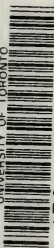
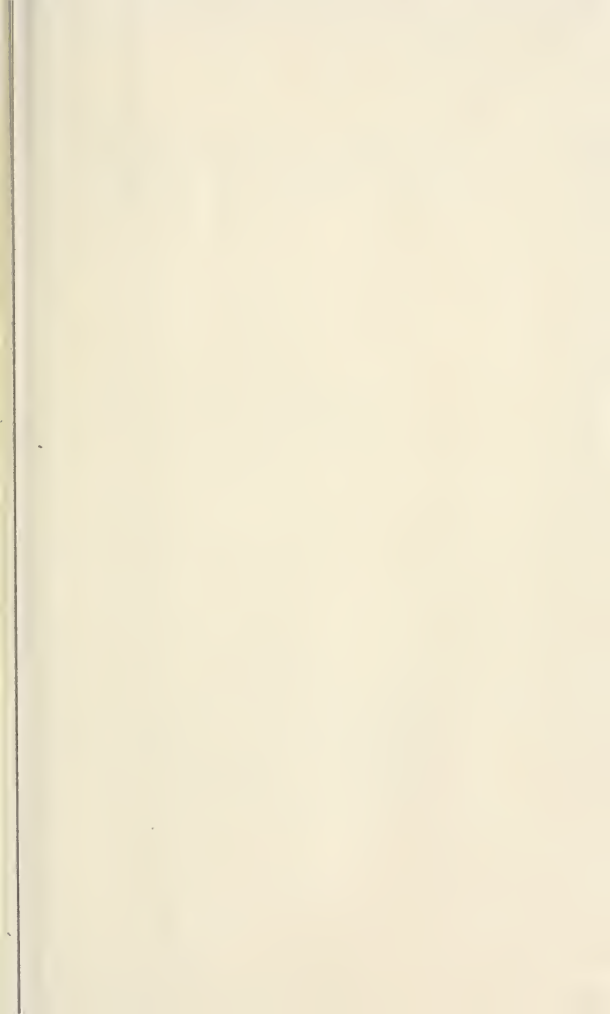


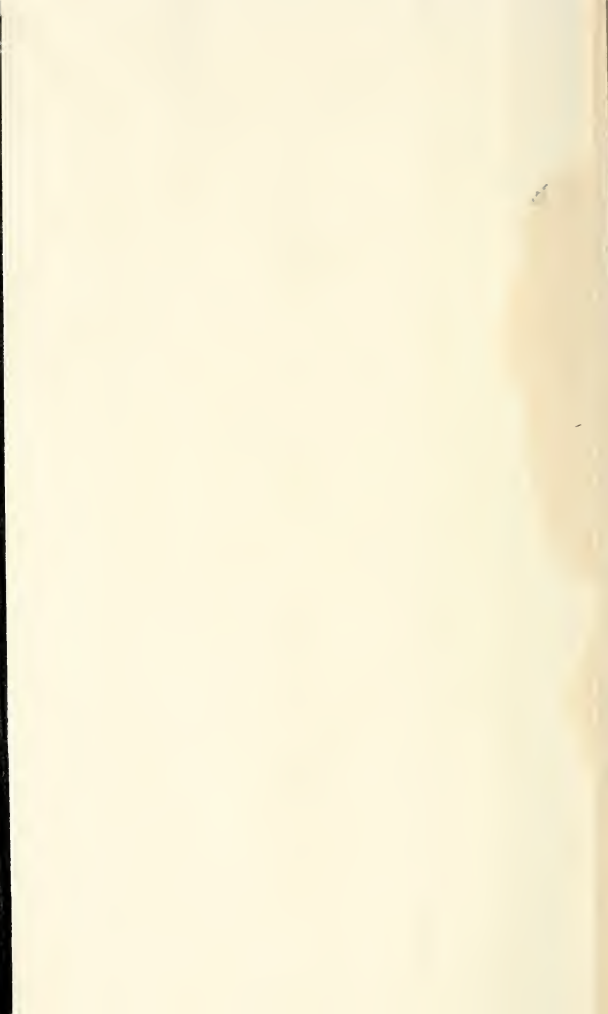
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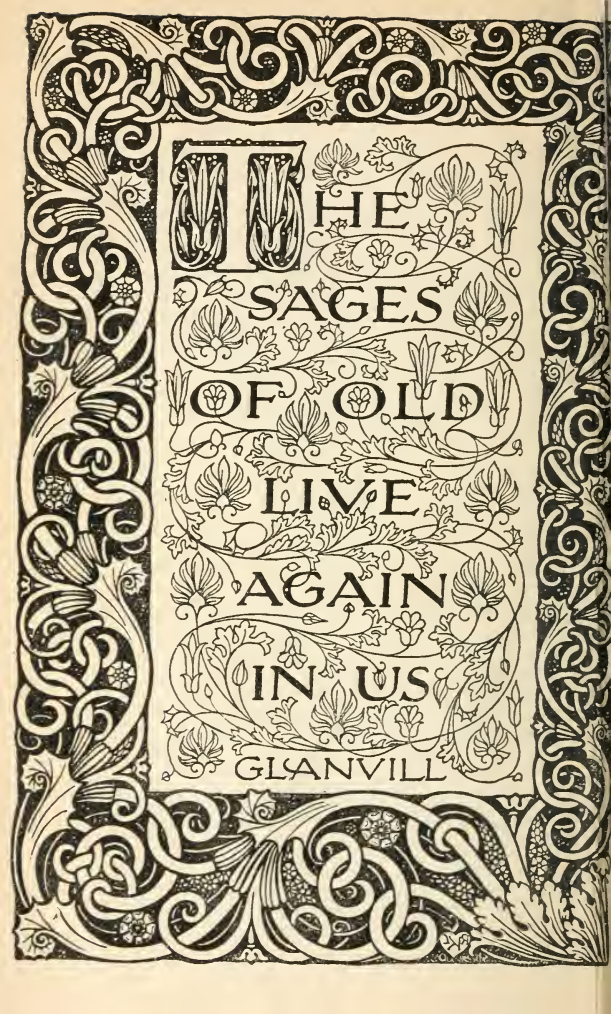
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THE ODYSSEY
OF HOMER
Translated by
WILLIAM
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
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THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION OF THE ODYSSEY, A POEM
THAT EXHIBITS IN THE CHARACTER OF ITS HEROINE
AN EXAMPLE OF ALL DOMESTIC VIRTUE, IS WITH
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BY HER LADYSHIP'S MOST DEVOTED
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THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

TRANSLATED INTO

ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BOOK I

ARGUMENT

IN a council of the Gods, Minerva calls their attention to Ulysses, still a wanderer. They resolve to grant him a safe return to Ithaca. Minerva descends to encourage Telemachus, and in the form of Mentis directs him in what manner to proceed. Throughout this book the extravagance and profligacy of the suitors are occasionally suggested.

MUSE make the man thy theme, for shrewdness famed
And genius versatile, who far and wide
A Wand'rer, after Ilium overthrown,
Discover'd various cities, and the mind
And manners learn'd of men, in lands remote.
He num'rous woes on Ocean toss'd, endured,
Anxious to save himself, and to conduct
His followers to their home; yet all his care
Preserved them not; they perish'd self-destroy'd
By their own fault; infatuate! who devoured 10
The oxen of the all-o'erseeing Sun,
And, punish'd for that crime, return'd no more.
Daughter divine of Jove, these things record,
As it may please thee, even in our ears.

The rest, all those who had perdition 'scaped
By war or on the Deep, dwelt now at home;
Him only, of his country and his wife
Alike desirous, in her hollow grots
Calypso, Goddess beautiful, detained
Wooing him to her arms. But when, at length, 20
(Many a long year elapsed) the year arrived
Of his return (by the decree of heav'n)
To Ithaca, not even then had he,

Although surrounded by his people, reach'd
 The period of his suff'rings and his toils.
 Yet all the Gods, with pity moved, beheld
 His woes, save Neptune; He alone with wrath
 Unceasing and implacable pursued
 Godlike Ulysses to his native shores.
 But Neptune, now, the Æthiopians fought,
 (The Æthiopians, utmost of mankind,
 These Eastward situate, those toward the West)
 Call'd to an hecatomb of bulls and lambs.
 There sitting, pleas'd he banqueted; the Gods
 In Jove's abode, meantime, assembled all,
 'Midst whom the Sire of heav'n and earth began.

30

For he recall'd to mind Ægisthus slain
 By Agamemnon's celebrated son
 Orestes, and retracing in his thought
 That dread event, the Immortals thus address'd.

40

Alas! how prone are human-kind to blame
 The Pow'rs of Heav'n! From us, they say, proceed
 The ills which they endure, yet more than Fate
 Herself inflicts, by their own crimes incur.
 So now Ægisthus, by no force constrained
 Of Destiny, Atrides' wedded wife
 Took to himself, and him at his return
 Slew, not unwarn'd of his own dreadful end
 By us: for we commanded Hermes down
 The watchful Argicide, who bade him fear
 Alike, to slay the King, or woo the Queen.
 For that Atrides' son Orestes, soon
 As grown mature, and eager to assume
 His sway imperial, should avenge the deed.
 So Hermes spake, but his advice moved not
 Ægisthus, on whose head the whole arrear
 Of vengeance heap'd, at last, hath therefore fall'n.

50

Whom answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 Oh Jove, Saturnian Sire, o'er all supreme!
 And well he merited the death he found;

60

So perish all, who shall, like him, offend.
 But with a bosom anguish-rent I view
 Ulysses, hapless Chief! who from his friends
 Remote, affliction hath long time endured
 In yonder wood-land isle, the central boss
 Of Ocean. That retreat a Goddess holds,

Daughter of sapient Atlas, who the abyss
 Knows to its bottom, and the pillars high
 Himself upbears which sep'rate earth from heav'n.
 His daughter, there, the sorrowing Chief detains, 70
 And ever with smooth speech insidious seeks
 To wean his heart from Ithaca; meantime

Ulysses, happy might he but behold
 The smoke ascending from his native land,
 Death covets. Canst thou not, Olympian Jove!
 At last relent? Hath not Ulysses oft
 With victims slain amid Achaia's fleet
 Thee gratified, while yet at Troy he fought?
 How hath he then so deep incensed thee, Jove?

To whom, the cloud-assembler God replied. 80

What word hath pass'd thy lips, Daughter below'd?

Can I forget Ulysses? Him forget
 So noble, who in wisdom all mankind
 Excels, and who hath sacrific'd so oft

To us whose dwelling is the boundless heav'n?

Earth-circling Neptune—He it is whose wrath

Pursues him ceaseless for the Cyclops' sake

Polypheme, strongest of the giant race,

Whom of his eye'Ulysses hath deprived.

For Him, Thoösa bore, Nymph of the sea 90

From Phorcys sprung, by Ocean's mighty pow'r

Impregnated in caverns of the Deep.

E'er since that day, the Shaker of the shores,

Although he slay him not, yet devious drives

Ulysses from his native isle afar.

Yet come—in full assembly his return

Contrive we now, both means and prosp'rous end;

So Neptune shall his wrath remit, whose pow'r

In contest with the force of all the Gods

Exerted single, can but strive in vain. 100

To whom Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed.

Oh Jupiter! above all Kings enthroned!

If the Immortals ever-blest ordain

That wise Ulysses to his home return,

Dispatch we then Hermes the Argicide,

Our messenger, hence to Ogygia's isle,

Who shall inform Calypso, nymph divine,

Of this our fixt resolve, that to his home

Ulysses, toil-enduring Chief, repair.

Myself will hence to Ithaca, meantime,
 His son to animate, and with new force
 Inspire, that (the Achaians all convened
 In council,) he may, instant, bid depart
 The suitors from his home, who, day by day,
 His num'rous flocks and fatted herds consume.
 And I will send him thence to Sparta forth,
 And into sandy Pylus, there to hear
 (If hear he may) some tidings of his Sire,
 And to procure himself a glorious name.

110

This said, her golden sandals to her feet
 She bound, ambrosial, which o'er all the earth
 And o'er the moist flood waft her fleet as air,
 Then, seizing her strong spear pointed with brass,
 In length and bulk, and weight a matchless beam,
 With which the Jove-born Goddess levels ranks
 Of Heroes, against whom her anger burns,
 From the Olympian summit down she flew,
 And on the threshold of Ulysses' hall

120

In Ithaca, and within his vestibule
 Apparent stood; there, grasping her bright spear
 Mentes¹ she seem'd, the hospitable Chief
 Of Taphos' isle—she found the haughty throng
 The suitors; they before the palace gate
 With iv'ry cubes sported, on num'rous hides
 Reclined of oxen which themselves had slain.
 The heralds and the busy menials there
 Minister'd to them; these their mantling cups
 With water slaked; with bibulous sponges those
 Made clean the tables, set the banquet on,
 And portioned out to each his plenteous share.

130

140

Long ere the rest Telemachus himself
 Mark'd her, for sad amid them all he sat,
 Pourtraying in deep thought contemplative
 His noble Sire, and questioning if yet
 Perchance the Hero might return to chase
 From all his palace that imperious herd,
 To his own honour lord of his own home.
 Amid them musing thus, sudden he saw
 The Goddess, and sprang forth, for he abhorr'd

¹ We are told that Homer was under obligations to Mentes, who had frequently given him a passage in his ship to different countries which he wished to see, for which reason he has here immortalised him.

To see a guest's admittance long delay'd; 150
 Approaching eager, her right hand he seized,
 The brazen spear took from her, and in words
 With welcome wing'd Minerva thus address'd.

Stranger, all hail! to share our cordial love
 Thou com'st; the banquet finish'd, thou shalt next
 Inform me wherefore thou hast here arrived.

So saying, toward the spacious hall he moved,
 Follow'd by Pallas, and, arriving soon
 Beneath the lofty roof, placed her bright spear
 Within a pillar's cavity, long time 160

The armoury where many a spear had stood,
 Bright weapons of his own illustrious Sire.
 Then, leading her toward a footstool'd throne
 Magnificent, which first he overspread
 With linen, there he seated her, apart
 From that rude throng, and for himself disposed
 A throne of various colours at her side,

Lest, stunn'd with clamour of the lawless band,
 The new-arrived should loth perchance to eat,
 And that more free he might the stranger's ear 170
 With questions of his absent Sire address,

And now a maiden charg'd with golden ew'r,
 And with an argent laver, pouring first
 Pure water on their hands, supplied them, next,
 With a resplendent table, which the chaste
 Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.

Then, in his turn, the sewer¹ with sav'ry meats,
 Dish after dish, served them, of various kinds,
 And golden cups beside the chargers placed, 180
 Which the attendant herald fill'd with wine.

Ere long, in rush'd the suitors, and the thrones
 And couches occupied, on all whose hands
 The heralds pour'd pure water; then the maids
 Attended them with bread in baskets heap'd,
 And eager they assail'd the ready feast.

At length, when neither thirst nor hunger more
 They felt unsatisfied, to new delights
 Their thoughts they turn'd, to song and sprightly dance,
 Enlivening sequel of the banquet's joys. 190

An herald, then, to Phemius' hand consign'd

¹ Milton uses the word—Sewers and seneschals.

His beauteous lyre; he through constraint regaled
 The suitors with his song, and while the chords
 He struck in prelude to his pleasant strains,
 Telemachus his head inclining nigh
 To Pallas' ear, lest others should his words
 Witness, the blue-eyed Goddess thus bespake.

My inmate and my friend! far from my lips
 Be ev'ry word that might displease thine ear!
 The song—the harp,—what can they less than charm 200
 These wantons? who the bread unpurchased eat
 Of one whose bones on yonder continent
 Lie mould'ring, drench'd by all the show'rs of heaven,
 Or roll at random in the billowy deep.
 Ah! could they see him once to his own isle
 Restored, both gold and raiment they would wish
 Far less, and nimbleness of foot instead.
 But He, alas! hath by a wretched fate,
 Past question perish'd, and what news soe'er
 We hear of his return, kindles no hope 210
 In us, convinced that he returns no more.
 But answer undissembling; tell me true;
 Who art thou? whence? where stands thy city? where
 Thy father's mansion? In what kind of ship
 Cam'st thou? Why steer'd the mariners their course
 To Ithaca, and of what land are they?
 For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
 This also tell me, hast thou now arrived
 New to our isle, or wast thou heretofore
 My father's guest? Since many to our house 220
 Resorted in those happier days, for he
 Drew pow'rful to himself the hearts of all.

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cærulean-eyed.

I will with all simplicity of truth
 Thy questions satisfy. Behold in me
 Mentès, the offspring of a Chief renown'd
 In war, Anchialus; and I rule, myself,
 An island race, the Taphians oar-expert.
 With ship and mariners I now arrive,
 Seeking a people of another tongue 230
 Athwart the gloomy flood, in quest of brass
 For which I barter steel, ploughing the waves
 To Temesa. My ship beneath the woods
 Of Neïus, at yonder field that skirts

Your city, in the haven Rhethrus rides.
 We are hereditary guests; our Sires
 Were friends long since; as, when thou seest him next,
 The Hero old Laertes will avouch,
 Of whom, I learn, that he frequents no more
 The city now, but in sequester'd scenes 240
 Dwells sorrowful, and by an antient dame
 With food and drink supplied oft as he feels
 Refreshment needful to him, while he creeps
 Between the rows of his luxuriant vines.
 But I have come drawn hither by report,
 Which spake thy Sire arrived, though still it seems
 The adverse Gods his homeward course retard.
 For not yet breathless lies the noble Chief,
 But in some island of the boundless flood
 Resides a prisoner, by barbarous force 250
 Of some rude race detained reluctant there.
 And I will now foreshow thee what the Gods
 Teach me, and what, though neither augur skill'd
 Nor prophet, I yet trust shall come to pass.
 He shall not, henceforth, live an exile long
 From his own shores, no, not although in bands
 Of iron held, but will ere long contrive
 His own return; for in expedients, framed
 With wond'rous ingenuity, he abounds.
 But tell me true; art thou, in stature such, 260
 Son of himself Ulysses? for thy face
 And eyes bright-sparkling, strongly indicate
 Ulysses in thee. Frequent have we both
 Conversed together thus, thy Sire and I,
 Ere yet he went to Troy, the mark to which
 So many Princes of Achaia steer'd.
 Him since I saw not, nor Ulysses me.
 To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Stranger! I tell thee true; my mother's voice
 Affirms me his, but since no mortal knows 270
 His derivation, I affirm it not.
 Would I had been son of some happier Sire,
 Ordain'd in calm possession of his own
 To reach the verge of life. But now, report
 Proclaims me his, whom I of all mankind
 Unhappiest deem.—Thy question is resolved.
 Then answer thus Pallas blue-eyed return'd.

From no ignoble race, in future days,
 The Gods shall prove thee sprung, whom so endow'd
 With ev'ry grace Penelope hath borne. 280
 But tell me true. What festival is this?
 This throng—whence are they? wherefore hast thou need
 Of such a multitude? Behold I here
 A banquet, or a nuptial? for these
 Meet not by contribution ¹ to regale,
 With such brutality and din they hold
 Their riotous banquet! a wise man and good
 Arriving, now, among them, at the sight
 Of such enormities would much be wroth.

To whom replied Telemachus discrete. 290
 Since, stranger! thou hast ask'd, learn also this.
 While yet Ulysses, with his people dwelt,
 His presence warranted the hope that here
 Virtue should dwell and opulence; but heav'n
 Hath cast for us, at length, a diff'rent lot,
 And he is lost, as never man before.
 For I should less lament even his death,
 Had he among his friends at Ilium fall'n,
 Or in the arms of his companions died,
 Troy's siege accomplish'd. Then his tomb the Greeks 300
 Of ev'ry tribe had built, and for his son,
 He had immortal glory atchieved; but now,
 By harpies torn inglorious, beyond reach
 Of eye or ear he lies; and hath to me
 Grief only, and unceasing sighs bequeath'd.
 Nor mourn I for his sake alone; the Gods
 Have plann'd for me still many a woe beside;
 For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
 Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
 Zacynthus, others also, rulers here 310
 In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
 In marriage, and my household stores consume.
 But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd,
 Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
 To end them; they my patrimony waste
 Meantime, and will not long spare even me.

¹*Ἐπαυρος*, a convivial meeting, at which every man paid his proportion, at least contributed something; but it seems to have been a meeting at which strict sobriety was observed, else Pallas would not have inferred from the noise and riot of this, that it was not such a one.

To whom, with deep commiseration pang'd,
 Pallas replied. Alas! great need hast thou
 Of thy long absent father to avenge
 These num'rous wrongs; for could he now appear 320
 There, at yon portal, arm'd with helmet, shield,
 And grasping his two spears, such as when first
 I saw him drinking joyous at our board,
 From Ilus son of Mermeris, who dwelt
 In distant Ephyre, just then return'd,
 (For thither also had Ulysses gone
 In his swift bark, seeking some pois'nous drug
 Wherewith to taint his brazen arrows keen,
 Which drug through fear of the eternal Gods
 Ilus refused him, and my father free 330
 Gave to him, for he loved him past belief)
 Could now, Ulysses, clad in arms as then,
 Mix with these suitors, short his date of life
 To each, and bitter should his nuptials prove.
 But these events, whether he shall return
 To take just vengeance under his own roof,
 Or whether not, lie all in the Gods lap.
 Meantime I counsel thee, thyself to think
 By what means likeliest thou shalt expel
 These from thy doors. Now mark me: close attend. 340
 To-morrow, summoning the Grecian Chiefs
 To council, speak to them, and call the Gods
 To witness that solemnity. Bid go
 The suitors hence, each to his own abode.
 Thy mother—if her purpose be resolved
 On marriage, let her to the house return
 Of her own potent father, who, himself,
 Shall furnish forth her matrimonial rites,
 And ample dow'r, such as it well becomes
 A darling daughter to receive, bestow. 350
 But hear me now; thyself I thus advise.
 The prime of all thy ships preparing, mann'd
 With twenty rowers, voyage hence to seek
 Intelligence of thy long-absent Sire.
 Some mortal may inform thee, or a word,¹
 Perchance, by Jove directed (safest source

¹ *Οσσα*—a word spoken, with respect to the speaker, casually; but with reference to the inquirer supposed to be sent for his information by he especial appointment and providential favour of the Gods.

Of notice to mankind) may reach thine ear.
 First voyaging to Pylus, there enquire
 Of noble Nestor; thence to Sparta tend,
 To question Menelaus amber-hair'd, 360
 Latest arrived of all the host of Greece.
 There should'st thou learn that still thy father lives,
 And hope of his return, although
 Distress'd, thou wilt be patient yet a year.
 But should'st thou there hear tidings that he breathes
 No longer, to thy native isle return'd,
 First heap his tomb; then with such pomp perform
 His funeral rites as his great name demands,
 And make thy mother's spousals, next, thy care.
 These duties satisfied, delib'rate last 370
 Whether thou shalt these troublers of thy house
 By stratagem, or by assault, destroy.
 For thou art now no child, nor longer may'st
 Sport like one. Hast thou not the proud report
 Heard, how Orestes hath renown acquired
 With all mankind, his father's murderer
 Ægisthus slaying, the deceiver base
 Who slaughter'd Agamemnon? Oh my friend!
 (For with delight thy vig'rous growth I view,
 And just proportion) be thou also bold, 380
 And merit praise from ages yet to come.
 But I will to my vessel now repair,
 And to my mariners, whom, absent long,
 I may perchance have troubled. Weigh thou well
 My counsel; let not my advice be lost.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
 Stranger! thy words bespeak thee much my friend,
 Who, as a father teaches his own son,
 Hast taught me, and I never will forget.
 But, though in haste thy voyage to pursue, 390
 Yet stay, that in the bath refreshing first
 Thy limbs now weary, thou may'st sprightlier seek
 Thy gallant bark, charged with some noble gift
 Of finish'd workmanship, which thou shalt keep
 As my memorial ever; such a boon
 As men confer on guests whom much they love.

Then Pallas thus, Goddess cærulean-eyed.
 Retard me not, for go I must; the gift
 Which liberal thou desirest to bestow,

Give me at my return, that I may bear
The treasure home; and, in exchange, thyself
Expect some gift equivalent from me. 400

She spake, and as with eagle-wings upborne,
Vanish'd incontinent, but him inspired
With daring fortitude, and on his heart
Dearer remembrance of his Sire impress'd
Than ever. Conscious of the wond'rous change,
Amazed he stood, and, in his secret thought
Revolving all, believed his guest a God.

The youthful Hero to the suitors then
Repair'd; they silent, listen'd to the song
Of the illustrious Bard: he the return
Deplorable of the Achaian host

From Ilium by command of Pallas, sang.
Penelope, Icarius' daughter, mark'd
Meantime the song celestial, where she sat
In the superior palace; down she came,
By all the num'rous steps of her abode;
Not sole, for two fair handmaids follow'd her.
She then, divinest of her sex, arrived 420

In presence of that lawless throng, beneath
The portal of her stately mansion stood,
Between her maidens, with her lucid veil
Her lovely features mantling. There, profuse
She wept, and thus the sacred bard bespake.

Phemius! for many a sorrow-soothing strain
Thou know'st beside, such as exploits record
Of Gods and men, the poet's frequent theme;
Give them of those a song, and let themselves
Their wine drink noiseless; but this mournful strain 430
Break off, unfriendly to my bosom's peace,
And which of all hearts nearest touches mine,
With such regret my dearest Lord I mourn,
Rememb'ring still an husband praised from side
To side, and in the very heart of Greece.

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
My mother! wherefore should it give thee pain
If the delightful bard that theme pursue
To which he feels his mind impell'd? the bard
Blame not, but rather Jove, who, as he wills, 440
Materials for poetic art supplies.
No fault is his, if the disastrous fate

He sing of the Achaians, for the song
 Wins ever from the hearers most applause
 That has been least in use. Of all who fought
 At Troy, Ulysses hath not lost, alone,
 His day of glad return; but many a Chief
 Hath perish'd also. Seek thou then again
 Thy own apartment, spindle ply and loom,
 And task thy maidens; management belongs 450
 To men of joys convivial, and of men
 Especially to me, chief ruler here.

She heard astonish'd; and the prudent speech
 Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
 Again with her attendant maidens sought
 Her upper chamber. There arrived, she wept
 Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
 Her weary lids in dewy sleep profound.
 Then echoed through the palace dark-bedimm'd
 With evening shades the suitors boist'rous roar, 460
 For each the royal bed burn'd to partake,
 Whom thus Telemachus discrete address'd.

All ye my mother's suitors, though addict
 To contumacious wrangling fierce, suspend
 Your clamour, for a course to me it seems
 More decent far, when such a bard as this,
 Godlike, for sweetness, sings, to hear his song.
 To-morrow meet we in full council all,
 That I may plainly warn you to depart
 From this our mansion. Seek ye where ye may 470
 Your feasts; consume your own; alternate feed
 Each at the other's cost; but if it seem
 Wisest in your account and best, to eat
 Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
 Of one man, rend'ring no account of all,¹
 Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry
 Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope
 That Jove, for retribution of the wrong,
 Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
 To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.¹ 480

He ended, and each gnaw'd his lip, aghast

¹ There is in the Original an evident stress laid on the word *Νήπιοι*, which is used in both places. It was a sort of Lex Talionis which Telemachus hoped might be put in force against them; and that Jove would demand no satisfaction for the lives of those who made him none for the waste of his property.

At his undaunted hardiness of speech.

Then thus Antinoüs spake, Eupithes' son.
Telemachus! the Gods, methinks, themselves
Teach thee sublimity, and to pronounce
Thy matter fearless. Ah forbid it, Jove!
That one so eloquent should with the weight
Of kingly cares in Ithaca be charged,
A realm, by claim hereditary, thine.

Then prudent thus Telemachus replied.
Although my speech Antinoüs may, perchance,
Provoke thee, know that I am not averse
From kingly cares, if Jove appoint me such.
Seems it to thee a burthen to be fear'd
By men above all others? trust me, no,
There is no ill in royalty; the man
So station'd, waits not long ere he obtain
Riches and honour. But I grant that Kings
Of the Achaians may no few be found
In sea-girt Ithaca both young and old,
Of whom since great Ulysses is no more,
Reign whoso may; but King, myself, I am
In my own house, and over all my own
Domestics, by Ulysses gained for me.

490

500

To whom Eurymachus replied, the son
Of Polybus. What Grecian Chief shall reign
In sea-girt Ithaca, must be referr'd
To the Gods' will, Telemachus! meantime
Thou hast unquestionable right to keep
Thy own, and to command in thy own house.
May never that man on her shores arrive,
While an inhabitant shall yet be left
In Ithaca, who shall by violence wrest
Thine from thee. But permit me, noble Sir!
To ask thee of thy guest. Whence came the man?
What country claims him? Where are to be found
His kindred and his patrimonial fields?
Brings he glad tidings of thy Sire's approach
Homeward? or came he to receive a debt
Due to himself? How swift he disappear'd!
Nor opportunity to know him gave
To those who wish'd it; for his face and air
Him speak not of Plebeian birth obscure.

510

520

Whom answered thus Telemachus discrete.

Eurymachus! my father comes no more.
 I can no longer, now tidings believe,
 If such arrive; nor heed I more the song
 Of sooth-sayers whom my mother may consult.
 But this my guest hath known in other days
 My father, and he came from Taphos, son
 Of brave Anchialus, Mentès by name,
 And Chief of the sea-practis'd Taphian race.

53°

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart
 Knew well his guest a Goddess from the skies.
 Then they to dance and heart-enlivening song
 Turn'd joyous, waiting the approach of eve,
 And dusky evening found them joyous still.
 Then each, to his own house retiring, sought
 Needful repose. Meantime Telemachus
 To his own lofty chamber, built in view
 Of the wide hall, retired; but with a heart
 In various musings occupied intense.

54°

Sage Euryclea, bearing in each hand
 A torch, preceded him; her sire was Ops,
 Pisenor's son, and, in her early prime,
 At his own cost Laertes made her his,
 Paying with twenty beeves her purchase-price,
 Nor in less honour than his spotless wife
 He held her ever, but his consort's wrath
 Fearing, at no time call'd her to his bed.

55°

She bore the torches, and with truer heart
 Loved him than any of the female train,
 For she had nurs'd him in his infant years.
 He open'd his broad chamber-valves, and sat
 On his couch-side: then putting off his vest
 Of softest texture, placed it in the hands
 Of the attendant dame discrete, who first
 Folding it with exactest care, beside
 His bed suspended it, and, going forth,
 Drew by its silver ring the portal close,
 And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.
 There lay Telemachus, on finest wool
 Reposed, contemplating all night his course
 Prescribed by Pallas to the Pylian shore.

56°

BOOK II

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS having convened an assembly of the Grecians, publicly calls on the Suitors to relinquish the house of Ulysses. During the continuance of the Council he has much to suffer from the petulance of the Suitors, from whom, having informed them of his design to undertake a voyage in hope to obtain news of Ulysses, he asks a ship, with all things necessary for the purpose. He is refused, but is afterwards furnished with what he wants by Minerva, in the form of Mentor. He embarks in the evening without the privity of his mother, and the Goddess sails with him.

AURORA, rosy daughter of the dawn,
Now ting'd the East, when habited again,
Uprose Ulysses' offspring from his bed.
Athwart his back his faulchion keen he flung,
His sandals bound to his unsullied feet,
And, godlike, issued from his chamber-door.
At once the clear-voic'd heralds he enjoin'd
To call the Greeks to council; they aloud
Gave forth the summons, and the throng began.
When all were gather'd, and the assembly full, 10
Himself, his hand arm'd with a brazen spear,
Went also; nor alone he went; his hounds
Fleet-footed follow'd him, a faithful pair.
O'er all his form Minerva largely shed
Majestic grace divine, and, as he went,
The whole admiring concourse gaz'd on him,
The seniors gave him place, and down he sat
On his paternal Throne. Then grave arose
The Hero, old Ægyptius; bow'd with age
Was he, and by experience deep-inform'd. 20
His son had with Ulysses, godlike Chief,
On board his fleet to steed-fam'd Ilium gone,
The warrior Antiphus, whom in his cave
The savage Cyclops slew, and on his flesh
At ev'ning made obscene his last regale.
Three sons he had beside, a suitor one,
Eurynomus; the other two, employ

Found constant managing their Sire's concerns.
 Yet he forgot not, father as he was
 Of these, his absent eldest, whom he mourn'd
 Ceaseless, and thus his speech, weeping, began.

30

Hear me, ye men of Ithaca, my friends!
 Nor council here nor session hath been held
 Since great Ulysses left his native shore.
 Who now convenes us? what especial need
 Hath urged him, whether of our youth he be,
 Or of our senators by age matured?
 Have tidings reach'd him of our host's return,
 Which here he would divulge? or brings he aught
 Of public import on a diff'rent theme?

40

I deem him, whosoe'er he be, a man
 Worthy to prosper, and may Jove vouchsafe
 The full performance of his chief desire!

He ended, and Telemachus rejoiced
 In that good omen. Ardent to begin,
 He sat not long, but, moving to the midst,
 Received the sceptre from Pisenor's hand,
 His prudent herald, and addressing, next,
 The hoary Chief Ægyptius, thus began.

Not far remote, as thou shalt soon thyself
 Perceive, oh venerable Chief! he stands,
 Who hath convened this council. I, am He,
 I am in chief the suff'rer. Tidings none
 Of the returning host I have received,
 Which here I would divulge, nor bring I aught
 Of public import on a different theme,
 But my own trouble, on my own house fall'n,
 And two-fold fall'n. One is, that I have lost
 A noble father, who, as fathers rule
 Benign their children, govern'd once yourselves;
 The other, and the more alarming ill,
 With ruin threatens my whole house, and all
 My patrimony with immediate waste.

50

60

Suitors, (their children who in this our isle
 Hold highest rank) importunate besiege
 My mother, though desirous not to wed,
 And rather than resort to her own Sire
 Icarius, who might give his daughter dow'r,
 And portion her to whom he most approves,
 (A course which, only named, moves their disgust)

70

They chuse, assembling all within my gates
 Daily to make my beeves, my sheep, my goats
 Their banquet, and to drink without restraint
 My wine; whence ruin threatens us and ours;
 For I have no Ulysses to relieve
 Me and my family from this abuse.
 Ourselves are not sufficient; we, alas!
 Too feeble should be found, and yet to learn
 How best to use the little force we own;
 Else, had I pow'r, I would, myself, redress
 The evil; for it now surpasses far
 All suff'rance, now they ravage uncontroll'd,
 Nor show of decency vouchsafe me more.
 Oh be ashamed¹ yourselves; blush at the thought
 Of such reproach as ye shall sure incur
 From all our neighbour states, and fear beside
 The wrath of the Immortals, lest they call
 Yourselves one day to a severe account.
 I pray you by Olympian Jove, by her
 Whose voice convenes all councils, and again
 Dissolves them, Themis, that henceforth ye cease,
 That ye permit me, oh my friends! to wear
 My days in solitary grief away,
 Unless Ulysses, my illustrious Sire,
 Hath in his anger any Grecian wrong'd,
 Whose wrongs ye purpose to avenge on me,
 Inciting these to plague me. Better far
 Were my condition, if yourselves consumed
 My substance and my revenue; from you
 I might obtain, perchance, righteous amends
 Hereafter; you I might with vehement suit
 O'ercome, from house to house pleading aloud
 For recompense, till I at last prevail'd.
 But now, with darts of anguish ye transfix
 My inmost soul, and I have no redress.

80

90

100

He spake impassion'd, and to earth cast down
 His sceptre, weeping. Pity at that sight
 Seiz'd all the people; mute the assembly sat
 Long time, none dared to greet Telemachus
 With answer rough, till of them all, at last,

110

¹ The reader is to be reminded that this is not an assembly of the suitors only, but a general one, which affords Telemachus an opportunity to apply himself to the feelings of the Ithacans at large.

Antinoüs, sole arising, thus replied.

Telemachus, intemp'rate in harangue,
High-sounding orator! it is thy drift
To make us all odious; but the offence
Lies not with us the suitors; she alone
Thy mother, who in subtlety excels,
And deep-wrought subterfuge, deserves the blame.

It is already the third year, and soon
Shall be the fourth, since with delusive art
Practising on their minds, she hath deceived
The Grecians; message after message sent
Brings hope to each, by turns, and promise fair,
But she, meantime, far otherwise intends.
Her other arts exhausted all, she framed
This stratagem; a web of amplest size
And subtlest woof beginning, thus she spake.

120

Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
Ulysses is no more, press not as yet
My nuptials, wait till I shall finish, first,
A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads decay)
Which for the antient Hero I prepare,
Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
Else I the censure dread of all my sex,
Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

130

So spake the Queen, and unsuspecting, we
With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
She wove the ample web, and by the aid
Of torches ravell'd it again at night.

Three years by such contrivance she deceived
The Grecians; but when (three whole years elaps'd)
The fourth arriv'd, then, conscious of the fraud,
A damsel of her train told all the truth,
And her we found rav'ling the beauteous work.
Thus, through necessity she hath, at length,
Perform'd the task, and in her own despight.

140

Now therefore, for the information clear
Of thee thyself, and of the other Greeks,
We answer. Send thy mother hence, with charge
That him she wed on whom her father's choice
Shall fall, and whom she shall, herself, approve.

150

But if by long procrastination still
She persevere wearing our patience out,

Attentive only to display the gifts
 By Pallas so profusely dealt to her,
 Works of surpassing skill, ingenious thought,
 And subtle shifts, such as no beauteous Greek
 (For aught that we have heard) in antient times
 E'er practised, Tyro, or Alcemena fair,
 Or fair Mycene, of whom none in art 160
 E'er match'd Penelope, although we yield
 To this her last invention little praise,
 Then know, that these her suitors will consume
 So long thy patrimony and thy goods,
 As she her present purpose shall indulge,
 With which the Gods inspire her. Great renown
 She to herself insures, but equal woe
 And devastation of thy wealth to thee;
 For neither to our proper works at home
 Go we, of that be sure, nor yet elsewhere, 170
 Till him she wed, to whom she most inclines.

Him prudent, then, answer'd Telemachus.
 Antinous! it is not possible
 That I should thrust her forth against her will,
 Who both produced and reared me. Be he dead,
 Or still alive, my Sire is far remote,
 And should I, voluntary, hence dismiss
 My mother to Icarius, I must much
 Refund, which hardship were and loss to me.
 So doing, I should also wrath incur 180
 From my offended Sire, and from the Gods
 Still more; for she, departing, would invoke
 Erynnis to avenge her, and reproach
 Beside would follow me from all mankind.
 That word I, therefore, never will pronounce.
 No, if ye judge your treatment at her hands
 Injurious to you, go ye forth yourselves,
 Forsake my mansion; seek where else ye may
 Your feasts; consume your own; alternate feed
 Each at the other's cost. But if it seem 190
 Wisest in your account and best to eat
 Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
 Of one man, rend'ring no account of all,
 Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry
 Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope
 That Jove, in retribution of the wrong,

Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.

So spake Telemachus, and while he spake,
The Thund'rer from a lofty mountain-top 200
Turn'd off two eagles; on the winds, awhile,
With outspread pinions ample side by side
They floated; but, ere long, hov'ring aloft,
Right o'er the midst of the assembled Chiefs
They wheel'd around, clang'd all their num'rous plumes,
And with a downward look eyeing the throng,
Death boded, ominous; then rending each
The other's face and neck, they sprang at once
Toward the right, and darted through the town.
Amazement universal, at that sight, 210
Seized the assembly, and with anxious thought
Each scann'd the future; amidst whom arose
The Hero Halitherses, antient Seer,
Offspring of Mastor; for in judgment he
Of portents augural, and in forecast
Unerring, his coevals all excell'd,
And prudent thus the multitude bespake.

Ye men of Ithaca, give ear! hear all!
Though chief my speech shall to the suitors look,
For, on their heads devolved, comes down the woe. 220
Ulysses shall not from his friends, henceforth,
Live absent long, but, hasting to his home,
Comes even now, and as he comes, designs
A bloody death for these, whose bitter woes
No few shall share, inhabitants with us
Of pleasant Ithaca; but let us frame
Effectual means maturely to suppress
Their violent deeds, or rather let themselves
Repentant cease; and soonest shall be best.
Not inexpert, but well-inform'd I speak 230
The future, and the accomplishment announce
Of all which when Ulysses with the Greeks
Embark'd for Troy, I to himself foretold.
I said that, after many woes, and loss
Of all his people, in the twentieth year,
Unknown to all, he should regain his home,
And my prediction shall be now fulfill'd.

Him, then, Eurymachus thus answer'd rough
The son of Polybus. Hence to thy house,

Thou hoary dotard! there, prophetic, teach 240
 Thy children to escape woes else to come.
 Birds num'rous flutter in the beams of day,
 Not all predictive. Death, far hence remote
 Hath found Ulysses, and I would to heav'n
 That, where he died, thyself had perish'd too.
 Thou hadst not then run o'er with prophecy
 As now, nor provocation to the wrath
 Giv'n of Telemachus, in hope to win,
 Perchance, for thine some favour at his hands.
 But I to *thee* foretell, skilled as thou art 250
 In legends old, (nor shall my threat be vain)
 That if by artifice thou move to wrath
 A younger than thyself, no matter whom,
 Woe first the heavier on himself shall fall,
 Nor shalt thou profit him by thy attempt,
 And we will charge thee also with a mulct,
 Which thou shalt pay with difficulty, and bear
 The burthen of it with an aching heart.

As for Telemachus, I him advise,
 Myself, and press the measure on his choice 260
 Earnestly, that he send his mother hence
 To her own father's house, who shall, himself,
 Set forth her nuptial rites, and shall endow
 His daughter sumptuously, and as he ought.
 For this expensive wooing, as I judge,
 Till then shall never cease; since we regard
 No man—no—not Telemachus, although
 In words exub'rant; neither fear we aught
 Thy vain prognostics, venerable sir!
 But only hate thee for their sake the more. 270
 Waste will continue and disorder foul
 Unremedied, so long as she shall hold
 The suitors in suspense, for, day by day,
 Our emulation goads us to the strife,
 Nor shall we, going hence, seek to espouse
 Each his own comfort suitable elsewhere.

To whom, discrete, Telemachus replied.
 Eurymachus, and ye the suitor train
 Illustrious, I have spoken: ye shall hear
 No more this supplication urged by me. 280
 The Gods, and all the Greeks, now know the truth.
 But give me instantly a gallant bark

With twenty rowers, skill'd their course to win
 To whatsoever haven; for I go
 To sandy Pylus, and shall hasten thence
 To Lacedemon, tidings to obtain
 Of my long-absent Sire, or from the lips
 Of man, or by a word from Jove vouchsafed
 Himself, best source of notice to mankind.
 If, there inform'd that still my father lives, 290
 I hope conceive of his return, although
 Distress'd, I shall be patient yet a year.
 But should I learn, haply, that he survives
 No longer, then, returning, I will raise
 At home his tomb, will with such pomp perform
 His fun'ral rites, as his great name demands,
 And give my mother's hand to whom I may.

This said, he sat, and after him arose
 Mentor, illustrious Ulysses' friend,
 To whom, embarking thence, he had consign'd 300
 All his concerns, that the old Chief might rule
 His family, and keep the whole secure.
 Arising, thus the senior, sage, began.

Hear me, ye Ithacans! be never King
 Henceforth, benevolent, gracious, humane
 Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
 Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
 Since none of all his people, whom he sway'd
 With such paternal gentleness and love,
 Remembers the divine Ulysses more! 310
 That the imperious suitors thus should weave
 The web of mischief and atrocious wrong,
 I grudge not; since at hazard of their heads
 They make Ulysses' property a prey,
 Persuaded that the Hero comes no more.
 But much the people move me; how ye sit
 All mute, and though a multitude, yourselves,
 Opposed to few, risque not a single word
 To check the license of these bold intruders!

Then thus Liocritus, Evenor's son. 320
 Injurious Mentor! headlong orator!
 How dar'st thou move the populace against
 The suitors? Trust me they should find it hard,
 Numerous as they are, to cope with us,
 A feast the prize. Or should the King himself

Of Ithaca, returning, undertake
 T' expell the jovial suitors from his house,
 Much as Penelope his absence mourns,
 His presence should afford her little joy;
 For fighting sole with many, he should meet 330
 A dreadful death. Thou, therefore, speak'st amiss.
 As for Telemachus, let Mentor him
 And Halytherses furnish forth, the friends
 Long valued of his Sire, with all dispatch;
 Though him I judge far likelier to remain
 Long-time contented an enquirer here,
 Than to perform the voyage now proposed.

Thus saying, Liocritus dissolved in haste
 The council, and the scattered concourse sought
 Their sev'ral homes, while all the suitors flock'd 340
 Thence to the palace of their absent King.
 Meantime, Telemachus from all resort
 Retiring, in the surf of the gray Deep
 First laved his hands, then, thus to Pallas pray'd.

O Goddess! who wast yesterday a guest
 Beneath my roof, and didst enjoin me then
 A voyage o'er the sable Deep in quest
 Of tidings of my long regretted Sire!
 Which voyage, all in Ithaca, but most 350
 The haughty suitors, obstinate impede,
 Now hear my suit and gracious interpose!

Such pray'r he made; then Pallas, in the form,
 And with the voice of Mentor, drawing nigh,
 In accents wing'd, him kindly thus bespake.

Telemachus! thou shalt hereafter prove
 Nor base, nor poor in talents. If, in truth,
 Thou have received from heav'n thy father's force
 Instill'd into thee, and resemblest him
 In promptness both of action and of speech,
 Thy voyage shall not useless be, or vain. 360
 But if Penelope produced thee not
 His son, I, then, hope not for good effect
 Of this design which, ardent, thou pursuest.
 Few sons their fathers equal; most appear
 Degenerate; but we find, though rare, sometimes
 A son superior even to his Sire.
 And since thyself shalt neither base be found
 Nor spiritless, nor altogether void

Of talents, such as grace thy royal Sire,
 I therefore hope success of thy attempt. 370
 Heed not the suitors' projects; neither wise
 Are they, nor just, nor aught suspect the doom
 Which now approaches them, and in one day
 Shall overwhelm them all. No long suspense
 Shall hold thy purposed enterprise in doubt,
 Such help from me, of old thy father's friend,
 Thou shalt receive, who with a bark well-oar'd
 Will serve thee, and myself attend thee forth.
 But haste, join thou the suitors, and provide,
 In sep'rate vessels stow'd, all needful stores, 380
 Wine in thy jars, and flour, the strength of man,
 In skins close-seam'd. I will, meantime, select
 Such as shall voluntary share thy toils.
 In sea-girt Ithaca new ships and old
 Abound, and I will chuse, myself, for thee
 The prime of all, which without more delay
 We will launch out into the spacious Deep.

Thus Pallas spake, daughter of Jove; nor long,
 So greeted by the voice divine, remain'd
 Telemachus, but to his palace went 390
 Distress'd in heart. He found the suitors there
 Goats slaying in the hall, and fatted swine
 Roasting; when with a laugh Antinoüs flew
 To meet him, fasten'd on his hand, and said,
 Telemachus, in eloquence sublime,
 And of a spirit not to be controul'd!
 Give harbour in thy breast on no account
 To after-grudge or enmity, but eat,
 Far rather, cheerfully as heretofore,
 And freely drink, committing all thy cares 400
 To the Achaians, who shall furnish forth
 A gallant ship and chosen crew for thee,
 That thou may'st hence to Pylus with all speed,
 Tidings to learn of thy illustrious Sire.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Antinoüs! I have no heart to feast
 With guests so insolent, nor can indulge
 The pleasures of a mind at ease, with you.
 Is't not enough, suitors, that ye have used
 My noble patrimony as your own 410
 While I was yet a child? now, grown mature,

And competent to understand the speech
Of my instructors, feeling, too, a mind
Within me conscious of augmented pow'rs,
I will attempt your ruin, be assured,
Whether at Pylus, or continuing here.

I go, indeed, (nor shall my voyage prove
Of which I speak, bootless or vain) I go
An humble passenger, who neither bark
Nor rowers have to boast my own, denied
That honour (so ye judg'd it best) by you.

420

He said, and from Antinoüs' hand his own
Drew sudden. Then their delicate repast
The busy suitors on all sides prepar'd,
Still taunting as they toil'd, and with sharp speech
Sarcastic wantoning, of whom a youth,
Arrogant as his fellows, thus began.

I see it plain, Telemachus intends
Our slaughter; either he will aids procure
From sandy Pylus, or will bring them arm'd
From Sparta; such is his tremendous drift.
Even to fruitful Ephyre, perchance,
He will proceed, seeking some baneful herb
Which cast into our cup, shall drug us all.

430

To whom some haughty suitor thus replied.
Who knows but that himself, wand'ring the sea
From all his friends and kindred far remote,
May perish like Ulysses? Whence to us
Should double toil ensue, on whom the charge
To parcel out his wealth would then devolve,
And to endow his mother with the house
For his abode whom she should chance to wed.

440

So sported they; but he, ascending sought
His father's lofty chamber, where his heaps
He kept of brass and gold, garments in chests,
And oils of fragrant scent, a copious store.
There many a cask with season'd nectar fill'd
The grape's pure juice divine, beside the wall
Stood orderly arranged, waiting the hour
(Should e'er such hour arrive) when, after woes
Num'rous, Ulysses should regain his home.
Secure that chamber was with folding doors
Of massy planks compact, and night and day,
Within it antient Euryclea dwelt,

450

Guardian discrete of all the treasures there,
Whom, thither call'd, Telemachus address'd.

Nurse! draw me forth sweet wine into my jars,
Delicious next to that which thou reserv'st
For our poor wand'rer; if escaping death
At last, divine Ulysses e'er return.

460

Fill twelve, and stop them close; pour also meal
Well mill'd (full twenty measures) into skins
Close-seam'd, and mention what thou dost to none.
Place them together; for at even-tide
I will convey them hence, soon as the Queen,
Retiring to her couch, shall seek repose.
For hence to Sparta will I take my course,
And sandy Pylus, tidings there to hear
(If hear I may) of my lov'd Sire's return.

He ceas'd, then wept his gentle nurse that sound
Hearing, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

470

My child! ah, wherefore hath a thought so rash
Possess'd thee? whither, only and belov'd,
Seek'st thou to ramble, travelling, alas!
To distant climes? Ulysses is no more;
Dead lies the Hero in some land unknown,
And thou no sooner shalt depart, than these
Will plot to slay thee, and divide thy wealth.
No, stay with us who love thee. Need is none
That thou should'st on the barren Deep distress
Encounter, roaming without hope or end.

480

Whom, prudent, thus answer'd Telemachus.
Take courage, nurse! for not without consent
Of the Immortals I have thus resolv'd.
But swear, that till eleven days be past,
Or twelve, or, till enquiry made, she learn
Herself my going, thou wilt not impart
Of this my purpose to my mother's ear,
Lest all her beauties fade by grief impair'd.

He ended, and the antient matron swore
Solemnly by the Gods; which done, she fill'd
With wine the vessels and the skins with meal,
And he, returning, join'd the throng below.

490

Then Pallas, Goddess azure-eyed, her thoughts
Elsewhere directing, all the city ranged
In semblance of Telemachus, each man
Exhorting, at the dusk of eve, to seek

The gallant ship, and from Noëmon, son
Renown'd of Phronius, ask'd, herself, a bark,
Which soon as ask'd, he promis'd to supply. 500

Now set the sun, and twilight dimm'd the ways,
When, drawing down his bark into the Deep,
He gave her all her furniture, oars, arms
And tackle, such as well-built galleys bear,
Then moor'd her in the bottom of the bay.
Meantime, his mariners in haste repair'd
Down to the shore, for Pallas urged them on.
And now on other purposes intent,
The Goddess sought the palace, where with dews
Of slumber drenching ev'ry suitor's eye, 510
She fool'd the drunkard multitude, and dash'd
The goblets from their idle hands away.
They through the city reeled, happy to leave
The dull carousal, when the slumb'rous weight
Oppressive on their eye-lids once had fall'n.
Next, Pallas azure-eyed in Mentor's form
And with the voice of Mentor, summoning
Telemachus abroad, him thus bespake.

Telemachus! already at their oars
Sit all thy fellow-voyagers, and wait 520
Thy coming; linger not, but haste away.

This said, Minerva led him thence, whom he
With nimble steps follow'd, and on the shore
Arrived, found all his mariners prepared,
Whom thus the princely voyager address'd.

Haste, my companions! bring we down the stores
Already sorted and set forth; but nought
My mother knows, or any of her train
Of this design, one matron sole except.

He spake, and led them; they, obedient, brought 530
All down, and, as Ulysses' son enjoin'd,
Within the gallant bark the charge bestow'd.

Then, led by Pallas, went the prince on board,
Where down they sat, the Goddess in the stern,
And at her side Telemachus. The crew
Cast loose the hawsers, and embarking, fill'd
The benches. Blue-eyed Pallas from the West
Call'd forth propitious breezes; fresh they curled
The sable Deep, and, sounding, swept the waves.
He loud-exhorting them, his people bade 540

Hand, brisk, the tackle; they, obedient, reared
The pine-tree mast, which in its socket deep
They lodg'd, then strain'd the cordage, and with thongs
Well-twisted, drew the shining sail aloft.
A land-breeze fill'd the canvas, and the flood
Roar'd as she went against the steady bark
That ran with even course her liquid way.
The rigging, thus, of all the galley set,
Their beakers crowning high with wine, they hail'd
The ever-living Gods, but above all
Minerva, daughter azure-eyed of Jove. 550
Thus, all night long the galley, and till dawn
Had brighten'd into day, cleaved swift the flood.

BOOK III

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS arriving at Pylus, enquires of Nestor concerning Ulysses.

Nestor relates to him all that he knows or has heard of the Grecians since their departure from the siege of Troy, but not being able to give him any satisfactory account of Ulysses, refers him to Menelaus. At evening Minerva quits Telemachus, but discovers herself in going. Nestor sacrifices to the Goddess, and the solemnity ended, Telemachus sets forth for Sparta in one of Nestor's chariots, and accompanied by Nestor's son, Pisistratus.

THE sun, emerging from the lucid waves,
Ascended now the brazen vault with light
For the inhabitants of earth and heav'n,
When in their bark at Pylus they arrived,
City of Neleus. On the shore they found
The people sacrificing; bulls they slew
Black without spot, to Neptune azure-hair'd.
On ranges nine of seats they sat; each range
Received five hundred, and to each they made
Allotment equal of nine sable bulls.

10

The feast was now begun; these eating sat
The entrails, those stood off'ring to the God
The thighs, his portion, when the Ithacans
Push'd right ashore, and, furling close the sails,
And making fast their moorings, disembark'd.
Forth came Telemachus, by Pallas led,
Whom thus the Goddess azure-eyed address'd.
Telemachus! there is no longer room
For bashful fear, since thou hast cross'd the flood
With purpose to enquire what land conceals
Thy father, and what fate hath follow'd him.
Advance at once to the equestrian Chief
Nestor, within whose bosom lies, perhaps,
Advice well worthy of thy search; entreat
Himself, that he will tell thee only truth,
Who will not lye, for he is passing wise.

20

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
Ah Mentor! how can I advance, how greet

A Chief like him, unpractis'd as I am
 In manag'd phrase? Shame bids the youth beware 30
 How he accosts the man of many years.

But him the Goddess answer'd azure-eyed,
 Telemachus! Thou wilt, in part, thyself
 Fit speech devise, and heav'n will give the rest;
 For thou wast neither born, nor hast been train'd
 To manhood, under unpropitious Pow'rs.

So saying, Minerva led him thence, whom he
 With nimble steps attending, soon arrived
 Among the multitude. There Nestor sat,
 And Nestor's sons, while, busily the feast 40
 Tending, his num'rous followers roasted, some,
 The viands, some, transfix'd them with the spits.
 They seeing guests arrived, together all
 Advanced, and, grasping courteously their hands,
 Invited them to sit; but first, the son
 Of Nestor, young Pisistratus, approach'd,
 Who, fast'ning on the hands of both, beside
 The banquet placed them, where the beach was spread
 With fleeces, and where Thrasymedes sat
 His brother, and the hoary Chief his Sire. 50
 To each a portion of the inner parts
 He gave, then fill'd a golden cup with wine,
 Which, tasted first, he to the daughter bore
 Of Jove the Thund'rer, and her thus bespake.

Oh guest! the King of Ocean now adore!
 For ye have chanced on Neptune's festival;
 And, when thou hast, thyself, libation made
 Duly, and pray'r, deliver to thy friend
 The gen'rous juice, that he may also make
 Libation; for he, doubtless, seeks, in prayer 60
 The Immortals, of whose favour all have need.
 But, since he younger is, and with myself
 Coeval, first I give the cup to thee.

He ceas'd, and to her hand consign'd the cup,
 Which Pallas gladly from a youth received
 So just and wise, who to herself had first
 The golden cup presented, and in pray'r
 Fervent the Sov'reign of the Seas adored.

Hear, earth-encircler Neptune! O vouchsafe
 To us thy suppliants the desired effect 70
 Of this our voyage; glory, first, bestow

On Nestor and his offspring both, then grant
 To all the Pyliaus such a gracious boon
 As shall requite their noble off'ring well.
 Grant also to Telemachus and me
 To voyage hence, possess'd of what we sought
 When hither in our sable bark we came.

So Pallas pray'd, and her own pray'r herself
 Accomplish'd. To Telemachus she gave
 The splendid goblet next, and in his turn
 Like pray'r Ulysses' son also preferr'd. 80
 And now (the banquet from the spits withdrawn)
 They next distributed sufficient share
 To each, and all were sumptuously regaled.
 At length, (both hunger satisfied and thirst)
 Thus Nestor, the Gerenian Chief, began.

Now with more seemliness we may enquire,
 After repast, what guests we have received.
 Our guests! who are ye? Whence have ye the waves
 Plough'd hither? Come ye to transact concerns 90
 Commercial, or at random roam the Deep
 Like pirates, who with mischief charged and woe
 To foreign States, oft hazard life themselves?

Him answer'd, bolder now, but still discrete,
 Telemachus. For Pallas had his heart
 With manly courage arm'd, that he might ask
 From Nestor tidings of his absent Sire,
 And win, himself, distinction and renown.

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece!
 Thou askest whence we are. I tell thee whence. 100
 From Ithaca, by the umbrageous woods
 Of Neritus o'erhung, by private need,
 Not public, urged, we come. My errand is
 To seek intelligence of the renown'd
 Ulysses; of my noble father, prais'd
 For dauntless courage, whom report proclaims
 Conqueror, with thine aid, of sacred Troy.
 We have already learn'd where other Chiefs
 Who fought at Ilium, died; but Jove conceals
 Even the death of my illustrious Sire 110
 In dull obscurity; for none hath heard
 Or confident can answer, where he dy'd;
 Whether he on the continent hath fall'n
 By hostile hands, or by the waves o'erwhelm'd

Of Amphitrite, welters in the Deep.
 For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
 That thou would'st tell me his disast'rous end,
 If either thou beheld'st that dread event
 Thyself, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
 Hast heard it: for my father at his birth
 Was, sure, predestin'd to no common woes. 120
 Neither through pity, or o'erstrain'd respect
 Flatter me, but explicit all relate
 Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
 E'er gratified thee by performance just
 Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
 So num'rous slain in fight, oh, recollect
 Now his fidelity, and tell me true.

Then Nestor thus Gerenian Hero old.
 Young friend! since thou remind'st me, speaking thus, 130
 Of all the woes which indefatigable
 We sons of the Achaians there sustain'd,
 Both those which wand'ring on the Deep we bore
 Wherever by Achilles led in quest
 Of booty, and the many woes beside
 Which under royal Priam's spacious walls
 We suffer'd, know, that there our bravest fell.
 There warlike Ajax lies, there Peleus' son;
 There, too, Patroclus, like the Gods themselves
 In council, and my son beloved there, 140
 Brave, virtuous, swift of foot, and bold in fight,
 Antilochus. Nor are these sorrows all;
 What tongue of mortal man could all relate?
 Should'st thou, abiding here, five years employ
 Or six, enquiring of the woes endured
 By the Achaians, ere thou should'st have learn'd
 The whole, thou would'st depart, tir'd of the tale.
 For we, nine years, stratagems of all kinds
 Devised against them, and Saturnian Jove
 Scarce crown'd the difficult attempt at last. 150
 There, no competitor in wiles well-plann'd
 Ulysses found, so far were all surpass'd
 In shrewd invention by thy noble Sire,
 If thou indeed art his, as sure thou art,
 Whose sight breeds wonder in me, and thy speech
 His speech resembles more than might be deem'd
 Within the scope of years so green as thine.

There, never in opinion, or in voice
 Illustrious Ulysses and myself
 Divided were, but, one in heart, contrived 160
 As best we might, the benefit of all.
 But after Priam's lofty city sack'd,
 And the departure of the Greeks on board
 Their barks, and when the Gods had scatter'd them,
 Then Jove imagin'd for the Argive host
 A sorrowful return; for neither just
 Were all, nor prudent, therefore many found
 A fate disast'rous through the vengeful ire
 Of Jove-born Pallas, who between the sons
 Of Atreus sharp contention interposed. 170
 They both, irregularly, and against
 Just order, summoning by night the Greeks
 To council, of whom many came with wine
 Oppress'd, promulgated the cause for which
 They had convened the people. Then it was
 That Menelaus bade the general host
 Their thoughts bend homeward o'er the sacred Deep,
 Which Agamemnon in no sort approved.
 His counsel was to slay them yet at Troy,
 That so he might assuage the dreadful wrath 180
 Of Pallas, first, by sacrifice and pray'r.
 Vain hope! he little thought how ill should speed
 That fond attempt, for, once provok'd, the Gods
 Are not with ease conciliated again.
 Thus stood the brothers, altercation hot
 Maintaining, till at length, uprose the Greeks
 With deaf'ning clamours, and with diff'ring minds.
 We slept the night, but teeming with disgust
 Mutual, for Jove great woe prepar'd for all.
 At dawn of day we drew our gallies down 190
 Into the sea, and, hasty, put on board
 The spoils and female captives. Half the host,
 With Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stay'd
 Supreme commander, and, embarking, half
 Push'd forth: Swift course we made, for Neptune smooth'd
 The waves before us of the monstrous Deep.
 At Tenedos arriv'd, we there perform'd
 Sacrifice to the Gods, ardent to reach
 Our native land, but unpropitious Jove,
 Not yet designing our arrival there, 200

Involved us in dissension fierce again.
 For all the crews, followers of the King,
 Thy noble Sire, to gratify our Chief,
 The son of Atreus, chose a diff'rent course,
 And steer'd their oary barks again to Troy.
 But I, assured that evil from the Gods
 Impended, gath'ring all my gallant fleet,
 Fled thence in haste, and warlike Diomed
 Exhorting his attendants, also fled.
 At length, the Hero Menelaus join'd
 Our fleets at Lesbos; there he found us held
 In deep deliberation on the length
 Of way before us, whether we should steer
 Above the craggy Chios to the isle
 Psyria, that island holding on our left,
 Or under Chios by the wind-swept heights
 Of Mimas. Then we ask'd from Jove a sign,
 And by a sign vouchsafed he bade us cut
 The wide sea to Eubœa sheer athwart,
 So soonest to escape the threat'ned harm.
 Shrill sang the rising gale, and with swift prows
 Cleaving the fishy flood, we reach'd by night
 Geræstus, where arrived, we burn'd the thighs
 Of num'rous bulls to Neptune, who had safe
 Conducted us through all our perilous course.
 The fleet of Diomed in safety moor'd
 On the fourth day at Argos, but myself
 Held on my course to Pylus, nor the wind
 One moment thwarted us, or died away,
 When Jove had once commanded it to blow.

210

220

230

Thus, uninform'd, I have arrived, my son!
 Nor of the Grecians, who are saved have heard,
 Or who have perish'd; but what news soe'er
 I have obtain'd, since my return, with truth
 I will relate, nor aught conceal from thee.

The spear-famed Myrmidons, as rumour speaks,
 By Neoptolemus, illustrious son
 Of brave Achilles led, have safe arrived;
 Safe, Philoctetes, also son renown'd
 Of Pæas; and Idomeneus at Crete
 Hath landed all his followers who survive
 The bloody war, the waves have swallow'd none.
 Ye have yourselves doubtless, although remote,

240

Of Agamemnon heard, how he return'd,
 And how Ægisthus cruelly contrived
 For him a bloody welcome, but himself
 Hath with his own life paid the murth'rous deed.
 Good is it, therefore, if a son survive
 The slain, since Agamemnon's son hath well
 Avenged his father's death, slaying, himself, 250
 Ægisthus, foul assassin of his Sire.
 Young friend! (for pleas'd thy vig'rous youth I view,
 And just proportion) be thou also bold,
 That thine like his may be a deathless name.

Then, prudent, him answer'd Telemachus.
 Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece!
 And righteous was that vengeance; *his* renown
 Achaia's sons shall far and wide diffuse,
 To future times transmitting it in song.
 Ah! would that such ability the Gods 260
 Would grant to me, that I, as well, the deeds
 Might punish of our suitors, whose excess
 Enormous, and whose bitter taunts I feel
 Continual, object of their subtle hate.
 But not for me such happiness the Gods
 Have twined into my thread; no, not for me
 Or for my father. Patience is our part.

To whom Gerenian Nestor thus replied.
 Young friend! (since thou remind'st me of that theme)
 Fame here reports that num'rous suitors haunt 270
 Thy palace for thy mother's sake, and there
 Much evil perpetrate in thy despight.
 But say, endur'st thou willing their controul
 Imperious, or because the people, sway'd
 By some response oracular, incline
 Against thee? But who knows? the time may come
 When to his home restored, either alone,
 Or aided by the force of all the Greeks,
 Ulysses may avenge the wrong; at least,
 Should Pallas azure-eyed thee love, as erst 280
 At Troy, the scene of our unnumber'd woes,
 She lov'd Ulysses (for I have not known
 The Gods assisting so apparently
 A mortal man, as him Minerva there)
 Should Pallas view thee also with like love
 And kind solicitude, some few of those

Should dream, perchance, of wedlock never more.

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.

That word's accomplishment I cannot hope;

It promises too much; the thought alone

290

O'erwhelms me; an event so fortunate

Would, unexpected on my part, arrive,

Although the Gods themselves should purpose it.

But Pallas him answer'd cærulean-eyed.

Telemachus! what word was that which leap'd

The iv'ry guard ¹ that should have fenced it in?

A God, so willing, could with utmost ease

Save any man, howe'er remote. Myself,

I had much rather, many woes endured,

300

Revisit home, at last, happy and safe,

Than, sooner coming, die in my own house,

As Agamemnon perish'd by the arts

Of base Ægisthus and the subtle Queen.

Yet not the Gods themselves can save from death

All-levelling, the man whom most they love,

When Fate ordains him once to his last sleep.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.

Howe'er it interest us, let us leave

This question, Mentor! He, I am assured,

Returns no more, but hath already found

310

A sad, sad fate by the decree of heav'n.

But I would now interrogate again

Nestor, and on a different theme, for him

In human rights I judge, and laws expert,

And in all knowledge beyond other men;

For he hath govern'd, as report proclaims,

Three generations; therefore in my eyes

He wears the awful impress of a God.

Oh Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me true;

What was the manner of Atrides' death,

320

Wide-ruling Agamemnon? Tell me where

Was Menelaus? By what means contrived

Ægisthus to inflict the fatal blow,

Slaying so much a nobler than himself?

Had not the brother of the Monarch reach'd

¹ Ερκος οδοντων. Prior, alluding to this expression, ludicrously renders it—

“When words like these in vocal breath
Burst from his twofold hedge of teeth.”

Achaian Argos yet, but, wand'ring still
 In other climes, his long absence gave
 Ægisthus courage for that bloody deed?
 Whom answer'd the Gerenian Chief renown'd.
 My son! I will inform thee true; meantime 330
 Thy own suspicions border on the fact.
 Had Menelaus, Hero, amber hair'd,
 Ægisthus found living at his return
 From Ilium, never on *his* bones the Greeks
 Had heap'd a tomb, but dogs and rav'ning fowls
 Had torn him lying in the open field
 Far from the town, nor him had woman wept
 Of all in Greece, for he had foul transgress'd.
 But we, in many an arduous task engaged,
 Lay before Ilium; he, the while, secure 340
 Within the green retreats of Argos, found
 Occasion apt by flatt'ry to delude
 The spouse of Agamemnon; she, at first,
 (The royal Clytemnestra) firm refused
 The deed dishonourable (for she bore
 A virtuous mind, and at her side a bard
 Attended ever, whom the King, to Troy
 Departing, had appointed to the charge.)
 But when the Gods had purposed to ensnare 350
 Ægisthus, then dismissing far remote
 The bard into a desert isle, he there
 Abandon'd him to rav'ning fowls a prey,
 And to his own home, willing as himself,
 Led Clytemnestra. Num'rous thighs he burn'd
 On all their hallow'd altars to the Gods,
 And hung with tap'stry, images, and gold
 Their shrines, his great exploit past hope atchiev'd.
 We (Menelaus and myself) had sailed
 From Troy together, but when we approach'd
 Sunium, headland of th' Athenian shore, 360
 There Phœbus, sudden, with his gentle shafts
 Slew Menelaus' pilot while he steer'd
 The volant bark, Phrontis, Onetor's son,
 A mariner past all expert, whom none
 In steerage match'd, what time the tempest roar'd.
 Here, therefore, Menelaus was detained,
 Giving his friend due burial, and his rites
 Funereal celebrating, though in haste

Still to proceed. But when, with all his fleet
 The wide sea traversing, he reach'd at length 370
 Malea's lofty foreland in his course,
 Rough passage, then, and perilous he found.
 Shrill blasts the Thund'rer pour'd into his sails,
 And wild waves sent him mountainous. His ships
 There scatter'd, some to the Cydonian coast
 Of Crete he push'd, near where the Jordan flows.
 Beside the confines of Gortyna stands,
 Amid the gloomy flood, a smooth rock, steep
 Toward the sea, against whose leftward point
 Phæstus by name, the South wind rolls the surge 380
 Amain, which yet the rock, though small, repells.
 Hither with part he came, and scarce the crews
 Themselves escaped, while the huge billows broke
 Their ships against the rocks; yet five he saved,
 Which winds and waves drove to the Ægyptian shore.

Thus he, provision gath'ring as he went
 And gold abundant, roam'd to distant lands
 And nations of another tongue. Meantime,
 Ægisthus these enormities at home
 Devising, slew Atrides, and supreme 390
 Rul'd the subjected land; sev'n years he reign'd
 In opulent Mycenæ, but the eighth
 From Athens brought renown'd Orestes home
 For his destruction, who of life bereaved
 Ægisthus base assassin of his Sire.
 Orestes, therefore, the funereal rites
 Performing to his shameless mother's shade
 And to her lustful paramour, a feast
 Gave to the Argives; on which self-same day
 The warlike Menelaus, with his ships 400
 All treasure-laden to the brink, arrived.

And thou, young friend! from thy forsaken home
 Rove not long time remote, thy treasures left
 At mercy of those proud, lest they divide
 And waste the whole, rend'ring thy voyage vain.
 But hence to Menelaus is the course
 To which I counsel thee; for he hath come
 Of late from distant lands, whence to escape
 No man could hope, whom tempests first had driv'n
 Devious into so wide a sea, from which 410
 Themselves the birds of heaven could not arrive

In a whole year, so vast is the expanse.
 Go, then, with ship and shipmates, or if more
 The land delight thee, steeds thou shalt not want
 Nor chariot, and my sons shall be thy guides
 To noble Lacedemon, the abode
 Of Menelaus; ask from him the truth,
 Who will not lye, for he is passing wise.

While thus he spake, the sun declined, and night
 Approaching, blue-eyed Pallas interposed. 420

O antient King! well hast thou spoken all.
 But now delay not. Cut ye forth the tongues,¹
 And mingle wine, that (Neptune first invoked
 With due libation, and the other Gods)
 We may repair to rest; for even now
 The sun is sunk, and it becomes us not
 Long to protract a banquet to the Gods
 Devote, but in fit season to depart.

So spake Jove's daughter; they obedient heard.
 The heralds, then, pour'd water on their hands, 430
 And the attendant youths, filling the cups,
 Served them from left to right. Next all the tongues
 They cast into the fire, and ev'ry guest
 Arising, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 Libation made, and all with wine sufficed,
 Godlike Telemachus and Pallas both
 Would have return'd, incontinent, on board,
 But Nestor urged them still to be his guests.

Forbid it, Jove, and all the Pow'rs of heav'n!
 That ye should leave me to repair on board 440
 Your vessel, as I were some needy wretch
 Cloakless and destitute of fleecy stores
 Wherewith to spread the couch soft for myself,
 Or for my guests. No. I have garments warm
 An ample store, and rugs of richest dye;
 And never shall Ulysses' son belov'd,
 My friend's own son, sleep on a galley's plank
 While I draw vital air; grant also, heav'n,
 That, dying, I may leave behind me sons
 Glad to accommodate whatever guest! 450

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.

¹ It is said to have been customary in the days of Homer, when the Greeks retired from a banquet to their beds, to cut out the tongues of the victims, and offer them to the Gods in particular who presided over conversation.

Old Chief! thou hast well said, and reason bids
Telemachus thy kind commands obey.

Let *him* attend thee hence, that he may sleep
Beneath thy roof, but I return on board
Myself, to instruct my people, and to give
All needful orders; for among them none
Is old as I, but they are youths alike,
Coevals of Telemachus, with whom
They have embark'd for friendship's sake alone. 460

I therefore will repose myself on board
This night, and to the Caucons bold in arms
Will sail to-morrow, to demand arrears
Long time unpaid, and of no small amount.
But, since he is become thy guest, afford
My friend a chariot, and a son of thine
Who shall direct his way, nor let him want
Of all thy steeds the swiftest and the best.

So saying, the blue-eyed Goddess as upborne
On eagle's wings, vanish'd; amazement seized 470
The whole assembly, and the antient King
O'erwhelmed with wonder at that sight, the hand
Grasp'd of Telemachus, whom he thus bespake.

My friend! I prophesy that thou shalt prove
Nor base nor dastard, whom, so young, the Gods
Already take in charge; for of the Pow'rs
Inhabitants of heav'n, none else was this
Than Jove's own daughter Pallas, who among
The Grecians honour'd most thy gen'rous Sire.

But thou, O Queen! compassionate us all, 480
Myself, my sons, my comfort; give to each
A glorious name, and I to thee will give
For sacrifice an heifer of the year,
Broad-fronted, one that never yet hath borne
The yoke, and will incase her horns with gold.

So Nestor pray'd, whom Pallas gracious heard.
Then the Gerenian warrior old, before
His sons and sons in law, to his abode
Magnificent proceeded; they (arrived 490
Within the splendid palace of the King)
On thrones and couches sat in order ranged,
Whom Nestor welcom'd, charging high the cup
With wine of richest sort, which she who kept
That treasure, now in the eleventh year

First broach'd, unsealing the delicious juice.
 With this the hoary Senior fill'd a cup,
 And to the daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd
 Pouring libation, offer'd fervent pray'r.

