THE ODYSSEY
THE ODYSSEY

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, IN
THE ORIGINAL METRE

BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

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EVERY translator sets before himself two aims. He must in the first place produce a faithful and accurate rendering of his text, such as will satisfy the scholar. And he has a further and a harder task. For he must also reproduce his author's spirit, so that new readers shall be held and moved as those have always been who can follow the original. What is the secret of Homer's power? Matthew Arnold has described it thus: Homer is rapid, he is simple and direct in thought and in expression he is noble. If this book exercises but a shadow of that fourfold spell it will win the gratitude of many. And those who will accept the opinion of one who has read some portions of it, and what is more to the point, has heard other portions read to him, may be prepared to find that it does. To him it is a matter of pride that such a labour of love has been achieved by one who has learnt to love the poems of Homer where the writer of this preface is still privileged to teach them.

A. A. DAVID.

SCHOOL HOUSE,
RUGBY.
December, 1920.
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For those unfamiliar with the metre the following note may be useful:

The hexameter line consists of six feet (or bars), each of which is composed either of two long syllables, the spondee (− −) or of one long syllable followed by two short ones, the dactyl (− v v).

The first four feet may be either spondees or dactyls indifferently: the fifth foot is almost always a dactyl: the sixth foot is always a spondee.

In the middle of each line is a pause (the cæsura) needful to give steadiness to the metre: the pause generally comes in the middle of the third foot, thus:

"Many a time in the deep his heart was melted for trouble,"

but it is occasionally delayed to the fourth, thus:

"Loosing the rope from the great pierced stone to which it was fastened."

If the cæsura falls in a dactyl, it may be placed after the first of the short syllables thus (− v | v): this is called a weak cæsura.

Stress is always laid on the first syllable of each foot: and in particular it is essential that the first syllable of each line be firmly and deliberately pronounced.

Familiar names are used as they are commonly pronounced: e.g., "Tele-machus" comes into the verse as "Telemmacus" not as "Teely Macuss."
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE ODYSSEY relates the adventures of Odysseus, king of Ithaca, on his way back from Troy, whither he had sailed, twenty years before we make his acquaintance, to take part in the famous siege. Throughout the book our sympathy is centred on Odysseus. Whether he is feasting in the palace of Alcinoïs, or talking over old times with the Swineherd, or engaged in blood-curdling struggle with the Round-eye, the reader cannot help following his fortunes with keen enjoyment and with a shrewd suspicion that, in spite of his repeated protestations that he was the most miserable of mortals, himself was enjoying his adventures with equal zest.

Always at hand is the stern yet kindly presence of Athené, and as a sombre background the rough and insolent crowd of suitors, and the somewhat unattractive figure of Penelope, sentimental but cold. Telemachus developing into a man under the tutelage of Athené is an interesting study, but never rouses our sympathy after the manner of his impulsive and thoroughly human father.

The first scene shows the Gods in Council, debating by what means Odysseus should be restored to his home. We are then introduced to Telemachus with the crowd of suitors in his father's hall, to the Ithacan Council, to the patriarchal warrior Nestor, to the wealthy and courteous king Meneläus, and Helen of Troy, his semi-divine wife, to the lonely Calypso in her island, to the charming Nausicaä and to her father, Alcinoïs, king of the Phæacians, the most cultivated and civilized of all the personages in the book, whose garden, palace, ships, harbour, waterworks and public buildings were a model of perfect design and construction, and whose political and social institutions were of the most advanced type. In the hall of Alcinoïs Odysseus himself recounts his adventures with the Lotus-eaters, the Round-eye, Æolus of the winds, the enchantress Circe,
also his visit to Hades, his encounter with the sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, his shipwreck, and his final rescue by Calypso.

When his tale was finished, the Phaeacians convey him in a ship to Ithaca, and lay him down fast asleep on the shore of his native land.

From hence onward the story recounts how Odysseus avenges himself on the suitors, is recognized by his wife and recovers his possessions: and here the outstanding figure, after himself, is the Swineherd Eumaeus, a prince by birth, who was kidnapped as a boy and sold for a slave to Laërtés, but who in his lowly condition always maintained his dignity and self-respect, and finally becomes the honoured and trusted friend of Odysseus.

All the time we are conscious of the rolling metre, reminiscent of the waves thundering upon the beach, or of the "κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα προτὶ χέρσον," a sound ever present to the ears and imaginations of those Island Dwellers.
THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS MENTIONED

ZEUS, the Cloud-Gatherer, bearer of the ΑέGIS, Chief of the Gods.
HERA, wife of Zeus.
PALLAS ATHÊNÉ, tutelary Goddess of the Greeks.
HÉLIOS, or HYPERION, the Sun.
POSEIDON, the Earth-Clasper and Earth-Shaker, God of the Sea.
AMPHITRÎTÉ, wife of Poseidon.
HÉRMÉS, the Messenger of the Gods.
APOLLO, the God of Music and of Archery.
HADÊS, the God of the World below.
PERSÉPHÔNÉ, wife of Hâdês.
ARÊS, God of War.
ÄRTÊMIS, the chaste Goddess of hunting.
APHRODÎTÉ, Goddess of beauty.
HEPHAËSTUS, the smith of the Gods.
CALYPSÔ, a Nymph, or inferior Goddess.
CIRCÉ, an Enchantress.
PRÔTEUS, a Sea-God.
POLYPHÊMUS, a monstrous supernatural giant, with only one eye, which was set in the middle of his forehead.
ODYSSEUS, king of Ithaca.
LAËRTÉS, father of Odysseus.
PENÈLOPÉ, daughter of Icarius, wife of Odysseus.
ANTICLEÎTA, daughter of Autolycus, mother of Odysseus.
TELEMACHUS, son of Odysseus and Penêlopé.
ANTÍNOÛS, EURYMACHUS, and many others, suitors for the hand of Penêlopé.
EURycleïa, nurse to Odysseus.
MENTOR, a friend of Odysseus.
NESTOR, king of Pylos.
PEISISTRATUS, a son of Nestor.
AGAMEMNÔN, son of Atreus (Atreidês), Commander of the Grecian Army.
MENELÀUS, son of Atreus, king of Sparta, brother of Agamemnon.
HELEN OF TROY (a daughter of Zeus), wife of Menelàus.
NAUSICĂA, daughter of Alcinoïs.
Alcinoüs, king of the Phaeacians.
Arête, wife of Alcinoüs.
Laodamas, son of Alcinoüs.
Euryalus, a Phaeacian noble.
Æolus, king of the Winds.
Eurylochus, brother of Penélopé, and others, members of the crew of Odysseus.
Teiresias, the Theban seer, Anticleia, Agamemnon, Achilles, and others, shades in Hâdés.
Eumæus, the Swineherd.
Theoclymenus, a prophet.

Note.—The above personages are described “without prejudice,” simply as they appear in the story.
The text used is that of the Cambridge Homer, 1892.
SING me the RESTLESS MAN, O Muse, who roamed the world over,
When, by his wondrous guile, he had sacked Troy's sacred fortress.
Cities of various men he saw: their thoughts he discerned.
Many a time, in the deep, his heart was melted for trouble,
Striving to win his life, and eke return for his comrades:
Yet, though he strove full sore, he could not save his companions,
For, as was meet and just, through deeds of folly they perished:
Fools! who devoured the oxen of Him who rides in the heavens, Helios, who, in his course, missed out their day of returning.
Yet, how they fared and died, be gracious, O Goddess, to tell us.

