace show me,  
 Alcinoüs, who among this people ruleth?  
 For I have hither come, a suffering stranger,  
 From foreign land far off: wherefore I know not  
 Any of men who hold the land and city.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Him answered then Athena, grey-eyed goddess :  
Stranger revered, the palace, which thou askest,  
I'll show thee : near my father dwells the monarch.  
But come in silence, I the way will lead thee : 30  
Look not on any, nor with words address them :  
For men endure not here the sight of strangers,  
Nor those salute, who come from lands far distant.  
Putting their trust in vessels swiftly sailing,  
The gulfs they cross, as Enosichthon grants them :  
Swift as a wing, or as a thought, their vessels.

Thus speaking, led the way Pallas Athena  
Promptly : and he the goddess' footsteps followed.  
But him the ship-renowned Phæacians saw not  
Townward among them passing : for Athena, 40  
Dread goddess, suffered not ; around him shedding  
A mist divine,—at heart his purpose speeding.  
Then gazed Odysseus at the ships and harbours,  
The forums of the heroic race, and ramparts,  
Lofty, on crags upreared, of aspect wondrous :  
But when they reached the king's resplendent palace,  
Began discourse Athena, grey-eyed goddess :

This, father stranger, is the house thou badest  
Me show to thee. Thou find'st the heav'n-fed princes  
Feasting a feast : but enter thou in spirit 50  
Nought dreading : the bold man in all things better  
Prosper, though strange he be, from distant country.  
First thou shalt find the mistress in the palace,  
Aretë is she called by name :—her parents  
The same, who gave the king Alcinoüs being.  
Nausithoüs first, Poseidon Enosichthon  
Begot of Peribœa, flower of women,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

The latest born of great Eurymedon's daughters;  
Who ruled aforetime all the haughty giants,  
But lost his impious tribe, and life together. 60  
With her Poseidon mingling, was the father  
Of great Nausithoüs, the Phæacian ruler :  
Who had for sons Rexenor and Alcinoüs.  
The first, in prime, struck silver-bowed Apollo,  
A bridegroom in his hall, one daughter leaving,  
Aretë, whom espoused the great Alcinoüs,  
And honours, as none else on earth is honoured  
Of wives, who rule the house beneath their husbands.  
Thus is she honoured, and esteemed among them,  
By her dear children, and the king Alcinoüs, 70  
And people, who revere her like a goddess,  
And greet with welcome when their town she enters.  
For neither is she void of timely wisdom  
Her friends to guide, and end disputes by counsel.  
Should she in heart thy suit regard with favour,  
Then thou hast hope thy friends to see, and visit  
Thy high-roofed mansion, and thy native country.  
Thus speaking, fled Athena, grey-eyed goddess,  
O'er the bleak sea, and left the lovely Scheria :  
To Marathon she came, and broad-wayed Athens, 80  
Entering Erechtheus' halls. Meanwhile Odysseus  
Made for Alcinoüs' towers. Oft throbb'd with wonder  
His heart, before he reached the brazen threshold :  
For as the sun or moon in all their glory,  
So shone the high-roofed palace of Alcinoüs.  
Brazen the walls, on each side far extended,  
From door to door ; and of bright steel the coping.  
The inner chamber golden doors defended,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

With silver doorposts, fixed in brazen thresholds ;  
Silver the lintels ; of pure gold the latches. 90  
On either side sat dogs of gold and silver,  
Whom wise Hephæstus by his skill created,  
To guard the palace of the great Alcinoüs,  
Of living metal, scathless and immortal.  
In the great hall along the walls were benches,  
From door to door throughout : and on them cushions  
Lay, finely wrought with patterns, work of women.  
There sate in order the Phæacian rulers,  
Eating and drinking : they have all in plenty.  
On well-wrought pedestals stood golden statues 100  
Of youths, their hands with burning torches furnished,  
To shed their light at night upon the banquet.  
Within the house were fifty female servants :  
Some ground the mealy corn upon the millstones,  
Some, sitting, wove the web and turned the spindle,  
Restless as twinkling leaves of lofty poplar :  
But from the close-wrought woof wet oil would trickle : \*  
For as of all mankind Phæacian sailors  
Are skilled, to row their vessels ; so the women  
To weave the web : thus hath Athena given them 110  
Knowledge of comely works, and wise devices.  
Without the palace-gates a spacious orchard  
Stretched, on both sides by a straight fence surrounded.  
There lofty trees in leafy vigour flourished,  
Pomegranates, pears, and golden-fruited apples,

\* There is some difficulty about the interpretation of this line. Either it means as in the text, or that the woof shone as if anointed with oil. The scholar may see the matter discussed in Loewe's edition of the Odyssey, in loco.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Sweet-flavoured figs, and olive trees luxuriant.  
Of these the fruit decayeth not, nor faileth  
Winter nor summer, ever fresh : for always  
The Zephyr breathing sets the pulp, or ripens.  
Apple on apple, pear on pear lies mellowing, 120  
Fig upon fig, and clustering grapes on cluster.  
Thence passing on, a thick well-ordered vineyard  
Was planted : one warm side sloped to the southward  
Catching the sun ; some grapes the men were cutting,  
Some treading out : before them hung green bunches,  
The flower just shed ; and some to purple dark'ning.  
Beyond the utmost row trim beds were planted  
Clad with all flowers, throughout the seasons blooming :  
I' the midst, two fountains : one through all the garden  
Ran devious : one beneath the palace threshold 130  
To a fair conduit, whence the townsmen drew it.  
Such in Alcinoüs' home were heaven's rich bounties.  
Here stood and gazed divine much-tried Odysseus.  
But when he all things in his mind had noted,  
Right on he passed, and o'er the threshold entered.  
There found he the Phæacian lords and rulers  
Honouring in bowls right-aiming Argeiphontes,  
Their last libation, ere to rest they parted.  
But onward passed divine much-tried Odysseus,  
Enwrapt in mist, which round him shed Athena, 140  
Till he Aretë reached and king Alcinoüs.  
Before the queen he fell, her knees embracing,  
Then stood revealed, the cloud back rolling from him.  
All were struck dumb, a man among them seeing :  
Wondering they gazed : when thus besought Odysseus :  
Aretë, daughter of divine Rexenor,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Thy spouse, thy knees, I seek, with labours wearied,  
And these thy guests, to whom may heav'n apportion  
Long happy years, and each to leave his children  
His wealth at home, and honour from his people. 150  
But me an escort grant, to reach my country  
With speed; long time I exiled pine in sorrow.

He spoke, and on the hearth amidst the ashes  
Sate, by the fire: all voices paused in silence.  
Till spake at length the hero Echeneüs,  
Who of Phæacian men most years had numbered,  
Well skilled to utter ancient things and many:  
Who, kindly-minded, thus in words address them:  
Alcinoüs, none will praise thee, nor befits it  
That a stranger on thine hearth among the ashes 160  
Should sit; for we all wait, thy word expecting.  
But raise him up, and on a seat repose him  
Silver-embossed: and then command the herald  
To mingle wine, that we to Zeus high-thundering  
May pour, who sees that suppliants lack not honour;  
And the stewardess from the stores to feed the stranger.

When heard Alcinoüs' sacred might this counsel,  
He, taking by the hand the wise Odysseus,  
Raised from the hearth, and on a bright throne placed him,  
Laodamas, his gentle son, displacing, 170  
Who next him sate, and most of all men loved him.  
Then poured a maiden water from an ewer  
Beautiful, golden, o'er a bowl of silver  
Upon their hands, and spread the polished table:  
While the chaste stewardess brought on provision,  
Meats various, lavish of her stores abundant.  
So ate and drank divine much-tried Odysseus.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Then thus Alcinoüs' might address the herald :  
Pontonoüs, mix a goblet, and distribute  
To all in turn, that we to Zeus the thunderer 180  
May pour, who sees that suppliants lack not honour.  
He spoke : Pontonoüs straight the sweet wine mingled,  
And served to all, beginning at the goblets.  
When they had poured, and now with drink were sated,  
To them Alcinoüs spoke, his words addressing :  
    Hear me Phæacian councillors and rulers,  
While I impart the thoughts my mind commands me.  
Now, end your feast, and home to rest betake you :  
But, in the morn, more elders let us summon,  
And feast the stranger in our halls, and victims 190  
Slay to the gods : and then devise the escort,  
That void of peril and of toil the stranger  
By us sent forward, may attain his country,  
With joy, and swiftly, though it be far distant,  
Nor by the way may ills and dangers suffer,  
Till he have reached his country's land : but after  
He must endure whate'er the fates in anger  
Wove for his destiny, when his mother bore him.  
But if from heav'n hath come one of the Immortals,  
With some new scheme the gods immortal try us : 200  
For ever yet, without disguise appearing,  
When we with hecatombs renowned adore them,  
By us they sit and feast, where we sit also.  
And if of them some one in journey reach us,  
Nought he conceals : for their near kindred are we,  
As the Cyclops, and the savage tribes of giants.  
    Him answering, spoke the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Alcinoüs, all thy care dismiss : nought am I

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Like the Immortals, who high heav'n inhabit,  
In person, nor in race: but both are mortal, 210  
And whomso'er ye know most versed in sorrows  
Of men, him most in likeness I resemble.

Even such I could surpass, my toils recounting,  
Which by the gods' appointment I have suffered.  
But now to sup permit me, though in sorrow:  
For than a famished belly nought is sharper,  
Which will of force compel its own remembrance,  
Though on a man press weariness and sorrow.

Thus I at heart have sorrow: but it ever  
Prompts me to eat and drink, and out of memory 220  
Wipes all my sufferings, till desire is sated.

But meet ye all at early dawn of morning,  
That ye may send me wretched to my country,  
Laden with suffering; then may death o'ertake me  
When I my lands have seen, and slaves, and palace.

He spoke: they all applauded, and commanded  
To send the stranger, who had fitly spoken.

Then, due libations poured, and each man sated,  
They all retired, the bed of slumber seeking.

But in the hall was left divine Odysseus, 230  
And by him sate Aretë, and the godlike  
Alcinoüs, while the slaves removed the fragments.

Then the discourse began white-armed Aretë:

For she the cloak and tunic knew,—the garments  
Splendid, which she had woven with her maidens:

And him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents:

Stranger, I first myself will ask: Who art thou?

Whence among men? and who these garments gave thee?

Art thou not here confest o'er seas a wanderer?

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Her answering, spake the many-schemed Odysseus : 240  
Sad were it, queen, in order to relate thee  
My woes ; for many have the gods ordained me.  
But this that thou enquirest I will tell thee :  
An island lies, Ogygia, in the ocean ;  
Crafty Calypso, child of Atlas, dwells there,  
Fair-tressed, a goddess powerful ; nor of mortals  
Nor of the gods, holds any converse with her :  
But me in wrath my fate her guest appointed,  
Alone,—for my swift ship with glittering lightning  
Zeus striking, broke amid the dark blue ocean : 250  
Then all the rest my brave companions perished,  
But I, the keel of my wrecked ship embracing,  
Nine days was borne : and on the tenth dark midnight  
The gods to Ogygia brought me, where Calypso  
Dwells, fair and powerful ; who with joy received me,  
Loved me, and cherished : and to make me deathless  
Promised, and clothe with bloom of youth perpetual.  
But nought could she persuade my heart within me.  
There dwelt I seven long years, with tears bedewing  
The immortal garments, which the goddess gave me. 260  
But when the eighth revolving year came o'er me,  
Then bade she me depart, constrained by order  
From Zeus received, which even *her* will persuaded.  
On well-bound raft she sent me, much bestowing,  
Bread, and sweet wine ; and robes of woof celestial :  
And sent a favouring breeze, smooth and innocuous.  
Thus sailed I seventeen days, the ocean cleaving,  
And on the eighteenth loomed the misty mountains  
Of this your land, and joy possessed my bosom,  
Wretch ! who had yet much converse with much sorrow 270

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

To hold, inflicted by the dread Poseidon ;  
He roused the winds, my further course forbidding,  
And stirred the mighty sea : nor would the billows  
Permit me, groaning, on my raft to stem them.  
Her soon the tempest shattered ; I by swimming  
Traversed the gulf, until the winds and waters  
Drifting me onward, to your country bore me.  
There on the beach a wave struck me at landing,  
Dashing me on great rocks, and crags unwelcome.  
But backward borne afresh I swam, till gained I 280  
A river's mouth, where seemed the shore most favouring,  
Smooth from all rocks, and from the wild wind sheltered.  
There fainting lay I : night divine came onward :  
So upward from the heaven-fed stream retiring,  
I stowed me in the shrubs, and round me gathered  
Thick leaves ; and sleep, by gift divine, came o'er me.  
There in the leaves, sad at my heart, and weary,  
All night I slept, and to the dawn, and mid-day :  
Till set the sun, and then sweet slumber left me.  
Then on the shore I saw thy daughter's handmaids 290  
Sporting, and her among them, like a goddess.  
Her prayed I : nor kind heart, nor wisdom, lacked she,  
Such, as in one so young men hardly look for :  
For ever err the young from deeds of wisdom.  
She gave me food enough, and dark wine also :  
In the stream bathed me, and bestowed these garments.  
Thus, though in grief, I all the truth have told thee.  
Him answered then Alcinoüs, and address him :  
But this one thing, stranger, my child devised not,  
Which fitting was ; to bring thee with her maidens 300  
Hither ; since her thou first for aid besoughtest.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Him answering spake the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Hero, chide not for this the blameless damsel :  
'Twas her command, that I with them should follow,  
But I complied not, filled with shame, and fearing  
Lest that thy wrath be kindled, if thou saw'st it ;  
We men on earth are lightly moved to anger.

Him answered then Alcinoüs, and address him :  
Stranger, not such my heart within my bosom,  
As to be lightly moved ; mild ways are better. 310  
For would, O Zeus, Athena, and Apollo,  
Such as thou art, and with myself like-minded,  
Thou hadst my child, and wouldst my son be reckoned,  
Abiding here ; thine were mine house and kingdom,  
If thou wouldst willing stay ; unwilling, none should force  
thee

Of the Phæacians ; lest high Zeus displease we :  
Witness the escort I will surely give thee  
To-morrow morn : meanwhile repose in slumber ;  
Then they shall calmly row thee, till thou reachest  
Thy land, and house, and whatsoe'er thou lovest, 320  
Though than Eubœa it be further distant ;  
Which they full far report, who of our people  
Beheld it, when the golden Rhadamanthus  
They took, the earth-born Tityus to visit ;  
Yet there they reached, and without toil accomplished  
In one same day, and home again restored him.  
And thou thyself shalt know, how far all others  
My ships and men excel, the sea to traverse.

He spake : rejoiced divine much-tried Odysseus,  
And praying spoke, and thus in words address them : 330  
O father Zeus, grant that the things he speaketh

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VII.

Alcinoüs may accomplish ; so his glory  
Shall be far spread, and I behold my country.  
Thus they such things discoursed with one another.

Then called white-armed Aretë to her maidens,  
Beds in the hall to place, and beauteous carpets  
On them to spread, and over these fair blankets,  
And fleecy woollen rugs for upper covering.  
They from the house departed, torches bearing :  
Who when the couch they had with speed made ready, 340  
Stood by Odysseus, him with words inviting :  
Stranger, arise and come ; thy bed awaits thee.  
They said : to him the thought of sleep was pleasant :  
Thus then reposed divine much-tried Odysseus,  
On the turned bedstead, near the echoing portal.  
Alcinoüs slept aloft, within the palace ;  
His queenly spouse the bed of rest preparing.

VIII.

WHEN peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Sprung from his couch the might of great Alcinoüs ;  
Thus likewise rose the siege-renowned Odysseus.  
Then led the way Alcinoüs to the forum  
Of the Phæacians, near the ships established.  
There sate they side by side on polished marble,  
While through the city roamed Pallas Athena  
In form the herald of the wise Alcinoüs,  
Speedy return to plan for brave Odysseus.  
And thus she spoke her say, by each man standing : 10  
    Come now, Phæacian councillors and rulers,  
Throng to the mart, that ye your guest may question,  
Who late arrived in wise Alcinoüs' dwelling  
From o'er the sea, in person like th' Immortals.  
    She spoke, and each man's mind and will excited.  
Swiftly were filled with men the marts and benches,  
Gathering : for many stood intent beholding  
Laertes' gallant son : on whom Athena  
Shed wondrous grace, about his head and shoulders,  
And made him taller to behold, and grander, 20  
That he might dear become to all Phæacians,  
And honoured and revered, and might the labours  
Perform, with which Phæacian men should try him.  
When all were now assembled, and in council,  
Among them spake Alcinoüs and addrest them :  
Hear me, Phæacian councillors and rulers,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

That I may speak, as bids my heart within me.  
A guest unknown hath hither come, a wanderer,  
Be he from Eastern nations, or from Western :  
An escort asks he, and will have our promise. 30

Ours be it, as we wont, to give this escort.  
For ne'er shall one who to my dwelling cometh,  
Reluctant long time stay for want of escort.  
But come, a dark ship draw we to the ocean  
Of the first rank : and young men two and fifty  
Among the people choose, well tried beforetime.  
Then, all your oars upon her banks fast binding,  
Leave her, and next prepare the speedy banquet  
Within my halls, which I to all will furnish.

Thus to the youths enjoin I : Ye the others, 40  
Lords sceptre-bearing, to my gorgeous palace  
Repair, that we within may feast the stranger.  
Let none refuse : and bid the bard illustrious,  
Demodocus ; to him the god hath granted  
To please, whene'er to sing his spirit prompts him.