When all had made libation, and no wish
 Remain'd of more, then each to rest retired, 500
 And Nestor the Gerenian warrior old
 Led thence Telemachus to a carved couch
 Beneath the sounding portico prepared.
 Beside him he bade sleep the spearman bold,
 Pisistratus, a gallant youth, the sole
 Unwedded in his house of all his sons.
 Himself in the interior palace lay,
 Where couch and cov'ring for her antient spouse
 The consort Queen had diligent prepar'd.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn, 510
 Had tinged the East, arising from his bed,
 Gerenian Nestor issued forth, and sat
 Before his palace-gate on the white stones
 Resplendent as with oil, on which of old
 His father Neleus had been wont to sit,
 In council like a God; but he had sought,
 By destiny dismiss'd long since, the shades.
 On those stones therefore now, Nestor himself,
 Achaia's guardian, sat, sceptre in hand,
 Where soon his num'rous sons, leaving betimes 520
 The place of their repose, also appeared,
 Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Thrasymedes,
 Aretus and Pisistratus. They placed
 Godlike Telemachus at Nestor's side,
 And the Gerenian Hero thus began.

Sons be ye quick—execute with dispatch
 My purpose, that I may propitiate first
 Of all the Gods Minerva, who herself
 Hath honour'd manifest our hallow'd feast.
 Haste, one, into the field, to order thence 530
 An ox, and let the herdsman drive it home.
 Another, hasting to the sable bark
 Of brave Telemachus, bring hither all
 His friends, save two, and let a third command
 Laerceus, that he come to enwrap with gold
 The victim's horns. Abide ye here, the rest,
 And bid my female train (for I intend

A banquet) with all diligence provide
Seats, stores of wood, and water from the rock.

He said, whom instant all obey'd. The ox 540
Came from the field, and from the gallant ship
The ship-mates of the brave Telemachus;
Next, charged with all his implements of art,
His mallet, anvil, pincers, came the smith
To give the horns their gilding; also came
Pallas herself to her own sacred rites.

Then Nestor, hoary warrior, furnish'd gold,
Which, hammer'd thin, the artist wrapp'd around
The victim's horns, that seeing him attired
So costly, Pallas might the more be pleased. 550

Stratius and brave Echephron introduced
The victim by his horns; Aretus brought
A laver in one hand, with flow'rs emboss'd,
And in his other hand a basket stored
With cakes, while warlike Thrasymedes, arm'd
With his long-hafted ax, prepared to smite
The ox, and Perseus to receive the blood.

The hoary Nestor consecrated first
Both cakes and water, and with earnest pray'r
To Pallas, gave the forelock to the flames. 560

When all had worshipp'd, and the broken cakes
Sprinkled, then godlike Thrasymedes drew
Close to the ox, and smote him. Deep the edge
Enter'd, and senseless on the floor he fell.

Then Nestor's daughters, and the consorts all
Of Nestor's sons, with his own consort, chaste
Eurydice, the daughter eldest-born
Of Clymenus, in one shrill orison
Vocif'rous join'd, while they, lifting the ox,
Held him supported firmly, and the prince 570
Of men, Pisistratus, his gullet pierced.

Soon as the sable blood had ceased, and life
Had left the victim, spreading him abroad,
With nice address they parted at the joint
His thighs, and wrapp'd them in the double cawl,
Which with crude slices thin they overspread.
Nestor burn'd incense, and libation pour'd
Large on the hissing brands, while him beside,
Busy with spit and prong, stood many a youth
Train'd to the task. The thighs consumed, each took

His portion of the maw, then, slashing well
 The remnant, they transpierced it with the spits
 Neatly, and held it reeking at the fire. 581
 Meantime the youngest of the daughters fair
 Of Nestor, beauteous Polycaste, laved,
 Anointed, and in vest and tunic cloathed
 Telemachus, who, so refresh'd, stepp'd forth
 From the bright laver graceful as a God,
 And took his seat at antient Nestor's side.
 The viands dress'd, and from the spits withdrawn, 590
 They sat to share the feast, and princely youths
 Arising, gave them wine in cups of gold.
 When neither hunger now nor thirst remain'd
 Unsated, thus Gerenian Nestor spake.

My sons, arise, lead forth the sprightly steeds,
 And yoke them, that Telemachus may go.

So spake the Chief, to whose commands his sons,
 Obedient, yoked in haste the rapid steeds,
 And the intendant matron of the stores
 Disposed meantime within the chariot, bread 600
 And wine, and dainties, such as princes eat.
 Telemachus into the chariot first
 Ascended, and beside him, next, his place
 Pisistratus the son of Nestor took,
 Then seiz'd the reins, and lash'd the coursers on.
 They, nothing loth, into the open plain
 Flew, leaving lofty Pylus soon afar.
 Thus, journeying, they shook on either side
 The yoke all day, and now the setting sun
 To dusky evening had resign'd the roads, 610
 When they to Pheræ came, and the abode
 Reach'd of Diocles, whose illustrious Sire
 Orsilochus from Alpheus drew his birth,
 And there, with kindness entertain'd, they slept.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy from the East, yoking the steeds,
 They in their sumptuous chariot sat again.
 The son of Nestor plied the lash, and forth
 Through vestibule and sounding portico
 The royal coursers, not unwilling, flew. 620
 A corn-invested land receiv'd them next,
 And there they brought their journey to a close,
 So rapidly they moved; and now the sun
 Went down, and even-tide dimm'd all the ways.

BOOK IV

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS, with Pisistratus, arrives at the palace of Menelaus, from whom he receives some fresh information concerning the return of the Grecians, and is in particular told on the authority of Proteus, that his father is detained by Calypso. The suitors, plotting against the life of Telemachus, lie in wait to intercept him in his return to Ithaca. Penelope being informed of his departure, and of their designs to slay him, becomes inconsolable, but is relieved by a dream sent to her from Minerva.

IN hollow Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Arriving, to the house they drove direct
Of royal Menelaus; him they found
In his own palace, all his num'rous friends
Regaling at a nuptial banquet giv'n
Both for his daughter and the prince his son.
His daughter to renown'd Achilles' heir
He sent, to whom he had at Troy engaged
To give her, and the Gods now made her his.
With chariots and with steeds he sent her forth 10
To the illustrious city where the prince,
Achilles' offspring, ruled the Myrmidons.
But to his son he gave a Spartan fair,
Alector's daughter; from an handmaid sprang
That son to Menelaus in his age,
Brave Megapenthes; for the Gods no child
To Helen gave, made mother, once, of her
Who vied in perfect loveliness of form
With golden Venus' self, Hermione.

Thus all the neighbour princes and the friends 20
Of noble Menelaus, feasting sat
Within his spacious palace, among whom
A sacred bard sang sweetly to his harp,
While, in the midst, two dancers smote the ground
With measur'd steps responsive to his song.

And now the Heroes, Nestor's noble son
And young Telemachus arrived within
The vestibule, whom, issuing from the hall,

The noble Eteoneus of the train
 Of Menelaus, saw; at once he ran 30
 Across the palace to report the news
 To his Lord's ear, and, standing at his side,
 In accents wing'd with haste thus greeted him.

Oh Menelaus! Heav'n descended Chief!
 Two guests arrive, both strangers, but the race
 Of Jove supreme resembling each in form.
 Say, shall we loose, ourselves, their rapid steeds,
 Or hence dismiss them to some other host?

But Menelaus, Hero golden-hair'd,
 Indignant answer'd him. Boethe's son! 40
 Thou wast not, Eteoneus, heretofore,
 A babbler, who now pratest as a child.
 We have ourselves arrived indebted much
 To hospitality of other men,
 If Jove shall, even here, some pause at last
 Of woe afford us. Therefore loose, at once,
 Their steeds, and introduce them to the feast.

He said, and, issuing, Eteoneus call'd
 The brisk attendants to his aid, with whom 50
 He loos'd their foaming coursers from the yoke.
 Them first they bound to mangers, which with oats
 And mingled barley they supplied, then thrust
 The chariot sidelong to the splendid wall.¹
 Themselves he, next, into the royal house
 Conducted, who survey'd, wond'ring, the abode
 Of the heav'n-favour'd King; for on all sides
 As with the splendour of the sun or moon
 The lofty dome of Menelaus blazed.
 Sate, at length, with wonder at that sight,
 They enter'd each a bath, and by the hands 60
 Of maidens laved, and oil'd, and cloath'd again
 With shaggy mantles and resplendent vests,
 Sat both enthroned at Menelaus' side.
 And now a maiden charged with golden ew'r,
 And with an argent laver, pouring first
 Pure water on their hands, supplied them next
 With a bright table, which the maiden, chief
 In office, furnish'd plenteously with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.

¹ Hesychius tells us, that the Grecians ornamented with much attention the front wall of their courts for the admiration of passengers.

Then came the sew'r, who with delicious meats
Dish after dish, served them, and placed beside
The chargers cups magnificent of gold,
When Menelaus grasp'd their hands, and said. 70

Eat and rejoice, and when ye shall have shared
Our nuptial banquet, we will then inquire
Who are ye both, for, certain, not from those
Whose generation perishes are ye,
But rather of some race of sceptred Chiefs
Heav'n-born; the base have never sons like you.

So saying, he from the board lifted his own 80
Distinguish'd portion, and the fatted chine
Gave to his guests; the sav'ry viands they
With outstretch'd hands assail'd, and when the force
No longer now of appetite they felt,
Telemachus, inclining close his head
To Nestor's son, lest others should his speech
Witness, in whisper'd words him thus address'd.

Dearest Pisistratus, observe, my friend!
How all the echoing palace with the light
Of beaming brass, of gold and amber shines 90
Silver and ivory! for radiance such
Th' interior mansion of Olympian Jove
I deem. What wealth, how various, how immense
Is here! astonish'd I survey the sight!

But Menelaus, golden-hair'd, his speech
O'erhearing, thus in accents wing'd replied.

My children! let no mortal man pretend
Comparison with Jove; for Jove's abode
And all his stores are incorruptible.
But whether mortal man with me may vie 100
In the display of wealth, or whether not,
This know, that after many toils endured,
And perilous wand'rings wide, in the eighth year
I brought my treasures home. Remote I roved
To Cyprus, to Phœnice, to the shores
Of Ægypt; Æthiopia's land I reach'd,
Th' Erempi, the Sidonians, and the coasts
Of Lybia, where the lambs their foreheads shew
At once with horns defended, soon as yeon'd.
There, thrice within the year the flocks produce, 110
Nor master, there, nor shepherd ever feels
A dearth of cheese, of flesh, or of sweet milk

Delicious, drawn from udders never dry.

While, thus, commodities on various coasts

Gath'ring I roam'd, another, by the arts

Of his pernicious spouse aided, of life

Bereav'd my brother privily, and when least

He fear'd to lose it. Therefore little joy

To me results from all that I possess.

Your fathers (be those fathers who they may)

120

These things have doubtless told you; for immense

Have been my suff'rings, and I have destroy'd

A palace well inhabited and stored

With precious furniture in ev'ry kind;

Such, that I would to heav'n! I own'd at home

Though but the third of it, and that the Greeks

Who perish'd then, beneath the walls of Troy

Far from steed-pastured Argos, still survived.

Yet while, sequester'd here, I frequent mourn

My slaughter'd friends, by turns I sooth my soul

130

With tears shed for them, and by turns again

I cease; for grief soon satiates free indulged.

But of them all, although I all bewail,

None mourn I so as one, whom calling back

To memory, I both sleep and food abhor.

For, of Achaia's sons none ever toiled

Strenuous as Ulysses; but his lot

Was woe, and unremitting sorrow mine

For his long absence, who, if still he live,

We know not aught, or be already dead.

140

Him doubtless, old Laertes mourns, and him

Discrete Penelope, nor less his son

Telemachus, born newly when he sail'd.

So saying, he kindled in him strong desire

To mourn his father; at his father's name

Fast fell his tears to ground, and with both hands

He spread his purple cloak before his eyes;

Which Menelaus marking, doubtful sat

If he should leave him leisure for his tears,

Or question him, and tell him all at large.

150

While thus he doubted, Helen (as it chanced)

Leaving her fragrant chamber, came, august

As Dian, goddess of the golden bow.

Adrasta, for her use, set forth a throne,

Alcippe with soft arras cover'd it,

And Philo brought her silver basket, gift
 Of fair Alcandra, wife of Polybus,
 Whose mansion in Ægyptian Thebes is rich
 In untold treasure, and who gave, himself,
 Ten golden talents, and two silver baths 160
 To Menelaus, with two splendid tripods
 Beside the noble gifts which, at the hand
 Of his illustrious spouse, Helen receiv'd;
 A golden spindle, and a basket wheel'd,
 Itself of silver, and its lip of gold.

That basket Philo, her own handmaid, placed
 At beauteous Helen's side, charged to the brim
 With slender threads, on which the spindle lay
 With wool of purple lustre wrapp'd around.
 Approaching, on her foot-stool'd throne she sat, 170
 And, instant, of her royal spouse enquired.

Know we, my Menelaus, dear to Jove!
 These guests of ours, and whence they have arrived?
 Erroneous I may speak, yet speak I must;
 In man or woman never have I seen
 Such likeness to another (wonder-fixt
 I gaze) as in this stranger to the son
 Of brave Ulysses, whom that Hero left
 New-born at home, when (shameless as I was)
 For my unworthy sake the Grecians sailed 180
 To Ilium, with fierce rage of battle fir'd.

Then Menelaus, thus, the golden-hair'd.
 I also such resemblance find in him
 As thou; such feet, such hands, the cast of eye¹
 Similar, and the head and flowing locks.
 And even now, when I Ulysses named,
 And his great sufferings mention'd, in my cause,
 The bitter tear dropp'd from his lids, while broad
 Before his eyes his purple cloak he spread.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied. 190
 Atrides! Menelaus! Chief renown'd!
 He is in truth his son, as thou hast said,
 But he is modest, and would much himself
 Condemn, if, at his first arrival here,
 He should loquacious seem and bold to thee,
 To whom we listen, captived by thy voice,
 As if some God had spoken. As for me,

¹ Οφθαλμῶν τε βολαί.

Nestor, my father, the Gerenian Chief
 Bade me conduct him hither, for he wish'd
 To see thee, promising himself from thee
 The benefit of some kind word or deed. 200

For, destitute of other aid, he much
 His father's tedious absence mourns at home.
 So fares Telemachus; his father strays
 Remote, and, in his stead, no friend hath he
 Who might avert the mischiefs that he feels.

To whom the Hero amber-hair'd replied.
 Ye Gods! the offspring of indeed a friend
 Hath reach'd my house, of one who hath endured
 Arduous conflicts num'rous for my sake; 210

And much I purpos'd, had Olympian Jove
 Vouchsaf'd us prosp'rous passage o'er the Deep,
 To have receiv'd him with such friendship here
 As none beside. In Argos I had then
 Founded a city for him, and had rais'd
 A palace for himself; I would have brought
 The Hero hither, and his son, with all
 His people, and with all his wealth, some town
 Evacuating for his sake, of those
 Ruled by myself, and neighb'ring close my own. 220

Thus situate, we had often interchanged
 Sweet converse, nor had other cause at last
 Our friendship terminated or our joys,
 Than death's black cloud o'ershadowing him or me.
 But such delights could only envy move
 Ev'n in the Gods, who have, of all the Greeks,
 Merc'd *him* only of his wish'd return.

So saying, he kindled the desire to weep
 In ev'ry bosom. Argive Helen wept
 Abundant, Jove's own daughter; wept as fast 230
 Telemachus and Menelaus both;

Nor Nestor's son with tearless eyes remain'd,
 Calling to mind Antilochus¹ by the son²
 Illustrious of the bright Aurora slain,
 Rememb'ring whom, in accents wing'd he said.

Atrides! antient Nestor, when of late
 Conversing with him, we remember'd thee,
 Pronounced thee wise beyond all human-kind.

¹ Antilochus was his brother.

² The son of Aurora, who slew Antilochus, was Memnon.

Now therefore, let not even my advice
 Displease thee. It affords me no delight 240
 To intermingle tears with my repast,
 And soon, Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Will tinge the orient. Not that I account
 Due lamentation of a friend deceased
 Blameworthy, since, to sheer the locks and weep,
 Is all we can for the unhappy dead.
 I also have my grief, call'd to lament
 One, not the meanest of Achaia's sons,
 My brother; him I cannot but suppose
 To thee well-known, although unknown to me 250
 Who saw him never;¹ but report proclaims
 Antilochus superior to the most,
 In speed superior, and in feats of arms.

To whom, the Hero of the yellow locks.
 O friend belov'd! since nought which thou hast said
 Or recommended now, would have disgraced
 A man of years maturer far than thine,
 (For wise thy father is, and such art thou,
 And easy is it to discern the son
 Of such a father, whom Saturnian Jove 260
 In marriage both and at his birth ordain'd
 To great felicity; for he hath giv'n
 To Nestor gradually to sink at home
 Into old age, and, while he lives, to see
 His sons past others wise, and skill'd in arms)
 The sorrow into which we sudden fell
 Shall pause. Come—now remember we the feast;
 Pour water on our hands, for we shall find,
 (Telemachus and I) no dearth of themes
 For mutual converse when the day shall dawn, 270

He ended; then, Asphalion, at his word,
 Servant of glorious Menelaus, poured
 Pure water on their hands, and they the feast
 Before them with keen appetite assail'd.
 But Jove-born Helen otherwise, meantime,
 Employ'd, into the wine of which they drank
 A drug infused, antidote to the pains
 Of grief and anger, a most potent charm
 For ills of ev'ry name. Whoe'er his wine
 So medicated drinks, he shall not pour 280

¹ Because Pisistratus was born after Antilochus had sailed to Troy.

All day the tears down his wan cheek, although
 His father and his mother both were dead,
 Nor even though his brother or his son
 Had fall'n in battle, and before his eyes.
 Such drugs Jove's daughter own'd, with skill prepar'd,
 And of prime virtue, by the wife of Thone,
 Ægyptian Polydamna, giv'n her.
 For Ægypt teems with drugs, yielding no few
 Which, mingled with the drink, are good, and many
 Of baneful juice, and enemies to life. 290
 There ev'ry man in skill medicinal
 Excels, for they are sons of Pæon all.
 That drug infused, she bade her servant pour
 The bev'rage forth, and thus her speech resumed.

Atrides! Menelaus! dear to Jove!
 These also are the sons of Chiefs renown'd,
 (For Jove, as pleases him, to each assigns
 Or good or evil, whom all things obey)
 Now therefore, feasting at your ease reclin'd,
 Listen with pleasure, for myself, the while, 300
 Will matter seasonable interpose.

I cannot all rehearse, nor even name,
 (Omitting none) the conflicts and exploits
 Of brave Ulysses; but with what address
 Successful, one atchievement he perform'd
 At Ilium, where Achaia's sons endured
 Such hardship, will I speak. Inflicting wounds
 Dishonourable on himself, he took
 A tatter'd garb, and like a serving-man
 Enter'd the spacious city of your foes. 310
 So veil'd, some mendicant he seem'd, although
 No Grecian less deserved that name than he.
 In such disguise he enter'd; all alike
 Misdemean'd him; me alone he not deceived
 Who challeng'd him, but, shrewd, he turn'd away.
 At length, however, when I had myself
 Bathed him, anointed, cloath'd him, and had sworn
 Not to declare him openly in Troy
 Till he should reach again the camp and fleet,
 He told me the whole purpose of the Greeks. 320
 Then, (many a Trojan slaughter'd,) he regain'd
 The camp, and much intelligence he bore
 To the Achaians. Oh what wailing then

Was heard of Trojan women! but my heart
 Exulted, alter'd now, and wishing home;
 For now my crime committed under force
 Of Venus' influence I deplored, what time
 She led me to a country far remote,
 A wand'rer from the matrimonial bed,
 From my own child, and from my rightful Lord
 Alike unblemish'd both in form and mind.

330

Her answer'd then the Hero golden-hair'd.
 Helen! thou hast well spoken. All is true.
 I have the talents fathom'd and the minds
 Of num'rous Heroes, and have travell'd far
 Yet never saw I with these eyes in man
 Such firmness as the calm Ulysses own'd;
 None such as in the wooden horse he proved,
 Where all our bravest sat, designing woe
 And bloody havoc for the sons of Troy.
 Thou thither cam'st, impell'd, as it should seem,
 By some divinity inclin'd to give
 Victory to our foes, and with thee came
 Godlike Deiphobus. Thrice round about
 The hollow ambush, striking with thy hand
 Its sides thou went'st, and by his name didst call
 Each prince of Greece feigning his consort's voice.
 Myself with Diomede, and with divine
 Ulysses, seated in the midst, the call
 Heard plain and loud; we (Diomede and I)
 With ardour burn'd either to quit the horse
 So summon'd, or to answer from within.

340

350

But, all impatient as we were, Ulysses
 Controul'd the rash design; so there the sons
 Of the Achaians silent sat and mute,
 And of us all Anticlus would alone
 Have answer'd; but Ulysses with both hands
 Compressing close his lips, saved us, nor ceased
 Till Pallas thence conducted thee again.

Then thus, discrete, Telemachus replied.

360

Atrides! Menelaus! prince renown'd!
 Hard was his lot whom these rare qualities
 Preserved not, neither had his dauntless heart
 Been iron, had he scaped his cruel doom.
 But haste, dismiss us hence, that on our beds
 Reposed, we may enjoy sleep, needful now.

He ceas'd; then Argive Helen gave command
 To her attendant maidens to prepare
 Beds in the portico with purple rugs
 Resplendent, and with arras, overspread, 370
 And cover'd warm with cloaks of shaggy pile.
 Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
 And spread the couches; next, the herald them
 Led forth, and in the vestibule the son
 Of Nestor and the youthful Hero slept,
 Telemachus; but in the interior house
 Atrides, with the loveliest of her sex
 Beside him, Helen of the sweeping stole.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Glow'd in the East, then from his couch arose 380
 The warlike Menelaus, fresh attir'd;
 His faulchion o'er his shoulders slung, he bound
 His sandals fair to his unsullied feet,
 And like a God issuing, at the side
 Sat of Telemachus, to whom he spake.

Hero! Telemachus! what urgent cause
 Hath hither led thee, to the land far-famed
 Of Lacedæmon o'er the spacious Deep?
 Public concern or private? Tell me true.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied. 390
 Atrides! Menelaus! prince renown'd!
 News seeking of my Sire, I have arrived.
 My household is devour'd, my fruitful fields
 Are desolated, and my palace fill'd
 With enemies, who while they mutual wage
 Proud competition for my mother's love,
 My flocks continual slaughter, and my beeves.
 For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
 That thou wouldst tell me his disastrous end,
 If either thou beheld'st with thine own eyes 400
 His death, or from some wand'rer of the Greeks
 Hast heard it; for no common woes, alas!
 Was he ordain'd to share ev'n from the womb.
 Neither through pity or o'erstrain'd respect
 Flatter me, but explicit all relate
 Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
 E'er gratified thee by performance just
 Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
 So num'rous slain in fight, oh recollect

Now his fidelity, and tell me true!

410

Then Menelaus, sighing deep, replied.
 Gods! their ambition is to reach the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But as it chances, when the hart hath lay'd
 Her fawns new-yea'd and sucklings yet, to rest
 Within some dreadful lion's gloomy den,
 She roams the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, till the lion, to his lair
 Return'd, destroys her and her little-ones,
 So them thy Sire shall terribly destroy.
 Jove, Pallas and Apollo! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, and threw him flat,
 A sight at which Achaia's sons rejoic'd,
 Such, now, Ulysses might assail them all!
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
 But thy enquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Antient of the Deep¹
 I have receiv'd will utter, hiding nought.

420

430

As yet the Gods on Ægypt's shore detained
 Me wishing home, angry at my neglect
 To heap their altars with slain hecatombs.
 For they exacted from us evermore
 Strict rev'rence of their laws. There is an isle
 Amid the billowy flood, Pharos by name,
 In front of Ægypt, distant from her shore
 Far as a vessel by a sprightly gale
 Impell'd, may push her voyage in a day.
 The haven there is good, and many a ship
 Finds wat'ring there from riv'lets on the coast.
 There me the Gods kept twenty days, no breeze
 Propitious granting, that might sweep the waves,
 And usher to her home the flying bark.
 And now had our provision, all consumed,
 Left us exhausted, but a certain nymph
 Pitying saved me. Daughter fair was she
 Of mighty Proteus, Antient of the Deep,
 Idothea named; her most my sorrows moved;
 She found me from my followers all apart
 Wand'ring (for they around the isle, with hooks

440

450

¹ Proteus

The fishes snaring roamed, by famine urged)
And standing at my side, me thus bespake.

Stranger! thou must be ideot born, or weak
At least in intellect, or thy delight
Is in distress and mis'ry, who delay'st
To leave this island, and no egress hence
Canst find, although thy famish'd people faint.

So spake the Goddess, and I thus replied.

I tell thee, whosoever of the Pow'rs
Divine thou art, that I am prison'd here
Not willingly, but must have, doubtless, sinn'd
Against the deathless tenants of the skies.
Yet say (for the Immortals all things know)
What God detains me, and my course forbids
Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?

460

So I; to whom the Goddess all-divine.

Stranger! I will inform thee true. A seer
Oracular, the Antient of the Deep,

Immortal Proteus, the Ægyptian, haunts
These shores, familiar with all Ocean's gulphs,
And Neptune's subject. He is by report

470

My father; him if thou art able once
To seize and bind, he will prescribe the course
With all its measured distances, by which
Thou shalt regain secure thy native shores.

He will, moreover, at thy suit declare,
Thou favour'd of the skies! what good, what ill
Hath in thine house befall'n, while absent thou
Thy voyage difficult perform'st and long.

480

She spake, and I replied—Thyself reveal

By what effectual bands I may secure
The antient Deity marine, lest, warn'd
Of my approach, he shun me and escape.
Hard task for mortal hands to bind a God!

Then thus Idothea answer'd all-divine.

I will inform thee true. Soon as the sun
Hath climb'd the middle heav'ns, the prophet old,
Emerging while the breezy zephyr blows,
And cover'd with the scum of ocean, seeks

490

His spacious cove, in which outstretch'd he lies.
The phocæ¹ also, rising from the waves,
Offspring of beauteous Halosydna, sleep

¹ Seals, or sea-calves.

Around him, num'rous, and the fishy scent
 Exhaling rank of the unfathom'd flood.
 Thither conducting thee at peep of day
 I will dispose thee in some safe recess,
 But from among thy followers thou shalt chuse
 The bravest three in all thy gallant fleet.
 And now the artifices understand 500
 Of the old prophet of the sea. The sum
 Of all his phocæ numb'ring duly first,
 He will pass through them, and when all by fives
 He counted hath, will in the midst repose
 Content, as sleeps the shepherd with his flock.
 When ye shall see him stretch'd, then call to mind
 That moment all your prowess, and prevent,
 Howe'er he strive impatient, his escape.
 All changes trying, he will take the form
 Of ev'ry reptile on the earth, will seem 510
 A river now, and now devouring fire;
 But hold him ye, and grasp him still the more.
 And when himself shall question you, restored
 To his own form in which ye found him first
 Reposing, then from farther force abstain;
 Then, Hero! loose the Antient of the Deep,
 And ask him, of the Gods who checks thy course
 Hence to thy country o'er the fishy flood.

So saying, she plunged into the billowy waste.
 I then, in various musings lost, my ships 520
 Along the sea-beach station'd sought again,
 And when I reach'd my galley on the shore
 We supp'd, and sacred night falling from heav'n,
 Slept all extended on the ocean-side.

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, pensive beside the shore
 I walk'd of Ocean, frequent to the Gods
 Praying devout, then chose the fittest three
 For bold assault, and worthiest of my trust.
 Meantime the Goddess from the bosom wide 530
 Of Ocean rising, brought us thence four skins
 Of phocæ, and all newly stript, a snare
 Contriving subtle to deceive her Sire.
 Four cradles in the sand she scoop'd, then sat
 Expecting us, who in due time approach'd;
 She lodg'd us side by side, and over each

A raw skin cast. Horrible to ourselves
 Proved that disguise whom the pernicious scent
 Of the sea-nourish'd phocæ sore annoy'd;
 For who would lay him down at a whale's side? 540
 But she a potent remedy devised
 Herself to save us, who the nostrils sooth'd
 Of each with pure ambrosia thither brought
 Odorous, which the fishy scent subdued.
 All morning, patient watchers, there we lay;
 And now the num'rous phocæ from the Deep
 Emerging, slept along the shore, and he
 At noon came also, and perceiving there
 His fatted monsters, through the flock his course
 Took regular, and summ'd them; with the first 550
 He number'd us, suspicion none of fraud
 Conceiving, then couch'd also. We, at once,
 Loud-shouting flew on him, and in our arms
 Constrain'd him fast; nor the sea-prophet old
 Call'd not incontinent his shifts to mind.
 First he became a long-maned lion grim,
 Then dragon, panther then, a savage boar,
 A limpid stream, and an o'ershadowing tree.
 We persevering held him, till at length
 The Antient of the Deep, skill'd as he is 560
 In wiles, yet weary, question'd me, and said.
 Oh Atreus' son, by what confed'rate God
 Instructed liest thou in wait for me,
 To seize and hold me? what is thy desire?
 So He; to whom thus answer I return'd.
 Old Seer! thou know'st; why, fraudulent, should'st thou ask?
 It is because I have been prison'd long
 Within this isle, whence I have sought in vain
 Deliv'rance, till my wonted courage fails.
 Yet say (for the Immortals all things know) 570
 What God detains me, and my course forbids
 Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?
 So I; when thus the old one of the waves.
 But thy plain duty¹ was to have adored
 Jove, first, in sacrifice, and all the Gods,

¹ From the abruptness of this beginning, Virgil, probably, who has copied the story, took the hint of his admired exordium.

Nam quis te, juvenum confidentissime, nostras.
 Egit adire domos.

That then embarking, by propitious gales
 Impell'd, thou might'st have reach'd thy country soon.
 For thou art doom'd ne'er to behold again
 Thy friends, thy palace, or thy native shores,
 Till thou have seen once more the hallow'd flood 580
 Of Ægypt, and with hecatombs adored
 Devout, the deathless tenants of the skies.
 Then will they speed thee whither thou desir'st.

He ended, and my heart broke at his words,
 Which bade me pass again the gloomy gulph
 To Ægypt; tedious course, and hard to atchieve!
 Yet, though in sorrow whelm'd, I thus replied.

Old prophet! I will all thy will perform.
 But tell me, and the truth simply reveal;
 Have the Achaians with their ships arrived 590
 All safe, whom Nestor left and I, at Troy?
 Or of the Chiefs have any in their barks,
 Or in their followers' arms found a dire death
 Unlook'd for, since that city's siege we closed?

I spake, when answer thus the God return'd.
 Atrides, why these questions? Need is none
 That thou should'st all my secrets learn, which once
 Reveal'd, thou would'st not long dry-eyed remain.
 Of those no few have died, and many live;
 But leaders, two alone, in their return 600
 Have died (thou also hast had war to wage)
 And one, still living, roams the boundless sea.

Ajax,¹ surrounded by his galleys, died.
 Him Neptune, first, against the bulky rocks
 The Gyræ drove, but saved him from the Deep;
 Nor had he perish'd, hated as he was
 By Pallas, but for his own impious boast
 In frenzy utter'd that he would escape
 The billows, even in the Gods' despight.
 Neptune that speech vain-glorious hearing, grasp'd 610
 His trident, and the huge Gyræan rock
 Smiting indignant, dash'd it half away;
 Part stood, and part, on which the boaster sat
 When, first, the brainsick fury seiz'd him, fell,
 Bearing him with it down into the gulphs
 Of Ocean, where he drank the brine, and died.
 But thy own brother in his barks escaped

¹ Son of Oileus.

That fate, by Juno saved; yet when, at length,
 He should have gain'd Malea's craggy shore,
 Then, by a sudden tempest caught, he flew 620
 With many a groan far o'er the fishy Deep
 To the land's utmost point, where once his home
 Thyestes had, but where Thyestes' son
 Dwelt then, Ægisthus. Easy lay his course
 And open thence, and, as it pleased the Gods,
 The shifted wind soon bore them to their home.
 He, high in exultation, trod the shore
 That gave him birth, kiss'd it, and, at the sight,
 The welcome sight of Greece, shed many a tear.
 Yet not unseen he landed; for a spy, 630
 One whom the shrewd Ægisthus had seduced
 By promise of two golden talents, mark'd
 His coming from a rock where he had watch'd
 The year complete, lest, passing unperceived,
 The King should reassert his right in arms.
 Swift flew the spy with tidings to this Lord,
 And He, incontinent, this project framed
 Insidious. Twenty men, the boldest hearts
 Of all the people, from the rest he chose,
 Whom he in ambush placed, and others charged 640
 Diligent to prepare the festal board.
 With horses, then, and chariots forth he drove
 Full-fraught with mischief, and conducting home
 The unsuspecting King, amid the feast
 Slew him, as at his crib men slay an ox.
 Nor of thy brother's train, nor of his train
 Who slew thy brother, one survived, but all,
 Welt'ring in blood together, there expired.
 He ended, and his words beat on my heart
 As they would break it. On the sands I sat 650
 Weeping, nor life nor light desiring more.
 But when I had in dust roll'd me, and wept
 To full satiety, mine ear again
 The oracle of Ocean thus address'd.
 Sit not, O son of Atreus! weeping here
 Longer, for remedy can none be found;
 But quick arising, trial make, how best
 Thou shalt, and soonest, reach thy home again.
 For either him still living thou shalt find,
 Or ere thou come, Orestes shall have slain 660

The traitor, and thine eyes shall see his tomb.

He ceas'd, and I, afflicted as I was,
Yet felt my spirit at that word refresh'd,
And in wing'd accents answer thus return'd.

Of these I am inform'd; but name the third
Who, dead or living, on the boundless Deep
Is still detain'd; I dread, yet wish to hear.

So I; to whom thus Proteus in return.
Laertes' son, the Lord of Ithaca—

Him in an island weeping I beheld, 670
Guest of the nymph Calypso, by constraint
Her guest, and from his native land withheld
By sad necessity; for ships well-oar'd,
Or faithful followers hath he none, whose aid
Might speed him safely o'er the spacious flood.
But, Menelaus dear to Jove! thy fate
Ordains not thee the stroke of death to meet
In steed-fam'd Argos, but far hence the Gods
Will send thee to Elysium, and the earth's
Extremest bounds; (there Rhadamanthus dwells, 680
The golden-hair'd, and there the human kind
Enjoy the easiest life; no snow is there,
No biting winter, and no drenching show'r,
But zephyr always gently from the sea
Breathes on them to refresh the happy race)
For that fair Helen is by nuptial bands
Thy own, and thou art son-in-law of Jove.

So saying, he plunged into the billowy waste,
I then, with my brave comrades to the fleet
Return'd, deep-musing as I went, and sad. 690

No sooner had I reach'd my ship beside
The ocean, and we all had supp'd, than night
From heav'n fell on us, and, at ease reposed
Along the margin of the sea, we slept.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, drawing our galleys down
Into the sacred Deep, we rear'd again
The mast, unfurl'd the sail, and to our seats
On board returning, thresh'd the foamy flood.
Once more, at length, within the hallow'd stream 700
Of Ægypt mooring, on the shore I slew
Whole hecatombs, and (the displeasure thus
Of the immortal Gods appeas'd) I reared

To Agamemnon's never-dying fame
 A tomb, and finishing it, sail'd again
 With such a gale from heaven vouchsafed, as sent
 My ships swift-scudding to the shores of Greece.
 But come—eleven days wait here, or twelve
 A guest with me, when I will send thee hence
 Nobly, and honour'd with illustrious gifts,
 With polish'd chariot, with three princely steeds,
 And with a gorgeous cup, that to the Gods
 Libation pouring ever while thou liv'st
 From that same cup, thou may'st remember me.

710

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.
 Atrides, seek not to detain me here
 Long time; for though contented I could sit
 The year beside thee, nor regret my home
 Or parents, (so delightful thy discourse
 Sounds in my ear) yet, even now, I know,
 That my attendants to the Pylian shore
 Wish my return, whom thou thus long detain'st.

720

What boon soe'er thou giv'st me, be it such
 As I may treasur'd keep; but horses none
 Take I to Ithaca; them rather far
 Keep thou, for thy own glory. Thou art Lord
 Of an extended plain, where copious springs
 The lotus, herbage of all savours, wheat,
 Pulse, and white barley of luxuriant growth.
 But Ithaca no level champaign owns,
 A nursery of goats, and yet a land
 Fairer than even pastures to the eye.
 No sea-encircled isle of ours affords
 Smooth course commodious and expanse of meads,
 But my own Ithaca transcends them all!

730

He said; the Hero Menelaus smiled,
 And stroaking tenderly his cheek, replied.
 Dear youth! thy speech proclaims thy noble blood.
 I can with ease supply thee from within
 With what shall suit thee better, and the gift
 Of all that I possess which most excels
 In beauty, and the noblest shall be thine.

740

I give thee, wrought elaborate, a cup
 Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
 It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
 The Hero Phædimus imparted, King

Of the Sidonians, when on my return
His house received me. That shall be thy own.

Thus they conferr'd; and now the busy train
Of menials culinary,¹ at the gate 750
Enter'd of Menelaus, Chief renown'd;
They brought him sheep, with heart-ennobling wine,
While all their wives, their brows with frontlets bound,
Came charg'd with bread. Thus busy they prepared
A banquet in the mansion of the King.

Meantime, before Ulysses' palace gate
The suitors sported with the quoit and spear
On the smooth area, customary scene
Of all their strife and angry clamour loud. 760
There sat Antinoüs, and the godlike youth
Eurymachus, superior to the rest
And Chiefs among them, to whom Phronius' son
Noëmon drawing nigh, with anxious mien
Question'd Antinoüs, and thus began.

Know we, Antinoüs! or know we not,
When to expect Telemachus at home
Again from Pylus? in my ship he went,
Which now I need, that I may cross the sea
To Elis, on whose spacious plain I feed
Twelve mares, each suckling a mule-colt as yet 770
Unbroken, but of which I purpose one
To ferry thence, and break him into use.

He spake, whom they astonish'd heard; for him
They deem'd not to Nelëian Pylus gone,
But haply into his own fields, his flocks
To visit, or the steward of his swine.
Then thus, Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, spake.

Say true. When sail'd he forth? of all our youth,
Whom chose he for his followers? his own train
Of slaves and hirelings? hath he pow'r to effect 780
This also? Tell me too, for I would learn—
Took he perforce thy sable bark away,
Or gav'st it to him at his first demand?

To whom Noëmon, Phronius' son, replied.
I gave it voluntary; what could'st thou,
Should such a prince petition for thy bark

¹ Δαιτυμων—generally signifies the founder of a feast; but we are taught by Eustathius to understand by it, in this place, the persons employed in preparing it.

In such distress? Hard were it to refuse.
 Brave youths (our bravest youths except yourselves)
 Attend him forth; and with them I observed
 Mentor embarking, ruler o'er them all, 790
 Or, if not him, a God; for such he seem'd.
 But this much moves my wonder. Yester-morn
 I saw, at day-break, noble Mentor here,
 Whom shipp'd for Pylus I had seen before.

He ceas'd; and to his father's house return'd;
 They, hearing, sat aghast. Their games meantime
 Finish'd, the suitors on their seats reposed,
 To whom Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, next,
 Much troubled spake; a black storm' overcharged
 His bosom, and his vivid eyes flash'd fire. 800

Ye Gods, a proud exploit is here atchieved,
 This voyage of Telemachus, by us
 Pronounced impracticable; yet the boy
 In downright opposition to us all,
 Hath headlong launched a ship, and, with a band
 Selected from our bravest youth, is gone.
 He soon will prove more mischievous, whose pow'r
 Jove wither, ere we suffer its effects!
 But give me a swift bark with twenty rowers,
 That, watching his return within the streights 810
 Of rocky Samos and of Ithaca,
 I may surprise him; so shall he have sail'd
 To seek his Sire, fatally for himself.

He ceased and loud applause heard in reply,
 With warm encouragement. Then, rising all,
 Into Ulysses' house at once they throng'd.
 Nor was Penelope left uninformed
 Long time of their clandestine plottings deep,
 For herald Medon told her all, whose ear
 Their councils caught while in the outer-court 820
 He stood, and they that project framed within.
 Swift to Penelope the tale he bore,
 Who as he pass'd the gate, him thus address'd.

For what cause, herald! have the suitors sent
 Thee foremost? Wou'd they that my maidens lay
 Their tasks aside, and dress the board for them?
 Here end their wooing! may they hence depart
 Never, and may the banquet now prepared,

This banquet prove your last!¹ who in such throngs
 Here meeting, waste the patrimony fair 830
 Of brave Telemachus; ye never, sure,
 When children, heard how gracious and how good
 Ulysses dwelt among your parents, none
 Of all his people, or in word or deed
 Injuring, as great princes oft are wont,
 By favour influenc'd now, now by disgust.
 He no man wrong'd at any time; but plain
 Your wicked purpose in your deeds appears,
 Who sense have none of benefits conferr'd.

Then Medon answer'd thus, prudent, return'd. 840
 Oh Queen! may the Gods grant this prove the worst.
 But greater far and heavier ills than this
 The suitors plan, whose counsels Jove confound!
 Their base desire and purpose are to slay
 Telemachus on his return; for he,
 To gather tidings of his Sire is gone
 To Pylus, or to Sparta's land divine.

He said; and where she stood, her trembling knees
 Fail'd under her, and all her spirits went.
 Speechless she long remain'd, tears filled her eyes, 850
 And inarticulate in its passage died
 Her utt'rance, till at last with pain she spake.

Herald! why went my son? he hath no need
 On board swift ships to ride, which are to man
 His steeds that bear him over seas remote.
 Went he, that, with himself, his very name
 Might perish from among mankind for ever?

Then answer, thus, Medon the wise return'd.
 I know not whether him some God impell'd 860
 Or his own heart to Pylus, there to hear
 News of his Sire's return, or by what fate
 At least he died, if he return no more.

He said, and traversing Ulysses' courts,
 Departed; she with heart consuming woe
 O'erwhelm'd, no longer could endure to take
 Repose on any of her num'rous seats,
 But on the threshold of her chamber-door
 Lamenting sat, while all her female train

¹ This transition from the third to the second person belongs to the original, and is considered as a fine stroke of art in the poet, who represents Penelope in the warmth of her resentment, forgetting where she is, and addressing the suitors as if present.

Around her moan'd, the antient and the young,
Whom, sobbing, thus Penelope bespake.

870

Hear me, ye maidens! for of women born
Coeval with me, none hath e'er received
Such plenteous sorrow from the Gods as I,
Who first my noble husband lost, endued
With courage lion-like, of all the Greeks
The Chief with ev'ry virtue most adorn'd,
A prince all-excellent, whose glorious praise
Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused.
And now, my darling son,—him storms have snatch'd
Far hence inglorious, and I knew it not.

880

Ah treach'rous servants! conscious as ye were
Of his design, not one of you the thought
Conceived to wake me when he went on board.
For had but the report once reach'd my ear,
He either had not gone (how much soe'er
He wish'd to leave me) or had left me dead.
But haste ye,—bid my antient servant come,
Dolion, whom (when I left my father's house
He gave me, and whose office is to attend
My num'rous garden-plants) that he may seek
At once Laertes, and may tell him all,
Who may contrive some remedy, perchance,
Or fit expedient, and shall come abroad
To weep before the men who wish to slay
Even the prince, godlike Ulysses' son.

890

Then thus the gentle Euryclea spake,
Nurse of Telemachus. Alas! my Queen!
Slay me, or spare, deal with me as thou wilt,
I will confess the truth. I knew it all.
I gave him all that he required from me.
Both wine and bread, and, at his bidding, swore
To tell thee nought in twelve whole days to come,
Or till, enquiry made, thou should'st thyself
Learn his departure, lest thou should'st impair
Thy lovely features with excess of grief.
But lave thyself, and, fresh attired, ascend
To thy own chamber, there, with all thy train,
To worship Pallas, who shall save, thenceforth,
Thy son from death, what ills soe'er he meet.
Add not fresh sorrows to the present woes
Of the old King, for I believe not yet

900

910

Arcesias' race entirely by the Gods
Renounced, but trust that there shall still be found
Among them, who shall dwell in royal state,
And reap the fruits of fertile fields remote.

So saying, she hush'd her sorrow, and her eyes
No longer stream'd. Then, bathed and fresh attired,
Penelope ascended with her train
The upper palace, and a basket stored
With hallow'd cakes off'ring, to Pallas pray'd. 920

Hear matchless daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd!
If ever wise Ulysses offer'd here
The thighs of fatted kine or sheep to thee,
Now mindful of his piety, preserve
His darling son, and frustrate with a frown
The cruelty of these imperious guests!

She said, and wept aloud, whose earnest suit
Pallas received. And now the spacious hall
And gloomy passages with tumult rang
And clamour of that throng, when thus, a youth, 930
Insolent as his fellows, dared to speak.

Much woo'd and long, the Queen at length prepares
To chuse another mate,¹ and nought suspects
The bloody death to which her son is doom'd.

So he; but they, meantime, themselves remain'd
Untaught, what course the dread concern elsewhere
Had taken, whom Antinoüs thus address'd.

Sirs! one and all, I counsel you, beware
Of such bold boasting unadvised; lest one
O'erhearing you, report your words within. 940
No—rather thus, in silence, let us move
To an exploit so pleasant to us all.

He said, and twenty chose, the bravest there,
With whom he sought the galley on the shore,
Which drawing down into the deep, they placed
The mast and sails on board, and, sitting, next,
Each oar in order to its proper groove,
Unfurl'd and spread their canvas to the gale.
Their bold attendants, then, brought them their arms,
And soon as in deep water they had moor'd 950
The ship, themselves embarking, supp'd on board,
And watch'd impatient for the dusk of eve.

¹ Mistaking, perhaps, the sound of her voice, and imagining that she sang.—Vide Barnes in loco.

But when Penelope, the palace stairs
 Remounting, had her upper chamber reach'd,
 There, unrefresh'd with either food or wine,
 She lay'd her down, her noble son the theme
 Of all her thoughts, whether he should escape
 His haughty foes, or perish by their hands.
 Num'rous as are the lion's thoughts, who sees,
 Not without fear, a multitude with toils 960
 Encircling him around, such num'rous thoughts
 Her bosom occupied, till sleep at length
 Invading her, she sank in soft repose.

Then Pallas, teeming with a new design,
 Set forth an airy phantom in the form
 Of fair Iphthima, daughter of the brave
 Icarius, and Eumelus' wedded wife
 In Pheræ. Shaped like her the dream she sent
 Into the mansion of the godlike Chief
 Ulysses, with kind purpose to abate 970
 The sighs and tears of sad Penelope.
 Ent'ring the chamber-portal, where the bolt
 Secured it, at her head the image stood,
 And thus, in terms compassionate, began.

Sleep'st thou, distress'd Penelope? The Gods,
 Happy in everlasting rest themselves,
 Forbid thy sorrows. Thou shalt yet behold
 Thy son again, who hath by no offence
 Incurr'd at any time the wrath of heav'n.

To whom, sweet-slumb'ring in the shadowy gate 980
 By which dreams pass, Penelope replied.

What cause, my sister, brings thee, who art seen
 Unfrequent here, for that thou dwell'st remote?
 And thou enjoin'st me a cessation too
 From sorrows num'rous, and which, fretting, wear
 My heart continual; first, my spouse I lost
 With courage lion-like endow'd, a prince
 All-excellent, whose never-dying praise
 Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused;
 And now my'only son, new to the toils 990
 And hazards of the sea, nor less untaught
 The arts of traffic, in a ship is gone
 Far hence, for whose dear cause I sorrow more
 Than for his Sire himself, and even shake
 With terror, lest he perish by their hands

To whom he goes, or in the stormy Deep;
 For num'rous are his foes, and all intent
 To slay him, ere he reach his home again.

Then answer thus the shadowy form return'd.

Take courage; suffer not excessive dread 1000
 To overwhelm thee, such a guide he hath
 And guardian, one whom many wish their friend,
 And ever at their side, knowing her pow'r,
 Minerva; she compassionates thy griefs,
 And I am here her harbinger, who speak
 As thou hast heard by her own kind command.

Then thus Penelope the wise replied.

Oh! if thou art a goddess, and hast heard
 A Goddess' voice, rehearse to me the lot 1010
 Of that unhappy one, if yet he live
 Spectator of the cheerful beams of day,
 Or if, already dead, he dwell below.

Whom answer'd thus the fleeting shadow vain.

I will not now inform thee if thy Lord
 Live, or live not. Vain words are best unspoken.

So saying, her egress swift beside the bolt
 She made, and melted into air. Upsprang
 From sleep Icarius' daughter, and her heart
 Felt heal'd within her, by that dream distinct
 Visited in the noiseless night serene. 1020

Meantime the suitors urged their wat'ry way,
 To instant death devoting in their hearts
 Telemachus. There is a rocky isle
 In the mid sea, Samos the rude between
 And Ithaca, not large, named Asteris.
 It hath commodious havens, into which
 A passage clear opens on either side,
 And there the ambush'd Greeks his coming watch'd.

BOOK V

ARGUMENT

MERCURY bears to Calypso a command from Jupiter that she dismiss Ulysses. She, after some remonstrances, promises obedience, and furnishes him with instruments and materials, with which he constructs a raft. He quits Calypso's island; is persecuted by Neptune with dreadful tempests, but by the assistance of a sea nymph, after having lost his raft, is enabled to swim to Phæacia.

AURORA from beside her glorious mate
Tithonus now arose, light to dispense
Through earth and heav'n, when the assembled Gods
In council sat, o'er whom high-thund'ring Jove
Presided, mightiest of the Pow'rs above.
Amid them, Pallas on the num'rous woes
Descanted of Ulysses, whom she saw
With grief, still prison'd in Calypso's isle.

Jove, Father, hear me, and ye other Pow'rs
Who live for ever, hear! Be never King
Henceforth to gracious acts inclined, humane,
Or righteous, but let ev'ry sceptred hand
Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
Since none of all his people whom he sway'd
With such paternal gentleness and love
Remembers, now, divine Ulysses more.
He, in yon distant isle a suff'rer lies
Of hopeless sorrow, through constraint the guest
Still of the nymph Calypso, without means
Or pow'r to reach his native shores again,
Alike of gallant barks and friends depriv'd,
Who might conduct him o'er the spacious Deep.
Nor is this all, but enemies combine
To slay his son ere yet he can return
From Pylus, whither he hath gone to learn
There, or in Sparta, tidings of his Sire.

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What word hath pass'd thy lips, daughter belov'd?
Hast thou not purpos'd that arriving soon
At home, Ulysses shall destroy his foes?

10

20

30

Guide thou, Telemachus, (for well thou canst)
That he may reach secure his native coast,
And that the suitors baffled may return.

He ceas'd, and thus to Hermes spake, his son.
Hermes! (for thou art herald of our will
At all times) to yon bright-hair'd nymph convey
Our fix'd resolve, that brave Ulysses thence
Depart, unaccompanied by God or man.
Borne on a corded raft, and suff'ring woe
Extreme, he on the twentieth day shall reach, 40
Not sooner, Scherie the deep-soil'd, possess'd
By the Phæacians, kinsmen of the Gods.
They, as a God shall reverence the Chief,
And in a bark of theirs shall send him thence
To his own home, much treasure, brass and gold
And raiment giving him, to an amount
Surpassing all that, had he safe return'd,
He should by lot have shared of Ilium's spoil.
Thus Fate appoints Ulysses to regain
His country, his own palace, and his friends. 50

He ended, nor the Argicide refused,
Messenger of the skies; his sandals fair,
Ambrosial, golden, to his feet he bound,
Which o'er the moist wave, rapid as the wind,
Bear him, and o'er th' illimitable earth,
Then took his rod with which, at will, all eyes
He closes soft, or opes them wide again.
So arm'd, forth flew the valiant Argicide.
Alighting on Pieria, down he stoop'd
To Ocean, and the billows lightly skimm'd 60
In form a sew-mew, such as in the bays
Tremendous of the barren Deep her food
Seeking, dips oft in brine her ample wing.
In such disguise o'er many a wave he rode,
But reaching, now, that isle remote, forsook
The azure Deep, and at the spacious grot,
Where dwelt the amber-tressed nymph arrived,
Found her within. A fire on all the hearth
Blazed sprightly, and, afar-diffused, the scent
Of smooth-split cedar and of cypress-wood 70
Odorous, burning, cheer'd the happy isle.
She, busied at the loom, and plying fast
Her golden shuttle, with melodious voice

Sat chaunting there; a grove on either side,
 Alder and poplar, and the redolent branch
 Wide-spread of Cypress, skirted dark the cave.
 There many a bird of broadest pinion built
 Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw
 Long-tongued, frequenter of the sandy shores.

A garden-vine luxuriant on all sides 80

Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
 Profuse; four fountains of serenest lymph
 Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
 Stray'd all around, and ev'ry where appear'd
 Meadows of softest verdure, purpled o'er
 With violets; it was a scene to fill

A God from heav'n with wonder and delight.
 Hermes, Heav'n's messenger, admiring stood
 That sight, and having all survey'd, at length

Enter'd the grotto; nor the lovely nymph 90

Him knew not soon as seen, for not unknown
 Each to the other the Immortals are,
 How far soever sep'rate their abodes.

Yet found he not within the mighty Chief
 Ulysses; he sat weeping on the shore,

Forlorn, for there his custom was with groans
 Of sad regret t' afflict his breaking heart.

Looking continual o'er the barren Deep.

Then thus Calypso, nymph divine, the God
 Question'd, from her resplendent throne august. 100

Hermes! possessor of the potent rod!

Who, though by me much reverenc'd and belov'd,

So seldom com'st, say, wherefore comest now?

Speak thy desire; I grant it, if thou ask

Things possible, and possible to me.

Stay not, but ent'ring farther, at my board

Due rites of hospitality receive.

So saying, the Goddess with ambrosial food

Her table cover'd, and with rosy juice

Nectareous charged the cup. Then ate and drank 110

The argicide and herald of the skies,

And in his soul with that repast divine

Refresh'd, his message to the nymph declared.

Questionest thou, O Goddess, me a God?

I tell thee truth, since such is thy demand.

Not willing, but by Jove constrain'd, I come.

For who would, voluntary, such a breadth
 Enormous measure of the salt expanse,
 Where city none is seen in which the Gods
 Are served with chosen hecatombs and pray'r? 120
 But no divinity may the designs
 Elude, or controvert, of Jove supreme.
 He saith, that here thou hold'st the most distrest
 Of all those warriors who nine years assail'd
 The city of Priam, and, (that city sack'd)
 Departed in the tenth; but, going thence,
 Offended Pallas, who with adverse winds
 Opposed their voyage, and with boist'rous waves.
 Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
 Billows and storms drove hither; Jove commands 130
 That thou dismiss him hence without delay,
 For fate ordains him not to perish here
 From all his friends remote, but he is doom'd
 To see them yet again, and to arrive
 At his own palace in his native land.

He said; divine Calypso at the sound
 Shudder'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Ye are unjust, ye Gods, and envious past
 All others, grudging if a Goddess take
 A mortal man openly to her arms! 140
 So, when the rosy-finger'd Morning chose
 Orion, though ye live yourselves at ease,
 Yet ye all envied her, until the chaste
 Diana from her golden throne dispatch'd
 A silent shaft, which slew him in Ortygia.
 So, when the golden-tressed Ceres, urged
 By passion, took Iasion to her arms
 In a thrice-labour'd fallow, not untaught
 Was Jove that secret long, and, hearing it,
 Indignant, slew him with his candent bolt. 150
 So also, O ye Gods, ye envy me
 The mortal man, my comfort. Him I saved
 Myself, while solitary on his keel
 He rode, for with his sulph'rous arrow Jove
 Had cleft his bark amid the sable Deep.
 Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
 Billows and storms drove hither, whom I lov'd
 Sincere, and fondly destin'd to a life
 Immortal, unobnoxious to decay.

But since no Deity may the designs
 Elude or controvert of Jove supreme,
 Hence with him o'er the barren Deep, if such
 The Sov'reign's will, and such his stern command.
 But undimiss'd he goes by me, who ships
 Myself well-oar'd and mariners have none
 To send with him athwart the spacious flood;
 Yet freely, readily, my best advice
 I will afford him, that, escaping all
 Danger, he may regain his native shore.

160

Then Hermes thus, the messenger of heav'n.
 Act as thou say'st, fearing the frown of Jove,
 Lest, if provoked, he spare not even thee.

170

So saying, the dauntless Argicide withdrew,
 And she (Jove's mandate heard) all-graceful went,
 Seeking the brave Ulysses; on the shore
 She found him seated; tears succeeding tears
 Delug'd his eyes, while, hopeless of return,
 Life's precious hours to eating cares he gave
 Continual, with the nymph now charm'd no more.

Yet, cold as she was am'rous, still he pass'd
 His nights beside her in the hollow grot,
 Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among
 Which lined the shore heart-broken sat, and oft
 While wistfully he eyed the barren Deep,
 Wept, groaned, desponded, sigh'd, and wept again.
 Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine.

180

Unhappy! weep not here, nor life consume
 In anguish; go; thou hast my glad consent.
 Arise to labour; hewing down the trunks
 Of lofty trees, fashion them with the ax
 To a broad raft, which closely floor'd above,
 Shall hence convey thee o'er the gloomy Deep.
 Bread, water, and the red grape's cheering juice
 Myself will put on board, which shall preserve
 Thy life from famine; I will also give
 New raiment for thy limbs, and will dispatch
 Winds after thee to waft thee home unharm'd,
 If such the pleasure of the Gods who dwell
 In yonder boundless heav'n, superior far
 To me, in knowledge and in skill to judge.

190

She ceas'd; but horror at that sound the heart
 Chill'd of Ulysses, and in accents wing'd

200

With wonder, thus the noble Chief replied.

Ah! other thoughts than of my safe return
Employ thee, Goddess, now, who bid'st me pass
The perilous gulph of Ocean on a raft,
That wild expanse terrible, which even ships
Pass not, though form'd to cleave their way with ease,
And joyful in propitious winds from Jove.
No—let me never, in despite of thee,
Embark on board a raft, nor till thou swear,
O Goddess! the inviolable oath,
That future mischief thou intend'st me none.

210

He said; Calypso, beauteous Goddess, smiled,
And, while she spake, stroaking his cheek, replied.

Thou dost asperse me rudely, and excuse
Of ignorance hast none, far better taught;
What words were these? How could'st thou thus reply?
Now hear me Earth, and the wide Heav'n above!
Hear, too, ye waters of the Stygian stream
Under the earth (by which the blessed Gods
Swear trembling, and revere the awful oath!)
That future mischief I intend thee none.

220

No, my designs concerning thee are such
As, in an exigence resembling thine,
Myself, most sure, should for myself conceive.
I have a mind more equal, not of steel
My heart is form'd, but much to pity inclined.

So saying, the lovely Goddess with swift pace
Led on, whose footsteps he as swift pursued.

230

Within the vaulted cavern they arrived,
The Goddess and the man; on the same throne
Ulysses sat, whence Hermes had aris'n,
And viands of all kinds, such as sustain
The life of mortal man, Calypso placed
Before him, both for bev'rage and for food.

She opposite to the illustrious Chief
Reposed, by her attendant maidens served
With nectar and ambrosia. They their hands
Stretch'd forth together to the ready feast,
And when nor hunger more nor thirst remain'd
Unsated, thus the beauteous nymph began.

240

Laertes' noble son, for wisdom famed
And artifice! oh canst thou thus resolve
To seek, incontinent, thy native shores?

I pardon thee. Farewell! but could'st thou guess
 The woes which fate ordains thee to endure
 Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content
 Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot
 And be immortal, howsoe'er thy wife
 Engage thy ev'ry wish day after day.
 Yet can I not in stature or in form
 Myself suspect inferior aught to her,
 Since competition cannot be between
 Mere mortal beauties, and a form divine.

250

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Awful Divinity! be not incensed.
 I know that my Penelope in form
 And stature altogether yields to thee,
 For she is mortal, and immortal thou,
 From age exempt; yet not the less I wish
 My home, and languish daily to return.
 But should some God amid the sable Deep
 Dash me again into a wreck, my soul
 Shall bear *that* also; for, by practice taught,
 I have learned patience, having much endured
 By tempest and in battle both. Come then
 This evil also! I am well prepared.

260

He ended, and the sun sinking, resign'd
 The earth to darkness. Then in a recess
 Interior of the cavern, side by side
 Reposed, they took their amorous delight.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, Ulysses then in haste
 Put on his vest and mantle, and, the nymph
 Her snowy vesture of transparent woof,
 Graceful, redundant; to her waist she bound
 Her golden zone, and veil'd her beauteous head,
 Then, musing, plann'd the noble Chief's return.
 She gave him, fitted to the grasp, an ax
 Of iron, pond'rous, double-edg'd, with haft
 Of olive-wood, inserted firm, and wrought
 With curious art. Then, placing in his hand
 A polish'd adze, she led, herself, the way
 To her isles' utmost verge, where tallest trees
 But dry long since and sapless stood, which best
 Might serve his purposes, as buoyant most,
 The alder, poplar, and cloud-piercing fir.

270

280

To that tall grove she led and left him there,
 Seeking her grot again. Then slept not He, 290
 But, swinging with both hands the ax, his task
 Soon finish'd; trees full twenty to the ground
 He cast, which, dext'rous, with his adze he smooth'd,
 The knotted surface chipping by a line.
 Meantime the lovely Goddess to his aid
 Sharp augres brought, with which he bored the beams,
 Then, side by side placing them, fitted each
 To other, and with long cramps join'd them all.
 Broad as an artist, skill'd in naval works,
 The bottom of a ship of burthen spreads, 300
 Such breadth Ulysses to his raft assign'd.
 He deck'd her over with long planks, upborne
 On massy beams; He made the mast, to which
 He added suitable the yard;—he framed
 Rudder and helm to regulate her course,
 With wicker-work he border'd all her length
 For safety, and much ballast stow'd within.
 Meantime, Calypso brought him for a sail
 Fittest materials, which he also shaped,
 And to his sail due furniture annex'd 310
 Of cordage strong, foot-ropes, and ropes aloft,
 Then heav'd her down with levers to the Deep.
 He finish'd all his work on the fourth day,
 And on the fifth, Calypso, nymph divine,
 Dismiss'd him from her isle, but laved him first,
 And cloath'd him in sweet-scented garments new.
 Two skins the Goddess also placed on board,
 One charg'd with crimson wine, and ampler one
 With water, nor a bag with food replete
 Forgot, nutritious, grateful to the taste, 320
 Nor yet, her latest gift, a gentle gale
 And manageable, which Ulysses spread,
 Exulting, all his canvas to receive.
 Beside the helm he sat, steering expert,
 Nor sleep fell ever on his eyes that watch'd
 Intent the Pleiads, tardy in decline
 Bootes, and the Bear, call'd else the Wain,
 Which, in his polar prison circling, looks
 Direct toward Orion, and alone
 Of these sinks never to the briny Deep. 330
 That star the lovely Goddess bade him hold

Continual on his left through all his course.
 Ten days and sev'n, he, navigating, cleav'd
 The brine, and on the eighteenth day, at length,
 The shadowy mountains of Phæacia's land
 Descried, where nearest to his course it lay
 Like a broad buckler on the waves afloat.

But Neptune, now returning from the land
 Of Ethiopia, mark'd him on his raft
 Skimming the billows, from the mountain-tops 340
 Of distant Solyma.¹ With tenfold wrath
 Inflamed that sight he view'd, his brows he shook,
 And thus within himself, indignant, spake.

So then—new counsels in the skies, it seems,
 Propitious to Ulysses, have prevail'd
 Since Æthiopia hath been my abode.
 He sees Phæacia nigh, where he must leap
 The bound'ry of his woes; but ere that hour
 Arrive, I will ensure him many a groan.

So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense 350
 The clouds and troubled ocean; ev'ry storm
 From ev'ry point he summon'd, earth and sea
 Darkening, and the night fell black from heav'n.
 The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,
 And the cold North-wind clear, assail'd at once
 His raft, and heaved on high the billowy flood.
 All hope, all courage, in that moment, lost,
 The Hero thus within himself complain'd.

Wretch that I am, what destiny at last
 Attends me! much I fear the Goddess' words 360
 All true, which threaten'd me with num'rous ills
 On the wide sea, ere I should reach my home.
 Behold them all fulfill'd! with what a storm
 Jove hangs the heav'ns, and agitates the Deep!
 The winds combined beat on me. Now I sink!
 Thrice blest, and more than thrice, Achaia's sons
 At Ilium slain for the Atridæ' sake!
 Ah, would to heav'n that, dying, I had felt
 That day the stroke of fate, when me the dead
 Achilles guarding, with a thousand spears 370
 Troy's furious host assail'd! Funereal rites
 I then had shared, and praise from ev'ry Greek,
 Whom now the most inglorious death awaits.

¹ The Solymi were the ancient inhabitants of Pisidia in Asia-Minor.

While thus he spake, a billow on his head
 Bursting impetuous, whirl'd the raft around,
 And, dashing from his grasp the helm, himself
 Plunged far remote. Then came a sudden gust
 Of mingling winds, that in the middle snapp'd
 His mast, and, hurried o'er the waves afar,
 Both sail and sail-yard fell into the flood. 380
 Long time submerged he lay, nor could with ease
 The violence of that dread shock surmount,
 Or rise to air again, so burthensome
 His drench'd apparel proved; but, at the last,
 He rose, and, rising, sputter'd from his lips
 The brine that trickled copious from his brows.
 Nor, harass'd as he was, resign'd he yet
 His raft, but buffetting the waves aside
 With desp'rate efforts, seized it, and again
 Fast seated on the middle deck, escaped. 390
 Then roll'd the raft at random in the flood,
 Wallowing unwieldy, toss'd from wave to wave.
 As when in autumn, Boreas o'er the plain
 Conglomerated thorns before him drives,
 They, tangled, to each other close adhere,
 So her the winds drove wild about the Deep.
 By turns the South consign'd her to be sport
 For the rude North-wind, and, by turns, the East
 Yielded her to the worrying West a prey.
 But Cadmus' beauteous daughter (Ino once,
 Now named Leucothea) saw him; mortal erst 400
 Was she, and trod the earth,¹ but nymph become
 Of Ocean since, in honours shares divine.
 She mark'd his anguish, and, while toss'd he roam'd,
 Pitied Ulysses; from the flood, in form
 A cormorant, she flew, and on the raft
 Close-corded perching, thus the Chief address'd.

Alas! unhappy! how hast thou incensed
 So terribly the Shaker of the shores,
 That he pursues thee with such num'rous ills? 410
 Sink thee he cannot, wish it as he may.
 Thus do (for I account thee not unwise)
 Thy garments putting off, let drive thy raft
 As the winds will, then, swimming, strive to reach

¹ The Translator finding himself free to chuse between *ἀυδηέσσα* and *ἠδηέσσα*, has preferred the latter.

Phæacia, where thy doom is to escape.
 Take this. This ribbon bind beneath thy breast,
 Celestial texture. Thenceforth ev'ry fear
 Of death dismiss, and, laying once thy hands
 On the firm continent, unbind the zone,
 Which thou shalt cast far distant from the shore
 Into the Deep, turning thy face away. 420

So saying, the Goddess gave into his hand
 The wond'rous zone, and, cormorant in form,
 Plunging herself into the waves again
 Headlong, was hidden by the closing flood.
 But still Ulysses sat perplex'd, and thus
 The toil-enduring Hero reason'd sad.

Alas! I tremble lest some God design
 T' ensnare me yet, bidding me quit the raft.
 But let me well beware how I obey 430
 Too soon that precept, for I saw the land
 Of my foretold deliv'rance far remote.
 Thus, therefore, will I do, for such appears
 My wiser course. So long as yet the planks
 Mutual adhere, continuing on board
 My raft, I will endure whatever woes,
 But when the waves shall shatter it, I will swim,
 My sole resource then left. While thus he mused,
 Neptune a billow of enormous bulk

Hollow'd into an overwhelming arch 440
 On high up-heaving, smote him. As the wind
 Tempestuous, falling on some stubble-heap,
 The arid straws dissipates ev'ry way,
 So flew the timbers. He, a single beam
 Bestriding, oar'd it onward with his feet,
 As he had urged an horse. His raiment, then,
 Gift of Calypso, putting off, he bound
 His girdle on, and prone into the sea
 With wide-spread palms prepar'd for swimming, fell.
 Shore-shaker Neptune noted him; he shook 450
 His awful brows, and in his heart he said,

Thus, suff'ring many mis'ries roam the flood,
 Till thou shalt mingle with a race of men
 Heav'n's special favourites; yet even there
 Fear not that thou shalt feel thy sorrows light.

He said, and scourging his bright steeds, arrived
 At Ægæ, where his glorious palace stands.

But other thoughts Minerva's mind employ'd
 Jove's daughter; ev'ry wind binding beside,
 She lull'd them, and enjoin'd them all to sleep, 460
 But roused swift Boreas, and the billows broke
 Before Ulysses, that, deliver'd safe
 From a dire death, the noble Chief might mix
 With maritime Phæacia's sons renown'd.

Two nights he wander'd, and two days, the flood
 Tempestuous, death expecting ev'ry hour;
 But when Aurora, radiant-hair'd, had brought
 The third day to a close, then ceas'd the wind,
 And breathless came a calm; he, nigh at hand
 The shore beheld, darting acute his sight 470
 Toward it, from a billow's tow'ring top.

Precious as to his children seems the life
 Of some fond father through disease long time
 And pain stretch'd languid on his couch, the prey
 Of some vindictive Pow'r, but now, at last,
 By gracious heav'n to ease and health restored,
 So grateful to Ulysses' sight appear'd
 Forests and hills. Impatient with his feet
 To press the shore, he swam; but when within
 Such distance as a shout may fly, he came, 480
 The thunder of the sea against the rocks
 Then smote his ear; for hoarse the billows roar'd
 On the firm land, belch'd horrible abroad,
 And the salt spray dimm'd all things to his view.
 For neither port for ships nor shelt'ring cove
 Was there, but the rude coast a headland bluff
 Presented, rocks and craggy masses huge.
 Then, hope and strength exhausted both, deep-groan'd
 The Chief, and in his noble heart complain'd.

Alas! though Jove hath given me to behold, 490
 Unhoped, the land again, and I have pass'd,
 Furrowing my way, these num'rous waves, there seems
 No egress from the hoary flood for me.
 Sharp stones hem in the waters; wild the surge
 Raves ev'ry where; and smooth the rocks arise;
 Deep also is the shore, on which my feet
 No standing gain, or chance of safe escape.
 What if some billow catch me from the Deep
 Emerging, and against the pointed rocks
 Dash me conflicting with its force in vain? 500

But should I, swimming, trace the coast in search
 Of sloping beach, haven or shelter'd creek,
 I fear lest, groaning, I be snatch'd again
 By stormy gusts into the fishy Deep,
 Or lest some monster of the flood receive
 Command to seize me, of the many such
 By the illustrious Amphitrite bred;
 For that the mighty Shaker of the shores
 Hates me implacable, too well I know.

While such discourse within himself he held,
 510
 A huge wave heav'd him on the rugged coast,
 Where flay'd his flesh had been, and all his bones
 Broken together, but for the infused
 Good counsel of Minerva azure-eyed.
 With both hands suddenly he seized the rock,
 And, groaning, clench'd it till the billow pass'd.
 So baffled he that wave; but yet again
 The reflux flood rush'd on him, and with force
 Resistless dash'd him far into the sea.

As pebbles to the hollow polypus
 520
 Extracted from his stony bed, adhere,
 So he, the rough rocks clasping, stripp'd his hands
 Raw, and the billows now whelm'd him again.
 Then had the hapless Hero premature
 Perish'd, but for sagacity inspired
 By Pallas azure-eyed. Forth from the waves
 Emerging, where the surf burst on the rocks,
 He coasted (looking landward as he swam)
 The shore, with hope of port or level beach.
 But when, still swimming, to the mouth he came
 530
 Of a smooth-sliding river, there he deem'd
 Safest th' ascent, for it was undeform'd
 By rocks, and shelter'd close from ev'ry wind.
 He felt the current, and thus, ardent, pray'd.

O hear, whate'er thy name, Sov'reign, who rul'st
 This river! at whose mouth, from all the threats
 Of Neptune 'scap'd, with rapture I arrive.
 Even the Immortal Gods the wand'rer's pray'r
 Respect, and such am I, who reach, at length,
 Thy stream, and clasp thy knees, after long toil.
 540
 I am thy suppliant. Oh King! pity me.

He said; the river God at once repress'd
 His current, and it ceas'd; smooth he prepared

The way before Ulysses, and the land
 Vouchsafed him easy at his channel's mouth.
 There, once again he bent for ease his limbs
 Both arms and knees, in conflict with the floods
 Exhausted; swoln his body was all o'er,
 And from his mouth and nostrils stream'd the brine.
 Breathless and speechless, and of life well nigh 550
 Bereft he lay, through dreadful toil immense.
 But when, revived, his dissipated pow'rs
 He recollected, loosing from beneath
 His breast the zone divine, he cast it far
 Into the brackish stream, and a huge wave
 Returning bore it downward to the sea,
 Where Ino caught it. Then, the river's brink
 Abandoning, among the rushes prone
 He lay, kiss'd oft the soil, and sighing, said,
 Ah me! what suff'rings must I now sustain, 560
 What doom, at last, awaits me? If I watch
 This woeful night, here, at the river's side,
 What hope but that the frost and copious dews,
 Weak as I am, my remnant small of life
 Shall quite extinguish, and the chilly air
 Breath'd from the river at the dawn of day?
 But if, ascending this declivity
 I gain the woods, and in some thicket sleep,
 (If sleep indeed can find me overtoil'd
 And cold-benumb'd) then I have cause to fear 570
 Lest I be torn by wild beasts, and devour'd.
 Long time he mused, but, at the last, his course
 Bent to the woods, which not remote he saw
 From the sea-brink, conspicuous on a hill.
 Arrived, between two neighbour shrubs he crept,
 Both olives, this the fruitful, that the wild;
 A covert, which nor rough winds blowing moist
 Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
 Smite through it, or unceasing show'rs pervade,
 So thick a roof the ample branches form'd 580
 Close interwoven; under these the Chief
 Retiring, with industrious hands a bed
 Collected broad of leaves, which there he found
 Abundant strew'd, such store as had sufficed
 Two travellers or three for cov'ring warm,
 Though winter's roughest blasts had rag'd the while.

That bed with joy the suff'ring Chief renown'd
Contemplated, and occupying soon
The middle space, hillock'd it high with leaves.
As when some swain hath hidden deep his torch
Beneath the embers, at the verge extreme
Of all his farm, where, having neighbours none,
He saves a seed or two of future flame
Alive, doom'd else to fetch it from afar,
So with dry leaves Ulysses overspread
His body, on whose eyes Minerva pour'd
The balm of sleep copious, that he might taste
Repose again, after long toil severe.

590

BOOK VI

ARGUMENT

MINERVA designing an interview between the daughter of Alcinoüs and Ulysses, admonishes her in a dream to carry down her clothes to the river, that she may wash them, and make them ready for her approaching nuptials. That task performed, the Princess and her train amuse themselves with play; by accident they awake Ulysses; he comes forth from the wood, and applies himself with much address to Nausicaa, who compassionating his distressed condition, and being much affected by the dignity of his appearance, interests himself in his favour, and conducts him to the city.