Finally, those who remained, escaping from headlong destruction,
Rested at home, now safe from war and the perils of ocean:
Thus, he alone was left, for wife and home still pining,
Kept, in her archéd cave, by the Nymph, Our Lady Calypso,
Goddess divine still longing to have him for lord and husband.
But, when the circling years had brought the season appointed
When, in the thread of Fate, was twined his return to his homeland
Ithaca, not even then was he wholly free from his troubles,
Safe among friends: yet the Gods still pitied the godlike Odysseus,
All but Poseidon: and he never ceased from his wrath for a moment.
He, at that time, was chasing the Ἐθίοπ, distant abiders,
(Æthiops, living apart, the farthest and last of the nations,
Some where Hyperion sinks to his rest, and some where he rises)
Claiming his hecatomb due, of sheep or maybe of oxen.
There was he feasting at will: but the rest of the Gods in
Olympus,
Thronging the halls of Zeus, were gathered together in council.
First of them all to speak was the Father of Gods and of Mortals,
For he remembered well the fate of the handsome Ægisthus
Slain by Atreidés' son, the world-renownéd Orestes.
Mindful of him, he thus addressed the assembled Immortals:
"Monstrous it is how men put blame on the Gods for all things,
Saying that we are the cause of the evils they suffer: but rather
They, in their impious folly, seek woes that were never ordained.
Thus did Ægisthus marry the lawful wife of Atreidés,
And, to complete his crime, he murdered him into the bargain.
Yet he foresaw his fate: ourselves had given him warning
(Sending to him in haste the keen-eyed Slayer of Argus)
Neither to slay Atreidés, nor take his consort in marriage:
For that revenge in full should be wrought by the noble Orestes
When he became a man, and longed to return to his homeland.
Thus did Hermés warn: but, spite of his counsel, Ægisthus
Would not obey: and now, at one stroke all is requited."

Answered to him in turn the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné:
"O Son of Kronos, my father, of Heaven's rulers the highest,
Surely that man lies dead, o'erwhelmed in fitting destruction:
So may all others perish, whoever such deeds shall adventure.
But it is now for Odysseus my heart is distracted, the world-wise
Victim of cruel fate, who is warely eating his heart out
Far from his home and friends, in an island the navel of ocean:
Clothed with forest, that isle: and in it a Goddess is dwelling,
Daughter of Atlas the wise who knows the abysses of ocean,
And, by his strength alone, upholds those lofty columns
Keeping, for ever and aye, the Earth and Heaven asunder.
She is the one who holds him, a prisoner sad and bewailing:
Ever, with winning words, she seeks to soothe and beguile him:
'Ithaca's far away; why not forget?' But Odysseus
Pines unto death to behold the smoke curl up from the cabins
Of his dear native land. But thou, O Lord of Olympus,
Carest for him no more. Yet did not the self-same Odysseus,
Hard by the Argive ships, on Troy's wide plain appease thee
Duly with sacred rites? Why art thou so angry, my father?"
And, in reply, spoke Zeus who gathers the clouds in the heavens:
"What is the thoughtless word has escaped from your lips, my daughter?
How could I ever forget the godlike Odysseus, the wisest
Far, among mortal men, and far the most lavish in service
Unto the Gods immortal whose home is the vault of the heavens?
But 'tis the great Earth-Clasper who nurses his anger against him,
All for the sake of the Round-eye whom thy good hero has
blinded,
Big as a God, Polyphemus, of all the tribe of the Round-eyes
Greatest and strongest: and he was the son of Thoösa the sea-
ymph,
Who, in some archéd cave, was embraced by mighty Poseidon. Therefore it is that Poseidon, though kill Odysseus he may not,
Keeps him an exile still from his home and the land of his
fathers.
But come, all of us here, let us now contrive his returning
Unto his home once more: and Poseidon his wrath will abandon:
For, if the rest are agreed, he will no longer oppose us."
Answered him then in turn the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"O father mine, son of Kronos, of Heaven's rulers the highest,
If it is truly the will of the blessed Gods of Olympus
That the wise-hearted Odysseus should come once more to his
homeland,
Let us dispatch forthwith our Messenger, Slayer of Argus,
Unto Ogygia's isle, that there to the golden-haired Goddess
He may declare the will of the Gods with regard to Odysseus,
Namely a safe return after all his trials and adventures.
I am for Ithaca bound, in order his son to encourage,
Hearten him up to call the long-haired Achæans together,
Then to warn off the suitors, who make no scruple to slaughter
Sheep, and the oxen who lumber along with curved horns
swaying.
Next, must he go to Sparta and sandy beaches of Pylos,
If he may hear, perchance, some news of his father returning,
And among men may earn a good report for his courage."
Thus having spoken, she bound on her feet her beautiful
sandals,
Golden, immortal, which swift as the winds of heaven did bear her
Over the boundless land and the broad expanse of the water:
Grasped she a mighty spear, with sharpest bronze it was pointed,
Heavy and large and strong, with which, if once she is angered,
Daughter of mighty sire, she quells the phalanx of heroes
And, like a flash down darting from off the crests of Olympus,
Stood at Odysseus' porch, in the midst of the Ithacan country,
Quietly on the threshold, her spear of bronze she was holding,
Like to a friend from afar, the Taphian chieftain Mentes.
There, sure enough she found the swaggering suitors, who just then,
Lounging in front of the doors, were amusing themselves with backgammon,
Seated on hides of oxen, the same that themselves had slaughtered:
And, for their cheer, the stewards and busy attendants were mixing
Wine and water in bowls: and some were laying the tables,
Wiping them clean with sponges, or carving meat in profusion.
But, far soonest of all, godlike Telemachus saw her,
As 'mid the suitors he sat, his dear heart heavy with sorrow,
Picturing in his mind his noble father, if ever
He should appear of a sudden and sweep through his halls like a whirlwind,
Scatter the suitors, and rule o'er his ancient possessions with honour.
And, as he sat thus thinking, he noticed Athené, and straightway
Rising, he went to the porch, for he felt ashamed that a stranger
Thus should be left at the door, neglected, and, standing before her,
Took her right hand in his, and received the spear that she carried,
Gravely saluted, and thus, in unstudied words, he addressed her:
"Welcome, Sir Guest, to our hall: and afterwards, when you have finished
Supper, I pray you to tell anything we may do in your service."
Thus said he, leading the way: and Pallas Athené followed,
And, when they entered the hall, he put her spear, as was proper.
Into the polished rack that stood by the base of a pillar
Where many other spears of the patient Odysseus were standing: Her did he lead to a chair inlaid with intricate patterns, Spread on the seat a cloth, and set for her feet a footstool: Near her, he placed for himself a seat apart from the others, Fearing his guest, thus thrown among men of o'erweening behaviour, Might be annoyed at the din of such a disorderly banquet, And that the better he might of his absent father enquire: Then did a serving maid bring a handwash of sparkling water, Poured from a golden ewer in a beautiful basin of silver, And, at their side, she spread a table carefully polished: And the staid housekeeper dame brought bread and set it before them, And many dainties besides, the best she had in the larder. Also the carver, in upraised hands, brought platters containing Meat of all kinds, and cups of gold for use at their pleasure, Which an attendant hard by with wine kept busily filling. In came the swaggering suitors: as if the house were their own, they Seated themselves in rows upon the chairs and the couches: Duly, upon their hands, was water poured by the stewards: And, by the maids, great heaps of bread were piled into baskets: While boys, up to the brim, were filling goblets of liquor. Then were all hands stretched out to the good things spread on the tables. But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, Then were the thoughts of the suitors diverted to other enjoyments, Music and dancing: for these are really the crown of a banquet. Promptly, a beautiful harp was placed in the hands of the minstrel Phemius, who, perforce, was obliged to sing to the suitors: And, to the notes of the harp, he struck up a ballad delightful: And it was then that Telemachus spoke to grey-eyed Athené, Holding his head quite close, that he might not be heard by the others: "Dear guest, will you be angry at what I am going to tell you? All these men that you see care only for songs and amusement, Easy enough for them, who are living at cost of another: While, on some distant shore, my father's bones may be lying
Rolled in the salt sea wave or bleached by the rain and the sunshine.