He spoke, and led the way : behind him followed  
The princes : while the bard the herald summoned.  
Then youths, with care selected, two and fifty,  
As ordered, to the salt wave's brink descended.  
When to the sea they came, and to their vessel, 50  
The dusky ship to the salt deeps down-drawing,  
A mast they duly placed, and sails, within her :  
Next, in the leathern loops the oars suspended,  
Each in its place : and stretched the white sails upward.  
High in the surf they moored her : and then straightway  
Made for the wise Alcinoüs' spacious palace.  
Filled were the halls with men, the courts, and porches,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Assembling : many were the young, and aged.  
For them Alcinoüs twelve wethers slaughtered,  
Eight white-toothed boars, and two slow-wending oxen : 60  
These flayed and dressed they for the joyous banquet.  
Then came the herald the sweet songster bringing,  
Whom loved the Muse, and gave him good and evil :  
Of sight amerced, but with sweet song endowed him.  
For him Pontonoüs a seat silver-studded  
Placed in the midst, against a pillar leaning :  
Then from a peg the shrill-toned lyre suspended  
Above his head, his hands to find it guiding.  
Then by him placed a basket, and fair table,  
And bowl of wine, to drink whene'er he listed. 70  
Then their hands stretched they to the ready banquet.  
But when with meat and drink each soul was sated,  
The Muse inspired the bard to sing of heroes,  
Of war, whose fame up to broad heaven extended :  
The strife of Peleus' offspring and Odysseus,  
How once they strove, at banquet sacrificial,  
With furious words : meanwhile king Agamemnon  
Rejoiced at heart, while strove the Achæan rulers.  
For bright Apollo gave him sign prophetic  
In sacred Pytho, when the marble threshold 80  
He crossed consulting, when rolled on the quarrel  
Of Greeks and Trojans, by great Zeus's counsel.  
Thus sung the bard renowned. Meanwhile Odysseus  
His purple cloak with both his strong hands grasping  
Wrapped round his head, veiling his lordly visage,  
Lest the Phæacians see the tears down falling.  
Then when the bard divine his song had ended,  
Wiping his tears, his head he straight uncovered,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Took the two-handled bowl, and made libations.  
But when he 'gan afresh, the chief Phæacians 90  
Bidding him sing, and in his strains delighting,  
Again Odysseus veiled his head in sorrow.  
Then all the rest his tears escaped unnoticed ;  
Alcinoüs alone, who sate beside him,  
His anguish marked, and heard him deeply groaning ;  
And quick address the oar-renowned Phæacians :  
Hear me, Phæacian councillors and rulers :  
Now all are sated with the equal banquet,  
And with the harp, the banquet's sweet companion,  
Straight speed we forth, and games athletic practise 100  
Of every sort : that to his friends the stranger  
May tell at home how we excel all others  
With fists, in wrestling, leaping, and the foot-race.  
He spoke, and led the way : the people followed.  
Then the shrill lyre upon a nail suspended  
The herald, by the hand Demodocus leading  
From out the palace, by the way where issued  
The chief Phæacians to the games athletic.  
The forum sought they, by a huge throng followed,  
Thousands : where stood the youths, many and noble, 110  
\*Akroneos, and Okyalus, and Elatreus,  
Nauteus and Prumneus, Anchialus and Eretmeus,  
Ponteus and Proreus, Thoon and Anabesineos,  
Amphialus, sprung from Tekton's son Polyneüs,  
Euryalus too, equal to murderous Ares :  
Naubolides, first in beauty and in prowess

\* All these names in Greek are significant of the Phæacians' naval prowess. Thus Okyalus is "swift at sea": Elatreus is "the rower": Nauteus, "the sailor": and so on.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Of all Phæacia, next to bold Laodamas.  
Three sons of king Alcinoüs stood among them,  
Laodamas, Halius, godlike Klytoneüs.  
These first each other rivalled in the foot-race. 120  
Straight from the goal their course was marked : together  
They flew with speed, the dusty level raising.  
First in the race was blameless Klytoneüs :  
Far as a yoke of mules in ploughing winneth,\*  
So far the rest he passed, and they were distanced.  
Some tried severer toil, the meed of wrestling ;  
In this Euryalus the strongest conquered.  
In leaps, Amphialus of all was foremost :  
Of all was foremost with the quoits Elatreus :  
Alcinoüs' son, Laodamas, in boxing. 130

When now with manly games each heart was gladdened,  
Alcinoüs' son, Laodamas, spoke among them :  
Come, friends, the stranger ask we, if he knoweth  
Aught of such games : his form is not ignoble  
In thighs and legs, and sinewy hands above them,  
In wiry neck, and strength of chest : nor wants he  
In youth : but with misfortunes hard is broken :  
For nought more cruel count I than the ocean  
To crush men down, how strong before soever.

Him then Euryalus answered, and addrest him : 140  
In season this, Laodamas, hast thou spoken :  
Thyself approach him now, and name thy challenge.

When this had heard the good son of Alcinoüs,  
Forth in the midst he stood, and called Odysseus :  
Come, father stranger, try thou too these contests :

\* *i. e.* over a yoke of oxen, being swifter.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

If aught of such thou kenn'st: but skilled thou shouldst be:  
For nought more glory brings a man, while living,  
Than that which he with feet and hands achieveth.  
But come and try: dash from thy thoughts thy sorrow:  
Not far is thy departure, for already 150  
Thy ship is on the sea, thy crew appointed.

Him answering spoke the many-schemed Odysseus:  
Laodamas, why in bitterness thus bid me?  
More at my heart are woes, than games athletic;  
Who have beforetime much endured and toiled through:  
Now in your forum, my return imploring,  
Sit I, a suppliant to your king and people.

Him then Euryalus answered, boldly chiding:  
Nor dost thou seem, O stranger, like one skilful  
In contests, such as most men oft engage in; 160  
But more like one a bank'd ship frequenting,  
Commanding those who sail in quest of commerce  
Minding the cargo, and the wares surveying,  
And gains rapacious: I no athlete hold thee.

Him, sternly frowning, answered wise Odysseus:  
Ill hast thou said, and some vain fool I hold thee;  
For not on all their gracious gifts the Immortals  
Bestow alike; nor beauty, speech, nor wisdom.  
One lacks in comeliness and outward bearing,  
But God his weakness crowns with eloquence: on him 170  
Men look delighted; boldly stands he, arguing  
With honeyed grace, and rules in their assemblies:  
And when he roams their streets, as god they mark him.  
Another rivals in his form the Immortals:  
But round his speech no grace adorning bloometh.  
And such art thou, in beauty rare; not fairer

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

A god's own work ; but weak of mind and witless.  
Within my bosom thou hast stirred my spirit  
With thy foul words. In games am I no novice,  
As thou hast babbled ; but among the foremost 180  
I ranked, while youth and my good arm I trusted :  
But woes and toils have worn me ; much enduring  
In wars with men, and conflict with wild billows.  
But ev'n thus woe-worn, I the games will enter :  
Soul-piercing was thy word, and much it roused me.

He said, and forward dashed, all cloaked ; a discus  
Grasping, of mighty bulk : no trifle weightier  
Than those, wherewith contended the Phæacians.  
Then, whirling, from his nervous hand he launched it ;  
Sung through the air the stone ; in fear crouched earthward  
The oar-renowned Phæacians, doughty shipmen, 191  
Beneath its whizz ; the marks it far out-distanced,  
Swift from his hand. The limit marked Athena,  
In human form, and spoke, and thus address him :

A blind man, stranger, might thy mark distinguish,  
Feeling by hand : 'tis with the crowd not mingled,  
But far the first : this time, at least, be fearless :  
For no Phæacian will surpass, nor reach thee.

She spoke : rejoiced much-tried divine Odysseus,  
Glad, a kind friend to see amidst the contest. 200  
And thus, more light at heart, address the people :

Reach that, ye youths : hereafter yet another  
Hope I to throw as far, or ev'n beyond it.  
But of the rest, if heart and spirit prompt him,  
Let any try (for ye have stirred me greatly)  
With fists, or wrestling, or the race, — I care not ;  
Of all Phæacia, only save Laodamas,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Who is mine host :— who with his friend contendeth ?  
Foolish that man I hold, and vain of purpose,  
Who with his entertainer wadgeth conflict 210  
In a strange land, his own good cheer destroying.  
But of the rest none grudge I, nor refuse them,  
But wish to know them all, and try their prowess ;  
For in all games with men some skill possess I.  
Well know I how the polished bow to handle :  
First can I strike my man, at dense ranks aiming  
Of foes opposed, though many comrades with me  
Stood in the field, all at the foemen shooting.  
None beat me with the bow, but Philoctetes,  
In Troy, when we Achæans strove in archery. 220  
Of all the rest I boast myself the foremost,  
The men, who now on earth their bread are eating,  
But not a match for those who went before us,  
For Herakles, or Eurytus the Œchalian,  
Who ev'n with gods for archer's meed contended.  
Wherefore great Eurytus early died ; nor reached he  
Old age at home, for king Apollo angered  
Slew him, because his archer's skill he challenged.  
With spear I throw, further than most with arrow :  
Only the foot-race fear I, lest there pass me 230  
Some of Phæacia ; cruelly was I weakened  
Amidst the waves : for not with stores sufficient  
Was my ship furnished, so my limbs were weakened.  
He spoke ; but every voice was held in silence.  
Alcinoüs in reply alone address him :  
Stranger, since words not wanting grace thou speakest,  
Wishing to show the prowess which adorns thee,  
Wroth, that this youth in the contest by thee standing



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Chid thee : — thy prowess none can doubt of mortals,  
Who in his mind knows wholesome words to utter. 240

But come, my counsel take, that thou to others  
Of heroes mayest tell, what time thou featest  
In thine own house beside thy wife and children,  
The memory of our worth, — what gifts the Thund'rer  
Bestows upon us from our fathers downward.

We are not blameless boxers, no, nor wrestlers :  
But swift of foot, and in our ships excelling.  
And ever love we feasts, the lyre, and dancing,  
Changes of robes, warm baths, and resty couches.  
But come, Phæacian dancers, best and fleetest, 250  
Make sport : that to his friends our guest report us,  
Returning home, how we surpass all others  
In ships, and in the race; the dance, and music.

And to Demodocus let one fetch quickly  
His shrill-toned lyre, which hangs within our palace.

Divine Alcinoüs spoke. Then went the herald  
From the king's house the shrill-toned harp to bring them.  
Then rose the officers, nine in all in number,  
Elected, in the games each thing to settle. 259

These smoothed the space, the dancers' bounds enlarging.  
Then came the herald too, the shrill harp bringing  
To the bard, who stood i' the midst ; and youths around him  
In their first bloom, skilled in the dance's measures,  
Beat with their feet the lordly dance : Odysseus  
The twinkling of their feet beheld, and wondered.  
Then 'gan the bard to sing in tuneful measure  
Of Arës' loves and fair-wreathed Aphrodita :  
How first they mingled in Hephæstus' palace  
By stealth : with large gifts he prevailed, disgracing

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Hephæstus' bed; but quickly brought him tidings 270  
Helios, who saw them in their love disporting.  
Then went Hephæstus, at the news unwelcome,  
Into his smithy, vengeful schemes concocting.  
He placed his anvil on its stand, and fetters  
Inevitable wrought, to bind for ever.  
Then when the snare was finished, wroth with Arës,  
He sought his chamber, where his marriage-bed was :  
And round the posts the fetters ranged in circle :  
And many likewise from the roof suspended  
Like airy cobwebs, by no eye distinguished 280  
Even of the gods: the work was wrought so subtle.  
Then when the bed was all with snares surrounded,  
He seemed to speed to Lemnos, fair-built city,  
Which of all lands on earth he loveth dearly.  
Nor was in vain the gold-reined Arës watching,  
The journey witnessing of skilled Hephæstus :  
But to Hephæstus' palace went he straightway  
Keen for the love of fair-wreathed Cytherea.  
She, freshly from her mighty sire Kronion  
Arrived, was sitting : he the palace entered, 290  
Seized on her hand, and speaking thus address her :  
Come, dearest, to the bed of love repair we :  
For here Hephæstus is not, but departed  
To Lemnos, to the roughly speaking Sintians.  
He spoke: the love proposed she gladly welcomed :  
Then both lay down and slept. But round them clasping  
Wound the sly fetters of the wise Hephæstus,  
Nor could they move their limbs, nor upright raise them.  
Thus knew they first, that there was no escaping.  
Then near approached the far-renownèd Fire-god, 300

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Returning home, ere yet he touched on Lemnos :  
For Helius saw from far, and gave him tidings.  
Home he returned, in spirit deeply wounded :  
Stood in the porch, and anger fierce possest him.  
Loudly he bellowed, all the gods forth-calling :  
Come, father Zeus, and ye immortal blest ones,  
Things laughter-worth and unimagined witness :  
How me, thus lame, Zeus' daughter Aphrodita  
Dishonoureth ever, murderous Arës loving :  
For he is fair and straight of foot, but I am 310  
Crookt from my birth : for which none other blame I  
But my two parents : would they ne'er had got me.  
But ye shall see how these two sleep embracing  
In mine own bed : and I beholding, rue it.  
Not soon again, I trow, they thus will dally,  
Though deep in love : nor covet, both together  
To sleep. But now my craft and chains shall hold them,  
Till that her father pays me back the dowry  
Which I resigned him for his shameless daughter.  
Beautiful is she, but of heart inconstant. 320

He spoke : thronged to the brazen house the Immortals.  
Poseidon, earth-surrounder, came ; the luck-god  
Hermes ; and came the archer-king, Apollo.  
But, held by shame, at home each goddess tarried.  
In the doorway stood the gods, the wealth-dispensers,  
And quenchless laughter shook the blest Immortals  
The wiles beholding of the deep Hephæstus :  
And thus spoke one, his neighbour next regarding :  
Vice doth not prosper : traps the swift, the tardy :  
Thus hath the slow Hephæstus now caught Arës, — 330  
The swiftest of the gods who hold Olympus, —

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Lame as he is, by craft. Now pays the adulterer.  
Such things they said, among themselves discoursing.

Then thus to Hermes spoke Zeus' son, Apollo :  
Hermes, Zeus' son and herald, fortune-sender,  
Shouldst thou be willing, in strong fetters hampered,  
In bed to lie with golden Aphroditë ?

Then thus replied the herald Argeiphontes :  
Would this might be, Apollo, royal archer !  
Might fetters thrice so strong be clenched around me, 340  
And all ye gods behold, and every goddess,  
So I might lie by golden Aphroditë.

He spoke : fresh laughter shook the gods immortal,  
All, but Poseidon : who besought unceasing  
Hephæstos, skill-renowned, to loosen Arës :  
And, him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents :  
Loose him : myself will pledge him, as thou biddest,  
Due fine to pay thee mid the blest Immortals

To him the far-famed Fire-god spoke in answer :  
Bid me not thus, Poseidon, earth-surrounder ; 350  
Sureties for men of nought, themselves are nothing.  
How shall I bind thee midst the gods immortal,  
If Ares flies, his bond and chain escaping ?

Him answered thus Poseidon, earth-surrounder :  
Hephæstus, if his bond Arës escaping  
Should take to flight, myself will pay the forfeit.

To him the far-famed Fire-god spoke in answer :  
Nor can nor must I thine own word dishonour.  
This said, Hephæstus' strength the fetters loosened.

When both were now freed from the bands coercive, 360  
Upspringing straight, Arës to Thracia hastened,  
To Cyprus Aphroditë laughter-loving,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

To Paphos, to her grove and fuming altar.  
And there the Graces bathed her, and anointed  
With oil ambrosial, such as gods adorneth :  
And clothed in lovely robes, of beauty wondrous.

Thus sang the far-famed songster : but Odysseus  
Rejoiced at heart to hear ; and all the others,  
The oar-renowned, Phæacians, doughty shipmen.  
Alcinoüs then Laodamas and Haleos

370

Bid dance alone, since none with them contended.  
First they, a fair round ball in hand receiving,  
Purple, which Polybus in his skill had wrought them,  
The one against the dusky clouds upcast it,  
Bending him back : the other, high upleaping,  
Caught it with ease, before his feet alighted.  
Thus when they long time with the ball had sported,  
Then danced they on the fertile earth together  
In dizzy maze : while all the youths applauded,  
Standing in ring : loud was the noise of clapping.

380

Then thus divine Odysseus to Alcinoüs :  
Royal Alcinoüs, noblest of thy people,  
Thou threatenedst, that thy dancers should be matchless :  
And lo, thy boast is true : I gaze, and wonder.

He spoke : rejoiced the might of great Alcinoüs,  
And straight addressed the oar-renowned Phæacians :  
Hear me, Phæacian councillors and rulers :  
Fraught with much wisdom seems to me the stranger ;  
Come, let us give him gifts, as it becometh.  
For twelve illustrious princes midst our people  
Rule o'er the land, and I myself the thirteenth ;  
Of whom let each a snow-white robe and tunic  
Bring as a gift, and of fine gold a talent.

390



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

All let us quickly fetch, that in possession  
Our guest may have them, and may sup with gladness.  
And let Euryalus with words appease him,  
And with a gift; because he spoke unwisely.

He said: they all approved, and bid him do it.  
Then each an herald sent to fetch the presents,  
And thus Euryalus answered, and address him: 400

Royal Alcinoüs, noblest of thy people,  
Our guest will I appease, as thou commandest.  
This brazen sword I give him, silver-hilted,  
Round which of finest ivory the scabbard  
Is wrought: a gift to him of no mean value.

This said, the silver-studded sword he reached him,  
And, him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents:

Hail, father stranger! if aught ill was spoken,  
May the winds seize and bear it swiftly from us.  
And may the gods thee grant, thy wife and country 410  
To see: since, exiled long, thou sufferest sorrow.

Him answering spake the many-schemed Odysseus:  
Hail thou too, friend, and may the gods thee prosper;  
And mayst thou ne'er in days to come, the weapon  
Miss, which thou givest me, with words appeasing.  
This said, the rich sword girt he on his shoulders.

Now set the sun, and came the beauteous presents,  
Brought by the heralds to Alcinoüs' palace:  
Which great Alcinoüs' blameless sons receiving,  
Laid by their stately mother, — fair and precious. 420  
The rest led on the hero great Alcinoüs:  
Arrived, they sate on lofty thrones in order:  
Then spoke Alcinoüs' might, Aretë calling:

Fetch hither of thy costly chests the fairest,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

And in it stow a snow-white coat and tunic ;  
On the fire the cauldron place, and heat him water,  
That having bathed, and all the comely presents  
Surveyed, brought hither by the brave Phæacians,  
He may in music and the feast delight him.

This my fair goblet also will I give him, 430  
Of gold : that all his days he me remembering  
Libations pour to Zeus and all the Immortals.

He spoke : Aretë to her maids commanded  
Straight on the fire to place an ample tripod :  
They on the bright fire placed the tripod laver,  
Poured water in, and lighted wood beneath it :  
The flame its belly girt, the water heating.  
Then for her guest a costly chest Aretë  
From the chamber brought, and stowed the gifts within it,  
The clothes and gold, which the Phæacians gave him : 440  
And with them placed a coat and beauteous tunic,  
And him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents :

Thyself the lid behold, and quickly bind it,  
Lest any by the way should rob thee, while thou  
Sleepest a sweet sleep, in the dark ship going.  
When this had heard divine much-tried Odysseus,  
The lid he closed, a knot upon it tying  
Of craft, which long since potent Circë taught him.  
Then came the stewardess, him to wash inviting,  
Entering the bath : his soul delighted witnessed 450  
The steaming laver : seldom had he used it,  
Since he the home left of fair-tressed Calypso :  
There, as a god, he had its use at pleasure.  
Him when the maids had washed, with oil anointing,  
And on him placed fair woollen robe and tunic,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Forth from the bath among the drinkers went he ;  
But first Nausicaä, godlike in her beauty,  
Stood by the doorpost of the hall close-built,  
Gazing with eyes of wonder on Odysseus,  
And him addressing spoke in wingèd accents : 460

Hail, stranger ! mayst thou in thy land hereafter  
Remember, to whom first thy life thou owest.

Her answering spoke the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Nausicaä, daughter of the great Alcinöus,  
So may the Thunderer grant me, spouse of Herë,  
Home to arrive, and see my glad returning ;  
There will I pray to thee, as to a goddess,  
Daily for ever : for thou sav'dst me, lady.