THERE then the noble suff'rer lay, by sleep
Oppress'd and labour; meantime, Pallas sought
The populous city of Phæacia's sons.
They, in old time, in Hypereia dwelt
The spacious, neighbours of a giant race
The haughty Cyclops, who, endued with pow'r
Superior, troubled them with frequent wrongs.
Godlike Nausithoüs then arose, who thence
To Scheria led them, from all nations versed
In arts of cultivated life, remote; 10
With bulwarks strong their city he enclosed,
Built houses for them, temples to the Gods,
And gave to each a portion of the soil.
But he, already by decree of fate
Had journey'd to the shades, and in his stead
Alcinoüs, by the Gods instructed, reign'd.
To his abode Minerva azure-eyed
Repair'd, neglecting nought which might advance
Magnanimous Ulysses' safe return.
She sought the sumptuous chamber where, in form 20
And feature perfect as the Gods, the young
Nausicaa, daughter of the King, reposed.
Fast by the pillars of the portal lay
Two damsels, one on either side, adorn'd
By all the Graces, and the doors were shut.
Soft as a breathing air, she stole toward

The royal virgin's couch, and at her head
 Standing, address'd her. Daughter she appear'd
 Of Dymas, famed for maritime exploits,
 Her friend and her coeval; so disguised
 Cærulean-eyed Minerva thus began.

30

Nausicaa! wherefore hath thy mother borne
 A child so negligent? Thy garments share,
 Thy most magnificent, no thought of thine.
 Yet thou must marry soon, and must provide
 Robes for thyself, and for thy nuptial train.
 Thy fame, on these concerns, and honour stand;
 These managed well, thy parents shall rejoice.

The dawn appearing, let us to the place
 Of washing, where thy work-mate I will be
 For speedier riddance of thy task, since soon

40

The days of thy virginity shall end;
 For thou art woo'd already by the prime
 Of all Phæacia, country of thy birth.

Come then—solicit at the dawn of day
 Thy royal father, that he send thee forth
 With mules and carriage for conveyance hence
 Of thy best robes, thy mantles and thy zones.
 Thus, more commodiously thou shalt perform
 The journey, for the cisterns lie remote.

50

So saying, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
 Rose to Olympus, the reputed seat
 Eternal of the Gods, which never storms
 Disturb, rains drench, or snow invades, but calm
 The expanse and cloudless shines with purest day.
 There the inhabitants divine rejoice
 For ever, (and her admonition giv'n)
 Cærulean-eyed Minerva thither flew.

Now came Aurora bright-enthroned, whose rays
 Awaken'd fair Nausicaa; she her dream
 Remember'd wond'ring, and her parents sought
 Anxious to tell them. Them she found within.
 Beside the hearth her royal mother sat,
 Spinning soft fleeces with sea-purple dyed
 Among her menial maidens, but she met
 Her father, whom the Nobles of the land
 Had summon'd, issuing abroad to join
 The illustrious Chiefs in council. At his side
 She stood, and thus her filial suit preferr'd.

60

Sir!¹ wilt thou lend me of the royal wains
 A sumpter-carriage? for I wish to bear
 My costly cloaths but sullied and unfit
 For use, at present, to the river side.
 It is but seemly that thou should'st repair
 Thyself to consultation with the Chiefs
 Of all Phæacia, clad in pure attire;
 And my own brothers five, who dwell at home,
 Two wedded, and the rest of age to wed,
 Are all desirous, when they dance, to wear
 Raiment new bleach'd; all which is my concern. 70

So spake Nausicaa; for she dared not name
 Her own glad nuptials to her father's ear,
 Who, conscious yet of all her drift, replied.

I grudge thee neither mules, my child, nor aught
 That thou canst ask beside. Go, and my train
 Shall furnish thee a sumpter-carriage forth
 High-built, strong-wheel'd, and of capacious size.

So saying, he issued his command, whom quick
 His grooms obey'd. They in the court prepared
 The sumpter-carriage, and adjoin'd the mules. 90
 And now the virgin from her chamber, charged
 With raiment, came, which on the car she placed,
 And in the carriage-chest, meantime, the Queen,
 Her mother, viands of all kinds disposed,
 And fill'd a skin with wine. Nausicaa rose
 Into her seat; but, ere she went, received
 A golden cruse of oil from the Queen's hand
 For unction of herself, and of her maids.
 Then, seizing scourge and reins, she lash'd the mules.
 They trampled loud the soil, straining to draw 100
 Herself with all her vesture; nor alone
 She went, but follow'd by her virgin train.
 At the delightful rivulet arrived
 Where those perennial cisterns were prepared
 With purest crystal of the fountain fed
 Profuse, sufficient for the deepest stains,
 Loosing the mules, they drove them forth to browze
 On the sweet herb beside the dimpled flood.
 The carriage, next, light'ning, they bore in hand

¹ In the Original, she calls him, pappa! a more natural stile of address and more endearing. But ancient as this appellative is, it is also so familiar in modern use, that the Translator feared to hazard it.

The garments down to the unsullied wave,
 And thrust them heap'd into the pools, their task
 Dispatching brisk, and with an emulous haste.
 When they had all purified, and no spot
 Could now be seen, or blemish more, they spread
 The raiment orderly along the beach
 Where dashing tides had cleansed the pebbles most,
 And laving, next, and smoothing o'er with oil
 Their limbs, all seated on the river's bank,
 They took repast, leaving the garments, stretch'd
 In noon-day fervour of the sun, to dry.

110

120

Their hunger satisfied, at once arose
 The mistress and her train, and putting off
 Their head-attire, play'd wanton with the ball,
 The princess singing to her maids the while.
 Such as shaft-arm'd Diana roams the hills,
 Tägetus sky-capt, or Erymanth,
 The wild boar chasing, or fleet-footed hind,
 All joy; the rural nymphs, daughters of Jove,
 Sport with her, and Latona's heart exults;
 She high her graceful head above the rest
 And features lifts divine, though all be fair,
 With ease distinguishable from them all;
 So, all her train, she, virgin pure, surpass'd.

130

But when the hour of her departure thence
 Approach'd (the mules now yoked again, and all
 Her elegant apparel folded neat)
 Minerva azure-eyed mused how to wake
 Ulysses, that he might behold the fair
 Virgin, his destin'd guide into the town.
 The Princess, then, casting the ball toward
 A maiden of her train, erroneous threw
 And plunged it deep into the dimpling stream.
 All shrieked; Ulysses at the sound awoke,
 And, sitting, meditated thus the cause.

140

Ah me! what mortal race inhabit here?
 Rude are they, contumacious and unjust?
 Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods?
 So shrill the cry and feminine of nymphs
 Fills all the air around, such as frequent
 The hills, clear fountains, and herbaceous meads.
 Is this a neighbourhood of men endued
 With voice articulate? But what avails

150

To ask; I will myself go forth and see.

So saying, divine Ulysses from beneath
 His thicket crept, and from the leafy wood
 A spreading branch pluck'd forcibly, design'd
 A decent skreen effectual, held before.
 So forth he went, as goes the lion forth,
 The mountain-lion, conscious of his strength,
 Whom winds have vex'd and rains; fire fills his eyes, 160
 And whether herds or flocks, or woodland deer
 He find, he rends them, and, adust for blood,
 Abstains not even from the guarded fold,
 Such sure to seem in virgin eyes, the Chief,
 All naked as he was, left his retreat,
 Reluctant, by necessity constrain'd.

Him foul with sea foam horror-struck they view'd,
 And o'er the jutting shores fled all dispersed.

Nausicaa alone fled not; for her

Pallas courageous made, and from her limbs,

By pow'r divine, all tremour took away.

Firm she expected him; he doubtful stood,

Or to implore the lovely maid, her knees

Embracing, or aloof standing, to ask

In gentle terms discrete the gift of cloaths,

And guidance to the city where she dwelt.

Him so deliberating, most, at length,

This counsel pleas'd; in suppliant terms aloof

To sue to her, lest if he clasp'd her knees,

The virgin should that bolder course resent.

Then gentle, thus, and well-advised he spake.

Oh Queen! thy earnest suppliant I approach.

Art thou some Goddess, or of mortal race?

For if some Goddess, and from heaven arrived,

Diana, then, daughter of mighty Jove

I deem thee most, for such as hers appear

Thy form, thy stature, and thy air divine.

But if, of mortal race, thou dwell below,

Thrice happy then, thy parents I account,

And happy thrice thy brethren. Ah! the joy

Which always for thy sake, their bosoms fill,

When thee they view, all lovely as thou art,

Ent'ring majestic on the graceful dance.

But him beyond all others blest I deem,

The youth, who, wealthier than his rich compeers,

- 170

180

190

Shall win and lead thee to his honour'd home.
 For never with these eyes a mortal form
 Beheld I comparable aught to thine,
 In man or woman. Wonder-wrapt I gaze.
 Such erst, in Delos, I beheld a palm 200
 Beside the altar of Apollo, tall,
 And growing still; (for thither too I sail'd,
 And num'rous were my followers in a voyage
 Ordain'd my ruin) and as then I view'd
 That palm long time amazed, for never grew
 So strait a shaft, so lovely from the ground,
 So, Princess! thee with wonder I behold,
 Charm'd into fixt astonishment, by awe
 Alone forbidden to embrace thy knees,
 For I am one on whom much woe hath fall'n. 210
 Yesterday I escaped (the twentieth day
 Of my distress by sea) the dreary Deep;
 For, all those days, the waves and rapid storms
 Bore me along, impetuous from the isle
 Ogygia; till at length the will of heav'n
 Cast me, that I might also here sustain
 Affliction on your shore; for rest, I think,
 Is not for me. No. The Immortal Gods
 Have much to accomplish ere that day arrive.
 But, oh Queen, pity me! who after long 220
 Calamities endured, of all who live
 Thee first approach, nor mortal know beside
 Of the inhabitants of all the land.
 Shew me your city; give me, although coarse,
 Some cov'ring (if coarse cov'ring *thou* canst give)
 And may the Gods thy largest wishes grant,
 House, husband, concord! for of all the gifts
 Of heav'n, more precious none I deem, than peace
 'Twixt wedded pair, and union undissolved;
 Envy torments their enemies, but joy 230
 Fills ev'ry virtuous breast, and most their own.
 To whom Nausicaa the fair replied.
 Since, stranger! neither base by birth thou seem'st,
 Nor unintelligent, (but Jove, the King
 Olympian, gives to good and bad alike
 Prosperity according to his will,
 And grief to thee, which thou must patient bear,)
 Now, therefore, at our land and city arrived,

Nor garment thou shalt want, nor aught beside
 Due to a suppliant guest like thee forlorn. 240
 I will both show thee where our city stands,
 And who dwell here. Phæacia's sons possess
 This land; but I am daughter of their King
 The brave Alcinoüs, on whose sway depends
 For strength and wealth the whole Phæacian race.

She said, and to her beauteous maidens gave
 Instant commandment—My attendants, stay!
 Why flee ye thus, and whither, from the sight
 Of a mere mortal? Seems he in your eyes 250
 Some enemy of ours? The heart beats not,
 Nor shall it beat hereafter, which shall come
 An enemy to the Phæacian shores,
 So dear to the immortal Gods are we.
 Remote, amid the billowy Deep, we hold
 Our dwelling, utmost of all human-kind,
 And free from mixture with a foreign race.

This man, a miserable wand'rer comes,
 Whom we are bound to cherish, for the poor
 And stranger are from Jove, and trivial gifts 260
 To such are welcome. Bring ye therefore food
 And wine, my maidens, for the guest's regale,
 And lave him where the stream is shelter'd most.

She spake; they stood, and by each other's words
 Encouraged, placed Ulysses where the bank
 O'erhung the stream, as fair Nausicaa bade,
 Daughter of King Alcinoüs the renown'd.
 Apparel also at his side they spread,
 Mantle and vest, and, next, the limpid oil
 Presenting to him in the golden cruse,
 Exhorted him to bathe in the clear stream. 270
 Ulysses then the maidens thus bespake.

Ye maidens, stand apart, that I may cleanse,
 Myself, my shoulders from the briny surf,
 And give them oil which they have wanted long.
 But in your presence I bathe not, ashamed
 To show myself uncloath'd to female eyes.

He said; they went, and to Nausicaa told
 His answer; then the Hero in the stream
 His shoulders laved, and loins incrusting rough
 With the salt spray, and with his hands the scum 280
 Of the wild ocean from his locks express'd.

Thus wash'd all over, and refresh'd with oil,
 He put the garments on, Nausicaa's gift.
 Then Pallas, progeny of Jove, his form
 Dilated more, and from his head diffused
 His curling locks like hyacinthine flowers.
 As when some artist, by Minerva made
 And Vulcan wise to execute all tasks
 Ingenious, binding with a golden verge
 Bright silver, finishes a graceful work,
 Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
 Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.
 Retiring, on the beach he sat, with grace
 And dignity illumed, where, viewing him,
 The virgin Princess, with amazement mark'd
 His beauty, and her damsels thus bespake.

290

My white-arm'd maidens, listen to my voice!
 Not hated, sure, by all above, this man
 Among Phæacia's godlike sons arrives.
 At first I deem'd him of plebeian sort
 Dishonourable, but he now assumes
 A near resemblance to the Gods above.
 Ah! would to heaven it were my lot to call
 Husband, some native of our land like him
 Accomplish'd, and content to inhabit here!
 Give him, my maidens, food, and give him wine.

300

She ended; they obedient to her will,
 Both wine and food, dispatchful, placed, and glad,
 Before Ulysses; he rapacious ate,
 Toil-suff'ring Chief, and drank, for he had lived
 From taste of aliment long time estranged.

310

On other thoughts meantime intent, her charge
 Of folded vestments neat the Princess placed
 Within the royal wain, then yoked the mules,
 And to her seat herself ascending, call'd
 Ulysses to depart, and thus she spake.

Up, stranger! seek the city. I will lead
 Thy steps toward my royal Father's house,
 Where all Phæacia's Nobles thou shalt see.
 But thou (for I account thee not unwise)

320

This course pursue. While through the fields we pass,
 And labours of the rural hind, so long
 With my attendants follow fast the mules
 And sumpter-carriage. I will be thy guide.

But, once the summit gain'd, on which is built
 Our city with proud bulwarks fenced around,
 And laved on both sides by its pleasant port
 Of narrow entrance, where our gallant barks
 Line all the road, each station'd in her place,
 And where, adjoining close the splendid fane
 Of Neptune, stands the forum with huge stones
 From quarries thither drawn, constructed strong,
 In which the rigging of their barks they keep
 Sail-cloth and cordage, and make smooth their oars;
 (For bow and quiver the Phæacian race
 Heed not, but masts and oars, and ships well-poised,
 With which exulting they divide the flood)
 Then, cautious, I would shun their bitter taunts
 Disgustful, lest they mock me as I pass;
 For of the meaner people some are coarse
 In the extreme, and it may chance that one,
 The basest there seeing us shall exclaim—
 What handsome stranger of athletic form
 Attends the Princess? Where had she the chance
 To find him? We shall see them wedded soon.
 Either she hath received some vagrant guest
 From distant lands, (for no land neighbours ours)
 Or by her pray'rs incessant won, some God
 Hath left the heav'ns to be for ever hers.
 'Tis well if she have found, by her own search,
 An husband for herself, since she accounts
 The Nobles of Phæacia, who her hand
 Solicit num'rous, worthy to be scorn'd—
 Thus will they speak, injurious. I should blame
 A virgin guilty of such conduct much,
 Myself, who reckless of her parents' will,
 Should so familiar with a man consort,
 Ere celebration of her spousal rites.
 But mark me, stranger! following my advice,
 Thou shalt the sooner at my father's hands
 Obtain safe conduct and conveyance home.
 Sacred to Pallas a delightful grove
 Of poplars skirts the road, which we shall reach
 Ere long; within that grove a fountain flows,
 And meads encircle it; my father's farm
 Is there, and his luxuriant garden plot;
 A shout might reach it from the city-walls.

There wait, till in the town arrived, we gain
 My father's palace, and when reason bids
 Suppose us there, then ent'ring thou the town, 370
 Ask where Alcinoüs dwells, my valiant Sire.
 Well known is his abode, so that with ease
 A child might lead thee to it, for in nought
 The other houses of our land the house
 Resemble, in which dwells the Hero, King
 Alcinoüs. Once within the court received
 Pause not, but, with swift pace advancing, seek
 My mother; she beside a column sits
 In the hearth's blaze, twirling her fleecy threads
 Tinged with sea-purple, bright, magnificent! 380
 With all her maidens orderly behind.
 There also stands my father's throne, on which
 Seated, he drinks and banquets like a God.
 Pass that; then suppliant clasp my mother's knees,
 So shalt thou quickly win a glad return
 To thy own home, however far remote.
 Her favour, once, and her kind aid secured,
 Thenceforth thou may'st expect thy friends to see,
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.
 So saying, she with her splendid scourge the mules 390
 Lash'd onward. They (the stream soon left behind)
 With even footsteps graceful smote the ground;
 But so she ruled them, managing with art
 The scourge, as not to leave afar, although
 Following on foot, Ulysses and her train.
 The sun had now declined, when in that grove
 Renown'd, to Pallas sacred, they arrived,
 In which Ulysses sat, and fervent thus
 Sued to the daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd.
 Daughter invincible of Jove supreme! 400
 Oh, hear me! Hear me now, because when erst
 The mighty Shaker of the shores incensed
 Toss'd me from wave to wave, thou heard'st me not.
 Grant me, among Phæacia's sons, to find
 Benevolence and pity of my woes!
 He spake, whose pray'r well-pleas'd the Goddess heard,
 But, rev'rencing the brother of her sire,¹
 Appear'd not to Ulysses yet, whom he
 Pursued with fury to his native shores.

¹ Neptune.

BOOK VII

ARGUMENT

NAUSICAA returns from the river, whom Ulysses follows. He halts, by her direction, at a small distance from the palace, which at a convenient time he enters. He is well received by Alcinoüs and his Queen; and having related to them the manner of his being cast on the shore of Scheria, and received from Alcinoüs the promise of safe conduct home, retires to rest.

SUCH pray'r Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd,
To Pallas made; meantime the virgin, drawn
By her stout mules, Phæacia's city reach'd,
And, at her father's house arriv'd, the car
Stay'd in the vestibule; her brothers five,
All godlike youths, assembling quick around,
Released the mules, and bore the raiment in.
Meantime, to her own chamber she return'd,
Where, soon as she arriv'd, an antient dame
Eurymedusa, by peculiar charge
Attendant on that service, kindled fire.
Sea-rovers her had from Epirus brought
Long since, and to Alcinoüs she had fall'n
By public gift, for that he ruled, supreme,
Phæacia, and as oft as he harangued
The multitude, was rev'renced as a God.
She waited on the fair Nausicaa, she
Her fuel kindled, and her food prepared.
And now Ulysses from his seat arose
To seek the city, around whom, his guard
Benevolent, Minerva, cast a cloud,
Lest, haply, some Phæacian should presume
T' insult the Chief, and question whence he came.
But ere he enter'd yet the pleasant town,
Minerva azure-eyed met him, in form
A blooming maid, bearing her pitcher forth.
She stood before him, and the noble Chief
Ulysses, of the Goddess thus enquired.

Daughter! wilt thou direct me to the house
Of brave Alcinoüs, whom this land obeys?

10

20

30

For I have here arrived, after long toil,
 And from a country far remote, a guest
 To all who in Phæacia dwell, unknown.

To whom the Goddess of the azure-eyes.
 The mansion of thy search, stranger revered!
 Myself will shew thee; for not distant dwells
 Alcinoüs from my father's own abode:
 But hush! be silent—I will lead the way;
 Mark no man; question no man; for the sight
 Of strangers is unusual here, and cold
 The welcome by this people shown to such.
 They, trusting in swift ships, by the free grant
 Of Neptune traverse his wide waters, borne
 As if on wings, or with the speed of thought.

40

So spake the Goddess, and with nimble pace
 Led on, whose footsteps he, as quick, pursued.
 But still the seaman-throng through whom he pass'd
 Perceiv'd him not; Minerva, Goddess dread,
 That sight forbidding them, whose eyes she dimm'd
 With darkness shed miraculous around
 Her fav'rite Chief. Ulysses, wond'ring, mark'd
 Their port, their ships, their forum, the resort
 Of Heroes, and their battlements sublime
 Fenced with sharp stakes around, a glorious show!
 But when the King's august abode he reach'd,
 Minerva azure-eyed, then, thus began.

50

My father! thou behold'st the house to which
 Thou bad'st me lead thee. Thou shalt find our Chiefs
 And high-born Princes banqueting within.

But enter fearing nought, for boldest men
 Speed ever best, come whencesoe'er they may.

60

First thou shalt find the Queen, known by her name
 Areta; lineal in descent from those
 Who gave Alcinoüs birth, her royal spouse,
 Neptune begat Nausithoüs, at the first,
 On Peribæa, loveliest of her sex,
 Latest-born daughter of Eurymedon,
 Heroic King of the proud giant race,
 Who, losing all his impious people, shared
 The same dread fate himself. Her Neptune lov'd,
 To whom she bore a son, the mighty prince
 Nausithoüs, in his day King of the land.
 Nausithoüs himself two sons begat,

70

Rhexenor and Alcinoüs. Phoebus slew
 Rhexenor at his home, a bridegroom yet,
 Who, father of no son, one daughter left,
 Areta, wedded to Alcinoüs now,
 And whom the Sov'reign in such honour holds,
 As woman none enjoys of all on earth
 Existing, subjects of an husband's pow'r. 80
 Like veneration she from all receives
 Unfeign'd, from her own children, from himself
 Alcinoüs, and from all Phæacia's race,
 Who, gazing on her as she were divine,
 Shout when she moves in progress through the town.
 For she no wisdom wants, but sits, herself,
 Arbitress of such contests as arise
 Between her fav'rites, and decides aright.
 Her count'nance once and her kind aid secured,
 Thou may'st thenceforth expect thy friends to see, 90
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.

So Pallas spake, Goddess cærulean-eyed,
 And o'er the untillable and barren Deep
 Departing, Scheria left, land of delight,
 Whence reaching Marathon, and Athens next,
 She pass'd into Erectheus' fair abode.
 Ulysses, then, toward the palace moved
 Of King Alcinoüs, but immers'd in thought
 Stood, first, and paused, ere with his foot he press'd
 The brazen threshold; for a light he saw 100
 As of the sun or moon illuming clear
 The palace of Phæacia's mighty King.
 Walls plated bright with brass, on either side
 Stretch'd from the portal to th' interior house,
 With azure cornice crown'd; the doors were gold
 Which shut the palace fast; silver the posts
 Rear'd on a brazen threshold, and above,
 The lintels, silver, architraved with gold.
 Mastiffs, in gold and silver, lined the approach
 On either side, by art celestial framed 110
 Of Vulcan, guardians of Alcinoüs' gate
 For ever, unobnoxious to decay.
 Sheer from the threshold to the inner house
 Fixt thrones the walls, through all their length, adorn'd,
 With mantles overspread of subtlest warp
 Transparent, work of many a female hand.

On these the princes of Phæacia sat,
 Holding perpetual feasts, while golden youths
 On all the sumptuous altars stood, their hands
 With burning torches charged, which, night by night, 120
 Shed radiance over all the festive throng.
 Full fifty female menials serv'd the King
 In household offices; the rapid mills
 These turning, pulverize the mellow'd grain,
 Those, seated orderly, the purple fleece
 Wind off, or ply the loom, restless as leaves
 Of lofty poplars fluttering in the breeze;
 Bright as with oil the new-wrought texture shone.¹
 Far as Phæacian mariners all else
 Surpass, the swift ship urging through the floods, 130
 So far in tissue-work the women pass
 All others, by Minerva's self endow'd
 With richest fancy and superior skill.
 Without the court, and to the gates adjoin'd
 A spacious garden lay, fenced all around
 Secure, four acres measuring complete.
 There grew luxuriant many a lofty tree,
 Pomegranate, pear, the apple blushing bright,
 The honied fig, and unctuous olive smooth.
 Those fruits, nor winter's cold nor summer's heat 140
 Fear ever, fail not, wither not, but hang
 Perennial, whose unceasing zephyr breathes
 Gently on all, enlarging these, and those
 Maturing genial; in an endless course
 Pears after pears to full dimensions swell,
 Figs follow figs, grapes clust'ring grow again
 Where clusters grew, and (ev'ry apple stript)
 The boughs soon tempt the gath'rer as before.
 There too, well-rooted, and of fruit profuse,
 His vineyard grows; part, wide-extended, basks, 150
 In the sun's beams; the arid level glows;
 In part they gather, and in part they tread
 The wine-press, while, before the eye, the grapes
 Here put their blossom forth, there, gather fast
 Their blackness. On the garden's verge extreme

¹ Καίροσέων δ' οθονεων ἀπολείβεται ὕγρον ἔλαιον.

Pope has given no translation of this line in the text of his work, but as translated it in a note. It is variously interpreted by commentators; the sense which is here given of it is that recommended by Aesthathus.

Flow'rs of all hues smile all the year, arranged
 With neatest art judicious, and amid
 The lovely scene two fountains welling forth,
 One visits, into ev'ry part diffus'd,
 The garden-ground, the other soft beneath
 The threshold steals into the palace-court,
 Whence ev'ry citizen his vase supplies.

160

Such were the ample blessings on the house
 Of King Alcinoüs by the Gods bestow'd.

Ulysses wond'ring stood, and when, at length,
 Silent he had the whole fair scene admired,
 With rapid step enter'd the royal gate.

The Chiefs he found and Senators within
 Libation pouring to the vigilant spy

Mercurius, whom with wine they worshipp'd last
 Of all the Gods, and at the hour of rest.

170

Ulysses, toil-worn Hero, through the house
 Pass'd undelaying, by Minerva thick
 With darkness circumfus'd, till he arrived
 Where King Alcinoüs and Areta sat.

Around Areta's knees his arms he cast,
 And, in that moment, broken clear away
 The cloud all went, shed on him from above.

Dumb sat the guests, seeing the unknown Chief,
 And wond'ring gazed. He thus his suit preferr'd.

180

Areta, daughter of the Godlike Prince
 Rhexenor! suppliant at thy knees I fall,
 Thy royal spouse imploring, and thyself,
 (After ten thousand toils) and these your guests,
 To whom heav'n grant felicity, and to leave
 Their treasures to their babes, with all the rights
 And honours, by the people's suffrage, theirs!
 But oh vouchsafe me, who have wanted long
 And ardent wish'd my home, without delay
 Safe conduct to my native shores again!

190

Such suit he made, and in the ashes sat
 At the hearth-side; they mute long time remain'd,
 Till, at the last, the antient Hero spake
 Echeneus, eldest of Phæacia's sons,
 With eloquence beyond the rest endow'd,
 Rich in traditionary lore, and wise
 In all, who thus, benevolent, began.

Not honourable to thyself, O King!

Is such a sight, a stranger on the ground
 At the hearth-side seated, and in the dust. 200
 Meantime, thy guests, expecting thy command,
 Move not; thou therefore raising by his hand
 The stranger, lead him to a throne, and bid
 The heralds mingle wine, that we may pour
 To thunder-bearing Jove, the suppliant's friend.
 Then let the cat'ress for thy guest produce
 Supply, a supper from the last regale.

Soon as those words Alcinoüs heard, the King,
 Upraising by his hand the prudent Chief
 Ulysses from the hearth, he made him sit, 210
 On a bright throne, displacing for his sake
 Laodamas his son, the virtuous youth
 Who sat beside him, and whom most he lov'd.
 And now, a maiden charg'd with golden ew'r
 And with an argent laver, pouring, first,
 Pure water on his hands, supply'd him, next,
 With a resplendent table, which the chaste
 Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
 Then ate the Hero toil-inured, and drank, 220
 And to his herald thus Alcinoüs spake.

Pontonoüs! mingling wine, bear it around
 To ev'ry guest in turn, that we may pour
 To thunder-bearer Jove, the stranger's friend,
 And guardian of the suppliant's sacred rights.

He said; Pontonoüs, as he bade, the wine
 Mingled delicious, and the cups dispensed
 With distribution regular to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Sufficient, then, Alcinoüs thus began. 230

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, I speak
 The dictates of my mind, therefore attend!
 Ye all have feasted—To your homes and sleep.
 We will assemble at the dawn of day
 More senior Chiefs, that we may entertain
 The stranger here, and to the Gods perform
 Due sacrifice; the convoy that he asks
 Shall next engage our thoughts, that free from pain
 And from vexation, by our friendly aid
 He may revisit, joyful and with speed, 240
 His native shore, however far remote.

No inconvenience let him feel or harm,
 Ere his arrival; but, arrived, thenceforth
 He must endure whatever lot the Fates
 Spun for him in the moment of his birth.
 But should he prove some Deity from heav'n
 Descended, then the Immortals have in view
 Designs not yet apparent; for the Gods
 Have ever from of old reveal'd themselves
 At our solemnities, have on our seats
 Sat with us evident, and shared the feast;
 And even if a single traveller
 Of the Phæacians meet them, all reserve
 They lay aside; for with the Gods we boast
 As near affinity as do themselves
 The Cyclops, or the Giant race profane.¹

250

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Alcinoüs! think not so. Resemblance none
 In figure or in lineaments I bear

260

To the immortal tenants of the skies,
 But to the sons of earth; if ye have known
 A man afflicted with a weight of woe
 Peculiar, let me be with him compared;
 Woes even passing his could I relate,
 And all inflicted on me by the Gods.
 But let me eat, comfortless as I am,
 Uninterrupted; for no call is loud
 As that of hunger in the ears of man;
 Importunate, unreas'nable, it constrains
 His notice, more than all his woes beside.
 So, I much sorrow feel, yet not the less
 Hear I the blatant appetite demand
 Due sustenance, and with a voice that drowns
 E'en all my suff'rings, till itself be fill'd.
 But expedite ye at the dawn of day
 My safe return into my native land,
 After much mis'ry; and let life itself
 Forsake me, may I but once more behold
 All that is mine, in my own lofty abode.

270

¹ The Scholiast explains the passage thus—We resemble the Gods in righteousness as much as the Cyclops and Giants resembled each other in impiety. But in this sense of it there is something intricate and contrary to Homer's manner. We have seen that they derived themselves from Neptune, which sufficiently justifies the above interpretation.

He spake, whom all applauded, and advised, 280
 Unanimous, the guest's conveyance home,
 Who had so fitly spoken. When, at length,
 All had libation made, and were sufficed,
 Departing to his house, each sought repose.
 But still Ulysses in the hall remain'd,
 Where, godlike King, Alcinoüs at his side
 Sat, and Areta; the attendants clear'd
 Meantime the board, and thus the Queen white-arm'd,
 (Marking the vest and mantle, which he wore
 And which her maidens and herself had made) 290
 In accents wing'd with eager haste began.

Stranger! the first enquiry shall be mine;
 Who art, and whence? From whom receiv'dst thou these?
 Saidst not—I came a wand'rer o'er the Deep?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Oh Queen! the task were difficult to unfold
 In all its length the story of my woes,
 For I have num'rous from the Gods receiv'd;
 But I will answer thee as best I may.
 There is a certain isle, Ogygia, placed 300
 Far distant in the Deep; there dwells, by man
 Alike unvisited, and by the Gods,
 Calypso, beauteous nymph, but deeply skill'd
 In artifice, and terrible in pow'r,
 Daughter of Atlas. Me alone my fate
 Her miserable inmate made, when Jove
 Had riv'n asunder with his candent bolt
 My bark in the mid-sea. There perish'd all
 The valiant partners of my toils, and I
 My vessel's keel embracing day and night 310
 With folded arms, nine days was borne along.
 But on the tenth dark night, as pleas'd the Gods,
 They drove me to Ogygia, where resides
 Calypso, beauteous nymph, dreadful in pow'r;
 She rescued, cherish'd, fed me, and her wish
 Was to confer on me immortal life,
 Exempt for ever from the sap of age.
 But me her offer'd boon sway'd not. Sev'n years
 I there abode continual, with my tears
 Bedewing ceaseless my ambrosial robes,
 Calypso's gift divine; but when, at length, 320
 (Sev'n years elaps'd) the circling eighth arrived,

She then, herself, my quick departure thence
 Advised, by Jove's own mandate overaw'd,
 Which even her had influenced to a change.
 On a well-corded raft she sent me forth
 With num'rous presents; bread she put and wine
 On board, and cloath'd me in immortal robes;
 She sent before me also a fair wind
 Fresh-blowing, but not dang'rous. Sev'nteen days 330
 I sail'd the flood continual, and descried,
 On the eighteenth, your shadowy mountains tall
 When my exulting heart sprang at the sight,
 All wretched as I was, and still ordain'd
 To strive with difficulties many and hard
 From adverse Neptune; he the stormy winds
 Exciting opposite, my wat'ry way
 Impeded, and the waves heav'd to a bulk
 Immeasurable, such as robb'd me soon
 Deep-groaning, of the raft, my only hope; 340
 For her the tempest scatter'd, and myself
 This ocean measur'd swimming, till the winds
 And mighty waters cast me on your shore.
 Me there emerging, the huge waves had dash'd
 Full on the land, where, incommodious most,
 The shore presented only roughest rocks,
 But, leaving it, I swam the Deep again,
 Till now, at last, a river's gentle stream
 Receiv'd me, by no rocks deform'd, and where
 No violent winds the shelter'd bank annoy'd. 350
 I flung myself on shore, exhausted, weak,
 Needing repose; ambrosial night came on,
 When from the Jove-descended stream withdrawn,
 I in a thicket lay'd me down on leaves
 Which I had heap'd together, and the Gods
 O'erwhelm'd my eye-lids with a flood of sleep.
 There under wither'd leaves, forlorn, I slept
 All the long night, the morning and the noon,
 But balmy sleep, at the decline of day,
 Broke from me; then, your daughter's train I heard 360
 Sporting, with whom she also sported, fair
 And graceful as the Gods. To her I kneel'd.
 She, following the dictates of a mind
 Ingenuous, pass'd in her behaviour all
 Which even ye could from an age like hers

Have hoped; for youth is ever indiscrete.
 She gave me plenteous food, with richest wine
 Refresh'd my spirit, taught me where to bathe,
 And cloath'd me as thou seest; thus, though a prey
 To many sorrows, I have told thee truth. 370

To whom Alcinoüs answer thus return'd.
 My daughter's conduct, I perceive, hath been
 In this erroneous, that she led thee not
 Hither, at once, with her attendant train,
 For thy first suit was to herself alone.

Thus then Ulysses, wary Chief, replied.
 Blame not, O Hero, for so slight a cause
 Thy faultless child; she bade me follow them,
 But I refused, by fear and awe restrain'd,
 Lest thou should'st feel displeasure at that sight 380
 Thyself; for we are all, in ev'ry clime,
 Suspicious, and to worst constructions prone.

So spake Ulysses, to whom thus the King.
 I bear not, stranger! in my breast an heart
 Causeless irascible; for at all times
 A temp'rate equanimity is best.
 And oh, I would to heav'n, that, being such
 As now thou art, and of one mind with me,
 Thou would'st accept my daughter, would'st become
 My son-in-law, and dwell contented here! 390

House would I give thee, and possessions too,
 Were such thy choice; else, if thou chuse it not,
 No man in all Phæacia shall by force
 Detain thee. Jupiter himself forbid!
 For proof, I will appoint thee convoy hence
 To-morrow; and while thou by sleep subdued
 Shalt on thy bed repose, they with their oars
 Shall brush the placid flood, till thou arrive
 At home, or at what place soe'er thou would'st,
 Though far more distant than Eubœa lies, 400
 Remotest isle from us, by the report
 Of ours, who saw it when they thither bore
 Golden-hair'd Rhadamanthus o'er the Deep,
 To visit earth-born Tityus. To that isle
 They went; they reach'd it, and they brought him thence
 Back to Phæacia, in one day, with ease.
 Thou also shalt be taught what ships I boast
 Unmatch'd in swiftness, and how far my crews

Excel, upturning with their oars the brine.

He ceas'd; Ulysses toil-inur'd his words
Exulting heard, and, praying, thus replied.

410

Eternal Father! may the King perform
His whole kind promise! grant him in all lands
A never-dying name, and grant to me
To visit safe my native shores again!

Thus they conferr'd; and now Areta bade
Her fair attendants dress a fleecy couch
Under the portico, with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras spread beneath,
And over all with cloaks of shaggy pile.

420

Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And, as she bade, prepared in haste a couch
Of depth commodious, then, returning, gave
Ulysses welcome summons to repose.

Stranger! thy couch is spread. Hence to thy rest.
So they—Thrice grateful to his soul the thought
Seem'd of repose. There slept Ulysses, then,
On his carv'd couch, beneath the portico,
But in the inner-house Alcinoüs found
His place of rest, and hers with royal state
Prepared, the Queen his consort, at his side.

430

BOOK VIII

ARGUMENT

THE Phæacians consult on the subject of Ulysses. Preparation is made for his departure. Antinoüs entertains them at his table. Games follow the entertainment. Demodocus the bard sings, first the loves of Mars and Venus, then the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy. Ulysses, much affected by his song, is questioned by Alcinoüs, whence, and who he is, and what is the cause of his sorrow.

BUT when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Blush'd in the East, then from his bed arose
The sacred might of the Phæacian King.
Then uprose also, city-waster Chief,
Ulysses, whom the King Alcinoüs
Led forth to council at the ships convened.
There, side by side, on polish'd stones they sat
Frequent; meantime, Minerva in the form
Of King Alcinoüs' herald ranged the town,
With purpose to accelerate the return
Of brave Ulysses to his native home,
And thus to ev'ry Chief the Goddess spake.

10

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, away!
Haste all to council on the stranger held,
Who hath of late beneath Alcinoüs' roof
Our King arrived, a wand'rer o'er the Deep,
But, in his form, majestic as a God.

So saying, she roused the people, and at once
The seats of all the senate-court were fill'd
With fast-assembling throngs, no few of whom
Had mark'd Ulysses with admiring eyes.
Then, Pallas o'er his head and shoulders broad
Diffusing grace celestial, his whole form
Dilated, and to the statelier height advanced,
That worthier of all rev'rence he might seem
To the Phæacians, and might many a feat
Atchieve, with which they should assay his force.

20

When, therefore, the assembly now was full,
Alcinoüs, them addressing, thus began.

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators! I speak 30
 The dictates of my mind, therefore attend.
 This guest, unknown to me, hath, wand'ring, found
 My palace, either from the East arrived,
 Or from some nation on our western side.
 Safe conduct home he asks, and our consent
 Here wishes ratified, whose quick return
 Be it our part, as usual, to promote;
 For at no time the stranger, from what coast
 Soe'er, who hath resorted to our doors,
 Hath long complain'd of his detention here. 40
 Haste—draw ye down into the sacred Deep
 A vessel of prime speed, and, from among
 The people, fifty and two youths select,
 Approved the best; then, lashing fast the oars,
 Leave her, that at my palace ye may make
 Short feast, for which myself will all provide.
 Thus I enjoin the crew; but as for those
 Of sceptred rank, I bid them all alike
 To my own board, that here we may regale
 The stranger nobly, and let none refuse. 50
 Call, too, Demodocus, the bard divine,
 To share my banquet, whom the Gods have blest
 With pow'rs of song delectable, unmatch'd
 By any, when his genius once is fired.

He ceas'd, and led the way, whom follow'd all
 The sceptred senators, while to the house
 An herald hasted of the bard divine.
 Then, fifty mariners and two, from all
 The rest selected, to the coast repair'd,
 And, from her station on the sea-bank, launched 60
 The galley down into the sacred Deep.
 They placed the canvas and the mast on board,
 Arranged the oars, unfurl'd the shining sail,
 And, leaving her in depth of water moor'd,
 All sought the palace of Alcinoüs.
 There, soon, the portico, the court, the hall
 Were fill'd with multitudes of young and old,
 For whose regale the mighty monarch slew
 Two beeves, twelve sheep, and twice four fatted brawns.
 They slay'd them first, then busily their task 70
 Administ'ring, prepared the joyous feast.
 And now the herald came, leading with care

The tuneful bard; dear to the muse was he,
 Who yet appointed him both good and ill;
 Took from him sight, but gave him strains divine.
 For him, Pontonoüs in the midst disposed
 An argent-studded throne, thrusting it close
 To a tall column, where he hung his lyre
 Above his head, and taught him where it hung.
 He set before him, next, a polish'd board
 And basket, and a goblet fill'd with wine
 For his own use, and at his own command.
 Then, all assail'd at once the ready feast,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst they felt,
 Then came the muse, and roused the bard to sing
 Exploits of men renown'd; it was a song,
 In that day, to the highest heav'n extoll'd.

80

He sang of a dispute kindled between
 The son of Peleus, and Laertes' ¹ son,
 Both seated at a feast held to the Gods.
 That contest Agamemnon, King of men,
 Between the noblest of Achaia's host
 Hearing, rejoiced; for when in Pytho erst
 He pass'd the marble threshold to consult
 The oracle of Apollo, such dispute
 The voice divine had to his ear announced;
 For then it was that, first, the storm of war
 Came rolling on, ordain'd long time to afflict
 Troy and the Grecians, by the will of Jove.

90

So sang the bard illustrious; then his robe
 Of purple dye with both hands o'er his head
 Ulysses drew, behind its ample folds
 Veiling his face, through fear to be observed
 By the Phæacians weeping at the song;
 And ever as the bard harmonious ceased,
 He wiped his tears, and, drawing from his brows
 The mantle, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 But when the Chiefs (for they delighted heard
 Those sounds) solicited again the bard,
 And he renew'd the strain, then cov'ring close

100

110

¹ Agamemnon having inquired at Delphos, at what time the Trojan war would end, was answered, that the conclusion of it should happen at a time when a dispute should arise between two of his principal commanders. That dispute occurred at the time here alluded to, Achilles recommending force as most likely to reduce the city, and Ulysses stratagem.

His count'nance, as before, Ulysses wept.
 Thus, unperceiv'd by all, the Hero mourn'd,
 Save by Alcinoüs; he alone his tears,
 (Beside him seated) mark'd, and his deep sighs
 O'erhearing, the Phæacians thus bespake.

Phæacia's Chiefs and Senators, attend!

We have regaled sufficient, and the harp
 Heard to satiety, companion sweet
 And seasonable of the festive hour.

Now go we forth for honourable proof 120
 Of our address in games of ev'ry kind,
 That this our guest may to his friends report,
 At home arriv'd, that none like us have learn'd
 To leap, to box, to wrestle, and to run.

So saying, he led them forth, whose steps the guests
 All follow'd, and the herald hanging high
 The sprightly lyre, took by his hand the bard
 Demodocus, whom he the self-same way
 Conducted forth, by which the Chiefs had gone
 Themselves, for that great spectacle prepared. 130

They sought the forum; countless swarm'd the throng
 Behind them as they went, and many a youth
 Strong and courageous to the strife arose.

Upstood Acroneus and Ocyalus,
 Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, after whom
 Anchialus with Anabeesineus

Arose, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus bold,
 Amphialus and Thöon. Then arose,

In aspect dread as homicidal Mars,
 Euryalus, and for his graceful form 140
 (After Laodamas) distinguish'd most
 Of all Phæacia's sons, Naubolides.

Three also from Alcinoüs sprung, arose,
 Laodamas, his eldest; Halius, next,
 His second-born; and godlike Clytoneus.

Of these, some started for the runner's prize.

They gave the race its limits.¹ All at once
 Along the dusty champaign swift they flew.
 But Clytoneus, illustrious youth, outstripp'd

¹ Τοισι δ' απο νυσης τετατο δρομος — This expression is by the commentators generally understood to be significant of the effort which they made at starting, but it is not improbable that it relates merely to the measurement of the course, otherwise, καρπαλιμως επετογοντο will be tautologous.

All competition; far as mules surpass
 Slow oxen furrowing the fallow ground,
 So far before all others he arrived
 Victorious, where the throng'd spectators stood,
 Some tried the wrestler's toil severe, in which
 Euryalus superior proved to all.

In the long leap Amphialus prevail'd;
 Elatreus most successful hurled the quoit,
 And at the cestus,¹ last, the noble son
 Of Scheria's King, Laodamas excell'd.
 When thus with contemplation of the games
 All had been gratified, Alcinoüs' son
 Laodamas, arising, then address'd.

Friends! ask we now the stranger, if he boast
 Proficiency in aught. His figure seems
 Not ill; in thighs, and legs, and arms he shews
 Much strength, and in his brawny neck; nor youth
 Hath left him yet, though batter'd he appears
 With num'rous troubles, and misfortune-flaw'd.
 Nor know I hardships in the world so sure
 To break the strongest down, as those by sea.

Then answer thus Euryalus return'd.
 Thou hast well said, Laodamas; thyself
 Approaching, speak to him, and call him forth.

Which when Alcinoüs' noble offspring heard,
 Advancing from his seat, amid them all
 He stood, and to Ulysses thus began.

Stand forth, oh guest, thou also; prove thy skill
 (If any such thou hast) in games like ours,
 Which, likeliest, thou hast learn'd; for greater praise
 Hath no man, while he lives, than that he know
 His feet to exercise and hands aright.
 Come then; make trial; scatter wide thy cares,
 We will not hold thee long; the ship is launch'd
 Already, and the crew stand all prepared.

To whom replied the wily Chief renown'd.
 Wherefore, as in derision, have ye call'd
 Me forth, Laodamas, to these exploits?
 No games have I, but many a grief, at heart,
 And with far other struggles worn, here sit
 Desirous only of conveyance home,
 For which both King and people I implore.

¹ In boxing.

Then him Euryalus aloud reproach'd.
 I well believ'd it, friend! in thee the guise
 I see not of a man expert in feats
 Athletic, of which various are perform'd
 In ev'ry land; thou rather seem'st with ships
 Familiar; one, accustom'd to controul
 Some crew of trading mariners; well-learn'd
 In stowage, pilotage, and wealth acquired
 By rapine, but of no gymnastic pow'rs.

200

To whom Ulysses, frowning dark, replied.
 Thou hast ill spoken, sir, and like a man
 Regardless whom he wrongs. Therefore the Gods
 Give not endowments graceful in each kind,
 Of body, mind, and utt'rance, all to one.
 This man in figure less excels, yet Jove
 Crowns him with eloquence; his hearers charm'd
 Behold him, while with modest confidence
 He bears the prize of fluent speech from all,
 And in the streets is gazed on as a God!

210

Another, in his form the Pow'rs above
 Resembles, but no grace around his words
 Twines itself elegant. So, thou in form
 Hast excellence to boast; a God, employ'd
 To make a master-piece in human shape,
 Could but produce proportions such as thine;
 Yet hast thou an untutor'd intellect.
 Thou much hast moved me; thy unhandsome phrase
 Hath roused my wrath; I am not, as thou say'st,
 A novice in these sports, but took the lead
 In all, while youth and strength were on my side.
 But I am now in bands of sorrow held,
 And of misfortune, having much endured
 In war, and buffeting the boist'rous waves.
 Yet, though with mis'ry worn, I will essay
 My strength among you; for thy words had teeth
 Whose bite hath pinch'd and pain'd me to the proof.

220

He said; and mantled as he was, a quoit
 Upstarting, seized, in bulk and weight all those
 Transcending far, by the Phæacians used.
 Swiftly he swung, and from his vig'rous hand
 Sent it. Loud sang the stone, and as it flew
 The maritime Phæacians low inclined
 Their heads beneath it; over all the marks,

230

And far beyond them, sped the flying rock.
 Minerva, in a human form, the cast
 Prodigious measur'd, and aloud exclaim'd.

Stranger! the blind himself might with his hands
 Feel out the 'vantage here. Thy quoit disdains
 Fellowship with a crowd, borne far beyond. 240
 Fear not a losing game; Phæacian none
 Will reach thy measure, much less overcast.

She ceased; Ulysses, hardy Chief, rejoiced
 That in the circus he had found a judge
 So favorable, and with brisker tone,
 As less in wrath, the multitude address'd.

Young men, reach this, and I will quickly heave
 Another such, or yet a heavier quoit.
 Then, come the man whose courage prompts him forth
 To box, to wrestle with me, or to run; 250
 For ye have chafed me much, and I decline
 No strife with any here, but challenge all
 Phæacia, save Laodamas alone.

He is mine host. Who combats with his friend?
 To call to proof of hardiment the man
 Who entertains him in a foreign land,
 Would but evince the challenger a fool,
 Who, so, would cripple his own interest there.
 As for the rest, I none refuse, scorn none,
 But wish for trial of you, and to match 260
 In opposition fair my force with yours.

There is no game athletic in the use
 Of all mankind, too difficult for me;
 I handle well the polish'd bow, and first
 Amid a thousand foes strike whom I mark,
 Although a throng of warriors at my side
 Imbattled, speed their shafts at the same time.
 Of all Achaia's sons who erst at Troy
 Drew bow, the sole who bore the prize from me
 Was Philoctetes; I resign it else 270
 To none now nourish'd with the fruits of earth.
 Yet mean I no comparison of myself
 With men of antient times, with Hercules,
 Or with Oechalian Eurytus, who, both,
 The Gods themselves in archery defied.
 Soon, therefore, died huge Eurytus, ere yet
 Old age he reach'd; him, angry to be call'd

To proof of archership, Apollo slew.
 But if ye name the spear, mine flies a length
 By no man's arrow reach'd; I fear no foil 280
 From the Phæacians, save in speed alone;
 For I have suffer'd hardships, dash'd and drench'd
 By many a wave, nor had I food on board
 At all times, therefore I am much unstrung.

He spake; and silent the Phæacians sat,
 Of whom alone Alcinoüs thus replied.

Since, stranger, not ungraceful is thy speech,
 Who hast but vindicated in our ears
 Thy question'd prowess, angry that this youth
 Reproach'd thee in the presence of us all, 290

That no man qualified to give his voice
 In public, might affront thy courage more;
 Now mark me, therefore, that in time to come,
 While feasting with thy children and thy spouse,
 Thou may'st inform the Heroes of thy land
 Even of our proficiency in arts
 By Jove enjoin'd us in our father's days.
 We boast not much the boxer's skill, nor yet
 The wrestler's; but light-footed in the race
 Are we, and navigators well-inform'd. 300

Our pleasures are the feast, the harp, the dance,
 Garments for change; the tepid bath; the bed.
 Come, ye Phæacians, beyond others skill'd
 To tread the circus with harmonious steps,
 Come, play before us; that our guest, arrived
 In his own country, may inform his friends
 How far in seamanship we all excel,
 In running, in the dance, and in the song.
 Haste! bring ye to Demodocus his lyre
 Clear-toned, left somewhere in our hall at home. 310

So spake the godlike King, at whose command
 The herald to the palace quick return'd
 To seek the charming lyre. Meantime arose
 Nine arbiters, appointed to intend
 The whole arrangement of the public games,
 To smooth the circus floor, and give the ring
 Its compass, widening the attentive throng.
 Ere long the herald came, bearing the harp,
 With which Demodocus supplied, advanced
 Into the middle area, around whom 320

Stood blooming youths, all skilful in the dance,
 With footsteps justly timed all smote at once
 The sacred floor; Ulysses wonder-fixt,
 The ceaseless play of twinkling¹ feet admired.

Then, tuning his sweet chords, Demodocus
 A jocund strain began, his theme, the loves
 Of Mars and Cytherea chaplet-crown'd;
 How first, clandestine, they embraced beneath
 The roof of Vulcan, her, by many a gift
 Seduced, Mars won, and with adult'rous lust 33°
 The bed dishonour'd of the King of fire.

The sun, a witness of their amorous sport,
 Bore swift the tale to Vulcan; he, apprized
 Of that foul deed, at once his smithy sought,
 In secret darkness of his inmost soul
 Contriving vengeance; to the stock he heav'd
 His anvil huge, on which he forged a snare
 Of bands indissoluble, by no art
 To be untied, durance for ever firm.

The net prepared, he bore it, fiery-wroth, 34°
 To his own chamber and his nuptial couch,
 Where, stretching them from post to post, he wrapp'd
 With those fine meshes all his bed around,
 And hung them num'rous from the roof, diffused
 Like spiders' filaments, which not the Gods
 Themselves could see, so subtle were the toils.

When thus he had encircled all his bed
 On ev'ry side, he feign'd a journey thence
 To Lemnos, of all cities that adorn
 The earth, the city that he favours most. 35°
 Nor kept the God of the resplendent reins
 Mars, drowsy watch, but seeing that the famed
 Artificer of heav'n had left his home,
 Flew to the house of Vulcan, hot to enjoy
 The Goddess with the wreath-encircled brows.
 She, newly from her potent Sire return'd
 The son of Saturn, sat. Mars, ent'ring, seiz'd
 Her hand, hung on it, and thus urg'd his suit.

¹ The Translator is indebted to Mr. Grey for an epithet more expressive of the original (*Μαρμαρυγας*) than any other, perhaps, in all our language. See the Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

“ To brisk notes in cadence beating,
 Glance their *many-twinkling* feet.”

To bed, my fair, and let us love! for lo!
Thine husband is from home, to Lemnos gone, 360
And to the Sintians, men of barb'rous speech.

He spake, nor she was loth, but bedward too
Like him inclined; so then, to bed they went,
And as they lay'd them down, down stream'd the net
Around them, labour exquisite of hands
By ingenuity divine inform'd.

Small room they found, so prison'd; not a limb
Could either lift, or move, but felt at once
Entanglement from which was no escape.

And now the glorious artist, ere he yet 370
Had reach'd the Lemnian isle, limping, return'd
From his feign'd journey, for his spy the sun
Had told him all. With aching heart he sought

His home, and, standing in the vestibule,
Frantic with indignation roar'd to heav'n,
And roar'd again, summoning all the Gods.—
Oh Jove! and all ye Pow'rs for ever blest!
Here; hither look, that ye may view a sight
Ludicrous, yet too monstrous to be borne, 380
How Venus always with dishonour loads

Her cripple spouse, doating on fiery Mars!
And wherefore? for that he is fair in form
And sound of foot, I ricket-boned and weak.
Whose fault is this? Their fault, and theirs alone
Who gave me being; ill-employ'd were they
Begetting me, one, better far unborn.

See where they couch together on my bed
Lascivious! ah, sight hateful to my eyes!
Yet cooler wishes will they feel, I ween,
To press my bed hereafter; here to sleep 390
Will little please them, fondly as they love.

But these my toils and tangles will suffice
To hold them here, till Jove shall yield me back
Complete, the sum of all my nuptial gifts
Paid to him for the shameless strumpet's sake
His daughter, as incontinent as fair.

He said, and in the brazen-floor'd abode
Of Jove the Gods assembled. Neptune came
Earth-circling Pow'r; came Hermes friend of man,
And, regent of the far-commanding bow, 400
Apollo also came; but chaste reserve

Bashful kept all the Goddesses at home.
 The Gods, by whose beneficence all live,
 Stood in the portal; infinite arose
 The laugh of heav'n, all looking down intent
 On that shrewd project of the smith divine,
 And, turning to each other, thus they said.

Bad works speed ill. The slow o'ertakes the swift.
 So Vulcan, tardy as he is, by craft
 Hath outstript Mars, although the fleetest far 410
 Of all who dwell in heav'n, and the light-heel'd
 Must pay the adult'rer's forfeit to the lame.

So spake the Pow'rs immortal; then the King
 Of radiant shafts thus question'd Mercury.

Jove's son, heaven's herald, Hermes, bounteous God!
 Would'st *thou* such stricture close of bands endure
 For golden Venus lying at thy side?

Whom answer'd thus the messenger of heav'n,
 Archer divine! yea, and with all my heart;
 And be the bands which wind us round about 420
 Thrice these innumerable, and let all
 The Gods and Goddesses in heav'n look on,
 So I may clasp Vulcan's fair spouse the while.

He spake; then laugh'd the Immortal Pow'rs again.
 But not so Neptune; he with earnest suit
 The glorious artist urged to the release
 Of Mars, and thus in accents wing'd he said.

Loose him; accept my promise; he shall pay
 Full recompense in presence of us all.

Then thus the limping smith far-famed replied. 430
 Earth-circler Neptune, spare me that request.
 Lame suitor, lame security.¹ What bands
 Could I devise for thee among the Gods,
 Should Mars, emancipated once, escape,
 Leaving both debt and durance, far behind?

Him answer'd then the Shaker of the shores.
 I tell thee, Vulcan, that if Mars by flight
 Shun payment, I will pay, myself, the fine.

To whom, the glorious artist of the skies.

¹ The original line has received such a variety of interpretations, that a Translator seems free to choose. It has, however, a proverbial turn, which I have endeavoured to preserve, and have adopted the sense of the words which appears best to accord with what immediately follows. Vulcan pleads his own inability to enforce the demand, as a circumstance that made Neptune's promise unacceptable.

Thou must not, canst not, shalt not be refused. 440

So saying, the might of Vulcan loos'd the snare,
 And they, detain'd by those coercive bands
 No longer, from the couch upstarting, flew,
 Mars into Thrace, and to her Paphian home
 The Queen of smiles, where deep in myrtle groves
 Her incense-breathing altar stands embow'r'd.
 Her there, the Graces laved, and oils diffused
 O'er all her form, ambrosial, such as add
 Fresh beauty to the Gods for ever young,
 And cloath'd her in the loveliest robes of heav'n, 450

Such was the theme of the illustrious bard.
 Ulysses with delight that song, and all
 The maritime Phæacian concourse heard.

Alcinoüs, then, (for in the dance they pass'd
 All others) call'd his sons to dance alone,
 Halius and Laodamas; they gave
 The purple ball into their hands, the work
 Exact of Polybus; one, re-supine,
 Upcast it high toward the dusky clouds,
 The other, springing into air, with ease 460
 Received it, ere he sank to earth again.

When thus they oft had sported with the ball
 Thrown upward, next, with nimble interchange
 They pass'd it to each other many a time,
 Footing the plain, while ev'ry youth of all
 The circus clapp'd his hands, and from beneath
 The din of stamping feet fill'd all the air.

Then, turning to Alcinoüs, thus the wise
 Ulysses spake. Alcinoüs! mighty King!
 Illustrious above all Phæacia's sons! 470
 Incomparable are ye in the dance,
 Ev'n as thou said'st. Amazement-fixt I stand!

So he, whom hearing, the imperial might
 Exulted of Alcinoüs, and aloud
 To his oar-skill'd Phæacians thus he spake.

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, attend!
 Wisdom beyond the common stint I mark
 In this our guest; good cause in my account,
 For which we should present him with a pledge
 Of hospitality and love. The Chiefs 480
 Are twelve, who, highest in command, controul
 The people, and the thirteenth Chief am I.

Bring each a golden talent, with a vest
Well-bleach'd, and tunic; gratified with these,
The stranger to our banquet shall repair
Exulting; bring them all without delay;
And let Euryalus by word and gift
Appease him, for his speech was unadvised.

He ceas'd, whom all applauded, and at once
Each sent his herald forth to bring the gifts, 490
When thus Euryalus his Sire address'd.

Alcinoüs! o'er Phæacia's sons supreme!
I will appease our guest, as thou command'st.
This sword shall be his own, the blade all steel.
The hilt of silver, and the unsullied sheath
Of iv'ry recent from the carver's hand,
A gift like this he shall not need despise.

So saying, his silver-studded sword he gave
Into his grasp, and, courteous, thus began.

Hail, honour'd stranger! and if word of mine 500
Have harm'd thee, rashly spoken, let the winds
Bear all remembrance of it swift away!
May the Gods give thee to behold again
Thy wife, and to attain thy native shore,
Whence absent long, thou hast so much endured!

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Hail also thou, and may the Gods, my friend,
Grant thee felicity, and may never want
Of this thy sword touch thee in time to come,
By whose kind phrase appeas'd my wrath subsides! 510

He ended, and athwart his shoulders threw
The weapon bright emboss'd. Now sank the sun,
And those rich gifts arriv'd, which to the house
Of King Alcinoüs the heralds bore.

Alcinoüs' sons receiv'd them, and beside
Their royal mother placed the precious charge.
The King then led the way, at whose abode
Arriv'd, again they press'd their lofty thrones,
And to Areta thus the monarch spake.

Haste, bring a coffer; bring thy best, and store 520
A mantle and a sumptuous vest within;
Warm for him, next, a brazen bath, by which
Refresh'd, and viewing in fair order placed
The noble gifts by the Phæacian Lords
Conferr'd on him, he may the more enjoy

Our banquet, and the bard's harmonious song.
 I give him also this my golden cup
 Splendid, elaborate; that, while he lives
 What time he pours libation forth to Jove
 And all the Gods, he may remember me.

530

He ended, at whose words Areta bade
 Her maidens with dispatch place o'er the fire
 A tripod ample-womb'd; obedient they
 Advanced a laver to the glowing hearth,
 Water infused, and kindled wood beneath
 The flames encircling bright the bellied vase,
 Warm'd soon the flood within. Meantime, the Queen
 Producing from her chamber-stores a chest
 All-elegant, within it placed the gold,
 And raiment, gifts of the Phæacian Chiefs,
 With her own gifts, the mantle and the vest,
 And in wing'd accents to Ulysses said.

540

Now take, thyself, the coffer's lid in charge;
 Girdle it quickly with a cord, lest loss
 Befall thee on thy way, while thou perchance
 Shalt sleep secure on board the sable bark.

Which when Ulysses heard, Hero renown'd,
 Adjusting close the lid, he cast a cord
 Around it which with many a mazy knot
 He tied, by Circe taught him long before.
 And now, the mistress of the household charge
 Summon'd him to his bath; glad he beheld
 The steaming vase, uncustom'd to its use
 E'er since his voyage from the isle of fair
 Calypso, although, while a guest with her,
 Ever familiar with it, as a God.

550

Laved by attendant damsels, and with oil
 Refresh'd, he put his sumptuous tunic on
 And mantle, and proceeding from the bath
 To the symposium, join'd the num'rous guests;
 But, as he pass'd, the Princess all divine
 Beside the pillars of the portal, lost
 In admiration of his graceful form,
 Stood, and in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

560

Hail, stranger! at thy native home arrived
 Remember me, thy first deliv'rer here.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Nausicaa! daughter of the noble King

Alcinoüs! So may Jove, high-thund'ring mate
 Of Juno, grant me to behold again 570
 My native land, and my delightful home,
 As, even there, I will present my vows
 To thee, adoring thee as I adore
 The Gods themselves, virgin, by whom I live!

He said, and on his throne beside the King
 Alcinoüs sat. And now they portion'd out
 The feast to all, and charg'd the cups with wine,
 And introducing by his hand the bard
 Phæacia's glory, at the column's side
 The herald placed Demodocus again. 580

Then, carving forth a portion from the loins
 Of a huge brawn, of which uneaten still
 Large part and delicate remain'd, thus spake
 Ulysses—Herald! bear it to the bard
 For his regale, whom I will soon embrace
 In spite of sorrow; for respect is due
 And veneration to the sacred bard
 From all mankind, for that the muse inspires
 Herself his song, and loves the tuneful tribe.

He ended, and the herald bore his charge 590
 To the old hero who with joy received
 That meed of honour at the bearer's hand.
 Then, all, at once, assail'd the ready feast,
 And hunger now, and thirst both satisfied,
 Thus to Demodocus Ulysses spake.

Demodocus! I give thee praise above
 All mortals, for that either thee the muse
 Jove's daughter teaches, or the King, himself,
 Apollo; since thou so record'st the fate,
 With such clear method, of Achaia's host, 600
 Their deeds heroic, and their num'rous toils,
 As thou hadst present been thyself, or learnt
 From others present there, the glorious tale.
 Come, then, proceed; that rare invention sing,
 The horse of wood, which by Minerva's aid
 Epeus framed, and which Ulysses erst
 Convey'd into the citadel of Troy
 With warriors fill'd, who lay'd all Ilium waste.
 These things rehearse regular, and myself
 Will, instant, publish in the ears of all 610
 Thy fame, reporting thee a bard to whom

Apollo free imparts celestial song.

He ended; then Apollo with full force
 Rush'd on Demodocus, and he began
 What time the Greeks, first firing their own camp
 Steer'd all their galleys from the shore of Troy.
 Already, in the horse conceal'd, his band
 Around Ulysses sat; for Ilium's sons
 Themselves had drawn it to the citadel.
 And there the mischief stood. Then, strife arose 620
 Among the Trojans compassing the horse,
 And threefold was the doubt; whether to cleave
 The hollow trunk asunder, or updrawn
 Aloft, to cast it headlong from the rocks,
 Or to permit the enormous image, kept
 Entire, to stand an off'ring to the Gods,
 Which was their destined course; for Fate had fix'd
 Their ruin sure, when once they had received
 Within their walls that engine huge, in which 630
 Sat all the bravest Grecians with the fate
 Of Ilium charged, and slaughter of her sons.
 He sang, how, from the horse effused, the Greeks
 Left their capacious ambush, and the town
 Made desolate. To others, in his song,
 He gave the praise of wasting all beside,
 But told how, fierce as Mars, Ulysses join'd
 With godlike Menelaus, to the house
 Flew of Deiphobus; him there engaged
 In direst fight he sang, and through the aid
 Of glorious Pallas, conqu'ror over all. 640

So sang the bard illustrious, at whose song
 Ulysses melted, and tear after tear
 Fell on his cheeks. As when a woman weeps,
 Her husband, who hath fallen in defence
 Of his own city and his babes before
 The gates; she, sinking, folds him in her arms
 And, gazing on him as he pants and dies,
 Shrieks at the sight; meantime, the enemy
 Smiting her shoulders with the spear to toil
 Command her and to bondage far away, 650
 And her cheek fades with horror at the sound;
 Ulysses, so, from his moist lids let fall,
 The frequent tear. Unnoticed by the rest
 Those drops, but not by King Alcinoüs, fell

Who, seated at his side, his heavy sighs
Remark'd, and the Phæacians thus bespake.

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators attend!

Now let Demodocus enjoin his harp
Silence, for not alike grateful to all
His music sounds; during our feast, and since 660
The bard divine began, continual flow

The stranger's sorrows, by remembrance caused
Of some great woe which wraps his soul around.

Then, let the bard suspend his song, that all
(As most befits th' occasion) may rejoice,
Both guest and hosts together; since we make
This voyage, and these gifts confer, in proof
Of hospitality and unfeign'd love,

Judging, with all wise men, the stranger-guest
And suppliant worthy of a brother's place. 670

And thou conceal not, artfully reserv'd,
What I shall ask, far better plain declared
Than smother'd close; who art thou? speak thy name,
The name by which thy father, mother, friends
And fellow-citizens, with all who dwell

Around thy native city, in times past
Have known thee; for of all things human none
Lives altogether nameless, whether good
Or whether bad, but ev'ry man receives
Ev'n in the moment of his birth, a name. 680

Thy country, people, city, tell; the mark
At which my ships, intelligent, shall aim,
That they may bear thee thither; for our ships
No pilot need or helm, as ships are wont,
But know, themselves, our purpose; know beside
All cities, and all fruitful regions well

Of all the earth, and with dark clouds involv'd
Plough rapid the rough Deep, fearless of harm,
(Whate'er betide) and of disast'rous wreck.

Yet thus, long since, my father I have heard 690
Nausithoüs speaking; Neptune, he would say,
Is angry with us, for that safe we bear
Strangers of ev'ry nation to their home;

And he foretold a time when he would smite
In vengeance some Phæacian gallant bark
Returning after convoy of her charge,
And fix her in the sable flood, transform'd

Into a mountain, right before the town.

So spake my hoary Sire, which let the God

At his own pleasure do, or leave undone. 700

But tell me truth, and plainly. Where have been

Thy wand'rings? in what regions of the earth

Hast thou arrived? what nations hast thou seen,

What cities? say, how many hast thou found

Harsh, savage and unjust? how many, kind

To strangers, and disposed to fear the Gods?

Say also, from what secret grief of heart

Thy sorrows flow, oft as thou hear'st the fate

Of the Achaians, or of Ilium sung?

That fate the Gods prepared; they spin the thread 710

Of man's destruction, that in after days

The bard may make the sad event his theme.

Perish'd thy father or thy brother there?

Or hast thou at the siege of Ilium lost

Father-in-law, or son-in-law? for such

Are next and dearest to us after those

Who share our own descent; or was the dead

Thy bosom-friend, whose heart was as thy own?

For worthy as a brother of our love

The constant friend and the discrete I deem. 720

BOOK IX

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES discovers himself to the Phæacians, and begins the history of his adventures. He destroys Ismarus, city of the Ciconians; arrives among the Lotophagi; and afterwards at the land of the Cyclops. He is imprisoned by Polypheme in his cave, who devours six of his companions; intoxicates the monster with wine, binds him while he sleeps, and escapes from him.

THEN answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
Alcinoüs! King! illustrious above all
Phæacia's sons, pleasant it is to hear
A bard like this, sweet as the Gods in song,
The world, in my account, no sight affords
More gratifying than a people blest
With cheerfulness and peace, a palace throng'd
With guests in order ranged, list'ning to sounds
Melodious, and the steaming tables spread
With plenteous viands, while the cups, with wine 10
From brimming beakers fill'd, pass brisk around.
No lovelier sight know I. But thou, it seems,
Thy thoughts hast turn'd to ask me whence my groans
And tears, that I may sorrow still the more.
What first, what next, what last shall I rehearse,
On whom the Gods have show'r'd such various woes?
Learn first my name, that even in this land
Remote I may be known, and that escaped
From all adversity, I may requite
Hereafter, this your hospitable care 20
At my own home, however distant hence.
I am Ulysses, fear'd in all the earth
For subtlest wisdom, and renown'd to heaven,
The offspring of Laertes; my abode
Is sun-burnt Ithaca; there waving stands
The mountain Neritus his num'rous boughs,
And it is neighbour'd close by clust'ring isles
All populous; thence Samos is beheld,
Dulichium, and Zacynthus forest-clad.
Flat on the Deep she lies, farthest removed 30

Toward the West, while, situate apart,
 Her sister islands face the rising day;
 Rugged she is, but fruitful nurse of sons
 Magnanimous; nor shall these eyes behold,
 Elsewhere, an object dear and sweet as she.
 Calypso, beauteous Goddess, in her grot
 Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused;
 Ææan Circe also, skill'd profound
 In potent arts, within her palace long
 Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused;
 But never could they warp my constant mind.
 So much our parents and our native soil
 Attract us most, even although our lot
 Be fair and plenteous in a foreign land.
 But come—my painful voyage, such as Jove
 Gave me from Ilium, I will now relate.

40

From Troy the winds bore me to Ismarus,
 City of the Ciconians; them I slew,
 And laid their city waste; whence bringing forth
 Much spoil with all their wives, I portion'd it
 With equal hand, and each received a share.
 Next, I exhorted to immediate flight
 My people; but in vain; they madly scorn'd
 My sober counsel, and much wine they drank,
 And sheep and beeves slew num'rous on the shore.
 Meantime, Ciconians to Ciconians call'd,
 Their neighbours summoning, a mightier host
 And braver, natives of the continent,
 Expert, on horses mounted, to maintain
 Fierce fight, or if occasion bade, on foot.
 Num'rous they came as leaves, or vernal flow'rs
 At day-spring. Then, by the decree of Jove,
 Misfortune found us. At the ships we stood
 Piercing each other with the brazen spear,
 And till the morning brighten'd into noon,
 Few as we were, we yet withstood them all;
 But, when the sun verged westward, then the Greeks
 Fell back, and the Ciconian host prevail'd.
 Six warlike Grecians from each galley's crew
 Perish'd in that dread field; the rest escaped.

50

60

70

Thus, after loss of many, we pursued
 Our course, yet, difficult as was our flight,
 Went not till first we had invoked by name

Our friends, whom the Ciconians had destroy'd.
 But cloud-assembler Jove assail'd us soon
 With a tempestuous North-wind; earth alike
 And sea with storms he overhung, and night
 Fell fast from heav'n. Their heads deep-plunging oft
 Our gallies flew, and rent, and rent again
 Our tatter'd sail-cloth crackled in the wind. 80
 We, fearing instant death, within the barks
 Our canvas lodg'd, and, toiling strenuous, reach'd
 At length the continent. Two nights we lay
 Continual there, and two long days, consumed
 With toil and grief; but when the beauteous morn
 Bright-hair'd, had brought the third' day to a close,
 (Our masts erected, and white sails unfurl'd)
 Again we sat on board; meantime, the winds
 Well managed by the steersman, urged us on.
 And now, all danger pass'd, I had attain'd 90
 My native shore, but, doubling in my course
 Malea, waves and currents and North-winds
 Constrain'd me devious to Cythera's isle.
 Nine days by cruel storms thence was I borne
 Athwart the fishy Deep, but on the tenth
 Reach'd the Lotophagi, a race sustain'd
 On sweetest fruit alone. There quitting ship,
 We landed and drew water, and the crews
 Beside the vessels took their ev'ning cheer.
 When, hasty, we had thus our strength renew'd, 100
 I order'd forth my people to inquire
 (Two I selected from the rest, with whom
 I join'd an herald, third) what race of men
 Might there inhabit. They, departing, mix'd
 With the Lotophagi; nor hostile aught
 Or savage the Lotophagi devised
 Against our friends, but offer'd to their taste
 The lotus; of which fruit what man soe'er
 Once tasted, no desire felt he to come
 With tidings back, or seek his country more, 110
 But rather wish'd to feed on lotus still
 With the Lotophagi, and to renounce
 All thoughts of home. Them, therefore, I constrain'd
 Weeping on board, and dragging each beneath
 The benches, bound him there. Then, all in haste,
 I urged my people to ascend again

Their hollow barks, lest others also, fed
 With fruit of lotus, should forget their home.
 They quick embark'd, and on the benches ranged
 In order, thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.

120

Thence, o'er the Deep proceeding sad, we reach'd
 The land at length, where, giant-sized¹ and free
 From all constraint of law, the Cyclops dwell.
 They, trusting to the Gods, plant not, or plough,
 But earth unsow'd, untill'd, brings forth for them
 All fruits, wheat, barley, and the vinous grape
 Large cluster'd, nourish'd by the show'rs of Jove.
 No councils they convene, no laws contrive,
 But in deep caverns dwell, found on the heads
 Of lofty mountains, judging each supreme

130

His wife and children, heedless of the rest.
 In front of the Cyclopean haven lies
 A level island, not adjoining close
 Their land, nor yet remote, woody and rude.
 There, wild-goats breed numberless, by no foot
 Of man molested; never huntsman there,
 Inured to winter's cold and hunger, roams
 The dreary woods, or mountain-tops sublime;
 No fleecy flocks dwell there, nor plough is known,
 But the unseeded and unfurrow'd soil,

140

Year after year a wilderness by man
 Untrodden, food for blatant goats supplies.
 For no ships crimson-prow'd the Cyclops own,
 Nor naval artizan is there, whose toil
 Might furnish them with oary barks, by which
 Subsists all distant commerce, and which bear
 Man o'er the Deep to cities far remote
 Who might improve the peopled isle, that seems
 Not steril in itself, but apt to yield,

150

In their due season, fruits of ev'ry kind.
 For stretch'd beside the hoary ocean lie
 Green meadows moist, where vines would never fail;
 Light is the land, and they might yearly reap
 The tallest crops, so unctuous is the glebe.
 Safe is its haven also, where no need
 Of cable is or anchor, or to lash
 The hawser fast ashore, but pushing in
 His bark, the mariner might there abide

¹ So the Scholium interprets in this place, the word *ὑπερθιαλος*.