But, if these gentry here should ever in Ithaca see him,
Swiftness in running away is the thing for which each would be praying
Rather than any amount of gold or of gems or of garments.
But, by an evil fate, he has perished: nor have we remaining
Comfort or solace at all: for, even suppose they should tell me
That he will come again, I have not the heart to believe it.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly: Who are you?
Where do you come from? And what is your city? And who are your parents?
What sort of ship did you come in? And what was the reason the sailors
Brought you to Ithaca? Also what land does your company hail from?
For you could never have come except by crossing the water.
And I am anxious to know if you now come here as a stranger
Or an old friend of my father's: because, once, many a brave man
Came to our house as a guest: for he was a favourite always."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Athené:
"All these things that you ask, I will tell you plainly and truly:
Mentes, I boast to be, the son of Anchialus, and I
Rule o'er the Taphians, seafaring men, and now I have come here, I
and my crew, in a ship, on the way to a far away island
Temesa, seeking copper: I carry a cargo of iron.
As for my ship, 'tis at anchor, apart from the crowd of the city,
Under the Néius woods, in the sheltered harbour of Rheithrus.
And, I am proud to say, you will find we are friends ancestral,
If you will trouble to ask of the aged hero Láërtes,
Who, as I hear men say, no longer comes to the city,
But, in his country home, lives very infirm and ailing,
Tended by one old woman who gets him his drink and his victuals
On those days when he can't do more, because of rheumatics,
Than just potter about and see how the vines are growing.
And I am here just now, because they told me your father
Lately had come to his home: but the Gods, most likely, delay him.
You may be sure that he is not dead, the godlike Odysseus,
But, in some distant isle, 'mid savages fierce and uncultured,
Though he has met no harm, perforce is detained as an exile.
But I will tell you now what the Gods have put in my mind,
and
What I believe, though I am no prophet nor skilful in bird-lore:
Have no fear: he will soon come back to the land of his fathers:
Even although his captors should bind him with fetters of iron,
He will contrive to escape, for his mind is full of devices.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly,
If a tall fellow like you are really the son of Odysseus,
For, in your head at least and eyes, you are wondrously like him:
For he was just such a one when we foregathered together,
Many a time, ere the day when he sailed with all of the others,
All of the best of the Argives, to Troy, in their roomy vessels.
Since that time neither I nor your father have seen one another."
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Surely, O Guest, I will tell these things both plainly and truly:
That I am really his son, my mother declares, but I know not:
For how can anyone know who his father is? But, from my
heart, I
Wish I had been the son of a man of happier fortune,
One who had reached old age still holding his goods in
possession.
But, of all men in the world, the man who they say is my father
Has the most evil fate, as matters are standing at present."
Him, in return, addressed the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné:
"'Tis quite clear that the Gods do not mean your race to be
nameless,
Since, with a sensible mind, your mother Penelope bore you.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
What is this feast, and this crowd that is here? And why do you
want them?
Is it a wedding? For certain it isn't a dinner they pay for.
As it appears to me, they make themselves too much at home
here,
Feasting in insolent manner: and any sensible man would,
If he came in, be indignant, and think their proceedings were
shameful."
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Guest, since you ask me to tell, I will truly reply to your questions:
Once on a time this house bid fair to be rich and decorous,
While that my father was here: but the Gods have otherwise ordered,
For they have snatched him away unseen from the land of the living:
And I should never have mourned so much had he died like a hero,
Had he been slain with his comrades in that far land of the Trojans,
Or had he died at home after bringing the war to a finish:
Then all the States of Greece would have raised a mound in his honour:
Yes, and for me his son, he would have won glory hereafter.
Now he is snatched away, unseen and unheard, by the Storm-fiends,
Having nor name nor fame, and to me leaves pain and lamenting.
Nor is it he alone whom I mourn: for the Powers have wrought me
Many a care besides: for all of these arrogant chieftains
Who, in Dulichium, Samé, and wooded Zacynthus, are foremost,
Taking no count of the others who rule in Ithaca's island,
All are wooing my mother, and wasting away our substance,
Still she can neither refuse their hateful offer of marriage,
Nor will she carry it out. Meanwhile they consume my possessions,
And, before long, no doubt, they will make an end of me also."