He said, and sat him down by king Alcinöus.  
The portions gave they, and the wine were mingling : 470  
Approached the herald, the sweet poet leading,  
Demodocus, prized by the people : and he set him  
Amid the feasters, 'gainst a pillar leaning.  
Then many-schemed Odysseus called the herald,  
From a chine cutting, but the most part leaving,  
Of white-tusked boar, with ample fat surrounded :

Herald, this piece Demodocus take to eat it,  
I would embrace him gladly, though in sorrow :  
For among men who dwell on earth, are songsters  
Worthy of praise and reverence ; for the Muses 480  
Teach them their lays, and love the tribe of songsters.

He spoke : the herald bore it to the hero  
Demodocus, who received it, inly gladdened.  
Then fell they eager to the ready banquet.  
Now when desire of meat and drink was sated,  
Addrest Demodocus many-schemed Odysseus :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Demodocus, most of all men I commend thee.  
The Muse, Zeus' daughter, taught thee, or Apollo :  
So orderly the Achæans' woes thou singest,  
All that they did and toiled, and how they sorrowed, 490  
As if thyself wert present, or hadst heard it.  
Thy measure change, and sing the horse of timber,  
Work of Epeios, aided by Athena,  
Which to the citadel brought in craft Odysseus,  
With heroes filled, who Ilion's city wasted.  
If this thou rightly all in order tell me,  
Then among all men will I spread thy praises,  
That God with song's divine gift hath endowed thee.

He spoke : the bard inspired took up the legend,  
Thence setting forth, when in their bankèd vessels 500  
They sailed away, their tents with fire consuming,  
Most part : the rest, with much-renowned Odysseus,  
Sate 'midst the Trojans in the horse safe-hidden :  
The Trojans selves within their fortress drew them :  
Thus stood the horse : and they in counsel differed,  
Tarrying around it : threefold their intent was :  
To cut with ruthless brass the hollow image,  
Or drawing on the heights to cast it headlong,  
Or the vast frame to leave, the gods appeasing.  
The last advice was into practice carried : 510  
For fate had willed their ruin, when the city  
Held the huge horse, where sate the Argive leaders  
In ambush, death and fate to Trojans bearing.  
He sung too, how the Achæans sacked the city,  
Poured from the horse, their hollow ambush leaving.  
He sung, how each dealt in each part destruction :  
How to Deïphobus' palace rushed Odysseus

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

Like Arès, with the godlike Menelaüs :  
There he, the fiercest of the fight provoking,  
Ev'n there prevailed, by help of great Athena. 520  
So sung the bard illustrious : but Odysseus  
Melted, and from his eyes the moist tear trickled.  
As mourns a wife, her dear lord fondly clasping,  
Who for his city and his folk hath fallen,  
Warding from home and babes destruction cruel :  
She, him convulsed with pangs of death beholding,  
Falls on him, wailing shrill : but they behind her  
With their spears smiting on her back and shoulders,  
Take her to bondage, to have toil and sorrow :  
The while with bitterest woe her cheeks are faded : — 530  
So from his eyelids dropt the tear Odysseus.  
Then all the rest his tears escaped unnoticed ;  
Alcinoüs alone, who sate beside him,  
His anguish marked, and heard him deeply groaning,  
And quick address the oar-renowned Phæacians :  
Hear me, Phæacian councillors and rulers :  
Now let the bard his sweet lyre cease from playing :  
For not by all his strains are heard with pleasure.  
Since we our meal begun, and the divine bard  
His strain, from bitter wailing ne'er desisteth 540  
Our guest : some mighty sorrow wraps his spirit.  
Come, let him cease, that all alike be merry,  
Both hosts and guest : for this is far more seemly.  
For on our honoured guest's account is all this  
Escort, and friendly gifts of our affection.  
Dear as a brother is a guest and suppliant,  
Even to a man whose heart but little feeleth.  
Wherefore conceal not thou with wiles deceitful



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

That which I ask thee : better 'twere, to answer.  
Tell me thy name, which there thy parents call thee, 550  
Those of thy city, and the dwellers round thee.  
For none of men is nameless altogether,  
Bad man, or good, when first his life beginneth :  
But parents at their birth some name bestow them.  
Tell me thy land, thy people, and thy city ;  
So may my ships, self-guided, take thee thither.  
For our Phæacian vessels need no pilot,  
Nor rudders, such as other ships have need of,  
But know themselves the thoughts of men, and projects :  
And far and near know the fat fields and cities 560  
Of all men,—and the sea's gulfs swiftly traverse,  
Shrouded in mist and cloud : nor fear we ever  
That any harm befall them, nor destruction.  
Yet have I learned beforetime from my father  
Nausithoüs, that Poseidon looked with envy  
On us, because we all convey with safety :  
That on a time a trim Phæacian vessel  
Back from such convoy bound, he in mid ocean  
Will break, and with a huge hill gird our city.  
Thus spoke my sire : this shall the god accomplish, 570  
Or unaccomplished leave, as best may please him.  
But come, inform me this and tell me truly ;  
Whence thou hast wandered : visited what countries  
Of men : themselves describe, and their thronged cities ;  
How many savage are, no friends of justice,  
Who hospitable, and of gods the fearers.  
Tell also, why thou weep'st and inly mournest,  
The fate of Danaans and of Ilion hearing :  
That fate the gods ordained, and wove destruction

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, VIII.

To men, that theme might be for song hereafter. 580  
Did one thy kinsman before Ilium perish,  
Brave son-in-law, or father-in-law, who chiefly  
Next to our flesh and blood are counted precious?  
Or some companion, near thee in affection?  
For not less valued than a kinsman is he,  
Who, a companion being, at heart is friendly.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

IX.

HIM answering spoke the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Royal Alcinoüs, noblest of thy people,  
Truly 'tis noble to a bard to listen  
Such as is this, in voice the gods resembling.  
Nor do I trow is any bliss more perfect,  
Than when a people festal mirth possesses,  
And in the houses guests to poets listen  
Sitting in ranks, and by them boards abounding  
In bread and flesh : and wine from jar renewing  
The drawer bears and pours it in the wine-cups : 10  
This is in my esteem of all things noblest.  
But now thy mind inclines my piteous sorrows  
To hear, that yet more I may groan lamenting.  
What first, what next, what last shall I declare thee ?  
Full many a woe the heavenly gods have given me.  
But first my name I'll tell, that ye may know it,  
And that hereafter, when mine ills are over,  
I may your friend be, though my home be distant.  
Odysseus I, Laertes' son ; surpassing  
All men in wiles, — heaven with my glory reaching. 20  
I dwell in sunny Ithaca : in it rises  
Bough-tossing Neritus, far discerned : and islands  
Around are dwelt in, near to one another,  
Dulichion, Samë, and the bowered Zacynthus :  
Itself lies low, the furthest in the ocean,  
Nightward : but they, turned to the sun, and morning :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Craggy, but nurse of valiant youths: nor may I  
Than mine own country aught behold more pleasant.  
Goddess divine, Calypso once detained me  
In her smooth caves, and wooed me for her husband; 30  
So likewise Circë kept me in her palace,  
Ææan witch, and wooed me for her husband;  
But nought my mind did they persuade within me.  
Thus beyond all things sweet are home and parents,  
E'en though a man, far off, some gorgeous palace  
Inhabit in strange land, from parents exiled.  
But come, my much-vexed journey I will tell thee,  
Which Zeus for me ordained from Troy returning.

From Ilium, winds to the Ciconians drove me,  
To Ismarus. There I sacked their town, and slew them. 40  
And from the town women and much prey taking,  
We shared it, so that none might lack his portion.  
Then I advised, that we with foot unresting  
Should fly: but they obeyed not in their folly.  
Large wine they drunk, and sheep in large abundance  
Slew by the shore, and horned slow-wending oxen.  
Meanwhile the 'scaped Ciconians told Ciconians,  
Who dwelt beside them, more in men and valour,  
The main land ruling; knowing well on horseback  
With men to fight, and if need be, as footmen. 50  
Then came they thick as leaves and flowers in springtide,  
Early: then evil fate from Zeus o'ertook us  
To sorrow doomed, and many woes to suffer.  
There stood and fought they by the ships swift-sailing,  
Smiting each other with their brass-bound lances.  
While it was morn, and day divine was waxing,  
So long we beat them off, though more in number:

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

But when the sun declined, and men leave ploughing,  
Then the Ciconians won, and turned the Achæans.  
Six from each vessel of my mailèd comrades 60  
Perished ; we others fled from death and ruin.

Thence further sailed we, heavy in our spirits,  
Death gladly 'scaping, but our comrades missing.  
Nor did my balanced vessels weigh their anchors,  
Ere we had thrice each low-laid friend saluted,  
Who died afield, by the Ciconians slaughtered.  
A north wind Zeus against our ships, cloud-gatherer,  
Sent, and a tempest wild : with storm-clouds veiling  
Both earth and sky : and down from heaven dropt darkness.  
They, blown athwart, were driven : their sails in fragments  
Cracking and tearing, rent the blast resistless. 71

These to the deck we lowered, destruction fearing,  
And with all haste our vessels rowed to shoreward.  
Two nights and days we there with no cessation  
Lay, with sore toil and woes our hearts consuming ;  
But when the bright-haired morn brought on the third day,  
Raising our masts, and on them white sails stretching,  
We sat : our ships the wind and pilots guided.

Now had I reached unscathed my native country,  
Had not the swell, and tide, Maleia doubling, 80  
And north wind, driven me back beside Cythera.  
Then nine days with the cursèd wind I drifted  
The fishy seas : but on the tenth day made we  
The Lotus-eaters' land, the blossom-feeders.  
There on the shore we landed and drew water :  
Ate by their ships a hasty meal my comrades.  
But when of meat and drink we now had tasted,  
Then of my comrades sent I for enquiry,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Two chosen men, and with them joined an herald,  
What were the race upon that land subsisting. 90

They quickly with the Lotus-eaters mingled,  
Nor did the Lotus-eaters for our comrades  
Destruction plot: but of the Lotus gave them.

Whoso the Lotus' honey-fruit had tasted,  
No longer would return, nor carry tidings:  
But there desired, among the Lotus-eaters,  
To stay and eat the Lotus, all return forgetting.

Them brought I to the ships by force, though weeping,  
And in the smooth barks bound, beneath the benches.

Then ordered I the rest, my friendly comrades, 100  
With haste to embark on board their rapid galleys,  
Lest any eat the Lotus, and return not.

Straight they embarked, and on the benches sitting  
In order, struck with oars the foaming ocean.

Thence we sailed onward, grieving in our spirits;  
And to the shore of the haughty lawless Cyclops  
We came, who trusting to the gods immortal  
Plant with their hands no plant, nor tillage practise:  
But all things grow unsown, and without ploughing,  
Barley, and wheat, and vines, which bear abundant 110  
Wine from their bunches, — all by heaven's rain nourished.

Laws have they none, nor counselling assemblies,  
But on the heads of lofty mountains dwell they,  
In caverns smooth: each rules unfettered over  
His wife and children, and for other cares not.

A fertile island off the harbour stretches  
Of the Cyclopiian land, not near, nor distant,  
Wooded: and in it breed goats without number,  
Untamed: for haunts of men are none to fright them,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Nor hunters chase them, who in savage forest 120  
Hardships endure, the tops of hills frequenting.  
Nor is it held by tended flocks, nor tillage,  
But through all time unsown, unturned by ploughshare,  
Of men is void, and bleating flocks supporteth.  
For ships vermilion-prowed the Cyclops have not,  
Nor men to build them vessels, who might shape out  
Well-bankèd ships, which might their wants supplying  
Take them to towns of men ; as wander many,  
Crossing in ships the seas to one another,  
Who this fair island might have wrought with tillage. 130  
Barren it is not, but would all in season  
Have borne : and there are meadows by the sea-board  
Marshy and rank, where vines might nobly flourish.  
Smooth were the soil for ploughs : rich waving wheat-crops  
Would wait the harvest : deep and fat the subsoil.  
There too is a still harbour, where no need is  
Of rope, nor casting anchor, nor of moorings :  
But only to put in and wait, till urges  
The sailors' spirit, and the breezes whistle.  
And at the harbour's head runs limpid water, 140  
A fountain from a cave ; and round grow poplars.  
There we sailed in, some god our vessels guiding  
Through the dark night ; nor was the coast apparent :  
Dense fog hung round the ships, nor shone upon us  
The moon from heaven, for veiling clouds concealed her.  
Then no one with his eyes beheld the island,  
Nor the long surf upon the pebbles rolling  
Saw we, before our bankèd ships were stranded.  
When thus they struck, each sail we quickly lowered :  
And then ourselves upon the sea-beach landed : 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Where having slept, the morn divine we awaited.

When gleamed the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
All round the island we explored with wonder.

Then roused the nymphs, the Ægis-bearer's daughters,  
The mountain goats, with food our crews to furnish.

We our bent bows, and long-staved hunting javelins  
Fetched from the ships, and in three lots dividing,  
We aimed : the god a prey sufficing granted.

Twelve ships obeyed me ; and to each assigned we  
Nine goats by lot : ten were my own sole portion. 160

Thus then all day, until the sun sunk downward,  
Sate we, much flesh and luscious wine enjoying.

For from the ships not yet the wine was wasted,  
But served us : for in jars each crew abundance  
Had stored, Ciconia's sacred fortress plundering.

Meanwhile, we marked the Cyclops' land hard by us,  
And smoke, and voices of themselves and cattle.

When now the sun went down and darkness followed,  
Then on the sea-beach lay we down to slumber.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning, 170  
All by the ships assembling, I address them :

Friends and companions, ye the rest remain here :

While I cross over with my ship and comrades,

Of these men to make trial, and their habits,

If they be men of violence, fierce and wrongful,

Or friends of strangers, and the gods revering.

I said, and climbed the ship, and bid my comrades

Quick to embark themselves, and loose her hawsers :

Straight they obeyed, and on the benches sitting

In order, struck with oars the foaming ocean. 180

But when upon the neighbouring shore we landed,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

At the end a cave espied we, near the ocean,  
Lofty, with laurels shaded o'er : beside which  
Lay flocks of many goats and sheep : and round it  
A lofty fence with earth-fixed stones was builded,  
And taper pines, and oaks with spreading branches.  
Here dwelt within a monster wight, who tended  
His flocks alone, apart from all, nor mingled  
With men, but practised lawless ways and sullen.  
A marvel was he, huge, uncouth ; resembling 190  
Not man who feeds on corn, but shaggy headland  
Of mountain chain, apart from others towering.  
Then ordered I the rest, my loved companions,  
There by the ship to wait, and guard the vessel :  
But I, twelve comrades of my best selecting,  
Set forth : dark wine in goatskin bottle bore I,  
Sweet, gift of Maron, offspring of Euanthes,  
Priest of Apollo, Ismarus' defender :  
Because we spared him with his wife and children,  
Through reverence ; for in bowered grove abode he 200  
Of bright Apollo ; splendid gifts he gave me,  
Of well-wrought gold ten talents he presented,  
And gave a cup of silver pure ; and after  
Drew out in wine-jars, twelve in all, sweet liquor,  
Unmingled, drink for gods : not any knew it  
Among his slaves, or of his household servants,  
Only himself, his wife, and faithful stewardess.  
This honeyed purple wine whoe'er would drink of,  
One goblet filling, twenty such of water  
Poured in ; and from the cup sweet odour mantled, 210  
Divine : that no man willing would refuse it.  
Of this I bore a goatskin full ; and victuals

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

In basket stored ; my mind ev'n now foreboded  
Encounter with some wight of strength enormous,  
Savage, no human laws nor rights observing.  
Quickly we reached the cave, but him we found not  
Within : his fat sheep in the mead he tended.  
The cave we entered, and looked round with wonder :  
Huge crates of cheese were there, and pens, resounding  
With lambs and kids, and each by age distinguished 220  
Were penned ; the old, and later born were severed,  
And newly yeaned. With curd swam all the vessels,  
Both pails and dishes, which he used for milking.  
Then me with words my comrades first entreated  
Of the cheese taking, to return: and after  
In haste some goats and lambs to our swift vessel  
Drive from the pens, and o'er the salt wave voyage.  
But I complied not (well had I but listened !)  
Him to behold, and gifts receive of friendship:  
A sight, alas, for my poor friends unwelcome ! 230  
Then, a fire kindling, offered we : moreover  
Took of the cheese and ate ; our host expecting  
Till he his flock drove back. A huge load brought he  
Of faggots dry, to light him to his supper.  
These threw he crashing down outside the cavern :  
We to the cave's recesses fled in terror.  
Then through the ample rift his fat ewes drove he,  
For milking: all the males outside remaining,  
Both rams and he-goats, of his roomy dwelling.  
Next, a huge stone he placed against the doorway 240  
Fearful in size : not two and twenty waggons  
Four-wheeled and staunch, could stir it from the groundsill,  
So vast a crag he rolled athwart his doorway.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Then sate and milked his ewes and bleating she-goats,  
Each in its turn, and gave to each her young one.  
Then when he half the snow-white milk had curdled,  
In wicker baskets, pressing, he bestowed it :  
Half he reserved in pails, that it might serve him  
For drink at meals, and furnish forth his supper.  
When without pause all this he had accomplished, 250  
A fire he lit, — first spied, and thus address us :

Strangers, what are ye ? o'er the watery furrows  
Sail ye for gain, or void of purpose cruising  
As pirates on the wave, who lawless wander  
Risking their lives, and fraught with harm to others ?

He spoke : but all our spirit sunk within us,  
Fearing his deep voice and his monstrous bearing :  
Yet, though in fear, I thus in words address him :

Greeks are we, from the sack of Troy returning,  
The sport of every wind, across the ocean. 260

Homeward was our desire, but by strange courses  
We hither come : so Zeus above hath willed it.  
Subjects we boast us of the son of Atreus  
Agamemnon, under heaven of men most glorious,  
Such city hath he sacked, and tribes subverted.  
Suppliant we clasp thy knees, and beg thy favour,  
If thou wilt give us guestly cheer, or presents  
Of thine own mind, treatment which guests befitteth.  
Great Sir, revere the gods : thy suppliants are we :  
Zeus is of stranger-suppliants the defender, 270  
The friend of guests, guide of the paths of strangers.

I spoke : but he in ruthless anger answered :  
Thou art a fool, or come from far, O stranger,  
Who urgest me the gods to fear, or reverence.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

For Zeus the ægis-bearer, Cyclops care not :  
Nor for the blessed gods: we far surpass them.  
Nor shall I spare thee, to avoid his anger,  
No, nor thy friends, if mine own mind agrees not.  
But tell me where thy tight ship thou hast stranded,  
On the far shore, or near, that I may know it. 280

In craft he spoke, yet me, much-versed, deceived not :  
But I with words of guile thus made him answer :

My vessel broke Poseidon, earth-upheaver,  
Cast on the rocks, beside your land's far boundary,  
Against a headland, borne by wind from ocean :  
And I with these escaped from grim destruction.