Till rising gales should tempt him forth again.
 At bottom of the bay runs a clear stream 160
 Issuing from a cove hemm'd all around
 With poplars; down into that bay we steer'd
 Amid the darkness of the night, some God
 Conducting us; for all unseen it lay,
 Such gloom involved the fleet, nor shone the moon
 From heav'n to light us, veil'd by pitchy clouds.
 Hence, none the isle descried, nor any saw
 The lofty surge roll'd on the strand, or ere
 Our vessels struck the ground; but when they struck,
 Then, low'ring all our sails, we disembark'd, 170
 And on the sea-beach slept till dawn appear'd.
 Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, we with admiring eyes
 The isle survey'd, roaming it wide around.
 Meantime, the nymphs, Jove's daughters, roused the goats
 Bred on the mountains, to supply with food
 The partners of my toils; then, bringing forth
 Bows and long-pointed javelins from the ships,
 Divided all into three sep'rate bands
 We struck them, and the Gods gave us much prey. 180
 Twelve ships attended me, and ev'ry ship
 Nine goats received by lot; myself alone
 Selected ten. All day, till set of sun,
 We eating sat goat's flesh, and drinking wine
 Delicious, without stint; for dearth was none
 Of ruddy wine on board, but much remain'd,
 With which my people had their jars supplied
 What time we sack'd Ciconian Ismarus.
 Thence looking forth toward the neighbour-land
 Where dwell the Cyclops, rising smoke we saw, 190
 And voices heard, their own, and of their flocks.
 Now sank the sun, and (night o'ershadowing all)
 We slept along the shore; but when again
 The rosy-finger'd daughter of the dawn
 Look'd forth, my crews convened, I thus began.
 Companions of my course! here rest ye all,
 Save my own crew, with whom I will explore
 This people, whether wild, they be, unjust,
 And to contention giv'n, or well-disposed
 To strangers, and a race who fear the Gods. 200
 So speaking, I embark'd, and bade embark

My followers, throwing, quick, the hawsers loose.
 They, ent'ring at my word, the benches fill'd
 Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
 Attaining soon that neighbour-land, we found
 At its extremity, fast by the sea,
 A cavern, lofty, and dark-brow'd above
 With laurels; in that cavern slumb'ring lay
 Much cattle, sheep and goats, and a broad court
 Enclosed it, fenced with stones from quarries hewn, 210
 With spiry firs, and oaks of ample bough.
 Here dwelt a giant vast, who far remote
 His flocks fed solitary, converse none
 Desiring, sullen, savage, and unjust.
 Monster, in truth, he was, hideous in form,
 Resembling less a man by Ceres' gift
 Sustain'd, than some aspiring mountain-crag
 Tufted with wood, and standing all alone.
 Enjoining, then, my people to abide
 Fast by the ship which they should closely guard, 220
 I went, but not without a goat-skin fill'd
 With sable wine which I had erst received
 From Maron, offspring of Evanthes, priest
 Of Phœbus guardian god of Ismarus,
 Because, through rev'rence of him, we had saved
 Himself, his wife and children; for he dwelt
 Amid the grove umbrageous of his God.
 He gave me, therefore, noble gifts; from him
 Sev'n talents I received of beaten gold,
 A beaker, argent all, and after these 230
 No fewer than twelve jars with wine replete,
 Rich, unadult'rate, drink for Gods; nor knew
 One servant, male or female, of that wine
 In all his house; none knew it, save himself,
 His wife, and the intendant of his stores.
 Oft as they drank that luscious juice, he slaked
 A single cup with twenty from the stream,
 And, even then, the beaker breath'd abroad
 A scent celestial, which whoever smelt,
 Thenceforth no pleasure found it to abstain. 240
 Charged with an ample goat-skin of this wine
 I went, and with a wallet well supplied,
 But felt a sudden presage in my soul
 That, haply, with terrific force endued,

Some savage would appear, strange to the laws
 And privileges of the human race.
 Few steps convey'd us to his den, but him
 We found not; he his flocks pastur'd abroad.
 His cavern ent'ring, we with wonder gazed
 Around on all; his strainers hung with cheese 250
 Distended wide; with lambs and kids his penns
 Close-throng'd we saw, and folded separate
 The various charge; the eldest all apart,
 Apart the middle-aged, and the new-yea'd
 Also apart. His pails and bowls with whey
 Swam all, neat vessels into which he milk'd.
 Me then my friends first importuned to take
 A portion of his cheeses, then to drive
 Forth from the sheep-cotes to the rapid bark
 His kids and lambs, and plow the brine again. 260
 But me they moved not, happier had they moved!
 I wish'd to see him, and to gain, perchance,
 Some pledge of hospitality at his hands,
 Whose form was such, as should not much bespeak
 When he appear'd, our confidence or love.
 Then, kindling fire, we offer'd to the Gods,
 And of his cheeses eating, patient sat
 Till home he trudged from pasture. Charged he came
 With dry wood bundled, an enormous load
 Fuel by which to sup. Loud crash'd the thorns 270
 Which down he cast before the cavern's mouth,
 To whose interior nooks we trembling flew.
 At once he drove into his spacious cave
 His batten'd flock, all those which gave him milk,
 But all the males, both rams and goats, he left
 Abroad, excluded from the cavern-yard.
 Upheaving, next, a rocky barrier huge
 To his cave's mouth, he thrust it home. That weight
 Not all the oxen from its place had moved
 Of twenty and two wains; with such a rock 280
 Immense his den he closed. Then down he sat,
 And as he milk'd his ewes and bleating goats
 All in their turns, her yeanling gave to each;
 Coagulating, then, with brisk dispatch,
 The half of his new milk, he thrust the curd
 Into his wicker sieves, but stored the rest
 In pans and bowls—his customary drink.

His labours thus perform'd, he kindled, last,
His fuel, and discerning *us*, enquired,

Who are ye, strangers? from what distant shore 290
Roam ye the waters? traffic ye? or bound
To no one port, wander, as pirates use,
At large the Deep, exposing life themselves,
And enemies of all mankind beside?

He ceased; we, dash'd with terrour, heard the growl
Of his big voice, and view'd his form uncouth,
To whom, though sore appall'd, I thus replied.

Of Greece are we, and, bound from Ilium home,
Have wander'd wide the expanse of ocean, sport 300
For ev'ry wind, and driven from our course,
Have here arrived; so stood the will of Jove.

We boast ourselves of Agamemnon's train,
The son of Atreus, at this hour the Chief
Beyond all others under heav'n renown'd,
So great a city he hath sack'd and slain
Such num'rous foes; but since we reach, at last,
Thy knees, we beg such hospitable fare,
Or other gift, as guests are wont to obtain.
Illustrious lord! respect the Gods, and us
Thy suitors; suppliants are the care of Jove 310
The hospitable; he their wrongs resents
And where the stranger sojourns, there is he.

I ceas'd, when answer thus he, fierce, return'd.

Friend! either thou art fool, or hast arrived
Indeed from far, who bidd'st me fear the Gods
Lest they be wroth. The Cyclops little heeds
Jove Ægis-arm'd, or all the Pow'rs of heav'n.
Our race is mightier far; nor shall myself,
Through fear of Jove's hostility, abstain
From thee or thine, unless my choice be such. 320
But tell me now. Where touch'd thy gallant bark
Our country, on thy first arrival here?
Remote or nigh? for I would learn the truth.

So spake he, tempting me; but, artful, thus
I answer'd, penetrating his intent.

My vessel, Neptune, Shaker of the shores,
At yonder utmost promontory dash'd
In pieces, hurling her against the rocks
With winds that blew right thither from the sea,
And I, with these alone, escaped alive. 330

So I, to whom, relentless, answer none
 He deign'd, but, with his arms extended, sprang
 Toward my people, of whom seizing two
 At once, like whelps against his cavern-floor
 He dash'd them, and their brains spread on the ground.
 These, piece-meal hewn, for supper he prepared,
 And, like a mountain-lion, neither flesh
 Nor entrails left, nor yet their marrowy bones.
 We, viewing that tremendous sight, upraised
 Our hands to Jove, all hope and courage lost. 340
 When thus the Cyclops had with human flesh
 Fill'd his capacious belly, and had quaff'd
 Much undiluted, milk, among his flocks
 Out-stretch'd immense, he press'd his cavern-floor.
 Me, then, my courage prompted to approach
 The monster with my sword drawn from the sheath,
 And to transfix him where the vitals wrap
 The liver; but maturer thoughts forbad.
 For so, we also had incurred a death
 Tremendous, wanting pow'r to thrust aside 350
 The rocky mass that closed his cavern-mouth
 By force of hand alone. Thus many a sigh
 Heaving, we watch'd the dawn. But when, at length,
 Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Look'd forth, then, kindling fire, his flocks he milk'd
 In order, and her yeanling kid or lamb
 Thrust under each. When thus he had perform'd
 His wonted task, two seizing, as before,
 He slew them for his next obscene regale.
 His dinner ended, from the cave he drove 360
 His fatted flocks abroad, moving with ease
 That pond'rous barrier, and replacing it
 As he had only closed a quiver's lid.
 Then, hissing them along, he drove his flocks
 Toward the mountain, and me left, the while,
 Deep ruminating how I best might take
 Vengeance, and by the aid of Pallas win
 Deathless renown. This counsel pleas'd me most.
 Beside the sheep-cote lay a massy club
 Hewn by the Cyclops from an olive stock, 370
 Green, but which dried, should serve him for a staff.
 To us consid'ring it, that staff appear'd
 Tall as the mast of a huge trading bark,

Impell'd by twenty rowers o'er the Deep.
 Such seem'd its length to us, and such its bulk.
 Part amputating, (an whole fathom's length)
 I gave my men that portion, with command
 To shave it smooth. They smooth'd it, and myself,
 Shaping its blunt extremity to a point,
 Season'd it in the fire; then cov'ring close 380
 The weapon, hid it under litter'd straw,
 For much lay scatter'd on the cavern-floor.
 And now I bade my people cast the lot
 Who of us all should take the pointed brand,
 And grind it in his eye when next he slept.
 The lots were cast, and four were chosen, those
 Whom most I wish'd, and I was chosen fifth.
 At even-tide he came, his fleecy flocks
 Pasturing homeward, and compell'd them all 390
 Into his cavern, leaving none abroad,
 Either through some surmise, or so inclined
 By influence, haply, of the Gods themselves.
 The huge rock pull'd into its place again
 At the cave's mouth, he, sitting, milk'd his sheep
 And goats in order, and her kid or lamb
 Thrust under each; thus, all his work dispatch'd,
 Two more he seiz'd, and to his supper fell.
 I then, approaching to him, thus address'd
 The Cyclops, holding in my hands a cup
 Of ivy-wood, well-charg'd with ruddy wine. 400

Lo, Cyclops! this is wine. Take this and drink
 After thy meal of man's flesh. Taste and learn
 What precious liquor our lost vessel bore.
 I brought it hither, purposing to make
 Libation to thee, if to pity inclined
 Thou would'st dismiss us home. But, ah, thy rage
 Is insupportable! thou cruel one!
 Who, thinkest thou, of all mankind, henceforth
 Will visit *thee*, guilty of such excess?

I ceas'd. He took and drank, and hugely pleas'd¹ 410
 With that delicious bev'rage, thus enquir'd.

Give me again, and spare not. Tell me, too,
 Thy name, incontinent, that I may make
 Requital, gratifying also thee
 With somewhat to thy taste. We Cyclops own

¹ *Αἴρω*

A bounteous soil, which yields *us* also wine
 From clusters large, nourish'd by show'rs from Jove;
 But this—this is from above—a stream
 Of nectar and ambrosia, all divine!

He ended, and received a second draught, 420
 Like measure. Thrice I bore it to his hand,
 And, foolish, thrice he drank. But when the fumes
 Began to play around the Cyclops' brain,
 With show of amity I thus replied.

Cyclops! thou hast my noble name enquired,
 Which I will tell thee. Give me, in return,
 The promised boon, some hospitable pledge,
 My name is Outis; ¹ Outis I am call'd
 At home, abroad; wherever I am known.

So I; to whom he, savage, thus replied, 430
 Outis, when I have eaten all his friends,
 Shall be my last regale. Be that thy boon.

He spake, and, downward sway'd, fell resupine,
 With his huge neck aslant. All-conqu'ring sleep
 Soon seized him. From his gullet gush'd the wine
 With human morsels mingled, many a blast
 Sonorous issuing from his glutted maw.
 Then, thrusting far the spike of olive-wood
 Into the embers glowing on the hearth,
 I heated it, and cheer'd my friends, the while, 440
 Lest any should, through fear, shrink from his part.
 But when that stake of olive-wood, though green,
 Should soon have flamed, for it was glowing hot,
 I bore it to his side. Then all my aids
 Around me gather'd, and the Gods infused
 Heroic fortitude into our hearts.
 They, seizing the hot stake rasp'd to a point,
 Bored his eye with it, and myself, advanced
 To a superior stand, twirled it about.

¹ Clarke, who has preserved this name in his marginal version, contends strenuously, and with great reason, that Outis ought not to be translated; and in a passage which he quotes from the *Acta eruditorum*, we see much fault found with Giphanius and other interpreters of Homer for having translated it. It is certain that in Homer the word is declined not as *οὔτις-τινος*, which signifies no man, but as *οὔτις-τιδος*, making *οὔτιν* in the accusative, consequently as a proper name. It is sufficient that the ambiguity was such as to deceive the friends of the Cyclops. Outis is said by some (perhaps absurdly) to have been a name given to Ulysses on account of his having larger ears than common.

As when a shipwright with his wimble bores 450
 Tough oaken timber, placed on either side
 Below, his fellow-artists strain the thong
 Alternate, and the restless iron spins,
 So, grasping hard the stake pointed with fire,
 We twirl'd it in his eye; the bubbling blood
 Boil'd round about the brand; his pupil sent
 A scalding vapour forth that sing'd his brow,
 And all his eye-roots crackled in the flame.

As when the smith an hatchet or large axe
 Temp'ring with skill, plunges the hissing blade 460
 Deep in cold water, (whence the strength of steel)
 So hiss'd his eye around the olive-wood.
 The howling monster with his outcry fill'd
 The hollow rock, and I, with all my aids,
 Fled terrified. He, plucking forth the spike
 From his burnt socket, mad with anguish, cast
 The implement all bloody far away.

Then, bellowing, he sounded forth the name
 Of ev'ry Cyclops dwelling in the caves
 Around him, on the wind-swept mountain-tops; 470
 They, at his cry flocking from ev'ry part,
 Circled his den, and of his ail enquired.

What grievous hurt hath caused thee, Polypheme!
 Thus yelling to alarm the peaceful ear
 Of night, and break our slumbers? Fear'st thou lest
 Some mortal man drive off thy flocks? or fear'st
 Thyself to die by cunning or by force?

Them answer'd, then, Polypheme from his cave.
 Oh, friends! I die! and Outis gives the blow.

To whom with accents wing'd his friends without. 480
 If no man ¹ harm thee, but thou art alone,
 And sickness feel'st, it is the stroke of Jove,
 And thou must bear it; yet invoke for aid
 Thy father Neptune, Sovereign of the floods.

So saying, they went, and in my heart I laugh'd
 That by the fiction only of a name,
 Slight stratagem! I had deceived them all.

Then groan'd the Cyclops wrung with pain and grief,
 And, fumbling, with stretch'd hands, removed the rock

¹ Outis, as a *name*, could only denote him who bore it; but as a *noun*, it signifies *no man*, which accounts sufficiently for the ludicrous mistake of his brethren.

From his cave's mouth, which done, he sat him down 490
 Spreading his arms athwart the pass, to stop
 Our egress with his flocks abroad; so dull,
 It seems, he held me, and so ill-advised.
 I, pondering what means might fittest prove
 To save from instant death, (if save I might)
 My people and myself, to ev'ry shift
 Inclined, and various counsels framed, as one
 Who strove for life, conscious of woe at hand.
 To me, thus meditating, this appear'd
 The likeliest course. The rams well-thriven were, 500
 Thick-fleeced, full-sized, with wool of sable hue.
 These, silently, with osier twigs on which
 The Cyclops, hideous monster, slept, I bound,
 Three in one leash; the intermediate rams
 Bore each a man, whom the exterior two
 Preserved, concealing him on either side.
 Thus each was borne by three, and I, at last,
 The curl'd back seizing of a ram, (for one
 I had reserv'd far stateliest of them all)
 Slipp'd underneath his belly, and both hands 510
 Enfolding fast in his exub'rant fleece,
 Clung ceaseless to him as I lay supine.
 We, thus disposed, waited with many a sigh
 The sacred dawn; but when, at length, aris'n,
 Aurora, day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Again appear'd, the males of all his flocks
 Rush'd forth to pasture, and, meantime, un milk'd,
 The wethers bleated, by the load distress'd
 Of udders overcharged. Their master, rack'd 520
 With pain intolerable, handled yet
 The backs of all, inquisitive, as they stood,
 But, gross of intellect, suspicion none
 Conceiv'd of men beneath their bodies bound.
 And now (none left beside) the ram approach'd
 With his own wool burthen'd, and with myself,
 Whom many a fear molested. Polypheme
 The giant stroak'd him as he sat, and said,
 My darling ram! why latest of the flock
 Com'st thou, whom never, heretofore, my sheep
 Could leave behind, but stalking at their head, 530
 Thou first was wont to crop the tender grass,
 First to arrive at the clear stream, and first

With ready will to seek my sheep-cote here
 At evening; but, thy practice chang'd, thou com'st,
 Now last of all. Feel'st thou regret, my ram!
 Of thy poor master's eye, by a vile wretch
 Bored out, who overcame me first with wine,
 And by a crew of vagabonds accurs'd,
 Followers of Outis, whose escape from death
 Shall not be made to-day? Ah! that thy heart 540
 Were as my own, and that distinct as I
 Thou could'st articulate, so should'st thou tell,
 Where hidden, he eludes my furious wrath.
 Then, dash'd against the floor his spatter'd brain
 Should fly, and I should lighter feel my harm
 From Outis, wretch base-named and nothing-worth.

So saying, he left him to pursue the flock.
 When, thus drawn forth, we had, at length, escaped
 Few paces from the cavern and the court,
 First, quitting my own ram, I loos'd my friends, 550
 Then, turning seaward many a thriven ewe
 Sharp-hoof'd, we drove them swiftly to the ship.
 Thrice welcome to our faithful friends we came
 From death escaped, but much they mourn'd the dead.
 I suffer'd not their tears, but silent shook
 My brows, by signs commanding them to lift
 The sheep on board, and instant plow the main.
 They, quick embarking, on the benches sat
 Well ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood;
 But distant now such length as a loud voice 560
 May reach, I hail'd with taunts the Cyclops' ear.

Cyclops! when thou devouredst in thy cave
 With brutal force my followers, thou devour'dst
 The followers of no timid Chief, or base,
 Vengeance was sure to recompense that deed
 Atrocious. Monster! who wast not afraid
 To eat the guest shelter'd beneath thy roof!
 Therefore the Gods have well requited thee.

I ended; he, exasp'rate, raged the more,
 And rending from its hold a mountain-top, 570
 Hurl'd it toward us; at our vessel's stern
 Down came the mass, nigh sweeping in its fall
 The rudder's head. The ocean at the plunge
 Of that huge rock, high on its refluent flood
 Heav'd, irresistible, the ship to land.

I seizing, quick, our longest pole on board,
 Back thrust her from the coast and by a nod
 In silence given, bade my companions ply
 Strenuous their oars, that so we might escape.
 Procumbent,¹ each obey'd, and when, the flood
 Cleaving, we twice that distance had obtain'd,² 580
 Again I hail'd the Cyclops; but my friends
 Earnest dissuaded me on ev'ry side.

Ah, rash Ulysses! why with taunts provoke
 The savage more, who hath this moment hurl'd
 A weapon, such as heav'd the ship again
 To land, where death seem'd certain to us all?
 For had he heard a cry, or but the voice
 Of one man speaking, he had all our heads
 With some sharp rock, and all our timbers crush'd 590
 Together, such vast force is in his arm.

So they, but my courageous heart remain'd
 Unmoved, and thus again, incensed, I spake.

Cyclops! should any mortal man inquire
 To whom thy shameful loss of sight thou ow'st,
 Say, to Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
 Laertes' son, native of Ithaca.

I ceas'd, and with a groan thus he replied.
 Ah me! an antient oracle I feel
 Accomplish'd. Here abode a prophet erst, 600
 A man of noblest form, and in his art
 Unrivall'd, Telemus Eurymedes.

He, prophesying to the Cyclops-race,
 Grew old among us, and presaged my loss
 Of sight, in future, by Ulysses' hand.
 I therefore watch'd for the arrival here,
 Always, of some great Chief, for stature, bulk
 And beauty prais'd, and cloath'd with wond'rous might.
 But now—a dwarf, a thing impalpable,
 A shadow, overcame me first by wine, 610
 Then quench'd my sight. Come hither, O my guest!

Return, Ulysses! hospitable cheer
 Awaits thee; and my pray'rs I will prefer

¹ προπεσοντες

———Olli certamine summo

Procumbunt.

VIRGIL.

² The seeming incongruity of this line with line 560, is reconciled by supposing that Ulysses exerted his voice, naturally loud, in an extraordinary manner on this second occasion. See Clarke.

To glorious Neptune for thy prosp'rous course;
 For I am Neptune's offspring, and the God
 Is proud to be my Sire; he, if he please,
 And he alone can heal me; none beside
 Of Pow'rs immortal, or of men below.

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 I would that of thy life and soul amerced,
 I could as sure dismiss thee down to Hell,
 As none shall heal thine eye—not even He.

620

So I; then pray'd the Cyclops to his Sire
 With hands uprais'd towards the starry heav'n.

Hear, Earth-encircler Neptune, azure-hair'd!
 If I indeed am thine, and if thou boast
 Thyself my father, grant that never more
 Ulysses, leveller of hostile tow'rs,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair,
 Behold his native home! but if his fate
 Decree him yet to see his friends, his house,
 His native country, let him deep distress'd
 Return and late, all his companions lost,
 Indebted for a ship to foreign aid,
 And let affliction meet him at his door.

630

He spake, and Ocean's sov'reign heard his pray'r.
 Then lifting from the shore a stone of size
 Far more enormous, o'er his head he whirl'd
 The rock, and his immeasurable force
 Exerting all, dismiss'd it. Close behind
 The ship, nor distant from the rudder's head,
 Down came the mass. The ocean at the plunge
 Of such a weight, high on its refluent flood
 Tumultuous, heaved the bark well nigh to land.

640

But when we reach'd the isle where we had left
 Our num'rous barks, and where my people sat
 Watching with ceaseless sorrow our return,
 We thrust our vessel to the sandy shore,
 Then disembark'd, and of the Cyclops' sheep
 Gave equal share to all. To me alone
 My fellow-voyagers the ram consign'd
 In distribution, my peculiar meed.

650

Him, therefore, to cloud-girt Saturnian Jove
 I offer'd on the shore, burning his thighs
 In sacrifice; but Jove my hallow'd rites
 Reck'd not, destruction purposing to all

My barks, and all my followers o'er the Deep.
Thus, feasting largely, on the shore we sat
Till even-tide, and quaffing gen'rous wine;
But when day fail'd, and night o'ershadow'd all, 660
Then, on the shore we slept; and when again
Aurora rosy daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd forth, my people, anxious, I enjoin'd
To climb their barks, and cast the hawsers loose.
They all obedient, took their seats on board
Well-ranged, and thresh'd with oars the foamy flood.
Thus, 'scaping narrowly, we roam'd the Deep
With aching hearts and with diminish'd crews.

BOOK X

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, in pursuit of his narrative, relates his arrival at the island of Æolus, his departure thence, and the unhappy occasion of his return thither. The monarch of the winds dismisses him at last with much asperity. He next tells of his arrival among the Læstrygonians, by whom his whole fleet, together with their crews, are destroyed, his own ship and crew excepted. Thence he is driven to the island of Circe. By her the half of his people are transformed into swine. Assisted by Mercury, he resists her enchantments himself, and prevails with the Goddess to recover them to their former shape. In consequence of Circe's instructions, after having spent a complete year in her palace, he prepares for a voyage to the infernal regions.

WE came to the Æolian isle; there dwells
Æolus, son of Hippotas, belov'd
By the Immortals, in an isle afloat.
A brazen wall impregnable on all sides
Girds it, and smooth its rocky coast ascends.
His children, in his own fair palace born,
Are twelve; six daughters, and six blooming sons.
He gave his daughters to his sons to wife;
They with their father hold perpetual feast
And with their royal mother, still supplied 10
With dainties numberless; the sounding dome
Is fill'd with sav'ry odours all the day,
And with their consorts chaste at night they sleep
On stateliest couches with rich arras spread.
Their city and their splendid courts we reach'd.
A month complete he, friendly, at his board
Regaled me, and enquiry made minute
Of Ilium's fall, of the Achaian fleet,
And of our voyage thence. I told him all.
But now, desirous to embark again, 20
I ask'd dismission home, which he approved,
And well provided for my prosp'rous course.
He gave me, furnish'd by a bullock slay'd
In his ninth year, a bag; ev'ry rude blast
Which from its bottom turns the Deep, that bag

Imprison'd held; for him Saturnian Jove
 Hath officed arbiter of all the winds,
 To rouse their force or calm them, at his will.
 He gave me them on board my bark, so bound
 With silver twine that not a breath escaped,
 Then order'd gentle Zephyrus to fill
 Our sails propitious. Order vain, alas!
 So fatal proved the folly of my friends.

30

Nine days continual, night and day we sail'd,
 And on the tenth my native land appear'd.
 Not far remote my Ithacans I saw
 Fires kindling on the coast; but me with toil
 Worn, and with watching, gentle sleep subdued;
 For constant I had ruled the helm, nor giv'n
 That charge to any, fearful of delay.
 Then, in close conference combined, my crew
 Each other thus bespake—He carries home
 Silver and gold from Æolus received,
 Offspring of Hippotas, illustrious Chief—
 And thus a mariner the rest harangued.

40

Ye Gods! what city or what land soe'er
 Ulysses visits, how is he belov'd
 By all, and honour'd! many precious spoils
 He homeward bears from Troy; but we return,
 (We who the self-same voyage have perform'd)
 With empty hands. Now also he hath gain'd
 This pledge of friendship from the King of winds.
 But come—be quick—search we the bag, and learn
 What stores of gold and silver it contains.

50

So he, whose mischievous advice prevailed.
 They loos'd the bag; forth issued all the winds,
 And, caught by tempests o'er the billowy waste,
 Weeping they flew, far, far from Ithaca.
 I then, awaking, in my noble mind
 Stood doubtful, whether from my vessel's side
 Immersed to perish in the flood, or calm
 To endure my sorrows, and content to live.
 I calm endured them; but around my head
 Winding my mantle, lay'd me down below,
 While adverse blasts bore all my fleet again
 To the Æolian isle; then groan'd my people.

60

We disembark'd and drew fresh water there,
 And my companions, at their galley's sides

All seated, took repast; short meal we made,
 When, with an herald and a chosen friend, 70
 I sought once more the hall of Æolus.
 Him banqueting with all his sons we found,
 And with his spouse; we ent'ring, on the floor
 Of his wide portal sat, whom they amazed
 Beheld, and of our coming thus enquired.

Return'd? Ulysses! by what adverse Pow'r
 Repuls'd hast thou arrived? we sent thee hence
 Well-fitted forth to reach thy native isle,
 Thy palace, or what place soe'er thou would'st. 80

So they—to whom, heart-broken, I replied.
 My worthless crew have wrong'd me, nor alone
 My worthless crew, but sleep ill-timed, as much.
 Yet heal, O friends, my hurt; the pow'r is yours!

So I their favour woo'd. Mute sat the sons,
 But thus their father answer'd. Hence—be gone—
 Leave this our isle, thou most obnoxious wretch
 Of all mankind. I should, myself, transgress,
 Receiving here, and giving conduct hence
 To one detested by the Gods as thou.
 Away—for hated by the Gods thou com'st. 90

So saying, he sent me from his palace forth,
 Groaning profound; thence, therefore, o'er the Deep
 We still proceeded sorrowful, our force
 Exhausting ceaseless at the toilsome oar,
 And, through our own imprudence, hopeless now
 Of other furth'rance to our native isle.
 Six days we navigated, day and night,
 The briny flood, and on the seventh reach'd
 The city erst by Lamus built sublime,
 Proud Læstrygonia, with the distant gates. 100
 The herdsman, there, driving his cattle home,¹
 Summons the shepherd with his flocks abroad.
 The sleepless there might double wages earn,
 Attending, now, the herds, now, tending sheep,
 For the night-pastures, and the pastures grazed
 By day, close border, both, the city-walls.

¹ It is supposed by Eustathius that the pastures being infested by gad-flies and other noxious insects in the day-time, they drove their sheep a-field in the morning, which by their wool were defended from them, and their cattle in the evening, when the insects had withdrawn. It is one of the few passages in Homer that must lie at the mercy of conjecture.

To that illustrious port we came, by rocks
 Uninterrupted flank'd on either side
 Of tow'ring height, while prominent the shores
 And bold, converging at the haven's mouth 110
 Leave narrow pass. We push'd our galleys in,
 Then moor'd them side by side; for never surge
 There lifts its head, or great or small, but clear
 We found, and motionless, the shelter'd flood.
 Myself alone, staying my bark without,
 Secured her well with hawsers to a rock
 At the land's point, then climb'd the rugged steep,
 And spying stood the country. Labours none
 Of men or oxen in the land appear'd,
 Nor aught beside saw we, but from the earth 120
 Smoke rising; therefore of my friends I sent
 Before me two, adding an herald third,
 To learn what race of men that country fed.
 Departing, they an even track pursued
 Made by the waggons bringing timber down
 From the high mountains to the town below.
 Before the town a virgin bearing forth
 Her ew'r they met, daughter of him who ruled
 The Læstrygonian race, Antiphatas.
 Descending from the gate, she sought the fount 130
 Artacia; for their custom was to draw
 From that pure fountain for the city's use.
 Approaching they accosted her, and ask'd
 What King reign'd there, and over whom he reign'd.
 She gave them soon to know where stood sublime
 The palace of her Sire; no sooner they
 The palace enter'd, than within they found,
 In size resembling an huge mountain-top,
 A woman, whom they shudder'd to behold.
 She forth from council summon'd quick her spouse 140
 Antiphatas, who teeming came with thoughts
 Of carnage, and, arriving, seized at once
 A Grecian, whom, next moment, he devoured.
 With headlong terrour the surviving two
 Fled to the ships. Then sent Antiphatas
 His voice through all the town, and on all sides,
 Hearing that cry, the Læstrygonians flock'd
 Numberless, and in size resembling more
 The giants than mankind. They from the rocks

Cast down into our fleet enormous stones, 150
 A strong man's burthen each; dire din arose
 Of shatter'd galleys and of dying men,
 Whom spear'd like fishes to their home they bore,
 A loathsome prey. While them within the port
 They slaughter'd, I, (the faulchion at my side
 Drawn forth) cut loose the hawser of my ship,
 And all my crew enjoin'd with bosoms laid
 Prone on their oars, to fly the threaten'd woe.
 They, dreading instant death tugg'd resupine
 Together, and the galley from beneath 160
 Those beetling¹ rocks into the open sea
 Shot gladly; but the rest all perish'd there.

Proceeding thence, we sigh'd, and roamed the waves,
 Glad that we lived, but sorrowing for the slain.
 We came to the Ææan isle; there dwelt
 The awful Circe, Goddess amber-hair'd,
 Deep-skill'd in magic song, sister by birth
 Of the all-wise Æætēs; them the Sun,
 Bright luminary of the world, begat
 On Perse, daughter of Oceanus. 170
 Our vessel there, noiseless, we push'd to land
 Within a spacious haven, thither led
 By some celestial Pow'r. We disembark'd,
 And on the coast two days and nights entire
 Extended lay, worn with long toil, and each
 The victim of his heart-devouring woes.
 Then, with my spear and with my faulchion arm'd,
 I left the ship to climb with hasty steps
 An airy height, thence, hoping to espie
 Some works of man, or hear, perchance, a voice. 180
 Exalted on a rough rock's craggy point
 I stood, and on the distant plain, beheld
 Smoke which from Circe's palace through the gloom
 Of trees and thickets rose. That smoke discern'd,
 I ponder'd next if thither I should haste,
 Seeking intelligence. Long time I mused,
 But chose at last, as my discreter course,
 To seek the sea-beach and my bark again,
 And, when my crew had eaten, to dispatch
 Before me, others, who should first enquire. 190

¹ The word has the authority of Shakspeare, and signifies overhanging.

But, ere I yet had reach'd my gallant bark,
 Some God with pity viewing me alone
 In that untrodden solitude, sent forth
 An antler'd stag, full-sized, into my path.
 His woodland pastures left, he sought the stream,
 For he was thirsty, and already parch'd
 By the sun's heat. Him issuing from his haunt,
 Sheer through the back beneath his middle spine,
 I wounded, and the lance sprang forth beyond.
 Moaning he fell, and in the dust expired.

200

Then, treading on his breathless trunk, I pluck'd
 My weapon forth, which leaving there reclined,
 I tore away the osiers with my hands
 And fallows green, and to a fathom's length
 Twisting the gather'd twigs into a band,
 Bound fast the feet of my enormous prey,
 And, flinging him athwart my neck, repair'd
 Toward my sable bark, propp'd on my lance,
 Which now to carry shoulder'd as before
 Surpass'd my pow'r, so bulky was the load.

210

Arriving at the ship, there I let fall
 My burthen, and with pleasant speech and kind,
 Man after man addressing, cheer'd my crew.

My friends! we suffer much, but shall not seek
 The shades, ere yet our destined hour arrive.
 Behold a feast! and we have wine on board—
 Pine not with needless famine! rise and eat.

I spake; they readily obey'd, and each
 Issuing at my word abroad, beside
 The galley stood, admiring, as he lay,
 The stag, for of no common bulk was he.
 At length, their eyes gratified to the full
 With that glad spectacle, they laved their hands,
 And preparation made of noble cheer.

220

That day complete, till set of sun, we spent
 Feasting deliciously without restraint,
 And quaffing generous wine; but when the sun
 Went down, and darkness overshadow'd all,
 Extended, then, on Ocean's bank we lay;
 And when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, convening all my crew
 To council, I arose, and thus began.

230

My fellow-voyagers, however worn

With num'rous hardships, hear! for neither West
 Know ye, nor East, where rises, or where sets
 The all-enlight'ning sun. But let us think,
 If thought perchance may profit us, of which
 Small hope I see; for when I lately climb'd
 Yon craggy rock, plainly I could discern
 The land encompass'd by the boundless Deep. 240
 The isle is flat, and in the midst I saw
 Dun smoke ascending from an oaken bow'r.

So I, whom hearing, they all courage lost,
 And at remembrance of Antiphatas
 The Læstrygonian, and the Cyclops' deeds,
 Ferocious feeder on the flesh of man,
 Mourn'd loud and wept, but tears could nought avail.
 Then numb'ring man by man, I parted them
 In equal portions, and assign'd a Chief 250
 To either band, myself to these, to those
 Godlike Eurylochus. This done, we cast
 The lots into the helmet, and at once
 Forth sprang the lot of bold Eurylochus.

He went, and with him of my people march'd
 Twenty and two, all weeping; nor ourselves
 Wept less, at separation from our friends.
 Low in a vale, but on an open spot,
 They found the splendid house of Circe, built
 With hewn and polish'd stones; compass'd she dwelt 260
 By lions on all sides and mountain-wolves
 Tamed by herself with drugs of noxious pow'rs.
 Nor were they mischievous, but as my friends
 Approach'd, arising on their hinder feet,
 Paw'd them in blandishment, and wagg'd the tail.
 As, when from feast he rises, dogs around
 Their master fawn, accustom'd to receive
 The sop conciliatory from his hand,
 Around my people, so, those talon'd wolves
 And lions fawn'd. They, terrified, that troop
 Of savage monsters horrible beheld. 270

And now, before the Goddess' gates arrived,
 They heard the voice of Circe singing sweet
 Within, while, busied at the loom, she wove
 An ample web immortal, such a work
 Transparent, graceful, and of bright design
 As hands of Goddesses alone produce.

Thus then Polites, Prince of men, the friend
Highest in my esteem, the rest bespake.

Ye hear the voice, comrades, of one who weaves
An ample web within, and at her task 280
So sweetly chaunts that all the marble floor
Re-echoes; human be she or divine
I doubt, but let us call, that we may learn.

He ceas'd; they call'd; soon issuing at the sound,
The Goddess open'd wide her splendid gates,
And bade them in; they, heedless, all complied,
All save Eurylochus, who fear'd a snare.
She, introducing them, conducted each
To a bright throne, then gave them Pramnian wine,
With grated cheese, pure meal, and honey new, 290
But medicated with her pois'nous drugs
Their food, that in oblivion they might lose
The wish of home. She gave them, and they drank,—
When, smiting each with her enchanting wand,
She shut them in her sties. In head, in voice,
In body, and in bristles they became
All swine, yet intellected as before,
And at her hand were dieted alone
With acorns, chestnuts, and the cornel-fruit,
Food grateful ever to the grovelling swine. 300

Back flew Eurylochus toward the ship,
To tell the woeful tale; struggling to speak,
Yet speechless, there he stood, his heart transfixt
With anguish, and his eyes deluged with tears.
Me boding terrours occupied. At length,
When, gazing on him, all had oft enquired,
He thus rehearsed to us the dreadful change.

Renown'd Ulysses! as thou bad'st, we went
Through yonder oaks; there, bosom'd in a vale,
But built conspicuous on a swelling knoll 310
With polish'd rock, we found a stately dome.
Within, some Goddess or some woman wove
An ample web, carolling sweet the while.
They call'd aloud; she, issuing at the voice,
Unfolded, soon, her splendid portals wide,
And bade them in. Heedless they enter'd, all,
But I remain'd, suspicious of a snare.
Ere long the whole band vanish'd, none I saw
Thenceforth, though, seated there, long time I watch'd.

He ended; I my studded faulchion huge
 Athwart my shoulder cast, and seized my bow,
 Then bade him lead me thither by the way
 Himself had gone; but with both hands my knees
 He clasp'd, and in wing'd accents sad exclaim'd.

320

My King! ah lead me not unwilling back,
 But leave me here; for confident I judge
 That neither thou wilt bring another thence,
 Nor come thyself again. Haste—fly we swift
 With these, for we, at least, may yet escape.

So he, to whom this answer I return'd.
 Eurylochus! abiding here, eat thou
 And drink thy fill beside the sable bark;
 I go; necessity forbids my stay.

330

So saying, I left the galley and the shore.
 But ere that awful vale ent'ring, I reach'd
 The palace of the sorceress, a God
 Met me, the bearer of the golden wand,
 Hermes. He seem'd a stripling in his prime,
 His cheeks cloath'd only with their earliest down,
 For youth is then most graceful; fast he lock'd
 His hand in mine, and thus, familiar, spake.

340

Unhappy! whither, wand'ring o'er the hills,
 Stranger to all this region, and alone,
 Go'st thou? Thy people—they within the walls
 Are shut of Circe, where as swine close-pent
 She keeps them. Comest thou to set them free?
 I tell thee, never wilt thou thence return
 Thyself, but wilt be prison'd with the rest.
 Yet hearken—I will disappoint her wiles,
 And will preserve thee. Take this precious drug;
 Possessing this, enter the Goddess' house
 Boldly, for it shall save thy life from harm.

350

Lo! I reveal to thee the cruel arts
 Of Circe; learn them. She will mix for thee
 A potion, and will also drug thy food
 With noxious herbs; but she shall not prevail
 By all her pow'r to change thee; for the force
 Superior of this noble plant, my gift,
 Shall baffle her. Hear still what I advise.
 When she shall smite thee with her slender rod,
 With faulchion drawn and with death-threat'ning looks
 Rush on her; she will bid thee to her bed

360

Affrighted; then beware. Decline not thou
 Her love, that she may both release thy friends,
 And may with kindness entertain thyself.
 But force her swear the dreaded oath of heav'n
 That she will other mischief none devise
 Against thee, lest she strip thee of thy might,
 And, quenching all thy virtue, make thee vile.

So spake the Argicide, and from the earth
 That plant extracting, placed it in my hand,
 Then taught me all its pow'rs. Black was the root,
 Milk-white the blossom; Moly is its name
 In heav'n; not easily by mortal man
 Dug forth, but all is easy to the Gods.
 Then, Hermes through the island-woods repair'd
 To heav'n, and I to Circe's dread abode,
 In gloomy musings busied as I went.

370

Within the vestibule arrived, where dwelt
 The beauteous Goddess, staying there my steps,
 I call'd aloud; she heard me, and at once
 Issuing, threw her splendid portals wide,
 And bade me in. I follow'd, heart-distress'd.

380

Leading me by the hand to a bright throne
 With argent studs embellish'd, and beneath
 Footstool'd magnificent, she made me sit.
 Then mingling for me in a golden cup
 My bev'rage, she infused a drug, intent
 On mischief; but when I had drunk the draught
 Unchanged, she smote me with her wand, and said. 390

Hence—seek the sty. There wallow with thy friends.
 She spake; I drawing from beside my thigh
 My faulchion keen, with death-denouncing looks
 Rush'd on her; she with a shrill scream of fear
 Ran under my rais'd arm, seized fast my knees,
 And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.

Who? whence? thy city and thy birth declare.
 Amazed I see thee with that potion drench'd,
 Yet uninchanted; never man before
 Once pass'd it through his lips, and liv'd the same; 400
 But in thy breast a mind inhabits, proof
 Against all charms. Come then—I know thee well.
 Thou art Ulysses artifice-renown'd,
 Of whose arrival here in his return
 From Ilium, Hermes of the golden wand

Was ever wont to tell me. Sheath again
Thy sword, and let us, on my bed reclined,
Mutual embrace, that we may trust thenceforth
Each other, without jealousy or fear.

The Goddess spake, to whom I thus replied. 410
O Circe! canst thou bid me meek become
And gentle, who beneath thy roof detain'st
My fellow-voyagers transform'd to swine?
And, fearing my escape, invit'st thou me
Into thy bed, with fraudulent pretext
Of love, that there, enfeebling by thy arts
My noble spirit, thou may'st make me vile?
No—trust me—never will I share thy bed
Till first, O Goddess, thou consent to swear
The dread all-binding oath, that other harm 420
Against myself thou wilt imagine none.

I spake. She swearing as I bade, renounced
All evil purpose, and (her solemn oath
Concluded) I ascended, next, her bed
Magnificent. Meantime, four graceful nymphs
Attended on the service of the house,
Her menials, from the fountains sprung and groves,
And from the sacred streams that seek the sea.
Of these, one cast fine linen on the thrones,
Which, next, with purple arras rich she spread; 430
Another placed before the gorgeous seats
Bright tables, and set on baskets of gold.
The third, an argent beaker fill'd with wine
Delicious, which in golden cups she served;
The fourth brought water, which she warm'd within
An ample vase, and when the simm'ring flood
Sang in the tripod, led me to a bath,
And laved me with the pleasant stream profuse
Pour'd o'er my neck and body, till my limbs
Refresh'd, all sense of lassitude resign'd. 440
When she had bathed me, and with limpid oil
Anointed me, and cloathed me in a vest
And mantle, next, she led me to a throne
Of royal state, with silver studs emboss'd,
And footstool'd soft beneath; then came a nymph
With golden ewer charged and silver bowl,
Who pour'd pure water on my hands, and placed
The polish'd board before me, which with food

Various, selected from her present stores,
 The cat'ress spread, then, courteous, bade me eat. 450
 But me it pleas'd not; with far other thoughts
 My spirit teem'd, on vengeance more intent.
 Soon, then, as Circe mark'd me on my seat
 Fast-rooted, sullen, nor with outstretch'd hands
 Deigning to touch the banquet, she approach'd,
 And in wing'd accents suasive thus began.

Why sits Ulysses like the Dumb, dark thoughts
 His only food? loaths he the touch of meat,
 And taste of wine? Thou fear'st, as I perceive,
 Some other snare, but idle is that fear, 460
 For I have sworn the inviolable oath.

She ceas'd, to whom this answer I return'd.
 How can I eat? what virtuous man and just,
 O Circe! could endure the taste of wine
 Or food, till he should see his prison'd friends
 Once more at liberty? If then thy wish
 That I should eat and drink be true, produce
 My captive people; let us meet again.

So I; then Circe, bearing in her hand
 Her potent rod, went forth, and op'ning wide 470
 The door, drove out my people from the sty,
 In bulk resembling brawns of the ninth year.
 They stood before me; she through all the herd
 Proceeding, with an unctuous antidote
 Anointed each, and at the wholesome touch
 All shed the swinish bristles by the drug
 Dread Circe's former magic gift, produced.
 Restored at once to manhood, they appear'd
 More vig'rous far, and sightlier than before.
 They knew me, and with grasp affectionate 480
 Hung on my hand. Tears follow'd, but of joy,
 And with loud cries the vaulted palace rang.
 Even the awful Goddess felt, herself,
 Compassion, and, approaching me, began.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 Hence to the shore, and to thy gallant bark;
 First, hale her safe aground, then, hiding all
 Your arms and treasures in the caverns, come
 Thyself again, and hither lead thy friends.
 So spake the Goddess, and my gen'rous mind 490
 Persuaded; thence repairing to the beach,

I sought my ship; arrived, I found my crew
 Lamenting miserably, and their cheeks
 With tears bedewing ceaseless at her side.
 As when the calves within some village rear'd
 Behold, at eve, the herd returning home
 From fruitful meads where they have grazed their fill,
 No longer in the stalls contain'd, they rush
 With many a frisk abroad, and, blaring oft,
 With one consent, all dance their dams around, 500
 So they, at sight of me, dissolved in tears
 Of rapt'rous joy, and each his spirit felt
 With like affections warm'd as he had reach'd
 Just then his country, and his city seen,
 Fair Ithaca, where he was born and rear'd.
 Then in wing'd accents tender thus they spake.

Noble Ulysses! thy appearance fills
 Our soul with transports, such as we should feel
 Arrived in safety on our native shore.
 Speak—say how perish'd our unhappy friends? 510

So they; to whom this answer mild I gave.
 Hale we our vessel first ashore, and hide
 In caverns all our treasures and our arms,
 Then, hasting hence, follow me, and ere long
 Ye shall behold your friends, beneath the roof
 Of Circe banqueting and drinking wine
 Abundant, for no dearth attends them there.

So I; whom all with readiness obey'd,
 All save Eurylochus; he sought alone
 To stay the rest, and, eager, interposed. 520

Ah whither tend we, miserable men?
 Why covet ye this evil, to go down
 To Circe's palace? she will change us all
 To lions, wolves or swine, that we may guard
 Her palace, by necessity constrain'd.
 So some were pris'ners of the Cyclops erst,
 When, led by rash Ulysses, our lost friends
 Intruded needlessly into his cave,
 And perish'd by the folly of their Chief.

He spake, whom hearing, occupied I stood 530
 In self-debate, whether, my faulchion keen
 Forth-drawing from beside my sturdy thigh,
 To tumble his lopp'd head into the dust,
 Although he were my kinsman in the bonds

Of close affinity; but all my friends
As with one voice, thus gently interposed.

Noble Ulysses! we will leave him here
Our vessel's guard, if such be thy command,
But us lead thou to Circe's dread abode.

So saying, they left the galley, and set forth 540
Climbing the coast; nor would Eurylochus
Beside the hollow bark remain, but join'd
His comrades by my dreadful menace awed.
Meantime the Goddess, busily employ'd,
Bathed and refresh'd my friends with limpid oil,
And clothed them. We, arriving, found them all
Banqueting in the palace; there they met;
These ask'd, and those rehearsed the wond'rous tale,
And, the recital made, all wept aloud
Till the wide dome resounded. Then approach'd 550
The graceful Goddess, and address'd me thus.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Provoke ye not each other, now, to tears.
I am not ignorant, myself, how dread
Have been your woes both on the fishy Deep,
And on the land by force of hostile pow'rs.
But come—Eat now, and drink ye wine, that so
Your freshen'd spirit may revive, and ye
Courageous grow again, as when ye left
The rugged shores of Ithaca, your home. 560
For now, through recollection, day by day,
Of all your pains and toils, ye are become
Spiritless, strengthless, and the taste forget
Of pleasure, such have been your num'rous woes.

She spake, whose invitation kind prevail'd,
And won us to her will. There, then, we dwelt
The year complete, fed with delicious fare
Day after day, and quaffing gen'rous wine.
But when (the year fulfill'd) the circling hours
Their course resumed, and the successive months 570
With all their tedious days were spent, my friends,
Summoning me abroad, thus greeted me.

Sir! recollect thy country, if indeed
The fates ordain thee to revisit safe
That country, and thy own glorious abode.

So they; whose admonition I receiv'd
Well-pleas'd. Then, all the day, regaled we sat

At Circe's board with sav'ry viands rare,
 And quaffing richest wine; but when, the sun
 Declining, darkness overshadow'd all,
 Then, each within the dusky palace took
 Custom'd repose, and to the Goddess' bed
 Magnificent ascending, there I urged
 My earnest suit, which gracious she receiv'd,
 And in wing'd accents earnest thus I spake.

580

O Circe! let us prove thy promise true;
 Dismiss us hence. My own desires, at length,
 Tend homeward vehement, and the desires
 No less of all my friends, who with complaints
 Unheard by thee, wear my sad heart away.

590

So I; to whom the Goddess in return.

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses famed
 For deepest wisdom! dwell not longer here,
 Thou and thy followers, in my abode
 Reluctant; but your next must be a course
 Far diff'rent; hence departing, ye must seek
 The dreary house of Ades and of dread
 Persephone there to consult the Seer
 Theban Tiresias, prophet blind, but blest
 With faculties which death itself hath spared.
 To him alone, of all the dead, Hell's Queen
 Gives still to prophesy, while others flit
 Mere forms, the shadows of what once they were.

600

She spake, and by her words dash'd from my soul
 All courage; weeping on the bed I sat,
 Reckless of life and of the light of day.
 But when, with tears and rolling to and fro
 Satiated, I felt relief, thus I replied.

O Circe! with what guide shall I perform
 This voyage, unperform'd by living man?

610

I spake, to whom the Goddess quick replied.
 Brave Laertiades! let not the fear
 To want a guide distress thee. Once on board,
 Your mast erected, and your canvas white
 Unfurld, sit thou; the breathing North shall waft
 Thy vessel on. But when ye shall have cross'd
 The broad expanse of Ocean, and shall reach
 The oozy shore, where grow the poplar groves
 And fruitless willows wan of Proserpine,
 Push thither through the gulphy Deep thy bark,

620

And, landing, haste to Pluto's murky abode.
 There, into Acheron runs not alone
 Dread Pyriphlegethon, but Cocytus loud,
 From Styx derived; there also stands a rock,
 At whose broad base the roaring rivers meet.
 There, thrusting, as I bid, thy bark ashore,
 O Hero! scoop the soil, op'ning a trench
 Ell-broad on ev'ry side; then pour around
 Libation consecrate to all the dead,
 First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine, 630
 Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all.
 Next, supplicate the unsubstantial forms
 Fervently of the dead, vowing to slay,
 (Return'd to Ithaca) in thy own house,
 An heifer barren yet, fairest and best
 Of all thy herds, and to enrich the pile
 With delicacies such as please the shades;
 But, in peculiar, to Tiresias vow
 A sable ram, noblest of all thy flocks.
 When thus thou hast propitiated with pray'r 640
 All the illustrious nations of the dead,
 Next, thou shalt sacrifice to them a ram
 And sable ewe, turning the face of each
 Right toward Erebus, and look thyself,
 Meantime, askance toward the river's course.
 Souls num'rous, soon, of the departed dead
 Will thither flock; then, strenuous urge thy friends,
 Flaying the victims which thy ruthless steel
 Hath slain, to burn them, and to sooth by pray'r
 Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine. 650
 While thus is done, thou seated at the foss,
 Faulchion in hand, chace thence the airy forms
 Afar, nor suffer them to approach the blood,
 Till with Tiresias thou have first conferr'd.
 Then, glorious Chief! the Prophet shall himself
 Appear, who will instruct thee, and thy course
 Delineate, measuring from place to place
 Thy whole return athwart the fishy flood.
 While thus she spake, the golden dawn arose,
 When, putting on me my attire, the nymph 660
 Next, cloath'd herself, and girding to her waist
 With an embroider'd zone her snowy robe
 Graceful, redundant, veil'd her beauteous head.

Then, ranging the wide palace, I aroused
 My followers, standing at the side of each—
 Up! sleep no longer! let us quick depart,
 For thus the Goddess hath, herself, advised.

So I, whose early summons my brave friends
 With readiness obey'd. Yet even thence
 I brought not all my crew. There was a youth, 670
 Youngest of all my train, Elpenor; one
 Not much in estimation for desert
 In arms, nor prompt in understanding more,
 Who overcharged with wine, and covetous
 Of cooler air, high on the palace-roof
 Of Circe slept, apart from all the rest.
 Awaken'd by the clamour of his friends
 Newly arisen, he also sprang to rise,
 And in his haste, forgetful where to find
 The deep-descending stairs, plunged through the roof. 680
 With neck-bone broken from the vertebræ
 Outstretch'd he lay; his spirit sought the shades.

Then, thus to my assembling friends I spake.
 Ye think, I doubt not, of an homeward course,
 But Circe points me to the drear abode
 Of Proserpine and Pluto, to consult
 The spirit of Tiresias. Theban seer.

I ended, and the hearts of all alike
 Felt consternation; on the earth they sat
 Disconsolate, and plucking each his hair,
 Yet profit none of all their sorrow found. 690

But while we sought my galley on the beach
 With tepid tears bedewing, as we went,
 Our cheeks, meantime the Goddess to the shore
 Descending, bound within the bark a ram
 And sable ewe, passing us unperceived.
 For who hath eyes that can discern a God
 Going or coming, if he shun the view?

BOOK XI

ARGUMENT

ULLYSSES relates to Alcinoüs his voyage to the infernal regions, his conference there with the prophet Tiresias concerning his return to Ithaca, and gives him an account of the heroes, heroines, and others whom he saw there.

ARRIVING on the shore, and launching, first,
Our bark into the sacred Deep, we set
Our mast and sails, and stow'd secure on board
The ram and ewe, then, weeping, and with hearts
Sad and disconsolate, embark'd ourselves.
And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
Pleasant companion of our course, and we
(The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
While managed gales sped swift the bark along. 10
All day, with sails distended, e'er the Deep
She flew, and when the sun, at length, declined,
And twilight dim had shadow'd all the ways,
Approach'd the bourn of Ocean's vast profound.
The city, there, of the Cimmerians stands
With clouds and darkness veil'd, on whom the sun
Deigns not to look with his beam-darting eye,
Or when he climbs the starry arch, or when
Earthward he slopes again his west'ring wheels,¹
But sad night canopies the woeful race. 20
We haled the bark aground, and, landing there
The ram and sable ewe, journey'd beside
The Deep, till we arrived where Circe bade.
Here, Perimedes' son Eurylochus
Held fast the destined sacrifice, while I
Scoop'd with my sword the soil, op'ning a trench
Ell-broad on ev'ry side, then pour'd around
Libation consecrate to all the dead,
First, milk with honey mixt, then luscious wine,
Then water, sprinkling, last, meal over all. 30

¹ Milton.

This done, adoring the unreal forms
 And shadows of the dead, I vow'd to slay,
 (Return'd to Ithaca) in my own abode,
 An heifer barren yet, fairest and best
 Of all my herds, and to enrich the pile
 With delicacies, such as please the shades.
 But, in peculiar, to the Theban seer
 I vow'd a sable ram, largest and best
 Of all my flocks. When thus I had implored
 With vows and pray'r, the nations of the dead, 40
 Piercing the victims next, I turn'd them both
 To bleed into the trench; then swarming came
 From Erebus the shades of the deceased,
 Brides, youths unwedded, seniors long with woe
 Oppress'd, and tender girls yet new to grief.
 Came also many a warrior by the spear
 In battle pierced, with armour gore-distain'd,
 And all the multitude around the foss
 Stalk'd shrieking dreadful; me pale horror seized.
 I next, importunate, my people urged, 50
 Flaying the victims which myself had slain,
 To burn them, and to supplicate in pray'r
 Illustrious Pluto and dread Proserpine.
 Then down I sat, and with drawn faulchion chased
 The ghosts, nor suffer'd them to approach the blood,
 Till with Tiresias I should first confer.

The spirit, first, of my companion came,
 Elpenor; for no burial honours yet
 Had he received, but we had left his corse
 In Circe's palace, tombless, undeplord, 60
 Ourselves by pressure urged of other cares.
 Touch'd with compassion seeing him, I wept,
 And in wing'd accents brief him thus bespake.

Elpenor! how cam'st thou into the realms
 Of darkness? Hast thou, though on foot, so far
 Outstripp'd my speed, who in my bark arrived?

So I, to whom with tears he thus replied.
 Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 Fool'd by some dæmon and the intemp'rate bowl,
 I perish'd in the house of Circe; there 70
 The deep-descending steps heedless I miss'd,
 And fell precipitated from the roof.
 With neck-bone broken from the vertebræ

Outstretch'd I lay; my spirit sought the shades.
 But now, by those whom thou hast left at home,
 By thy Penelope, and by thy fire,
 The gentle nourisher of thy infant growth,
 And by thy only son Telemachus
 I make my suit to thee. For, sure, I know
 That from the house of Pluto safe return'd, 80
 Thou shalt ere long thy gallant vessel moor
 At the Ææan isle. Ah! there arrived
 Remember me. Leave me not undeplord
 Nor uninhumed, lest, for my sake, the Gods
 In vengeance visit thee; but with my arms
 (What arms soe'er I left) burn me, and raise
 A kind memorial of me on the coast,
 Heap'd high with earth; that an unhappy man
 May yet enjoy an unforgotten name.
 Thus do at my request, and on my hill 90
 Funereal, plant the oar with which I row'd,
 While yet I lived a mariner of thine.

He spake, to whom thus answer I return'd.
 Poor youth! I will perform thy whole desire.

Thus we, there sitting, doleful converse held,
 With outstretch'd faulchion, I, guarding the blood,
 And my companion's shadowy semblance sad
 Meantime discoursing me on various themes.
 The soul of my departed mother, next,
 Of Anticleia came, daughter of brave 100
 Autolycus; whom, when I sought the shores
 Of Ilium, I had living left at home.
 Seeing her, with compassion touch'd, I wept,
 Yet even her, (although it pain'd my soul)
 Forbad, relentless, to approach the blood,
 Till with Tiresias I should first confer.

Then came the spirit of the Theban seer
 Himself, his golden sceptre in his hand,
 Who knew me, and, enquiring, thus began.
 Why, hapless Chief! leaving the cheerful day, 110
 Arriv'st thou to behold the dead, and this
 Unpleasant land? but, from the trench awhile
 Receding, turn thy faulchion keen away,
 That I may drink the blood, and tell thee truth.

He spake; I thence receding, deep infix'd
 My sword bright-studded in the sheath again.

The noble prophet then, approaching, drank
The blood, and, satisfied, address'd me thus.

Thou seek'st a pleasant voyage home again,
Renown'd Ulysses! but a God will make
That voyage difficult; for, as I judge,
Thou wilt not pass by Neptune unperceiv'd,
Whose anger follows thee, for that thou hast
Deprived his son Cyclops of his eye.

120

At length, however, after num'rous woes
Endur'd, thou may'st attain thy native isle,
If thy own appetite thou wilt controul
And theirs who follow thee, what time thy bark
Well-built, shall at Thrinacia's shore arrive,¹
Escaped from perils of the gloomy Deep.

130

There shall ye find grazing the flocks and herds
Of the all-seeing and all-hearing Sun,
Which, if attentive to thy safe return,
Thou leave unharm'd, though after num'rous woes,
Ye may at length arrive in Ithaca.

But if thou violate them, I denounce
Destruction on thy ship and all thy band,
And though thyself escape, late shalt thou reach
Thy home and hard-bested,² in a strange bark,
All thy companions lost; trouble beside
Awaits thee there, for thou shalt find within
Proud suitors of thy noble wife, who waste
Thy substance, and with promis'd spousal gifts
Ceaseless solicit her to wed; yet well
Shalt thou avenge all their injurious deeds.

140

That once perform'd, and ev'ry suitor slain
Either by stratagem, or face to face,
In thy own palace, bearing, as thou go'st,
A shapely oar, journey, till thou hast found
A people who the sea know not, nor eat
Food salted; they trim galley crimson prow'd
Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar,
With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves.
Well thou shalt know them; this shall be the sign—
When thou shalt meet a trav'ler, who shall name

150

¹ The shore of Scilly commonly called Trinacria, but *Euphonicè* by Homer, Thrinacia.

² The expression is used by Milton, and signifies—Beset with many difficulties.

The oar on thy broad shoulder borne, a van,¹
 There, deep infixing it within the soil,
 Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,
 A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
 Thy home again, and sacrifice at home
 An hecatomb to the Immortal Gods,
 Adoring each duly, and in his course.
 So shalt thou die in peace a gentle death,
 Remote from Ocean; it shall find thee late,
 In soft serenity of age, the Chief
 Of a blest people.—I have told thee truth.

160

He spake, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 Tiresias! thou, I doubt not, hast reveal'd
 The ordinance of heav'n. But tell me, Seer!
 And truly. I behold my mother's shade;
 Silent she sits beside the blood, nor word
 Nor even look vouchsafes to her own son.
 How shall she learn, prophet, that I am her's?

170

So I, to whom Tiresias quick replied.
 The course is easy. Learn it, taught by me.
 What shade soe'er, by leave of thee obtain'd,
 Shall taste the blood, that shade will tell thee truth;
 The rest, prohibited, will all retire.

When thus the spirit of the royal Seer
 Had his prophetic mind reveal'd, again
 He enter'd Pluto's gates; but I unmoved
 Still waited till my mother's shade approach'd;
 She drank the blood, then knew me, and in words
 Wing'd with affection, plaintive, thus began.

180

My son! how hast thou enter'd, still alive,
 This darksome region? Difficult it is
 For living man to view the realms of death.
 Broad rivers roll, and awful floods between,
 But chief, the Ocean, which to pass on foot,
 Or without ship, impossible is found.
 Hast thou, long wand'ring in thy voyage home
 From Ilium, with thy ship and crew arrived,
 Ithaca and thy consort yet unseen?

190

She spake, to whom this answer I return'd.
 My mother! me necessity constrain'd
 To Pluto's dwelling, anxious to consult

¹ Mistaking the oar for a corn-van. A sure indication of his ignorance of maritime concerns.

Theban Tiresias; for I have not yet
 Approach'd Achaia, nor have touch'd the shore
 Of Ithaca, but suff'ring ceaseless woe
 Have roam'd, since first in Agamemnon's train 200
 I went to combat with the sons of Troy.
 But speak, my mother, and the truth alone;
 What stroke of fate slew *thee*? Fell'st thou a prey
 To some slow malady? or by the shafts
 Of gentle Dian suddenly subdued?
 Speak to me also of my ancient Sire,
 And of Telemachus, whom I left at home;
 Possess I still unalienate and safe
 My property, or hath some happier Chief
 Admittance free into my fortunes gain'd, 210
 No hope subsisting more of my return?
 The mind and purpose of my wedded wife
 Declare thou also. Dwells she with our son
 Faithful to my domestic interests,
 Or is she wedded to some Chief of Greece?
 I ceas'd, when thus the venerable shade.
 Not so; she faithful still and patient dwells
 Thy roof beneath; but all her days and nights
 Devoting sad to anguish and to tears.
 Thy fortunes still are thine; Telemachus 220
 Cultivates, undisturb'd, thy land, and sits
 At many a noble banquet, such as well
 Beseems the splendour of his princely state,
 For all invite him; at his farm retired
 Thy father dwells, nor to the city comes,
 For aught; nor bed, nor furniture of bed,
 Furr'd cloaks or splendid arras he enjoys,
 But, with his servile hinds all winter sleeps
 In ashes and in dust at the hearth-side,
 Coarsely attired; again, when summer comes, 230
 Or genial autumn, on the fallen leaves
 In any nook, not curious where, he finds
 There, stretch'd forlorn, nourishing grief, he weeps
 Thy lot, enfeebled now by num'rous years.
 So perish'd I; such fate I also found;
 Me, neither the right-aiming arch'ress struck,
 Diana, with her gentle shafts, nor me
 Distemper slew, my limbs by slow degrees
 But sure, bereaving of their little life, 240

But long regret, tender solicitude,
 And recollection of thy kindness past,
 These, my Ulysses! fatal proved to me.

She said; I, ardent wish'd to clasp the shade
 Of my departed mother; thrice I sprang
 Toward her, by desire impetuous urged,
 And thrice she flitted from between my arms,
 Light as a passing shadow or a dream.
 Then, pierced by keener grief, in accents wing'd
 With filial earnestness I thus replied.

250

My mother, why elud'st thou my attempt
 To clasp thee, that ev'n here, in Pluto's realm,
 We might to full satiety indulge
 Our grief, enfolded in each other's arms?
 Hath Proserpine, alas! only dispatch'd
 A shadow to me, to augment my woe?

Then, instant, thus the venerable form.
 Ah, son! thou most afflicted of mankind!
 On thee, Jove's daughter, Proserpine, obtrudes
 No airy semblance vain; but such the state
 And nature is of mortals once deceased.
 For they nor muscle have, nor flesh, nor bone;
 All those (the spirit from the body once
 Divorced) the violence of fire consumes,
 And, like a dream, the soul flies swift away.
 But haste thou back to light, and, taught thyself
 These sacred truths, hereafter teach thy spouse.

260

Thus mutual we conferr'd. Then, thither came,
 Encouraged forth by royal Proserpine,
 Shades female num'rous, all who consorts, erst,
 Or daughters were of mighty Chiefs renown'd.
 About the sable blood frequent they swarm'd.
 But I, consid'ring sat, how I might each
 Interrogate, and thus resolv'd. My sword
 Forth drawing from beside my sturdy thigh,
 Firm I prohibited the ghosts to drink
 The blood together; they successive came;
 Each told her own distress; I question'd all.

270

There, first, the high-born Tyro I beheld;
 She claim'd Salmoneus as her sire, and wife
 Was once of Cretheus, son of Æolus.
 Enamour'd of Enipeus, stream divine,
 Loveliest of all that water earth, beside

280

His limpid current she was wont to stray,
 When Ocean's God, (Enipeus' form assumed)
 Within the eddy-whirling river's mouth
 Embraced her; there, while the o'er-arching flood,
 Uplifted mountainous, conceal'd the God
 And his fair human bride, her virgin zone
 He loos'd, and o'er her eyes sweet sleep diffused. 290
 His am'rous purpose satisfied, he grasp'd
 Her hand, affectionate, and thus he said.

Rejoice in this my love, and when the year
 Shall tend to consummation of its course,
 Thou shalt produce illustrious twins, for love
 Immortal never is unfruitful love.
 Rear them with all a mother's care; meantime,
 Hence to thy home. Be silent. Name it not.
 For I am Neptune, Shaker of the shores.

So saying, he plunged into the billowy Deep. 300
 She pregnant grown, Pelias and Neleus bore,
 Both, valiant ministers of mighty Jove.
 In wide-spread Iäolchus Pelias dwelt,
 Of num'rous flocks possess'd; but his abode
 Amid the sands of Pylus Neleus chose.
 To Cretheus wedded next, the lovely nymph
 Yet other sons, Æson and Pheres bore,
 And Amythaon of equestrian fame.

I, next, the daughter of Asopus saw,
 Antiope; she gloried to have known 310
 Th' embrace of Jove himself, to whom she brought
 A double progeny, Amphion named
 And Zethus; they the seven-gated Thebes
 Founded and girded with strong tow'rs, because,
 Though puissant Heroes both, in spacious Thebes
 Unfenced by tow'rs, they could not dwell secure.

Alcmena, next, wife of Amphitryon
 I saw; she in the arms of sov'reign Jove
 The lion-hearted Hercules conceiv'd,
 And, after, bore to Creon brave in fight 320
 His daughter Megara, by the noble son
 Unconquer'd of Amphitryon espoused.

The beauteous Epicaste¹ saw I then,
 Mother of Oedipus, who guilt incurr'd
 Prodigious, wedded, unintentional,

¹ By the Tragedians called—Jocasta.

To her own son; his father first he slew,
 Then wedded her, which soon the Gods divulged.
 He, under vengeance of offended heav'n,
 In pleasant Thebes dwelt miserable, King
 Of the Cadmean race; she to the gates
 Of Ades brazen-barr'd despairing went, 330
 Self-strangled by a cord fasten'd aloft
 To her own palace-roof, and woes bequeath'd
 (Such as the Fury sisters execute
 Innumerable) to her guilty son.

There also saw I Chloris, loveliest fair,
 Whom Neleus woo'd and won with spousal gifts
 Inestimable, by her beauty charm'd
 She youngest daughter was of Iafus' son,
 Amphion, in old time a sov'reign prince 340
 In Minuëian Orchomenus,
 And King of Pylus. Three illustrious sons
 She bore to Neleus, Nestor, Chromius,
 And Periclymenus the wide-renown'd,
 And, last, produced a wonder of the earth,
 Pero, by ev'ry neighbour prince around
 In marriage sought; but Neleus her on none
 Deign'd to bestow, save only on the Chief
 Who should from Phylace drive off the bees
 (Broad-fronted, and with jealous care secured) 350
 Of valiant Iphicles. One undertook
 That task alone, a prophet high in fame,
 Melampus; but the Fates fast bound him there
 In rig'rous bonds by rustic hands imposed.
 At length (the year, with all its months and days
 Concluded, and the new-born year begun)
 Illustrious Iphicles releas'd the seer,
 Grateful for all the oracles resolved,¹
 Till then obscure. So stood the will of Jove.

Next, Leda, wife of Tyndarus I saw, 360
 Who bore to Tyndarus a noble pair,
 Castor the bold, and Pollux cestus-famed.
 They pris'ners in the fertile womb of earth,
 Though living, dwell, and even there from Jove
 High priv'lege gain; alternate they revive

¹ Iphicles had been informed by the Oracles that he should have no children till instructed by a prophet how to obtain them; a service which Melampus had the good fortune to render him.

And die, and dignity partake divine.

The comfort of Aloëus, next, I view'd,
Iphimedeia; she th' embrace profess'd
Of Neptune to have shared, to whom she bore
Two sons; short-lived they were, but godlike both, 370
Otus and Ephialtes far-renown'd.

Orion sole except, all-bounteous Earth
Ne'er nourish'd forms for beauty or for size
To be admired as theirs; in his ninth year
Each measur'd, broad, nine cubits, and the height
Was found nine ells of each. Against the Gods
Themselves they threaten'd war, and to excite
The din of battle in the realms above.
To the Olympian summit they essay'd
To heave up Ossa, and to Ossa's crown 380
Branch-waving Pelion; so to climb the heav'ns.
Nor had they failed, maturer grown in might,
To accomplish that emprize, but them the son¹
Of radiant-hair'd Latona and of Jove
Slew both, ere yet the down of blooming youth
Thick-sprung, their cheeks or chins had tufted o'er.

Phædra I also there, and Procris saw,
And Ariadne for her beauty praised,
Whose sire was all-wise Minos. Theseus her
From Crete toward the fruitful region bore 390
Of sacred Athens, but enjoy'd not there,
For, first, she perish'd by Diana's shafts
In Dia, Bacchus witnessing her crime.²

Mæra and Clymene I saw beside,
And odious Eriphyle, who received
The price in gold of her own husband's life.

But all the wives of Heroes whom I saw,
And all their daughters can I not relate;
Night, first, would fail; and even now the hour
Calls me to rest either on board my bark, 400
Or here; meantime, I in yourselves confide,
And in the Gods to shape my conduct home.

He ceased; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstasy by his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall, till, at the last,

¹ Apollo.

² Bacchus accused her to Diana of having lain with Theseus in his temple, and the Goddess punished her with death.

Areta iv'ry arm'd them thus bespake.

Phæacians! how appears he in your eyes

This stranger, graceful as he is in port,

In stature noble, and in mind discrete?

My guest he is, but ye all share with me

410

That honour; him dismiss not, therefore, hence

With haste, nor from such indigence withhold

Supplies gratuitous; for ye are rich,

And by kind heav'n with rare possessions blest.

The Hero, next, Echeneus spake, a Chief

Now ancient, eldest of Phæacia's sons.

Your prudent Queen, my friends, speaks not beside

Her proper scope, but as beseems her well.

Her voice obey; yet the effect of all

Must on Alcinoüs himself depend.

420

To whom Alcinoüs, thus, the King, replied.

I ratify the word. So shall be done,

As surely as myself shall live supreme

O'er all Phæacia's maritime domain.

Then let the guest, though anxious to depart,

Wait till the morrow, that I may complete

The whole donation. His safe conduct home

Shall be the gen'ral care, but mine in Chief,

To whom dominion o'er the rest belongs.

Him answer'd, then, Ulysses ever-wise.

430

Alcinoüs! Prince! exalted high o'er all

Phæacia's sons! should ye solicit, kind,

My stay throughout the year, preparing still

My conduct home, and with illustrious gifts

Enriching me the while, ev'n that request

Should please me well; the wealthier I return'd,

The happier my condition; welcome more

And more respectable I should appear

In ev'ry eye to Ithaca restored.

440

To whom Alcinoüs answer thus return'd.

Ulysses! viewing thee, no fears we feel

Lest thou, at length, some false pretender prove,

Or subtle hypocrite, of whom no few

Disseminated o'er its face the earth

Sustains, adepts in fiction, and who frame

Fables, where fables could be least surmised.

Thy phrase well turn'd, and thy ingenuous mind

Proclaim *thee* diff'rent far, who hast in strains

Musical as a poet's voice, the woes
 Rehears'd of all thy Grecians, and thy own. 450
 But say, and tell me true. Beheld'st thou there
 None of thy followers to the walls of Troy
 Slain in that warfare? Lo! the night is long—
 A night of utmost length; nor yet the hour
 Invites to sleep. Tell me thy wond'rous deeds,
 For I could watch till sacred dawn, could'st thou
 So long endure to tell me of thy toils.

Then thus Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Alcinoüs! high exalted over all
 Phæacia's sons! the time suffices yet 460
 For converse both and sleep, and if thou wish
 To hear still more, I shall not spare to unfold
 More pitiable woes than these, sustain'd
 By my companions, in the end destroy'd;
 Who, saved from perils of disast'rous war
 At Ilium, perish'd yet in their return,
 Victims of a pernicious woman's crime.¹

Now, when chaste Proserpine had wide dispers'd
 Those female shades, the spirit sore distress'd
 Of Agamemnon, Atreus' son, appear'd; 470
 Encircled by a throng, he came; by all
 Who with himself beneath Ægisthus' roof
 Their fate fulfill'd, perishing by the sword.
 He drank the blood, and knew me; shrill he wail'd
 And querulous; tears trickling bathed his cheeks,
 And with spread palms, through ardour of desire
 He sought to enfold me fast, but vigour none,
 Or force, as erst, his agile limbs inform'd.
 I, pity-moved, wept at the sight, and him,
 In accents wing'd by friendship, thus address'd. 480

Ah glorious son of Atreus, King of men!
 What hand inflicted the all-numbing stroke
 Of death on thee? Say, didst thou perish sunk
 By howling tempests irresistible
 Which Neptune raised, or on dry land by force
 Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
 Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away,
 Or fighting for Achaia's daughters, shut
 Within some city's bulwarks close besieged?
 I ceased, when Agamemnon thus replied. 490

¹ Probably meaning Helen.