Then, with indignant mien, did Pallas Athené address him:
"Ye Gods! sorely, my son, you have need of the absent Odysseus:
He would lay forcible hands, very soon, on these insolent suitors.
For, if he now should come, and stand at the gate of his palace,
Helmet on head, with a shield and two darts, being such as I saw him
For the first time, when, a guest in our house, he was drinking and merry,
On his way back from a visit to Ilus in Ephyra (for he Went there once, in the course of his wanderings, seeking a poison
Deadly to man, wherewith to anoint his arrows: but Ilus
Gave it him not, for he feared the eternal vengeance of Heaven:
But my own father gave it, because he was greatly belovéd).
If, as Odysseus was then, he should join in fight with the suitors,
Then would they all have the shortest of shrift, and a bitter
wedding.
But, on the knees of the Gods, lie all these things, to determine,
Whether he shall come back to requite them, or whether he
shall not,
In his own halls. But now I urge you well to consider
How you are going to drive these suitors out of your castle:
Listen to me, if you please, and lay to heart what I tell you.
 Summon a meeting of all the Achæan heroes to-morrow:
Boldly address them there, and let the Gods be your witness:
Bid that the suitors disperse, each one to his own habitation:
And, for your mother, if really her heart is set upon marriage,
Bid her return once more to her father, a lord of great power:
They will arrange a marriage, and also provide her a dowry,
Handsomely, such as is fit to give to a favourite daughter.
Also I strongly advise you, if you are disposed to obey me,
Take the best ship you can find, with twenty rowers, and set out
Seeking for news of your father, who now long-time has been
absent:
Haply some man may tell you: or even Rumour may reach you,
Sent from Zeus: for she is the one who gives warning to mortals.
First then, go to Pylos, and question the godlike Nestor,
Passing on thence, unto Sparta, to golden-haired Meneläus,
Who was the last to return, of the Greeks with brazen cuirasses.
Now, if you hear that your father's alive, and will soon be
returning,
Then, though in much distress, for a year you well may endure it,
But, should you hear he is dead, and passed to the region of
shadows,
Tarry no more, come back without fail to the land of your fathers,
Pile a great mound to his name, with splendid funeral honours
Such as his deeds deserve, and give your mother in marriage.
But, soon as all these things you have done and duly performed,
Then bend all your powers, of mind and of heart, to contriving
How you may slay the suitors within the walls of your castle,
Openly, or by guile: nor does it longer become you
Childish pursuits to follow: the time for trifles is over. Have you not heard what glory was won by Orestes the godlike Through the whole world, when he dared to avenge the death of his father, Slaying the crafty Ægisthus, who murdered his glorious father? You, my young friend, so big as you are and comely to look at, O be brave! that so men not yet born may approve you. But I must now make haste, and run to the shore, to my galley And to my crew, who I fear are somewhat impatient of waiting: Let these things be your care, and lay to heart what I tell you.” And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “Friend, I see that you speak from kindly feeling towards me, As might father to son: and I will never forget it. But come, wait for a while, in spite of your haste to be going, That you may have a bath, and refresh yourself: afterwards, you can Cheerfully go to your ship, and with you carry a present Precious and beautiful too, to be a keepsake and heirloom, From me, such as is fit that friends should give to each other.” Answered him then in turn, the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné: “Do not detain me longer: ’tis time I should start on my journey: Also, whatever it be that your dear heart bids you to give me, Keep it till next I come, to take and put with my treasures: Choose me a beautiful gift, and it shall deserve a requital.” Thus having spoken, she left him, the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné, And, like a bird, flew upward: but, into his heart, she instilled Courage and might, and made him bethink himself of his father More than ever before: and, when he considered the marvel, He was amazed, for he guessed ’twas a God with whom he had spoken. Straightway, a man with the mien of a God, he went to the suitors. There was the bard with his harp: and the men were seated in silence, Listening, while he sang the sad return of Achæans Back from the plains of Troy, ordained by Pallas Athéné. But, in her upper chamber, Penelope, pearl of discretion, Heard the inspired song, and descended the stairs from the tower,
Not unattended, for, with her, there came two maidens in waiting. But, when she came to the suitors, she stood, this marvel of women, Hard by a post that upheld the massive beam of the roof-tree Holding before her face the flaps of her glistening head-dress, While, on each side to guard her, there stood a trusty attendant. Tearfully then she spoke to the bard inspired of Heaven: "Phemius, you know well many lays that are soothing to mortals, Deeds of men and of Gods, and all that singers delight in: Sing one of these to us now, while the gentlemen listen in silence, Drinking their wine: but cease, I pray, from this doleful ditty, Wearing away my heart: for on me lies sorrow unending, As I lament the loss of one who can ne'er be forgotten, Him whose glory has spread through Hellas and central Argos."

But, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "Mother dear, why should you grudge the delightful bard to amuse us Just as his fancy prompts? He is not responsible, but Zeus, Who, unto toiling men, as he wills, their talents apportions. There is no blame to the bard for singing the fate of the Grecians, Seeing the song that is newest is ever most warmly applauded. For, not Odysseus alone, in Troy, but many another Perished before his time, and lost his day of returning. But you had better go back and attend to the work you are skilled in, Distaff and spindle and web, and see that you bid your attendants Set to their work at once. But speechmaking is men's business Always, and specially mine: for I, in this house, am the master." Then, in amazement at words like these, she returned to her chamber, Paying good heed to her son's wise speech, and there with her maidens, Wept for Odysseus her lord, till sleep, the consoler of mortals, Silent and soft on her eyelids was poured by Pallas Athené. Now, in the shadowy hall, the suitors were making a riot, Thinking each one he would like to share the bed of the lady. And it was then that Telemachus spoke, and thus he addressed them:

"Listen, you haughty men who profess to be courting my mother:
Let us enjoy this feast without any shouting or uproar,  
For 'tis a pleasure to hear such a godlike singer as this one.  
But, in the morning, we all will take our seats in the council,  
Where I will warn you, in words you will have no chance of mistaking,  
Straightway to quit these halls and seek elsewhere for your banquets,  
Making the round of your houses and eating your own provisions.  
But, if you think it better that one man's goods should be wasted,  
And without cost to yourselves, I will call on the Gods ever-living,  
If it may please great Zeus to grant us deeds of requital.  
Then in your homes shall you perish: and none shall there be to avenge you."

Thus did he speak: and all were biting their lips in their anger,  
Wondering what had occurred that he should so boldly harangue them.

Then spoke up in reply Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes:  
"'Tis very easy to see that the Gods, my Telemachus, make you Ride the high horse like this, and talk in this insolent manner:  
But I devoutly hope that the Son of Kronos will never Choose you as Ithaca's king, for all that it's yours to inherit."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:  
"If you will kindly excuse me, Antinoüs, I will speak freely:  
True, I would gladly accept this honour, if Zeus should bestow it:  
For there are many worse things than this that can happen to mortals.
'Tis not so bad to be king, after all: for soon a man's household Grows to be splendid and rich: and himself will be treated with honour.  
But you know well that there are, in sea-girt Ithaca, Grecian Kings not a few, not counting myself, of various ages:  
Any of these may be chief, since godlike Odysseus has perished:  
But I am king, and king will remain, of our own castle,  
And of the household slaves who were captured by godlike Odysseus."

Then did Eurymachus, Polybus' son, thus speak up in answer:  
"This, my Telemachus, lies on the knees of the Gods to determine,
Which of the Greeks shall be king in sea-girt Ithaca: meanwhile
Keep your own goods, and be king as much as you please of
your household:
For 'tis my fervent hope that, while men live in this island,
No one will come to rob you by force of your lawful possessions.
But, my good fellow, I want to ask you about this stranger:
Where did he come from? and what sort of land does he claim
to belong to?
Where are his family settled? and where his estates ancestral?
Did he come here to bring some news of your father returning,
Or did he come to ask you to pay some debt that you owed him?
How he jumped up and was gone before we could make his
acquaintance!
For, if we judge by his face, he seemed a man of some standing."
And unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"There is no longer hope, good sir, of my father returning:
Nor do I trust any more to news wherever it come from,
Neither to soothsayers' tales: for sometimes my mother will
summon
Men such as these to our hall, and question them as to the future.
But this guest who was here is a friend of my father's from
Taphos:
Mentes, he claims to be, the son of Anchialus Wiseheart:
And he is king, as he says, of the famous Taphian oarsmen."
Thus did he speak: but, at heart, he knew 'twas the Goddess
immortal.
Then did the others resort to dancing and singing of ballads,
Keeping it up to the last, till shades of evening o'ertook them.
So, to home and to bed, each one of the feasters departed.
Then, to his bed Telemachus went, where a chamber was
built him,
Seen from all sides, in a tower, that looked on the beautiful
forecourt,
Pondering much in his mind: and, bearing torches to light him,
Euryycleia went also, the careful and clever: the daughter
Was she of Ops the son of Pisenor: Laërtes had bought her
When in the bloom of her youth, at the price of a score of oxen:
Her, in his palace, not less than his own chaste wife did he
honour,
But never went to her bed for fear of my lady's displeasure:
She, it was, carried his light: she had been his nurse from a baby,
Loving him more than the rest. But he opened the door of
his chamber,
Sat on the side of the bed, and took off his soft woollen tunic,
And, to the hands of the dame, so careful and clever, he gave it.
She then, when she had brushed and neatly had folded the tunic,
Put it to hang on a peg by the side of the bedstead of fretwork,
Quietly went from the room, and pulled the door to by the
handle
Shaped like a ring, and then, with the thong, she drew the bolt forward.
There, all night, rolled up in fleecy blankets, he pondered
How to accomplish the task which Pallas Athené had set him.
BOOK II