I spoke : nought answered he, with churlish spirit,  
But rushing, threw his arms among my comrades :  
Seizing on two, like whelps, upon the pavement  
He dashed them ; all their brains the ground bespattered.  
Then limb from limb he hacked them for his supper, 291

And ate, like mountain lion ; nothing leaving  
Of flesh behind, nor marrowy bones, nor garbage.  
Weeping, our hands to Zeus above we lifted,  
Such horrors viewing ; and despair possest us.  
The Cyclop now had filled his mighty stomach  
With flesh of man, and drank sweet milk unmingled ;  
Then laid him down to sleep within the cavern  
Amidst his flocks. I with my great heart counselled,  
Whether to draw my sharp sword, and approaching, 300

Stab at his breast where join the lungs and liver,  
With vigorous hand. Another thought restrained me :  
There should we perish with destruction certain :  
For none were able from the lofty doorway  
To roll the mighty stone which he had placed there.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

We sighed then, and for morn's divine light waited.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
His fire he lit, and milked his comely cattle,

Each in its turn, and gave to each her young one.

When without pause all this he had accomplished, 310

Two more he seized, and made his morning banquet.

Then, sated, from the cave his fat sheep drove he,

Moving with ease the monstrous door, and after

As quick replacing, as a lid on quiver.

Then whistling loud, his fat flocks towards the mountain

He drove : and I was left, dark schemes revolving,

To pay him, if Athena gave me glory.

This to my mind appeared the wisest counsel :

Near to his sheepfold lay a club of olive,

Weighty and green, cut by his hand, his footsteps 320

To stay, when dry. We likened it, beholding,

To mast of some dark ship with twenty rowers,

Laden and broad, which o'er the great sea crosses.

Such was its length, and such its size, to look on.

Of this one fathom length I went and severed,

And to my comrades gave it to be pointed.

They made it smooth : I sharpened it, and turned it

In the hot fire, till it was scorched and hardened.

When done, I hid it in the heaps of ordure

Which, long neglected, all the pavement covered. 330

Then ordered I the rest by lot to settle,

Who should with me, the club uplifting, venture

To churn it in his eye, when sleep o'ercame him.

The lot took those whom I had gladliest chosen,

Four ; and myself the fifth with these was added.

At eve he came, tending his fair-fleeced cattle :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Then his fat sheep into the vast cave drove he,  
The flock complete: without his hall none leaving:  
Somewhat suspecting, or divinely prompted.  
Then his large door athwart the entrance lifting, 340  
He sate, and milked his ewes and bleating she-goats,  
Each in its turn, and gave to each her young one.  
When without pause all this he had accomplished,  
Two more he seized, and made his evening banquet.  
Then spoke I to the Cyclop, standing near him,  
A bowl of dark wine in my hands extending:

Here, Cyclop, drink, after thy meal of man's-flesh:  
That thou mayst know what wine our vessel furnished.  
For thee I brought it, if thou wouldst in pity  
Have sent me home: but thou art mad past bearing: 350  
Thou arrant knave, how after this of all men  
Shall any visit thee? for thy deeds are fearful.

I spoke: he took, and drank. Strangely he chuckled  
The sweet drink tasting, and for more besought me:  
Give me it yet again, and forthwith tell me  
Thy name, that I with gifts thy heart may gladden.  
The Cyclops' fertile soil is not deficient  
In wine from bunches crushed, by heaven's rain nourished;  
But this is from ambrosia drawn, and nectar!

He spoke: again with the dark wine I plied him: 360  
Thrice gave I: thrice he drank it in his folly.  
But when the wine the Cyclop's brain had mounted,  
Then I with soothing accents thus address him:

Cyclop, wouldst know my name renowned? I'll tell thee:  
And thou the gift bestow, as thou hast promised.  
NOMAN my name is: Noman always call me  
Father, and mother, and companions each one.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

I spoke : with ruthless breast the monster answered :  
Noman then eat I last, after his comrades ;  
The others first ; behold the boon I promised. 370  
He spoke, and reeling tumbled prone, and straightway  
Lay, his thick neck stretched back ; and slumber seized him  
That conquers all :— wine from his maw came pouring,  
And lumps of flesh : drunken he belched sonorous.  
Then I the lever thrust in the thick ashes,  
Till it was heated through : and cheered my comrades  
With words, lest fearing any shrink, and fail me.  
But when the olive bar among the embers  
At point to flame, though green, showed red and glowing :  
I snatched it from the fire, while stood my comrades 380  
Around : the god within us breathed great courage.  
They seized the olive bar, at end sharp-pointed,  
And dropt it in his eye : while I, bent over,  
Drilled it. As when one boreth a ship timber  
With auger, and with thong men turn the wimble  
On each side pulling, and it runs, firm-centred :  
Thus in his eye the red-hot stake revolving  
We twirled, and round its heat the blood up bubbled.  
His lids around and brow singed the hot vapour  
From the burning ball : i' th' fire his eye-roots crackled. 390  
As when a brazier some great axe or hatchet  
Into cold water merges, hissing loudly,  
To temper it,— for thence the strength of iron :  
So hissed his eye around the stake of olive.  
Fearfully roared he : all the rocks rebellowed.  
We fled in fear : but he the stake, all dripping  
With gore abundant, from his eye extracting,  
With both hands dashed it from him in his madness ;



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

And shouted for the Cyclops who around him  
Dwelt in the caves among the woody headlands. 400

Hearing the cry, they thronged from every quarter :  
And stood around the cave, and asked what ailed him :

Why, Polyphemus, dost thou raise such tumult  
Through the ambrosial night, and break our slumbers ?  
Doth any drive thy flocks, against thy liking ?  
Or slay thyself by treachery or by violence ?

Thus from the cave replied fierce Polyphemus :  
Me Noman slays, by treachery nor by violence.

Then answering they in accents swift addrest him :  
If no man hurts thee, and alone thou bidest, 410  
From maladies sent by Zeus can none secure thee.  
Pray therefore to thy father, great Poseidon.

They spoke, departing : laughed my heart within me  
That thus my name and perfect guile deceived them.  
The Cyclop, roaring, and in pangs with anguish,  
Feeling about, the stone moved from the doorway,  
And in the passage sat, his hands extending,  
Any to catch, who with his flocks forth issued :  
So void of counsel in my mind he thought me.  
But how this best might be arranged, I pondered, 420  
Escape from death both for myself and comrades  
To find : all crafts and counsel I considered,  
As for my life ; vast was the evil near me.  
This in my mind appeared the wisest counsel :  
Wethers there were, well fed, with shaggy fleeces  
Goodly and large, in darkest wool enveloped.  
These bound I stealthily with flexile withies,  
On which the Cyclop slept, the lawless monster :  
Three in a rank ; each inmost bore a rider ;

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

One went on either side, my comrades masking. 430  
Thus three sheep each man bore : but I, the latest,  
Chose me a ram, of all the flock the fairest.  
His back I seized, and 'neath his belly clinging  
Lay ; with my hands the ample fleece tight-grasping  
And twisting round, with patient mind I held him.  
Thus, sighing sore, the morn divine we waited.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Then rushed the rams and wethers forth to pasture.  
The ewes un milked around the pens stood bleating,  
With teats distended. With his pain, their master  
Enraged, the backs of all his flock felt strictly, 440  
There as they stood : but this the fool divined not,  
That they beneath the woolly breasts were fastened.  
Last of the flock the ram stalked to the doorway,  
With his fleece laden, and myself, much pondering.  
Him stroking, thus address fierce Polyphemus :

Why thus, my ram, of all the cavern leav'st thou  
The last ? Before time thou wert not the hindmost ;  
But first to crop the meadow-blossoms tender,  
Marching before ; and first the brook's stream reaching : 450  
First too thou homeward wouldst to stall betake thee  
At eve ; but now, the last of all. Dost thou too  
Mourn thy lord's eye, which a bad man hath blinded,  
With his curst comrades, him with wine o'ercoming,  
Noman, who yet hath not escaped destruction ?  
If thou me lov'dst, and hadst a voice to tell me  
Where now he lurks, my vengeful wrath avoiding,  
His brain through all the cave each way bespattered  
Should smear the pavement, and my heart be lightened  
From all the woe which naughtful Noman wrought me. 460

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

He said, and through the doorway forth dismiss him.  
When from the cave and sheepfold some way distant,  
First from the ram I lit, then loosed my comrades.  
Swiftly the hoofed sheep with much fat laden  
In numbers gathering drove we, till our vessel  
We reached. Most welcome to our friends appeared we  
Who death escaped : the rest they mourned in sorrow.  
I suffered not, each man with frown forbidding  
To weep, but bid them quick the fair-fleeced cattle  
In the ship stowing the salt waves to traverse. 470  
Straight they embarked, and on the benches sitting  
In order struck with oars the foaming ocean.  
When we so far had rowed, as shout might hail men,  
Then I addrest with cutting words the Cyclop :

Cyclop, it was no feeble wight's companions  
Thou atest in thy cave by savage violence :  
Vengeance severe laid wait for thee and found thee.  
Wretch, who within thine house thy guests didst fear not  
To eat : for which Zeus and the gods have paid thee.

I spoke : but he in heart was doubly angered : 480  
A huge cliff's top he tore, and hurled in fury :  
It struck the waves beyond our dark-prowed vessel,  
The rudder's tip by shortest space escaping.  
Deep surged the sea beneath the rock descending,  
And her to shoreward bore the refluent billow,  
Brimming, from ocean, and on land nigh drove us.  
Then I our longest pole with both hands grasping,  
Shoved her athwart, and ordered all my comrades  
To ply their oars, that we might scape the peril,  
With my head beckoning: eager bent they o'er them. 490  
When we the waves had swept to twice the distance,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

The Cyclop I was hailing, but my comrades  
One and another with mild words restrained me :  
    Infatuate, why wilt thou provoke the savage ?  
Who cast but now to seaward, and our vessel  
Drove to the land, and we had well nigh perished.  
Had he thy voice but caught, and speaking heard thee,  
Our heads were broken, and our ship, in fragments,  
With some rough crag : such is his strength in throwing.  
They spoke : but my high-purposed spirit moved not :     500  
And then again, with angry breast, I shouted :

    Cyclop, of mortal men if any ask thee  
The ugly blot upon thine eye concerning,  
Tell them, Odysseus, siege-renowned, destroyed it,  
Laertes' son, in Ithaca's island dwelling.

I spoke : he groaned aloud, and thus address me :

    O heavens ! now oracles ancient light upon me :  
Once dwelt there here a prophet, great and noble,  
Telemus, son of Eurymus, skilled in presage :  
Who in his art grew old among the Cyclops.             510  
He told me all, how it should be hereafter,  
That by Odysseus' hands I should be blinded.  
But I some hero looked for, tall and comely,  
Hither to come, endowed with strength enormous :  
But now of stature small, nought worth, and feeble,  
Thou blindedst me, my mind with wine deceiving.  
But come, Odysseus, let me entertain thee,  
And Ennosigæus beg safe way to grant thee ;  
For I his offspring am, and he my father ;  
He, if he will, shall send thee, and no other             520  
Either of blessed gods or earthly mortals. .

    He spoke : but I in answer thus address him :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Would I might thee of life and soul bereaving,  
So surely send down to the realm of Hadès,  
As thy dread sire shall fail to heal thine eyesight.  
Thus spoke I: he forthwith to king Poseidon  
Prayed, to the starry heavens his hands outstretching:

Hear me, dark-haired Poseidon, earth-surrounder:

If I am truly thine, and thou my father,  
Grant that Odysseus ne'er his home revisit, 530  
Laertes' son, in Ithaca's island dwelling.  
Or if he must his friends behold, and visit  
His stately home, and his own native country,  
Late may he come and wretched, reft of comrades,  
On foreign ship, and in his home find sorrow.

He spoke in prayer: dark-haired Poseidon heard him.

Then he again a rock far larger lifting  
Brandished and hurled, his strength immense exerting.  
The missile lit short of our dark-prowed vessel,  
The rudder tip by shortest space escaping. 540

Deep surged the sea beneath the rock descending,  
Her onward bearing, and on shore nigh drove us.  
But when we reached the island, where our vessels  
Waited us all together, and our comrades  
Sat full of woe, for our arrival longing:

Then on the sands our ship ashore we guided,  
Amid the broken surf ourselves alighting.  
Straight from the ship the Cyclop's cattle taking  
We shared, that none might want an equal portion.  
To me alone the ram my mailed companions 550

In the division gave: him on the sea beach  
I to all ruling Zeus, gatherer of tempests,  
Offered, and burnt the thighs: but he nought heeded



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, IX.

Our sacrifice, but planned how all might perish,  
My goodly ships, and my beloved companions.

Thus all the day, until the sun sunk downwards,  
Sweet wine and meat profuse we sat enjoying.

But when the sun set, and the darkness followed,  
Then by the ocean surf we lay and slumbered.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning, 560

Then I, my comrades urging, bade them straightway  
Embark themselves, and loose their vessels' moorings :

Straight they obeyed, and on the benches sitting

In order, struck with oars the foaming ocean.

Thence sailed we onward, grieving in our spirits,

Glad of our lives, but our dear comrades mourning.

X.

WE reached the isle Æolia, Æolus' dwelling,  
 Hippotès' son, dear to the gods immortal.  
 Floateth the island \* : round it is a rampart  
 Of brass, unbroken : and sheer cliffs uptowering.  
 To him were children twelve born in his palace,  
 Six daughters fair, — six sons, in prime of manhood.  
 His daughters gave he to his sons for partners.  
 They ever more beside their sire and mother  
 Banquet : before them heaped are meats unnumbered.  
 All day the savoury hall with merriment ringeth ;                   10  
 And then at night beside their noble consorts  
 They sleep, on tapestries fine, and costly couches.  
 One month he treated me, and all things asked me,  
 Of Ilium, and our ships, and homeward journey ;  
 All which I told him duly, each in order.  
 And when I asked dismissal, and besought him  
 To send me, he complied, my way providing.  
 A bag of nine-year bullock's skin he gave me,  
 In which the furious winds were all imprisoned.  
 For him hath Zeus lord of the winds appointed,                   20  
 To stay or rouse them, as may be his pleasure.  
 Then in my ship with a bright cord he bound them

\* The interpretation is not quite certain ; whether it is meant that this island was a floating and vagrant one, as Delos is reported in legend once to have been, or simply that it, as other islands, was circumnavigable. The former seems more probable.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Of silver, that no breath might blow, escaping.  
On me he bid to blow the breathing Zephyr,  
Us and our ships to waft; but nought availed he  
To bring us home; we perished in our folly.  
Nine days we sailed,—nine days and nights together:  
On the tenth night our country's shores descried we,  
And saw, as we approached, their beacons glimmer.  
Then fell sweet slumber on me, faint and weary; 30  
Ever I held the sheet: nor any trusted  
Of all my crew,—our home to reach the sooner.  
Then to each other spoke in words my comrades,  
Thinking that home I carried gold and silver,  
Gifts from the great-souled Æolus, Hippotës' offspring:  
And thus one spoke, his neighbour next addressing:  
Ye gods! how is this man beloved and honoured  
By all men, when their land and town he visits:  
Many brave spoils from Troy he brings, and booty  
Endless; but we, bound on the self-same journey, 40  
With empty hands are to our home returning.  
And now hath Æolus this in friendship given him:  
Come let us straightway see, what is this secret,  
How much the skin contains of gold and silver.  
They spoke; prevailed my comrades' evil counsel;  
The skin they loosed, and all the winds forth issued.  
Them quickly seizing bore to sea a tempest  
Weeping, away from home; but I, awaking,  
Within my dauntless soul in doubt considered,  
Whether to leap and perish in the ocean, 50  
Or yet bear up and stay among the living.  
But I endured: enfolded in my mantle  
In my ship lay I: while the storm our vessels

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Back to Æolia drove : deep sighed my comrades.  
There on the beach we landed and drew water :  
And by their ships their meal partook my comrades.  
But when of meat and drink each man had tasted,  
Then I an herald chose, and one companion,  
And Æolus' splendid mansion sought. I found him  
Banqueting, by his consort and his children. 60  
The palace reached, by the doorposts on the threshold  
We sate : amazed in spirit they demanded :

How art thou come, Odysseus? What god hates thee?  
Duly we sped thee going, that thou mightest  
Thy country reach, and home, and all thou lovest.  
They spoke : I answered, pierced at heart with sorrow :  
My bad friends wronged me, and, besides them, slumber  
Accurst : but help me, friends ; the power is with you.  
I spoke, with softest words their spirits soothing :  
Mute were the rest : but thus the father answered : 70

Out of this isle with speed, of men most guilty !  
I may not entertain, nor speed at parting  
Those who are hated by the gods immortal.  
Go—for by heaven detested thou returnest.  
He spoke, and forth dismiss me, deeply sighing.

Thence sailed we further, grieving in our spirits.  
Worn were my men with rowing, toil relentless,  
By our own fault ; nor any sped our voyage.  
Still six days sailed we, — days and nights together :  
And on the seventh reached Lamus' lofty fortress, 80  
High-gated, Læstrygonian : where the shepherd  
At eve returning, calls the listening herdsman :  
There sleepless men might gather wages double,  
Once by the herds, — once, white-fleeced sheep attending :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

So close the ways of night and day together.\*  
The far-famed port we made, round which a tall rock  
On each side rising, all its bay embraces ;  
And headlands jutting forth, each other fronting,  
The mouths defend, leaving an entrance narrow ;  
There all my crews steered in their well-trimmed vessels : 90  
Moored were they close within the hollow harbour ;  
For never entered there with surging billow  
Wave great or small ; but all was bright calm always.  
But I alone outside my dark ship halted,  
At the port's end, and to the rock fast moored her.  
Then stood I, on a craggy headland mounted.  
No trace of herds or human labours saw I ;  
But smoke alone, up from the ground ascending.  
On this some comrades sent I to gain knowledge  
What men the land possest, its fruit partaking. 100  
Two men I chose, and with them sent an herald.  
They went, a smooth road taking, whereon waggons  
Bore to the town wood from the lofty mountains.  
There by the town a maiden drawing water  
They found, the Læstrygon Antiphates' daughter.  
She to the clear-streamed fountain was descending,  
Artasia, whence the townsmen fetched their water ;  
Then stood they and enquired, the maid addressing,  
Who was their king, and o'er what people ruling.  
Straightway her father's lofty roof she showed them. 110  
They the grand palace entered, and his consort

\* This is interpreted to mean that the pastures were so rich, that the field which fed the herds by night might feed the sheep by day. But this does not seem to satisfy the last line of the description : and probably some mythical sense is latent.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Saw, vast as mountain-top : and seeing, loathed her.  
She from the forum famed Antiphates summoned,  
Her husband, bent upon my friends' destruction.  
One straightway seized he, and his meal made off him :  
The two in flight forth rushing, reached the vessels :  
He through the city raised the cry : which hearing  
Came stalwart Læstrygons from every quarter,  
Myriads, in form not like to men, but giants.  
They from the hills with rocks, each one man's burden, 120  
Cast : dire the din which rose among the vessels  
Of dying men, and crashing ships : then spitting  
The men like fish, their unblest meal enjoyed they.

While in the harbour's depth they thus destroyed them,  
I, my sharp falchion from my thigh out-drawing,  
Cut off the hawser of my dark-prowed vessel.  
Swiftly with eager voice I bid my comrades,  
To ply their oars, that they might 'scape the danger.  
Together all they beat, destruction dreading.  
Grateful, to sea the beetling headlands distanced 130  
My ship : the rest all perished there together.  
Thence sailed we onward, grieving in our spirits,  
Glad of our lives, but our dear comrades mourning.