Ulysses, noble Chief, Laertes' son
 For wisdom famed! I neither perish'd sunk
 By howling tempests irresistible
 Which Neptune raised, nor on dry land received
 From hostile multitudes the fatal blow,
 But me Ægisthus slew; my woeful death
 Confed'rate with my own pernicious wife
 He plotted, with a show of love sincere
 Bidding me to his board, where as the ox
 Is slaughter'd at his crib, he slaughter'd *me*. 500
 Such was my dreadful death; carnage ensued
 Continual of my friends slain all around,
 Num'rous as boars bright-tusk'd at nuptial feast,
 Or feast convivial of some wealthy Chief.
 Thou hast already witness'd many a field
 With warriors overspread, slain one by one,
 But that dire scene had most thy pity moved,
 For we, with brimming beakers at our side,
 And underneath full tables bleeding lay.
 Blood floated all the pavement. Then the cries 510
 Of Priam's daughter sounded in my ears
 Most pitiable of all. Cassandra's cries,
 Whom Clytemnestra close beside me slew.
 Expiring as I lay, I yet essay'd
 To grasp my faulchion, but the trayt'ress quick
 Withdrew herself, nor would vouchsafe to close
 My languid eyes, or prop my drooping chin
 Ev'n in the moment when I sought the shades.
 So that the thing breathes not, ruthless and fell
 As woman once resolv'd on such a deed 520
 Detestable, as my base wife contrived,
 The murder of the husband of her youth.
 I thought to have return'd welcome to all,
 To my own children and domestic train;
 But she, past measure profligate, hath poured
 Shame on herself, on women yet unborn,
 And even on the virtuous of her sex.

He ceas'd, to whom, thus, answer I return'd.
 Gods! how severely hath the thund'rer plagued
 The house of Atreus even from the first, 530
 By female counsels! we for Helen's sake
 Have num'rous died, and Clytemnestra framed,
 While thou wast far remote, this snare for thee!

So I, to whom Atrides thus replied.
 Thou, therefore, be not pliant overmuch
 To woman; trust her not with all thy mind,
 But half disclose to her, and half conceal.
 Yet, from thy consort's hand no bloody death,
 My friend, hast thou to fear; for passing wise
 Icarius' daughter is, far other thoughts,
 Intelligent, and other plans, to frame. 540
 Her, going to the wars we left a bride
 New-wedded, and thy boy hung at her breast,
 Who, man himself, consorts ere now with men
 A prosp'rous youth; his father, safe restored
 To his own Ithaca, shall see him soon,
 And *he* shall clasp his father in his arms
 As nature bids; but me, my cruel one
 Indulged not with the dear delight to gaze
 On my Orestes, for she slew me first. 550
 But listen; treasure what I now impart.¹
 Steer secret to thy native isle; avoid
 Notice; for woman merits trust no more.
 Now tell me truth. Hear ye in whose abode
 My son resides? dwells he in Pylus, say,
 Or in Orchomenos, or else beneath
 My brother's roof in Sparta's wide domain?
 For my Orestes is not yet a shade.

So he, to whom I answer thus return'd.
 Atrides, ask not me. Whether he live,
 Or have already died, I nothing know;
 Mere words are vanity, and better spared. 560

Thus we discoursing mutual stood, and tears
 Shedding disconsolate. The shade, meantime,
 Came of Achilles, Peleus' mighty son;
 Patroclus also, and Antilochus
 Appear'd, with Ajax, for proportion just
 And stature tall, (Pelides sole except)
 Distinguish'd above all Achaia's sons.
 The soul of swift Æacides at once 570
 Knew me, and in wing'd accents thus began.

Brave Laertiades, for wiles renown'd!

¹ This is surely one of the most natural strokes to be found in any Poet. Convinced, for a moment, by the virtues of Penelope, he mentioned her with respect; but recollecting himself suddenly, involves even her in his general ill opinion of the sex, begotten in him by the crimes of Clytemnestra.

What mightier enterprise than all the past
 Hath made thee here a guest? rash as thou art!
 How hast thou dared to penetrate the gloom
 Of Ades, dwelling of the shadowy dead,
 Semblances only of what once they were?

He spake, to whom I, answer'ing, thus replied.

O Peleus' son! Achilles! bravest far
 Of all Achaia's race! I here arrived
 Seeking Tiresias, from his lips to learn,
 Perchance, how I might safe regain the coast
 Of craggy Ithaca; for tempest-toss'd
 Perpetual, I have neither yet approach'd
 Achaia's shore, or landed on my own.
 But as for thee, Achilles! never man
 Hath known felicity like thine, or shall,
 Whom living we all honour'd as a God,
 And who maintain'st, here resident, supreme
 Controul among the dead; indulge not then,
 Achilles, causeless grief that thou hast died.

I ceased, and answer thus instant received.

Renown'd Ulysses! think not death a theme
 Of consolation; I had rather live
 The servile hind for hire, and eat the bread
 Of some man scantily himself sustain'd,
 Than sov'reign empire hold o'er all the shades.
 But come—speak to me of my noble boy;
 Proceeds he, as he promis'd, brave in arms,
 Or shuns he war? Say also, hast thou heard
 Of royal Peleus? shares he still respect
 Among his num'rous Myrmidons, or scorn
 In Hellas and in Phthia, for that age
 Predominates in his enfeebled limbs?
 For help is none in me; the glorious sun
 No longer sees me such, as when in aid
 Of the Achaians I o'erspread the field
 Of spacious Troy with all their bravest slain.
 Oh might I, vigorous as then, repair¹
 For one short moment to my father's house,
 They all should tremble; I would shew an arm,

¹ Another most beautiful stroke of nature. Ere yet Ulysses has had opportunity to answer, the very thought that Peleus may possibly be insulted, fires him, and he takes the whole for granted. Thus is the impetuous character of Achilles sustained to the last moment!

Such as should daunt the fiercest who presumes
To injure *him*, or to despise his age.

Achilles spake, to whom I thus replied.

Of noble Peleus have I nothing heard;

But I will tell thee, as thou bidd'st, the truth

Unfeign'd of Neoptolemus thy son;

For him, myself, on board my hollow bark

From Scyros to Achaia's host convey'd.

Oft as in council under Ilium's walls

620

We met, he ever foremost was in speech,

Nor spake erroneous; Nestor and myself

Except, no Grecian could with him compare.

Oft, too, as we with battle hemm'd around

Troy's bulwarks, from among the mingled crowd

Thy son sprang foremost into martial act,

Inferior in heroic worth to none.

Beneath him num'rous fell the sons of Troy

In dreadful fight, nor have I pow'r to name

Distinctly all, who by his glorious arm

630

Exerted in the cause of Greece, expired.

Yet will I name Eurypylus, the son

Of Telephus, an Hero whom his sword

Of life bereaved, and all around him strew'd

The plain with his Cetean warriors, won

To Ilium's side by bribes to women giv'n./

Save noble Memnon only, I beheld

No Chief at Ilium beautiful as he.

Again, when we within the horse of wood

Framed by Epeüs sat, an ambush chos'n

640

Of all the bravest Greeks, and I in trust

Was placed to open or to keep fast-closed

The hollow fraud; then, ev'ry Chieftain there

And Senator of Greece wiped from his cheeks

The tears, and tremors felt in ev'ry limb;

But never saw I changed to terror's hue

His ruddy cheek, no tears wiped *he* away,

But oft he press'd me to go forth, his suit

With pray'rs enforcing, griping hard his hilt

¹ *Γυναίων εινεκα δώρων*—Priam is said to have influenced by gifts the wife and mother of Eurypylus, to persuade him to the assistance of Troy, he being himself unwilling to engage. The passage through defect of history has long been dark, and commentators have adapted different senses to it, all conjectural. The Ceteans are said to have been a people of Mysia, of which Eurypylus was King.

And his brass-burthen'd spear, and dire revenge 650
 Denouncing, ardent, on the race of Troy.
 At length, when we had sack'd the lofty town
 Of Priam, laden with abundant spoils
 He safe embark'd, neither by spear or shaft
 Aught hurt, or in close fight by faulchion's edge,
 As oft in war befalls, where wounds are dealt
 Promiscuous at the will of fiery Mars.

So I; then striding large, the spirit thence
 Withdrew of swift Æacides, along
 The hoary mead pacing,¹ with joy elate 660
 That I had blazon'd bright his son's renown.

The other souls of men by death dismiss'd
 Stood mournful by, sad uttering each his woes;
 The soul alone I saw standing remote
 Of Telamonian Ajax, still incensed
 That in our public contest for the arms
 Worn by Achilles, and by Thetis thrown
 Into dispute, my claim had strongest proved,
 Troy and Minerva judges of the cause.
 Disastrous victory! which I could wish 670
 Not to have won, since for that armour's sake
 The earth hath cover'd Ajax, in his form
 And martial deeds superior far to all
 The Grecians, Peleus' matchless son except.
 I, seeking to appease him, thus began.

O Ajax, son of glorious Telamon!
 Canst thou remember, even after death,
 Thy wrath against me, kindled for the sake
 Of those pernicious arms? arms which the Gods
 Ordain'd of such dire consequence to Greece, 680
 Which caused thy death, our bulwark! Thee we mourn
 With grief perpetual, nor the death lament
 Of Peleus' son, Achilles, more than thine.
 Yet none is blameable; Jove evermore
 With bitt'rest hate pursued Achaia's host,
 And he ordain'd thy death. Hero! approach,
 That thou may'st hear the words with which I seek
 To sooth thee; let thy long displeasure cease!
 Quell all resentment in thy gen'rous breast!

¹ Κατ' ασφοδελον λειμωνα—Asphodel was planted on the graves and around the tombs of the deceased, and hence the supposition that the Stygian plain was clothed with asphodel. F.

I spake; nought answer'd he, but sullen join'd 690
 His fellow-ghosts; yet, angry as he was,
 I had prevail'd even on him to speak,
 Or had, at least, accosted him again,
 But that my bosom teem'd with strong desire
 Urgent, to see yet others of the dead.

There saw I Minos, offspring famed of Jove;
 His golden sceptre in his hand, he sat
 Judge of the dead; they, pleading each in turn,
 His cause, some stood, some sat, filling the house
 Whose spacious folding-gates are never closed. 700

Orion next, huge ghost, engaged my view,
 Drove urging o'er the grassy mead, of beasts
 Which he had slain, himself, on the wild hills,
 With strong club arm'd of ever-during brass.

There also Tityus on the ground I saw
 Extended, offspring of the glorious earth;
 Nine acres he o'erspread, and, at his side
 Station'd, two vultures on his liver prey'd,
 Scooping his entrails; nor sufficed his hands
 To fray them thence; for he had sought to force 710
 Latona, illustrious concubine of Jove,
 What time the Goddess journey'd o'er the rocks
 Of Pytho into pleasant Panopeus.

Next, suff'ring grievous torments, I beheld
 Tantalus; in a pool he stood, his chin
 Wash'd by the wave; thirst-parch'd he seem'd, but found
 Nought to assuage his thirst; for when he bow'd
 His hoary head, ardent to quaff, the flood
 Vanish'd absorb'd, and, at his feet, adust
 The soil appear'd, dried, instant, by the Gods. 720
 Tall trees, fruit-laden, with inflected heads
 Stoop'd to him, pomegranates, apples bright,
 The luscious fig, and unctuous olive smooth;
 Which when with sudden grasp he would have seized,
 Winds hurl'd them high into the dusky clouds.

There, too, the hard-task'd Sisyphus I saw,
 Thrusting before him, strenuous, a vast rock.¹
 With hands and feet struggling, he shoved the stone
 Up to a hill-top; but the steep well-nigh

¹ *Βασαζορρα* must have this sense interpreted by what follows. To attempt to make the English numbers expressive as the Greek is a labour like that of Sisyphus. The Translator has done what he could.

Vanquish'd, by some great force repulsed,¹ the mass 700
 Rush'd again, obstinate, down to the plain.
 Again, stretch'd prone, severe he toiled, the sweat
 Bathed all his weary limbs, and his head reek'd.

The might of Hercules I, next, survey'd;
 His semblance; for himself their banquet shares
 With the Immortal Gods, and in his arms
 Enfolds neat-footed Hebe, daughter fair
 Of Jove, and of his golden-sandal'd spouse.
 Around him, clamorous as birds, the dead
 Swarm'd turbulent; he, gloomy-brow'd as night, 740
 With uncased bow and arrow on the string
 Peer'd terrible from side to side, as one
 Ever in act to shoot; a dreadful belt
 He bore athwart his bosom, thong'd with gold.
 There, broider'd shone many a stupendous form,
 Bears, wild boars, lions with fire-flashing eyes,
 Fierce combats, battles, bloodshed, homicide.
 The artist, author of that belt, none such
 Before, produced, or after. Me his eye
 No sooner mark'd, than knowing me, in words 750
 By sorrow quick suggested, he began.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 Ah, hapless Hero! thou art, doubtless, charged,
 Thou also, with some arduous labour, such
 As in the realms of day I once endured.
 Son was I of Saturnian Jove, yet woes
 Immense sustain'd, subjected to a King
 Inferior far to me, whose harsh commands
 Enjoin'd me many a terrible exploit.
 He even bade me on a time lead hence 760
 The dog, that task believing above all
 Impracticable; yet from Ades him
 I dragg'd reluctant into light, by aid
 Of Hermes, and of Pallas azure-eyed.

So saying, he penetrated deep again
 The abode of Pluto; but I still unmoved
 There stood expecting, curious, other shades
 To see of Heroes in old time deceased.

¹ It is now, perhaps, impossible to ascertain with precision what Homer meant by the word *κραταιῖς*, which he uses only here, and in the next book, where it is the name of Scylla's dam.—*Αναίδης*—is also of very doubtful explication.

And now, more ancient worthies still, and whom
 I wish'd, I had beheld, Pirithoüs 770
 And Theseus, glorious progeny of Gods,
 But nations, first, numberless of the dead
 Came shrieking hideous; me pale horror seized,
 Lest awful Proserpine should thither send
 The Gorgon-head from Ades, sight abhorr'd!
 I, therefore, hasting to the vessel, bade
 My crew embark, and cast the hawsers loose.
 They, quick embarking, on the benches sat.
 Down the Oceanus¹ the current bore
 My galley, winning, at the first, her way 780
 With oars, then, wafted by propitious gales.

¹ The two first lines of the following book seem to ascertain the true meaning of the conclusion of this, and to prove sufficiently that by 'Ὠκεανὸς here Homer could not possibly intend any other than a river. In those lines he tells us in the plainest terms that *the ship left the stream of the river Oceanus, and arrived in the open sea.* Diodorus Siculus informs us that 'Ὠκεανὸς had been a name anciently given to the Nile. See Clarke.

BOOK XII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, pursuing his narrative, relates his return from the shades to Circe's island, the precautions given him by that Goddess, his escape from the Sirens, and from Scylla and Charybdis; his arrival in Sicily, where his companions, having slain and eaten the oxen of the Sun, are afterward shipwrecked and lost; and concludes the whole with an account of his arrival, alone, on the mast of his vessel, at the island of Calypso.

AND now, borne seaward from the river-stream
Of the Oceanus, we plow'd again
The spacious Deep, and reach'd th' Ææan isle,
Where, daughter of the dawn, Aurora takes
Her choral sports, and whence the sun ascends.
We, there arriving, thrust our bark aground
On the smooth beach, then landed, and on shore
Reposed, expectant of the sacred dawn.
But soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
Look'd forth again, sending my friends before,
I bade them bring Elpenor's body down
From the abode of Circe to the beach.
Then, on the utmost headland of the coast
We timber fell'd, and, sorrowing o'er the dead,
His fun'ral rites water'd with tears profuse.
The dead consumed, and with the dead his arms,
We heap'd his tomb, and the sepulchral post
Erecting, fix'd his shapely oar aloft.

10

Thus, punctual, we perform'd; nor our return
From Ades knew not Circe, but attired
In haste, ere long arrived, with whom appear'd
Her female train with plenteous viands charged,
And bright wine rosy-red. Amidst us all
Standing, the beauteous Goddess thus began.

20

Ah miserable! who have sought the shades
Alive! while others of the human race
Die only once, appointed twice to die!
Come—take ye food; drink wine; and on the shore

All day regale, for ye shall hence again
 At day-spring o'er the Deep; but I will mark 30
 Myself your future course, nor uninform'd
 Leave you in aught, lest, through some dire mistake,
 By sea or land new mis'ries ye incur.

The Goddess spake, whose invitation kind
 We glad accepted; thus we feasting sat
 Till set of sun, and quaffing richest wine;
 But when the sun went down and darkness fell,
 My crew beside the hawsers slept, while me
 The Goddess by the hand leading apart,
 First bade me sit, then, seated opposite, 40
 Enquired, minute, of all that I had seen,
 And I, from first to last, recounted all.
 Then, thus the awful Goddess in return.

Thus far thy toils are finish'd. Now attend!
 Mark well my words, of which the Gods will sure
 Themselves remind thee in the needful hour.
 First shalt thou reach the Sirens; they the hearts
 Enchant of all who on their coast arrive.
 The wretch, who unforewarn'd approaching, hears 50
 The Sirens' voice, his wife and little-ones
 Ne'er fly to gratulate his glad return,
 But him the Sirens sitting in the meads
 Charm with mellifluous song, while all around
 The bones accumulated lie of men
 Now putrid, and the skins mould'ring away.
 But, pass them thou, and, lest thy people hear
 Those warblings, ere thou yet approach, fill all
 Their ears with wax moulded between thy palms;
 But as for thee—thou hear them if thou wilt.
 Yet let thy people bind thee to the mast 60
 Erect, encompassing thy feet and arms
 With cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,
 So shalt thou, raptur'd, hear the Sirens' song,
 But if thou supplicate to be released,
 Or give such order, then, with added cords
 Let thy companions bind thee still the more.
 When thus thy people shall have safely pass'd
 The Sirens by, think not from me to learn
 What course thou next shalt steer; two will occur;
 Delib'rate chuse; I shall describe them both. 70
 Here vaulted rocks impend, dash'd by the waves

Immense of Amphitrite azure-eyed;
 The blessed Gods those rocks, Erratic, call.
 Birds cannot pass them safe; no, not the doves
 Which his ambrosia bear to Father Jove,
 But even of those doves the slipp'ry rock
 Proves fatal still to one, for which the God
 Supplies another, lest the number fail.
 No ship, what ship soever there arrives,
 Escapes them, but both mariners and planks 80
 Whelm'd under billows of the Deep, or, caught
 By fiery tempests, sudden disappear.
 Those rocks the billow-cleaving bark alone
 The Argo, further'd by the vows of all,
 Pass'd safely, sailing from Ææta's isle;
 Nor she had pass'd, but surely dash'd had been
 On those huge rocks, but that, propitious still
 To Jason, Juno sped her safe along.
 These rocks are two; one lifts his summit sharp
 High as the spacious heav'ns, wrapt in dun clouds 90
 Perpetual, which nor autumn sees dispers'd
 Nor summer, for the sun shines never there;
 No mortal man might climb it or descend,
 Though twice ten hands and twice ten feet he own'd,
 For it is levigated as by art.
 Down scoop'd to Erebus, a cavern drear
 Yawns in the centre of its western side;
 Pass it, renown'd Ulysses! but aloof
 So far, that a keen arrow smartly sent
 Forth from thy bark should fail to reach the cave. 100
 There Scylla dwells, and thence her howl is heard
 Tremendous; shrill her voice is as the note
 Of hound new-whelp'd, but hideous her aspect,
 Such as no mortal man, nor ev'n a God
 Encount'ring her, should with delight survey.
 Her feet are twelve, all fore-feet; six her necks
 Of hideous length, each clubb'd into a head
 Terrific, and each head with fangs is arm'd
 In triple row, thick planted, stored with death.
 Plunged to her middle in the hollow den 110
 She lurks, protruding from the black abyss
 Her heads, with which the rav'ning monster dives
 In quest of dolphins, dog-fish, or of prey
 More bulky, such as in the roaring gulphs

Of Amphitrite without end abounds.

It is no seaman's boast that e'er he slipp'd
Her cavern by, unharm'd. In ev'ry mouth
She bears upcaught a mariner away.

The other rock, Ulysses, thou shalt find

Humbler, a bow-shot only from the first;

120

On this a wild fig grows broad-leav'd, and here
Charybdis dire ingulphs the sable flood.

Each day she thrice disgorges, and each day

Thrice swallows it. Ah! well forewarn'd, beware

What time she swallows, that thou come not nigh,
For not himself, Neptune, could snatch thee thence.

Close passing Scylla's rock, shoot swift thy bark

Beyond it, since the loss of six alone

Is better far than shipwreck made of all.

So Circe spake, to whom I thus replied.

130

Tell me, O Goddess, next, and tell me true!

If, chance, from fell Charybdis I escape,

May I not also save from Scylla's force

My people; should the monster threaten them?

I said, and quick the Goddess in return.

Unhappy! can exploits and toils of war

Still please thee? yield'st not to the Gods themselves?

She is no mortal, but a deathless pest,

Impracticable, savage, battle-proof.

Defence is vain; flight is thy sole resource.

140

For should'st thou linger putting on thy arms

Beside the rock, beware, lest darting forth

Her num'rous heads, she seize with ev'ry mouth

A Grecian, and with others, even thee.

Pass therefore swift, and passing, loud invoke

Cratais, mother of this plague of man,

Who will forbid her to assail thee more.

Thou, next, shalt reach Thrinacia; there, the beeves

And fatted flocks graze num'rous of the Sun;

Sev'n herds; as many flocks of snowy fleece;

150

Fifty in each; they breed not, neither die,

Nor are they kept by less than Goddesses,

Lampetia fair, and Phæthusa, both

By nymph Næra to Hyperion borne.

Them, soon as she had train'd them to an age

Proportion'd to that charge, their mother sent

Into Thrinacia, there to dwell and keep

Inviolate their father's flocks and herds.
 If, anxious for a safe return, thou spare
 Those herds and flocks, though after much endured, 160
 Ye may at last your Ithaca regain;
 But should'st thou violate them, I foretell
 Destruction of thy ship and of thy crew,
 And though thyself escape, thou shalt return
 Late, in ill plight, and all thy friends destroy'd.

She ended, and the golden morning dawn'd.
 Then, all-divine, her graceful steps she turn'd
 Back through the isle, and, at the beach arrived,
 I summon'd all my followers to ascend 170
 The bark again, and cast the hawsers loose.
 They, at my voice, embarking, fill'd in ranks
 The seats, and rowing, thresh'd the hoary flood,
 And now, melodious Circe, nymph divine,
 Sent after us a canvas-stretching breeze,
 Pleasant companion of our course, and we
 (The decks and benches clear'd) untoiling sat,
 While managed gales sped swift the bark along.
 Then, with dejected heart, thus I began.

Oh friends! (for it is needful that not one
 Or two alone the admonition hear 180
 Of Circe, beauteous prophetess divine)
 To all I speak, that whether we escape
 Or perish, all may be, at least, forewarn'd.
 She bids us, first, avoid the dang'rous song
 Of the sweet Sirens and their flow'ry meads.
 Me only she permits those strains to hear;
 But ye shall bind me with coercion strong
 Of cordage well-secured to the mast-foot,
 And by no struggles to be loos'd of mine.
 But should I supplicate to be released 190
 Or give such order, then, with added cords
 Be it your part to bind me still the more.

Thus with distinct precaution I prepared
 My people; rapid in her course, meantime,
 My gallant bark approach'd the Sirens' isle,
 For brisk and favourable blew the wind.
 Then fell the wind suddenly, and serene
 A breathless calm ensued, while all around
 The billows slumber'd, lull'd by pow'r divine.
 Up-sprang my people, and the folded sails 200

Bestowing in the hold, sat to their oars,
 Which with their polish'd blades whiten'd the Deep.
 I, then, with edge of steel sev'ring minute
 A waxen cake, chafed it and moulded it
 Between my palms; ere long the ductile mass
 Grew warm, obedient to that ceaseless force,
 And to Hyperion's all-pervading beams.
 With that soft liniment I fill'd the ears
 Of my companions, man by man, and they
 My feet and arms with strong coercion bound
 Of cordage to the mast-foot well secured. 210
 Then down they sat, and, rowing, thresh'd the brine.
 But when with rapid course we had arrived
 Within such distance as a voice may reach,
 Not unperceived by them the gliding bark
 Approach'd, and, thus, harmonious they began.

Ulysses, Chief by ev'ry tongue extoll'd,
 Achaia's boast, oh hither steer thy bark!
 Here stay thy course, and listen to our lay!
 These shores none passes in his sable ship 220
 Till, first, the warblings of our voice he hear,
 Then, happier hence and wiser he departs.
 All that the Greeks endured, and all the ills
 Inflicted by the Gods on Troy, we know,
 Know all that passes on the boundless earth.

So they with voices sweet their music poured
 Melodious on my ear, winning with ease
 My heart's desire to listen, and by signs
 I bade my people, instant, set me free.
 But they incumbent row'd, and from their seats 230
 Eurylochus and Perimedes sprang
 With added cords to bind me still the more.
 This danger past, and when the Sirens' voice,
 Now left remote, had lost its pow'r to charm,
 Then, my companions freeing from the wax
 Their ears, deliver'd me from my restraint.
 The island left afar, soon I discern'd
 Huge waves, and smoke, and horrid thund'rings heard.
 All sat aghast; forth flew at once the oars
 From ev'ry hand, and with a clash the waves 240
 Smote all together; check'd, the galley stood,
 By billow-sweeping oars no longer urged,
 And I, throughout the bark, man after man

Encouraged all, addressing thus my crew.

We meet not, now, my friends, our first distress.

This evil is not greater than we found

When the huge Cyclops in his hollow den

Imprison'd us, yet even thence we 'scaped,

My intrepidity and fertile thought

Opening the way; and we shall recollect

250

These dangers also, in due time, with joy.

Come, then—pursue my counsel. Ye your seats

Still occupying, smite the furrow'd flood

With well-timed strokes, that by the will of Jove

We may escape, perchance, this death, secure.

To thee the pilot thus I speak, (my words

Mark thou, for at thy touch the rudder moves)

This smoke, and these tumultuous waves avoid;

Steer wide of both; yet with an eye intent

On yonder rock, lest unaware thou hold

260

Too near a course, and plunge us into harm.

So I; with whose advice all, quick, complied.

But Scylla I as yet named not, (that woe

Without a cure) lest, terrified, my crew

Should all renounce their oars, and crowd below.

Just then, forgetful of the strict command

Of Circe not to arm, I cloath'd me all

In radiant armour, grasp'd two quiv'ring spears,

And to the deck ascended at the prow,

Expecting earliest notice there, what time

270

The rock-bred Scylla should annoy my friends.

But I discern'd her not, nor could, although

To weariness of sight the dusky rock

I vigilant explored. Thus, many a groan

Heaving, we navigated sad the streight,

For here stood Scylla, while Charybdis there

With hoarse throat deep absorb'd the briny flood.

Oft as she vomited the deluge forth,

Like water cauldron'd o'er a furious fire

The whirling Deep all murmur'd, and the spray

280

On both those rocky summits fell in show'rs.

But when she suck'd the salt wave down again,

Then, all the pool appear'd wheeling about

Within, the rock rebellow'd, and the sea

Drawn off into that gulph disclosed to view

The oozy bottom. Us pale horror seized.

Thus, dreading death, with fast-set eyes we watch'd
Charybdis; meantime, Scylla from the bark
Caught six away, the bravest of my friends.

With eyes, that moment, on my ship and crew
Retorted, I beheld the legs and arms 290
Of those whom she uplifted in the air;
On me they call'd, my name, the last, last time
Pronouncing then, in agony of heart.

As when from some bold point among the rocks
The angler, with his taper rod in hand,
Casts forth his bait to snare the smaller fry,
He swings away remote his guarded line,¹
Then jerks his gasping prey forth from the Deep,
So Scylla them raised gasping to the rock, 300
And at her cavern's mouth devour'd them loud-
Shrieking, and stretching forth to me their arms
In sign of hopeless mis'ry. Ne'er beheld
These eyes in all the seas that I have roam'd,
A sight so piteous, nor in all my toils.

From Scylla and Charybdis dire escaped,
We reach'd the noble island of the Sun
Ere long, where bright Hyperion's beauteous herds
Broad-fronted grazed, and his well-batten'd flocks.
I, in the bark and on the sea, the voice 310
Of oxen bellowing in hovels heard,
And of loud-bleating sheep; then dropp'd the word
Into my memory of the sightless Seer,
Theban Tiresias, and the caution strict
Of Circe, my Ææan monitress,
Who with such force had caution'd me to avoid
The island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
Thus then to my companions, sad, I spake.

Hear ye, my friends! although long time distress'd,
The words prophetic of the Theban seer 320
And of Ææan Circe, whose advice
Was oft repeated to me to avoid
This island of the Sun, joy of mankind.
There, said the Goddess, dread your heaviest woes,
Pass the isle, therefore, scudding swift away.

I ceased; they me with consternation heard,
And harshly thus Eurylochus replied.

¹ They passed the line through a pipe of horn, to secure it against the fishes' bite.

Ulysses, ruthless Chief! no toils impair
 Thy strength, of senseless iron thou art form'd,
 Who thy companions weary and o'erwatch'd 330
 Forbidd'st to disembark on this fair isle,
 Where now, at last, we might with ease regale.
 Thou, rash, command'st us, leaving it afar,
 To roam all night the Ocean's dreary waste;
 But winds to ships injurious spring by night,
 And how shall we escape a dreadful death
 If, chance, a sudden gust from South arise
 Or stormy West, that dash in pieces oft
 The vessel, even in the Gods' despight?
 Prepare we rather now, as night enjoins, 340
 Our evening fare beside the sable bark,
 In which at peep of day we may again
 Launch forth secure into the boundless flood.

He ceas'd, whom all applauded. Then I knew
 That sorrow by the will of adverse heav'n
 Approach'd, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

I suffer force, Eurylochus! and yield
 O'er-ruled by numbers. Come, then, swear ye all
 A solemn oath, that should we find an herd
 Or num'rous flock, none here shall either sheep 350
 Or bullock slay, by appetite profane
 Seduced, but shall the viands eat content
 Which from immortal Circe we received.

I spake; they readily a solemn oath
 Sware all, and when their oath was fully sworn,
 Within a creek where a fresh fountain rose
 They moor'd the bark, and, issuing, began
 Brisk preparation of their evening cheer.
 But when nor hunger now nor thirst remain'd
 Unsated, recollecting, then, their friends 360
 By Scylla seized and at her cave devour'd,
 They mourn'd, nor ceased to mourn them, till they slept.
 The night's third portion come, when now the stars
 Had travers'd the mid-sky, cloud-gath'rer Jove
 Call'd forth a vehement wind with tempest charged,
 Menacing earth and sea with pitchy clouds
 Tremendous, and the night fell dark from heav'n.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the day,
 Look'd rosy forth, we haled, drawn inland more,
 Our bark into a grot, where nymphs were wont 370

Graceful to tread the dance, or to repose.
 Convening there my friends, I thus began.

My friends! food fails us not, but bread is yet
 And wine on board. Abstain we from the herds,
 Lest harm ensue; for ye behold the flocks
 And herds of a most potent God, the Sun!
 Whose eye and watchful ear none may elude.

So saying, I sway'd the gen'rous minds of all.
 A month complete the South wind ceaseless blew,
 Nor other wind blew next, save East and South, 380
 Yet they, while neither food nor rosy wine
 Fail'd them, the herds harm'd not, through fear to die.
 But, our provisions failing, they employed
 Whole days in search of food, snaring with hooks
 Birds, fishes, of what kind soe'er they might.
 By famine urged. I solitary roam'd
 Meantime the isle, seeking by pray'r to move
 Some God to shew us a deliv'rance thence.
 When, roving thus the isle, I had at length 390
 Left all my crew remote, laving my hands
 Where shelter warm I found from the rude blast,
 I supplicated ev'ry Pow'r above;
 But they my pray'rs answer'd with slumbers soft
 Shed o'er my eyes, and with pernicious art
 Eurylochus, the while, my friends harangued.

My friends! afflicted as ye are, yet hear
 A fellow-suff'rer. Death, however caused,
 Abhorrence moves in miserable man,
 But death by famine is a fate of all
 Most to be fear'd. Come—let us hither drive 400
 And sacrifice to the Immortal Pow'rs
 The best of all the oxen of the Sun,
 Resolving thus—that soon as we shall reach
 Our native Ithaca, we will erect
 To bright Hyperion an illustrious fane,
 Which with magnificent and num'rous gifts
 We will enrich. But should he chuse to sink
 Our vessel, for his stately beeves incensed,
 And should, with him, all heav'n conspire our death,
 I rather had with open mouth, at once, 410
 Meeting the billows, perish, than by slow
 And pining waste here in this desert isle.

So spake Eurylochus, whom all approved.

Then, driving all the fattest of the herd
 Few paces only, (for the sacred beeves
 Grazed rarely distant from the bark) they stood
 Compassing them around, and, grasping each
 Green foliage newly pluck'd from saplings tall,
 (For barley none in all our bark remain'd)
 Worshipp'd the Gods in pray'r. Pray'r made, they slew
 And flay'd them, and the thighs with double fat 421
 Investing, spread them o'er with slices crude.

No wine had they with which to consecrate
 The blazing rites, but with libation poor
 Of water hallow'd the interior parts.
 Now, when the thighs were burnt, and each had shared
 His portion of the maw, and when the rest
 All-slash'd and scored hung roasting at the fire,
 Sleep, in that moment, suddenly my eyes
 Forsaking, to the shore I bent my way. 430

But ere the station of our bark I reach'd,
 The sav'ry steam greeted me. At the scent
 I wept aloud, and to the Gods exclaim'd.
 Oh Jupiter, and all ye Pow'rs above!
 With cruel sleep and fatal ye have lull'd
 My cares to rest, such horrible offence
 Meantime my rash companions have devised.

Then, flew long-stoled Lampetia to the Sun
 At once with tidings of his slaughter'd beeves,
 And he, incensed, the Immortals thus address'd. 440

Jove, and ye everlasting Pow'rs divine!
 Avenge me instant on the crew profane
 Of Laertiades; Ulysses' friends
 Have dared to slay my beeves, which I with joy
 Beheld, both when I climb'd the starry heav'ns,
 And when to earth I sloped my "westring wheels,"
 But if they yield me not amercement due
 And honourable for my loss, to Hell
 I will descend and give the ghosts my beams.

Then, thus the cloud-assembler God replied. 450
 Sun! shine thou still on the Immortal Pow'rs,
 And on the teeming earth, frail man's abode.
 My candent bolts can in a moment reach
 And split their flying bark in the mid-sea.

These things Calypso told me, taught, herself,
 By herald Hermes, as she oft affirm'd.

But when, descending to the shore, I reach'd
 At length my bark, with aspect stern and tone
 I reprimanded them, yet no redress
 Could frame, or remedy—the beeves were dead. 460
 Soon follow'd signs portentous sent from heav'n.
 The skins all crept, and on the spits the flesh
 Both roast and raw bellow'd, as with the voice
 Of living beeves. Thus my devoted friends
 Driving the fattest oxen of the Sun,
 Feasted six days entire; but when the sev'nth
 By mandate of Saturnian Jove appeared,
 The storm then ceased to rage, and we, again
 Embarking, launch'd our galley, rear'd the mast,
 And gave our unfurl'd canvas to the wind. 470

The island left afar, and other land
 Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
 Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
 Hung a cærulean cloud, dark'ning the Deep.
 Not long my vessel ran, for, blowing wild,
 Now came shrill Zephyrus; a stormy gust
 Snapp'd sheer the shrouds on both sides; backward fell
 The mast, and with loose tackle strew'd the hold;
 Striking the pilot in the stern, it crush'd
 His scull together; he a diver's plunge 480
 Made downward, and his noble spirit fled.
 Meantime, Jove thund'ring, hurl'd into the ship
 His bolts; she, smitten by the fires of Jove,
 Quaked all her length; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
 And o'er her sides headlong my people plunged
 Like sea-mews, interdicted by that stroke
 Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
 But I, the vessel still paced to and fro,
 Till, fever'd by the boist'rous waves, her sides
 Forsook the keel now left to float alone. 490
 Snapp'd where it join'd the keel the mast had fall'n,
 But fell encircled with a leathern brace,
 Which it retain'd; binding with this the mast
 And keel together, on them both I sat,
 Borne helpless onward by the dreadful gale.
 And now the West subsided, and the South
 Arose instead, with mis'ry charged for me,
 That I might measure back my course again
 To dire Charybdis. All night long I drove,

And when the sun arose, at Scylla's rock 500
 Once more, and at Charybdis' gulph arrived.
 It was the time when she absorb'd profound
 The briny flood, but by a wave upborne
 I seized the branches fast of the wild-fig.¹
 To which, bat-like, I clung; yet where to fix
 My foot secure found not, or where to ascend,
 For distant lay the roots, and distant shot
 The largest arms erect into the air,
 O'ershadowing all Charybdis; therefore hard
 I clench'd the boughs, till she disgorg'd again 510
 Both keel and mast. Not undesired by me
 They came, though late; for at what hour the judge,
 After decision made of num'rous strifes²
 Between young candidates for honour, leaves
 The forum for refreshment' sake at home,
 Then was it that the mast and keel emerged.
 Deliver'd to a voluntary fall,
 Fast by those beams I dash'd into the flood,
 And seated on them both, with oary palms
 Impell'd them; nor the Sire of Gods and men 520
 Permitted Scylla to discern me more,
 Else had I perish'd by her fangs at last.
 Nine days I floated thence, and, on the tenth
 Dark night, the Gods convey'd me to the isle
 Ogygia, habitation of divine
 Calypso, by whose hospitable aid
 And assiduity, my strength revived.
 But wherefore this? ye have already learn'd
 That hist'ry, thou and thy illustrious spouse;
 I told it yesterday, and hate a tale 530
 Once amply told, then, needless, traced again.

¹ See line 120.

² He had therefore held by the fig-tree from sunrise till afternoon.

BOOK XIII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, having finished his narrative, and received additional presents from the Phæacians, embarks; he is conveyed in his sleep to Ithaca, and in his sleep is landed on that island. The ship that carried him is in her return transformed by Neptune to a rock.

Minerva meets him on the shore, enables him to recollect his country, which, till enlightened by her, he believed to be a country strange to him, and they concert together the means of destroying the suitors. The Goddess then repairs to Sparta to call thence Telemachus, and Ulysses, by her aid disguised like a beggar, proceeds towards the cottage of Eumæus.

HE ceas'd; the whole assembly silent sat,
Charm'd into ecstacy with his discourse
Throughout the twilight hall. Then, thus the King.

Ulysses, since beneath my brazen dome
Sublime thou hast arrived, like woes, I trust,
Thou shalt not in thy voyage hence sustain
By tempests tost, though much to woe inured.
To you, who daily in my presence quaff
Your princely meed of gen'rous wine and hear
The sacred bard, my pleasure, thus I speak.
The robes, wrought gold, and all the other gifts
To this our guest, by the Phæacian Chiefs
Brought hither in the sumptuous coffer lie.
But come—present ye to the stranger, each,
An ample tripod also, with a vase
Of smaller size, for which we will be paid
By public impost; for the charge of all
Excessive were by one alone defray'd.

10

So spake Alcinoüs, and his counsel pleased;
Then, all retiring, sought repose at home.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, each hasted to the bark
With his illustrious present, which the might
Of King Alcinoüs, who himself her sides
Ascended, safe beneath the seats bestowed,
Lest it should harm or hinder, while he toil'd

20

In rowing, some Phæacian of the crew.
The palace of Alcinoüs seeking next,
Together, they prepared a new regale.

For them, in sacrifice, the sacred might ¹ 30
Of King Alcinoüs slew an ox to Jove
Saturnian, cloud-girt governor of all.
The thighs with fire prepared, all glad partook
The noble feast; meantime, the bard divine
Sang, sweet Demodocus, the people's joy.
But oft Ulysses to the radiant sun
Turn'd wistful eyes, anxious for his decline,
Nor longer, now, patient of dull delay.
As when some hungry swain whose sable beeves
Have through the fallow dragg'd his pond'rous plow 40
All day, the setting sun views with delight
For supper' sake, which with tir'd feet he seeks,
So welcome to Ulysses' eyes appear'd
The sun-set of that eve; directing, then,
His speech to maritime Phæacia's sons,
But to Alcinoüs chiefly, thus he said.

Alcinoüs, o'er Phæacia's realm supreme!
Libation made, dismiss ye me in peace,
And farewell all! for what I wish'd, I have,
Conductors hence, and honourable gifts 50
With which heav'n prosper me! and may the Gods
Vouchsafe to me, at my return, to find
All safe, my spotless consort and my friends!
May ye, whom here I leave, gladden your wives
And see your children blest, and may the pow'rs
Immortal with all good enrich you all,
And from calamity preserve the land!

He ended, they unanimous, his speech
Applauded loud, and bade dismiss the guest
Who had so wisely spoken and so well. 60
Then thus Alcinoüs to his herald spake.

Pontonöus! charging high the beaker, bear
To ev'ry guest beneath our roof the wine,
That, pray'r prefer'd to the eternal Sire,
We may dismiss our inmate to his home.

Then, bore Pontonoüs to ev'ry guest
The brimming cup; they, where they sat, perform'd
Libation due; but the illustrious Chief

¹Ἱερὸν μένος Ἀλκίνοοιο.

Ulysses, from his seat arising, placed
 A massy goblet in Areta's hand, 70
 To whom in accents wing'd, grateful, he said.
 Farewell, O Queen, a long farewell, till age
 Arrive, and death, the appointed lot of all!
 I go; but be this people, and the King
 Alcinoüs, and thy progeny, thy joy
 Yet many a year beneath this glorious roof!
 So saying, the Hero through the palace-gate
 Issued, whom, by Alcinoüs' command,
 The royal herald to his vessel led. 80
 Three maidens also of Areta's train
 His steps attended; one, the robe well-bleach'd
 And tunic bore; the corded coffer, one;
 And food the third, with wine of crimson hue.
 Arriving where the galley rode, each gave
 Her charge to some brave mariner on board,
 And all was safely stow'd. Meantime were spread
 Linen and arras on the deck astern,
 For his secure repose. And now the Chief
 Himself embarking, silent lay'd him down.
 Then, ev'ry rower to his bench repair'd; 90
 They drew the loosen'd cable from its hold
 In the drill'd rock, and, resupine, at once
 With lusty strokes upturn'd the flashing waves,
His eye-lids, soon, sleep, falling as a dew,
 Closed fast, death's simular, in sight the same,
 She, as four harness'd stallions o'er the plain
 Shooting together at the scourge's stroke,
 Toss high their manes, and rapid scour along,
 So mounted she the waves, while dark the flood
 Roll'd after her of the resounding Deep. 100
 Steady she ran and safe, passing in speed
 The falcon, swiftest of the fowls of heav'n;
 With such rapidity she cut the waves,
 An hero bearing like the Gods above
 In wisdom, one familiar long with woe
 In fight sustain'd, and on the perilous flood,
 Though sleeping now serenely, and resign'd
 To sweet oblivion of all sorrow past.
 The brightest star of heav'n, precursor chief
 Of day-spring, now arose, when at the isle 110
 (Her voyage soon perform'd) the bark arrived.

There is a port sacred in Ithaca
 To Phorcys, hoary ancient of the Deep,
 Form'd by converging shores, prominent both
 And both abrupt, which from the spacious bay
 Exclude all boist'rous winds; within it, ships
 (The port once gain'd) uncabled ride secure.
 An olive, at the haven's head, expands
 Her branches wide, near to a pleasant cave
 Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named 120
 The Naiads. In that cave beakers of stone
 And jars are seen; bees lodge their honey there;
 And there, on slender spindles of the rock
 The nymphs of rivers weave their wond'rous robes.
 Perennial springs water it, and it shows
 A twofold entrance; ingress one affords
 To mortal man, which Northward looks direct,
 But holier is the Southern far; by that
 No mortal enters, but the Gods alone.
 Familiar with that port before, they push'd 130
 The vessel in; she, rapid, plow'd the sands
 With half her keel, such rowers urged her on.
 Descending from the well-bench'd bark ashore,
 They lifted forth Ulysses first, with all
 His splendid couch complete, then, lay'd him down
 Still wrapt in balmy slumber on the sands.
 His treasures, next, by the Phæacian Chiefs
 At his departure given him as the meed
 Due to his wisdom, at the olive's foot
 They heap'd, without the road, lest, while he slept 140
 Some passing traveller should rifle them.
 Then homeward thence they sped. Nor Ocean's God
 His threats forgot denounced against divine
 Ulysses, but with Jove thus first advised.
 Eternal Sire! I shall no longer share
 Respect and reverence among the Gods,
 Since, now, Phæacia's mortal race have ceas'd
 To honour me, though from myself derived
 It was my purpose, that by many an ill
 Harass'd, Ulysses should have reach'd his home, 150
 Although to intercept him, whose return
 Thyself had promis'd, ne'er was my intent.
 But him fast-sleeping swiftly o'er the waves
 They have conducted, and have set him down

In Ithaca, with countless gifts enrich'd,
 With brass, and tissued raiment, and with gold;
 Much treasure! more than he had home convey'd
 Even had he arrived with all his share
 Allotted to him of the spoils of Troy.

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied. 160
 What hast thou spoken, Shaker of the shores,
 Wide-ruling Neptune? Fear not; thee the Gods
 Will ne'er despise; dangerous were the deed
 To cast dishonour on a God by birth
 More ancient, and more potent far than they.
 But if, profanely rash, a mortal man
 Should dare to slight thee, to avenge the wrong
 Some future day is ever in thy pow'r.
 Accomplish all thy pleasure, thou art free.

Him answer'd, then, the Shaker of the shores. 170
 Jove cloud-enthroned! that pleasure I would soon
 Perform, as thou hast said, but that I watch
 Thy mind continual, fearful to offend.
 My purpose is, now to destroy amid
 The dreary Deep yon fair Phæacian bark,
 Return'd from safe conveyance of her freight;
 So shall they waft such wand'ers home no more,
 And she shall hide their city, to a rock
 Transform'd of mountainous o'ershadowing size.

Him, then, Jove answer'd, gath'rer of the clouds. 180
 Perform it, O my brother, and the deed
 Thus done, shall best be done—What time the people
 Shall from the city her approach descry,
 Fix her to stone transform'd, but still in shape
 A gallant bark, near to the coast, that all
 May wonder, seeing her transform'd to stone
 Of size to hide their city from the view.

These words once heard, the Shaker of the shores
 Instant to Scheria, maritime abode
 Of the Phæacians, went. Arrived, he watch'd. 190
 And now the flying bark full near approach'd,
 When Neptune, meeting her, with out-spread palm
 Depress'd her at a stroke, and she became
 Deep-rooted stone. Then Neptune went his way.
 Phæacia's ship-ennobled sons meantime
 Conferring stood, and thus, in accents wing'd,
 Th' amazed spectator to his fellow spake.

Ah! who hath sudden check'd the vessel's course
Homeward? this moment she was all in view.

Thus they, unconscious of the cause, to whom
Alcinoüs, instructing them, replied. 200

Ye Gods! a prophecy now strikes my mind
With force, my father's. He was wont to say—
Neptune resents it, that we safe conduct
Natives of ev'ry region to their home.
He also spake, prophetic, of a day
When a Phæacian gallant bark, return'd
After conveyance of a stranger hence,
Should perish in the dreary Deep, and changed
To a huge mountain, cover all the town. 210

So spake my father, all whose words we see
This day fulfill'd. Thus, therefore, act we all
Unanimous; henceforth no longer bear
The stranger home, when such shall here arrive;
And we will sacrifice, without delay,
Twelve chosen bulls to Neptune, if, perchance,
He will commiserate us, and forbear
To hide our town behind a mountain's height.

He spake, they, terrified, the bulls prepared.
Thus all Phæacia's Senators and Chiefs 220

His altar compassing, in pray'r adored
The Ocean's God. Meantime, Ulysses woke,
Unconscious where; stretch'd on his native soil
He lay, and knew it not, long-time exiled.

For Pallas, progeny of Jove, a cloud
Drew dense around him, that, ere yet agnized
By others, he might wisdom learn from her,
Neither to citizens, nor yet to friends
Reveal'd, nor even to his own espoused,
Till, first, he should avenge complete his wrongs 230
Domestic from those suitors proud sustained.

All objects, therefore, in the Hero's eyes
Seem'd alien, foot-paths long, commodious ports,
Heav'n-climbing rocks, and trees of amplest growth.
Arising, fixt he stood, his native soil
Contemplating, till with expanded palms
Both thighs he smote, and, plaintive, thus began.

Ah me! what mortal race inhabits here?
Rude are they, contumacious and unjust,
Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods? 240

Where now shall I secrete these num'rous stores?
 Where wander I, myself? I would that still
 Phæacians own'd them, and I had arrived
 In the dominions of some other King
 Magnanimous, who would have entertain'd
 And sent me to my native home secure!
 Now, neither know I where to place my wealth,
 Nor can I leave it here, lest it become
 Another's prey. Alas! Phæacia's Chiefs
 Not altogether wise I deem or just, 250
 Who have misplaced me in another land,
 Promis'd to bear me to the pleasant shores
 Of Ithaca, but have not so perform'd.
 Jove, guardian of the suppliant's rights, who all
 Transgressors marks, and punishes all wrong,
 Avenge me on the treach'rous race!—but hold—
 I will revise my stores, so shall I know
 If they have left me here of aught despoiled.

So saying, he number'd carefully the gold,
 The vases, tripods bright, and tissued robes, 260
 But nothing miss'd of all. Then he bewail'd
 His native isle, with pensive steps and slow
 Pacing the border of the billowy flood,
 Forlorn; but while he wept, Pallas approach'd,
 In form a shepherd stripling, girlish fair
 In feature, such as are the sons of Kings;
 A sumptuous mantle o'er his shoulders hung
 Twice-folded, sandals his nice feet upbore,
 And a smooth javelin glitter'd in his hand.
 Ulysses, joyful at the sight, his steps 270
 Turn'd brisk toward her, whom he thus address'd.

Sweet youth! since thee, of all mankind, I first
 Encounter in this land unknown, all hail!
 Come not with purposes of harm to me!
 These save, and save me also. I prefer
 To thee, as to some God, my pray'r, and clasp
 Thy knees a suppliant. Say, and tell me true,
 What land? what people? who inhabit here?
 Is this some isle delightful, or a shore
 Of fruitful main-land sloping to the sea? 280

Then Pallas, thus, Goddess cærulean-eyed.
 Stranger! thou sure art simple, or hast dwelt
 Far distant hence, if of this land thou ask.

It is not, trust me, of so little note,
 But known to many, both to those who dwell
 Toward the sun-rise, and to others placed
 Behind it, distant in the dusky West.
 Rugged it is, not yielding level course
 To the swift steed, and yet no barren spot,
 However small, but rich in wheat and wine; 290
 Nor wants it rain or fertilising dew,
 But pasture green to goats and beeves affords,
 Trees of all kinds, and fountains never dry.
 Ithaca therefore, stranger, is a name
 Known ev'n at Troy, a city, by report,
 At no small distance from Achaia's shore.

The Goddess ceased; then, toil-enduring Chief
 Ulysses, happy in his native land,
 (So taught by Pallas, progeny of Jove)
 In accents wing'd her answ'ring, utter'd prompt 300
 Not truth, but figments to truth opposite,
 For guile, in him, stood never at a pause.

O'er yonder flood, even in spacious Crete¹
 I heard of Ithaca, where now, it seems,
 I have, myself, with these my stores arrived;
 Not richer stores than, flying thence, I left
 To my own children; for from Crete I fled
 For slaughter of Orsilochus the swift,
 Son of Idomeneus, whom none in speed
 Could equal throughout all that spacious isle. 310
 His purpose was to plunder me of all
 My Trojan spoils, which to obtain, much woe
 I had in battle and by storms endured,
 For that I would not gratify his Sire,
 Fighting beside him in the fields of Troy,
 But led a diff'rent band. Him from the field
 Returning homeward, with my brazen spear
 I smote, in ambush waiting his return
 At the road-side, with a confed'rate friend.
 Unwonted darkness over all the heav'ns 320
 That night prevailed, nor any eye of man
 Observed us, but, unseen, I slew the youth.
 No sooner, then, with my sharp spear of life

¹ Homer dates all the fictions of Ulysses from Crete, as if he meant to pass a similar censure on the Cretans to that quoted by St. Paul—
κρητες αει ψευσαι.

I had bereft him, than I sought a ship
 Mann'd by renown'd Phæacians, whom with gifts
 Part of my spoils, and by requests, I won.
 I bade them land me on the Pylia shore,
 Or in fair Elis by th' Epeans ruled,
 But they, reluctant, were by violent winds
 Driv'n devious thence, for fraud they purpos'd none. 330
 Thus through constraint we here arriv'd by night,
 And with much difficulty push'd the ship
 Into safe harbour, nor was mention made
 Of food by any, though all needed food,
 But, disembark'd in haste, on shore we lay.
 I, weary, slept profound, and they my goods
 Forth heaving from the bark, beside me placed
 The treasures on the sea-beach where I slept,
 Then, reimbarkeing, to the populous coast
 Steer'd of Sidonia, and me left forlorn. 340

He ceased; then smiled Minerva azure-eyed
 And stroak'd his cheek, in form a woman now,
 Beauteous, majestic, in all elegant arts
 Accomplish'd, and with accents wing'd replied.

Who passes thee in artifice well-framed
 And in imposture various, need shall find
 Of all his policy, although a God.
 Canst thou not cease, inventive as thou art
 And subtle, from the wiles which thou hast lov'd
 Since thou wast infant, and from tricks of speech 350
 Delusive, even in thy native land?
 But come, dismiss we these ingenious shifts
 From our discourse, in which we both excel;
 For thou of all men in expedients most
 Abound'st and eloquence, and I, throughout
 All heav'n have praise for wisdom and for art.
 And know'st thou not thine Athenæan aid,
 Pallas, Jove's daughter, who in all thy toils
 Assist thee and defend? I gave thee pow'r
 T' engage the hearts of all Phæacia's sons, 360
 And here arrive ev'n now, counsels to frame
 Discrete with thee, and to conceal the stores
 Giv'n to thee by the rich Phæacian Chiefs
 On my suggestion, at thy going thence.
 I will inform thee also what distress
 And hardship under thy own palace-roof

Thou must endure; which, since constraint enjoins,
 Bear patiently, and neither man apprize
 Nor woman that thou hast arrived forlorn
 And vagabond, but silent undergo
 What wrongs soever from the hands of men.

370

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 O Goddess! thou art able to elude,
 Wherever met, the keenest eye of man,
 For thou all shapes assum'st; yet this I know
 Certainly, that I ever found thee kind,
 Long as Achaia's Heroes fought at Troy;
 But when (the lofty tow'rs of Priam laid
 In dust) we re-embark'd, and by the will
 Of heav'n Achaia's fleet was scatter'd wide,
 Thenceforth, O daughter wise of Jove, I thee
 Saw not, nor thy appearance in my ship
 Once mark'd, to rid me of my num'rous woes,
 But always bearing in my breast a heart
 With anguish riv'n, I roam'd, till by the Gods
 Relieved at length, and till with gracious words
 Thyself didst in Phæacia's opulent land
 Confirm my courage, and becam'st my guide.
 But I adjure thee in thy father's name—

380

O tell me truly, (for I cannot hope
 That I have reach'd fair Ithaca; I tread
 Some other soil, and thou affirm'st it mine
 To mock me merely, and deceive) oh say—
 Am I in Ithaca? in truth, at home?

390

Thus then Minerva the cærulean-eyed.
 Such caution in thy breast always prevails
 Distrustful; but I know thee eloquent,
 With wisdom and with ready thought endued,
 And cannot leave thee, therefore, thus distress'd.
 For what man, save Ulysses, new-return'd
 After long wand'rings, would not pant to see
 At once his home, his children, and his wife?
 But thou preferr'st neither to know nor ask
 Concerning them, till some experience first
 Thou make of her whose wasted youth is spent
 In barren solitude, and who in tears
 Ceaseless her nights and woeful days consumes.
 I ne'er was ignorant, but well foreknew
 That not till after loss of all thy friends

400

Thou should'st return; but loth I was to oppose 410
 Neptune, my father's brother, sore incensed
 For his son's sake deprived of sight by thee.
 But, I will give thee proof—come now—survey
 These marks of Ithaca, and be convinced.

This is the port of Phorcys, sea-born sage;
 That, the huge olive at the haven's head;
 Fast by it, thou behold'st the pleasant cove
 Umbrageous, to the nymphs devoted named
 The Naiads; this the broad-arch'd cavern is 420
 Where thou wast wont to offer to the nymphs
 Many a whole hecatomb; and yonder stands
 The mountain Neritus with forests cloath'd.

So saying, the Goddess scatter'd from before
 His eyes all darkness, and he knew the land.
 Then felt Ulysses, Hero toil-inured,
 Transport unutterable, seeing plain
 Once more his native isle. He kiss'd the glebe,
 And with uplifted hands the nymphs ador'd.

Nymphs, Naiads, Jove's own daughters! I despair'd
 To see you more, whom yet with happy vows 430
 I now can hail again. Gifts, as of old,
 We will hereafter at your shrines present,
 If Jove-born Pallas, huntress of the spoils,
 Grant life to me, and manhood to my son.

Then Pallas, blue-eyed progeny of Jove.
 Take courage; trouble not thy mind with thoughts
 Now needless. Haste—delay not—far within
 This hallow'd cave's recess place we at once
 Thy precious stores, that they may thine remain,
 Then muse together on thy wisest course. 440

So saying, the Goddess enter'd deep the cave
 Caliginous, and its secret nooks explored
 From side to side; meantime, Ulysses brought
 All his stores into it, the gold, the brass,
 And robes magnificent, his gifts received
 From the Phæacians; safe he lodg'd them all,
 And Pallas, daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd,
 Closed fast, herself, the cavern with a stone.

Then, on the consecrated olive's root
 Both seated, they in consultation plann'd 450
 The deaths of those injurious suitors proud,
 And Pallas, blue-eyed Goddess, thus began.

Laertes' noble son, Ulysses! think
 By what means likeliest thou shalt assail
 Those shameless suitors, who have now controuled
 Three years thy family, thy matchless wife
 With language amorous and with spousal gifts
 Urging importunate; but she, with tears
 Watching thy wish'd return, hope gives to all
 By messages of promise sent to each,
 Framing far other purposes the while. 460

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
 Ah, Agamemnon's miserable fate
 Had surely met me in my own abode,
 But for thy gracious warning, pow'r divine!
 Come then—Devise the means; teach me, thyself,
 The way to vengeance, and my soul inspire
 With daring fortitude, as when we loos'd
 Her radiant frontlet from the brows of Troy.
 Would'st thou with equal zeal, O Pallas! aid 470
 Thy servant here, I would encounter thrice
 An hundred enemies, let me but perceive
 Thy dread divinity my prompt ally.

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 And such I will be; not unmark'd by me,
 (Let once our time of enterprize arrive)
 Shalt thou assail them. Many, as I judge,
 Of those proud suitors who devour thy wealth
 Shall leave their brains, then, on thy palace floor.
 But come. Behold! I will disguise thee so 480
 That none shall know thee! I will parch the skin
 On thy fair body; I will cause thee shed
 Thy wavy locks; I will enfold thee round
 In such a kirtle as the eyes of all
 Shall loath to look on; and I will deform
 With blurring rheums thy eyes, so vivid erst;
 So shall the suitors deem thee, and thy wife,
 And thy own son whom thou didst leave at home,
 Some sordid wretch obscure. But seek thou first
 Thy swine-herd's mansion; he, alike, intends 490
 Thy good, and loves, affectionate, thy son
 And thy Penelope; thou shalt find the swain
 Tending his herd; they feed beneath the rock
 Corax, at side of Arethusa's fount,
 On acorns dieted, nutritious food

To them, and drinking of the limpid stream.
 There waiting, question him of thy concerns,
 While I from Sparta praised for women fair
 Call home thy son Telemachus, a guest
 With Menelaus now, whom to consult
 In spacious Lacedæmon he is gone,
 Anxious to learn if yet his father lives.

500

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 And why, alas! all-knowing as thou art,
 Him left'st thou ignorant? was it that he,
 He also, wand'ring wide the barren Deep,
 Might suffer woe, while these devour his wealth?

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 Grieve thou not much for him. I sent him forth
 Myself, that there arrived, he might acquire
 Honour and fame. No suff'rings finds he there,
 But in Atrides' palace safe resides,
 Enjoying all abundance. Him, in truth,
 The suitors watch close ambush'd on the Deep,
 Intent to slay him ere he reach his home,
 But shall not as I judge, till of themselves
 The earth hide some who make thee, now, a prey.

510

So saying, the Goddess touch'd him with a wand.
 At once o'er all his agile limbs she parch'd
 The polish'd skin; she wither'd to the root
 His wavy locks; and cloath'd him with the hide
 Deform'd of wrinkled age; she charged with rheums
 His eyes before so vivid, and a cloak
 And kirtle gave him, tatter'd, both, and foul,
 And smutch'd with smoak; then, casting over all
 An huge old deer-skin bald, with a long staff
 She furnish'd him, and with a wallet patch'd
 On all sides, dangling by a twisted thong.

520

Thus all their plan adjusted, diff'rent ways
 They took, and she, seeking Ulysses' son,
 To Lacedæmon's spacious realm repair'd.

530

BOOK XIV

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES arriving at the house of Eumæus, is hospitably entertained, and spends the night there.

LEAVING the haven-side, he turn'd his steps
Into a rugged path, which over hills
Mantled with trees led him to the abode
By Pallas mention'd of his noble friend ¹
The swine-herd, who of all Ulysses' train
Watch'd with most diligence his rural stores.
Him sitting in the vestibule he found
Of his own airy lodge commodious, built
Amidst a level lawn. That structure neat
Eumæus, in the absence of his Lord, 10
Had raised, himself, with stones from quarries hewn,
Unaided by Laertes or the Queen.
With tangled thorns he fenced it safe around,
And with contiguous stakes riv'n from the trunks
Of solid oak black-grain'd hemm'd it without.
Twelve pennis he made within, all side by side,
Lairs for his swine, and fast-immured in each
Lay fifty pregnant females on the floor.
The males all slept without, less num'rous far, 20
Thinn'd by the princely wooers at their feasts
Continual, for to them he ever sent
The fattest of his saginated charge.
Three hundred, still, and sixty brawns remained.
Four mastiffs in adjoining kennels lay,
Resembling wild-beasts nourish'd at the board
Of the illustrious steward of the sty.
Himself sat fitting sandals to his feet,
Carved from a stain'd ox-hide. Four hinds he kept,
Now busied here and there; three in the pennis

¹ Δῖος ὑφορβος.—The swineherd's was therefore in those days, and in that country, an occupation honourable as well as useful. Barnes deems the epithet δῖος significant of his noble birth. Vide Clarke in loco.

Were occupied; meantime, the fourth had sought 30
 The city, whither, for the suitors' use,
 With no good will, but by constraint, he drove
 A boar, that, sacrificing to the Gods,
 Th' imperious guests might on his flesh regale.

Soon as those clamorous watch-dogs the approach
 Saw of Ulysses, baying loud, they ran
 Toward him; he, as ever, well-advised,
 Squatted, and let his staff fall from his hand.

Yet foul indignity he had endured
 Ev'n there, at his own farm, but that the swain, 40
 Following his dogs in haste, sprang through the porch
 To his assistance, letting fall the hide.
 With chiding voice and vollied stones he soon
 Drove them apart, and thus his Lord bespake.

Old man! one moment more, and these my dogs
 Had, past doubt, worried thee, who should'st have proved,
 So slain, a source of obloquy to me.

But other pangs the Gods, and other woes
 To me have giv'n, who here lamenting sit
 My godlike master, and his fatted swine 50
 Nourish for others' use, while he, perchance,
 A wand'rer in some foreign city, seeks
 Fit sustenance, and none obtains, if still
 Indeed he live, and view the light of day.

But, old friend! follow me into the house,
 That thou, at least, with plenteous food refresh'd,
 And cheer'd with wine sufficient, may'st disclose
 Both who thou art, and all that thou hast borne.

So saying, the gen'rous swine-herd introduced
 Ulysses, and thick bundles spread of twigs 60
 Beneath him, cover'd with the shaggy skin
 Of a wild goat, of which he made his couch
 Easy and large; the Hero, so received,
 Rejoiced, and thus his gratitude express'd.

Jove grant thee and the Gods above, my host,
 For such beneficence thy chief desire!

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 My guest! I should offend, treating with scorn
 The stranger, though a poorer should arrive
 Than ev'n thyself; for all the poor that are, 70
 And all the strangers are the care of Jove.
 Little, and with good will, is all that lies

Within my scope; no man can much expect
 From servants living in continual fear
 Under young masters; for the Gods, no doubt,
 Have intercepted my own Lord's return,
 From whom great kindness I had, else, received,
 With such a recompense as servants gain
 From gen'rous masters, house and competence,
 And lovely wife from many a wooer won, 80
 Whose industry should have requited well
 His goodness, with such blessing from the Gods
 As now attends me in my present charge.
 Much had I, therefore, prosper'd, had my Lord
 Grown old at home; but he hath died—I would
 That the whole house of Helen, one and all,
 Might perish too, for she hath many slain
 Who, like my master, went glory to win
 For Agamemnon in the fields of Troy.

So saying, he girdled, quick, his tunic close, 90
 And, issuing, sought the styes; thence bringing two
 Of the imprison'd herd, he slaughter'd both,
 Singed them, and slash'd and spitted them, and placed
 The whole well-roasted banquet, spits and all,
 Reeking before Ulysses; last, with flour
 He sprinkled them, and filling with rich wine
 His ivy goblet, to his master sat
 Opposite, whom inviting thus he said.

Now, eat, my guest! such as a servant may 100
 I set before thee, neither large of growth
 Nor fat; the fatted—those the suitors eat,
 Fearless of heav'n, and pitiless of man.
 Yet deeds unjust as theirs the blessed Gods
 Love not; they honour equity and right.
 Even an hostile band when they invade
 A foreign shore, which by consent of Jove
 They plunder, and with laden ships depart,
 Even they with terrors quake of wrath divine.
 But these are wiser; these must sure have learn'd
 From some true oracle my master's death, 110
 Who neither 'deign with decency to woo,
 Nor yet to seek their homes, but boldly waste
 His substance, shameless, now, and sparing nought.
 Jove ne'er hath giv'n us yet the night or day
 When with a single victim, or with two

They would content them, and his empty jars
 Witness how fast the squand'ers use his wine.
 Time was, when he was rich indeed; such wealth
 No Hero own'd on yonder continent,
 Nor yet in Ithaca; no twenty Chiefs 120
 Could match with all their treasures his alone;
 I tell thee their amount. Twelve herds of his
 The mainland graze; ¹ as many flocks of sheep;
 As many droves of swine; and hirelings there
 And servants of his own seed for his use,
 As many num'rous flocks of goats; his goats,
 (Not fewer than eleven num'rous flocks)
 Here also graze the margin of his fields
 Under the eye of servants well-approved,
 And ev'ry servant, ev'ry day, brings home 130
 The goat, of all his flock largest and best.
 But as for me, I have these swine in charge,
 Of which, selected with exactest care
 From all the herd, I send the prime to them.

He ceas'd, meantime Ulysses ate and drank
 Voracious, meditating, mute, the death
 Of those proud suitors. His repast, at length,
 Concluded, and his appetite sufficed,
 Eumæus gave him, charged with wine, the cup
 From which he drank himself; he, glad, received 140
 The boon, and in wing'd accents thus began.

My friend, and who was he, wealthy and brave
 As thou describ'st the Chief, who purchased thee?
 Thou say'st he perish'd for the glory-sake
 Of Agamemnon. Name him; I, perchance,
 May have beheld the Hero. None can say
 But Jove and the inhabitants of heav'n
 That I ne'er saw him, and may not impart
 News of him; I have roam'd through many a clime.

To whom the noble swine-herd thus replied. 150
 Alas, old man! no trav'ler's tale of him
 Will gain his consort's credence, or his son's;
 For wand'ers, wanting entertainment, forge
 Falsehoods for bread, and wilfully deceive.
 No wand'rer lands in Ithaca, but he seeks

¹ It may be proper to suggest that Ulysses was lord of part of the continent opposite to Ithaca—viz.—of the peninsula Nericus or Leuca, which afterward became an island, and is now called Santa Maura. F.

With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear;
 She welcomes all, and while she questions each
 Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear
 Affectionate, as well beseems a wife
 Whose mate hath perish'd in a distant land. 160
 Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend!
 (Would any furnish thee with decent vest
 And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease;
 Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,
 His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep
 Have eaten him, and on some distant shore
 Whelm'd in deep sands his mould'ring bones are laid.
 So hath he perish'd; whence, to all his friends,
 But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart;
 For such another Lord, gentle as he, 170
 Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,
 Though I should wander even to the house
 Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart
 So feelingly (though that desiring too)
 To see once more my parents and my home,
 As to behold Ulysses yet again.
 Ah stranger; absent as he is, his name
 Fills me with rev'rence, for he lov'd me much,
 Cared for me much, and, though we meet no more,
 Holds still an elder brother's part in me. 180
 Him answer'd, then, the Hero toil-inured.
 My friend! since his return, in thy account,
 Is an event impossible, and thy mind
 Always incredulous that hope rejects,
 I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath—
 Ulysses comes again; and I demand
 No more, than that the boon such news deserves,
 Be giv'n me soon as he shall reach his home.
 Then give me vest and mantle fit to wear,
 Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both, 190
 I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.
 For him whom poverty can force aside
 From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
 Be Jove, of all in heav'n, my witness first,
 Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last,
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
 Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
 That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.

In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
 Ere, this month closed, another month succeed, 200
 He shall return, and punish all who dare
 Insult his consort and his noble son.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Old friend! that boon thou wilt ne'er earn from me;
 Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine
 Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
 Some other theme; recall not this again
 To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
 Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.

Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come 210
 Ev'n as myself, and as Penelope,
 And as his ancient father, and his son
 Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.

Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
 His son Telemachus; who, when the Gods
 Had giv'n him growth like a young plant, and I
 Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
 In person or in mind to his own sire,
 Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
 I know not how, his sober intellect, 220

And after tidings of his sire is gone
 To far-famed Pylus; his return, meantime,
 In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
 That the whole house may perish of renown'd
 Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more.

But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
 Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect!
 But come, my ancient guest! now let me learn
 Thy own afflictions; answer me in truth.

Who, and whence art thou? in what city born? 230
 Where dwell thy parents; in what kind of ship
 Cam'st thou? the mariners, why brought they thee
 To Ithaca? and of what land are they?

For, that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure,
 Him answer'd, then, Ulysses, ever-wise.

I will with truth resolve thee; and if here
 Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
 And food for many a day, and business none
 But to regale at ease while others toiled,
 I could exhaust the year complete, my woes 240
 Rehearsing, nor, at last, rehearse entire

My sorrows by the will of heav'n sustained.

I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete; son of a wealthy sire,
 Who other sons train'd num'rous in his house,
 Born of his wedded wife; but he begat
 Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
 Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
 Castor Hylacides esteem'd and lov'd,
 For him I boast my father. Him in Crete,
 While yet he liv'd, all reverenc'd as a God,
 So rich, so prosp'rous, and so blest was he
 With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
 Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,

250

And his illustrious sons among themselves
 Portion'd his goods by lot; to me, indeed,
 They gave a dwelling, and but little more,
 Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
 A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain
 Nor base, forlorn as thou perceiv'st me now.

260

But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
 What once was in the ear. Ah! I have borne
 Much tribulation; heap'd and heavy woes.
 Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
 From Mars and Pallas; at what time I drew,
 (Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
 Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
 Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
 I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.
 Such was I once in arms. But household toils
 Sustain'd for children's sake, and carking cares
 T' enrich a family, were not for me.

270

My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din
 Of battle, the smooth spear and glitt'ring shaft,
 Objects of dread to others, but which me
 The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.

Thus diff'rent minds are diff'rently amused;
 For ere Achaia's fleet had sailed to Troy,
 Nine times was I commander of an host
 Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found
 In all those enterprizes great success.

280

From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most
 Chusing, and sharing also much by lot
 I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth

Among the Cretans rev'rence and respect.
 But when loud-thund'ring Jove that voyage dire
 Ordain'd, which loos'd the knees of many a Greek,
 Then, to Idomeneus and me they gave
 The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid
 We found not, so importunate the cry 290
 Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.
 There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth
 (Priam's proud city pillag'd) steer'd again
 Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.
 Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised
 For me much evil. One short month, no more,
 I gave to joys domestic, in my wife
 Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,
 When the desire seiz'd me with sev'ral ships
 Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews, 300
 To sail for Ægypt; nine I fitted forth,
 To which stout mariners assembled fast.
 Six days the chosen partners of my voyage
 Feasted, to whom I num'rous victims gave
 For sacrifice, and for their own regale.
 Embarking on the sev'nth from spacious Crete,
 Before a clear breeze prosp'rous from the North
 We glided easily along, as down
 A river's stream; nor one of all my ships
 Damage incurr'd, but healthy and at ease 310
 We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.
 The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
 And safe I moor'd in the Ægyptian stream.
 Then, charging all my mariners to keep
 Strict watch for preservation of the ships,
 I order'd spies into the hill-tops; but they
 Under the impulse of a spirit rash
 And hot for quarrel, the well-cultur'd fields
 Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
 Their wives and little ones, and slew the men. 320
 Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
 Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
 With horse and foot, and with the gleam of arms
 Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
 Struck all my people; none found courage more
 To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on ev'ry side.
 There, num'rous by the glittering spear we fell

Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
 Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
 My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would 33°
 That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate
 In Ægypt, for new woes were yet to come!)
 Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
 My buckler, there I left them on the field,
 Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next,
 The chariot of the sov'reign, clasp'd his knees,
 And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
 Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
 Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home.
 With many an ashen spear his warriors sought 34°
 To slay me, (for they now grew fiery wroth)
 But he, through fear of hospitable Jove,
 Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive.
 Sev'n years I there abode, and much amass'd
 Among the Ægyptians, gifted by them all;
 But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
 A shrewd Phœnician, in all fraud adept,
 Hungry, and who had num'rous harm'd before,
 By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
 T' attend him to Phœnicia, where his house 35°
 And his possessions lay; there I abode
 A year complete his inmate; but (the days
 And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
 And the new seasons ent'ring on their course)
 To Lybia then, on board his bark, by wiles
 He won me with him, partner of the freight
 Profess'd, but destin'd secretly to sale,
 That he might profit largely by my price.
 Not unsuspecting, yet constrain'd to go,
 With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale 36°
 Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
 Ran right before it through the middle sea,
 In the offing over Crete; but adverse Jove
 Destruction plann'd for them and death the while.
 For, Crete now left afar, and other land
 Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
 Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
 A cloud cærulean hung, dark'ning the Deep.
 Then, thund'ring oft, he hurl'd into the bark
 His bolts; she smitten by the fires of Jove, 37°

Quaked all her length; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
 And, o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
 Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
 Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
 But Jove himself, when I had cast away
 All hope of life, conducted to my arms
 The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
 Around that beam I clung, driving before
 The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
 And, on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood 380
 Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
 There me the Hero Phidon, gen'rous King
 Of the Thesprotians, freely entertained;
 For his own son discov'ring me with toil
 Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence
 Led me humanely to his father's house,
 Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
 There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
 Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
 To his own land; he shew'd me also gold, 390
 Brass, and bright steel elab'rate, whatsoe'er
 Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed
 A less illustrious family than his
 To the tenth generation, so immense
 His treasures in the royal palace lay.
 Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
 There, from the tow'ring oaks of Jove to ask
 Counsel divine, if openly to land
 (After long absence) in his opulent realm
 Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise. 400
 To me the monarch swore, in his own hall
 Pouring libation, that the ship was launch'd,
 And the crew ready for his conduct home.
 But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
 Bear me to King Acastus with all speed;
 But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
 Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
 In deeper gulphs of woe than I had known. 410
 For, when the billow-cleaving bark had left
 The land remote, framing, combined, a plot
 Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest

And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
 Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold.
 At even-tide reaching the cultur'd coast
 Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
 With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
 Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
 But me, meantime, the Gods easily loos'd 420
 By their own pow'r, when, with wrapper vile
 Around my brows, sliding into the sea
 At the ship's stern, I lay'd me on the flood.
 With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
 Till past all ken of theirs; then landing where
 Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
 Close couchant down I lay; they mutt'ring loud,
 Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
 Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.
 Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods 430
 Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
 Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply,
 Alas! my most compassionate guest!
 Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute
 Of thy sad wand'rings and thy num'rous woes.
 But, speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
 All credence; I at least can give thee none.
 Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent 440
 Palpable falsehoods? as for the return
 Of my regretted Lord, myself I know
 That had he not been hated by the Gods
 Unanimous, he had in battle died
 At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
 Concluded,) in his people's arms at home.
 Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
 And he had even for his son atchiev'd
 Immortal glory; but alas! by beaks
 Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
 Here is my home the while; I never seek 450
 The city, unless summon'd by discrete
 Penelope to listen to the news
 Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
 Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
 Both who regret the absence of our King,
 And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge

His property; but as for me, no joy
 Find I in list'ning after such reports,
 Since an Ætolian cozen'd me, who found
 (After long wand'ring over various lands
 A fugitive for blood) my lone retreat. 460
 Him warm I welcom'd, and with open arms
 Receiv'd, who bold affirm'd that he had seen
 My master with Idomeneus at Crete
 His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm,
 And that in summer with his godlike band
 He would return, bringing great riches home,
 Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
 Forlorn! since thee the Gods have hither led,
 Seek not to gratify me with untruths 470
 And to deceive me, since for no such cause
 I shall respect or love thee, but alone
 By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind,
 Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
 Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
 In terms express a cov'nant, and the Gods
 Who hold Olympus, witness to us both!
 If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive, 480
 Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
 In vest and mantle, that I may repair
 Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
 But, if thy Lord come not, then, gath'ring all
 Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock,
 That other mendicants may fear to lie.