THE ITHACAN COUNCIL

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then, from his cosy bed, sprang up the dear son of Odysseus,
Speedily put on his clothes, and slung a sharp sword from his shoulder,
And, on his gleaming feet, he bound his beautiful sandals,
Sallied from out his chamber as 'twere an Immortal in presence,
And, to the clear-voiced heralds, he gave his orders to summon
All the Achæans with flowing locks to meet in the council.
Promptly they sounded the call: and quickly the people assembled.
And, when they all had met, and the place of assembly was crowded,
Then did he also set out (a spear of bronze he was holding)
Not unguarded, for, close at his heels, two swift dogs followed:
Over him, godlike grace was shed by the watchful Athené,
So that, on him, all eyes were fastened as he came forward:
Even the elders made way when he sat on the throne of his father.
Then did the hero Ægyptius rise and address the assembly,
(Bent was his body with age, but his mind was stored with wisdom)
And it was his dear son, the warrior Antiphus, who once
Went, in the hollow ships, to Troy with godlike Odysseus.
(Him the ferocious Round-eye killed in his scooped-out cavern,
Killed and ate: but that meal was the last that he ever prepared.)
Three other sons had he: and one, Eurynomus, used to
Go with the suitors: the others looked after the farm of their father:
Yet did he never forget to grieve and lament for his lost one:
So, with a tear in his eye, he spoke to the people assembled:
"Listen, and lay to heart, men of Ithaca, what I shall tell you.
Not once, since that Odysseus in hollow ships went sailing,
THE ODYSSEY

Have we been summoned here to hold a meeting or Council. But, may I ask the name of the man who has called us together, Whether he still be young or one of the elders like we are? Has he received some news of the Grecian army returning, Which he will plainly report, as being the first to have known it, Or will he speak of aught else that may be of public concernment? Truly, whatever his trouble, this act is much to his credit: May Zeus show him his favour and grant him a prosperous issue."

Thus did he speak: and his words brought cheer to the son of Odysseus:

Nor did he stay long seated, for he was impatient for speaking: So he stood forth in the midst: and at once Piseñor the herald, Versed in fitting procedure, put into his hand a sceptre. Then, taking up the word, he turned and spoke to the ancient: "Honoured Sir, the man is not far who has summoned this meeting:

Soon shall you know him: 'tis I. On me is anxiety pressing. Though I have heard no news of the Grecian army returning, Which I might plainly report as being the first to have known it, Nor of aught else do I speak that is of public concernment, Yet I have needs of my own: on me misfortune has fallen Double: for first, I have lost my excellent father, who sometime Ruled among you, and was gentle, as might be a father, among you. Now, at the last, there has come still greater misfortune, which soon will Utterly break up my home, and ruin me altogether. Rivals, unwelcome and proud, are pressing their suit on my mother, Sons of the very men who are counted the foremost amongst us. They do not wish her at all to return to the house of her father So that himself may betroth his daughter, and give her in marriage Unto the man he shall choose and deem an acceptable husband. But these, day after day, are hanging about our palace, Slaughtering oxen and sheep, and drinking, in reckless profusion, Sparkling wine of the best: and most of the things they are using Merely are squandered away: because there is no one at home now,
Such as Odysseus was, to ward the curse from our household.
I am not strong enough yet to do it, and even in future
I may be feeble in action and not well practised in warfare.
Yet I have got the will, if only the power was with me:
For that I cannot bear to see the dishonour and ruin
Fallen upon my house. But rouse yourselves, I entreat you,
And, for your honour’s sake, requite these scandalous doings,
And, in the deep of your hearts, beware of the Gods’ resentment,
Lest, in their wrath at your evil deeds, they should over-
throw you.
Now I implore you by Zeus the Olympian, also by Justice,
Her who convenes and dissolves the great assemblies of freemen,
Give me no help, my friends, but let me in misery perish,
All unaided, if ever my father, the kindly Odysseus,
Has, with malicious intent, oppressed the well-greaved Achaeans:
Take your revenge, I say: be hostile, abetting the suitors
Here in their evil deeds. But, as for myself, I had rather
That it should be yourselves who destroyed my flocks and my
treasures,
Seeing, if that were the case, some time, there might come
retribution:
For, until all were repaid, I might go through the town as a
beggar,
Crying ‘Restore me my Goods.’ But now there’s no help for
my trouble.”
Thus did he speak in a passion, and, throwing his wand on
the pavement,
Burst into tears: and the people were melted to pity to hear him:
Nor was there any who dared to answer his speech with
reproaches.
But ’twas Alcinoïs only who spoke and addressed him in answer:
“Measure your words, my fine fellow: we’ll stand no more
of your nonsense,
Fixing the blame upon us in terms no less than insulting.
Those whom you ought to blame are not we men of Achaia,
But ’tis your own dear mother, whose schemes are a little too
clever:
For ’tis the third year now, and soon it will come to the
fourth one,
Since she has been befouling the hearts of the simple Achæans,
Holding out hopes to all, and making promise to each one,
Sending out messages: while, in her heart, she has other intentions.
Here is the last of the tricks which she in her cunning concocted:
Having a loom put up in the palace, she set about weaving:
Large, and of finest thread, was the web: and thus she addressed us:
‘Gallant gentlemen all, since godlike Odysseus has perished,
Cease from urging your suit, at least until I shall finish
This pall which you now see, lest all my work should be wasted.
Funeral robe it is for the aged hero Laërtes,
Ready against the time when Death the Reaper shall seize him.
For it may be, perchance, some Grecian woman would blame me,
If he should want for a shroud, who once had many possessions.’
So did she speak: and so our manly heart was persuaded.
Then, till the day was done, she would busily keep to her weaving,
But, each night, she unravelled the fruit of her labour by torchlight.
So, for three years, she befooled us, and never her trick was suspected:
But, when the fourth year came, and hour on hour was passing,
Then we were told it at last by a maid who knew of the secret:
And, in the act of unpicking the glorious web, we surprised her.
Thus, at the last she finished the web, with no choice in the matter.
But we suitors now deign to give you this answer, that you may
Know we have made up our minds, and likewise all the Achaeans:
Send your mother away, and bid her to take for a husband
Him whom her father may choose and also herself may be pleased with.
But, if she still persists in tormenting us sons of Achaeans,
Thinking alone of the gifts with which the gracious Athené
Has so richly endowed her, both skill in beautiful arts and
Good understanding, or rather, as plain spoken people would call it,
Craftiness, such as we never have heard of amongst the renowned
Beauties of Greece, Tyro, Alcmene and rose-crowned Mycenae, Not one of whom was a match for Penelope's cunning devices. But this last of her tricks exceeds all bounds of discretion: And, while she keeps of this mind, though it may be suggested by Heaven, So long shall we her suitors consume your goods and possess- sions.  
She may be flattered perhaps, but you will lose much of your income: For we will neither go back to our farms nor stir from your palace Till she shall choose as mate some noble Achaean and wed him."
But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "Never will I consent to drive from our castle my mother, Her who both bore me and reared me: and, dead or alive, my father Is in a foreign land: and Icarius too would be angered: Nor could I possibly pay the fine he is certain to ask for If I should send her away: and the Gods will punish me also: For she would surely invoke the curse of the terrible Furies As she was leaving the house: and even men would condemn me. So I have made up my mind that never such word will I utter. But, if your spirit resents the things I have said, you have only Just to get out of my palace and seek elsewhere for your banquets, Making the round of your houses and eating your own prov- isions: But, if in your opinion it seems more becoming and proper That, without payment, the wealth of one man only be wasted, Waste it: but I will call aloud on the Powers immortal, And it may happen that Zeus will deign to grant retribution: Then shall you perish within your own homes, and none shall avenge you."
Thus did Telemachus speak: but Zeus, whose eye is on all things, Sent, from the mountain crest, a pair of eagles to aid him: First, on the blasts of the wind, they swooped with outstretched pinions Close to each other: but soon as they came 'mid the din of the council, Wheeling round in a circle, they flapped their wings in a fury,
Looking the crowd in the face, the heralds of woe and disaster, 
Clawing at cheeks and necks with their talons, and, off in a 
moment, 
Darting by houses and streets of the Ithacan city, they vanished. 
But, when the multitude saw the birds, they were struck with 
amazement, 
And, in their hearts they wondered what evil chance was im-
pending. 
Then rose up and addressed them the hero, old Alitherses, 
Mastor's son, for he, among all the elders, was wisest 
Judging the flight of birds and reading the signs of the future. 
He then, counselling well, thus spoke and harangued the 
assembly: 
"Listen, and lay to heart, men of Ithaca, what I shall tell you: 
And, what I now shall say, I chiefly address to the suitors: 
For, upon them, great woe is rolling apace: for Odysseus 
Will not be absent long, but already, somewhere or other, 
Not far off, is preparing for all of them ruin and slaughter: 
Yes, and on many another of us in this Ithacan island, 
Evil is going to fall: but let us take time by the forelock, 
Put a restraint on these men: or better it were if themselves 
should 
Cease from their evil deeds: for that is the pathway of wisdom. 
I am no novice, but speak those things that experience teaches: 
For what I then foretold, at the time when the host of the 
Argives 
Sailed up the offering for Troy, and amongst them resourceful 
Odysseus, 
All has now come to pass and is being fulfilled to the letter: 
For, after suffering much and losing the whole of his comrades, 
Now, in the twentieth year, I said, he should come to his home-
land 
Unrecognized and alone: and all is near to fulfilment."