The Ææan island reached we, where abideth  
Circë, dread power, fair-tressed, with voice melodious,  
Own sister to the cruel-souled Æætēs.  
For they were sprung from Helios, light of mortals,  
Both by one mother, Persë, Ocean's daughter.  
There on the shore our ship was steered in silence  
Into the sheltering port : — some god directed. 140  
There landing, two whole days and nights together  
Lay we, with toil and woe our hearts consuming.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

But when the bright-haired morning brought the third day,  
Then I, my spear and my sharp falchion taking,  
To place of prospect from the ship ascended,  
To see the signs of men, and hear their voices.  
There stood I, on a lofty headland mounted,  
And smoke beheld out from the ground up-curling,  
From Circë's hall, through woods and shady thickets.  
Then in my mind I pondered, inly scheming, 150  
To go and spy, since I the smoke had witnessed.  
But thus to me considering seemed the safest :  
First to my ship and the sea-shore returning,  
To give my crew their meat, and scouts send forward.  
When now I near approached to my trim vessel,  
Me in my solitude some god compassioned,  
Who in my very path a stag tall-antlered  
Sent : he from forest pasture sought the river  
To drink, struck by the sun's meridian fervour.  
Him coming up midway between the shoulders 160  
I smote : the brazen spear, right through, passed outward.  
Prone with a cry he fell, and life forsook him.  
Then standing on him, from the wound my weapon  
I drew : and him straight on the ground arranging  
I left, and pulled me withes and supple osiers,  
Of which a twisted rope in length a fathom  
Plaiting, the monster's feet I bound together.  
Slung on my neck to my dark ship I bore him,  
Propped on my spear ; for hardly on my shoulder  
Could one hand bear the beast : so huge the carcass. 170  
Him by the ship I cast : then roused my comrades  
With cheering words, in turn by each man standing :  
Not yet, my friends, shall we go down, through sorrowing,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

To Hadēs' halls, before our day appointed :  
But come, while in our ship is drink and victual,  
Think we of food, nor thus consume with hunger.

I spoke : they to my words gave swift compliance :  
Uncovering, by the shore of the wild ocean  
They saw the stag : for monstrous was the carcass.  
But when with joy their gazing eyes were sated, 180  
Their hands they laved, and cooked the glorious banquet.  
Thus all the day, until the sun sunk downward,  
Sweet wine and meat profuse we sat enjoying :  
But when the sun set, and the darkness followed,  
Then by the ocean surf we lay and slumbered.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Then I, assembling all, thus spoke among them :  
Hear ye my words, though suffering woe, my comrades :  
We know not, friends, the ways of night or morning,  
Nor where the bright sun 'neath the world repaireth, 190  
Nor where he riseth. But with speed consult we  
If we have counsel—but of such I know not,  
For I surveyed, on craggy headland mounted,  
This isle, crowned with the boundless sea on all sides ;  
Level it lies : smoke from the midst ascending  
Beheld I with mine eyes, through densest thickets.

I spoke : but all their spirit sunk within them :  
The Læstrygonian's deed to mind recalling,  
And cruelty of the man-devouring Cyclop.  
Shrilly they wailed, many a warm tear shedding ; 200  
But nought their wailing nor their tears availed them.  
Then I divided all my buskined comrades  
In two bands, and o'er each I set a captain :  
Myself and brave Eurylochus, to lead them.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Our lots we quickly shook in brazen helmet :  
Eurylochus' lot leapt forth, my godlike comrade ;  
Then set he forth, with fellows two and twenty,  
Weeping : and us they left weeping behind them.  
The hall of Circë found they, built in thickets,  
Of polished stones, in place of choicest shelter. 210

There all around were mountain wolves, and lions,  
Whom she had charmed, seduced with potions noxious :  
Nor did they rush upon my friends, but blandly,  
Erect, with waving tails, they fawned upon them.  
As when about their lord, from banquet coming,  
Dogs fawn, for morsels for their maw he bringeth,—  
So around them strong-taloned wolves and lions  
Fawned : they with fear the monsters grim regarded.  
I'th' doorway stood they of the fair-tressed goddess ;  
And Circë heard within with clear voice singing, 220  
Weaving a web divine and large ; such texture  
As goddess worketh, airy, light, and splendid.

Thus then began Politës, hero-leader,  
Of all my mates to me the best and dearest :  
Friends, one within weaveth her loomwork, singing  
Sweetly, that all the pavements ring with music,  
Woman, or goddess : let us straight accost her.  
He thus advised : and they address and called her.  
She quickly coming spread the glittering portals,  
And bade them in : they in their folly entered : 230  
Eurylochus remained, some craft suspecting.  
Entered, she placed them all on stools and couches,  
And mixed them cheese and meal and virgin honey  
With Pramnian wine, but with the meal she mingled  
Foul drugs, that they might quite forget their country.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

When she had given them, and they drank, then straightway  
With her wand touching, in her sties she thrust them.

The heads of swine they had, their voice and bodies,  
And bristles : but their minds were as beforetime ;  
Thus were they pent up, weeping sore : but Circë . 240

Acorns and beech-nuts cast to them, and cornels  
To eat, the food of swine, on earth that grovel.

Then ran Eurylochus to the swift dark vessel  
To tell the fate relentless of his comrades.

Nor could he utter word, though much desiring,  
Struck with great grief at heart : his eye ran over  
With tears, and all his sense was rapt in sorrow.

While in amazement all remained enquiring,  
At length the fate of our companions told he :

As bid, the thickets sought we, great Odysseus ; . 250  
There in the woods we found fair palace, builded  
Of polished stones, in place of choicest shelter.

There one sung sweetly, a great loomwork weaving,  
Goddess, or woman : whom they stood and summoned.

She quickly coming spread the glittering portals,  
And bade them in : they in their folly entered :

But I without remained, some craft suspecting.

Together vanished they, nor of them any

Again appeared, though long I sat expecting.

He spoke : but I my sword, with silver studded, . 260

Vast, brazen, and my bow, cast o'er my shoulder,

And bid him straight by the same path to lead me.

But he besought me, both my knees embracing,

And weeping, thus with winged words address me :

Divine one ! thither take me not, but leave me.

For sure I am thou'lt ne'er return, nor any



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Bring of thy comrades. Rather with this remnant  
Fly we : for thus we yet may 'scape destruction.

He spoke : but I in answer thus addrest him :  
Eurylochus, thou indeed behind mayst tarry, 270  
Eating and drinking, by the dark-hulled vessel :  
But I must go : for stern compulsion sends me.

I spoke : and from the ship and sea departed.  
But when I came, the sacred valleys threading,  
Close on the palace of the enchantress Circë,  
Hermeias, golden-staved, my steps encountered,  
As I the halls approached ; to young man likened  
When buds the beard, and youth is prime in beauty.

Then fastening on my hand, he spoke, and named me :  
Where, wretched one, among the mountains far'st thou, 280  
A stranger, and alone ? Thy mates hath Circë  
Penned in her halls, to burrowing swine transmuted.  
Goest thou to loose them ? thou thyself shalt never  
Return again, but with the others tarry.

But now from peril will I save and free thee :  
Behold this virtuous drug ; take it, and enter  
The halls of Circë ; safe its power shall keep thee.  
Now will I tell thee Circë's wiles destructive.

Brew will she mix thee, noxious drugs inserting,  
But shall not thus o'er thee prevail : thy safety 290  
This virtuous drug, my gift. Now hear the sequel.  
When with her taper wand Circë shall touch thee,  
Then thy sharp falchion from thy thigh forth-drawing,  
Rush thou upon her, as to kill her purposed.

Then will she to her bed in terror bid thee :  
Refuse not thou the bidding of the goddess,  
That she may loose thy friends, and fair entreat thee.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

But make thou her the gods' great oath to swear thee,  
That she for thee will plot no further mischief :  
Lest of thy might she strip and leave thee powerless. 300

Thus Argeiphontes : and from earth uprooting  
Gave me the drug, and taught me all its nature :  
Black was the root, but white as milk the blossom.  
MOLY its name in heaven ; 'tis hard to dig it  
For mortal man ; but gods can all accomplish.  
Then flew Hermeias to the high Olympus  
Over the wooded isle : while I to Circë  
Proceeded ; as I went, at heart much pondering.  
By the gates stood I of the fair-tressed goddess.  
There stood, and called : the goddess heard my accents. 310  
She, quickly coming, spread the glittering portals,  
And bade me in : I followed, sad in spirit.

Within, on silver-studded seat she placed me,  
Fair, richly wrought ; and at my feet a footstool.  
Then mingled for me brew in golden goblet :  
And shred her poisons in, with wicked purpose.  
Then gave me, and I drank, the charm escaping.  
Then touching with her wand, she spoke and named me :  
Turn to the sty and wallow with thy comrades.  
Thus she ; but I my falchion keen forth-drawing 320  
Rushed upon Circë, as to kill her purposed.

Loud-shrieking sunk she down, my knees embracing,  
And wailing thus in wingëd words addrest me :  
Who art thou ? whence ? where are thy home and parents ?  
I marvel that these drugs have failed to charm thee :  
Never, no never man hath these resisted,  
Once having drunk, and in his mouth received them.  
Some iron heart within thy bosom dwelleth.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Or thou Odysseus art, much-versed, whom ever  
Announced to me the gold-staved Argeiphontes, 330  
From Troy returning in his swift dark vessel.  
But come, sheathe thou thy sword ; and then let us two  
Ascend the bed of love, that there uniting  
In rites connubial, we each other gladden.

She spoke : and I in answer thus address her :  
O Circë, how canst thou to love thee bid me,  
Who in thine halls to swine hast turned my comrades ?  
And me now thou hast here, in craft invitest  
Into thy chamber, on thy bed to lay me,  
That stripped, thou mayst unman, and powerless leave me ?  
Never will I thy bed consent to enter, 341  
Except, O goddess, thou a great oath swear me,  
That thou for me wilt plot no further mischief.

I spoke : she forthwith swore as I commanded.  
Now when she swearing had her oath accomplished,  
The splendid couch of Circë I ascended :  
The while her handmaids in the house were busied,  
Four, who did all her will within the palace,  
Nymphs, having birth from fountains and from forests :  
And sacred rivers flowing to the ocean. 350  
Of these, one spread the seats with goodly cushions  
Purple above, and linen spread beneath them ;  
Another placed before the seats fair tables  
Of silver, golden baskets on them laying :  
The third, sweet honeyed wine in goblet mingled  
Of silver, and brought golden cups for drinking.  
The fourth brought water, and a large fire kindled  
Beneath a tripod vast, the water warming.  
But when within the cauldron boiled the water,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Then to a bath she led, and from it washed me, 360  
Pleasantly pouring it o'er head, and shoulders,  
Toilworn fatigue from all my limbs removing.  
When she had bathed me, and with oil anointed,  
Fair woollen robe she on me placed, and tunic :  
Then led me in, and on seat silver-studded  
Seated, dædalean work, with footstool furnished.  
Then poured a maiden water from an ewer  
Beautiful, golden, o'er a bowl of silver  
Upon my hands, and spread a polished table :  
While the chaste stewardess brought on provisions, 370  
Meats various, lavish of her stores abundant ;  
And bid me eat : but food my spirit pleased not :  
Full of sad thoughts I sat, and ill foreboded.  
When Circë saw me thus, nor on the viands  
My hands forth reaching, but absorbed in sadness,  
Near me she stood, and in swift words address me :  
Why thus, Odysseus, like one speechless sitt'st thou,  
Thine heart consuming, meat nor drink partaking ?  
Some guile thou fearest, having for suspicion  
No cause : for I by solemn oath abjured it. 380  
She spoke : but I in answer thus address her :  
What man, O Circë, with true heart and loyal,  
Of meat and drink could bear to take his pleasure,  
Till he should free his comrades, and behold them ?  
But if thou bidst me eat and drink contented,  
Free them, that I may see my loved companions.  
I said : and Circë went forth from the palace,  
Holding her wand in hand : the sty-doors opened  
And drove them forth, nine-year-old swine resembling.  
Upright they stood before her : she, throughout them 390

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Going, with some new drug anointed each one.  
Then from their limbs the bristles fell, the produce  
Of that curst drug which potent Circë gave them.  
Straightway became they men, and than beforetime  
Younger, and goodlier to view, and taller.  
They knew me, each my hands in fondness seizing :  
From all sprung tears and sobs : the palace round us  
Echoed : their lot herself the goddess pitied :  
And near me standing spoke the nymph divinest :  
Heaven-born Laertes' son, much-versed Odysseus, 400  
Now go thou to the shore and thy swift vessel.  
Then first of all to land your vessel drawing,  
Stow in the caves your arms, and all your cargo :  
Next, come thyself, and bring thy loved companions.

She spoke : complied my prompting mind within me :  
And to the shore and my swift ship repaired I.  
There found I by the bark my loved companions  
In bitter sorrow many a warm tear dropping.  
As when the calves afield around their mothers  
That home return with lavish herbage sated, 410  
Rush in a troop, and frisk, — nor can the pinfold  
Keep them, with frequent blare their dams surrounding ;  
So around me, when first their eyes beheld me,  
Weeping they thronged : nor otherwise their spirit  
Was touched, than if their home they saw, and country,  
The crag-built Ithaca of their birth and childhood.  
Then, weeping, they in winged words address me :

Heaven-born ! with like delight we hail thy coming,  
As if we Ithaca saw, our native country.  
But come, the fate of our companions tell us. 420  
They spoke : and I with soothing accents answered :



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Before all else, to land our vessel drawing,  
Stow in the caves our arms and all our cargo.  
And then yourselves prepare, with me to follow,  
Our friends to see in Circë's sacred palace  
Eating and drinking; for abundance have they.

I spoke: and quickly they obeyed my bidding:  
Eurylochus alone kept back my comrades,  
And them addressing spoke in winged accents:  
Wretches, ah wherefore flee, in love with ruin, 430  
To seek the halls of Circë, who by witchcraft  
To swine or wolves will turn us, or to lions,  
To guard her mighty palace by compulsion?  
Thus did the Cyclop, when his cavern entered  
Our comrades, and their leader rash Odysseus:  
For by his madness our companions perished.

He spake: but I within my spirit pondered,  
Whether my sharp sword from my thigh out-drawing  
His head to cast upon the ground dissevered,—  
Although my near relation: but my comrades, 440  
Both one and all, with soothing words dissuaded:

Heaven-born, him let us leave, if thou commandest,  
Here by the ship to stay, and guard our vessel.  
But us to Circë's sacred palace lead thou.

They spoke; and left the ship and shore of ocean.  
Nor did Eurylochus by the vessel tarry,  
But followed; for my stern rebuke he dreaded.  
Meanwhile my friends within her palace, Circë  
Had washed with care and with fresh oil anointed,  
And placed upon them goodly robes and tunics: 450  
And them we found all in the palace feasting.  
When they each other saw, and all had questioned,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

They fell to weeping, and the halls resounded.

Then standing near, the nymph divine addrest me :  
Heaven-born Laertes' son, deep-schemed Odysseus,  
No more the warm tear shed ; myself hath knowledge  
Of what ye suffered in the fishy waters,  
And how on land fierce men have done ye mischief.  
But come, of meat partake, and wine consoling,  
That may again within you raise your courage, 460  
As when ye first your country's shore deserted  
Of craggy Ithaca :—spiritless now and powerless,  
Thinking of nought but journeyings hard ; nor ever  
Is your mind joyful, on your sufferings brooding.  
She spoke : complied my prompting mind within me.  
There all the day, until a year past o'er us,  
We sate, much flesh and much sweet wine partaking.  
But when the year completed brought new seasons,  
[The moons had waned, and all the long days ended,\*]  
Then called me forth and spoke my loved companions : 470  
Leader divine, thy native home remember :  
Since it is fated that thou reach in safety  
Thy high-roofed palace and thy native country.  
They spoke ; complied my prompting mind within me.  
Then all the day until the sun sunk downward,  
Sweet wine and meat profuse we sat enjoying :  
[But when the sun set, and the darkness followed,  
Along the shadowy halls they lay and slumbered.]  
But I, the splendid couch of Circë mounting,  
Prayed at her knees ; propitious heard the goddess ; 480  
And, her addressing, spoke in wingèd accents :

\* This line is wanting in some MSS. and ancient editions. The same is the case with lines 477, 478.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Circë, the word perform which thou didst promise,  
To send me home; by this my bosom yearneth,  
And my companions, who consume my spirit  
Weeping around me, when thou art not with us.

I spoke, and thus the nymph divinest answered:  
Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,  
Reluctant bide ye in mine house no longer:  
But other journey waits thee first, to visit  
The realm of Hadës, and dread Persephoneia, 490  
To ask the soul of him of Thebes, Teiresias,  
The prophet blind, whose power is unabated,  
To whom, when dead, Persephonë gave wisdom  
Alone, and truth: the rest are fitting shadows.

She spoke: but all my heart sunk down within me:  
On the bed I sate, and wept: nor did my spirit  
Longer desire to live and see the sunlight.

But when with woe and weeping I was sated,  
Then I, in words replying, thus address her:  
O Circë, who shall such a journey lead me? 500  
None in his dark ship ever yet reached Hadës.

I spoke; and thus the nymph divinest answered:  
Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,  
For lack of one to guide thy vessel care not:  
Set up thy mast, and stretch thy white sails o'er it,  
And sit: the northern breeze shall bear thee thither.  
But when thy ship hath crost the stream of ocean,  
Where is a low shore, Persephoneia's precinct,  
And lofty poplars, and fruit-casting alders:  
Land there thy ship by the deep-eddying ocean, 510  
And go thyself to Hadës' gloomy dwelling.  
Where into Acheron Pyriphlegethon floweth,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

And the dark branch of Stygian flood, Cocytus,  
There is a cliff where two loud streams commingle;  
There landing, noble chief, as I command thee,  
Dig thou a trench, an ell in each dimension:  
Then round it pour to all the dead an offering,  
With milk and honey first, with sweet wine after,  
Lastly with water, and white meal pour on it.  
Then pray with vows the dead men's airy shadows, 520  
In Ithaca thy fairest barren heifer  
At home to slay, and heap the pile with treasures.  
But to Teiresias, special gift, a wether  
Offer, all black, of thy whole flock the primest.  
Then, when with prayers the illustrious tribes departed  
Thou hast besought, a ram and black ewe offer,  
Towards Erebus turned: but stand thyself averted,  
The river's current watching: where in numbers  
The ghosts will gather of the dead departed:  
Then urge thou thy companions, and command them 530  
The sheep which lie with ruthless falchion slaughtered  
To flay and burn: the gods meanwhile beseeching,  
Great Hadës' power, and dread Persephoneia.  
Thyself, thy sharp sword from thy thigh out-drawing,  
Sit, warding off the dead men's airy shadows  
The blood from tasting, till thou see Teiresias.  
Ere long, Odysseus, will the seer approach thee,  
Who all thy way will tell, and journey's measures,  
And thy return across the fishy waters.  
She spoke: and morning golden-throned rose on us. 540  
On me she garments placed, a robe and tunic,  
Herself in mantle silver-bright arraying,  
Thin, beautiful; and round her loins a girdle,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, X.