To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
 Yes, stranger! doubtless I should high renown
 Obtain for virtue among men, both now
 And in all future times, if, having first 490
 Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
 I, next, should slay thee; then my pray'rs would mount,
 Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.
 But the hour calls to supper, and, ere long,
 The partners of my toils will come prepared
 To spread the board with no unsav'ry cheer.

Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
 Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
 Within their customary pennis, and loud

The hubbub was of swine prison'd within. 500
 Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
 Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
 Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
 With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
 The bright-tusk'd multitude a painful charge,
 While others, at no cost of theirs, consume
 Day after day, the profit of our toils.

So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
 And dragging thither a well-fatted brawn
 Of the fifth year his servants held him fast 510
 At the hearth-side. Nor failed the master swain
 T' adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he)
 But consecration of the victim, first,
 Himself performing, cast into the fire
 The forehead bristles of the tusky boar,
 Then pray'd to all above, that, safe, at length,
 Ulysses might regain his native home.

Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
 The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell,
 Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair, 520
 They carv'd him quickly, and Eumæus spread
 Thin slices crude taken from ev'ry limb
 O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,
 Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.
 The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well,
 And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.
 Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
 Of distribution, for he understood
 The hospitable entertainer's part.

Sev'n-fold partition of the banquet made, 530
 He gave, with previous pray'r, to Maia's son ¹
 And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
 Then served his present guests, honouring first
 Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine;
 By that distinction just his master's heart
 He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.

Eumæus! be thou as belov'd of Jove
 As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
 So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect!

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply. 540
 Eat, noble stranger! and refreshment take

¹ Mercury.

Such as thou may'st; God¹ gives, and God denies
At his own will, for He is Lord of all.

He said, and to the everlasting Gods
The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made
Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
Of city-spoiler Laertiades
Sitting beside his own allotted share.

Meantime, Mesaulius bread dispensed to all,
Whom, in the absence of his Lord, himself
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expence
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.

550

And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none
Felt more or thirst, Mesaulius clear'd the board.

Then, fed to full satiety, in haste

Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in show'rs,
With howlings of the ever wat'ry West.

560

Ulysses, at that sound, for trial sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family, began.

Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-lab'ers! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces ev'n the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft, better suppress'd.

570

But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay!

Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself
Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.

Approaching to the city's lofty wall

Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird

¹ Θεός—without a relative, and consequently signifying God in the abstract, is not unfrequently found in Homer, though fearing to give offence to serious minds unacquainted with the original, I have not always given it that force in the translation. But here, the sentiment is such as fixes the sense intended by the author with a precision that leaves no option. It is observable too, that—*δυναται γαρ αταρτα*—is an ascription of power such as the poet never makes to his Jupiter.

The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
 Under our arms, then Boreas blowing loud, 580
 A rueful night came on, frosty and charged
 With snow that blanch'd us thick as morning rime,
 And ev'ry shield with ice was crystall'd o'er.
 The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept
 Beneath their bucklers; I alone my cloak,
 Improvident, had left behind, no thought
 Conceiving of a season so severe;

Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.
 The night, at last, nigh spent, and all the stars
 Declining in their course, with elbow thrust 590
 Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
 And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.
 No cloak have I; some evil dæmon, sure,
 Beguil'd me of all prudence, that I came
 Thus sparely clad; I shall, I must expire.

So I; he, ready as he was in arms
 And counsel both, the remedy at once
 Devised, and thus, low-whisp'ring, answer'd me. 600

Hush! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
 And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.

My friends! all hear—a monitory dream
 Hath reach'd me, for we lie far from the ships.
 Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request
 To Agamemnon, Atreus' son, our Chief,
 That he would reinforce us from the camp.

He spake, and at the word, Andræmon's son
 Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
 Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm 610
 Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.

Oh for the vigour of such youth again!
 Then, some good peasant here, either for love
 Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
 Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 My ancient guest! I cannot but approve
 Thy narrative, nor hast thou utter'd aught
 Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
 Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside 620
 Needful to solace penury like thine,

Shall harm thee here; yet, at the peep of dawn
 Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again;
 For *we* have no great store of cloaks to boast,
 Or change of vests, but singly one for each.
 But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
 He will himself with vest and mantle both
 Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.

So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
 To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins 630
 Of sheep and goats; then lay the Hero down,
 O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
 Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
 The winter's blast and terrible arose.
 So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths
 Slept all beside him; but the master-swain
 Chose not his place of rest so far remote
 From his rude charge, but to the outer court
 With his nocturnal furniture, repair'd,
 Gladd'ning Ulysses' heart that one so true 640
 In his own absence kept his rural stores.
 Athwart his sturdy shoulders, first, he flung
 His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
 Thick-woven, winter-proof; he lifted, next,
 The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk
 Surpassing others, and his javelin took
 Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
 Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
 A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
 From the sharp current of the Northern blast. 650

BOOK XV

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS, admonished by Minerva, takes leave of Menelaus, but ere he sails, is accosted by Theoclymenos, a prophet of Argos, whom at his earnest request he takes on board. In the meantime Eumæus relates to Ulysses the means by which he came to Ithaca. Telemachus arriving there, gives orders for the return of his bark to the city, and repairs himself to Eumæus.

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Minerva went, that she might summon thence
Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule
Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
Fast-bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
Amid the silent night, when, drawing near 10
To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.
Thou canst no longer prudently remain
A wand'rer here, Telemachus! thy home
Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made
Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
And in the end thy voyage bootless prove.
Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home
Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge 20
And her own father even now to wed
Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
Of proffer'd dow'r superior to them all.
Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare.
For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;
Her whole anxiety is to encrease
His substance whom she weds; no care hath she
Of her first children, or remembers more
The buried husband of her virgin choice. 30

Returning then, to her of all thy train
 Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
 Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
 Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife.
 Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith
 Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
 The chief of all her suitors thy return
 In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
 To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
 But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide
 Many a lewd reveller at thy expence. 40

Yet, steer thy galley from those isles afar,
 And voyage make by night; some guardian God
 Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosp'rous gales.
 Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore
 Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
 Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
 The swine-herd; for Eumæus is thy friend.
 There sleep, and send him forth into the town
 With tidings to Penelope, that safe
 Thou art restored from Pylus home again. 50

She said, and sought th' Olympian heights sublime.
 Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
 The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.

Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus! lead forth
 The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.

Telemachus! what haste soe'er we feel,
 We can by no means prudently attempt
 To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn. 60

Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son,
 Spear-practis'd Menelaus shall his gifts
 Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
 Dismiss thee; for the guest in mem'ry holds
 Through life, the host who treats him as a friend.

Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
 Appearing, Menelaus, from the side
 Of beauteous Helen ris'n, their bed approach'd,
 Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
 Cloathing himself hastily in his vest
 Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
 Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
 He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd. 70

Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again,
My native isle, for I desire to go.

Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms.
Telemachus! I will not long delay
Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike
The host whose assiduity extreme 80
Distresses, and whose negligence offends;
The middle course is best; alike we err,
Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
And hind'ring the impatient to depart.
This only is true kindness—To regale
The present guest, and speed him when he would,
Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts
Placed in thy chariot, and till I command
My women from our present stores to spread
The table with a plentiful repast. 90
For both the honour of the guest demands,
And his convenience also, that he eat
Sufficient, ent'ring on a length of road.
But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way
And traverse Argos, I will, then, myself
Attend thee; thou shalt journey with my steeds
Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide
To many a city, whence we shall not go
Ungratified, but shall in each receive
Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright, 100
Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
I would at once depart, (for guardian none
Of my possessions have I left behind)
Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost
Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.

Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,
He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board
At once with remnants of the last regale. 110
Then Eteoneus came, Boetheus' son
Newly aris'n, for nigh at hand he dwelt,
Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire
By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.
He next, himself his fragrant chamber sought,
Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son

Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived
 Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
 Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd
 To his son's hand an argent beaker bright. 120
 Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
 Where lay her variegated robes, fair works
 Of her own hand. Producing one, in size
 And in magnificence the chief, a star
 For splendour, and the lowest placed of all,
 Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.
 Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
 Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
 The Hero of the golden locks began.

May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate, 130
 Grant thee, Telemachus! such voyage home
 As thy own heart desires! accept from all
 My stores selected as the richest far
 And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This.
 I give thee wrought elaborate a cup,
 Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
 It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
 The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
 Of the Sidonians, when, on my return,
 Beneath his roof I lodg'd. I make it thine. 140

So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
 Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
 Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
 But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
 Presented to him, whom she thus address'd.

I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
 Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
 Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
 For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe
 In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell! 150
 Prosp'rous and happy be thy voyage home!

She ceas'd, and gave it to him, who the gift
 Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
 Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,
 Admiring them the while. They, following, next,
 The Hero Menelaus to his hall
 Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.
 A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
 And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,

And spread the polish'd table, which with food 160
 Various, selected from her present stores,
 The mistress of the household charge supplied.
 Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
 His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
 Of glorious Menelaus, serv'd the cup.
 Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
 They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
 Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
 In the resplendent chariot, drove at once 170
 Right through the sounding portico abroad.
 But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
 A golden cup bearing with richest wine
 Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
 That not without libation first perform'd
 They might depart; he stood before the steeds,
 And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.

Health to you both, young friends! and from my lips
 Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
 For he was ever as a father kind 180
 To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
 And doubtless, so we will; at our return
 We will report to him, illustrious Prince!
 Thy ev'ry word. And oh, I would to heav'n
 That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
 Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
 Depart, with all benevolence by thee
 Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.

While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd 190
 An eagle; in his talons pounced he bore
 A white-plumed goose domestic, newly ta'en
 From the house-court. Ran females all and males
 Clamorous after him; but he the steeds
 Approaching on the right, sprang into air.
 That sight rejoicing and with hearts reviv'd
 They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
 Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.

Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief!
 If us, this omen, or thyself regard. 200

While warlike Menelaus musing stood
 What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,

His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.

Hear me; for I will answer as the Gods
Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass.
As he, descending from his place of birth
The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
So shall Ulysses, after many woes
And wand'rings to his home restored, avenge
His wrongs, or even now is at his home
For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.

210

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thund'ring mate!
So will I, there arrived, with vow and pray'r
Thee worship, as thou wert, thyself, divine.

He said, and lash'd the coursers; fiery they
And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
All day the yoke on either side they shook,
Journeying swift; and now the setting sun
To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads,
When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
Of good Diocles slept, their lib'ral host,
Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.
But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds,
They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.
Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gates
Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech
Turning to his companion, thus began.

220

230

How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee
Not promise only, but performance kind
Of my request? we are not bound alone
To friendship by the friendship of our sires,
But by equality of years, and this
Our journey shall unite us still the more.
Bear me not, I intreat thee, noble friend!
Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side,
Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,
Detain me in his palace through desire
To feast me, for I dread the least delay.

240

He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best
He might effect the wishes of his friend,

And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds
 With sudden deviation to the shore
 He sought the bark, and placing in the stern
 Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts
 Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd 250
 With ardour, urged Telemachus away.

Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,
 Ere my arrival notice give of thine
 To the old King; for vehement I know
 His temper, neither will he let thee hence,
 But, hasting hither, will himself enforce
 Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart
 Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.

So saying, he to the Pylian city urged
 His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate 260
 Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime
 Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.

My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb
 The sable bark, for I would now return.

He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once
 All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he
 Thus expedited, and beside the stern
 To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,
 A stranger, born remote, who had escaped
 From Argos, fugitive for blood, a seer 270
 And of Melampus' progeny, approach'd.
 Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,
 Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
 And the magnificence of his abode.
 He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King,
 The mighty Neleus, migrated at length
 Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
 Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.
 Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
 Of Phylacus imprisonment and woe, 280
 And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
 By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.

¹ Iphycus the son of Phylacus had seized and detained cattle belonging to Neleus; Neleus ordered his nephew Melampus to recover them, and as security for his obedience seized on a considerable part of his possessions. Melampus attempted the service, failed, and was cast into prison; but at length escaping, accomplished his errand, vanquished Neleus in battle, and carried off his daughter Pero, whom Neleus had promised to the brother of Melampus, but had afterward refused her.

But, 'scaping death, he drove the lowing beeves
 From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged
 His num'rous injuries at Neleus' hands
 Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms
 King Neleus' daughter fair, the promis'd bride.
 To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,
 There destin'd to inhabit and to rule
 Multitudes of Achaians. In that land
 He married, built a palace, and became
 Father of two brave sons, Antiphates
 And Mantius; to Antiphates was born
 The brave Oicleus; from Oicleus sprang
 Amphiaräus, demagogue renown'd,
 Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend
 Alike the Thund'rer and Apollo prized;
 Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age.

290

But by his mercenary consort's arts ¹
 Persuaded, met his destiny at Thebes.

300

He 'gat Alcmaëon and Amphilocus.
 Mantius was also father of two sons,
 Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd
 From earth to heav'n, and dwells among the Gods,
 Stol'n by Aurora for his beauty's sake.
 But (brave Amphiaräus once deceased)
 Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
 Above all others in the prophet's part.
 He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
 To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd
 Throughout all lands the oracle of all.

310

His son, named Theoclymenus, was he
 Who now approach'd; he found Telemachus
 Libation off'ring in his bark, and pray'r,
 And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd.

Ah, friend! since sacrificing in this place
 I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
 Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
 And by the lives of these thy mariners
 I beg true answer; hide not what I ask.

320

Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom?

¹ His wife Eryphyle, bribed by Polynices, persuaded him, though aware that death awaited him at that city, to go to Thebes, where he fell accordingly.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 I will inform thee, stranger! and will solve
 Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
 Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire.
 But he hath perish'd by a woeful death,
 And I, believing it, with these have plow'd
 The ocean hither, int'rested to learn
 A father's fate long absent from his home.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus. 33°
 I also am a wand'rer, having slain
 A man of my own tribe; brethren and friends
 Num'rous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
 And pow'rful are the Achaians dwelling there.
 From them, through terrour of impending death,
 I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.
 Ah save a suppliant fugitive! lest death
 O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete. 34°
 I shall not, be assured, since thou desir'st
 To join me, chace thee from my bark away.
 Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
 In Ithaca, what best the land affords.

So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
 His spear, which on the deck he lay'd, then climb'd
 Himself the bark, and, seated in the stern,
 At his own side placed Theoclymenus.
 They cast the hawsers loose; then with loud voice
 Telemachus exhorted all to hand 35°
 The tackle, whom the sailors prompt obey'd.
 The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep
 They lodg'd it, and its cordage braced secure,
 Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.
 Fair wind, and blowing fresh through æther pure
 Minerva sent them, that the bark might run
 Her nimblest course through all the briny way.
 Now sank the sun, and dusky ev'ning dimm'd
 The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,
 His bark stood right for Pheræ; thence she stretch'd
 To sacred Elis where the Epeans rule, 36°
 And through the sharp Echinades he next
 Steer'd her, uncertain whether fate ordain'd
 His life or death, surprizal or escape.

Meantime Ulysses and the swine-herd ate

Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains
 Theirs also; and when hunger now and thirst
 Had ceased in all, Ulysses thus began,
 Proving the swine-herd, whether friendly still,
 And anxious for his good, he would intreat
 His stay, or thence hasten him to the town.

370

Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear!
 It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,
 Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn
 The city, there to beg—But give me first
 Needful instructions, and a trusty guide
 Who may conduct me thither; there my task
 Must be to roam the streets; some hand humane
 Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,
 A little bread, and a few drops to drink.

Ulysses' palace I shall also seek,

380

And to discrete Penelope report
 My tidings; neither shall I fail to mix
 With those imperious suitors, who, themselves
 Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.
 Me shall they find, in whatsoever they wish
 Their ready servitor, for (understand
 And mark me well) the herald of the skies,
 Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
 Their grace receive and polish, is my friend,
 So that in menial offices I fear

390

No rival, whether I be called to heap
 The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
 To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
 As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.

To whom, Eumæus! at those words displeased,
 Thou didst reply. Gods! how could such a thought
 Possess thee, stranger? surely thy resolve
 Is altogether fixt to perish there,
 If thou indeed hast purposed with that throng
 To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts
 Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.

400

None, such as thou, serve *them*; their servitors
 Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested; sleek their heads,
 And smug their countenances; such alone
 Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards
 Groan overcharg'd with bread, with flesh, with wine.
 Rest here content; for neither me nor these

Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
 Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
 Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st. 410

To whom Ulysses, toil-inured.

I wish thee, O Eumæus! dear to Jove
 As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
 Vouchsafed me kind, from wand'ring and from woe!
 No worse condition is of mortal man
 Than his who wanders; for the poor man, driv'n
 By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
 A thousand mis'ries, day by day, endures.
 Since thou detain'st me, then, and bidd'st me wait
 His coming, tell me if the father still 420
 Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
 He left so nearly on the verge of life?
 And lives his mother? or have both deceased
 Already, and descended to the shades?

To whom the master swine-herd thus replied.

I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
 Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,
 But supplication off'ring to the Gods
 Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
 So deeply his long-absent son he mourns, 430
 And the dear consort of his early youth,
 Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
 Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.
 She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
 And died deplorably; ¹ may never friend
 Of mine, or benefactor die as she!
 While yet she liv'd, dejected as she was,
 I found it yet some solace to converse
 With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
 Together with her lovely youngest-born 440
 The Princess Ctimena; for side by side
 We grew, and I, scarce honour'd less than she.
 But soon as our delightful prime we both
 Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
 And were requited with rich dow'r; but me
 Cloath'd handsomely with tunic and with vest,
 And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
 She order'd forth, yet loved me still the more.
 I miss her kindness now; but gracious heav'n

¹ She is said to have hanged herself.

Prosper the work on which I here attend; 450
 Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
 Refresh, sometimes, a worthy guest like thee.
 But kindness none experience I, or can,
 From fair Penelope (my mistress now)
 In word or action, so is the house curs'd
 With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
 Might they approach their mistress, and receive
 Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,
 And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
 For perquisites are ev'ry servant's joy. 460

Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
 From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
 Ev'n in thy infancy! But tell me true.
 The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes
 Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
 Surprizing thee alone, on herd or flock
 Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
 And sell thee at this Hero's house, who pay'd
 Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small? 470

To whom the master swine-herd in reply.
 Stranger! since thou art curious to be told
 My story, silent listen, and thy wine
 At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
 And such as time for sleep afford, and time
 For pleasant conf'rence; neither were it good
 That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
 Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.
 Whoever here is weary, and desires
 Early repose, let him depart to rest, 480
 And, at the peep of day, when he hath fed
 Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd;
 But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
 Supplied, will solace mutually derive
 From recollection of our sufferings past;
 For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
 Finds the recital ev'n of sorrow sweet.
 Now hear thy question satisfied; attend!
 There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
 Of such an isle) named Syria;¹ it is placed 490

¹ Not improbably the isthmus of Syracuse, an island, perhaps, or peninsula at that period, or at least imagined to be such by Homer. The birth of Diana gave fame to Ortygia. F.

Above Ortigia, and a dial owns ¹
 True to the tropic changes of the year.
 No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
 In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
 No famine knows that people, or disease
 Noisome, of all that elsewhere seize the race
 Of miserable man; but when old age
 Steals on the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
 With silver bow and bright Diana come,
 Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest. 500
 Two cities share between them all the isle,
 And both were subject to my father's sway
 Ctesius Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
 It chanced that from Phœnicia, famed for skill
 In arts marine, a vessel thither came
 By sharpers mann'd, and laden deep with toys,
 Now, in my father's family abode
 A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
 In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
 While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside 510
 The ship, a certain mariner of those
 Seduced her; for all women, ev'n the wise
 And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
 Who was she, he enquired, and whence? nor she
 Scrupled to tell at once her father's home.

I am of Sidon,² famous for her works
 In brass and steel; daughter of Arybas,
 Who rolls in affluence; Taphian pirates thence
 Stole me returning from the field, from whom
 This Chief procured me at no little cost. 520

Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
 Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
 That thou may'st once more visit the abode
 Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves?
 For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd.

To whom the woman. Even that might be,
 Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
 Assure me of a safe conveyance home.

¹ Ὀθι τροπαὶ ἡέλιου — The Translator has rendered the passage according to that interpretation of it to which several of the best expositors incline. Nothing can be so absurd as to suppose that Homer, so correct in his geography, could mean to place a Mediterranean island under the Tropic.

² A principal city of Phœnicia.

Then swear the mariners as she required,
 And, when their oath was ended, thus again 530
 The woman of Phœnicia them bespake.

Now, silence! no man, henceforth, of you all
 Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
 Or at yon fountain; lest some tattler run
 With tidings home to my old master's ear,
 Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
 In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
 But be ye close; purchase your stores in haste;
 And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
 Quick send me notice, for I mean to bring 540
 What gold soever opportune I find,
 And will my passage cheerfully defray
 With still another moveable. I nurse
 The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
 To scamper at my side; him will I bring,
 Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
 Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.

So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
 They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
 With purchased goods freighted of ev'ry kind, 550
 And when, her lading now complete, she lay
 For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
 To summon down the woman to the shore.
 A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
 Then, ent'ring at my father's gate, produced
 A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
 My mother (then at home) with all her maids
 Handling and gazing on it with delight,
 Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
 Significant, gave unobserv'd, the while, 560
 To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.
 She, thus informed, leading me by the hand
 Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
 The cups and tables which my father's guests
 Had used, (but they were to the forum gone
 For converse with their friends assembled there)
 Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
 And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child
 Accompanied, at the decline of day,
 When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore. 570
 We, stepping nimble on, soon reach'd the port

Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.
 They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleav'd
 Their liquid road, by favourable gales,
 Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night
 Continual sailed, but when Saturnian Jove
 Now bade the sev'nth bright morn illumine the skies,
 Then, shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
 At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
 Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again,
 The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
 And I survived to mourn her. But the winds
 And rolling billows them bore to the coast
 Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
 Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced
 That e'er I saw the isle in which I dwell.

580

To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief, replied.
 Eumæus! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
 Enumerating thus at large. But Jove
 Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good,
 That after num'rous sorrows thou hast reach'd
 The house of a kind master, at whose hands
 Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
 A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
 City after city of the world explored.

590

Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
 Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprized.
 Meantime the comrades of Telemachus
 Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
 Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in.
 The anchors heav'd aground,¹ and hawsers tied
 Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
 Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
 When neither hunger now, nor thirst remained
 Unsatisfied, Telemachus began.

600

Push ye the sable bark without delay
 Home to the city. I will to the field
 Among my shepherds, and, (my rural works
 Survey'd,) at eve will to the town return.
 To-morrow will I set before you wine
 And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.

610

To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
 Whither must I, my son? who, of the Chiefs

¹ The anchors were lodged on the shore, not plunged as ours.

Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me?
 Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house?

Then thus Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 I would invite thee to proceed at once
 To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
 Of kind reception, but it were a course
 Now not adviseable; for I must myself, 620
 Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
 Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears
 Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
 Weaving continual at the palace-top.
 But I will name to thee another Chief
 Whom thou may'st seek, Eurymachus, the son
 Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
 The people here reverence as a God.
 Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks
 More ardent than his rivals far, to wed 630
 My mother, and to fill my father's throne.
 But, He who dwells above, Jove only knows
 If some disastrous day be not ordain'd
 For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.

While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd,
 Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,
 A falcon; in his pounces clench'd he bore
 A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes
 Between the galley and Telemachus.
 Then, calling him apart, the prophet lock'd 640
 His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.

Not undirected by the Gods his flight
 On our right hand, Telemachus! this hawk
 Hath wing'd propitious; soon as I perceived
 I knew him ominous—In all the isle
 No family of a more royal note
 Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
 Grant heav'n, my guest! that this good word of thine
 Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share 650
 And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.
 Piræus, son of Clytius! (for of all
 My followers to the shore of Pylus, none
 More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd)

Now also to thy own abode conduct
This stranger, whom with hospitable care
Cherish and honour till myself arrive.

To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd. 660
Telemachus! however long thy stay,
Punctual I will attend him, and no want
Of hospitality shall he find with me.

So saying, he climb'd the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose,
And each, obedient, to his bench repair'd.
Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,
And lifted from the deck his glitt'ring spear,
Then, as Telemachus had bidden them,
Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose 670
The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep
And sought the city, while with nimble pace
Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd
The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,
The swine-herd, faithful to his num'rous charge.

BOOK XVI

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS dispatches Eumæus to the city to inform Penelope of his safe return from Pylus; during his absence, Ulysses makes himself known to his son. The suitors, having watched for Telemachus in vain, arrive again at Ithaca.

It was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.

Eumæus! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st; 10
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.

Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while,
As when a father folds in his embrace 20
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.

Light of my eyes, thou com'st; it is thyself,
Sweetest Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
Thou hadst departed for the Pylian coast. 30
Enter, my precious son; that I may sooth

My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
 For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
 Visitest, in the city custom'd much
 To make abode, that thou may'st witness there
 The manners of those hungry suitors proud.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 It will be so. There is great need, my friend!
 But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
 That I may look on thee, and from thy lips 40
 Learn if my mother still reside at home,
 Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
 Leaving untenanted Ulysses' bed
 To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.

To whom the master swine-herd in return.
 Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
 Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
 Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.

So saying, Eumæus at his hand received
 His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone 50
 Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire
 Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
 But him Telemachus forbidding, said—

Guest, keep thy seat; our cottage will afford
 Some other, which Eumæus will provide.

He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
 Reposed again; then good Eumæus spread
 Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
 Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.
 He, next, disposed his dishes on the board 60
 With relicts charged of yesterday; with bread,
 Alert, he heap'd the baskets; with rich wine
 His ivy cup replenish'd; and a seat
 Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
 Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast
 Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied) Telemachus, his speech
 Addressing to their gen'rous host, began.

Whence is this guest, my father? How convey'd
 Came he to Ithaca? What country boast 70
 The mariners with whom he here arrived?
 For, that on foot he found us not, is sure.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 I will with truth answer thee, O my son!

He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
 Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.
 Ev'n now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
 He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own;
 I yield him to thee; treat him as thou wilt;
 He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.

80

Then thus, Telemachus, discrete, replied.

Thy words, Eumæus, pain my very soul.

For what security can I afford

To any in my house? myself am young,

Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel

An offer'd insult, and my mother's mind

In doubtful balance hangs, if, still with me

An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,

Attentive only to her absent Lord

90

And her own good report, or shall espouse

The noblest of her wooers, and the best

Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.

But I will give him, since I find him lodg'd

A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak,

Sword double-edged, and sandals for his feet,

With convoy to the country of his choice.

Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,

And I will send him raiment, with supplies

Of all sorts, lest he burthen thee and thine.

100

But where the suitors come, there shall not he

With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride

And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer

They wound him, and through him, wound also me;

For little is it that the boldest can

Against so many; numbers will prevail.

Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.

Oh amiable and good! since even I

Am free to answer thee, I will avow

My heart within me torn by what I hear

110

Of those injurious suitors, who the house

Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.

But say—submittest thou to their controul

Willingly, or because the people, sway'd

By some response oracular, incline

Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,

Slow to assist thee—for a brother's aid

Is of importance in whatever cause.

For oh that I had youth as I have will,
Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire, 120
Or that himself might wander home again.
Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
If I would fail, ent'ring Ulysses' gate,
To be the bane and mischief of them all.

But if alone to multitudes opposed
I should perchance be foiled; nobler it were
With my own people, under my own roof
To perish, than to witness evermore 130
Their unexampled deeds, guests shoved aside,
Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
Indulging glutt'nous appetite day by day
Enormous, without measure, without end.

To whom, Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive
True answer. Enmity or hatred none
Subsists the people and myself between,
Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid 140
Is of importance in whatever cause,
For Jove hath from of old with single heirs
Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat
Except Laertes, and Laertes none
Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me
Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd.

Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;
For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also rulers here 150
In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them; they my patrimony waste
Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,
As I expect, but heav'n disposes all.

Eumæus! haste, my father! bear with speed
News to Penelope that I am safe,
And have arrived from Pylus; I will wait
Till thou return; and well beware that none 160

Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. But say beside,
Shall I not also, as I go, inform
Distress'd Laertes? who while yet he mourn'd
Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
And dieted among his menials oft
As hunger prompted him, but now, they say,
Since thy departure to the Pylion shore,
He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
And weeping, wasted even to the bone.

170

Him then Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.
For, were the ordering of all events
Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
Should be to see my father's glad return.
But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
In quest of Him, but hither speed again.
Rather request my mother that she send
Her household's governess without delay
Privately to him; she shall best inform
The ancient King that I have safe arrived.

180

He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
His sandals, to the city bent his way.
Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd
By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair
Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts,
Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood
Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
But to his son invisible; for the Gods
Appear not manifest alike to all.
The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
The sign, and, issuing through the outer court,
Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.

190

Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd!
Disclose thyself to thy own son, that, death
Concerting and destruction to your foes,
Ye may the royal city seek, nor long

200

Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.

Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs;
Swarthy again his manly hue became, 210
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage; wonder at that sight
Seiz'd on Telemachus; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspecting of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.

Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy cloaths, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heav'n. 220
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate; ah spare us, Pow'r divine!

To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.

So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then, perforce restrained.
Telemachus, (for he believed him not 230
His father yet) thus, wond'ring, spake again.

My father, said'st thou? no. Thou art not He,
But some Divinity beguiles my soul
With mock'ries to afflict me still the more;
For never mortal man could so have wrought
By his own pow'r; some interposing God
Alone could render thee both young and old,
For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
But wear'st the semblance, now, of those in heav'n!

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 240
Telemachus! it is not well, my son!
That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.
Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.
Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes
Which I have borne, I visit once again

My native country in the twentieth year.
 This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,
 She cloath'd me even with what form she would,
 For so she can. Now poor I seem and old, 250
 Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.
 The Gods who dwell in yonder heav'n, with ease
 Dignify or debase a mortal man.

So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus
 His arms around his father's neck, and wept.
 Desire intense of lamentation seized
 On both; soft murmurs utt'ring, each indulged
 His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,
 (Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest 260
 Some swain hath stol'n her yet unfeather'd young.
 So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd
 Of tend'rest grief, nor had the setting sun
 Cessation of their weeping seen, had not
 Telemachus his father thus address'd.

What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,
 My father! and what country boast the crew?
 For, that on foot thou not arriv'dst, is sure,

Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.
 My son! I will explicit all relate. 270
 Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons
 I came, a race accusom'd to convey
 Strangers who visit them across the Deep.
 Me, o'er the billows in a rapid bark
 Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
 They lay'd; rich gifts they gave me also, brass,
 Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
 Which, warn'd from heav'n, I have in caves conceal'd.
 By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
 That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
 Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know 280
 How pow'rful, certainly, and who they are,
 And consultation with my dauntless heart
 May hold, if we be able to contend
 Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.

Then, answer thus his son, discrete, return'd.
 My father! thy renown hath ever rung
 In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
 In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
 But terribly thou speak'st; amazement-fixt

I hear; can two a multitude oppose, 290
 And valiant warriors all? for neither ten
 Are they, nor twenty, but more num'rous far.
 Learn, now, their numbers. Fifty youths and two
 Came from Dulichium; they are chosen men,
 And six attendants follow in their train;
 From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
 Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons

Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
 Herself, her twelve chief rulers; Medon, too,
 Is there the herald, and the bard divine, 300
 With other two, intendants of the board.
 Should we within the palace, we alone,
 Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
 Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
 Frustrating thy return. But recollect—
 Think, if thou canst, on whose confed'rate arm
 Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.

To him replied his patient father bold.
 I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.
 Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire 310
 Alone suffice? or need we other aids?

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
 Though throned above the clouds; for their controul
 Is universal both in earth and heav'n.

To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.
 Not long will they from battle stand aloof,
 When once, within my palace, in the strength
 Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge
 The suitors. But thyself at early dawn 320
 Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there
 With that imperious throng; me in due time
 Eumæus to the city shall conduct,
 In form a miserable beggar old.

But should they with dishonourable scorn
 Insult me, thou unmov'd my wrongs endure,
 And should they even drag me by the feet
 Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath
 Refraining, gently counsel them to cease
 From such extravagance; but well I know 330
 That cease they will not, for their hour is come.
 And mark me well; treasure what now I say

Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,
 Suggest the measure, then, shaking my brows,
 I will admonish thee; thou, at the sign,
 Remove what arms soever in the hall
 Remain, and in the upper palace safe
 Dispose them; should the suitors, missing them,
 Perchance interrogate thee, then reply
 Gently—I have removed them from the smoke; 340
 For they appear no more the arms which erst
 Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
 But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
 This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
 Jove taught me; lest, intoxicate with wine,
 Ye should assault each other in your brawls,
 Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
 Itself of arms incites to their abuse.
 Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,
 Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force 350
 Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise
 Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.
 This word store also in remembrance deep—
 If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,
 Then, of Ulysses to his home returned
 Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
 Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
 The menials any, or ev'n Penelope,
 That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
 Of our domestic women, and may prove 360
 Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
 And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
 So gracious and so worthy to be loved.

Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
 Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught
 That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
 But this I think not likely to avail
 Or thee or me; ponder it yet again;
 For tedious were the task, farm after farm
 To visit of those servants, proving each, 370
 And the proud suitors merciless devour
 Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught.
 Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
 Advise) who slights thee of the female train,
 And who is guiltless; but I would not try

From house to house the men, far better proved
 Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heav'n
 Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.

Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,
 Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylian shore 380
 Had brought Telemachus with all his band.
 Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
 His lusty followers haled her far aground,
 Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
 Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd.
 Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
 An herald charg'd with tidings to the Queen,
 That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
 Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent 390
 Home to the city; lest the matchless dame
 Should still deplore the absence of her son.
 They, then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
 Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
 And at the palace of the godlike Chief
 Arriving, compass'd by the female throng
 Inquisitive, the herald thus began.

Thy son, O Queen! is safe; ev'n now return'd.
 Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
 His message also from her son received,
 And, his commission punctually discharged, 400
 Leaving the palace, sought his home again.

Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
 The suitors; issuing forth, on the outside
 Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
 When Polybus' son, Eurymachus, began.

My friends! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
 By us impossible, in our despight
 Telemachus hath atchieved. Haste! launch we forth
 A sable bark, our best, which let us man
 With mariners expert, who, rowing forth 410
 Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.

Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
 Amphinomus beheld a bark arrived
 Just then in port; he saw them furling sail,
 And seated with their oars in hand; he laugh'd
 Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake.

Our message may be spared. Lo! they arrive.
 Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,

Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs.

420

He spake; they, rising, hasted to the shore.
Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
To his own home. Then, all, to council those
Assembling, neither elder of the land
Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.

Ah! how the Gods have rescued him! all day
Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
Successive watch'd; and, when the sun declined,
We never slept on shore, but all night long
Till sacred dawn arose, plow'd the abyss,
Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
In our despight, safe to his home again.
But frame we yet again means to destroy
Telemachus; ah—let not Him escape!

430

For end of this our task, while he survives,
None shall be found, such prudence he displays
And wisdom, neither are the people now
Unanimous our friends as heretofore.

440

Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
To council; for he will not long delay,
But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
Amid them all, how we in vain devised
His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
From our own country to a distant land.—

Prevent him, therefore, quickly; in the field
Slay him, or on the road; so shall his wealth
And his possessions on ourselves devolve
Which we will share equally, but his house
Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.
Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather chuse
That he should live and occupy entire
His patrimony, then, no longer, here
Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
But let us all with spousal gifts produced
From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
Leaving her in full freedom to espouse
Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.

450

460

He ceased; the assembly silent sat and mute,
 Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
 Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son, himself,
 Of King Aretias. He had thither led
 The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
 Corn-clad of green Dulichium had arrived,
 And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
 Penelope, for he was just and wise,
 And thus, well-counselling the rest, began.

470

Not I, my friends! far be the thought from me
 To slay Telemachus! it were a deed
 Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
 First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heav'n,
 And if Jove's oracle that course approve,
 I will encourage you, and will myself
 Be active in his death; but if the Gods
 Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.

So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
 Arising then, into Ulysses' house
 They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.

480

A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
 Penelope; she purposed to appear
 Before her suitors, whose design to slay
 Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd,
 The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
 Toward the hall with her attendant train
 She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
 Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
 The columns standing of the stately dome,
 And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
 Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.

490

Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
 To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
 Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech
 Pre-eminent, but such wast never thou.
 Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
 To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
 Rejectest thou the suppliant's pray'r,¹ which Jove
 Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods. 500
 Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
 Here, when he fled before the people's wrath

¹ Alluding probably to entreaties made to him at some former time by herself and Telemachus, that he would not harm them. Clarke.

Whom he had irritated by a wrong
 Which, with a band of Taphian robbers joined,
 He offer'd to the Thesprots, our allies?
 They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
 All his delights and his possessions waste,
 But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
 Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
 Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife,
 Slaying his son, and filling me with woe. 510
 But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest.

To whom the son of Polybus replied,
 Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
 Take courage, fair Penelope, and chace
 These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
 The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,
 And faculty of sight retain, shall harm
 Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
 And thus will I perform; his blood shall stream 520
 A sable current from my lance's point
 That moment; for the city-waster Chief
 Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
 Hath fill'd my infant grasp with sav'ry food,
 And giv'n me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold
 Telemachus of all men most my friend,
 Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
 Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.

So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
 Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought 530
 Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
 Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
 Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
 Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.

And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd
 Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
 Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
 When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
 Ulysses, at the stroke rend'ring him old,
 And his apparel sordid as before, 540
 Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
 Penelope, and let the secret forth.

Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
 Noble Eumæus! thou art come; what news
 Bring'st from the city? Have the warrior band

Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
The port again, or wait they still for me?

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd
To make my message known, and to return.

550

But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
From thy companions, met me on the way,
Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,
For this I saw. Passing above the town
Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones
To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark

Ent'ring the port; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were num'rous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge.
Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.

560

He spake, and by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.
Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,
They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger, now, and thirst both sated, all
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

BOOK XVII

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS returns to the city, and relates to his mother the principal passages of his voyage; Ulysses, conducted by Eumæus, arrives there also, and enters among the suitors, having been known only by his old dog Argus, who dies at his feet. The curiosity of Penelope being excited by the account which Eumæus gives her of Ulysses, she orders him immediately into her presence, but Ulysses postpones the interview till evening, when the suitors having left the palace, there shall be no danger of interruption. Eumæus returns to his cottage.

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
When the illustrious offspring of divine
Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet;
He seiz'd his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
And to the city meditating quick
Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.

Father! I seek the city, to convince
My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
I judge, and lamentation shall not cease
Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
Thyself, this hapless guest, that he may beg
Provision there, a morsel and a drop
From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.
I cannot, vext and harass'd as I am,
Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Nor is it my desire to be detained.
Better the mendicant in cities seeks
His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
Than in the villages. I am not young,
Nor longer of an age that well accords
With rural tasks, nor could I all perform
That it might please a master to command.
Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
Before the hearth, and when the risen sun

Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
 Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st,
 For this is a vile garb; the frosty air 30
 Of morning would benumb me thus attired,
 And, as ye say, the city is remote.

He ended, and Telemachus in haste
 Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went
 With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts
 Arriving, he reclined his spear against
 A column, and proceeded to the hall.
 Him Euryclea, first, his nurse, perceived,
 While on the variegated seats she spread
 Their fleecy cov'ring; swift with tearful eyes 40
 She flew to him, and the whole female train
 Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
 Clasp'ing him, and his forehead and his neck
 Kissing affectionate; then came, herself,
 As golden Venus or Diana fair,
 Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
 The chaste Penelope; with tears she threw
 Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
 And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint
 Maternal, in wing'd accents thus began. 50

Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes! my son!
 My lov'd Telemachus! I had no hope
 To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
 For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
 From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire.
 But haste; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Ah mother! let my sorrows rest, nor me
 From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
 But, bathed and habited in fresh attire, 60
 With all the maidens of thy train ascend
 To thy superior chamber, there to vow
 A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
 When Jove shall have avenged our num'rous wrongs.
 I seek the forum, there to introduce
 A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
 Whom sending forward with my noble band,
 I bade Piræus to his own abode
 Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
 The stranger, till I should myself arrive. 70

He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
 She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
 Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
 Would Jove but recompense her num'rous wrongs.
 Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
 Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
 Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
 And ev'ry eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
 The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
 And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts. 80
 He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
 A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
 And Halytherses, long his father's friends
 Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
 Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
 Toward the forum; nor Telemachus
 Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
 And was accosted by Piræus thus.

Sir! send thy menial women to bring home
 The precious charge committed to my care, 90
 Thy gifts at Menelaus' hands received.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Piræus! wait; for I not yet foresee
 The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
 My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
 And parcel my inheritance by lot,
 I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
 But should I with success plan for them all
 A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
 Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend. 100

So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
 Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
 Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
 And plung'd his feet into a polish'd bath.
 There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
 From the attendant maidens each received
 Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
 Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
 A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
 And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands, 110
 And spread the polish'd table, which with food
 Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
 The mistress of the household charge supplied.

Meantime, beside a column of the dome
 His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd
 Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
 Stretch'd forth their hands, and, hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied, Penelope began.

Telemachus! I will ascend again,
 And will repose me on my woeful bed; 120
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
 Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
 With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
 Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
 Had occupied the house again, of all
 That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast)
 Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.

Her answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
 Mother, at thy request I will with truth
 Relate the whole. At Pylus shore arrived 130
 We Nestor found, Chief of the Pylian race.
 Receiving me in his august abode,
 He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
 As a glad father shews to his own son
 Long-lost and newly found; so Nestor me,
 And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
 But yet assured me that he nought had heard
 From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
 Whether alive or dead; with his own steeds
 He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence 140
 To spear-famed Menelaus, Atreus' son.
 There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
 Auth'ress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
 The Hero Menelaus then enquired
 What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale
 Of Lacedæmon; plainly I rehearsed
 The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.

Ye Gods! they are ambitious of the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But, as it chanceth when the hart hath laid 150
 Her fawns new-yeand and sucklings yet, to rest
 In some resistless lion's den, she roams,
 Meantime, the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
 Returning soon, both her and hers destroys,
 So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.

Jove! Pallas! and Apollo! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
 He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced,
 Ulysses, now, might mingle with his foes!
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.

160

But thy enquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Ancient of the Deep¹
 I have received will utter, hiding nought.
 The God declared that he had seen thy sire
 In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd
 An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
 Calypso, wanting also means by which
 To reach the country of his birth again,
 For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
 To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.

170

So Menelaus spake, the spear-renown'd.
 My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd—
 And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
 Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.

He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
 So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
 The godlike Theoclymenus began.

180

Consort revered of Laertiades!
 Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
 For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
 Be Jove of all in heav'n my witness first,
 Then this thy hospitable board, and, last,
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
 Ulysses, at whose hearth I have arrived,²
 That, even now, within his native isle
 Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
 Witness of these enormities, and seeds
 Sowing of dire destruction for his foes;
 So sure an augury, while on the deck
 Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
 And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.

190

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 Grant heav'n, my guest, that this good word of thine

¹ Proteus.

² The hearth was the altar on which the lares or household-gods were worshipped.

Fail not! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
 And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd 200
 The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
 Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
 Of their contentions, sports, and clamours rude.
 But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
 And from the pastures on all sides the sheep
 Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
 (For he of all the heralds pleas'd them most,
 And waited at the board) them thus address'd.

Enough of play, young princes! ent'ring now
 The house, prepare we sedulous our feast, 210
 Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.

He spake, whose admonition pleas'd. At once
 All, rising, sought the palace; there arrived,
 Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
 Or couch he spread, then, brisk, to slaughter fell
 Of many a victim; sheep and goats and brawns
 They slew, all fatt'd, and a pastur'd ox,
 Hast'ning the banquet; nor with less dispatch
 Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
 To seek the town, when thus the swain began. 220

My guest! since thy fixt purpose is to seek
 This day the city as my master bade,
 Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
 A keeper of our herds, yet, through respect
 And rev'rence of his orders, whose reproof
 I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,
 I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
 For day already is far-spent, and soon
 The air of even-tide will chill thee more.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 230
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. Let us depart,
 And lead, thyself, the way; but give me, first,
 (If thou have one already hewn) a staff
 To lean on, for ye have described the road
 Rugged, and oft-times dang'rous to the foot.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
 Eumæus gratified him with a staff,

And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept 240
 By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
 Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
 Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.
 But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
 They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd
 The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
 Pellucid all the citizens supplied,
 (Ithacus had that fountain framed of old
 With Neritus and Polyctor, over which
 A grove of water-nourish'd alders hung 250
 Circular on all sides, while cold the rill
 Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood
 The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd
 With sacrifice frequented, still, and pray'r)
 Melantheus, son of Dolius, at that fount
 Met them; the chosen goats of ev'ry flock,
 With two assistants, from the field he drove,
 The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,
 In surly accent boorish, such as fired
 Ulysses with resentment, thus began. 260

Ay—this is well—The villain leads the vile—
 Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.
 Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct
 This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,
 Defiler base of banquets? many a post
 Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs
 Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,
 Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.
 Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard
 Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply 270
 My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes
 Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.
 But no such useful arts hath he acquired,
 Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort
 From others food for his unsated maw.
 But mark my prophecy, for it is true,
 At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,
 His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd
 Against them by the offended princes there.

He spake, and drawing nigh, with his rais'd foot, 280
 Insolent as he was and brutish, smote
 Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path

The firm-set Chief, who, doubtful, mused awhile
 Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
 To slay him, or uplifting him on high,
 Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath
 Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
 Him then Eumæus with indignant look
 Rebuking, rais'd his hands, and fervent pray'd.

Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove! 290
 If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
 The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
 This my request. O let the Hero soon,
 Conducted by some Deity, return!
 So shall he quell that arrogance which safe
 Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
 The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.

To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
 Melantheus. Marvellous! how rare a speech
 The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send 300
 Far hence at a convenient time on board
 My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
 I would, that he who bears the silver bow
 As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
 In his own house, or that the suitors might,
 As that same wand'rer shall return no more!

He said, and them left pacing slow along,
 But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arriv'd;
 There ent'ring bold, he with the suitors sat
 Opposite to Eurymachus, for him 310
 He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
 Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
 Directress of the household gave him bread.
 And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
 Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre,
 Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
 He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.

This house, Eumæus! of Ulysses seems
 Passing magnificent, and to be known
 With ease for his among a thousand more. 320
 One pile supports another, and a wall
 Crested with battlements surrounds the court;
 Firm, too, the folding doors all force of man
 Defy; but num'rous guests, as I perceive,
 Now feast within; witness the sav'ry steam

Fast-fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
Divine associate of the festive board.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Thou hast well-guess'd; no wonder, thou art quick
On ev'ry theme; but let us well forecast
This business. Wilt thou, ent'ring first, thyself,
The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
Me leaving here? or shall I lead the way
While thou remain'st behind? yet linger not,
Lest, seeing thee without, some servant strike
Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.

33°

Him answer'd, then, the patient Hero bold.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Lead thou the way
Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows
To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
Learn'd patience. Follow, next, what follow may!
But, to suppress the appetite, I deem
Impossible; the stomach is a source
Of ills to man, an avaricious gulph
Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
Seas travers'd, and fierce battles waged remote.

34°

Thus they discoursing stood; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since, himself, but rarely used,
Departing, first, to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chace
Of wild goat, hart and hare; but now he lodg'd
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should, in due time, manure his spacious fields.
There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul
All over, Argus; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old.
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.

35°

36°

I can but wonder seeing such a dog

Thus lodg'd, Eumæus! beautiful in form
 He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been 370
 As fleet as fair I know not; rather such
 Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
 Their tables, nourish'd more for shew than use.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 He is the dog of one dead far remote.
 But had he now such feat-performing strength
 As when Ulysses left him, going hence
 To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,
 Astonish'd, his agility and force.
 He never in the sylvan deep recess 380
 The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
 Their steps infallible; but he hath now
 No comfort, for (the master dead afar)
 The heedless servants care not for his dog.
 Domestics, missing once their Lord's controul,
 Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks;
 For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
 At once the half of that man's worth away.

He said, and, ent'ring at the portal, join'd
 The suitors. Then his destiny released 390
 Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
 Ulysses in the twentieth year restored.

Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
 Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
 Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast
 His eye around, and seeing vacant there
 The seat which the dispenser of the feast
 Was wont to occupy while he supplied
 The num'rous guests, planted it right before 400
 Telemachus, and at his table sat,
 On which the herald placed for him his share
 Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
 Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
 The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
 Staff-propp'd, and in loose tatters foul attired.
 Within the portal on the ashen sill
 He sat, and, seeming languid, lean'd against
 A cypress pillar by the builder's art
 Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
 Then took Telemachus a loaf entire 410
 Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh

A portion large as his two hands contained,
And, beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.

These to the stranger; whom advise to ask
Some dole from ev'ry suitor; bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

He spake; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more
The suitors, one by one; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

420

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant ev'ry good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete
Accomplishment of all that he desires!

He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceas'd to eat,

430

Then also ceas'd the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impell'd the Chief

Crusts to collect, or any pittance small
At ev'ry suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust; yet deliv'rance none
From evil she design'd for any there.

From left to right¹ his progress he began
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng,
As one familiar with the beggar's art.

440

They, pitying, gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and th' assembly thus address'd.

Hear me, ye suitors of th' illustrious Queen!
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Elsewhere; the swine-herd brought him; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.

So he; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way

450

¹ That he might begin auspiciously. Wine was served in the same direction. F.

Into the city? are we not enough
 Infested with these troublers of our feasts?
 Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat
 At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
 This fellow hither, found we know not where?

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Antinoüs! though of high degree, thou speak'st
 Not wisely. What man to another's house 460
 Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
 He be of those who by profession serve
 The public, prophet, healer of disease,
 Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
 Whose music may exhilarate the guests?
 These, and such only, are in ev'ry land
 Call'd to the banquet; none invites the poor,
 Who much consume, and no requital yield.
 But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st
 Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me; 470
 Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
 Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Peace! answer not verbose a man like him.
 Antinoüs hath a tongue accustom'd much
 To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.

Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
 Antinoüs! as a father for his son
 Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
 The stranger harshly hence; but God forbid!¹ 480
 Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
 Exhort thee to it; neither, in this cause,
 Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
 Whatever menial throughout all the house
 Of famed Ulysses. Ah! within thy breast
 Dwells no such thought; thou lov'st not to impart
 To others, but to gratify thyself.

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
 High-soaring and intemp'rate in thy speech
 How hast thou said, Telemachus? Would all 490
 As much bestow on him, he should not seek
 Admittance here again three months to come.

So saying, he seized the stool which, banqueting,
 He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath

¹ Here again *Θεός* occurs in the abstract.

The table forth advanced it into view.
 The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh
 Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,
 Returning to his threshold, there to taste
 The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
 Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd.

500

Kind sir! vouchsafe to me! for thou appear'st
 Not least, but greatest of the Achaians here,
 And hast a kingly look. It might become
 Thee therefore above others to bestow,
 So should I praise thee wheresoe'er I roam.

I also lived the happy owner once
 Of such a stately mansion, and have giv'n
 To num'rous wand'ers (whencesoe'er they came
 All that they needed; I was also served
 By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
 The envied owner opulent and blest.

510

But Jove (for so it pleas'd him) hath reduced
 My all to nothing, prompting me, in league
 With rovers of the Deep, to sail afar
 To Ægypt, for my sure destruction there.
 Within th' Ægyptian stream my barks well-oar'd
 I station'd, and, enjoining strict my friends
 To watch them close-attendant at their side,
 Commanded spies into the hill-tops; but they,
 Under the impulse of a spirit rash

520

And hot for quarrel, the well-cultur'd fields
 Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
 Their wives and little-ones, and slew the men.
 Ere long, the loud alarm their city reach'd.
 Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
 With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
 Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
 Struck all my people; none found courage more
 To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on ev'ry side.

There, num'rous by the glitt'ring spear we fell
 Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
 Alive to servitude; but me they gave
 To Dmetor, King in Cyprus, Jasus' son;
 He entertained me liberally, and thence
 This land I reach'd, but poor and woe-begone.

530

Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
 What dæmon introduced this nuisance here,

This troubler of our feast? stand yonder, keep
 Due distance from my table, or expect
 To see an *Ægypt* and a *Cyprus* worse 540
 Than those, bold mendicant and void of shame!
 Thou hauntest each, and, inconsiderate, each
 Gives to thee, because gifts at other's cost
 Are cheap, and, plentifully serv'd themselves,
 They squander, heedless, viands not their own.

To whom *Ulysses* while he slow retired.
 Gods! how illib'ral with that specious form!
 Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
 From thy own board, who at another's fed
 So nobly, canst thou not spare a crust to me. 550

He spake; then raged *Antinoüs* still the more,
 And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.

Take such dismissal now as thou deserv'st,
 Opprobrious! hast thou dared to scoff at me?
 So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint
 Of his right shoulder smote him; firm as rock
 He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
 But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
 Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
 His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged 560
 He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.

Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
 Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
 Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow.
 But me *Antinoüs* struck for that I ask'd
 Food from him merely to appease the pangs
 Of hunger, source of num'rous ills to man.
 If then the poor man have a God t' avenge
 His wrongs, I pray to him that death my seize 570
Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive!

To whom *Antinoüs* answer thus return'd.
 Son of *Eupithes*. Either seated there
 Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still;
 Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot
 We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.

He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
 Ev'n his own proud companions censured him.

Antinoüs! thou didst not well to smite
 The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd 580

For ever, if there be a God in heav'n;¹
 For, in similitude of strangers oft,
 The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
 Repair to populous cities, where they mark
 The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.

So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
 But in his heart Telemachus that blow
 Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
 He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
 Terrible things. Penelope, meantime,
 Told of the wand'rer so abused beneath
 Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.

So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
 Thee also. Then Eurynome replied,
 Oh might our pray'rs prevail, none of them all
 Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.

Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 Nurse! they are odious all, for that alike
 All teem with mischief; but Antinoüs' looks
 Remind me ever of the gloom of death.
 A stranger hath arrived who, begging, roams
 The house, (for so his penury enjoins)
 The rest have giv'n him, and have fill'd his bag
 With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
 His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him.

While thus the Queen conversing with her train
 In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made
 Plenteous repast. Then, calling to her side
 Eumæus, thus she signified her will.

Eumæus, noble friend! bid now approach
 Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
 If he has seen Ulysses, or have heard
 Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
 For much a wand'rer by his garb he seems.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Were those Achaians silent, thou shouldst hear,
 O Queen! a tale that would console thy heart.

¹ *Εἰ δὲ πῶς τις ἐπουρανίος θεὸς ἐστὶ*

Eustathius, and Clarke after him, understand an aposiopesis here, as if the speaker meant to say—what if there should be? or—supposethere should be? But the sentence seems to fall in better with what follows interpreted as above, and it is a sense of the passage not unwarranted by the opinion of other commentators. See Schauffelbergerus.

Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
 Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
 A fugitive, and came direct to me) 620
 But half untold his hist'ry still remains.

As when his eye one fixes on a bard
 From heav'n instructed in such themes as charm
 The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
 The people press, insatiable, to hear,
 So, in my cottage, seated at my side,
 That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
 Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
 Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides,
 And thence he hath arrived, after great loss, 630
 A suppliant to the very earth abased;
 He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
 He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
 And that he comes laden with riches home.

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied.
 Haste; call him. I would hear, myself, his tale.
 Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate
 Sport jocular, or here; their hearts are light,
 For their possessions are secure; *their* wine 640
 None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own,
 While my abode, day after day, themselves
 Haunting, my beeves and sheep and fatted goats
 Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
 Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues;
 For no such friend as was Ulysses once
 Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
 Revisit once his native shores again,
 Then, aided by his son, he should avenge,
 Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.

Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force, 650
 That all the palace rang; his mother laugh'd,
 And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.

Haste—bid him hither—hear'st thou not the sneeze
 Propitious of my son? oh might it prove
 A presage of inevitable death
 To all these revellers! may none escape!
 Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
 Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
 Mantle and tunic both for his reward.

She spake; he went, and where Ulysses sat 660

Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Penelope, my venerable friend!
 Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.
 Oppress'd by num'rous troubles, she desires
 To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord.
 And should the event verify thy report,
 Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)
 Tunic and mantle; but she gives no more;
 Thy sustenance thou must, as now, obtain,¹
 Begging it at their hands who chuse to give. 670

Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
 Eumæus! readily I can relate
 Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen
 Icarius' daughter; for of him I know
 Much, and have suff'ered sorrows like his own.
 But dread I feel of this imperious throng
 Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts
 Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.
 And, even now, when for no fault of mine
 Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd 680
 My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus
 Nor any interposed to stay his arm.
 Now, therefore, let Penelope, although
 Impatient, till the sun descend postpone
 Her questions; then she may enquire secure
 When comes her husband, and may nearer place
 My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad
 Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.

He ceas'd; at whose reply Eumæus sought
 Again the Queen, but ere he yet had pass'd 690
 The threshold, thus she greeted his return.

Com'st thou alone, Eumæus? why delays
 The invited wand'rer? dreads he other harm?
 Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe
 Fills him? the bashful poor are poor indeed.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 He hath well spoken; none who would decline
 The rudeness of this contumelious throng
 Could answer otherwise; thee he entreats
 To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen, 700
 Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,

¹ This seems added by Eumæus to cut off from Ulysses the hope that might otherwise tempt him to use fiction.

To hold thy conf'rence with the guest, alone,

Then answer thus Penelope return'd.

The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none
Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.

So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)

The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

710

Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm;
For num'rous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail!

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.

So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither; I will keep,
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.

720

He ended; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and, both with wine and food
Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

BOOK XVIII

ARGUMENT

THE beggar Irus arrives at the palace; a combat takes place between him and Ulysses, in which Irus is by one blow vanquished. Penelope appears to the suitors, and having reminded them of the presents which she had a right to expect from them, receives a gift from each. Eurymachus, provoked by a speech of Ulysses, flings a foot-stool at him, which knocks down the cup-bearer; a general tumult is the consequence, which continues, till by the advice of Telemachus, seconded by Amphinomus, the suitors retire to their respective homes.

Now came a public mendicant, a man
Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
Of Ithaca; one never sated yet
With food or drink; yet muscle had he none,
Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show.
Arnæus was the name which at his birth
His mother gave him, but the youthful band
Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
To drive Ulysses forth from his own home,
And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.

10

Forth from the porch, old man! lest by the foot
I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
Wink on me, and by signs give me command
To drag thee hence? nor is it aught but shame
That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
Thou force me to adjust our diff'rence.

To whom Ulysses, low'ring dark, replied.
Peace, fellow! neither word nor deed of mine
Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon,
However plentiful, which thou receiv'st.
The sill may hold us both; thou dost not well
To envy others; thou appear'st like me
A vagrant; plenty is the gift of heav'n.
But urge me not to trial of our fists,
Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.

20

So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
 More tranquil here; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
 Ulysses' mansion, never to return. 30

Then answer'd Irus, kindling with disdain.
 Gods! with what volubility of speech
 The table-hunter prates, like an old hag
 Collied with chimney-smutch! but ah beware!
 For I intend thee mischief, and to dash
 With both hands ev'ry grinder from thy gums,
 As men untooth a pig pilf'ring the corn.
 Come—gird thee, that all here may view the strife—
 But how wilt thou oppose one young as I?

Thus on the threshold of the lofty gate 40
 They, wrangling, chafed each other, whose dispute
 The high-born youth Antinoüs mark'd; he laugh'd
 Delighted, and the suitors thus address'd.

Oh friends! no pastime ever yet occur'd
 Pleasant as this which, now, the Gods themselves
 Afford us. Irus and the stranger brawl
 As they would box. Haste—let us urge them on.

He said; at once loud-laughing all arose;
 The ill-clad disputants they round about
 Encompass'd, and Antinoüs thus began. 50

Attend ye noble suitors to my voice.
 Two paunches lie of goats here on the fire,
 Which fill'd with fat and blood we set apart
 For supper; he who conquers, and in force
 Superior proves, shall freely take the paunch
 Which he prefers, and shall with us thenceforth
 Feast always; neither will we here admit
 Poor man beside to beg at our repasts.

He spake, whom all approved; next, artful Chief
 Ulysses thus, dissembling, them address'd. 60

Princes! unequal is the strife between
 A young man and an old with mis'ry worn;
 But hunger, always counsellor of ill,
 Me moves to fight, that many a bruise received,
 I may be foil'd at last. Now swear ye all
 A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake
 Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
 Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.

He ceas'd, and, as he bade, all present swore
 A solemn oath; then thus, amid them all 70

Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.

Guest! if thy courage and thy manly mind
 Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
 Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find
 Yet other foes to cope with; I am here
 In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
 Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
 Discrete, accord unanimous with me.

He ceas'd, whom all approved. Then, with his rags
 Ulysses braced for decency his loins 80
 Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
 Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
 His chest and arms robust; while, at his side,
 Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more
 Minerva stood; the assembly with fixt eyes
 Astonish'd gazed on him, and, looking full
 On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.

Irus shall be in Irus found no more.
 He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
 And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid! 90

So he—meantime in Irus' heart arose
 Horrible tumult; yet, his loins by force
 Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
 Pale, and his flesh all quiv'ring as he came;
 Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked.

Now, wherefore liv'st, and why wast ever born
 Thou mountain-mass of earth! if such dismay
 Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
 Ancient as he, and worn with many woes?
 But mark, I threaten not in vain; should he 100
 O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
 To Echetus thou go'st; my sable bark
 Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
 Enemy of mankind; of nose and ears
 He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel,
 And tearing by the roots the parts away¹
 That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.

He said; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
 Shook under him; into the middle space
 They led him, and each raised his hands on high. 110

¹ Tradition says that Echetus, for a love-affair, condemned his daughter to lose her eyes, and to grind iron barley-grains, while her lover was doomed to suffer what Antinoüs threatens to Irus. F.

Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
 Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
 At once, or fell him with a managed blow.
 To smite with managed force at length he chose
 As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength,
 He should be known. With elevated fists
 Both stood; him Irus on the shoulder struck,
 But he his adversary on the neck
 Pash'd close beneath his ear; he split the bones,
 And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth. 120
 With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth
 Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.

The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
 In glad surprize, laugh'd all their breath away.
 Then, through the vestibule, and right across
 The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
 Into the portico, where propping him
 Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
 In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.

There seated now, dogs drive and swine away, 130
 Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme controul
 O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
 Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He threw suspended by its leathern twist,
 And tow'rd the threshold turning, sat again,
 They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
 Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.

Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies 140
 Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatsoe'er it be,
 Thy heart's desire! who hast our ears reliev'd
 From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
 Soon to Epirus he shall go dispatch'd
 To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.

So they, to whose propitious words the Chief
 Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed
 The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
 Two loaves, selected from the rest; he fill'd
 A goblet also, drank to him, and said,

My father, hail! O stranger, be thy lot 150
 Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard!

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st

With much discretion, who art also son
 Of such a sire, whose fair report I know,
 Dulichian Nysus, opulent and good.
 Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
 Judicious; hear me, therefore; mark me well.
 Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
 No creature weak as man; for while the Gods 160
 Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
 Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn;
 But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
 Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind;
 For such as the complexion of his lot
 By the appointment of the Sire of all,
 Such is the colour of the mind of man.
 I, too, have been familiar in my day
 With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
 And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought 170
 Of my own father's and my brethren's pow'r.
 Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
 Use modestly what gift soe'er of heav'n.
 So do not these. These ever bent I see
 On deeds injurious, the possessions large
 Consuming, and dishonouring the wife
 Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
 Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
 Ev'n at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
 Steal hence in time! ah, meet not his return 180
 To his own country! for they will not part,
 (He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
 If once he enter at these gates again!

He ended, and, libation pouring, quaff'd
 The generous juice, then in the prince's hand
 Replaced the cup; he, pensive, and his head
 Inclining low, pass'd from him; for his heart
 Forboded ill; yet 'scaped not even he,
 But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
 To the heroic arm and spear resign'd 190
 Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
 The seat whence he had ris'n, he sat again.

Minerva then, Goddess, cærulean-eyed,
 Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
 Before the suitors; so to expose the more
 Their drift iniquitous, and that herself

More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd,¹
And, bursting into laughter, thus began.

I wish, Eurynome! (who never felt
That wish till now) though I detest them all, 200
To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
I will admonish, for his good, my son,
Not to associate with that lawless crew
Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend.

Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
My daughter! wisely hast thou said and well.
Go! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
Without reserve; but shew not there thy cheeks 210
Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
And he is now bearded, and hath attained
That age which thou wast wont with warmest pray'r
To implore the Gods that he might live to see.

Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
To bathe, Eurynome! or to anoint
My face with oil; for all my charms the Gods
Inhabitants of Olympus then destroy'd, 220
When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
Hippodamia and Autonoe
That they attend me to the hall, and wait
Beside me there; for decency forbids
That I should enter to the men, alone.

She ceas'd, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.

But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarus' daughter; on her couch 230
Reclining, soon as she reclin'd, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.
Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess cloath'd her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face
She with ambrosia purified, with such
As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance

¹ This seems the sort of laughter intended by the word *Αχρηλορ*.

She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
 Beneath her touch, and ampler size she grew, 240
 And fairer than the elephantine bone
 Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
 Divine, the awful Deity retired.

And now, loud-prattling as they came, arriv'd
 Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound,
 She wip'd away a tear, and thus she said.

Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
 Hath here involved. O would that by a death
 As gentle chaste Diana would herself
 This moment set me free, that I might waste 250
 My life no longer in heart-felt regret
 Of a lamented husband's various worth
 And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!

She said, and through her chambers' stately door
 Issuing, descended; neither went she sole,
 But with those two fair menials of her train.

Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
 In presence of the num'rous guests, beneath
 The portal of the stately dome she stood
 Between her maidens, with her lucid veil 260
 Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then, ev'ry knee
 Trembled, and ev'ry heart with am'rous heat
 Dissolv'd, her charms all coveting alike,
 While to Telemachus her son she spake.

Telemachus! thou art no longer wise
 As once thou wast, and even when a child.
 For thriven as thou art, and at full size
 Arriv'd of man, so fair proportion'd, too,
 That ev'n a stranger, looking on thy growth
 And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born, 270
 Yet is thy intellect still immature.

For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
 To be abused in thy own palace? how?
 Know'st not that if the stranger seated here
 Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine?

Her answer'd, then, Telemachus discrete.
 I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
 Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
 Able to mark and to discern between
 Evil and good, child as I lately was, 280
 Although I find not promptitude of thought

Sufficient always, overaw'd and check'd
 By such a multitude, all bent alike
 On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.
 But Irus and the stranger have not fought,
 Urged by the suitors, and the stranger prov'd
 Victorious; yes—heav'n knows how much I wish
 That, (in the palace some, some in the court)
 The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
 Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs,
 Even as that same Irus, while I speak,
 With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
 Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
 Erect, or to regain his proper home.

290

So they; and now addressing to the Queen
 His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed.

O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
 Throughout Iasian Argos¹ view thy charms,
 Discrete Penelope! more suitors still
 Assembling in thy courts would banquet here
 From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
 In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.

300

To whom replied Penelope discrete.
 The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
 My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
 Could he, returning, my domestic charge
 Himself intend, far better would my fame
 Be so secured, and wider far diffused.

But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
 Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
 Claspings my wrist with his right hand, he said.

310

My love! for I imagine not that all
 The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
 Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,
 Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,
 And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds
 High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring
 The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war—
 I know not, therefore, whether heav'n intend
 My safe return, or I must perish there.
 But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,
 While I am absent, or more dearly still

320

¹ From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

My parents, and what time our son thou seest
 Mature, then wed; wed even whom thou wilt,
 And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,
 All which shall full accomplishment ere long
 Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,
 Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,
 Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors. 330
 But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind
 Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore
 The suitors' custom'd practice; all who chose
 To engage in competition for a wife
 Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced
 From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast
 For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,
 But never ate as ye, at others' cost.

She ceased; then brave Ulysses toil-inured
 Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw 340
 From each some gift, although on other views,
 And more important far, himself intent.

Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithes' son.
 Icarus' daughter wise! only accept
 Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand
 That grace, nor can be decently refused;
 But to our rural labours, or elsewhere
 Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
 Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.

Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved. 350
 Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
 His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first
 A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
 Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
 Than twelve, all golden, and to ev'ry clasp
 Was fitted opposite its eye exact.

Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
 A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
 Bestudded, ev'ry bead bright as a sun.
 Two servants for Eurydamas produced 360
 Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
 Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse.
 The herald of Polyctor's son, the prince
 Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
 A sumptuous ornament. Each Grecian gave,
 And each a gift dissimilar from all.

Then, loveliest of her sex, turning away,
 She sought her chamber, whom her maidens fair
 Attended, charged with those illustrious gifts.
 Then turn'd, they all to dance and pleasant song 370
 Joyous, expecting the approach of ev'n.

Ere long the dusky evening came, and them
 Found sporting still. Then, placing in the hall
 Three hearths that should illumine wide the house,
 They compass'd them around with fuel-wood
 Long-season'd and new-split, mingling the sticks
 With torches. The attendant women watch'd
 And fed those fires by turns, to whom, himself,
 Their unknown Sov'reign thus his speech address'd.

Ye maidens of the long-regretted Chief 380
 Ulysses! to the inner-courts retire,
 And to your virtuous Queen, that following there
 Your sev'ral tasks, spinning and combing wool,
 Ye may amuse her; I, meantime, for these
 Will furnish light, and should they chuse to stay
 Till golden morn appear, they shall not tire
 My patience aught, for I can much endure.

He said; they, titt'ring, on each other gazed.
 But one, Melantho with the blooming cheeks,
 Rebuked him rudely. Dolius was her sire, 390
 But by Penelope she had been reared
 With care maternal, and in infant years
 Supplied with many a toy; yet even she
 Felt not her mistress' sorrows in her heart,
 But, of Eurymachus enamour'd, oft
 His lewd embraces met; she, with sharp speech
 Reproachful, to Ulysses thus replied.

Why—what a brainsick vagabond art thou!
 Who neither wilt to the smith's forge retire
 For sleep, nor to the public portico, 400
 But here remaining, with audacious prate
 Disturb'st this num'rous company, restrain'd
 By no respect or fear; either thou art
 With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
 Art always fool, and therefore babblest now.
 Say, art thou drunk with joy that thou hast foiled
 The beggar Irus? Tremble, lest a man
 Stronger than Irus suddenly arise,
 Who on thy temples pelting thee with blows

Far heavier than his, shall drive thee hence 410
 With many a bruise, and foul with thy own blood.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Snarler! Telemachus shall be inform'd
 This moment of thy eloquent harangue,
 That he may hew thee for it, limb from limb.

So saying, he scared the women; back they flew
 Into the house, but each with falt'ring knees
 Through dread, for they believ'd his threats sincere.
 He, then illumin'd by the triple blaze,
 Watch'd close the lights, busy from hearth to hearth, 420
 But in his soul, meantime, far other thoughts
 Revolved, tremendous, not conceived in vain.

Nor Pallas (that they might exasp'rate more
 Laertes' son) permitted to abstain
 From heart-corroding bitterness of speech
 Those suitors proud, of whom Eurymachus,
 Offspring of Polybus, while thus he jeer'd
 Ulysses, set the others in a roar.

Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen! .
 I shall promulge my thought. This man, methinks, 430
 Not uncondacted by the Gods, hath reach'd
 Ulysses' mansion, for to me the light
 Of yonder torches altogether seems
 His own, an emanation from his head,
 Which not the smallest growth of hair obscures.

He ended; and the city-waster Chief
 Himself accosted next. Art thou disposed
 To serve me, friend! would I afford thee hire,
 A labourer at my farm? thou shalt not want
 Sufficient wages; thou may'st there collect 440
 Stones for my fences, and may'st plant my oaks,
 For which I would supply thee all the year
 With food, and cloaths, and sandals for thy feet.
 But thou hast learn'd less creditable arts,
 Nor hast a will to work, preferring much
 By beggary from others to extort
 Wherewith to feed thy never-sated maw.

Then answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Forbear, Eurymachus; for were we match'd 450
 In work against each other, thou and I,
 Mowing in spring-time, when the days are long,
 I with my well-bent sickle in my hand,

Thou arm'd with one as keen, for trial sake
 Of our ability to toil unfed
 Till night, grass still sufficing for the proof.—
 Or if, again, it were our task to drive
 Yoked oxen of the noblest breed, sleek-hair'd,
 Big-limb'd, both batten'd to the full with grass,
 Their age and aptitude for work the same
 Not soon to be fatigued, and were the field 460
 In size four acres, with a glebe through which
 The share might smoothly slide, then should'st thou see
 How strait my furrow should be cut and true.—
 Or should Saturnian Jove this day excite
 Here, battle, or elsewhere, and were I arm'd
 With two bright spears and with a shield, and bore
 A brazen casque well-fitted to my brows,
 Me, then, thou should'st perceive mingling in fight
 Amid the foremost Chiefs, nor with the crime
 Of idle beggary should'st upbraid me more. 470
 But thou art much a railer, one whose heart
 Pity moves not, and seem'st a mighty man
 And valiant to thyself, only because
 Thou herd'st with few, and those of little worth.
 But should Ulysses come, at his own isle
 Again arrived, wide as these portals are,
 To thee, at once, too narrow they should seem
 To shoot thee forth with speed enough abroad.

He ceased—then tenfold indignation fired
 Eurymachus; he furrow'd deep his brow 480
 With frowns, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Wretch, I shall roughly handle thee anon,
 Who thus with fluent prate presumptuous dar'st
 Disturb this num'rous company, restrain'd
 By no respect or fear. Either thou art
 With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
 Art always fool, and therefore babblest now;
 Or thou art frantic haply with delight
 That thou hast foil'd yon vagabond obscure.

So saying, he seized a stool; but to the knees 490
 Ulysses flew of the Dulichian Prince
 Amphinomus, and sat, fearing incensed
 Eurymachus; he on his better hand
 Smote full the cup-bearer; on the hall-floor
 Loud rang the fallen beaker, and himself

Lay on his back clamouring in the dust.
 Strait through the dusky hall tumult ensued
 Among the suitors, of whom thus, a youth,
 With eyes directed to the next, exclaim'd.

Would that this rambling stranger had elsewhere 500
 Perish'd, or ever he had here arrived,
 Then no such uproar had he caused as this!
 This doth the beggar; he it is for whom
 We wrangle thus, and may despair of peace
 Or pleasure more; now look for strife alone.