Then did Eurymachus, Polybus' son, speak roughly in answer: 
"Old man, let me advise you to go back at once to your house, 
and 
Prophesy this to your children, for fear they should get into 
trouble. 
But, what these two birds mean, I can tell much better than 
you can:
You may see plenty of birds any day in sunshiny weather:
And they don't, most of them, mean anything in particular: also
Your friend Odysseus is dead: and 'twould be a good job if you too
Were just as dead as he: for then we shouldn't be bored with
All this prophecy business: nor would you be thus exciting
This young man in his anger on chance he may give you a present.
But I will tell you plainly what is quite certain to happen:
If you beguile this young man here with your musty old wisdom,
Stirring him up to be angry, for him 'twill be rather unpleasant, And, on yourself, old man, we shall lay such a fine as will make you
Feel most uncommonly bad and hurt in your mind when you pay it.
But, to Telemachus now, to begin with, I make a suggestion: Let him encourage his mother to go back again to her parents:
They will arrange a marriage, and also provide her a dowry, Handsomely, such as is fit to give to a favourite daughter:
For, till that happens, 'tis sure that we noble sons of Achæans Will not abandon our suit: since we are not easily frightened, Not by Telemachus even, for all his eloquent talking. Nor do we set much store by oracles, which you, old fellow, Prate of to no effect: for you're only considered a nuisance, And we shall go on using the young man's goods at our pleasure, That is so long as my lady keeps wearing out our patience
As to her marriage: while we, each day, are indulging her fancies, Quarrelling over her virtues, and never spending a thought on Plenty of other women who might prove suitable matches.”

But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “Hear me, Eurymachus, now, and all other illustrious suitors. There is no need to discuss such matters as these any longer, For they are quite well known to the Gods and all the Achæans. But come, give me a ship and twenty rowers to man it Who shall be able to take me from place to place at my pleasure: For I must go to Sparta and sandy beaches of Pylos, Seeking for news of my father who now so long has been absent, Some one may tell me about him, or even Rumour may reach me: For it is chiefly she brings word from Zeus unto mortals. If I should hear he 's alive, and making his way to his homeland,
Then, though in much distress, for a year, I well might endure it: But, should I hear he is dead, and passed to the region of shadows, Then, when I come once more to my own dear home, I will straightway Pile a great mound to his name and celebrate funeral honours Splendidly, such as are meet, and give my mother in marriage.”

Thus did he speak, and sat down. Then Mentor rose to address them, Mentor, who, once on a time, was comrade of noble Odysseus, And, when he sailed with him in the ships, he commanded his household Ever to honour the elder and hold fast order and safety. He then, counselling well, thus spoke in the midst and addressed them:

“Listen, and lay to heart, men of Ithaca, what I shall tell you:
Never let sceptred king hereafter be kindly and gentle, Nor let him reverence right, but be prone to harshness and outrage, As there is not one here who remembers the godlike Odysseus Though he was once their king—not so much a king as a father. But, on my life, I should fear to be one of these swaggering suitors, Working the violent schemes their evil minds have concocted: For their own lives are at stake when they plunder the house of Odysseus, Saying, meanwhile, in their folly, that he will no more be returning. But ’tis you Ithacan people who rouse me to indignation, Sitting with folded hands, not even reproving the suitors, Few as they are, though indeed your numbers are ample to quell them.”