Fair, golden ; and in veil her head enwrapping.  
Then going through the house I roused my comrades,  
With soothing accents bland by each man standing :  
No longer sleeping pluck the flower of slumber ;  
But let us go : enough hath Circë warned me.

I spoke : complied their stirring mind within them :  
Yet not even thence brought I unscathed my comrades : 550  
Elpenor was there, of us all the youngest,  
Unfamed in war, nor like the rest in wisdom :  
He from his friends apart on Circë's house-top,  
Heavy with wine, for love of cool was sleeping :  
Then the noise hearing of his moving comrades,  
Sudden he rose, nor once in heart bethought him  
By the long stair to come down safely backwards :  
Sheer from the roof he fell, from the spine severing  
His neck : his soul to Hadës' realms descended.  
Then thus I spoke to my assembling comrades : 560  
Doubtless ye think, your much-loved native country  
To see : but other route hath Circë bid us,  
To Hadës' realms and dread Persephoneia,  
Counsel to seek of him of Thebes, Teiresias.

I spoke : but all their spirit sunk within them :  
They sate them down, and tore their hair in sorrow.  
In vain : for nought might their laments avail them.  
While to our swift ship and the shore of ocean  
We sorrowing went, and many a warm tear shedding,  
Circë meantime, to our dark ship descending, 570  
Bound there a ram, and ewe, of sable fleeces :  
Us lightly passing. If a god consent not,  
Who can discern him, coming or departing ?



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

XI.

WHEN to the sea we came and to our vessel,  
First to the ocean-flood divine we drew her ;  
Then in the ship her mast and sails arranging,  
We placed on board the victims, and embarking  
We went in sorrow, many a warm tear shedding.  
To waft us on, behind our dark-prowed vessel  
The fair-tressed Circë, goddess dread and vocal,  
Sent a sail-filling breeze, companion welcome.  
Then having bent all tackle in our vessel,  
We sat : the wind and helm the ship directed. 10  
All day with straining sails she skimmed the waters,  
Till set the sun and all the ways were darkened ;  
Then came she to the bounds of deep-streamed ocean,  
Where is the race and town of men Cimmerian,  
Hidden in mist and cloud : nor ever on them  
The cheerful sun looks with his beams resplendent,  
Not when he up the starry heaven is climbing,  
Nor when again the earth from heaven he seeketh,  
But o'er the wretches night hangs brooding ever.  
There stranded we our ship : and forth the victims 20  
We took, and then ourselves by ocean's current  
Went, till we reached the place which Circë told us.  
Then held Eurylochus and Perimedes  
The victims, while my falchion sharp out-drawing  
A trench I dug, an ell in each dimension.  
Round it to all the dead we poured libations

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

With milk and honey, and with sweet wine after,  
Lastly with water : and white meal poured over :  
Then prayed with vows the dead men's airy shadows,  
In Ithaca my fairest barren heifer 30  
At home to slay, and heap the pile with treasures.  
But to Teiresias, special gift, a wether  
I offered, black, of all my flock the primest.  
Then when with prayers and vows the tribes departed  
I had besought, the sheep I took, and slew them  
Over the trench : ran the black blood : assembled  
The ghosts from Erebus of dead departed,  
Brides, and young men, and elders much-enduring,  
And tender virgins, fresh in recent sorrow :  
And many with the brazen spear deep-wounded, 40  
Men slain in war, their blood-stained weapons holding.  
Hither and thither round the trench they flitted,  
Shrieking aloud : pale terror seized upon me.  
Then urged I my companions, and commanded  
The sheep which lay with ruthless falchion slaughtered  
To flay and burn : the gods meanwhile beseeching,  
Dread Hadës' power, and dark Persephoneia.  
Myself, my sharp sword from my thigh out-drawing,  
Sat, warding off the dead men's airy shadows  
The blood from tasting, till I saw Teiresias. 50  
First came the spirit of my mate Elpenor ;  
Beneath the wide earth he was not yet buried,  
For we his body left in Circë's palace  
Unwept and uninterred : for haste constrained us.  
Him when I saw at heart I pitied, weeping,  
And him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents :  
Elpenor, how the shadowy realms attain'dst thou,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Swifter on foot, than I in my dark vessel ?

I spoke : and he with groans replied in answer :  
Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus, 60  
Me evil fate, and wine unbounded, ruined.

Lying on Circë's house-top, I bethought not  
By the long stair to come down safely backwards,  
But from the roof fell sheer, from the spine severing  
My neck ; my soul to Hadës' realm descended.

Now pray I thee by those thou left'st behind thee,  
Thy wife, and sire who tended thee in childhood,  
And only son Telemachus in thy palace,—  
For this I know, that homeward bent from Hadës  
First on Ææa thou wilt land thy vessel,— 70

There, I beseech thee, king, me to remember :  
Leave me not, homeward-bound, unwept, unburied,  
Departing, — lest for me heaven's wrath o'ertake thee ;  
But burn me with mine armour which is on me,  
And a tomb heap me on the grey sea's margin,  
To tell my tale of woe to after-ages.

This do : and on my tomb the oar erect thou,  
With which I, living, rowed among my comrades.

He spoke : and I in answer thus addrest him :  
All this, poor friend, will I for thee accomplish. 80  
Thus we with mournful words each other answering  
Sate : o'er the blood with drawn sword I on this side,  
On that, my comrade's spirit, much discoursing.

Came too the ghost of my departed mother,  
Great-souled Autolycus' daughter Anticleia :  
Yet living, when I left for sacred Ilion.  
Her when I saw I weeping inly pitied :  
Yet not even thus allowed, though deeply grieving,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

To touch the blood, before I saw Teiresias.

Then came the ghost of him of Thebes, Teiresias, 90  
With golden sceptre,—knew me, and addrest me :

Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,  
Why, wretched one, the sun's bright rays deserting,  
Com'st thou, the spirits' cheerless home to visit ?  
But from the trench recede, and stay thy falchion,  
That I may drink the blood, and truth declare thee.

He spoke : and I my studded sword withdrawing  
Fixed in its sheath : and then, the black blood tasted,  
Addrest me thus in words the blameless prophet :  
Painless return thou seekest, brave Odysseus : 100

A painful one the gods decree : forgets not,  
I trow, Ennosigæus yet the anger  
In which he holds thee for his dear son blinded.  
But yet ev'n thus ye shall arrive, though suffering,  
If thou thy lust will curb, and thy companions',  
When first thou touchest in thy tight-built vessel  
The isle Thrinakia, from the blue sea landed ;  
And grazing herds ye find, and flocks unnumbered  
Of the great Sun, who sees and hears of all things :  
These if thou leav'st untouched, and mindst thy journey, 110  
Ev'n yet to Ithaca ye may come though suffering :  
But hurt them, and I doom to sure destruction  
Thy ship and crew : and if thyself escapest,  
Late shalt thou reach it, reft of all thy comrades,  
On foreign ship : and in thine home find mischief,  
Outrageous men of pride who waste thy substance,  
Wooing thy spouse divine, and dowries bringing ;  
But thou appearing shalt their insolence punish.  
Then when the suitors in thine halls paternal

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

By craft thou shalt have slain, or keen sword boldly, 120  
Then go thou out, a handy oar forth taking,  
Till thou shalt find a race, the sea who know not :  
Nor eat their daily food with salt commingled,  
Nor ken they aught of ships with bows empurpled,  
Nor handy oars, which are as wings to vessels.  
A sign I tell thee plain whereby to know them :  
Whene'er another traveller with thee meeting,  
Shall say thou bear'st a fan upon thy shoulder,  
Then in the earth thy handy oar infixing,  
Fair offerings offer thou to king Poseidon, 130  
A ram, and bull, and boar, on sows that leapeth :  
Then home return, and sacred hecatombs offer  
To the immortal gods who heaven inhabit,  
To all in turn. Then to thee from the ocean  
Shall come a painless death, which shall remove thee  
Softly, in hale old age : while round thee prosper  
Thy people. Such the truth which I foretell thee.  
He spoke : and I in answer thus address him :  
Teiresias, thus then have the gods appointed.  
But come, declare me this, and tell me truly : 140  
My deceased mother's spirit here behold I :  
Mute sits she near the blood, nor has she courage  
Her son's face to behold, nor to address him.  
Say, king, how she may know me for her offspring ?  
I spoke : and he replying thus address me :  
With ease I tell thee, — in thy memory store it :  
Whome'er thou sufferest of the dead departed  
To touch the blood, he shall the truth declare thee :  
But whom thou sufferest not, he back returneth.  
This said, to Hadës' realm the spirit flitted 150



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Of king Teiresias, all his warnings uttered.

But I my place retained, until my mother  
Came, and the dark blood drank : forthwith she knew me.  
And weeping, in swift accents thus address me :

My child, how cam'st thou 'neath the misty darkness,  
Yet living, — hard for those who live to visit ?  
For here great rivers flow, and dreadful currents,  
First ocean's stream, which no man can pass over  
Travelling on foot, unless with tight ship furnished.  
Hast thou from Troy hither arrived, thus errant 160  
With ship, and crew, long time ? nor yet hast landed  
On Ithaca ? nor seen at home thy consort ?

She spoke : and I in answer thus address her :  
My mother, need hath brought me down to Hadës,  
The soul to seek of him of Thebes, Teiresias.  
Achæa have I ne'er approached, nor landed  
On mine own land, but wander full of sorrow,  
Since first I followed godlike Agamemnon  
To Ilion steed-renowned, to fight the Trojans.  
But come, declare me this and tell me truly : 170  
What fate of slow-paced death at length subdued thee ?  
Some long disease ? or with her painless arrows  
Smote thee the huntress Artemis, and slew thee ?  
Tell of my sire too, and my child left living,  
If they have yet my dignity, or other  
Possess it, hoping my return no longer.  
Say too the counsel of the wife I wooed me ;  
Guards she my son, and keeps my wealth together,  
Or is she to some chief Achæan wedded ?

I spoke : and answered thus my reverend mother : 180  
Still waits she patient with enduring spirit,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Within thine halls, and wastes in sorrow ever  
Her nights and days, with bitter tears and wailing.  
Thy throne hath none invaded : but in quiet  
Telemachus tills thy fields, and equal banquets  
Shares, as befits a ruling prince to share in,  
For all invite him. But thy sire remaineth  
Afield, nor comes to town : nor hath he couches,  
Nor beds, nor quilts, nor richly-patterned blankets,  
But in the winter sleeps he with the servants 190  
In corner, by the fire, in warmest garments :  
And when the summer comes and fruitful autumn,  
Along the acres of the wine-stored vineyard  
Thick on the surface beds of leaves are scattered,  
Where lies he mourning, feeding inward sorrow,  
Weeping thy fate : and sad old age creeps on him.  
Thus also perished I, to fate submitting ;  
Not the sure-aiming huntress in the palace  
Smote, aiming with her painless darts, and slew me :  
Nor did disease come on me, which most often 200  
By sad decay steals from the limbs the spirit ;  
But fond regrets for thee, my brave Odysseus,  
And all thy love, of my sweet life have robbed me.  
She spoke : but I yearned deeply in my spirit  
To clasp the ghost of my departed mother :  
Thrice I essayed by strong desire excited :  
Thrice from my hands like dream or empty shadow  
It faded : grief sat heavier on my spirit :  
And her addressing spoke I winged accents :  
Mother, why flee me yearning to o'ertake thee, 210  
That ev'n in Hadës with fond arms embracing  
We both may take our fill of cruel sorrow ?

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Or why this form hath dread Persephoneia  
Sent me, that I may have increase of mourning?

I spoke: and thus my reverend mother answered:  
Alas, my son, above all mortals wretched,  
Zeus' daughter Persephoneia nought hath wronged thee,  
But such is after death the state of mortals;  
No flesh and blood have they by sinews fastened,  
But these the force of ardent fire consuming 220  
Subdues, when first the soul deserts the members:  
And dreamlike, flying off, the spirit hovers.  
But quickly thou to light return, and all this  
Remember, and hereafter tell thy consort.

Thus we in words conversed: but other women  
Appeared, sent up by dread Persephoneia,  
Such as of heroes had been wives and daughters:  
Who round the black blood thick in numbers gathered.  
Then pondered I, how I of each might question.  
And this to me appeared the safest counsel: 230  
My sharp-edged sword forth from my stout thigh drawing,  
I let not all the black blood drink together:  
One and another came in turn: and each one  
Told me her race,—for I of each one questioned.

Tyro I first beheld, daughter of heroes,  
Who boasted as her sire unblamed Salmoneus,  
In wedlock joined with Cretheus, Æolus' offspring.  
She loved a river, the divine Enipeus,  
Fairest of all the streams the earth that traverse:  
And oft Enipeus' lovely banks she haunted. 240  
Clad in whose form Poseidon, earth-upheaver,  
Hard by the river's eddying mouth enjoyed her.  
Vast as a hill, a purple wave stood o'er them,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

With arching crest, and hid the god and mortal :  
Her virgin zone he loosed, and sleep shed on her.  
Now when the god the rites of love had finished,  
Her hand he grasped, and named and thus address her :

For this embrace be glad : the year revolving,  
Thou shalt fair children bear ; for not unfruitful  
The Immortals' love. Them bring thou up and cherish. 250  
But now go home : be close : to none reveal it :  
For I Poseidon am, the earth-upheaver.

He spoke, and plunged beneath the foaming billows.  
But she, conceiving, Pelias bore, and Neleus,  
Who mighty servants of great Zeus thereafter  
Grew : Pelias in the broad-plained Ialocus  
Dwelt, rich in flocks : Neleus, in sandy Pylos.  
More sons to Cretheus bore the queen of women,  
Æson, and Pheres, and the knight Amythaön.

Antiope saw I next, Asopus' daughter, 260  
Once in the arms of Zeus himself enfolded :  
Two children bore she, Zethus and Amphion,  
Who of seven-gated Thebes the circuit founded,  
And built its towers ; for not unbulwarked might they  
Dwell in broad-streeted Thebes, though warriors valiant.

Alcmena saw I next, Amphitryon's consort,  
Who bore Heracles, stalwart, lion-hearted,  
In the embrace of mighty Zeus made pregnant ;  
And Megara, daughter of the haughty Creon,  
Spouse of Amphitryon's son in strength untiring. 270

Fair Epicasta saw I, Œdipus' mother,  
Who in her blindness a bold deed accomplished,  
Wedding her son : fresh from his father's murder  
He took her : soon the gods to men proclaimed them.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

He in the lovely Thebes, a prey to sorrow,  
Ruled Cadmus' race, through heaven's destructive counsels :  
But she to Hadës' fast-barred hall descended,  
The fatal noose from the high roof suspending,  
To woe abandoned : griefs to him bequeathing  
Untold, such as inflict a mother's furies. 280

The lovely Chloris saw I too, whom Neleus  
Wedded for beauty, dowry large bestowing :  
The youngest born of Iasus' son, Amphion.  
He in Orchomenus once the Minyans governed,  
And Pylos ruled : — she noble children bore him,  
Nestor and Chromius, Periclymenus bold in onslaught,  
And lastly Pero, wonder of beholders,  
Whom all her neighbours wooed ; but Neleus gave her  
To none save him who should the broad-faced oxen  
Of mighty Iphicles drive from Phylacë, — labour 290  
Severe : alone a blameless prophet promised  
To bring them : but the gods' hard fate detained him,  
And cruel bonds, and herdsmen unrelenting.  
But when the months and days were nigh accomplished  
Of a revolving year, the seasons bringing,  
At length the might of Iphicles released him  
For boon prophetic. Thus was wrought Heaven's counsel.

And Leda also saw I, Tyndareus' consort,  
Two valiant-hearted youths to Tyndareus bore she,  
Castor the knight, the boxer Polydeuces. 300  
Them, living yet, the genial earth possesseth :  
Who, ev'n beneath, from Zeus high honour holding,  
Alternate live their day, alternate also  
Die : and have honour to the Immortals equal.

Next Iphimedeia, consort of Aloeus,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Saw I, who commerce with Poseidon boasted :  
Two sons she bore, but short of days and fleeting,  
Otus renowned and godlike Ephialtes ;  
Whom vast of stature earth life-giving nourished,  
Noblest of form, save far-renowned Orion : 310  
Nine summers old, in breadth to thrice three cubits  
They reached, — in stature thrice three fathoms measured.

These to the Immortals in Olympus threatened  
The hostile strife of cruel war to carry :  
On Olympus heaping Ossa, and on Ossa  
Leaf-tossing Pelion, heaven to scale the easier.  
This they had done, had they to manhood ripened :  
But first the son of Zeus and Leto slew them  
Together, ere the down beneath their temples  
Budded, or clothed their cheeks with bloom pubescent. 320

Phædra and Procris saw I ; fair Ariadne,  
Daughter of cruel Minos, once by Theseus  
From Crete, bound for the plain of sacred Athens,  
Brought, but in vain : for Artemis detained her  
In sea-washed Dia, warned by Dionysus.

Mæra I saw, and Clymenë, — curst Eriphylë,  
Who sold for measured gold her lord and husband.

All could I not recount, nor singly name them,  
The wives of heroes whom I saw, and daughters,  
Ere fled the ambrosial night. The hour invites me 330  
To rest, — the swift ship seeking, and my comrades,  
Or here : the gods, and ye, my convoy furnish.

He spoke : but every voice was hushed in silence,  
All listening charmed along the shadowy palace.  
Then first white-armed Aretë spoke among them :  
Phæacians, how appears this man to please you,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

In form, and stature, and in inner wisdom ?  
My guest he is : each hath his turn of honour.  
Wherefore dismiss him not thus soon, nor shorten  
Your gifts to him who needs them : for abundance 340  
By the gods' favour in your homes is treasured.

Then spoke the aged hero, Echeneüs,  
Furthest in years of all Phæacian nobles :  
Friends, not beside the mark nor our intention  
Speaketh our prudent queen : give we compliance.  
But for Alcinöus word and deed must tarry.

Thus answered then Alcinöus, and addrest them :  
This word shall be fulfilled, if I am living  
To rule as king the oar-renowned Phæacians.  
Let now our guest, for his return though eager, 350  
Contented wait till morrow, till the present  
I have completed : be our care his convoy,  
But mine the most : for mine the power among you.

Him answered then the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Royal Alcinöus, of thy people noblest,  
If a whole year ye bid me here to tarry,  
While ye my way prepared, and rich gifts gave me,  
I would consent, and deem it thus far better,  
With larger band to reach my native country :  
For so more honoured and beloved by all men 360  
Should I arrive, who my return should witness.