Then in the midst Telemachus upstood
 Majestic, and the suitors thus bespake.
 Sirs! ye are mad, and can no longer eat
 Or drink in peace; some dæmon troubles you.
 But since ye all have feasted, to your homes 510
 Go now, and, at your pleasure, to your beds;
 Soonest were best, but I thrust no man hence.

He ceased; they gnawing stood their lips, aghast
 With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
 Such boldness used. Then rose Amphinomus,
 Brave son of Nisus offspring of the King
 Aretus, and the assembly thus address'd.

My friends! let none with contradiction thwart
 And rude reply words rational and just;
 Assault no more the stranger, nor of all 520
 The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
 Harm any. Come. Let the cup-bearer fill
 To all, that due libation made, to rest
 We may repair at home, leaving the Prince
 To accommodate beneath his father's roof
 The stranger, for he is the Prince's guest.

He ended, whose advice none disapproved.
 The Hero Mulus then, Dulichian-born,
 And herald of Amphinomus, the cup
 Filling, dispensed it, as he stood, to all; 530
 They, pouring forth to the Immortals, quaff'd
 The luscious bev'rage, and when each had made
 Libation, and such measure as he would
 Of wine had drunk, then all to rest retired.

BOOK XIX

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES and Telemachus remove the arms from the hall to an upper-chamber. The Hero then confers with Penelope, to whom he gives a fictitious narrative of his adventures. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar on his knee, but he prevents her communication of that discovery to Penelope.

THEY went, but left the noble Chief behind
In his own house, contriving by the aid
Of Pallas, the destruction of them all,
And thus, in accents wing'd, again he said.

My son! we must remove and safe dispose
All these my well-forged implements of war;
And should the suitors, missing them, enquire
Where are they? thou shalt answer smoothly thus—
I have convey'd them from the reach of smoke,
For they appear no more the same which erst 10
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
So smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Some God suggested to me,—lest, inflamed
With wine, ye wound each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

He ceased, and, in obedience to his will,
Calling the ancient Euryclea forth,
His nurse, Telemachus enjoin'd her thus. 20

Go—shut the women in; make fast the doors
Of their apartment, while I safe dispose
Elsewhere, my father's implements of war,
Which, during his long absence, here have stood
Till smoke hath sullied them. For I have been
An infant hitherto, but, wiser grown,
Would now remove them from the breath of fire.

Then thus the gentle matron in return.
Yes truly—and I wish that now, at length,
Thou would'st assert the privilege of thy years, 30

My son, thyself assuming charge of all,
Both house and stores; but who shall bear the light?
Since they, it seems, who would, are all forbidden.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.

This guest; for no man, from my table fed,
Come whence he may, shall be an idler here.

He ended, nor his words flew wing'd away,
But Euryclea bolted every door.

Then, starting to the task, Ulysses caught,
And his illustrious son, the weapons thence,
Helmet, and bossy shield, and pointed spear,
While Pallas from a golden lamp illumed
The dusky way before them. At that sight
Alarm'd, the Prince his father thus address'd.

40

Whence—whence is this, my father? I behold
A prodigy! the walls of the whole house,
The arches, fir-tree beams, and pillars tall
Shine in my view, as with the blaze of fire!
Some Pow'r celestial, doubtless, is within.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

50

Soft! ask no questions. Give no vent to thought,
Such is the custom of the Pow'rs divine.
Hence, thou, to bed. I stay, that I may yet
Both in thy mother and her maidens move
More curiosity; yes—she with tears
Shall question me of all that I have seen.

He ended, and the Prince, at his command,
Guided by flaming torches, sought the couch
Where he was wont to sleep, and there he slept
On that night also, waiting the approach
Of sacred dawn. Thus was Ulysses left
Alone, and planning sat in solitude,
By Pallas' aid, the slaughter of his foes.

60

At length, Diana-like, or like herself,
All golden Venus, (her apartment left)
Enter'd Penelope. Beside the hearth
Her women planted her accustom'd seat
With silver wreathed and ivory. That throne
Icmalius made, artist renown'd, and join'd
A footstool to its splendid frame beneath,
Which ever with an ample fleece they spread.
There sat discrete Penelope; then came
Her beautiful attendants from within,

70

Who cleared the litter'd bread, the board, and cups
 From which the insolent companions drank.
 They also raked the embers from the hearths
 Now dim, and with fresh billets piled them high,
 Both for illumination and for warmth.
 Then yet again Melanthis with rude speech
 Opprobrious, thus, assail'd Ulysses' ear.

80

Guest—wilt thou trouble us throughout the night
 Ranging the house? and linger'st thou a spy
 Watching the women? Hence—get thee abroad
 Glad of such fare as thou hast found, or soon
 With torches beaten we will thrust thee forth.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Petulant woman! wherefore thus incensed
 Inveigh'st thou against me? is it because
 I am not sleek? because my garb is mean?
 Because I beg? thanks to necessity—

90

I would not else. But such as I appear,
 Such all who beg and all who wander are.
 I also lived the happy owner once
 Of such a stately mansion, and have giv'n
 To num'rous wand'ers, whencesoe'er they came,
 All that they needed; I was also served
 By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
 The envied owner opulent and blest.

But Jove (for so it pleas'd him) hath reduced
 My all to nothing. Therefore well beware

100

Thou also, mistress, lest a day arrive
 When all these charms by which thou shin'st among
 Thy sister-menials, fade; fear, too, lest her
 Thou should'st perchance irritate, whom thou serv'st,
 And lest Ulysses come, of whose return
 Hope yet survives; but even though the Chief
 Have perish'd, as ye think, and comes no more,
 Consider yet his son, how bright the gifts
 Shine of Apollo in the illustrious Prince
 Telemachus; no woman, unobserved
 By him, can now commit a trespass here;
 His days of heedless infancy are past.

110

He ended, whom Penelope discrete
 O'erhearing, her attendant sharp rebuked.

Shameless, audacious woman! known to me
 Is thy great wickedness, which with thy life

Thou shalt atone; for thou wast well aware,
 (Hearing it from myself) that I design'd
 To ask this stranger of my absent Lord,
 For whose dear sake I never cease to mourn. 120

Then to her household's governess she said.
 Bring now a seat, and spread it with a fleece,
 Eurynome! that, undisturb'd, the guest
 May hear and answer all that I shall ask.

She ended. Then the matron brought in haste
 A polish'd seat, and spread it with a fleece,
 On which the toil-accustom'd Hero sat,
 And thus the chaste Penelope began.

Stranger! my first enquiry shall be this—
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom? 130

Then answer thus Ulysses, wise, return'd.
 O Queen! uncensurable by the lips
 Of mortal man! thy glory climbs the skies
 Unrivall'd, like the praise of some great King
 Who o'er a num'rous people and renown'd
 Presiding like a Deity, maintains
 Justice and truth. The earth, under his sway,
 Her produce yields abundantly; the trees
 Fruit-laden bend; the lusty flocks bring forth;
 The Ocean teems with finny swarms beneath 140
 His just controul, and all the land is blest.
 Me therefore, question of what else thou wilt
 In thy own palace, but forbear to ask
 From whom I sprang, and of my native land,
 Lest thou, reminding me of those sad themes,
 Augment my woes; for I have much endured;
 Nor were it seemly, in another's house,
 To pass the hours in sorrow and in tears,
 Wearisome when indulg'd with no regard
 To time or place; thy train (perchance thyself) 150
 Would blame me, and I should reproach incur
 As one tear-deluged through excess of wine.

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 The immortal Gods, O stranger, then destroy'd
 My form, my grace, my beauty, when the Greeks
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
 Could he, returning, my domestic charge
 Himself intend, far better would my fame

Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
 But I am wretched now, such storms of woe 160
 The Gods have sent me; for as many Chiefs
 As hold dominion in the neighbour isles
 Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
 Zacynthus; others, also, rulers here
 In pleasant Ithaca, me, loth to wed,
 Woo ceaseless, and my household stores consume.
 I therefore, neither guest nor suppliant heed,
 Nor public herald more, but with regret
 Of my Ulysses wear my soul away.
 They, meantime, press my nuptials, which by art 170
 I still procrastinate. Some God the thought
 Suggested to me, to commence a robe
 Of amplest measure and of subtlest woof,
 Laborious task; which done, I thus address'd them.
 Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
 Ulysses is no more, enforce not now
 My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
 A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads be marr'd)
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour 180
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest.
 Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
 Such was my speech; they, unsuspecting all,
 With my request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 I wove the ample web, and, by the aid
 Of torches, ravell'd it again at night.
 Three years by artifice I thus their suit
 Eluded safe; but when the fourth arrived,
 And the same season after many moons 190
 And fleeting days return'd, passing my train
 Who had neglected to release the dogs,
 They came, surprized and reprimanded me.
 Thus, through necessity, not choice, at last
 I have perform'd it, in my own despite.
 But no escape from marriage now remains,
 Nor other subterfuge for me; meantime
 My parents urge my nuptials, and my son
 (Of age to note it) with disgust observes
 His wealth consumed; for he is now become 200
 Adult, and abler than myself to rule

The house, a Prince distinguish'd by the Gods,
 Yet, stranger, after all, speak thy descent;
 Say whence thou art; for not of fabulous birth
 Art thou, nor from the oak, nor from the rock.

Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
 O spouse revered of Laertiades!
 Resolv'st thou still to learn from whom I sprang?
 Learn then; but know that thou shalt much augment
 My present grief, natural to a man 210
 Who hath, like me, long exiled from his home
 Through various cities of the sons of men
 Wander'd remote, and num'rous woes endured.
 Yet, though it pain me, I will tell thee all.

There is a land amid the sable flood
 Call'd Crete; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea.
 Num'rous are her inhabitants, a race
 Not to be summ'd, and ninety towns she boasts.
 Diverse their language is; Achaians some,
 And some indigenous are; Cydonians there, 220
 Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.

One city in extent the rest exceeds,
 Cnossus; the city in which Minos reign'd,
 Who, ever at a nine years' close, conferr'd
 With Jove himself; from him my father sprang
 The brave Deucalion; for Deucalion's sons
 Were two, myself and King Idomeneus.
 To Ilium he, on board his gallant barks,
 Follow'd the Atridæ. I, the youngest-born,
 By my illustrious name, Æthon, am known, 230
 But he ranks foremost both in worth and years.

There I beheld Ulysses, and within
 My walls receiv'd him; for a violent wind
 Had driv'n him from Malea (while he sought
 The shores of Troy) to Crete. The storm his barks
 Bore into the Amnisus, for the cave
 Of Ilythia known, a dang'rous port,
 And which with difficulty he attain'd.
 He, landing, instant to the city went,
 Seeking Idomeneus; his friend of old, 240
 As he affirm'd, and one whom much he lov'd.
 But *he* was far remote, ten days advanced,
 Perhaps eleven, on his course to Troy.
 Him, therefore, I conducted to my home,

Where hospitably, and with kindest care
 I entertain'd him, (for I wanted nought)
 And for himself procured and for his band,—
 By public contribution, corn, and wine,
 And beeves for food, that all might be sufficed.
 Twelve days his noble Grecians there abode,
 Port-lock'd by Boreas blowing with a force
 Resistless even on the land, some God
 So roused his fury; but the thirteenth day
 The wind all fell, and they embark'd again.

With many a fiction specious, as he sat,
 He thus her ear amused; she at the sound
 Melting, with fluent tears her cheeks bedew'd;
 And as the snow by Zephyrus diffused,
 Melts on the mountain tops, when Eurus breathes,
 And fills the channels of the running streams,
 So melted she, and down her lovely cheeks
 Pour'd fast the tears, him mourning as remote
 Who sat beside her. Soft compassion touch'd
 Ulysses of his consort's silent woe;
 His eyes as they had been of steel or horn,
 Moved not, yet artful, he suppress'd his tears,
 And she, at length with overflowing grief
 Satiated, replied, and thus enquired again.

Now, stranger, I shall prove thee, as I judge,
 If thou, indeed, hast entertain'd in Crete
 My spouse and his brave followers, as thou say'st.
 Describe his raiment and himself; his own
 Appearance, and the appearance of his friends.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 Hard is the task, O Queen! (so long a time
 Hath since elaps'd) to tell thee. Twenty years
 Have pass'd since he forsook my native isle,
 Yet, from my best remembrance, I will give
 A likeness of him, such as now I may.
 A double cloak, thick-piled, Mœonian dyed,
 The noble Chief had on; two fast'nings held
 The golden clasp, and it display'd in front
 A well-wrought pattern with much art design'd.
 An hound between his fore-feet holding fast
 A dappled fawn, gaped eager on his prey.
 All wonder'd, seeing, how in lifeless gold
 Express'd, the dog with open mouth her throat

Attempted still, and how the fawn with hoofs
 Thrust trembling forward, struggled to escape.
 That glorious mantle much I noticed, soft 290
 To touch, as the dried garlick's glossy film;
 Such was the smoothness of it, and it shone
 Sun-bright; full many a maiden, trust me, view'd
 The splendid texture with admiring eyes.
 But mark me now; deep treasure in thy mind
 This word. I know not if Ulysses wore
 That cloak at home, or whether of his train
 Some warrior gave it to him on his way,
 Or else some host of his; for many loved
 Ulysses, and with him might few compare, 300
 I gave to him, myself, a brazen sword,
 A purple cloak magnificent, and vest
 Of royal length, and when he sought his bark,
 With princely pomp dismiss'd him from the shore.
 An herald also waited on the Chief,
 Somewhat his Senior; him I next describe.
 His back was bunch'd, his visage swarthy, curl'd
 His poll, and he was named Eurybates;
 A man whom most of all his followers far
 Ulysses honour'd, for their minds were one. 310
 He ceased; she recognising all the proofs
 Distinctly by Ulysses named, was moved
 Still more to weep, till with o'erflowing grief
 Satiated, at length she answer'd him again.
 Henceforth, O stranger, thou who hadst before
 My pity, shalt my rev'rence share and love,
 I folded for him (with these hands the cloak
 Which thou describ'st, produced it when he went,
 And gave it to him; I that splendid clasp
 Attach'd to it myself, more to adorn 320
 My honour'd Lord, whom to his native land
 Return'd secure I shall receive no more.
 In such an evil hour Ulysses went
 To that bad city never to be named.
 To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Consort revered of Laertiades!
 No longer let anxiety impair
 Thy beauteous form, nor any grief consume
 Thy spirits more for thy Ulysses' sake.
 And yet I blame thee not; a wife deprived 330

Of her first mate to whom she had produced
 Fair fruit of mutual love, would mourn his loss,
 Although he were inferior far to thine,
 Whom fame affirms the semblance of the Gods.
 But cease to mourn. Hear me. I will relate
 A faithful tale, nor will from thee withhold
 Such tidings of Ulysses living still,
 And of his safe return, as I have heard
 Lately, in yon neighb'ring opulent land
 Of the Thesprotians. He returns enrich'd 340
 With many precious stores from those obtain'd
 Whom he hath visited; but he hath lost,
 Departing from Thrinacia's isle, his bark
 And all his lov'd companions in the Deep,
 For Jove was adverse to him, and the Sun,
 Whose beeves his followers slew. They perish'd all
 Amid the billowy flood; but Him, the keel
 Bestriding of his bark, the waves at length
 Cast forth on the Phæacian's land, a race
 Allied to heav'n, who rev'renced like a God 350
 Thy husband, honour'd him with num'rous gifts,
 And willing were to have convey'd him home.
 Ulysses, therefore, had attained long since
 His native shore, but that he deem'd it best
 To travel far, that he might still amass
 More wealth; so much Ulysses all mankind
 Excels in policy, and hath no peer.
 This information from Thesprotia's King
 I gain'd, from Phidon; to myself he swore,
 Libation off'ring under his own roof, 360
 That both the bark was launch'd, and the stout crew
 Prepared, that should conduct him to his home.
 But me he first dismiss'd; for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To corn-enrich'd Dulichium. All the wealth
 He shew'd me by the Chief amass'd, a store
 To feed the house of yet another Prince
 To the tenth generation; so immense
 His treasures were within that palace lodg'd. 370
 Himself he said was to Dodona gone,
 Counsel to ask from the oracular oaks
 Sublime of Jove, how safest he might seek,
 After long exile thence, his native land,

If openly were best, or in disguise.

Thus, therefore, he is safe, and at his home
Well-nigh arrived, nor shall his country long
Want him. I swear it with a solemn oath.

First Jove be witness, King and Lord of all!

Next these domestic Gods of the renown'd

Ulysses, in whose royal house I sit,

380

That thou shalt see my saying all fulfill'd.

Ulysses shall this self-same year return,

This self-same month, ere yet the next begin.

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.

Grant heav'n, my guest, that this good word of thine

Fail not! then, soon shalt thou such bounty share

And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,

Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

But ah! my soul forebodes how it will prove;

Neither Ulysses will return, nor thou

390

Receive safe conduct hence; for we have here

None, such as once Ulysses was, to rule

His household with authority, and to send

With honourable convoy to his home

The worthy guest, or to regale him here.

Give him the bath, my maidens; spread his couch

With linen soft, with fleecy gaberdines¹

And rugs of splendid hue, that he may lie

Waiting, well-warm'd, the golden morn's return.

Attend him also at the peep of day

400

With bath and unction, that, his seat resumed

Here in the palace, he may be prepared

For breakfast with Telemachus; and woe

To him who shall presume to incommode

Or cause him pain; that man shall be cashier'd

Hence instant, burn his anger as it may.

For how, my honour'd inmate! shalt thou learn

That I in wisdom œconomic aught

Pass other women, if unbathed, unoiled,

Ill-clad, thou sojourn here? man's life is short,

410

Whoso is cruel, and to cruel arts

Addict, on him all men, while yet he lives,

Call plagues and curses down, and after death

Scorn and proverbial mock'ries hunt his name.

¹ A gaberdine is a shaggy cloak of coarse but warm materials. Such always make part of Homer's bed-furniture.

But men, humane themselves, and giv'n by choice
 To offices humane, from land to land
 Are rumour'd honourably by their guests,
 And ev'ry tongue is busy in their praise.

Her answer'd then, Ulysses, ever-wise.

Consort revered of Laertiades!

420

Warm gaberdines and rugs of splendid hue
 To me have odious been, since first the sight
 Of Crete's snow-mantled mountain-tops I lost,
 Sweeping the billows with extended oars.

No; I will pass, as I am wont to pass

The sleepless night; for on a sordid couch

Outstretch'd, full many a night have I reposed

Till golden-charioted Aurora dawn'd.

Nor me the foot-bath pleases more; my foot

Shall none of all thy ministring maidens touch,

430

Unless there be some ancient matron grave

Among them, who hath pangs of heart endured

Num'rous, and keen as I have felt myself;

Her I refuse not. She may touch my feet.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.

Dear guest! for of all trav'lers here arrived

From distant regions, I have none received

Discrete as thou, or whom I more have lov'd,

So just thy matter is, and with such grace

Express'd. I have an ancient maiden grave,

440

The nurse who at my hapless husband's birth

Receiv'd him in her arms, and with kind care

Maternal rear'd him; she shall wash thy feet,

Although decrepid. Euryclea, rise!

Wash one coeval with thy Lord; for such

The feet and hands, it may be, are become

Of my Ulysses now; since man beset

With sorrow once, soon wrinkled grows and old.

She said, then Euryclea with both hands

Cov'ring her face, in tepid tears profuse

450

Dissolved, and thus in mournful strains began.

Alas! my son, trouble for thy dear sake

Distracts me. Jove surely of all mankind

Thee hated most, though ever in thy heart

Devoutly giv'n; for never mortal man

So many thighs of fatted victims burn'd,

And chosen hecatombs produced as thou

To Jove the Thund'rer, him entreating still
 That he would grant thee a serene old age,
 And to instruct, thyself, thy glorious son. 460
 Yet thus the God requites thee, cutting off
 All hope of thy return—oh ancient sir!
 Him too, perchance, where'er he sits a guest
 Beneath some foreign roof, the women taunt,
 As all these shameless ones have taunted thee,
 Fearing whose mock'ry thou forbidd'st their hands
 This office, which Icarus' daughter wise
 To me enjoins, and which I, glad perform.
 Yes, I will wash thy feet; both for her sake
 And for thy own,—for sight of thee hath raised 470
 A tempest in my mind. Hear now the cause!
 Full many a guest forlorn we entertain,
 But never any have I seen, whose size,
 The fashion of whose foot and pitch of voice,
 Such likeness of Ulysses show'd, as thine.

To whom Ulysses, ever-shrewd, replied.
 Such close similitude, O ancient dame!
 As thou observ'st between thy Lord and me,
 All, who have seen us both, have ever found.

He said; then taking the resplendent vase 480
 Allotted always to that use, she first
 Infused cold water largely, then, the warm.
 Ulysses (for beside the hearth he sat)
 Turn'd quick his face into the shade, alarm'd
 Lest, handling him, she should at once remark
 His scar, and all his stratagem unveil.
 She then, approaching, minister'd the bath
 To her own King, and at first touch discern'd
 That token, by a bright-tusk'd boar of old
 Impress'd, what time he to Parnassus went 490
 To visit there Autolycus and his sons,
 His mother's noble sire, who all mankind
 In furtive arts and fraudulent oaths excell'd.¹
 For such endowments he by gift receiv'd
 From Hermes' self, to whom the thighs of kids

¹ Homer's morals seem to allow to a good man dissimulation, and even an ambiguous oath, should they be necessary to save him from a villain. Thus in Book XX. Telemachus swears by Zeus, that he does not hinder his mother from marrying whom she pleases of the wooers, though at the same time he is plotting their destruction with his father. F.

He offer'd and of lambs, and, in return,
 The watchful Hermes never left his side.
 Autolycus arriving in the isle
 Of pleasant Ithaca, the new-born son
 Of his own daughter found, whom on his knees 500
 At close of supper Euryclea placed,
 And thus the royal visitant address'd.

Thyself, Autolycus! devise a name
 For thy own daughter's son, by num'rous pray'rs
 Of thine and fervent, from the Gods obtained.

Then answer thus Autolycus return'd.
 My daughter and my daughter's spouse! the name
 Which I shall give your boy, that let him bear.
 Since after provocation and offence
 To numbers giv'n of either sex, I come, 510
 Call him Ulysses; ¹ and when, grown mature,
 He shall Parnassus visit, the abode
 Magnificent in which his mother dwelt,
 And where my treasures lie, from my own stores
 I will enrich and send him joyful home.

Ulysses, therefore, that he might obtain
 Those princely gifts, went thither. Him arrived,
 With right-hand gratulation and with words
 Of welcome kind, Autolycus received,
 Nor less his offspring; but the mother most 520
 Of his own mother clung around his neck,
 Amphithea; she with many a fervent kiss
 His forehead press'd, and his bright-beaming eyes.

Then bade Autolycus his noble sons
 Set forth a banquet. They, at his command,
 Led in a fatted ox of the fifth year,
 Which slaying first, they spread him carved abroad,
 Then scored his flesh, transfix'd it with the spits,
 And roasting all with culinary skill
 Exact, gave each his portion. Thus they sat 530
 Feasting all day, and till the sun declined,
 But when the sun declined, and darkness fell,
 Each sought his couch, and took the gift of sleep.
 Then, soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Aurora look'd abroad, forth went the hounds,
 And, with the hounds Ulysses, and the youths,

¹ In the Greek 'ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ from the verb 'οδυσσω—Irascor, I
m angry.

Sons of Autolycus, to chase the boar.
 Arrived at the Parnassian mount, they climb'd
 His bushy sides, and to his airy heights
 Ere long attain'd. It was the pleasant hour
 When from the gently-swelling flood profound
 The sun, emerging, first smote on the fields.
 The hunters reach'd the valley; foremost ran,
 Questing, the hounds; behind them, swift, the sons
 Came of Autolycus, with whom advanced
 The illustrious Prince Ulysses, pressing close
 The hounds, and brandishing his massy spear.
 There, hid in thickest shades, lay an huge boar.
 That covert neither rough winds blowing moist
 Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
 Smite through it, or fast-falling show'rs pervade,
 So thick it was, and underneath the ground
 With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.
 Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear
 The sound of feet perceived; upridging high
 His bristly back and glaring fire, he sprang
 Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood
 Near and right opposite. Ulysses, first,
 Rush'd on him, elevating his long spear
 Ardent to wound him; but, preventing quick
 His foe, the boar gash'd him above the knee.
 Much flesh, assailing him oblique, he tore
 With his rude tusk, but to the Hero's bone
 Pierced not; Ulysses *his* right shoulder reach'd;
 And with a deadly thrust impell'd the point
 Of his bright spear through him and far beyond.
 Loud yell'd the boar, sank in the dust, and died.
 Around Ulysses, then, the busy sons
 Throng'd of Autolycus; expert they braced
 The wound of the illustrious hunter bold,
 With incantation staunch'd the sable blood,
 And sought in haste their father's house again,
 Whence, heal'd and gratified with splendid gifts
 They sent him soon rejoicing to his home,
 Themselves rejoicing also. Glad their son
 His parents saw again, and of the scar
 Enquired, where giv'n, and how? He told them all,
 How to Parnassus with his friends he went,
 Sons of Autolycus to hunt, and how

540

550

560

570

A boar had gash'd him with his iv'ry tusk. 580

That scar, while chafing him with open palms,
The matron knew; she left his foot to fall;
Down dropp'd his leg into the vase; the brass
Rang, and o'ertilted by the sudden shock,
Poured forth the water, flooding wide the floor.

Her spirit joy at once and sorrow seized;
Tears fill'd her eyes; her intercepted voice
Died in her throat; but to Ulysses' beard
Her hand advancing, thus, at length, she spake.

Thou art himself, Ulysses. Oh my son! 590

Dear to me, and my master as thou art,
I knew thee not, till I had touch'd the scar.

She said, and to Penelope her eyes

Directed, all impatient to declare

Her own Ulysses even then at home.

But she, nor eye nor ear for aught that pass'd

Had then, her fixt attention so entire

Minerva had engaged. Then, darting forth

His arms, the Hero with his right-hand close

Compress'd her throat, and nearer to himself 600

Drawing her with his left, thus caution'd her.

Why would'st thou ruin me? Thou gav'st me milk

Thyself from thy own breast. See me return'd

After long suff'rings, in the twentieth year,

To my own land. But since (some God the thought

Suggesting to thee) thou hast learn'd the truth,

Silence! lest others learn it from thy lips.

For this I say, nor shall the threat be vain;

If God vouchsafe to me to overcome

The haughty suitors, when I shall inflict 610

Death on the other women of my house,

Although my nurse, thyself shalt also die.

Him answer'd Euryclea then, discrete.

My son! oh how could so severe a word

Escape thy lips? my fortitude of mind

Thou know'st, and even now shalt prove me firm

As iron, secret as the stubborn rock.

But hear and mark me well. Should'st thou prevail,

Assisted by a Pow'r divine, to slay

The haughty suitors, I will then, myself, 620

Give thee to know of all the female train

Who have dishonour'd thee, and who respect.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 My nurse, it were superfluous; spare thy tongue
 That needless task. I can distinguish well
 Myself, between them, and shall know them all;
 But hold thy peace. Hush! leave it with the Gods.

So he; then went the ancient matron forth,
 That she might serve him with a second bath,
 For the whole first was spilt. Thus, laved at length, 630
 And smooth'd with oil, Ulysses nearer pull'd
 His seat toward the glowing hearth to enjoy
 More warmth, and drew his tatters o'er the scar.
 Then, prudent, thus Penelope began.

One question, stranger, I shall yet propound,
 Though brief, for soon the hour of soft repose
 Grateful to all, and even to the sad
 Whom gentle sleep forsakes not, will arrive.
 But heav'n to me immeasurable woe 640
 Assigns,—whose sole delight is to consume
 My days in sighs, while here retired I sit,
 Watching my maidens' labours and my own;
 But (night return'd, and all to bed retired)
 I press mine also, yet with deep regret
 And anguish lacerated, even there.

As when at spring's first entrance, her sweet song
 The azure-crested nightingale renews,
 Daughter of Pandarus; within the grove's
 Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice
 Now deep, now clear, still varying the strain 650
 With which she mourns her Itylus, her son
 By royal Zethus, whom she, erring, slew,¹
 So also I, by soul-distressing doubts
 Toss'd ever, muse if I shall here remain
 A faithful guardian of my son's affairs,
 My husband's bed respecting, and not less
 My own fair fame, or whether I shall him
 Of all my suitors follow to his home
 Who noblest seems, and offers richest dow'r.
 My son while he was infant yet, and own'd 660
 An infant's mind, could never give consent

¹ She intended to slay the son of her husband's brother Amphion, incited to it by the envy of his wife, who had six children, while herself had only two, but through mistake she slew her own son Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

That I should wed and leave him; but at length,
 Since he hath reached the stature of a man,
 He wishes my departure hence, the waste
 Viewing indignant by the suitors made.

But I have dream'd. Hear, and expound my dream.
 My geese are twenty, which within my walls
 I feed with sodden wheat; they serve to amuse
 Sometimes my sorrow. From the mountains came
 An eagle, huge, hook-beak'd, brake all their necks, 670
 And slew them; scatter'd on the palace-floor
 They lay, and he soar'd swift into the skies.

Dream only as it was, I wept aloud,
 Till all my maidens, gather'd by my voice,
 Arriving, found me weeping still, and still
 Complaining, that the eagle had at once
 Slain all my geese. But, to the palace-roof
 Stooping again, he sat, and with a voice
 Of human sound, forbad my tears, and said—

Courage! O daughter of the far-renown'd 680
 Icarus! no vain dream thou hast beheld,
 But, in thy sleep, a truth. The slaughter'd geese
 Denote thy suitors. I who have appear'd
 An eagle in thy sight, am yet indeed
 Thy husband, who have now, at last, return'd,
 Death, horrid death designing for them all.

He said; then waking at the voice, I cast
 An anxious look around, and saw my geese
 Beside their tray, all feeding as before.

Her then Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise. 690
 O Queen! it is not possible to miss
 Thy dream's plain import, since Ulysses' self
 Hath told thee the event; thy suitors all
 Must perish; not one suitor shall escape.

To whom Penelope discrete replied.
 Dreams are inexplicable, O my guest!
 And oft-times mere delusions that receive
 No just accomplishment. There are two gates
 Through which the fleeting phantoms pass; of horn
 Is one, and one of ivory.¹ Such dreams 700

¹ The difference of the two substances may perhaps serve to account for the preference given in this case to the gate of horn; horn being ansperant, and as such emblematical of truth, while ivory, from its hiteness, promises light, but is, in fact, opaque. F.

As through the thin-leaf'd iv'ry portal come
 Sooth, but perform not, utt'ring empty sounds;
 But such as through the polish'd horn escape,
 If, haply seen by any mortal eye,
 Prove faithful witnesses, and are fulfill'd.
 But through those gates my wond'rous dream, I think,
 Came not; thrice welcome were it else to me
 And to my son. Now mark my words; attend.

This is the hated morn that from the house
 Removes me of Ulysses. I shall fix, 710
 This day, the rings for trial to them all
 Of archership; Ulysses' custom was
 To plant twelve spikes, all regular arranged ¹
 Like galley-props, and crested with a ring,
 Then standing far remote, true in his aim
 He with his whizzing shaft would thrid them all.

This is the contest in which now I mean
 To prove the suitors; him, who with most ease
 Shall bend the bow, and shoot through all the rings,
 I follow, this dear mansion of my youth 720
 Leaving, so fair, so fill'd with ev'ry good,
 Though still to love it even in my dreams.

Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades!
 Postpone not this contention, but appoint
 Forthwith the trial; for Ulysses here
 Will sure arrive, ere they, (his polish'd bow
 Long tamp'ring) shall prevail to stretch the nerve,
 And speed the arrow through the iron rings.

To whom Penelope replied discrete. 730
 Would'st thou with thy sweet converse, O my guest!
 Here sooth me still, sleep ne'er should influence
 These eyes the while; but always to resist
 Sleep's pow'r is not for man, to whom the Gods
 Each circumstance of his condition here
 Fix universally. Myself will seek
 My own apartment at the palace-top,
 And there will lay me down on my sad couch,
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine

¹ The translation here is somewhat pleonastic for the sake of perspicuity; the original is clear in itself, but not to us who have no such practice. Twelve stakes were fixt in the earth, each having a ring at the top; the order in which they stood was so exact, that an arrow sent with an even hand through the first ring, would pass them all.

Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
To that bad city, never to be named.

74^o

There will I sleep; but sleep thou here below,
Either, thyself, preparing on the ground
Thy couch, or on a couch by these prepared.

So saying, she to her splendid chamber thence
Retired, not sole, but by her female train
Attended; there arrived, she wept her spouse,
Her lov'd Ulysses, till Minerva dropp'd
The balm of slumber on her weary lids.

BOOK XX

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, doubting whether he shall destroy or not the women servants who commit lewdness with the suitors, resolves at length to spare them for the present. He asks an omen from Jupiter, and that he would grant him also to hear some propitious words from the lips of one in the family. His petitions are both answered. Preparation is made for the feast. Whilst the suitors sit at table, Pallas smites them with a horrid frenzy. Theoclymenus, observing the strange effects of it, prophesies their destruction, and they deride his prophecy.

BUT in the vestibule the Hero lay
On a bull's-hide undress'd, o'er which he spread
The fleece of many a sheep slain by the Greeks,
And, cover'd by the household's governess
With a wide cloak, composed himself to rest.
Yet slept he not, but meditating lay
Woe to his enemies. Meantime, the train
Of women, wonted to the suitors' arms,
Issuing all mirth and laughter, in his soul
A tempest raised of doubts, whether at once 10
To slay, or to permit them yet to give
Their lusty paramours one last embrace.
As growls the mastiff standing on the start
For battle, if a stranger's foot approach
Her cubs new-whelp'd—so growl'd Ulysses' heart,
While wonder fill'd him at their impious deeds.
But, smiting on his breast, thus he reproved
The mutinous inhabitant within.

Heart! bear it. Worse than this thou didst endure
When, uncontrollable by force of man, 20
The Cyclops thy illustrious friends devour'd.
Thy patience then fail'd not, till prudence found
Deliv'rance for thee on the brink of fate.

So disciplined the Hero his own heart,
Which, tractable, endured the rigorous curb,
And patient; yet he turn'd from side to side.
As when some hungry swain turns oft a maw

Unctuous and sav'ry on the burning coals,
 Quick expediting his desired repast,
 So he from side to side roll'd, pond'ring deep 30
 How likeliest with success he might assail
 Those shameless suitors; one to many opposed.
 Then, sudden from the skies descending, came
 Minerva in a female form; her stand
 Above his head she took, and thus she spake.

Why sleep'st thou not, unhappiest of mankind?
 Thou art at home; here dwells thy wife, and here
 Thy son; a son, whom all might wish their own.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Goddess! true is all that thou hast said, 40
 But, not without anxiety, I muse
 How, single as I am, I shall assail
 Those shameless suitors who frequent my courts
 Daily; and always their whole multitude.
 This weightier theme I meditate beside;
 Should I, with Jove's concurrence and with thine
 Prevail to slay them, how shall I escape,
 Myself, at last? ¹ oh Goddess, weigh it well.

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 Oh faithless man! a man will in his friend 50
 Confide, though mortal, and in valour less
 And wisdom than himself; but I who keep
 Thee in all difficulties, am divine.
 I tell thee plainly. Were we hemm'd around
 By fifty troops of shouting warriors bent
 To slay thee, thou should'st yet securely drive
 The flocks away and cattle of them all.
 But yield to sleep's soft influence; for to lie
 All night thus watchful, is, itself, distress.
 Fear not. Deliv'rance waits, not far remote. 60

So saying, she o'er Ulysses' eyes diffused
 Soft slumbers, and when sleep that soothes the mind
 And nerves the limbs afresh had seized him once,
 To the Olympian summit swift return'd.
 But his chaste spouse awoke; she weeping sat
 On her soft couch, and, noblest of her sex,
 Satiated at length with tears, her pray'r address'd
 First to Diana of the Pow'rs above.

Diana, awful progeny of Jove!

¹ That is, how shall I escape the vengeance of their kindred?

I would that with a shaft this moment sped 70
 Into my bosom, thou would'st here conclude
 My mournful life! or, oh that, as it flies,
 Snatching me through the pathless air, a storm
 Would whelm me deep in Ocean's restless tide!
 So, when the Gods their parents had destroy'd,
 Storms suddenly the beauteous daughters snatch'd ¹
 Of Pandarus away; them left forlorn
 Venus with curds, with honey and with wine
 Fed duly; Juno gave them to surpass 80
 All women in the charms of face and mind,
 With graceful stature eminent the chaste
 Diana bless'd them, and in works of art
 Illustrious, Pallas taught them to excel.
 But when the foam-sprung Goddess to the skies
 A suitress went on their behalf, to obtain
 Blest nuptials for them from the Thund'rer Jove,
 (For Jove the happiness, himself, appoints,
 And the unhappiness of all below)
 Meantime, the Harpies ravishing away
 Those virgins, gave them to the Furies Three, 90
 That they might serve them. O that me the Gods
 Inhabiting Olympus so would hide
 From human eyes for ever, or bright-hair'd
 Diana pierce me with a shaft, that while
 Ulysses yet engages all my thoughts,
 My days concluded, I might 'scape the pain
 Of gratifying some inferior Chief!
 This is supportable, when (all the day
 To sorrow giv'n) the mourner sleeps at night;
 For sleep, when it hath once the eyelids veil'd, 100
 All reminiscence blots of all alike,
 Both good and ill; but me the Gods afflict
 Not seldom ev'n in dreams, and at my side,
 This night again, one lay resembling him;
 Such as my own Ulysses when he join'd
 Achaia's warriors; my exulting heart
 No airy dream believed it, but a truth.

While thus she spake, in orient gold enthroned
 Came forth the morn; Ulysses, as she wept,
 Heard plain her lamentation; him that sound 110
 Alarm'd; he thought her present, and himself

¹ Aëdon, Cleothera, Merope.

Known to her. Gath'ring hastily the cloak
 His cov'ring, and the fleeces, them he placed
 Together on a throne within the hall,
 But bore the bull's-hide forth into the air.
 Then, lifting high his hands to Jove, he pray'd.

Eternal Sire! if over moist and dry
 Ye have with good-will sped me to my home
 After much suff'ring, grant me from the lips
 Of some domestic now awake, to hear 120
 Words of propitious omen, and thyself
 Vouchsafe me still some other sign abroad.

Such pray'r he made, and Jove omniscient heard.
 Sudden he thunder'd from the radiant heights
 Olympian; glad, Ulysses heard the sound.

A woman, next, a labourer at the mill
 Hard by, where all the palace-mills were wrought,
 Gave him the omen of propitious sound.
 Twelve maidens, day by day, toil'd at the mills,
 Meal grinding, some, of barley, some, of wheat, 130
 Marrow of man.¹ The rest (their portion ground)
 All slept; she only from her task as yet
 Ceas'd not, for she was feeblest of them all;
 She rested on her mill, and thus pronounced
 The happy omen by her Lord desired.

Jove, Father, Governor of heav'n and earth!
 Loud thou hast thunder'd from the starry skies
 By no cloud veil'd; a sign propitious, giv'n
 To whom I know not; but oh grant the pray'r
 Of a poor bond-woman! appoint their feast 140
 This day, the last that in Ulysses' house
 The suitors shall enjoy, for whom I drudge,
 With aching heart and trembling knees their meal
 Grinding continual. Feast they here no more!

She ended, and the list'ning Chief received
 With equal joy both signs; for well he hoped
 That he should punish soon those guilty men.
 And now the other maidens in the hall
 Assembling, kindled on the hearth again
 Th' unwearied blaze; then, godlike from his couch 150
 Arose Telemachus, and, fresh-attired,
 Athwart his shoulders his bright faulchion slung,
 Bound his fair sandals to his feet, and took

¹ *μυελον ανδρων.*

His sturdy spear pointed with glitt'ring brass;
 Advancing to the portal, there he stood,
 And Euryclea thus, his nurse, bespake.

Nurse! have ye with respectful notice serv'd
 Our guest? or hath he found a sordid couch
 E'en where he might? for, prudent though she be,
 My mother, inattentive oft, the worse 160
 Treats kindly, and the better sends away.

Whom Euryclea answer'd, thus, discrete.
 Blame not, my son! who merits not thy blame.
 The guest sat drinking till he would no more,
 And ate, till, question'd, he replied—Enough.
 But when the hour of sleep call'd him to rest,
 She gave commandment to her female train
 To spread his couch. Yet he, like one forlorn,
 And, through despair, indiff'rent to himself,
 Both bed and rugs refused, and in the porch 170
 On skins of sheep and on an undress'd hide
 Reposed, where we threw cov'ring over him.

She ceas'd, and, grasping his bright-headed spear,
 Forth went the Prince attended, as he went,
 By his fleet hounds; to the assembled Greeks
 In council with majestic gait he moved,
 And Euryclea, daughter wise of Ops,
 Pisenor's son, call'd to the serving-maids.

Haste ye! be diligent! sweep the palace-floor
 And sprinkle it; then give the sumptuous seats 180
 Their purple coverings. Let others cleanse
 With sponges all the tables, wash and rince
 The beakers well, and goblets rich-emboss'd;
 Run others to the fountain, and bring thence
 Water with speed. The suitors will not long
 Be absent, but will early come to-day,
 For this day is a public festival.¹

So she; whom all, obedient, heard; forth went
 Together, twenty to the crystal fount,
 While in their sev'ral provinces the rest 190
 Bestirr'd them brisk at home. Then enter'd all
 The suitors, and began cleaving the wood.
 Meantime, the women from the fountain came,
 Whom soon the swine-herd follow'd, driving three
 His fattest brawns; them in the spacious court

¹ The new moon.

He feeding left, and to Ulysses' side
 Approaching, courteously bespake the Chief.
 Guest! look the Grecians on thee with respect
 At length, or still disdainful as before?

Then, answer thus Ulysses wise return'd. 200
 Yes—and I would that vengeance from the Gods
 Might pay their insolence, who in a house
 Not theirs, dominion exercise, and plan
 Unseemly projects, shameless as they are!

Thus they conferr'd; and now Melanthius came
 The goat-herd, driving, with the aid of two
 His fellow-swains, the fattest of his goats
 To feast the suitors. In the sounding porch
 The goats he tied, then, drawing near, in terms
 Reproachful thus assail'd Ulysses' ear. 210

How, stranger? persever'st thou, begging, still
 To vex the suitors? wilt thou not depart?
 Scarce shall we settle this dispute, I judge,
 Till we have tasted each the other's fist;
 Thou art unreasonable thus to beg
 Here always—have the Greeks no feasts beside?

He spake, to whom Ulysses answer none
 Return'd, but shook his brows, and, silent, framed
 Terrible purposes. Then, third, approach'd
 Chief o'er the herds, Philœtius; fatted goats 220
 He for the suitors brought, with which he drove
 An heifer; (ferry-men had pass'd them o'er,
 Carriers of all who on their coast arrive)
 He tied them in the sounding porch, then stood
 Beside the swine-herd, to whom thus he said.

Who is this guest, Eumæus, here arrived
 So lately? from what nation hath he come?
 What parentage and country boasts the man?
 I pity him, whose figure seems to speak
 Royalty in him. Heav'n will surely plunge 230
 The race of common wand'rers deep in woe,
 If thus it destine even Kings to mourn.

He ceas'd; and, with his right hand, drawing nigh,
 Welcom'd Ulysses, whom he thus bespake.

Hail venerable guest! and be thy lot
 Prosp'rous at least hereafter, who art held
 At present in the bonds of num'rous ills.
 Thou, Jupiter, of all the Gods, art most

Severe, and spar'st not to inflict distress
 Even on creatures from thyself derived.¹ 240
 I had no sooner mark'd thee, than my eyes
 Swam, and the sweat gush'd from me at the thought
 Of dear Ulysses; for if yet he live
 And see the sun, such tatters, I suppose,
 He wears, a wand'rer among human-kind.
 But if already with the dead he dwell
 In Pluto's drear abode, oh then, alas
 For kind Ulysses! who consign'd to me,
 While yet a boy, his Cephallenian herds,
 And they have now encreas'd to such a store 250
 Innumerable of broad-fronted beeves,
 As only care like mine could have produced.
 These, by command of others, I transport
 For their regale, who neither heed his son,
 Nor tremble at the anger of the Gods,
 But long have wish'd ardently to divide
 And share the substance of our absent Lord.
 Me, therefore, this thought occupies, and haunts
 My mind not seldom; while the heir survives
 It were no small offence to drive his herds 260
 Afar, and migrate to a foreign land;
 Yet here to dwell, suff'ring oppressive wrongs
 While I attend another's beeves, appears
 Still less supportable; and I had fled,
 And I had served some other mighty Chief
 Long since, (for patience fails me to endure
 My present lot) but that I cherish still
 Some hope of my ill-fated Lord's return,
 To rid his palace of those lawless guests.
 To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 270
 Herdsman! since neither void of sense thou seem'st,
 Nor yet dishonest, but myself am sure
 That thou art owner of a mind discrete,
 Hear therefore, for I swear! bold I attest
 Jove and this hospitable board, and these
 The Lares² of the noble Chief, whose hearth
 Protects me now, that, ere thy going hence,
 Ulysses surely shall have reach'd his home,
 And thou shalt see him, if thou wilt, thyself,

¹ He is often called—*πατηρ ανδρων τε θεων τε*.

² Household Gods who presided over the hearth.

Slaying the suitors who now lord it here.

280

Him answer'd then the keeper of his beeves.
Oh stranger! would but the Saturnian King
Perform that word, thou should'st be taught (thyself
Eye-witness of it) what an arm is mine.

Eumæus also ev'ry power of heav'n
Entreated, that Ulysses might possess
His home again. Thus mutual they conferr'd.

Meantime, in conf'rence close the suitors plann'd
Death for Telemachus; but while they sat
Consulting, on their left the bird of Jove
An eagle soar'd, grasping a tim'rous dove.
Then, thus, Amphinomus the rest bespake.

290

Oh friends! our consultation how to slay
Telemachus, will never smoothly run
To its effect; but let us to the feast.

So spake Amphinomus, whose counsel pleased.
Then, all into the royal house repaired,
And on the thrones and couches throwing off
Their mantles, slew the fatted goats, the brawns,
The sheep full-sized, and heifer of the herd.
The roasted entrails first they shared, then fill'd
The beakers, and the swine-herd placed the cups,
Philœtius, chief intendant of the beeves,
Served all with baskets elegant of bread,
While all their cups Melanthius charged with wine,
And they assail'd at once the ready feast.
Meantime Telemachus, with forecast shrewd,
Fast by the marble threshold, but within
The spacious hall his father placed, to whom
A sordid seat he gave and scanty board.
A portion of the entrails, next, he set
Before him, fill'd a golden goblet high,
And thus, in presence of them all, began.

300

310

There seated now, drink as the suitors drink.
I will, myself, their biting taunts forbid,
And violence. This edifice is mine,
Not public property; my father first
Possess'd it, and my right from him descends.
Suitors! controul your tongues, nor with your hands
Offend, lest contest fierce and war ensue.

320

He ceas'd: they gnawing, sat, their lips, aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech

Such boldness used. Then spake Eupithes' son,
Antinoüs, and the assembly thus address'd.

Let pass, ye Greeks! the language of the Prince,
Harsh as it is, and big with threats to us.
Had Jove permitted, his orations here,
Although thus eloquent, ere now had ceased.

So spake Antinoüs, whom Ulysses' son
Heard unconcern'd. And now the heralds came 330
In solemn pomp, conducting through the streets
A sacred hecatomb, when in the grove
Umbrageous of Apollo, King shaft-arm'd,
The assembled Grecians met. The sav'ry roast
Finish'd, and from the spits withdrawn, each shared
His portion of the noble feast, and such
As they enjoy'd themselves the attendants placed
Before Ulysses, for the Hero's son
Himself, Telemachus, had so enjoined.

But Pallas (that they might exasp'rate more 340
Ulysses) suffer'd not the suitor Chiefs
To banquet, guiltless of heart-piercing scoffs
Malign. There was a certain suitor named
Ctesippus, born in Samos; base of mind
Was he and profligate, but, in the wealth
Confiding of his father, woo'd the wife
Of long-exiled Ulysses. From his seat
The haughty suitors thus that man address'd.

Ye noble suitors, I would speak; attend!
The guest is served; he hath already shared 350
Equal with us; nor less the laws demand
Of hospitality; for neither just
It were nor decent, that a guest, received
Here by Telemachus, should be denied
His portion of the feast. Come then—myself
Will give to him, that he may also give
To her who laved him in the bath, or else
To whatsoever menial here he will.

So saying, he from a basket near at hand
Heav'd an ox-foot, and with a vig'rous arm 360
Hurl'd it. Ulysses gently bow'd his head,
Shunning the blow, but gratified his just
Resentment with a broad sardonic smile¹
Of dread significance. He smote the wall.

¹ A smile of displeasure.

Then thus Telemachus rebuked the deed.

Ctesippus, thou art fortunate; the bone
 Struck not the stranger, for he shunn'd the blow;
 Else, I had surely thrust my glitt'ring lance
 Right through thee; then, no hymenæal rites
 Of thine should have employ'd thy father here, 370
 But thy funereal. No man therefore treat
 Me with indignity within these walls,
 For though of late a child, I can discern
 Now, and distinguish between good and ill.
 Suffice it that we patiently endure
 To be spectators daily of our sheep
 Slaughter'd, our bread consumed, our stores of wine
 Wasted; for what can one to all opposed?
 Come then—persist no longer in offence
 And hostile hate of me; or if ye wish 380
 To slay me, pause not. It were better far
 To die, and I had rather much be slain,
 Than thus to witness your atrocious deeds
 Day after day; to see our guests abused,
 With blows insulted, and the women dragg'd
 With a licentious violence obscene
 From side to side of all this fair abode.

He said, and all sat silent, till at length
 Thus Agelaüs spake, Diastor's son.

My friends! let none with contradiction thwart 390
 And rude reply, words rational and just;
 Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
 The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
 Harm any. My advice, both to the Queen
 And to Telemachus, shall gentle be,
 May it but please them. While the hope survived
 Within your bosoms of the safe return
 Of wise Ulysses to his native isle,
 So long good reason was that she should use
 Delay, and hold our wooing in suspence; 400
 For had Ulysses come, that course had proved
 Wisest and best; but that he comes no more
 Appears, now, manifest. Thou, therefore, Prince!
 Seeking thy mother, counsel her to wed
 The noblest, and who offers richest dow'r,
 That thou, for thy peculiar, may'st enjoy
 Thy own inheritance in peace and ease,

And she, departing, find another home.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.

I swear by Jove, and by my father's woes, 410

Who either hath deceased far from his home,

Or lives a wand'rer, that I interpose

No hindrance to her nuptials. Let her wed

Who offers most, and even whom she will.

But to dismiss her rudely were a deed

Unfilial—That I dare not—God forbid!

So spake Telemachus. Then Pallas struck

The suitors with delirium; wide they stretch'd

Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud;

Their meat dripp'd blood; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire

Presages of approaching woe, their hearts. 421

Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.¹

Ah miserable men! what curse is this

That takes you now? night wraps itself around

Your faces, bodies, limbs; the palace shakes

With peals of groans—and oh, what floods ye weep!

I see the walls and arches dappled thick

With gore; the vestibule is throng'd, the court

On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim

Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom 430

Of Erebus; the sun is blotted out

From heav'n, and midnight whelms you premature.

He said, they, hearing, laugh'd; and thus the son

Of Polybus, Eurymachus replied.

This wand'rer from a distant shore hath left

His wits behind. Ho! there! conduct him hence

Into the forum; since he dreams it night

Already, teach him there that it is day.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.

I have no need, Eurymachus, of guides 440

To lead me hence, for I have eyes and ears,

The use of both my feet, and of a mind

In no respect irrational or wild.

These shall conduct me forth, for well I know

That evil threatens you, such, too, as none

Shall 'scape of all the suitors, whose delight

Is to insult the unoffending guest

Received beneath this hospitable roof.

¹ Who had sought refuge in the ship of Telemachus when he left Sparta, and came with him to Ithaca.

He said, and, issuing from the palace, sought
 Piræus' house, who gladly welcom'd him. 450
 Then all the suitors on each other cast
 A look significant, and, to provoke
 Telemachus the more, fleer'd at his guests.
 Of whom a youth thus, insolent began.

No living wight, Telemachus, had e'er
 Guests such as thine. Witness, we know not who,
 This hungry vagabond, whose means of life
 Are none, and who hath neither skill nor force
 To earn them, a mere burthen on the ground.
 Witness the other also, who upstarts 460
 A prophet suddenly. Take my advice;
 I counsel wisely; send them both on board
 Some gallant bark to Sicily for sale;
 Thus shall they somewhat profit thee at last.

So spake the suitors, whom Telemachus
 Heard unconcern'd, and, silent, look'd and look'd
 Toward his father, watching still the time
 When he should punish that licentious throng.
 Meantime, Icarius' daughter, who had placed
 Her splendid seat opposite, heard distinct 470
 Their taunting speeches. They, with noisy mirth,
 Feasted deliciously, for they had slain
 Many a fat victim; but a sadder feast
 Than, soon, the Goddess and the warrior Chief
 Should furnish for them, none shall ever share.
 Of which their crimes had furnish'd first the cause.

BOOK XXI

ARGUMENT

PENELOPE proposes to the suitors a contest with the bow, herself the prize. They prove unable to bend the bow; when Ulysses having with some difficulty possessed himself of it, manages it with the utmost ease, and dispatches his arrow through twelve rings erected for the trial.

MINERVA now, Goddess cærulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter, the discrete
Penelope, with bow and rings to prove
Her suitors in Ulysses' courts, a game
Terrible in conclusion to them all.
First, taking in her hand the brazen key
Well-forged, and fitted with an iv'ry grasp,
Attended by the women of her train
She sought her inmost chamber, the recess
In which she kept the treasures of her Lord, 10
His brass, his gold, and steel elaborate.
Here lay his stubborn bow, and quiver fill'd
With num'rous shafts, a fatal store. That bow
He had received and quiver from the hand
Of godlike Iphitus Eurytides,
Whom, in Messenia,¹ in the house he met
Of brave Orsilochus. Ulysses came
Demanding payment of arrearage due
From all that land; for a Messenian fleet
Had borne from Ithaca three hundred sheep, 20
With all their shepherds; for which cause, ere yet
Adult, he voyaged to that distant shore,
Deputed by his sire, and by the Chiefs
Of Ithaca, to make the just demand.
But Iphitus had thither come to seek
Twelve mares and twelve mule colts which he had lost,
A search that cost him soon a bloody death.
For, coming to the house of Hercules
The valiant task-performing son of Jove,

¹ A province of Laconia.

He perish'd there, slain by his cruel host
 Who, heedless of heav'n's wrath, and of the rights
 Of his own board, first fed, then slaughter'd him;
 For in *his* house the mares and colts were hidden.
 He, therefore, occupied in that concern,
 Meeting Ulysses there, gave him the bow
 Which, erst, huge Eurytus had borne, and which
 Himself had from his dying sire received.
 Ulysses, in return, on him bestowed
 A spear and sword, pledges of future love
 And hospitality; but never more
 They met each other at the friendly board,
 For, ere that hour arrived, the son of Jove
 Slew his own guest, the godlike Iphitus.
 Thus came the bow into Ulysses' hands,
 Which, never in his gallant barks he bore
 To battle with him, (though he used it oft
 In times of peace) but left it safely stored
 At home, a dear memorial of his friend.

Soon as, divinest of her sex, arrived
 At that same chamber, with her foot she press'd
 The oaken threshold bright, on which the hand
 Of no mean architect had stretch'd the line,
 Who had erected also on each side
 The posts on which the splendid portals hung,
 She loos'd the ring and brace, then introduced
 The key, and aiming at them from without,¹
 Struck back the bolts. The portals, at that stroke,
 Sent forth a tone deep as the pastur'd bull's,
 And flew wide open. She, ascending, next,
 The elevated floor on which the chests
 That held her own fragrant apparel stood,
 With lifted hand aloft took down the bow
 In its embroider'd bow-case safe enclosed.
 Then, sitting there, she lay'd it on her knees,
 Weeping aloud, and drew it from the case.
 Thus weeping over it long time she sat,
 Till satiate, at the last, with grief and tears,
 Descending by the palace steps she sought
 Again the haughty suitors, with the bow

¹ The reader will of course observe, that the whole of this process implies a sort of mechanism very different from that with which we are acquainted.—The translation, I believe, is exact.

Elastic, and the quiver in her hand 70
 Replete with pointed shafts, a deadly store,
 Her maidens, as she went, bore after her
 A coffer fill'd with prizes by her Lord,
 Much brass and steel; and when at length she came,
 Loveliest of women, where the suitors sat,
 Between the pillars of the stately dome
 Pausing, before her beauteous face she held
 Her lucid veil, and by two matrons chaste
 Supported, the assembly thus address'd.

Ye noble suitors hear, who rudely haunt 80
 This palace of a Chief long absent hence,
 Whose substance ye have now long time consumed,
 Nor palliative have yet contrived, or could,
 Save your ambition to make me a bride—
 Attend this game to which I call you forth.
 Now suitors! prove yourselves with this huge bow
 Of wide-renown'd Ulysses; he who draws
 Easiest the bow, and who his arrow sends
 Through twice six rings, he takes me to his home,
 And I must leave this mansion of my youth 90
 Plenteous, magnificent, which, doubtless, oft
 I shall remember even in my dreams.

So saying, she bade Eumæus lay the bow
 Before them, and the twice six rings of steel.
 He wept, received them, and obey'd; nor wept
 The herdsman less, seeing the bow which erst
 His Lord had occupied; when at their tears
 Indignant, thus, Antinoüs began.

Ye rural drones, whose purblind eyes see not 100
 Beyond the present hour, egregious fools!
 Why weeping trouble ye the Queen, too much
 Before afflicted for her husband lost?
 Either partake the banquet silently,
 Or else go weep abroad, leaving the bow,
 That stubborn test, to us; for none, I judge,
 None here shall bend this polish'd bow with ease,
 Since in this whole assembly I discern
 None like Ulysses, whom myself have seen
 And recollect, though I was then a boy.

He said, but in his heart, meantime, the hope 110
 Cherish'd, that he should bend, himself, the bow,
 And pass the rings; yet was he destin'd first

Of all that company to taste the steel
 Of brave Ulysses' shaft, whom in that house
 He had so oft dishonour'd, and had urged
 So oft all others to the like offence.
 Amidst them, then, the sacred might arose
 Of young Telemachus, who thus began.

Saturnian Jove questionless hath deprived
 Me of all reason. My own mother, fam'd 120
 For wisdom as she is, makes known to all
 Her purpose to abandon this abode
 And follow a new mate, while, heedless, I
 Trifle and laugh as I were still a child.
 But come, ye suitors! since the prize is such,
 A woman like to whom none can be found
 This day in all Achaia; on the shores
 Of sacred Pylus; in the cities proud
 Of Argos or Mycenæ; or even here
 In Ithaca; or yet within the walls 130
 Of black Epirus; and since this yourselves
 Know also, wherefore should I speak her praise?
 Come then, delay not, waste not time in vain
 Excuses, turn not from the proof, but bend
 The bow, that thus the issue may be known.
 I also will, myself, that task essay;
 And should I bend the bow, and pass the rings,
 Then shall not my illustrious mother leave
 Her son forlorn, forsaking this abode
 To follow a new spouse, while I remain 140
 Disconsolate, although of age to bear,
 Successful as my sire, the prize away.

So saying, he started from his seat, cast off
 His purple cloak, and lay'd his sword aside,
 Then fix'd, himself, the rings, furrowing the earth
 By line, and op'ning one long trench for all,
 And stamping close the glebe. Amazement seized
 All present, seeing with how prompt a skill
 He executed, though untaught, his task.
 Then, hasting to the portal, there he stood. 150
 Thrice, struggling, he essay'd to bend the bow,
 And thrice desisted, hoping still to draw
 The bow-string home, and shoot through all the rings.¹

¹ This first attempt of Telemachus and the suitors was not an attempt to shoot, but to lodge the bow-string on the opposite horn, the bow having been released at one end, and slackened while it was laid by.

And now the fourth time striving with full force
 He had prevail'd to string it, but his sire
 Forbad his eager efforts by a sign.

Then thus the royal youth to all around—

Gods! either I shall prove of little force
 Hereafter, and for manly feats unapt,

Or I am yet too young, and have not strength 160
 To quell the aggressor's contumely. But come—
 (For ye have strength surpassing mine) try ye
 The bow, and bring this contest to an end.

He ceas'd, and set the bow down on the floor,
 Reclining it against the shaven pannels smooth
 That lined the wall; the arrow next he placed,
 Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,
 And to the seat, whence he had ris'n, return'd.
 Then thus Eupithes' son, Antinoüs spake.

My friends! come forth successive from the right,¹ 170
 Where he who ministers the cup begins.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.

Then, first, Leiodes, CEnop's son, arose.

He was their soothsayer, and ever sat

Beside the beaker, inmost of them all.

To him alone, of all, licentious deeds

Were odious, and, with indignation fired,

He witness'd the excesses of the rest.

He then took foremost up the shaft and bow,

And, station'd at the portal, strove to bend 180

But bent it not, fatiguing, first, his hands

Delicate and uncustom'd to the toil.

He ceased, and the assembly thus bespake.

My friends, I speed not; let another try;

For many Princes shall this bow of life

Bereave, since death more eligible seems,

Far more, than loss of her, for whom we meet

Continual here, expecting still the prize.

Some suitor, haply, at this moment, hopes

That he shall wed whom long he hath desired, 190

Ulysses' wife, Penelope; let him

Essay the bow, and, trial made, address

His spousal offers to some other fair

Among the long-stoled Princesses of Greece,

¹ Antinoüs prescribes to them this manner of rising to the trial for the good omen's sake, the left-hand being held unpropitious.

This Princess leaving his, whose proffer'd gifts
Shall please her most, and whom the Fates ordain.

He said, and set the bow down on the floor,
Reclining it against the shaven pannels smooth
That lined the wall; the arrow, next, he placed,
Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn, 200
And to the seat whence he had ris'n return'd.
Then him Antinoüs, angry, thus reprov'd.

What word, Leiodes, grating to our ears
Hath scap'd thy lips? I hear it with disdain.
Shall this bow fatal prove to many a Prince,
Because thou hast, thyself, too feeble proved
To bend it? no. Thou wast not born to bend
The unpliant bow, or to direct the shaft,
But here are nobler who shall soon prevail.

He said, and to Melanthius gave command, 210
The goat-herd. Hence, Melanthius, kindle fire;
Beside it place, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; from within procure
A large round cake of suet next, with which
When we have chafed and suppled the tough bow
Before the fire, we will again essay
To bend it, and decide the doubtful strife.

He ended, and Melanthius, kindling fire
Beside it placed, with fleeces spread, a form 220
Of length commodious; next, he brought a cake
Ample and round of suet from within,
With which they chafed the bow, then tried again
To bend, but bent it not; superior strength
To theirs that task required. Yet two, the rest
In force surpassing, made no trial yet,
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus the brave.

Then went the herdsman and the swine-herd forth
Together; after whom, the glorious Chief
Himself the house left also, and when all
Without the court had met, with gentle speech 230
Ulysses, then, the faithful pair address'd.

Herdsmen! and thou, Eumæus! shall I keep
A certain secret close, or shall I speak
Outright? my spirit prompts me, and I will.
What welcome should Ulysses at your hands
Receive, arriving suddenly at home,
Some God his guide; would ye the suitors aid,

Or would ye aid Ulysses? answer true.

Then thus the chief intendant of his herds.
 Would Jove but grant me my desire, to see 240
 Once more the Hero, and would some kind Pow'r,
 Restore him, I would shew thee soon an arm
 Strenuous to serve him, and a dauntless heart.

Eumæus, also, fervently implored
 The Gods in pray'r, that they would render back
 Ulysses to his home. He, then, convinced
 Of their unfeigning honesty, began.

Behold him! I am he myself, arrived
 After long suff'rings in the twentieth year!
 I know how welcome to yourselves alone 250
 Of all my train I come, for I have heard
 None others praying for my safe return.
 I therefore tell you truth; should heav'n subdue
 The suitors under me, ye shall receive
 Each at my hands a bride, with lands and house
 Near to my own, and ye shall be thenceforth
 Dear friends and brothers of the Prince my son.
 Lo! also this indisputable proof
 That ye may know and trust me. View it here.
 It is the scar which in Parnassus erst 260
 (Where with the sons I hunted of renown'd
 Autolycus) I from a boar received.

So saying, he stripp'd his tatters, and unveil'd
 The whole broad scar; then, soon as they had seen
 And surely recognized the mark, each cast
 His arms around Ulysses, wept, embraced
 And press'd him to his bosom, kissing oft
 His brows and shoulders, who as oft their hands
 And foreheads kiss'd, nor had the setting sun
 Beheld them satisfied, but that himself 270
 Ulysses thus admonished them, and said.

Cease now from tears, lest any, coming forth,
 Mark and report them to our foes within.
 Now, to the hall again, but one by one,
 Not all at once, I foremost, then yourselves,
 And this shall be the sign. Full well I know
 That, all unanimous, they will oppose
 Deliv'ry of the bow and shafts to me;
 But thou, (proceeding with it to my seat)
 Eumæus, noble friend! shalt give the bow 280

Into my grasp; then bid the women close
 The massy doors, and should they hear a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none set step abroad,
 But all work silent. Be the palace-door
 Thy charge, my good Philcæti¹! key it fast
 Without a moment's pause, and fix the brace.¹

He ended, and, returning to the hall,
 Resumed his seat; nor stay'd his servants long
 Without, but follow'd their illustrious Lord. 290
 Eurymachus was busily employ'd
 Turning the bow, and chafing it before
 The sprightly blaze, but, after all, could find
 No pow'r to bend it. Disappointment wrung
 A groan from his proud heart, and thus he said.

Alas! not only for myself I grieve,
 But grieve for all. Nor, though I mourn the loss
 Of such a bride, mourn I that loss alone,
 (For lovely Grecians may be found no few
 In Ithaca, and in the neighbour isles) 300
 But should we so inferior prove at last
 To brave Ulysses, that no force of ours
 Can bend his bow, we are for ever shamed.

To whom Antinoüs, thus, Eupithes' son.
 Not so; (as even thou art well-assured
 Thyself, Eurymachus!) but Phœbus claims
 This day his own. Who then, on such a day,
 Would strive to bend it? Let it rather rest.
 And should we leave the rings where now they stand,
 I trust that none ent'ring Ulysses' house 310
 Will dare displace them. Cup-bearer, attend!
 Serve all with wine, that, first, libation made,
 We may religiously lay down the bow.
 Command ye too Melanthius, that he drive
 Hither the fairest goats of all his flocks
 At dawn of day, that burning first, the thighs
 To the ethereal archer, we may make
 New trial, and decide, at length, the strife.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 The heralds, then, pour'd water on their hands, 320
 While youths crown'd high the goblets which they bore

¹ The *δεσμός* seems to have been a strap designed to close the only aperture by which the bolt could be displaced, and the door opened.

From right to left, distributing to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Till well sufficed, then, artful to effect
 His shrewd designs, Ulysses thus began.

Hear, O ye suitors of the illustrious Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. But I shall entreat
 Chiefly Eurymachus and the godlike youth
 Antinoüs, whose advice is wisely giv'n.

Tamper no longer with the bow, but leave 330
 The matter with the Gods, who shall decide
 The strife to-morrow, fav'ring whom they will.
 Meantime, grant *me* the polish'd bow, that I
 May trial make among you of my force,
 If I retain it still in like degree
 As erst, or whether wand'ring and defect
 Of nourishment have worn it all away.

He said, whom they with indignation heard
 Extreme, alarm'd lest he should bend the bow,
 And sternly thus Antinoüs replied. 340

Desperate vagabond! ah wretch deprived
 Of reason utterly! art not content?
 Esteem'st it not distinction proud enough
 To feast with us the nobles of the land?
 None robs thee of thy share, thou witnessest
 Our whole discourse, which, save thyself alone,
 No needy vagrant is allow'd to hear.
 Thou art befool'd by wine, as many have been,
 Wide-throated drinkers, unrestrain'd by rule.
 Wine in the mansion of the mighty Chief 350
 Pirithoüs, made the valiant Centaur mad
 Eurytion, at the Lapithæan feast.¹
 He drank to drunkenness, and being drunk,
 Committed great enormities beneath
 Pirithoüs' roof, and such as fill'd with rage
 The Hero-guests, who therefore by his feet
 Dragg'd him right through the vestibule, amerced
 Of nose and ears, and he departed thence
 Provoked to frenzy by that foul disgrace,
 Whence war between the human kind arose 360

¹ When Pirithoüs, one of the Lapithæ, married Hippodamia, daughter of Adrastus, he invited the Centaurs to the wedding. The Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, attempted to ravish the wives of the Lapithæ, who in resentment of that insult, slew them.

And the bold Centaurs—but he first incurred
 By his ebriety that mulct severe.
 Great evil, also, if thou bend the bow,
 To thee I prophesy; for thou shalt find
 Advocate or protector none in all
 This people, but we will dispatch thee hence
 Incontinent on board a sable bark
 To Echetus, the scourge of human kind,
 From whom is no escape. Drink then in peace,
 And contest shun with younger men than thou.

370

Him answer'd, then, Penelope discrete.
 Antinoüs! neither seemly were the deed
 Nor just, to maim or harm whatever guest
 Whom here arrived Telemachus receives.
 Canst thou expect, that should he even prove
 Stronger than ye, and bend the massy bow,
 He will conduct me hence to his own home,
 And make me his own bride? No such design
 His heart conceives, or hope; nor let a dread
 So vain the mind of any overcloud
 Who banquets here, since it dishonours me.

380

So she; to whom Eurymachus reply'd,
 Offspring of Polybus. O matchless Queen!
 Icarus' prudent daughter! none suspects
 That thou wilt wed with him; a mate so mean
 Should ill become thee; but we fear the tongues
 Of either sex, lest some Achaian say
 Hereafter, (one inferior far to us)
 Ah! how unworthy are they to compare
 With him whose wife they seek! to bend his bow
 Pass'd all their pow'r, yet this poor vagabond,
 Arriving from what country none can tell,
 Bent it with ease, and shot through all the rings.
 So will they speak, and so shall we be shamed.

390

Then answer, thus, Penelope return'd.
 No fair report, Eurymachus, attends
 Their names or can, who, riotous as ye,
 The house dishonour, and consume the wealth
 Of such a Chief. Why shame ye thus *yourselves*?
 The guest is of athletic frame, well form'd,
 And large of limb; he boasts him also sprung
 From noble ancestry. Come then—consent—
 Give him the bow, that we may see the proof;

400

For thus I say, and thus will I perform;
 Sure as he bends it, and Apollo gives
 To him that glory, tunic fair and cloak
 Shall be his meed from me, a javelin keen
 To guard him against men and dogs, a sword
 Of double edge, and sandals for his feet,
 And I will send him whither most he would.

410

Her answer'd then prudent Telemachus.
 Mother—the bow is mine; and, save myself,
 No Greek hath right to give it, or refuse.
 None who in rock-bound Ithaca possess
 Dominion, none in the steed-pastured isles
 Of Elis, if I chose to make the bow
 His own for ever, should that choice controul,
 But thou into the house repairing, ply
 Spindle and loom, thy province, and enjoin
 Diligence to thy maidens; for the bow
 Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
 Especially, since I am master here.

420

She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
 Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
 Withdrew; then mounting with her female train
 To her superior chamber, there she wept
 Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
 With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
 And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
 Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all
 The suitors, clamorous, reproved the deed,
 Of whom a youth, thus, insolent exclaim'd.

430

Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither bear'st the bow,
 Delirious wretch? the hounds that thou hast train'd
 Shall eat thee at thy solitary home
 Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
 Propitious to us, and the Pow'rs of heav'n.

So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
 Where erst it stood, terrified at the sound
 Of such loud menaces; on the other side
 Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.

440

Friend! forward with the bow; or soon repent
 That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
 With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
 Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine.
 I would to heav'n that I in force excell'd

As far, and prowess, every suitor here!
 So would I soon give rude dismissal hence
 To some, who live but to imagine harm.

He ceased, whose words the suitors laughing heard. 450
 And, for their sake, in part their wrath resign'd
 Against Telemachus; then through the hall
 Eumæus bore, and to Ulysses' hand
 Consign'd the bow; next, summoning abroad
 The ancient nurse, he gave her thus in charge.

It is the pleasure of Telemachus,
 Sage Euryclea! that thou key secure
 The doors; and should you hear, perchance, a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none look, curious, forth, 460
 But each in quietness pursue her work.

So he; nor flew his words useless away,
 But she, incontinent, shut fast the doors.
 Then, noiseless, sprang Philœtius forth, who closed
 The portals also of the palace-court.
 A ship-rope of Ægyptian reed, it chanced,
 Lay in the vestibule; with that he braced
 The doors securely, and re-entring fill'd
 Again his seat, but watchful, eyed his Lord.
 He, now, assaying with his hand the bow, 470
 Made curious trial of it ev'ry way,
 And turn'd it on all sides, lest haply worms
 Had in its master's absence drill'd the horn.
 Then thus a suitor to his next remark'd.

He hath an eye, methinks, exactly skill'd
 In bows, and steals them; or perhaps, at home,
 Hath such himself, or feels a strong desire
 To make them; so inquisitive the rogue
 Adept in mischief, shifts it to and fro!

To whom another, insolent, replied. 480
 I wish him like prosperity in all
 His efforts, as attends his effort made
 On this same bow, which he shall never bend.

So they; but when the wary Hero wise
 Had made his hand familiar with the bow
 Poising it and examining—at once—
 As when in harp and song adept, a bard
 Unlab'ring strains the chord to a new lyre,
 The twisted entrails of a sheep below

With fingers nice inserting, and above, 490
 With such facility Ulysses bent
 His own huge bow, and with his right hand play'd
 The nerve, which in its quick vibration sang
 Clear as the swallow's voice. Keen anguish seized
 The suitors, wan grew ev'ry cheek, and Jove
 Gave him his rolling thunder for a sign.
 That omen, granted to him by the son
 Of wily Saturn, with delight he heard.
 He took a shaft that at the table-side
 Lay ready drawn; but in his quiver's womb 500
 The rest yet slept, by those Achaians proud
 To be, ere long, experienced. True he lodg'd
 The arrow on the centre of the bow,
 And, occupying still his seat, drew home
 Nerve and notch'd arrow-head; with stedfast sight
 He aimed and sent it; right through all the rings
 From first to last the steel-charged weapon flew
 Issuing beyond, and to his son he spake.

Thou need'st not blush, young Prince, to have received
 A guest like me; neither my arrow swerved, 510
 Nor labour'd I long time to draw the bow;
 My strength is unimpair'd, not such as these
 In scorn affirm it. But the waning day
 Calls us to supper, after which succeeds¹
 Jocund variety, the song, the harp,
 With all that heightens and adorns the feast.

He said, and with his brows gave him the sign.
 At once the son of the illustrious Chief
 Slung his keen faulchion, grasp'd his spear, and stood
 Arm'd bright for battle at his father's side. 520

¹ This is an instance of the *Σαρδανιον μαλα τοιον* mentioned in Book XX.; such as, perhaps, could not be easily paralleled. I question if there be a passage, either in ancient or modern tragedy, so truly terrible as this seeming levity of Ulysses, in the moment when he was going to begin the slaughter.