Then did the son of Evenor, Leócritus, angrily answer:

“Mischievous Mentor, and crazy to boot, what folly you’re talking, Bidding them put us down! But that isn’t so easy a matter. Men, although many, won’t fight on account of a feast: ’tisn’t worth it. For, if Odysseus himself should come, and, finding the suitors
Feasting at ease in his hall, should take the notion to drive us
Out of his house by force, not even his excellent wife would
Get much joy of his coming, however she might have desired it:
For he would only have drawn on himself unseemly disaster,
Fighting against long odds. So you have not spoken discreetly.
But come, let us be off, each one to his farm and his household:
And, as for this young man, Alitherses here, and Mentor,
Who from the first have been the friends and allies of his father,
Surely will speed his voyage. For myself, I think he will stay here,
Waiting for news, and that this is the last we shall hear of the
matter.”

These were his words: and so the meeting was ended abruptly.
Then, each one to his home, the people quickly departed.
Only Telemachus went by himself to the lonely sea-shore,
Dipped his hands in the foam, and prayed aloud to Athené:

“Hear me, Divine one, who deignedst to come to our poor
dwelling,
Bidding me sail in a ship o’er the sea with its mists and its
shadows,
That I might hear some news of my long-lost father returning:
Try as I may, the Achæans still thwart and hinder my purpose:
Worst of them all are the suitors, those men overbearing and
haughty.”

Thus did he speak in his prayer: and Athené was standing
beside him,
Like unto Mentor in form and also in voice: and she called him
Gently by name, and thus, in wingéd words she addressed him:

“Never, Telemachus, will you be found either coward or
foolish,
If in your veins now runs the generous force of your father,
Such as was he to bring both word and deed to an issue:
Then will your voyage be of good effect, nor fail of completion.
But, if you are not the son of him and Penelope, why then
I have small reason to hope you will carry out what you desire.
For very few are the sons that grow up as good as their father:
Most are worse, and a few, a very few, are better.
But, as I am quite sure you will not prove coward or foolish,
And that some share of your father’s wit to you has descended,
There is good hope you will dare to pursue this work to a finish.
Therefore you need not care for what the suitors are planning
Foolishly: for, as they are not just, neither are they prudent. Nor do they think of Fate, who is followed by Death's black shadow, Near, very near, to them now, when all shall perish together, But you will not have long to wait for the voyage that you purpose: For I will act as is due from a comrade and friend of your father, Fit out a good swift ship for your use, and be your companion. But now go to the palace and take your place with the suitors, Lay in stores of provisions and pack them securely in vessels, Wine in two-handled jars, and meal, that supplies men's marrow, In stout leathern sacks, while I get the sailors together: I shall soon find volunteers from the people: and ships there are many, New and old, in the island: and, when I have chosen the best one, We will equip her well and launch her at once on the ocean."

Thus spoke Athené the daughter of Zeus: and Telemachus hastened, Heeding the voice of the God: and sadly homeward he wended: There, sure enough, in the hall, he found the swaggering suitors Busily skinning goats and singeing the fattest of porkers. But, to Telemachus, straight, with a laugh, Antinoüs came up, Took his hand and held it, and spoke in familiar fashion:

"Well, my fine orator, no one can hold you: but don't be inventing In that mind of yours any more bad schemes or speeches. Come, like a good man: eat and drink with us as you used to: And, for the rest, the Achæans will see to the things you desire, Ship, and a crew of picked rowers, that you may the quicker arrive at Pylos the sacred, to seek for news of your excellent father."

But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "No, Antinoüs, not for the world could I feast and be merry, Quiet, and holding my peace, in the midst of your arrogant party. Do you not think it enough to have robbed me and clipped my possessions All these years that are past, while I was too young to resist you? Now that I am grown up and hear what others are saying,
I understand it well, and my spirit rises within me, And I will do my utmost to bring destruction upon you, Whether I go to Pylos or here remain with the people: And I will go (nor shall the journey be vain that I speak of) As a plain merchant (for that your own selves thought to be better) Not as a man in command of a ship and a party of oarsmen."

Then he withdrew his hand from the hand of Antinoës quickly. But, in the house, the suitors were busy preparing their supper, And, with abusive words, they began to taunt and revile him: And you might hear one say, with an insolent air, to his neighbour:

"There is no doubt that our friend Telemachus here means murder:
He will be seeking allies from Sparta or sandy Pylos, Or he will go to the rich ploughed land of Ephyra, whence he Hopes to bring back some poison (for that no doubt is his purpose) Which he will put in our drink, and wipe us out all in a body."

Then would another reply: "I fancy 'tis much more likely That, when he goes in his ship a-wandering, he himself may Come to a lonely end just like his father Odysseus: Then we should have the trouble of sharing out his possessions, Giving the house to his mother and him she may happen to marry."

So did they talk: but the other went down to the room of his father, Lofty and wide, where lay great piles of gold and of copper, Garments stored in chests, and sweet-smelling oil in abundance: And, in a row by the wall, great earthen jars were standing, Filled with divinest drink, pure wine of mellowest vintage Stored up against the time when, after his labours, Odysseus Should be restored to his home. And the place was carefully guarded, Closed with two-leaved doors very strongly fitted: and also, Night and day, it was watched by the housekeeper, prudent and clever, Eurycleia, the daughter of Ops the son of Pisenor. Her, then, Telemachus called to the chamber, and thus he addressed her:
“Nurse dear, draw me sweet wine in earthen jars double handled, 
Choicest of all that you have, next after that you are keeping 
For the return of him, the hapless Zeus-born Odysseus, 
Whencesoever he come, escaping from Fate and Destruction. 
Fill me twelve, and see that you fit a stopper to each one. 
And will you pour me meal into bags stitched firmly of leather: 
Twenty bushels in all of barley meal well pounded. 
Don’t tell anyone else, and let all be collected together. 
For I am off to Sparta and sandy beaches of Pylos, 
If I may hear, perchance, some news of my father returning.”

So did he speak: but she wept aloud, his nurse Eurycleia, 
And, ’mid her wailing, thus, in words unbidden she answered: 
“Why did you think, dear child, of taking this perilous journey? 
Where do you want to go, the only son, and the loved one, 
So far away? But he, divinely descended Odysseus, 
Far from his native land, ’midst unknown strangers has perished. 
And, soon as ever you’re gone, these men will be hatching their plots to 
Kill you by craft, and divide these treasures of yours as their plunder. 
Stay on your own land here: You have no need or occasion, 
Over the barren sea, to wander ’mid danger and hardship.”

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: 
“Cheer up, nurse, and be sure this plan has the blessing of Heaven. 
But you must take an oath that you won’t tell this to my mother 
For twelve days, or eleven at least, or till she herself shall 
Ask, and find out I am gone, lest she spoil her fair face with weeping.”