Him then Alcinöus answered, and addrest him :  
Odysseus, never judged we thee, beholding,  
Impostor, or deceiver, whom in numbers  
The dark earth feeds, through every country scattered,  
Dressing up lies, where none suspect their falsehood.  
But in thy words is grace, and noble meaning,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

And, as a bard, with skill thou hast recounted  
Of all the Argives, and thyself, the sorrows.  
But come, declare me this, and tell me truly ; 370  
If of thy godlike friends thou saw'st, who with thee  
Followed to Troy, and there to fate submitted.  
Long is this night and ample : not yet summons  
The hour to rest ; thy tale divine continue.  
For till fair dawn I could abide, if only  
Thou in my hall wouldst stay, and tell thy sorrows.

Him answering spoke the many-schemed Odysseus :  
Royal Alcinoüs, of thy people noblest,  
Time have we for much talk, and time for slumber :  
But shouldst thou yet desire to hear, I will not 380  
Begrudge the telling tales of yet more sorrows,  
Woes of my comrades, who at length all perished,  
Who 'scaped the vengeful war-cry of the Trojans,  
But died returning, a base woman's victims.

When now the goddess chaste Persephoneia  
The female ghosts had this and that way scattered,  
The spirit of Atrides Agamemnon  
Came sad ; around were all the souls who with him  
Died in Ægisthus' house, and fate accomplished.  
Straight knew he me, when he the black blood tasted : 390  
And shrilly wailed, while the warm tears dropt from him :  
His hands to me he stretched, to clasp me seeking :  
But his no more was sinewy strength, nor vigour  
As dwelt beforetime in his flexile members :  
I wept, beholding him, and inly pitied,  
And him addressing, spoke in wingèd accents :  
Glorious Atrides, king of men, Agamemnon,  
What fate hath laid thee low of death all-conquering ?

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Did dread Poseidon in thy ships destroy thee,  
Raising the boundless din of savage tempests? 400  
Or on the land did hostile men o'ercome thee,  
Spoiling their herds or fleecy flocks of wethers,  
For their own city and their wives contending?

I said : and he in answer thus addrest me :  
Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,—  
Neither Poseidon in my ships destroyed me,  
Raising the boundless din of savage tempests,—  
Nor on the land did hostile men o'ercome me ;—  
Ægisthus slew me, death and fate contriving,  
With my cursed wife, me to his house inviting 410  
At banquet, as an ox before the manger.

So died I a foul death : and my companions  
Round me were slain, as white-tusked boars are butchered  
In halls of some great noble, rich and mighty,  
At wedding, revel, or at costly banquet.  
Ere now full many a murder hast thou witnessed  
Of singly slain, or in the hard-fought battle :  
But this, of all, in heart thou most hadst pitied ;  
Around the wine-bowl and the teeming tables  
Stricken we lay : with blood the pavement bubbled. 420

Saddest to hear, the wail of Priam's daughter  
Cassandra,— whom the subtle Clytæmnestra  
Upon me slew : prostrate, my hands outstretching  
I sought my sword, though dying ; but the traitress  
Was gone, nor staid, though fast I sped to Hadës,  
To close my eyes nor mouth with hand relenting.  
Thus is than woman nought more base and shameless,  
Who can such deeds within her spirit counsel,  
As she committed, -- murder foul and heinous,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Slaying her lawful lord. Yet hoped I ever 430  
To all my children welcome, and my servants,  
Home to return : but she, unmatched in baseness,  
Heaped shame upon herself, and those to follow  
Of all her sex, chaste though they be and virtuous.

He spoke : and I in answer thus address him.  
O Heaven ! Almighty Zeus the house of Atreus  
Hath plagued full sorely through the plots of women,  
Long since. For Helen we in number perished :—  
Thy death, yet distant, plotted Clytæmnestra.

Thus spoke I : he in answer straight address me : 440  
Wherefore trust fully, no not ev'n thy consort,  
Nor tell her every counsel which thou knowest :  
Some things reveal, and others keep thou secret.

Not thee, Odysseus, shall thy consort murder ;  
Chaste is she, and of prudent schemes deviser,  
Icarius' daughter, wise Penelopeia.

Her fresh in youth, a bride, we left behind us  
Bound for the war : a boy hung on her bosom,  
A babe,— who now with heroes sits in counsel.  
Happy,— for him his sire shall see returning, 450  
And he with pious arms enfold his father.

Me on my boy not ev'n to sate mine eyesight  
My wife allowed, but first relentless slew me.  
One thing I warn thee, in thy memory store it ;  
By stealth, unwitnessed, to thy native country  
Steer in thy ship :— faith is no more in woman.

But come, declare me this, and tell me truly,  
If aught ye hear about my son yet living,  
Or in Orchomenus or in sandy Pylos,  
Or in broad Sparta, home of Menelaüs ; 460



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Not yet on earth hath died divine Orestes.

He spoke: and I in answer thus address him:  
Atrides, why thus ask? of him I know not,  
Live he, or be he dead: vain words are harmful.

Thus we with mournful talk each other answer  
Stood, sorrowing both — while the hot tears dropt from us.

Then came the ghost of Peleus' son Achilles,  
Patroclus, and Antilochus the blameless,  
And Ajax, first in beauty and in stature  
Of all the Danaans, next to great Pelides. 470  
Straightway the ghost of swift Æacides knew me,  
And, weeping, thus in winged words address me:

Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,  
Wretch, why devise this deed, of all the greatest?  
How dar'st thou enter Hadēs, where inhabit  
The senseless dead, shades of departed mortals?

He spoke: and I in answer thus address him:  
Achilles, Peleus' son, first of the Achæans,  
I came to seek Teiresias, who some counsel  
Might give, how I my native isle may compass. 480  
For I not yet Achæa nor my country  
Have reached, — still prey to woes. Thy lot, Achilles,  
May none surpass of mortals, past or future:  
In life, as the immortal gods revered thee  
We Argives: now among the dead thou reignest  
Below: then grieve not at thy death, Achilles.

I spoke: but he in answer thus address me:  
Speak me not fair of death, renowned Odysseus;  
Rather would I afield for wages labour,  
Slave to some needy hind who lacked a living, 490  
Than reign supreme o'er all the shades departed.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

But tell me of my valiant boy some tidings,  
Waxed he, or not, to be the chief in battles.  
And tell me if of Peleus aught thou knowest,  
Holds he among the Myrmidons his honour,  
Or is in Phthia slighted and in Hellas,  
Because old age his hands and feet hath fettered.  
For me no longer hath he as his succour  
In the sun's light, such as in Troy's broad champain  
I slew the bravest, for the Argives fighting. 500  
Could I but thus my father's house revisit,  
Soon should they rue my strength and hands unconquered,  
Who him oppress, and keep him from his honour.

He spoke : and I in answer thus address him :  
No tidings have I of the blameless Peleus :  
But of Neoptolemus, thy son beloved,  
The truth I will declare as thou command'st me.  
Him I myself upon a well-trimmed vessel  
From Scyros fetched to join the mailed Achæans.  
When before Troy in council we debated, 510  
Ever the first he spoke, no wisdom lacking ;  
Save godlike Nestor, and myself, none matched him.  
And when we fought at Troy, the hosts Achæan,  
Ne'er in the crowded files of men remained he,  
But forward rushed, to none in prowess yielding :  
And many heroes slew in cruel battle.  
All can I not relate thee, -- no, nor name them,  
What people slew he, for the Achæans fighting,  
Only how Telephus' son with spear he slaughtered,  
The chief, Eurypylus : and around, his comrades 520  
Cetean fell, betrayed by bribes of women.  
Him goodliest saw I there, save godlike Memnon.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

When in the horse we sat, work of Epeus,  
The Argive chiefs, and mine by trust the office  
To ope our ambush, or close-fastened keep it,—  
Then all the Argive councillors and rulers  
Wiped tears, and each man's limbs with terror trembled:  
But him alone I first or last beheld not  
His blooming colour change, nor any tear-drop  
Wipe from his cheek: but often he besought me 530  
To issue forth, and oft his sword's hilt handled  
And brass-tipt spear, vowing revenge on Trojans.  
But when we Priam's lofty town had plundered,  
With goodly portion to his ships returned he  
Unscathed,—neither by flying spear-point wounded,  
Nor hand to hand in fight, as oft befalls men  
In the thick war, where Arës blindly rageth.

I spake, and ceased: but swift Æacides' spirit  
Paced with broad strides the asphodel mead in gladness,  
That I his son's renown had thus reported. 540  
Then of the dead departed all the spirits  
Stood in their grief, each one its woes recounting.  
Only the ghost of Ajax, Telamon's offspring,  
Stood off apart in anger, for the contest  
In which I beat him, striving by the vessels  
For Achilles' arms; the prize his goddess-mother  
Offered: the Trojans judged it, and Athena.  
Would that I had not in that strife been victor!  
So great a soul the issue sent to Hadës,  
Ajax, in form and valiant deeds superior 550  
To all the Danaans, next to great Peleion.

Whom I addressing spoke in soothing accents:  
Ajax, great Telamon's son, wilt thou then never,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Though dead, remit thine anger for those weapons  
Accurst, a plague from heaven upon the Argives?  
So stout a tower they lost in thee : the Achæans  
Not less than for Achilles, son of Peleus,  
Ev'n now lament thy death : nor any other  
Caused it,—but Zeus, wroth with the Argive spearmen  
Through all the host, on thee his vengeance sated. 560  
But hither, king, my words and converse listen ;  
Repress thy wrath, and tame thy mighty spirit.

I spoke : he nothing answered me, but followed  
The souls to Erebus of the dead departed.  
Still he to me, though angered, yet had spoken,  
Or I to him : but in my breast my spirit  
Yearned to behold more ghosts of the departed.

Then saw I, son of Zeus, imperial Minos,  
With golden sceptre, high in judgment sitting  
Over the dead, who prayed the king for justice, 570  
Seated, or standing, through the halls of Hadës.

Next after him, I noted vast Orion  
Wild herds athwart the asphodel meadow chasing,  
Which once he slew along the lonely mountains,  
Grasping his club of solid brass, unbroken.

Tityus saw I, son of Earth the glorious,  
Stretched on the plain : nine acres' space he covered :  
Two vultures by him sitting tore his liver,  
Deep in his bowels : nought his hands availed him :  
Because he Leto, loved by Zeus, insulted, 580  
For Pytho bound, through Panopeus' pleasant meadows.

Tantalus too I saw, in torments grievous :  
Fixed in a pool, close to his beard upfloating ;  
Thirsting he longed, but might not reach and drink it :

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

Oft as the old man stooped, a draught desiring,  
So oft absorbed the water sunk, and round him  
Dark earth appeared : so wrath divine appointed.  
Above him bent high-branching trees fruit-laden,  
Rich with pomegranates, pears, and apples splendid,  
And luscious figs were there, and verdant olives. 590  
But when the old man stretched his hand to grasp them,  
Up to the dusky clouds a tempest whirled them.

There saw I Sisyphus too, in grievous torment,  
Heaving with both his arms a stone enormous :  
With feet firm-planted and with hands he laboured  
Pushing the stone uphill : but when the summit  
He thought to reach, the toppling mass slipped from him  
Again : to the plain the saucy rock ran bounding.  
Once more low-bent he wrought ; the sweat of labour  
Ran from his limbs, and dust his head surrounded. 600

Next him, the might of Heracles I noted, —  
His shadow : — for himself with the Immortals  
Banquets in bliss, and has fair-ankled Hebe,  
Daughter of Zeus and golden-sandalled Hera.  
Round him of ghosts, like birds, there rose a clangour  
Thronging each way : he black as night stood holding  
His naked bow, and on the string an arrow,  
Scowling around, like one to shoot preparing.  
His belt gleamed dreadful, clasped athwart his bosom :  
The thong was gold, with works divine engraven, 610  
Bears, and wild boars, and brightly glaring lions,  
Battles, and fights, and homicides, and murders.  
He wrought none such before, nor might he after,  
Who by his art that wondrous thong completed.  
Straightway he knew me, when his eyes beheld me,



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XI.

And weeping, thus in accents swift addrest me :

Heaven-born Laertiades, many-schemed Odysseus,  
Ah wretch ! thou too some evil task fulfill'st,  
Such as I bore beneath the radiant sunlight.

I was Kroneion's son, but toil unending

620

My portion was, a master far inferior

Serving, who on me laid severest labours :

Hither too sent me for Hell's dog, believing

Than this no labour more severe could try me.

Him fetched I up, and brought to earth from Hadës,

By Hermes' guidance, and blue-eyed Athena.

He spoke, and sought again the halls of Hadës.

But I unmoved remained, the visit waiting

Of heroes, who in former times had perished.

And ancient men I now had seen, as wished I,

630

Theseus, Peirithoüs, sons of gods illustrious :

But came the nations of the dead thick-crowding

With awful din : pale horror seized upon me,

Lest up from Hadës dread Persephoneia

The Gorgon's head should send, portent tremendous.

Straight to my ship I fled, and bid my comrades

Themselves to embark, and loose to cast the hawsers :

They entered quick, and sate upon the benches.

Her bore the current down the ocean-river,

By oars propelled, and then by favouring breezes.

640

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

XII.

Now when our ship had left the ocean-current,  
And on the sea's wide billows sailing reached she  
Ææa's isle, where hath the dawn's bright daughter  
Her halls and dances, and the Sun his rising: —  
Arrived, our vessel in the sand we grounded,  
And next ourselves forth on the sea-marge issued:  
Where, having slept, the morn divine we waited.

When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Then sent I comrades to the halls of Circë,  
To bring the body of the slain Elpenor. 10  
Then, timber felling, on the loftiest headland  
We sadly buried him, the warm tear shedding.  
When now the corse was burnt and all his armour,  
We heaped a tomb, and on it built a pillar,  
And on the top his shapely oar erected.

Thus we our rites performed: nor did not Circë  
Mark our return from Hadës; but made ready  
Promptly, and came; and with her, maidens, bearing  
Much bread and flesh, and wine bright red and sparkling.  
Then spoke the goddess fair, among us standing: 20  
Wretches! who living Hadës' halls have entered  
Twice-dying, whereas all one death suffices!  
But come, eat food, and drink ye wine, abiding  
Here all the day: and when the morrow dawneth  
Sail ye: the way myself will show, and all things  
Forewarn you, lest in aught by thriftless counsel

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

On sea or land ye loss incur and sorrow.

She spoke : complied our prompting mind within us :  
Thus then all day, until the sun sunk downward,  
We sate, sweet wine and meat profuse enjoying : 30  
But when the sun set, and the darkness followed,  
Then by the ship's stern-sheets they lay and slumbered.  
But me by the hand apart from my loved comrades  
She led, and by me sate, and asked me all things :  
And I to her in order all related.

Then Circë, nymph divine, in words addrest me :  
All this is thus accomplished. But attend thou,  
What I shall tell, and heaven itself remind thee.  
The Sirens first thy course shall reach, who all men  
Bewitch with charms, who'er approach their dwelling. 40  
Who'er unwitting comes and hears their singing,  
To him no more his wife and infant children  
Homeward arrived, shall throng, nor greet him joyous :  
But the false Sirens with sweet song bewitch him,  
In meadow sitting, with men's bones around them  
Mouldering in heaps, and putrid skins decaying.  
But row thou past, thy comrades' ears anointing  
With kneaded honey-wax, lest any hear them  
Of all the rest : and if thou mind to listen,  
Let them both hand and foot i' th' vessel bind thee 50  
Upright, and to the mast the ropes be fastened.  
Thus mayst thou hear the Siren's song delighted.  
But if thou prayst thy friends and bidst them loose thee,  
Let them but bind thee with more ropes, relentless.  
Then when past these thy comrades shall have rowed thee,  
Thenceforth I will not tell thee all in order  
Which way of two to choose ; thyself determine

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

In thine own breast ; but both I will declare thee.  
Two beetling rocks there are, against whose bosom  
Dash the great waves of blue-eyed Amphitritë : 60  
Planctæ by name the gods immortal call them.  
Not birds can pass them safe — no, nor the pigeons  
Swift, who ambrosia bear to Zeus our father ;  
But ever on the smooth rocks' face some perish,  
And more the Sire creates to fill their number.  
Never escaped a ship of men that came there ;  
Corpses of men and vessels' planks together  
The billows sweep, and fiery blasts destructive.  
One only ship illustrious passed in safety,  
The world-famed Argo, from Æetes sailing : 70  
And her the current on the rocks had broken,  
But Hera bore her safe, in love to Jason.

Thence, are two rocks ; the one broad heaven invadeth  
With lofty top, on which a cloud is resting  
Dark, which at no time clears, nor sunshine ever  
The summit clothes, in summer nor in autumn.  
No mortal man may upward climb, nor downward,  
Not if with twice ten hands and feet provided :  
For slippery-smooth it is, like surface polished.  
In the mid-rock there yawns a cavern darksome, 80  
Nightward to Erebus turned : and if ye thither  
Your smooth-prowed ship direct, noble Odysseus,  
Not from the vessel could a youth of vigour  
With arrow shooting, reach the inmost cavern.  
There Scylla wons within, a blatant monster :  
Shrill is her voice as whelp new-yeaned : her aspect  
Fearful, portentous : none her form beholding  
Would greet with joy — not even a god immortal.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

Twelve are her feet, of shape uncouth and savage,  
And six long-stretching necks: on each is mounted 90  
A head ferocious, with three barriers furnished  
Of thick-set teeth and stiff, black death revealing.  
Sunk in the hollow cave herself abideth,  
Outside the dread abyss her heads protruding,  
Snapping around the rock, and fishing ever  
Dolphins and dogs, or beasts of ampler carcass,  
Which feeds in shoals the roaring Amphitritë.  
Her seaman ne'er can boast unscathed escaping  
Safe with his ship to have past; each head a sailor  
Seizes, and tears them from the dark-prowed vessel. 100

The other rock shall lower seem, Odysseus:  
So near they stand, an arrow's shot may join them.  
On it a wild-fig grows, with leaves abounding;  
Beneath Charybdis swallows the dark water;  
Daily she thrice emits it and thrice swallows;  
Fearful: mayst thou be far when she engulfs it!  
Not Enosichthon could from mischief free thee.  
But by the rock of Scylla coasting swiftly  
Row past thy ship: it is for thee far better  
Six from thy ship to lose, than all thy comrades. 110

She spoke: and I in answer thus address her:  
Come, tell me this, and teach me truly, goddess:  
Is there no way to flee from curst Charybdis,  
And fight the other, on my comrades rushing?