BOOK XXII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, with some little assistance from Telemachus, Eumæus and Philœtius, slays all the suitors, and twelve of the female servants who had allowed themselves an illicit intercourse with them, are hanged. Melanthius also is punished with miserable mutilation.

THEN, girding up his rags, Ulysses sprang
With bow and full-charged quiver to the door;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he pour'd
His arrows, and the suitors, thus, bespake.

This prize, though difficult, hath been atchieved.
Now for another mark which never man
Struck yet, but I will strike it if I may,
And if Apollo make that glory mine.

He said, and at Antinoüs aimed direct
A bitter shaft; he, purposing to drink, 10
Both hands advanced toward the golden cup
Twin-ear'd, nor aught suspected death so nigh.
For who, at the full banquet, could suspect
That any single guest, however brave,
Should plan his death, and execute the blow?
Yet him Ulysses with an arrow pierced
Full in the throat, and through his neck behind
Started the glitt'ring point. Aslant he droop'd;
Down fell the goblet, through his nostrils flew
The spouted blood, and spurning with his foot 20
The board, he spread his viands in the dust.
Confusion, when they saw Antinoüs fall'n,
Seized all the suitors; from the thrones they sprang,
Flew ev'ry way, and on all sides explored
The palace-walls, but neither sturdy lance
As erst, nor buckler could they there discern,
Then, furious, to Ulysses thus they spake.

Thy arrow, stranger, was ill-aimed; a man
Is no just mark. Thou never shalt dispute
Prize more. Inevitable death is thine. 30
For thou hast slain a Prince noblest of all

In Ithaca, and shalt be vultures' food.

Various their judgments were, but none believed
That he had slain him wittingly, nor saw
Th' infatuate men fate hov'ring o'er them all.
Then thus Ulysses, louring dark, replied.

O dogs! not fearing aught my safe return
From Ilium, ye have shorn my substance close,
Lain with my women forcibly, and sought,
While yet I lived, to make my consort yours,
Heedless of the inhabitants of heav'n
Alike, and of the just revenge of man.
But death is on the wing; death for you all.

40

He said; their cheeks all faded at the sound,
And each with sharpen'd eyes search'd ev'ry nook
For an escape from his impending doom,
Till thus, alone, Eurymachus replied.

If thou indeed art he, the mighty Chief
Of Ithaca return'd, thou hast rehears'd
With truth the crimes committed by the Greeks
Frequent, both in thy house and in thy field.
But he, already, who was cause of all,
Lies slain, Antinoüs; he thy palace fill'd
With outrage, not solicitous so much
To win the fair Penelope, but thoughts
Far diff'rent framing, which Saturnian Jove
Hath baffled all; to rule, himself, supreme
In noble Ithaca, when he had kill'd
By an insidious stratagem thy son.

50

But he is slain. Now therefore, spare thy own,
Thy people; public reparation due
Shall sure be thine, and to appease thy wrath
For all the waste that, eating, drinking here
We have committed, we will yield thee, each,
Full twenty beeves, gold paying thee beside
And brass, till joy shall fill thee at the sight,
However just thine anger was before.

60

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied,
Eurymachus, would ye contribute each
His whole inheritance, and other sums
Still add beside, ye should not, even so,
These hands of mine bribe to abstain from blood,
Till ev'ry suitor suffer for his wrong.
Ye have your choice. Fight with me, or escape

70

(Whoever may) the terrours of his fate,
But ye all perish, if my thought be true.

He ended, they with trembling knees and hearts
All heard, whom thus Eurymachus address'd.

To your defence, my friends! for respite none
Will he to his victorious hands afford, 80
But, arm'd with bow and quiver, will dispatch
Shafts from the door till he have slain us all.
Therefore to arms—draw each his sword—oppose
The tables to his shafts, and all at once
Rush on him; that, dislodging him at least
From portal and from threshold, we may give
The city on all sides a loud alarm,
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

Thus saying, he drew his brazen faulchion keen 90
Of double edge, and with a dreadful cry
Sprang on him; but Ulysses with a shaft
In that same moment through his bosom driv'n
Transfix'd his liver, and down dropp'd his sword.
He, staggering around his table, fell
Convolv'd in agonies, and overturn'd
Both food and wine; his forehead smote the floor;
Woe fill'd his heart, and spurning with his heels
His vacant seat, he shook it till he died.
Then, with his faulchion drawn, Amphinomus 100
Advanced to drive Ulysses from the door,
And fierce was his assault; but, from behind,
Telemachus between his shoulders fix'd
A brazen lance, and urged it through his breast.
Full on his front, with hideous sound, he fell.
Leaving the weapon planted in his spine
Back flew Telemachus, lest, had he stood
Drawing it forth, some enemy, perchance,
Should either pierce him with a sudden thrust
Oblique, or hew him with a downright edge.
Swift, therefore, to his father's side he ran, 110
Whom reaching, in wing'd accents thus he said.

My father! I will now bring thee a shield,
An helmet, and two spears; I will enclose
Myself in armour also, and will give
Both to the herdsmen and Eumæus arms
Expedient now, and needful for us all.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Run; fetch them, while I yet have arrows left,
Lest, single, I be justled from the door.

He said, and, at his word, forth went the Prince, 120

Seeking the chamber where he had secured
The armour. Thence he took four shields, eight spears,

With four hair-crested helmets, charged with which

He hasted to his father's side again,

And, arming first himself, furnish'd with arms

His two attendants. Then, all clad alike

In splendid brass, beside the dauntless Chief

Ulysses, his auxiliars firm they stood.

He, while a single arrow unemploy'd

Lay at his foot, right-aiming, ever pierced 130

Some suitor through, and heaps on heaps they fell.

But when his arrows fail'd the royal Chief,

His bow reclining at the portal's side

Against the palace-wall, he slung, himself,

A four-fold buckler on his arm, he fix'd

A casque whose crest wav'd awful o'er his brows

On his illustrious head, and fill'd his gripe

With two stout spears, well-headed, both, with brass.

There was a certain postern in the wall¹

At the gate-side, the customary pass 140

Into a narrow street, but barr'd secure.

Ulysses bade his faithful swine-herd watch

That egress, station'd near it, for it own'd

One sole approach; then Agelaüs loud

Exhorting all the suitors, thus exclaim'd.

Oh friends, will none, ascending to the door

Of yonder postern, summon to our aid

The populace, and spread a wide alarm?

So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

To whom the keeper of the goats replied 150

Melanthius. Agelaüs! Prince renown'd!

That may not be. The postern and the gate²

Neighbour too near each other, and to force

The narrow egress were a vain attempt;

¹ If the ancients found it difficult to ascertain clearly the situation of this *ορθοθυρη*, well may we. The Translator has given it the position which to him appeared most probable.—There seem to have been two of these posterns, one leading to a part from which the town might be alarmed, the other to the chamber to which Telemachus went for armour. There was one, perhaps, on each side of the portal, and they appear to have been at some height above the floor.

² At which Ulysses stood.

One valiant man might thence repulse us all.
 But come—myself will furnish you with arms
 Fetch'd from above; for there, as I suppose,
 (And not elsewhere) Ulysses and his son
 Have hidden them, and there they shall be found.

So spake Melanthius, and, ascending, sought 160
 Ulysses' chambers through the winding stairs
 And gall'ries of the house. Twelve bucklers thence
 He took, as many spears, and helmets bright
 As many, shagg'd with hair, then swift return'd
 And gave them to his friends. Trembled the heart
 Of brave Ulysses, and his knees, at sight
 Of his opposers putting armour on,
 And shaking each his spear; arduous indeed
 Now seem'd his task, and in wing'd accents brief
 Thus to his son Telemachus he spake. 170

Either some woman of our train contrives
 Hard battle for us, furnishing with arms
 The suitors, or Melanthius arms them all.

Him answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
 Father, this fault was mine, and be it charged
 On none beside; I left the chamber-door
 Unbarr'd, which, more attentive than myself,
 Their spy perceived. But haste, Eumæus, shut
 The chamber-door, observing well, the while,
 If any women of our train have done 180
 This deed, or whether, as I more suspect,
 Melanthius, Dolius' son, have giv'n them arms.

Thus mutual they conferr'd; meantime, again
 Melanthius to the chamber flew in quest
 Of other arms. Eumæus, as he went,
 Mark'd him, and to Ulysses' thus he spake.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 Behold, the traitor, whom ourselves supposed,
 Seeks yet again the chamber! Tell me plain,
 Shall I, should I superior prove in force, 190
 Slay him, or shall I drag him thence to thee,
 That he may suffer at thy hands the doom
 Due to his treasons perpetrated oft
 Against thee, here, even in thy own house?

Then answer thus Ulysses shrewd return'd.
 I, with Telemachus, will here immew
 The lordly suitors close, rage as they may.

Ye two, the while, bind fast Melanthius' hands
 And feet behind his back, then cast him bound
 Into the chamber, and (the door secured) 200
 Pass underneath his arms a double chain,
 And by a pillar's top weigh him aloft
 Till he approach the rafters, there to endure,
 Living long time, the mis'ries he hath earned.

He spake; they prompt obey'd; together both
 They sought the chamber, whom the wretch within
 Heard not, exploring ev'ry nook for arms.
 They watching stood the door, from which, at length,
 Forth came Melanthius, bearing in one hand
 A casque, and in the other a broad shield 210
 Time-worn and chapp'd with drought, which in his youth
 Warlike Laertes had been wont to bear.

Long time neglected it had lain, till age
 Had loosed the sutures of its bands. At once
 Both, springing on him, seized and drew him in
 Forcibly by his locks, then cast him down
 Prone on the pavement, trembling at his fate.
 With painful stricture of the cord his hands
 They bound and feet together at his back,
 As their illustrious master had enjoined, 220
 Then weigh'd him with a double chain aloft
 By a tall pillar to the palace-roof,
 And thus, deriding him, Eumæus spake.

Now, good Melanthius, on that fleecy bed
 Reclined, as well befits thee, thou wilt watch
 All night, nor when the golden dawn forsakes
 The ocean stream, will she escape thine eye,
 But thou wilt duly to the palace drive
 The fattest goats, a banquet for thy friends.

So saying, he left him in his dreadful sling. 230
 Then, arming both, and barring fast the door,
 They sought brave Laertiades again.

And now, courageous at the portal stood
 Those four, by numbers in the interior house
 Opposed of adversaries fierce in arms,
 When Pallas, in the form and with the voice
 Approach'd of Mentor, whom Laertes' son
 Beheld, and joyful at the sight, exclaim'd.

Help, Mentor! help—now recollect a friend
 And benefactor, born when thou wast born. 240

So he, not unsuspecting that he saw
 Pallas, the heroine of heav'n. Meantime
 The suitors fill'd with menaces the dome,
 And Agelaüs, first, Damastor's son,
 In accents harsh rebuked the Goddess thus.

Beware, oh Mentor! that he lure thee not
 To oppose the suitors and to aid himself,
 For thus will we. Ulysses and his son
 Both slain, in vengeance of thy purpos'd deeds
 Against us, we will slay *thee* next, and thou 250
 With thy own head shalt satisfy the wrong.
 Your force thus quell'd in battle, all thy wealth
 Whether in house or field, mingled with his,
 We will confiscate, neither will we leave
 Or son of thine, or daughter in thy house
 Alive, nor shall thy virtuous consort more
 Within the walls of Ithaca be seen.

He ended, and his words with wrath inflamed
 Minerva's heart the more; incensed, she turn'd
 Towards Ulysses, whom she thus reproved. 260

Thou neither own'st the courage nor the force,
 Ulysses, now, which nine whole years thou showd'st
 At Ilium, waging battle obstinate
 For high-born Helen, and in horrid fight
 Destroying multitudes, till thy advice
 At last lay'd Priam's bulwark'd city low.
 Why, in possession of thy proper home
 And substance, mourn'st thou want of pow'r t'oppose
 The suitors? Stand beside me, mark my deeds,
 And thou shalt own Mentor Alcimides 270
 A valiant friend, and mindful of thy love.

She spake; nor made she victory as yet
 Entire his own, proving the valour, first,
 Both of the sire and of his glorious son,
 But, springing in a swallow's form aloft,
 Perch'd on a rafter of the splendid roof.
 Then, Agelaüs animated loud
 The suitors, whom Eurynomus also roused,
 Amphimedon, and Demoptolemus,
 And Polyctorides, Pisander named, 280
 And Polybus the brave; for noblest far
 Of all the suitor-chiefs who now survived
 And fought for life were these. The bow had quell'd

And shafts, in quick succession sent, the rest.
Then Agelaüs, thus, harangued them all.

We soon shall tame, O friends, this warrior's might,
Whom Mentor, after all his airy vaunts
Hath left, and at the portal now remain
Themselves alone. Dismiss not therefore, all,
Your spears together, but with six alone 290
Assail them first; Jove willing, we shall pierce
Ulysses, and subduing him, shall slay
With ease the rest; their force is safely scorn'd.

He ceas'd; and, as he bade, six hurl'd the spear
Together; but Minerva gave them all
A devious flight; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third¹
Flung right his ashen beam pond'rous with brass
Against the wall. Then (ev'ry suitor's spear
Eluded) thus Ulysses gave the word— 300

Now friends! I counsel you that ye dismiss
Your spears at *them*, who, not content with past
Enormities, thirst also for our blood.

He said, and with unerring aim, all threw
Their glitt'ring spears. Ulysses on the ground
Stretch'd Demoptolemus; Euryades
Fell by Telemachus; the swine-herd slew
Elätus; and the keeper of the beeves
Pisander; in one moment all alike
Lay grinding with their teeth the dusty floor. 310
Back flew the suitors to the farthest wall,
On whom those valiant four advancing, each
Recover'd, quick, his weapon from the dead.
Then hurl'd the desp'rate suitors yet again
Their glitt'ring spears, but Pallas gave to each
A frustrate course; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third
Flung full his ashen beam against the wall.
Yet pierced Amphimedon the Prince's wrist,
But slightly, a skin-wound, and o'er his shield 320
Ctesippus reach'd the shoulder of the good
Eumæus, but his glancing weapon swift
O'erflew the mark, and fell. And now the four,
Ulysses, dauntless Hero, and his friends

¹ The deviation of three only is described, which must be understood, therefore, as instances of the ill success of all.

All hurl'd their spears together in return,
Himself Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
Wounded Eurydamas; Ulysses' son
Amphimedon; the swine-herd Polybus;
And in his breast the keeper of the beeves
Ctesippus, glorying over whom, he cried.

330

Oh son of Polytherses! whose delight
Hath been to taunt and jeer, never again
Boast foolishly, but to the Gods commit
Thy tongue, since they are mightier far than thou.
Take this—a compensation for thy pledge
Of hospitality, the huge ox-hoof,
Which while he roam'd the palace, begging alms,
Ulysses at thy bounteous hand received.

So gloried he; then, grasping still his spear,
Ulysses pierced Damastor's son, and, next,
Telemachus, enforcing his long beam
Sheer through his bowels and his back, transpierced
Leiocritus; he prostrate smote the floor.
Then, Pallas from the lofty roof held forth
Her host-confounding Ægis o'er their heads,
With'ring their souls with fear. They through the hall
Fled, scatter'd as an herd, which rapid-wing'd
The gad-fly dissipates, infester fell
Of beeves, when vernal suns shine hot and long.

340

But, as when bow-beak'd vultures crooked-claw'd¹
Stoop from the mountains on the smaller fowl;
Terrified at the toils that spread the plain
The flocks take wing, they, darting from above,
Strike, seize, and slay, resistance or escape
Is none, the fowler's heart leaps with delight,
So they, pursuing through the spacious hall
The suitors, smote them on all sides, their heads
Sounded beneath the sword, with hideous groans
The palace rang, and the floor foamed with blood.
Then flew Leiodes to Ulysses' knees,
Which clasping, in wing'd accents thus he cried.

350

360

¹ In this simile we seem to have a curious account of the ancient manner of fowling. The nets (for *νεφεια* is used in that sense by Aristophanes) were spread on a plain; on an adjoining rising ground were stationed they who had charge of the vultures (such Homer calls them) which were trained to the sport. The alarm being given to the birds below, the vultures were loosed, when if any of them escaped their talons, the nets were ready to enclose them. See Eustathius Dacier. Clarke.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me! Never have I word
 Injurious spoken, or injurious deed
 Attempted 'gainst the women of thy house,
 But others, so transgressing, oft forbad.
 Yet they abstain'd not, and a dreadful fate
 Due to their wickedness have, therefore, found.
 But I, their soothsayer alone, must fall,
 Though unoffending; such is the return
 By mortals made for benefits received!

370

To whom Ulysses, louring dark, replied.
 Is that thy boast? Hast thou indeed for these
 The seer's high office fill'd? Then, doubtless, oft
 Thy pray'r hath been that distant far might prove
 The day delectable of my return,
 And that my consort might thy own become
 To bear thee children; wherefore thee I doom
 To a dire death which thou shalt not avoid.

So saying, he caught the faulchion from the floor
 Which Agelaüs had let fall, and smote
 Leiodes, while he kneel'd, athwart his neck
 So suddenly, that ere his tongue had ceased
 To plead for life, his head was in the dust.
 But Phemius, son of Terpius, bard divine,
 Who, through compulsion, with his song regaled
 The suitors, a like dreadful death escaped.
 Fast by the postern, harp in hand, he stood,
 Doubtful if, issuing, he should take his seat
 Beside the altar of Hercæan Jove,¹

380

390

Where oft Ulysses offer'd, and his sire,
 Fat thighs of beeves, or whether he should haste,
 An earnest suppliant, to embrace his knees.
 That course, at length, most pleased him; then, between
 The beaker and an argent-studded throne
 He grounded his sweet lyre, and seizing fast
 The Hero's knees, him, suppliant, thus address'd.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me. Thou shalt not escape
 Regret thyself hereafter, if thou slay
 Me, charmer of the woes of Gods and men.
 Self-taught am I, and treasure in my mind

400

¹ So called because he was worshipped within the 'Ερκος or wall that surrounded the court.

Themes of all argument from heav'n inspired,
And I can sing to thee as to a God.

Ah, then, behead me not. Put ev'n the wish
Far from thee! for thy own beloved son
Can witness, that not drawn by choice, or driv'n
By stress of want, resorting to thine house
I have regaled these revellers so oft,
But under force of mightier far than I.

410

So he; whose words soon as the sacred might
Heard of Telemachus, approaching quick
His father, thus, humane, he interposed.

Hold, harm not with the vengeful faulchion's edge
This blameless man; and we will also spare
Medon the herald, who hath ever been
A watchful guardian of my boyish years,
Unless Philœtius have already slain him,
Or else Eumæus, or thyself, perchance,
Unconscious, in the tumult of our foes.

420

He spake, whom Medon hearing (for he lay
Beneath a throne, and in a new-stript hide
Enfolded, trembling with the dread of death)
Sprang from his hiding-place, and casting off
The skin, flew to Telemachus, embraced
His knees, and in wing'd accents thus exclaim'd.

Prince! I am here—oh, pity me! repress
Thine own, and pacify thy father's wrath,
That he destroy not me, through fierce revenge
Of their iniquities who have consumed
His wealth, and, in their folly scorn'd his son.

430

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
Smiling complacent. Fear not; my own son
Hath pleaded for thee. Therefore (taught thyself
That truth) teach others the superior worth
Of benefits with injuries compared.
But go ye forth, thou and the sacred bard,
That ye may sit distant in yonder court
From all this carnage, while I give command,
Myself, concerning it, to those within.

440

He ceas'd; they going forth, took each his seat
Beside Jove's altar, but with careful looks
Suspicious, dreading without cease the sword.
Meantime Ulysses search'd his hall, in quest
Of living foes, if any still survived

Unpunish'd; but he found them all alike
 Welt'ring in dust and blood; num'rous they lay
 Like fishes when they strew the sinuous shore
 Of Ocean, from the grey gulph drawn aground
 In nets of many a mesh; they on the sands
 Lie spread, athirst for the salt wave, till hot
 The gazing sun dries all their life away;
 So lay the suitors heap'd, and thus at length
 The prudent Chief gave order to his son.

450

Telemachus! bid Euryclea come
 Quickly, the nurse, to whom I would impart
 The purpose which now occupies me most.

He said; obedient to his sire, the Prince
 Smote on the door, and summon'd loud the nurse.

Arise thou ancient governess of all
 Our female menials, and come forth; attend
 My father; he hath somewhat for thine ear.

450

So he; nor flew his words useless away,
 For, throwing wide the portal, forth she came,
 And, by Telemachus conducted, found
 Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,
 With blood defiled and dust; dread he appear'd
 As from the pastur'd ox newly-devoured
 The lion stalking back; his ample chest
 With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung,
 Tremendous spectacle! such seem'd the Chief,
 Blood-stain'd all over. She, the carnage spread
 On all sides seeing, and the pools of blood,
 Felt impulse forcible to publish loud
 That wond'rous triumph; but her Lord repress'd
 The shout of rapture ere it burst abroad,
 And in wing'd accents thus his will enforced.

470

Silent exult, O ancient matron dear!
 Shout not, be still. Unholy is the voice
 Of loud thanksgiving over slaughter'd men.
 Their own atrocious deeds and the Gods' will
 Have slain all these; for whether noble guest
 Arrived or base, they scoff'd at all alike,
 And for their wickedness have, therefore, died.
 But say; of my domestic women, who
 Have scorn'd me, and whom find'st thou innocent?

480

To whom good Euryclea thus replied.
 My son! I will declare the truth; thou keep'st

Female domestics fifty in thy house,
 Whom we have made intelligent to comb 490
 The fleece, and to perform whatever task.
 Of these, twice six have overpass'd the bounds
 Of modesty, respecting neither me,
 Nor yet the Queen; and thy own son, adult
 So lately, no permission had from her
 To regulate the women of her train.
 But I am gone, I fly with what hath pass'd
 To the Queen's ear, who nought suspects, so sound
 She sleeps, by some divinity composed.

Then answer, thus, Ulysses wise returned. 500
 Hush, and disturb her not. Go. Summon first
 Those wantons, who have long deserved to die.

He ceas'd; then issued forth the ancient dame
 To summon those bad women, and, meantime,
 Calling his son, Philœtius, and Eumæus,
 Ulysses in wing'd accents thus began.

Bestir ye, and remove the dead; command
 Those women also to your help; then cleanse
 With bibulous sponges and with water all
 The seats and tables; when ye shall have thus 510
 Set all in order, lead those women forth,
 And in the centre of the spacious court,
 Between the scull'ry and the outer-wall
 Smite them with your broad faulchions till they lose
 In death the mem'ry of their secret loves
 Indulged with wretches lawless as themselves.

He ended, and the damsels came at once
 All forth, lamenting, and with tepid tears
 Show'ring the ground; with mutual labour, first,
 Bearing the bodies forth into the court, 520
 They lodged them in the portico; meantime
 Ulysses, stern, enjoin'd them haste, and, urged
 By sad necessity, they bore all out.

With sponges and with water, next, they cleansed
 The thrones and tables, while Telemachus
 Beesom'd the floor, Eumæus in that work
 Aiding him and the keeper of the beeves,
 And those twelve damsels bearing forth the soil.
 Thus, order giv'n to all within, they, next,
 Led forth the women, whom they shut between 530
 The scull'ry and the outer-wall in close

Durance, from which no pris'ner could escape,
And thus Telemachus discrete began.

An honourable death is not for these
By my advice, who have so often heap'd
Reproach on mine and on my mother's head,
And held lewd commerce with the suitor-train.

He said, and noosing a strong galley-rope
To an huge column, led the cord around
The spacious dome, suspended so aloft 540
That none with quiv'ring feet might reach the floor.
As when a flight of doves ent'ring the copse,
Or broad-wing'd thrushes, strike against the net
Within, ill rest, entangled, there they find,
So they, suspended by the neck, expired
All in one line together. Death abhorr'd!
With restless feet awhile they beat the air,
Then ceas'd. And now through vestibule and hall
They led Melanthius forth. With ruthless steel
They pared away his ears and nose, pluck'd forth 550
His parts of shame, destin'd to feed the dogs,
And, still indignant, lopp'd his hands and feet.
Then, laving each his feet and hands, they sought
Again Ulysses; all their work was done,
And thus the Chief to Euryclea spake.

Bring blast-averting sulphur, nurse, bring fire!
That I may fumigate my walls; then bid
Penelope with her attendants down,
And summon all the women of her train.

But Euryclea, thus, his nurse, replied. 560
My son! thou hast well said; yet will I first
Serve thee with vest and mantle. Stand not here
In thy own palace cloath'd with tatters foul
And beggarly—she will abhor the sight.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Not so. Bring fire for fumigation first.

He said; nor Euryclea his lov'd nurse
Longer delay'd, but sulphur brought and fire,
When he with purifying steams, himself,
Visited ev'ry part, the banquet-room, 570
The vestibule, the court. Ranging meantime
His house magnificent, the matron call'd
The women to attend their Lord in haste,
And they attended, bearing each a torch.

Then gather'd they around him all, sincere
Welcoming his return; with close embrace
Enfolding him, each kiss'd his brows, and each
His shoulders, and his hands lock'd fast in hers.
He, irresistible the impulse felt
To sigh and weep, well recognizing all.

580

BOOK XXIII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES with some difficulty, convinces Penelope of his identity, who at length, overcome by force of evidence, receives him to her arms with transport. He entertains her with a recital of his adventures, and in his narration the principal events of the poem are recapitulated. In the morning, Ulysses, Telemachus, the herdsman and the swine-herd depart into the country.

AND now, with exultation loud the nurse
Again ascended, eager to apprise
The Queen of her Ulysses' safe return;
Joy braced her knees, with nimbleness of youth
She stepp'd, and at her ear, her thus bespake.

Arise, Penelope! dear daughter, see
With thy own eyes thy daily wish fulfill'd.
Ulysses is arrived; hath reach'd at last
His native home, and all those suitors proud
Hath slaughter'd, who his family distress'd, 10
His substance wasted, and controul'd his son.

To whom Penelope discrete replied.
Dear nurse! the Gods have surely ta'en away
Thy judgment; they transform the wise to fools,
And fools conduct to wisdom, and have marr'd
Thy intellect, who wast discrete before.
Why wilt thou mock me, wretched as I am,
With tales extravagant? and why disturb
Those slumbers sweet that seal'd so fast mine eyes?
For such sweet slumbers have I never known 20
Since my Ulysses on his voyage sail'd
To that bad city never to be named.
Down instant to thy place again—begone—
For had another of my maidens dared
Disturb my sleep with tidings wild as these,
I had dismiss'd her down into the house
More roughly; but thine age excuses *thee*.

To whom the venerable matron thus.
I mock thee not, my child; no—he is come—
Himself, Ulysses, even as I say, 30

That stranger, object of the scorn of all.
 Telemachus well knew his sire arrived,
 But prudently conceal'd the tidings, so
 To insure the more the suitors' punishment.

So Euryclea she transported heard,
 And springing from the bed, wrapp'd in her arms
 The ancient woman shedding tears of joy,
 And in wing'd accents ardent thus replied.

Ah then, dear nurse inform me! tell me true!
 Hath he indeed arriv'd as thou declar'st?
 How dared he to assail alone that band
 Of shameless ones, for ever swarming here?

40

Then Euryclea, thus, matron belov'd.
 I nothing saw or knew; but only heard
 Groans of the wounded; in th' interior house
 We trembling sat, and ev'ry door was fast.
 Thus all remain'd till by his father sent,
 Thy own son call'd me forth. Going, I found
 Ulysses compass'd by the slaughter'd dead.
 They cover'd wide the pavement, heaps on heaps.

50

It would have cheer'd thy heart to have beheld
 Thy husband lion-like with crimson stains
 Of slaughter and of dust all dappled o'er,
 Heap'd in the portal, at this moment, lie
 Their bodies, and he fumigates, meantime,
 The house with sulphur and with flames of fire,
 And hath, himself, sent me to bid thee down.
 Follow me, then, that ye may give your hearts
 To gladness, both, for ye have much endured;
 But the event, so long your soul's desire,
 Is come; himself hath to his household Gods
 Alive return'd, thee and his son he finds
 Unharm'd and at your home, nor hath he left
 Unpunish'd one of all his enemies.

60

Her answer'd, then, Penelope discrete.
 Ah dearest nurse! indulge not to excess
 This dang'rous triumph. Thou art well apprized
 How welcome his appearance here would prove
 To all, but chief, to me, and to his son,
 Fruit of our love. But these things are not so;
 Some God, resentful of their evil deeds,
 And of their biting contumely severe,
 Hath slain those proud; for whether noble guest

70

Arrived or base, alike they scoff'd at all,
 And for their wickedness have therefore died.
 But my Ulysses distant far, I know,
 From Greece hath perish'd, and returns no more.

To whom thus Euryclea, nurse belov'd.
 What word my daughter had escaped thy lips,
 Who thus affirm'st thy husband, now within 80
 And at his own hearth-side, for ever lost?
 Canst thou be thus incredulous? Hear again—
 I give thee yet proof past dispute, his scar
 Imprinted by a wild-boar's iv'ry tusk.
 Laving him I remark'd it, and desired,
 Myself, to tell thee, but he, ever-wise,
 Compressing with both hands my lips, forbad.
 Come, follow me. My life shall be the pledge.
 If I deceive thee, kill me as thou wilt.

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied. 90
 Ah, dearest nurse, sagacious as thou art,
 Thou little know'st to scan the counsels wise
 Of the eternal Gods. But let us seek
 My son, however, that I may behold
 The suitors dead, and him by whom they died.

So saying, she left her chamber, musing much
 In her descent, whether to interrogate
 Her Lord apart, or whether to imprint,
 At once, his hands with kisses and his brows.
 O'erpassing light the portal-step of stone 100
 She enter'd. He sat opposite, illumed
 By the hearth's sprightly blaze, and close before
 A pillar of the dome, waiting with eyes
 Downcast, till viewing him, his noble spouse
 Should speak to him; but she sat silent long,
 Her faculties in mute amazement held.
 By turns she riveted her eyes on his,
 And, seeing him so foul attired, by turns
 She recognized him not; then spake her son
 Telemachus, and her silence thus reprov'd. 110

My mother! ah my hapless and my most
 Obdurate mother! wherefore thus aloof
 Shunn'st thou my father, neither at his side
 Sitting affectionate, nor utt'ring word?
 Another wife lives not who could endure
 Such distance from her husband new-return'd

To his own country in the twentieth year,
 After much hardship; but thy heart is still
 As ever, less impressible than stone,

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied. 120
 I am all wonder, O my son; my soul
 Is stunn'd within me; pow'r to speak to him
 Or to interrogate him have I none,
 Or ev'n to look on him; but if indeed
 He be Ulysses, and have reach'd his home,
 I shall believe it soon, by proof convinced
 Of signs known only to himself and me.

She said; then smiled the Hero toil-inured,
 And in wing'd accents thus spake to his son.

Leave thou, Telemachus, thy mother here 130
 To sift and prove me; she will know me soon
 More certainly; she sees me ill-attired
 And squalid now; therefore she shews me scorn,
 And no belief hath yet that I am he.
 But we have need, thou and myself, of deep
 Deliberation. If a man have slain
 One only citizen, who leaves behind
 Few interested to avenge his death,
 Yet, flying, he forsakes both friends and home;
 But we have slain the noblest Princes far 140
 Of Ithaca, on whom our city most
 Depended; therefore, I advise thee, think!

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.

Be that thy care, my father! for report
 Proclaims *thee* shrewdest of mankind, with whom
 In ingenuity may none compare.

Lead thou; to follow thee shall be our part
 With prompt alacrity; nor shall, I judge,
 Courage be wanting to our utmost force.

Thus then replied Ulysses, ever-wise. 150
 To me the safest counsel and the best
 Seems this. First wash yourselves, and put ye on
 Your tunics; bid ye, next, the maidens take
 Their best attire, and let the bard divine
 Harping melodious play a sportive dance,
 That, whether passenger or neighbour near,
 All may imagine nuptials held within.
 So shall not loud report that we have slain
 All those, alarm the city, till we gain

Our woods and fields, where, once arriv'd, such plans 160
We will devise, as Jove shall deign to inspire.

He spake, and all, obedient, in the bath
First laved themselves, then put their tunics on;
The damsels also dress'd, and the sweet bard,
Harping melodious, kindled strong desire
In all, of jocund song and graceful dance.
The palace under all its vaulted roof
Remurmur'd to the feet of sportive youths
And cinctured maidens, while no few abroad,
Hearing such revelry within, remark'd— 170

The Queen with many wooers, weds at last.
Ah fickle and unworthy fair! too frail
Always to keep inviolate the house
Of her first Lord, and wait for his return.

So spake the people; but they little knew
What had befall'n. Eurynome, meantime,
With bath and unction serv'd the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, and he saw himself attired
Royally once again in his own house.
Then, Pallas over all his features shed 180

Superior beauty, dignified his form
With added amplitude, and pour'd his curls
Like hyacinthine flow'rs down from his brows.
As when some artist by Minerva made
And Vulcan, wise to execute all tasks
Ingenious, borders silver with a wreath
Of gold, accomplishing a graceful work,
Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.
He, godlike, stepping from the bath, resumed 190
His former seat magnificent, and sat
Opposite to the Queen, to whom he said.

Penelope! the Gods to thee have giv'n
Of all thy sex, the most obdurate heart.
Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After such hardship. But prepare me, nurse,
A bed, for solitary I must sleep,
Since she is iron, and feels not for me. 200

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
I neither magnify thee, sir! nor yet

Depreciate thee, nor is my wonder such
 As hurries me at once into thy arms,
 Though my remembrance perfectly retains,
 Such as he was, Ulysses, when he sail'd
 On board his bark from Ithaca—Go, nurse,
 Prepare his bed, but not within the walls
 Of his own chamber built with his own bands.
 Spread it without, and spread it well with warm
 Mantles, with fleeces, and with richest rugs. 210

So spake she, proving him,¹ and not untouch'd
 With anger at that word, thus he replied.

Penelope, that order grates my ear.
 Who hath displaced my bed? The task were hard
 E'en to an artist; other than a God
 None might with ease remove it; as for man,
 It might defy the stoutest in his prime
 Of youth, to heave it to a different spot.

For in that bed elaborate, a sign, 220
 A special sign consists; I was myself
 The artificer; I fashion'd it alone.

Within the court a leafy olive grew
 Lofty, luxuriant, pillar-like in girth.
 Around this tree I built, with massy stones
 Cemented close, my chamber, roof'd it o'er,
 And hung the glutinated portals on.
 I lopp'd the ample foliage and the boughs,
 And sev'ring near the root its solid bole,
 Smooth'd all the rugged stump with skilful hand, 230

And wrought it to a pedestal well squared
 And modell'd by the line. I wimbled, next,
 The frame throughout, and from the olive-stump
 Beginning, fashion'd the whole bed above
 Till all was finish'd, plated o'er with gold,
 With silver, and with ivory, and beneath
 Close interlaced with purple cordage strong.
 Such sign I give thee. But if still it stand
 Unmoved, or if some other, sev'ring sheer
 The olive from its bottom, have displaced 240
 My bed—that matter is best known to thee.

¹ The proof consisted in this—that the bed being attached to the stump of an olive tree still rooted, was immovable, and Ulysses having made it himself, no person present, he must needs be apprized of the impossibility of her orders, if he were indeed Ulysses; accordingly, this demonstration of his identity satisfies all her scruples.

He ceas'd; she, conscious of the sign so plain
 Giv'n by Ulysses, heard with flutt'ring heart
 And fault'ring knees that proof. Weeping she ran
 Direct toward him, threw her arms around
 The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied.

Ah my Ulysses! pardon me—frown not—
 Thou, who at other times hast ever shewn
 Superior wisdom! all our griefs have flow'd
 From the Gods' will; they envied us the bliss
 Of undivided union sweet enjoy'd

250

Through life, from early youth to latest age.
 No. Be not angry now; pardon the fault
 That I embraced thee not as soon as seen,
 For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm
 My soul, lest some false alien should, perchance,
 Beguile me, for our house draws num'rous such.
 Jove's daughter, Argive Helen, ne'er had given
 Free entertainment to a stranger's love,
 Had she foreknown that the heroic sons
 Of Greece would bring her to her home again.

260

But heav'n incited her to that offence,
 Who never, else, had even in her thought
 Harbour'd the foul enormity, from which
 Originated even our distress.
 But now, since evident thou hast described
 Our bed, which never mortal yet beheld,
 Ourselves except and Actoris my own
 Attendant, giv'n me when I left my home
 By good Icarius, and who kept the door,
 Though hard to be convinced, at last I yield.

270

So saying, she awaken'd in his soul
 Pity and grief; and folding in his arms
 His blameless consort beautiful, he wept.
 Welcome as land appears to those who swim,
 Whose gallant bark Neptune with rolling waves
 And stormy winds hath sunk in the wide sea,
 A mariner or two, perchance, escape
 The foamy flood, and, swimming, reach the land,
 Weary indeed, and with incrustated brine
 All rough, but oh, how glad to climb the coast!
 So welcome in her eyes Ulysses seem'd,
 Around whose neck winding her snowy arms,
 She clung as she would loose him never more.

280

Thus had they wept till rosy-finger'd morn
 Had found them weeping, but Minerva check'd
 Night's almost finish'd course, and held, meantime,
 The golden dawn close pris'ner in the Deep,
 Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
 Lampus and Phaëton that furnish light 290
 To all the earth, and join them to the yoke.
 Then thus, Ulysses to Penelope.

My love; we have not yet attain'd the close
 Of all our sufferings, but unmeasured toil
 Arduous remains, which I must still atchieve.
 For so the spirit of the Theban seer
 Inform'd me, on that day, when to enquire
 Of mine and of my people's safe return
 I journey'd down to Pluto's drear abode.
 But let us hence to bed, there to enjoy 300
 Tranquil repose. My love, make no delay.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
 Thou shalt to bed at whatsoever time
 Thy soul desires, since the immortal Gods
 Give thee to me and to thy home again.
 But, thou hast spoken from the seer of Thebes
 Of arduous toils yet unperform'd; declare
 What toils? Thou wilt disclose them, as I judge,
 Hereafter, and why not disclose them now?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 310
 Ah conversant with woe! why would'st thou learn
 That tale? but I will tell it thee at large.
 Thou wilt not hear with joy, nor shall myself
 With joy rehearse it; for he bade me seek
 City after city, bearing, as I go,
 A shapely oar, till I shall find, at length,
 A people who the sea know not, nor eat
 Food salted; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
 Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar
 With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves. 320
 He gave me also this authentic sign,
 Which I will tell thee. In what place soe'er
 I chance to meet a trav'ler who shall name
 The oar on my broad shoulder borne, a van;¹
 He bade me, planting it on the same spot,
 Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,

¹ See the note on the same passage, Book XI. •

A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
 My home again, and sacrifice at home
 An hecatomb to the immortal Gods
 Inhabitants of the expanse above. 330
 So shall I die, at length, the gentlest death
 Remote from Ocean; it shall find me late,
 In soft serenity of age, the Chief
 Of a blest people.—Thus he prophesied.

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 If heav'n appoint thee in old age a lot
 More tranquil, hope thence springs of thy escape
 Some future day from all thy threaten'd woes.

Such was their mutual conf'rence sweet; meantime
 Eurynome and Euryclea dress'd 340
 Their bed by light of the clear torch, and when
 Dispatchful they had spread it broad and deep,
 The ancient nurse to her own bed retired.
 Then came Eurynome, to whom in trust
 The chambers appertain'd, and with a torch
 Conducted them to rest; she introduced
 The happy pair, and went; transported they
 To rites connubial intermitted long,
 And now recover'd, gave themselves again.¹
 Meantime, the Prince, the herdsman, and the good 350
 Eumæus, giving rest each to his feet,
 Ceased from the dance; they made the women cease
 Also, and to their sev'ral chambers all
 Within the twilight edifice repair'd.

At length, with conjugal endearment both
 Satiated, Ulysses tasted and his spouse
 The sweets of mutual converse. She rehearsed,
 Noblest of women, all her num'rous woes
 Beneath that roof sustain'd, while she beheld
 The profligacy of the suitor-throng, 360
 Who in their wooing had consumed his herds
 And fatted flocks, and drawn his vessels dry;
 While brave Ulysses, in his turn, to her
 Related his successes and escapes,
 And his afflictions also; he told her all;

¹ Aristophanes the grammarian and Aristarchus chose that the Odyssey should end here; but the story is not properly concluded till the tumult occasioned by the slaughter of so many Princes being composed, Ulysses finds himself once more in peaceful possession of his country.

She listen'd charm'd, nor slumber on his eyes
 Fell once, or ere he had rehearsed the whole.
 Beginning, he discoursed, how, at the first
 He conquer'd in Ciconia, and thence reach'd
 The fruitful shores of the Lotophagi; 370
 The Cyclops' deeds he told her next, and how
 He well avenged on him his slaughter'd friends
 Whom, pitiless, the monster had devour'd.
 How to the isle of Æolus he came,
 Who welcom'd him and safe dismiss'd him thence,
 Although not destin'd to regain so soon
 His native land; for o'er the fishy deep
 Loud tempests snatch'd him sighing back again.
 How, also at Telepylus he arrived,
 Town of the Læstrygonians, who destroyed 380
 His ships with all their mariners, his own
 Except, who in his sable bark escaped.
 Of guileful Circe too he spake, deep-skill'd
 In various artifice, and how he reach'd
 With sails and oars the squalid realms of death,
 Desirous to consult the prophet there
 Theban Tiresias, and how there he view'd
 All his companions, and the mother bland
 Who bare him, nourisher of his infant years.
 How, next he heard the Sirens in one strain 390
 All chiming sweet, and how he reach'd the rocks
 Erratic, Scylla and Charybdis dire,
 Which none secure from injury may pass.
 Then, how the partners of his voyage slew
 The Sun's own beeves, and how the Thund'rer Jove
 Hurl'd down his smoky bolts into his bark,
 Depriving him at once of all his crew,
 Whose dreadful fate he yet, himself, escaped.
 How to Ogygia's isle he came, where dwelt
 The nymph Calypso, who, enamour'd, wish'd 400
 To espouse him, and within her spacious grot
 Detain'd, and fed, and promis'd him a life
 Exempt for ever from the sap of age,
 But him moved not. How, also, he arrived
 After much toil, on the Phæacian coast,
 Where ev'ry heart revered him as a God,
 And whence, enriching him with brass and gold,
 And costly raiment first, they sent him home.

At this last word, oblivious slumber sweet
Fell on him, dissipating all his cares. 410

Meantime, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
On other thoughts intent, soon as she deem'd
Ulysses with connubial joys sufficed,
And with sweet sleep, at once from Ocean rous'd
The golden-axled chariot of the morn
To illumine earth. Then from his fleecy couch
The Hero sprang, and thus his spouse enjoined.

Oh consort dear! already we have striv'n
Against our lot, till wearied with the toil,
My painful absence, thou with ceaseless tears 420
Deploring, and myself in deep distress

Withheld reluctant from my native shores
By Jove and by the other pow'rs of heav'n.
But since we have in this delightful bed
Met once again, watch thou and keep secure
All my domestic treasures, and ere long
I will replace my num'rous sheep destroy'd
By those imperious suitors, and the Greeks
Shall add yet others till my folds be fill'd.

But to the woodlands go I now—to see 430
My noble father, who for my sake mourns
Continual; as for thee, my love, although
I know thee wise, I give thee thus in charge.
The sun no sooner shall ascend, than fame
Shall wide divulge the deed that I have done,
Slaying the suitors under my own roof.
Thou, therefore, with thy maidens, sit retired
In thy own chamber at the palace-top,
Nor question ask, nor, curious, look abroad.

He said, and cov'ring with his radiant arms 440
His shoulders, called Telemachus; he roused
Eumæus and the herdsman too, and bade
All take their martial weapons in their hands.
Not disobedient they, as he enjoin'd,
Put armour on, and issued from the gates
Ulysses at their head. The earth was now
Enlighten'd, but Minerva them in haste
Led forth into the fields, unseen by all.

BOOK XXIV

ARGUMENT

MERCURY conducts the souls of the suitors down to Ades. Ulysses discovers himself to Laertes, and quells, by the aid of Minerva, an insurrection of the people resenting the death of the suitors.

AND now Cyllenian Hermes summon'd forth
 The spirits of the suitors; waving wide
 The golden wand of pow'r to seal all eyes
 In slumber, and to ope them wide again,
 He drove them gibb'ring down into the shades,¹
 As when the bats within some hallow'd cave
 Flit squeaking all around, for if but one
 Fall from the rock, the rest all follow him,
 In such connexion mutual they adhere,
 So, after bounteous Mercury, the ghosts, 10
 Troop'd downward gibb'ring all the dreary way.¹
 The Ocean's flood and the Leucadian rock,
 The Sun's gate also and the land of Dreams
 They pass'd, whence, next, into the meads they came
 Of Asphodel, by shadowy forms possess'd,
 Simulars of the dead. They found the souls
 Of brave Pelides there, and of his friend
 Patroclus, of Antilochus renown'd,
 And of the mightier Ajax, for his form 20
 And bulk (Achilles sole except) of all
 The sons of the Achaians most admired.
 These waited on Achilles. Then, appear'd
 The mournful ghost of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus, compass'd by the ghosts of all
 Who shared his fate beneath Ægisthus' roof,
 And him the ghost of Peleus' son bespake.
 Atrides! of all Heroes we esteem'd
 Thee dearest to the Gods, for that thy sway

¹ Τρίγυσαι—τερριγύλαι—the ghosts
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

Extended over such a glorious host
 At Ilium, scene of sorrow to the Greeks. 30
 But Fate, whose ruthless force none may escape
 Of all who breathe, pursued thee from the first.
 Thou should'st have perish'd full of honour, full
 Of royalty, at Troy; so all the Greeks
 Had rais'd thy tomb, and thou hadst then bequeath'd
 Great glory to thy son; but Fate ordain'd
 A death, oh how deplorable! for thee.

To whom Atrides' spirit thus replied.
 Blest son of Peleus, semblance of the Gods,
 At Ilium, far from Argos, fall'n! for whom 40
 Contending, many a Trojan, many a Chief
 Of Greece died also, while in eddies whelm'd
 Of dust thy vastness spread the plain,¹ nor thee
 The chariot aught or steed could int'rest more!
 All day we waged the battle, nor at last
 Desisted, but for tempests sent from Jove.
 At length we bore into the Grecian fleet
 Thy body from the field; there, first, we cleansed
 With tepid baths and oil'd thy shapely corse,
 Then placed thee on thy bier, while many a Greek 50
 Around thee wept, and shore his locks for thee.
 Thy mother, also, hearing of thy death
 With her immortal nymphs from the abyss
 Arose and came; terrible was the sound
 On the salt flood; a panic seized the Greeks,
 And ev'ry warrior had return'd on board
 That moment, had not Nestor, ancient Chief,
 Illumed by long experience, interposed,
 His counsels, ever wisest, wisest proved
 Then also, and he thus address'd the host. 60

Sons of Achaia; fly not; stay, ye Greeks!
 Thetis arrives with her immortal nymphs
 From the abyss, to visit her dead son.

So he; and, by his admonition stay'd,
 The Greeks fled not. Then, all around thee stood
 The daughters of the Ancient of the Deep,
 Mourning disconsolate; with heav'nly robes
 They clothed thy corse, and all the Muses nine
 Deplord thee in full choir with sweetest tones

¹—Behemoth, biggest born of earth,
 Upheav'd his vastness.

Responsive, nor one Grecian hadst thou seen 70
 Dry-eyed, such grief the Muses moved in all.
 Full sev'nteen days we, day and night, deplored
 Thy death, both Gods in heav'n and men below,
 But, on the eighteenth day, we gave thy corse
 Its burning, and fat sheep around thee slew
 Num'rous, with many a pastur'd ox moon-horn'd.
 We burn'd thee clothed in vesture of the Gods,
 With honey and with oil feeding the flames
 Abundant, while Achaia's Heroes arm'd,
 Both horse and foot, encompassing thy pile, 80
 Clash'd on their shields, and deaf'ning was the din.
 But when the fires of Vulcan had at length
 Consumed thee, at the dawn we stored thy bones
 In unguent and in undiluted wine;
 For Thetis gave to us a golden vase
 Twin-ear'd, which she profess'd to have received
 From Bacchus, work divine of Vulcan's hand.
 Within that vase, Achilles, treasured lie
 Thine and the bones of thy departed friend
 Patroclus, but a sep'rate urn we gave 90
 To those of brave Antilochus, who most
 Of all thy friends at Ilium shared thy love
 And thy respect, thy friend Patroclus slain.
 Around both urns we piled a noble tomb,
 (We warriors of the sacred Argive host)
 On a tall promontory shooting far
 Into the spacious Hellespont, that all
 Who live, and who shall yet be born, may view
 Thy record, even from the distant waves.
 Then, by permission from the Gods obtain'd, 100
 To the Achaian Chiefs in circus met
 Thetis appointed games. I have beheld
 The burial rites of many an Hero bold,
 When, on the death of some great Chief, the youths
 Girding their loins anticipate the prize,
 But sight of those with wonder fill'd me most,
 So glorious past all others were the games
 By silver-footed Thetis giv'n for thee,
 For thou wast ever favour'd of the Gods.
 Thus, hast thou not, Achilles! although dead, 110
 Foregone thy glory, but thy fair report
 Is universal among all mankind;

But, as for me, what recompense had I,
My warfare closed? for whom, at my return,
Jove framed such dire destruction by the hands
Of fell Ægisthus and my murth'ress wife.

Thus, mutual, they conferr'd; meantime approach'd,
Swift messenger of heav'n, the Argicide,
Conducting thither all the shades of those
Slain by Ulysses. At that sight amazed
Both moved toward them. Agamemnon's shade
Knew well Amphimedon, for he had been
Erewhile his father's guest in Ithaca,
And thus the spirit of Atreus' son began.

120

Amphimedon! by what disastrous chance,
Coœvals as ye seem, and of an air
Distinguish'd all, descend ye to the Deeps?
For not the chosen youths of a whole town
Should form a nobler band. Perish'd ye sunk
Amid vast billows and rude tempests raised
By Neptune's pow'r? or on dry land through force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away?
Or fighting for your city and your wives?
Resolve me? I was once a guest of yours.
Remember'st not what time at your abode
With godlike Menelaus I arrived,
That we might win Ulysses with his fleet
To follow us to Troy? scarce we prevail'd
At last to gain the city-waster Chief,
And, after all, consumed a whole month more
The wide sea traversing from side to side.

130

140

To whom the spirit of Amphimedon.
Illustrious Agamemnon, King of men!
All this I bear in mind, and will rehearse
The manner of our most disastrous end.
Believing brave Ulysses lost, we woo'd
Meantime his wife; she our detested suit
Would neither ratify nor yet refuse,
But, planning for us a tremendous death,
This novel stratagem, at last, devised.
Beginning, in her own recess, a web
Of slend'rest thread, and of a length and breadth
Unusual, thus the suitors she address'd.

150

Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief

Ulysses is no more, enforce not yet
 My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
 A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads decay)
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
 Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

So spake the Queen; we, unsuspecting all,
 With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 She wove the ample web, and by the aid
 Of torches ravell'd it again at night.

Three years she thus by artifice our suit
 Eluded safe, but when the fourth arrived,
 And the same season, after many moons
 And fleeting days, return'd, a damsel then
 Of her attendants, conscious of the fraud,
 Reveal'd it, and we found her pulling loose
 The splendid web. Thus, through constraint, at length,
 She finish'd it, and in her own despight.

But when the Queen produced, at length, her work
 Finish'd, new-blanch'd, bright as the sun or moon,
 Then came Ulysses, by some adverse God
 Conducted, to a cottage on the verge
 Of his own fields, in which his swine-herd dwells;

There also the illustrious Hero's son
 Arrived soon after, in his sable bark
 From sandy Pylus borne; they, plotting both
 A dreadful death for all the suitors, sought
 Our glorious city, but Ulysses last,
 And first Telemachus. The father came
 Conducted by his swine-herd, and attired
 In tatters foul; a mendicant he seem'd,
 Time-worn, and halted on a staff. So clad,
 And ent'ring on the sudden, he escaped
 All knowledge even of our eldest there,

And we reviled and smote him; he although
 Beneath his own roof smitten and reproach'd,
 With patience suffer'd it awhile, but roused
 By inspiration of Jove Ægis-arm'd
 At length, in concert with his son convey'd
 To his own chamber his resplendent arms,
 There lodg'd them safe, and barr'd the massy doors

Then, in his subtlety he bade the Queen
 A contest institute with bow and rings 200
 Between the hapless suitors, whence ensued
 Slaughter to all. No suitor there had pow'r
 To overcome the stubborn bow that mock'd
 All our attempts; and when the weapon huge
 At length was offer'd to Ulysses' hands,
 With clamour'd menaces we bade the swain
 Withhold it from him, plead he as he might;
 Telemachus alone with loud command,
 Bade give it him, and the illustrious Chief
 Receiving in his hand the bow, with ease 210
 Bent it, and sped a shaft through all the rings.
 Then, springing to the portal steps, he pour'd
 The arrows forth, peer'd terrible around,
 Pierced King Antinoüs, and, aiming sure
 His deadly darts, pierced others after him,
 Till in one common carnage heap'd we lay.
 Some God, as plain appear'd, vouchsafed them aid,
 Such ardour urged them, and with such dispatch
 They slew us on all sides; hideous were heard
 The groans of dying men fell'd to the earth 220
 With head-strokes rude, and the floor swam with blood.
 Such, royal Agamemnon! was the fate
 By which we perish'd, all whose bodies lie
 Unburied still, and in Ulysses' house,
 For tidings none have yet our friends alarm'd
 And kindred, who might cleanse from sable gore
 Our clotted wounds, and mourn us on the bier,
 Which are the rightful privilege of the dead.
 Him answer'd, then, the shade of Atreus' son.
 Oh happy offspring of Laertes! shrewd 230
 Ulysses! matchless valour thou hast shewn
 Recov'ring thus thy wife; nor less appears
 The virtue of Icarius' daughter wise,
 The chaste Penelope, so faithful found
 To her Ulysses, husband of her youth.
 His glory, by superior merit earn'd,
 Shall never die, and the immortal Gods
 Shall make Penelope a theme of song
 Delightful in the ears of all mankind.
 Not such was Clytemnestra, daughter vile 240
 Of Tyndarus; she shed her husband's blood,

And shall be chronicled in song a wife
Of hateful memory, by whose offence
Even the virtuous of her sex are shamed.

Thus they, beneath the vaulted roof obscure
Of Pluto's house, conferring mutual stood.

Meantime, descending from the city-gates,
Ulysses, by his son and by his swains
Follow'd, arrived at the delightful farm
Which old Laertes had with strenuous toil 250
Himself long since acquired. There stood his house
Encompass'd by a bow'r in which the hinds
Who served and pleased him, ate, and sat, and slept.
An ancient woman, a Sicilian, dwelt
There also, who in that sequester'd spot
Attended diligent her aged Lord.
Then thus Ulysses to his followers spake.

Haste now, and, ent'ring, slay ye of the swine
The best for our regale; myself, the while,
Will prove my father, if his eye hath still 260
Discernment of me, or if absence long
Have worn the knowledge of me from his mind.

He said, and gave into his servants' care
His arms; they swift proceeded to the house,
And to the fruitful grove himself as swift
To prove his father. Down he went at once
Into the spacious garden-plot, but found
Nor Dolius there, nor any of his sons
Or servants; they were occupied elsewhere,
And, with the ancient hind himself, employ'd 270
Collecting thorns with which to fence the grove,
In that umbrageous spot he found alone
Laertes, with his hoe clearing a plant;
Sordid his tunic was, with many a patch
Mended unseemly; leathern were his greaves,
Thong-tied and also patch'd, a frail defence
Against sharp thorns, while gloves secured his hands
From briar-points, and on his head he bore
A goat-skin casque, nourishing hopeless woe.
No sooner then the Hero toil-inured 280

Saw him age-worn and wretched, than he paused
Beneath a lofty pear-tree's shade to weep.
There standing much he mused, whether, at once,
Kissing and clasping in his arms his sire,

To tell him all, by what means he had reach'd
 His native country, or to prove him first.
 At length, he chose as his best course, with words
 Of seeming strangeness to accost his ear,
 And, with that purpose, moved direct toward him.
 He, stooping low, loosen'd the earth around 290
 A garden-plant, when his illustrious son
 Now, standing close beside him, thus began.
 Old sir! thou art no novice in these toils
 Of culture, but thy garden thrives; I mark
 In all thy ground no plant, fig, olive, vine,
 Pear-tree or flow'r-bed suff'ring through neglect.
 But let it not offend thee if I say
 That thou neglect'st thyself, at the same time
 Oppress'd with age, sun-parch'd and ill-attired.
 Not for thy inactivity, methinks, 300
 Thy master slights thee thus, nor speaks thy form
 Or thy surpassing stature servile aught
 In thee, but thou resemblest more a King.
 Yes—thou resemblest one who, bathed and fed,
 Should softly sleep; such is the claim of age.
 But tell me true—for whom labourest thou,
 And whose this garden? answer me beside,
 For I would learn; have I indeed arrived
 In Ithaca, as one whom here I met
 Ev'n now assured me, but who seem'd a man 310
 Not overwise, refusing both to hear
 My questions, and to answer when I ask'd
 Concerning one in other days my guest
 And friend, if he have still his being here,
 Or have deceas'd and journey'd to the shades.
 For I will tell thee; therefore mark. Long since
 A stranger reach'd my house in my own land,
 Whom I with hospitality receiv'd,
 Nor ever sojourn'd foreigner with me
 Whom I lov'd more. He was by birth, he said, 320
 Ithacan, and Laertes claim'd his sire,
 Son of Arcesias. Introducing him
 Beneath my roof, I entertain'd him well,
 And proved by gifts his welcome at my board.
 I gave him seven talents of wrought gold,
 A goblet, argent all, with flow'rs emboss'd,
 Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets, mantles twelve

Of brightest lustre, with as many vests,
 And added four fair damsels, whom he chose
 Himself, well born and well accomplish'd all. 330

Then thus his ancient sire weeping replied.
 Stranger! thou hast in truth attain'd the isle
 Of thy enquiry, but it is possess'd
 By a rude race, and lawless. Vain, alas!
 Were all thy num'rous gifts; yet hadst thou found
 Him living here in Ithaca, with gifts
 Reciprocated he had sent thee hence,
 Requiting honourably in his turn
 Thy hospitality. But give me quick
 Answer and true. How many have been the years 340
 Since thy reception of that hapless guest
 My son? for mine, my own dear son was he.
 But him, far distant both from friends and home,
 Either the fishes of the unknown Deep
 Have eaten, or wild beasts and fowls of prey,
 Nor I, or she who bare him, was ordain'd
 To bathe his shrouded body with our tears,
 Nor his chaste wife, well-dow'r'd Penelope
 To close her husband's eyes, and to deplore
 His doom, which is the privilege of the dead. 350
 But tell me also thou, for I would learn,
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom?

The bark in which thou and thy godlike friends
 Arrived, where is she anchor'd on our coast?
 Or cam'st thou only passenger on board
 Another's bark, who landed thee and went?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 I will with all simplicity relate
 What thou hast ask'd. Of Alybas am I,
 Where in much state I dwell, son of the rich 360
 Apheidas royal Polypemon's son,
 And I am named Eperitus; by storms
 Driven from Sicily I have arrived,
 And yonder, on the margin of the field
 That skirts your city, I have moor'd my bark.
 Five years have pass'd since thy Ulysses left,
 Unhappy Chief! my country; yet the birds
 At his departure hovered on the right,
 And in that sign rejoicing, I dismiss'd

Him thence rejoicing also, for we hoped
To mix in social intercourse again, 370
And to exchange once more pledges of love.

He spake; then sorrow as a sable cloud
Involved Laertes; gath'ring with both hands
The dust, he pour'd it on his rev'rend head
With many a piteous groan. Ulysses' heart
Commotion felt, and his stretch'd nostrils throbb'd
With agony close-pent, while fixt he eyed
His father; with a sudden force he sprang
Toward him, clasp'd, and kiss'd him, and exclaim'd. 380

My father! I am he. Thou seest thy son
Absent these twenty years at last return'd.
But bid thy sorrow cease; suspend henceforth
All lamentation; for I tell thee true,
(And the occasion bids me briefly tell thee)
I have slain all the suitors at my home,
And all their taunts and injuries avenged.

Then answer thus Laertes quick return'd.
If thou hast come again, and art indeed
My son Ulysses, give me then the proof 390
Indubitable, that I may believe.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
View, first, the scar which with his iv'ry tusk
A wild boar gave me, when at thy command
And at my mother's, to Autolycus
Her father, on Parnassus, I repair'd
Seeking the gifts which, while a guest of yours,
He promis'd should be mine. Accept beside
This proof. I will enum'rate all the trees 400
Which, walking with thee in this cultured spot
(Boy then) I begg'd, and thou confirm'dst my own.
We paced between them, and thou mad'st me learn
The name of each. Thou gav'st me thirteen pears,¹
Ten apples,¹ thirty figs,¹ and fifty ranks
Didst promise me of vines, their alleys all
Corn-cropp'd between. There, oft as sent from Jove
The influences of the year descend,
Grapes of all hues and flavours clust'ring hang.

He said; Laertes, conscious of the proofs

¹ The fruit is here used for the tree that bore it, as it is in the Greek; the Latins used the same mode of expression, neither is it uncommon in our own language.

Indubitable by Ulysses giv'n, 410
 With fault'ring knees and fault'ring heart both arms
 Around him threw. The Hero toil-inured
 Drew to his bosom close his fainting sire,
 Who, breath recov'ring, and his scatter'd pow'rs
 Of intellect, at length thus spake aloud.

Ye Gods! oh then your residence is still
 On the Olympian heights, if punishment
 At last hath seized on those flagitious men.
 But terrour shakes me, lest, incensed, ere long
 All Ithaca flock hither, and dispatch 420
 Swift messengers with these dread tidings charged
 To ev'ry Cephallenian state around.

Him answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
 Courage! fear nought, but let us to the house
 Beside the garden, whither I have sent
 Telemachus, the herdsman, and the good
 Eumæus to prepare us quick repast.

So they conferr'd, and to Laertes' house
 Pass'd on together; there arrived, they found 430
 Those three preparing now their plenteous feast,
 And mingling sable wine; then, by the hands
 Of his Sicilian matron, the old King
 Was bathed, anointed, and attired afresh,
 And Pallas, drawing nigh, dilated more
 His limbs, and gave his whole majestic form
 Encrease of amplitude. He left the bath.
 His son, amazed as he had seen a God
 Alighted newly from the skies, exclaim'd.

My father! doubtless some immortal Pow'r
 Hath clothed thy form with dignity divine. 440

Then thus replied his venerable sire.
 Jove! Pallas! Phœbus! oh that I possess'd
 Such vigour now, as when in arms I took
 Nericus, continental city fair,
 With my brave Cephallenians! oh that such
 And arm'd as then, I yesterday had stood
 Beside thee in thy palace, combating
 Those suitors proud, then had I strew'd the floor
 With num'rous slain, to thy exceeding joy.

Such was their conference; and now, the task 450
 Of preparation ended, and the feast
 Set forth, on couches and on thrones they sat,

And, ranged in order due, took each his share.
 Then, ancient Dolius, and with him, his sons
 Arrived toil-worn, by the Sicilian dame
 Summon'd, their cat'ress, and their father's kind
 Attendant ever in his eve of life.

They, seeing and recalling soon to mind
 Ulysses, in the middle mansion stood
 Wond'ring, when thus Ulysses with a voice
 Of some reproof, but gentle, them bespake.

460

Old servant, sit and eat, banishing fear
 And mute amazement; for, although provoked
 By appetite, we have long time abstain'd,
 Expecting ev'ry moment thy return.

He said; then Dolius with expanded arms
 Sprang right toward Ulysses, seized his hand,
 Kiss'd it, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Oh master ever dear! since thee the Gods
 Themselves in answer to our warm desires,
 Have, unexpectedly, at length restored,
 Hail, and be happy, and heav'n make thee such!
 But say, and truly; knows the prudent Queen
 Already thy return, or shall we send
 Ourselves an herald with the joyful news?

470

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 My ancient friend, thou may'st release thy mind
 From that solicitude; she knows it well.

So he; then Dolius to his glossy seat
 Return'd, and all his sons gath'ring around
 Ulysses, welcom'd him and grasp'd his hand,
 Then sat beside their father; thus beneath
 Laertes' roof they, joyful, took repast.

480

But Fame with rapid haste the city roam'd
 In ev'ry part, promulging in all ears
 The suitors' horrid fate. No sooner heard
 The multitude that tale, than one and all
 Groaning they met and murmuring before
 Ulysses' gates. Bringing the bodies forth,
 They buried each his friend, but gave the dead
 Of other cities to be ferried home

490

By fishermen on board their rapid barks.
 All hasted then to council; sorrow wrung
 Their hearts, and, the assembly now convened,
 Arising first Eupithes spake, for grief

Sat heavy on his soul, grief for the loss
 Of his Antinoüs by Ulysses slain
 Foremost of all, whom mourning, thus he said.

My friends! no trivial fruits the Grecians reap
 Of this man's doings. *Those* he took with him 500
 On board his barks, a num'rous train and bold,
 Then lost his barks, lost all his num'rous train,
 And *these*, our noblest, slew at his return.

Come therefore—ere he yet escape by flight
 To Pylus or to noble Elis, realm

Of the Epeans, follow him; else shame
 Attends us and indelible reproach.

If we avenge not on these men the blood
 Of our own sons and brothers, farewell then 510
 All that makes life desirable; my wish
 Henceforth shall be to mingle with the shades.

Oh then pursue and seize them ere they fly.

Thus he with tears, and pity moved in all.
 Then, Medon and the sacred bard whom sleep
 Had lately left, arriving from the house
 Of Laertiades, approach'd; amid
 The throng they stood; all wonder'd seeing them,
 And Medon, prudent senior, thus began.

Hear me, my countrymen! Ulysses plann'd
 With no disapprobation of the Gods 520
 The deed that ye deplore. I saw, myself,
 A Pow'r immortal at the Hero's side,
 In semblance just of Mentor; now the God,
 In front apparent, led him on, and now,
 From side to side of all the palace, urged
 To flight the suitors; heaps on heaps they fell.

He said; then terrour wan seiz'd ev'ry cheek,
 And Halitherses, Hero old, the son
 Of Mastor, who alone among them all
 Knew past, and future, prudent, thus began. 530

Now, O ye men of Ithaca! my words
 Attentive hear! by your own fault, my friends,
 This deed hath been perform'd; for when myself
 And noble Mentor counsell'd you to check
 The sin and folly of your sons, ye would not.
 Great was their wickedness, and flagrant wrong
 They wrought, the wealth devouring and the wife
 Dishonouring of an illustrious Chief

Whom they deem'd destined never to return.
But hear my counsel. Go not, lest ye draw
Disaster down and woe on your own heads.

540

He ended; then with boist'rous roar (although
Part kept their seats) upsprang the multitude,
For Halitherses pleased them not, they chose
Eupithes' counsel rather; all at once
To arms they flew, and clad in dazzling brass,
Before the city form'd their dense array.
Leader infatuate at their head appear'd
Eupithes, hoping to avenge his son
Antinoüs, but was himself ordain'd
To meet his doom, and to return no more.
Then thus Minerva to Saturnian Jove.

550

Oh father! son of Saturn! Jove supreme!
Declare the purpose hidden in thy breast,
Wilt thou that this hostility proceed,
Or wilt thou grant them amity again?

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
Why asks my daughter? didst thou not design
Thyself, that brave Ulysses coming home
Should slay those profligates? act as thou wilt,
But thus I counsel, since the noble Chief
Hath slain the suitors, now let peace ensue
Oath-bound, and reign Ulysses evermore!
The slaughter of their brethren and their sons
To strike from their remembrance, shall be ours.
Let mutual amity, as at the first,
Unite them, and let wealth and peace abound.

560

So saying, he animated to her task
Minerva prompt before, and from the heights
Olympian down to Ithaca she flew.
Meantime Ulysses (for their hunger now
And thirst were sated) thus address'd his hind's.

570

Look ye abroad, lest haply they approach.
He said, and at his word, forth went a son
Of Dolius; at the gate he stood, and thence
Beholding all that multitude at hand,
In accents wing'd thus to Ulysses spake.

They come—they are already arrived—arm all!
Then, all arising, put their armour on,
Ulysses with his three, and the six sons
Of Dolius; Dolius also with the rest,

580

Arm'd and Laertes, although silver-hair'd,
 Warriors perforce. When all were clad alike
 In radiant armour, throwing wide the gates
 They sallied, and Ulysses led the way.
 Then Jove's own daughter Pallas, in the form
 And with the voice of Mentor, came in view,
 Whom seeing Laertiades rejoiced,
 And thus Telemachus, his son, bespake.

Now, oh my son! thou shalt observe, untold
 By me, where fight the bravest. Oh shame not
 Thine ancestry, who have in all the earth
 Proof given of valour in all ages past.

590

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 My father! if thou wish that spectacle,
 Thou shalt behold thy son, as thou hast said,
 In nought dishonouring his noble race.

Then was Laertes joyful, and exclaim'd,
 What sun hath ris'n to-day? ¹ oh blessed Gods!
 My son and grandson emulous dispute
 The prize of glory, and my soul exults.

600

He ended, and Minerva drawing nigh
 To the old King, thus counsell'd him. Oh friend
 Whom most I love, son of Arcesias! pray'r
 Preferring to the virgin azure-eyed,
 And to her father Jove, delay not, shake
 Thy lance in air, and give it instant flight.

So saying, the Goddess nerved his arm anew.
 He sought in pray'r the daughter dread of Jove,
 And, brandishing it, hurl'd his lance; it struck
 Eupithes, pierced his helmet brazen-cheek'd
 That stay'd it not, but forth it sprang beyond,
 And with loud clangor of his arms he fell.

610

Then flew Ulysses and his noble son
 With faulchion and with spear of double edge
 To the assault, and of them all had left
 None living, none had to his home return'd,
 But that Jove's virgin daughter with a voice
 Of loud authority thus quell'd them all.

Peace, O ye men of Ithaca! while yet
 The field remains undeluged with your blood.

620

So she, and fear at once paled ev'ry cheek.

¹ *Tis nó μοι ήμέρη ήδε;*—So Cicero, who seems to translate it—*Proh dii immortales! Quis hic illuxit dies!* See Clarke in loco.

All trembled at the voice divine; their arms
Escaping from the grasp fell to the earth,
And, covetous of longer life, each fled
Back to the city. Then Ulysses sent
His voice abroad, and with an eagle's force
Sprang on the people; but Saturnian Jove,
Cast down, incontinent, his smouldring bolt
At Pallas' feet, and thus the Goddess spake.

630

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Forbear; abstain from slaughter; lest thyself
Incur the anger of high thund'ring Jove.

So Pallas, whom Ulysses, glad, obey'd.
Then faithful covenants of peace between
Both sides ensued, ratified in the sight
Of Pallas progeny of Jove, who seem'd,
In voice and form, the Mentor known to all.

END OF THE ODYSSEY

NOTES

NOTE I.

Bk. x. l. 101-106 (Hom. x. l. 81-86).—It is held now that this passage should be explained by the supposition that the Homeric bards had heard tales of northern latitudes, where, in summer-time, the darkness was so short that evening was followed almost at once by morning. Thus the herdsman coming home in the twilight at one day's close might meet and hail the shepherd who was starting betimes for the next day's work.

Line 86 in the Greek ought probably to be translated, "For the paths of night and day are close together," *i.e.*, the entrance of day follows hard on the entrance of night.

NOTE II.

Bk. xi. l. 162, 163 (Hom. xi. l. 134, 135).—

θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἁλὸς αὐτῷ
ἀβληχρός μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται.

Others translate, "And from the sea shall thy own death come," suggesting that Ulysses after all was lost at sea. This is the rendering followed by Tennyson in his poem "Ulysses" (and see Dante, *Inferno*, Canto xxvi.). It is a more natural translation of the Greek, and gives a far more wonderful vista for the close of the Wanderer's life.

NOTE III.

Bk. xix. l. 712 (Hom. xix. l. 573).—The word *πελέκας*, for which Cowper gives as a paraphrase "spikes, crested with a ring," elsewhere means *axes*, and ought so to be translated here. For since Cowper's day an axe-head of the Mycenaean period has been discovered *with the blade pierced* so as to form a hole through which an arrow could pass. (See Tsountas and Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age*.) Axes of this type were not known to Cowper, and hence the hypothesis in his text. He realised correctly the essential conditions of the feat proposed: the axes must have been set up, one behind the other, in the way he suggested for his ringed stakes.

NOTE IV.

Bk. xxii. l. 139-162 (Hom. xxii. l. 126-143).—How Melanthius got out of the hall remains a puzzle. Cowper assumes a second postern, but there is no evidence for this, and l. 139 ff. (l. 126 ff. in the Greek)

suggest rather strongly that there was only *one*. Unfortunately the crucial word $\rho\acute{\omega}\gamma\epsilon\varsigma$ which occurs in the line describing Melanthius' exit is not found elsewhere. "He went up," the poet says, "through the $\rho\acute{\omega}\gamma\epsilon\varsigma$ of the hall." Merry suggests that "he scrambled up to the loopholes that were pierced in the wall." Others suppose that there was a ladder at the inner end of the hall leading to the upper story, and on through passages to the armoury.

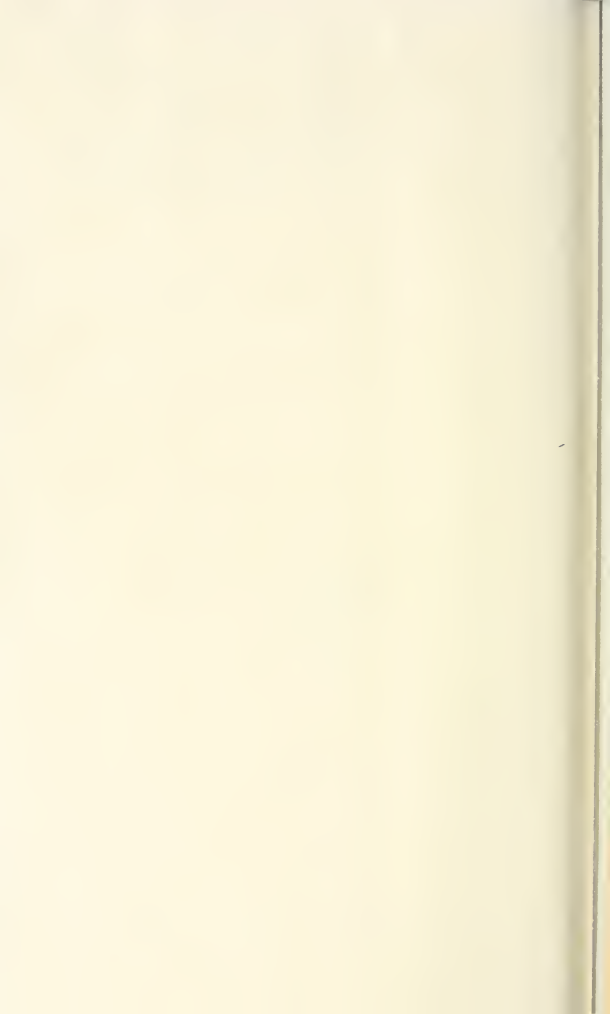
In l. 141 (l. 128 in the Greek) the word translated "street" by Cowper is usually rendered "corridor."

F. M. S.



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