I spoke: and thus replied the nymph divinest:  
Man much presuming! Wars and troubles ever  
Attract thee: wilt thou not to gods submit thee?  
She is no mortal, but a pest undying;  
Fearful and fierce and wild, unmatched in combat;



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

Nor canst thou conquer — flight from her is wisest. 120  
For if thou tarry by the rock and arm thee,  
I fear lest yet again she rush, and catch thee  
With all her heads, and rob thee of like number.  
But swiftly row, and call upon Cratæis,  
Mother of Scylla, who bore her, pest to mortals;  
She from a second onslaught shall restrain her.  
Then thou shalt reach Thrinakia's isle : where many  
Herds of Heëlius feed, both sheep and oxen :  
Seven herds of oxen, of fair sheep as many, 130  
Fifty in each : no offspring yean they ever,  
Nor ever waste : goddesses are their shepherds,  
Nymphs with fair locks, Phaëthusa and Lampetia,  
Whom to the Sun-god bore divine Neæra.  
Them, born and nourished up, their divine mother  
Sent in Thrinakia's isle to dwell far distant,  
Their father's sheep to tend and horned oxen.  
These if thou leav'st unhurt, and mindst thy journey,  
Then may ye home arrive, though tried with troubles :  
But touch thou them, — and I denounce destruction  
On ship and crew : thyself, if thou escapest, 140  
Late shalt arrive, bereaved of all thy comrades.  
She spoke : appeared the golden-throned morning :  
Then through the isle the nymph divine departed :  
But I my vessel sought, and urged my comrades  
Themselves to enter, and cast loose the hawsers.  
Straight they obeyed, and on the benches sitting  
In order, struck with oars the foaming ocean.  
To waft us on, behind our dark-prowed vessel  
The fair-tressed Circë, goddess dread and vocal,  
Sent a sail-filling breeze, companion welcome. 150

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

Then, having bent all tackle in our vessel,  
We sate: the wind and helm the ship directed.

Then spoke I to my comrades, sad in spirit:  
Friends, — for not one alone nor two must know them,  
The words prophetic which the goddess gave me, —  
I tell them you, that, knowing, we may perish,  
Or, heeding, may escape from death and ruin.

First she commanded, of the nymphs the Sirens  
The voice to shun, and flee their flowery meadows:  
Me only bade she listen: but with fetters  
Bind me secure, that I my place desert not,  
Upright, and to the mast by cables fasten.  
And if I you beseech and bid you loose me,  
Then do ye bind me with more ropes relentless.

160

Thus I, each thing revealing, told my comrades:  
Meanwhile the tight ship swiftly went, approaching  
The Sirens' isle, by favouring breezes wafted.  
Then sudden fell the wind: a calm succeeded  
Without a breath: some god had lulled the billows.

My comrades rising, furl'd their idle canvas,  
And laid it in the hold: then on their benches  
Seated, with polished oars they foamed the water.  
Then a large wheel of wax with my sharp falchion  
In pieces cutting, with my hands I kneaded:  
Ere long the wax by mighty force was softened,  
And by the king of light Hyperion's radiance:  
And on my comrades' ears in turn I spread it.  
Then hand and foot they bound me in the vessel  
Upright, and to the mast by cables fastened.

170

Then sitting, struck with oars the foaming ocean.  
When now we reached within the hail of voices,

180

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

Swift pulling, them our sea-bound ship escaped not  
Thus hasting past :— and sweet and shrill they warbled :

    Come, famed Odysseus, come, Achæa's glory,  
Thy vessel stay, and to our singing hearken :  
Never hath any in dark ship gone by us,  
But staid, sweet melody from our lips to listen ;  
Then went his way with joy, increased in wisdom.  
For all we know, whate'er in Troy the Argives  
And Trojans too by heaven's appointment suffered :         190  
And all that on the peopled earth hath happened.

    Thus spoke they with sweet voices : all my spirit  
To listen yearned ; I, beckoning, bid them loose me ;  
But they lay forward and their oars plied swiftly.  
Then rose Eurylochus up, and Perimedes,  
And bound me with more ropes, and tighter lashed them.

    But when they past them by, and we no longer  
The Siren's voice could catch, nor hear them singing,  
Then first the wax removed my loved companions  
Which on their ears I placed, and they released me.         200

    When we the isle were leaving, saw I straightway  
Smoke, and a mighty surf, and heard a roaring :—  
My comrades' oars fell from their hands in terror,  
And floated whirling down the flood : the vessel  
Stood fixed, with taper oars impelled no longer.  
But I throughout the vessel cheered my comrades,  
With soothing accents, by each sailor standing :

    Friends, we are not thus all unskilled in evils :  
No greater danger this, than when the Cyclop  
Seized us by savage force within his cavern.             210  
But even from him my valour, skill, and prudence  
Wrought our escape, which ye must still remember.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

And now let all obey, as I shall warn you.  
Ye with your oars the deep surf of the ocean  
Smite, on your benches ranged : if peradventure  
Zeus from this peril too escape may grant us.  
And thee, my pilot, thus I charge ; be mindful,  
Since thou the rudder of our vessel rulest :  
Outside this smoke and billowy tumult keep thou  
The ship, and hug yon rock, lest unexpected  
She thither drift, and us thou bring to mischief.

220

I said : and they with speed obeyed my orders.  
But I of Scylla spoke not, pest unconquered ;  
Lest my companions should desert in terror  
Their rowing, and within crowd close for safety.  
Then to the hest of Circë, hard of practice,  
I took no heed, who not to arm forewarned me :  
But all my trusty armour donned, and grasping  
Two taper spears, on the high deck I mounted  
Forward : for from the rock I there expected  
Scylla to meet, death to my comrades bringing.  
As yet, I saw her not : mine eyes were weary  
Round the dark rock in each direction gazing.

230

Thus entered we the strait, with sighs and terror :  
On this side Scylla dwelt ; on that, Charybdis ;  
With fearful din the sea's salt water hurtled :  
When forth she sent it, as o'er fire a cauldron  
She foamed in tumult, and on high upheaping  
The dashing spray on both the rocks was scattered :  
But when she back the sea's salt water swallowed,  
Within was tumult all : the rock surrounding,  
Fearful it roared : beneath was seen the bottom  
With its dark sand : pale terror seized my sailors.

240

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

While thus on her we gazed, destruction fearing,  
From the smooth vessel Scylla of my comrades  
Snatched six, the best of all for skill and labour.  
Back looking on my ship and my companions,  
Their feet I saw, and hands, as they were lifted  
High in the air : on me they called, pronouncing  
My name, for the last time, with hearts desponding. 250

As with long rod on jutting bank a fisher  
For the small fish his subtle morsel casting,  
A horn of pastured neat throws on the ocean,\*  
Then strikes, and casts to land his quivering booty ;  
Thus were they quivering to the rock uplifted,  
And she within devoured them, shrilly wailing,  
Stretching to me their hands in bitter anguish.  
Ah piteous sight ! none other saw I like it,  
In all my toils, the ocean's ways exploring.

When we the rocks had scaped, and dire Charybdis 260  
And Scylla, then the Sun-god's beauteous island  
We reached, where browsed the broad-faced herds and comely,  
And fattening sheep of Helius Hýpereion.  
Then yet at sea in my dark vessel sitting  
I heard the lowing of the cows at pasture,  
And bleating sheep : fell on my mind the warning  
Of the blind prophet, him of Thebes, Teiresias,  
Ææan Circë too, who much forewarned me  
To shun the isle of Helius, joy of mortals.  
Then spoke I to my comrades, sad in spirit : 270  
Hear now my words, though full of woe, my comrades :

\* This is explained by Eustathius to mean, that a small piece of neat's horn is whipped in at the top of the hook, to prevent the fish from biting the line asunder.



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

While I the sayings of Teiresias tell you,  
Ææan Circë too, who much forewarned me  
To shun the isle of Helius, joy of mortals,  
For there she said our greatest woe would happen ;  
But past the island row your dusky vessel.  
I spoke : but all their spirit sunk within them,  
And thus Eurylochus with sharp words addrest me :

Hard art thou, Odysseus : thou hast strength abundant,  
Thou weariest not, but all thy nerves are iron ; 280  
Who thy companions, worn for toil and slumber,  
To land forbiddest, where we might refreshment  
Ample prepare, here in the sea-girt island :  
But bidst us aimless through the night to wander  
Far from the island, in the darksome ocean.  
By night tempests severe, the pest of vessels,  
Arise ; and whither should we 'scape destruction  
If on a sudden windy blasts should gather,  
Notus, or Zephyr blowing fierce, which chiefly  
Men's ships destroys, ev'n if the gods would save them. 290  
But let us now, by the dark night persuaded,  
Prepare our meal, remaining by our vessel,  
Then with the morn embarking, plough the waters.

So spoke Eurylochus, and the rest applauded.  
Then knew I first that heaven decreed us mischief,  
And him addressing, spoke in wingëd accents :  
Eurylochus, I am one, and ye constrain me :  
But come, swear all an oath which may be binding,  
If herd of kine, or flock with weighty fleeces  
We find, that none shall venture in his folly 300  
Or kine or sheep to slay : but still and quiet  
Eat ye the meat immortal Circë gave us.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

I spoke, and they forswore it as I ordered.  
When they had sworn and all the oath had finished,  
In the locked port we stayed our tight-built vessel,  
Near a sweet stream : and from the ship my comrades  
Stept forth on land, and swiftly sped the banquet.  
When now desire of meat and drink was sated,  
Then mindful wept they for their dear companions  
Devoured by Scylla from our hollow vessel : 310  
And on their weeping came oblivious slumber.  
A third of night was past, — the stars were setting,  
When Zeus a shrill wind sent, the lord of tempests,  
With a fierce storm, and with his dark clouds covered  
Both land and sea : down from the heaven fell darkness.  
When peeped the child of dawn, rose-fingered morning,  
Within a hollow cave we moored our vessel,  
Where were the nymphs' fair haunts for dance or leisure :  
There I assembled all, and thus address them :  
Friends, in the ship is food and drink in plenty : 320  
Abstain we from these herds, lest harm we suffer :  
For a dread Power these kine and fat sheep owneth,  
The Sun, who heareth and beholdeth all things.  
I spoke: obeyed their prompting soul within them.  
A whole month blew the adverse south: nor ever  
Breathed any wind, save south and east, upon us.  
Now, while they bread possessed, and red wine lasted,  
So long they spared the herds, their lives desiring.  
But when all stores within the vessel failed them,  
Then sought they prey, by need compelled to wander, 330  
Fishes and birds, and all, to hand that happened,  
With twisted hooks: for hunger pinched their bellies.  
Then I along the island went, beseeching

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

The gods, some way to grant me of departure.  
And when I wandering thus had left my comrades,  
My hands I laved in spot of calmest shelter,  
And prayed to all the gods who hold Olympus:  
But they sweet slumber poured upon mine eyelids.

Eurylochus then ill counsel first suggested:  
Listen my words, though full of woe, my comrades: 340  
All deaths to wretched mortals are unwelcome,  
But most, to die and suffer fate by famine.  
Come then, the best of the Sun's kine selecting,  
We will the gods appease, high heaven's possessors:  
And if we Ithaca reach, our native island,  
A wealthy shrine to Helius Hypereion  
Straight will we build, and with rich offerings fill it:  
But if he, angry for his long-horned cattle,  
Decree our ship to wreck, the gods persuading,  
Better to die at once, choked in the billows, 350  
Than pine by inches in an island dreary.

Thus spoke Eurylochus; and the rest applauded.  
Then they the fattest kine of Helius driving,  
Hard by, — for from the dark-prowed ship not distant  
Fair slowly-wending cows, broad-faced, were feeding, —  
They gathered round and prayed to the Immortals,  
Scattering the tender leaves of oak high-branching;  
White barley had they none within the vessel.  
When they had prayed, and slain and flayed the victims,  
The thighs they severed, fat upon them rolling, 360  
In double rank, and flesh above arranging,  
And, lacking wine to pour on their burnt-offering,  
With water o'er the entrails made libation.  
When now the thighs were burnt, and inwards tasted,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

The rest they sliced, and then on spits transfixed it.  
Then from mine eyelids fell oblivious slumber,  
And for the shore and my swift ship I parted.  
But when I neared the place where lay my vessel,  
Around me came the viand's savoury odour :  
I groaned, and thus called on the gods immortal :       370  
O father Zeus, and ye blest gods eternal,  
Much woe have ye by cruel slumber brought me !  
A fearful crime my tarrying friends have counselled.

Swift flying, to the Sun the tidings carried  
Long-robed Lampetia, that the kine we slaughtered.  
Then in his rage he spoke among the Immortals:  
Thou, father Zeus, and ye blest gods eternal,  
Vengeance I ask upon Odysseus' comrades,  
Who have my cattle foully slain, which ever  
I saw with joy, the starry heaven ascending,       380  
And back to earth from heaven again returning.  
But if they shall not for my kine repay me,  
I sink to Hadës, and the shades illumine.

Him the cloud-gatherer Zeus addrest in answer :  
Heëlius, shine thou still among the Immortals,  
And mortal men upon the earth life-giving ;  
Their ship ere long will I with glittering lightning  
To fragments in the vast blue ocean shiver.

This had I after, from fair-locked Calypso ;  
Who said that she from herald Hermes heard it.       390

But when I reached the ship, and the sea's margin,  
One and another chid I all : but solace  
None could we find : the kine ere now were slaughtered.  
Then to them straightway showed the gods dire portents :  
The stript hides crept ; the spitted morsels bellowed,

HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

Roasted and raw, with voice of living oxen.

Six days from that, remained my loved companions  
Feasting, the primest kine of Helios taking.

But when the son of Kronos brought the seventh day,  
Then ceased the wind with rushing tempest blowing. 400

We straight embarking in the broad sea launched her,  
Planted her mast, and spread her white sails upward.

When now the isle was left, nor further traces

Of land appeared, but sky alone and water,

Then Kronos' son a darksome cloud suspended

Over our ship : the sea gloomed black beneath it.

Not long she onward ran : for soon 'gan hurtle

The shrill-voiced West, with furious blasts careering :

First both the mast-ropes snapt the gusty tempest ;

Sternward it fell and bore the rigging downward 410

Into the hold ; impelled athwart the steerage,

It struck the pilot's head, and crushed relentless

His skull together : like a diver plunged he

Down from the bulwarks, and his spirit left him.

Thick thundered Zeus, and smote our bark with lightning :

Pierced by the flash, from stem to stern she shuddered

With sulphur filled : and from her dropped my comrades.

As cormorants floating round the dusky vessel

They rode the waves ; the god cut short their voyage.

But I the ship paced, till the surging billows 420

Washed from the sides her keel, which separate drifted.

The mast by the keel was broken, but about it

Remained the thong of firm ox-hide that bound them.

With this I lashed the mast and keel together,

And on them sitting drove before the tempest.

Now paused the West with furious blast careering ;



HOMER'S ODYSSEY, XII.

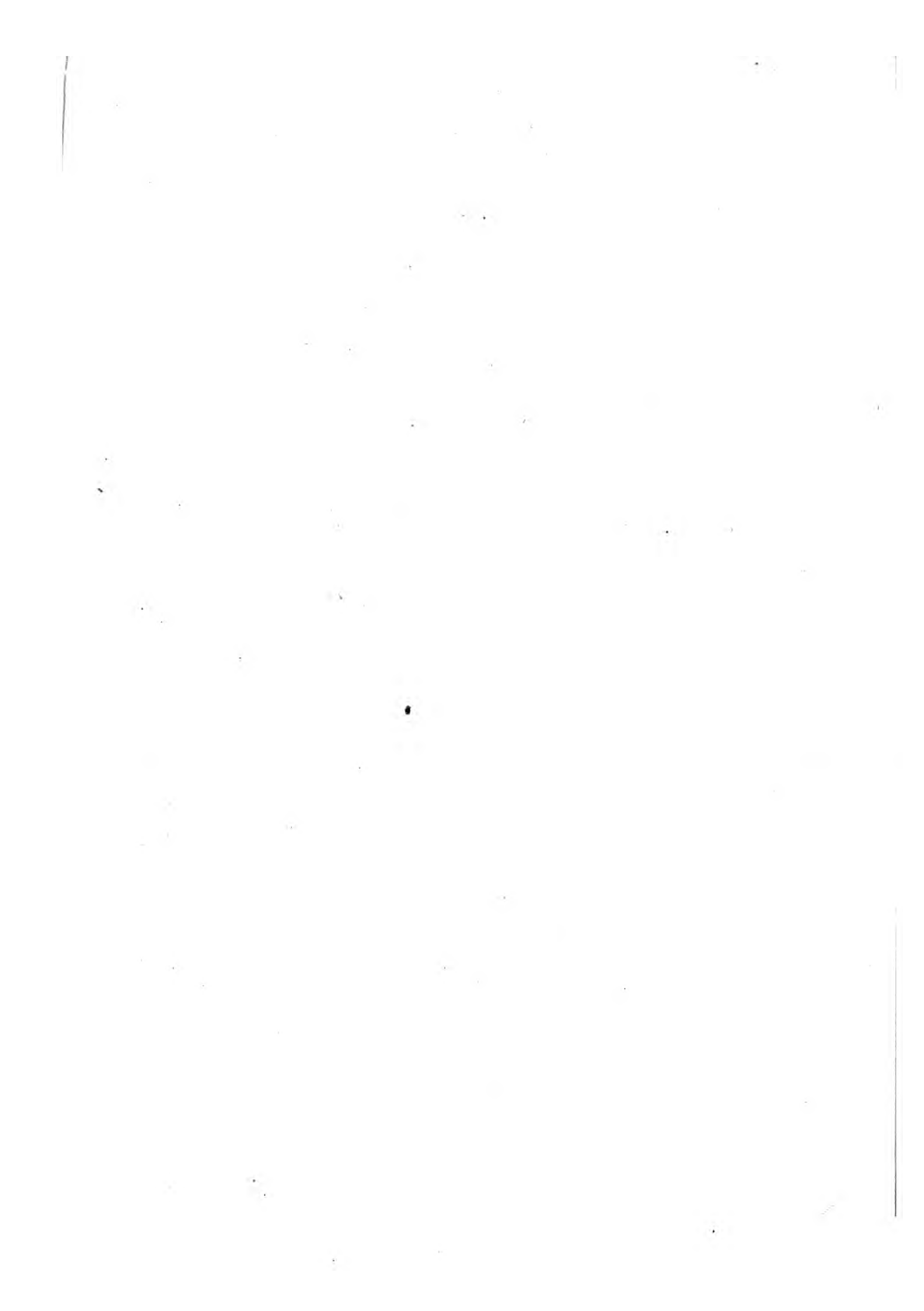
And blew the South, to me sad anguish bringing,—  
Sent on my backward way to curst Charybdis.  
All night I drove; and when the sun was mounting  
I came to Scylla's rock and dire Charybdis. 430  
Down to her maw the sea's salt wave was pouring:  
I leapt on high, and climbing to the fig tree  
Clung to it as a bat: nor was I able  
To fix my footing there, nor mount it higher:  
For far were all the roots, the branches distant,  
Rambling and vast, and shadowed all Charybdis.  
But firm I held, till she again emitted  
My mast and keel. Late to my wishes came they:  
What time one leaves for his night-meal the forum,  
Who weary strifes of wrangling youths hath settled,— 440  
Then first swam up my raft from out Charybdis:  
Down dashed I on my hands and feet to catch them,  
And on the midst of the long timbers lighting,  
There seated on them with my hands I paddled.  
The sire of gods and men from seeing Scylla  
Withheld me: else had I not 'scaped destruction.  
Nine days I drove: on the tenth night the Immortals  
To the isle Ogygia brought me, where Calypso  
Dwells, with fair locks, a goddess dread and vocal,  
Who loved and tended me. Why this inform thee? 450  
Already yester-even in thy palace  
Thee and thy royal queen I told; I love not  
Vainly to trace again things once related.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

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