Thus did Telemachus speak: and the dame she swore to obey him. 
But, when the oath was sworn, and confirmed with all due observance, 
Then did she draw the wine in earthen jars double-handled, 
Also she poured the meal into bags, sewn stoutly, of leather. 
But, to the house he went, and took his place with the suitors. 
Then did the grey-eyed Goddess continue to plan for his safety:
Taking Telemachus’ form, she went through the lanes of the city,
Stood by, and spoke a word in the ear of each man that she met with,
Bidding them all to assemble beside the ship in the evening.
Then did she beg for a ship from the famous son of Noëmon, Phronius, who, on his part, the request most readily granted.
And the sun set: and the ways were veiled in silence and shadow.
Then did she drag the ship to the sea, and put in the rigging
And other needful gear: at the end of the harbour she moored it.
First-rate seamen came round: and each with a word she encouraged.
Then other things were devised by the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
For she set out to go to the palace of godlike Odysseus:
There, by her power, she shed a soothing sleep on the suitors,
Made them to drop their cups, and wander at random while drinking:
Nor did they stay long seated, for sleep was heavy upon them,
But all hurried away to sleep here and there in the city.
Then, to Telemachus, spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené,
Calling him out from the palace so cheerful and fair to inhabit,
Making herself like Mentor as well in voice as in figure:
"Come, Telemachus, come: already your booted companions
Patiently sit at their oars, awaiting your word to weigh anchor.
Let us be off, nor longer delay to start on our journey."
Thus having spoken, she led the way, did Pallas Athené,
Striding along: and close in the steps of the Goddess Athené
But, when they came to the sea, to the place where the vessel was lying,
There, sure enough, they found their long-haired comrades a-waiting.
Then did the sacred might of Telemachus cheerily hail them:
"Come, my friends, let us fetch the provisions: for all is now ready
Packed in the hall: but of this, I must tell you, my mother knows nothing:
And, of the women, one only has heard of what we are doing."
Then did he lead the way: and the others came closely behind him.

So, to the well-benched ship they carried all the provisions, Stowing them, just in the manner the Son of Odysseus commanded.
This being done, he embarked: but Athené acted as captain, Taking her seat in the stern: Telemachus too, as was proper, Sat by her side, the while that the crew cast loose the stern hawsers:
Then did the men embark, and took their seats on the benches. Soon was a following breeze vouchsafed by Pallas Athené: And, o'er the deep blue sea, the brisk west wind went rustling. Then gave Telemachus word to the crew to get out the rigging: Smart at the word they obeyed, and, raising aloft the fir mast, Firm in the deep mast hole they stepped it, and fixed it with forestays, Hoisting the white sails up with twisted halyards of oxhide. Under the breeze, the sail bellied out, and the blue wave parted, Roaring about her bows, as the ship gathered way through the water: And, o'er the wave she sped in haste to accomplish her journey. Then, having made all taut in the good ship roomy and tarry, Bowls brimfull of wine they set for themselves on the benches, Pouring out some to the Gods who know neither end nor beginning, Chiefly to that great daughter of Zeus, the grey-eyed Athené. All night long till the morning the good ship passed on her journey.
BOOK III

TELEMACHUS IN PYLOS

NOW, from the glassy sea, to the brazen sky at the zenith, Rose the majestic Sun, to shed his light on Immortals And on the toiling men who labour on bountiful plough-land. Soon unto Pylos they came, the well built city of Neleus: There, on the shore of the sea, were the Pylians duly performing Rites to the God of the Raven Locks who makes the earth tremble. Nine great stands they had built, and in each five hundred were seated: And, at each stand, nine coal-black bulls they had vowed to Poseidon, And, having tasted the entrails, the thighs to the God they were burning Just at the very time when the men in Telemachus' vessel Ran her aground on the beach, then hoisted their canvas and furled it, Moored their craft and landed, Telemachus last of the number: But 'twas Athené herself who marched as leader before them. She was the first to speak, the grey-eyed Goddess Athené: "Now is no time to be bashful, Telemachus, not for a moment, Since, for this very cause, you sailed o'er the sea in your galley That you might hear some news of your father, to know for a surety Under what sod he rests or into what fate he has fallen. But come now, go straight to Nestor the tamer of horses That you may learn what counsel he keeps locked up in his bosom: Ask him yourself for an answer, and trust my word, he will tell you Truth without fraud or evasion: for years have endowed him with wisdom."
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"Mentor, how shall I go? and how ought I to salute him?
For I have had, till now, small practice in making of speeches:
And a young man feels bashful, beginning to question an elder."

Spoke unto him in reply the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:

"Some things, Telemachus, you, without any prompting, will think of:
Some, will the Gods suggest: for this I can say for a surety,
You were not born nor nurtured without the protection of Heaven."

Thus having spoken, she led the way, did Pallas Athené,
Striding along: and close, in the steps of the Goddess, he followed.

And, when they came to the seats where the Pylian men were assembled,
Nestor was seated there, with his sons and their comrades around him
Busy preparing a feast and spitting and toasting of rashers.
But, at the sight of the strangers, they all came forward together,
Made a salute with their hands, and graciously bade them be seated.
First to come up and salute was Peisistratus, offspring of Nestor:
Taking a hand of each, he gave them seats at the banquet
(Softest fleeces were spread on heaped-up sand from the sea-shore)
Near Thrasytmédés his brother, and next to his father Nestor:
Duly he gave them shares of the entrails, and wine did he pour out
Into a golden cup, with words of welcome addressing
Pallas Athené, the daughter of Zeus the Lord of the Ægis:

"Offer a prayer, Sir Guest, to the great sea-ruler Poseidon:
For, coming here, you have chanced on a banquet held in his honour.
But, after making libation, and prayer, as religion requires,
Pass on the cup of wine to your friend, that he may do likewise:
For, if I am not mistaken, he too is in habit of praying
To the Immortals: for whom the soul of all men is hungry.
But he is younger than you, and much of the same age as I am,
Therefore, unto you first, the golden cup do I offer."
And, with these words, he handed the cup of sweet wine to Athené:
She was well pleased to observe the young man's proper behaviour,
Giving the cup to her: and straightway she prayed to Poseidon:
"Hear me, Earth-rider Poseidon, and grudge me not the fulfilment
Of our prayers: and first, all honour attend upon Nestor
And on his sons: and next, to the rest of the people of Pylos,
Graciously give a return for their splendid hecatomb: lastly
Grant, to Telemachus and to me, that we may accomplish
What we have come to do, and return with our vessel in safety."
Thus did Athené pray, and herself fulfilled her petition:
Then did she pass the cup to the son of Odysseus, who likewise
Prayed, while the others did cut the outside meat into morsels
Toasted, and drew from the spits, and portioned them round
to the feasters.
Then they fell to with a will to enjoy the glorious banquet.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Then did he rise and speak, old Nestor knight of Gerené:
"Now that our honoured guests have finished their meal, we may ask them
Who they may chance to be. My welcome guests, who are you?
From what port do you hail? Are you bound upon some business,
Or just roving at random as is the habit of pirates
Taking their lives in their hands, but bringing evil to strangers?"
But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"O Nestor son of Neleus, great glory of all the Achæans,
Who we may be, you ask, and I will answer you fully:
Ithaca is the land we hail from, which Neius shelters:
And what I speak of now is no public matter, but private.
I am in search for news of my father, the godlike Odysseus,
Him who endured so much, and who, long since, as they tell me,
Fought at your side at Troy and sacked the city of Priam.
For, of each one of the others who fought in the war with the Trojans,
We have had news, and know where he met with doleful de-
straction:
But, by the son of Kronos, the fate of my father is hidden:

Nor is there any to tell either where he has perished, or whether,

On some outlandish shore, he was slain by barbarous foemen,

Or, on the sea, was engulfed by the billows of Amphitrité.

Therefore I come to your knees to learn the pitiful story

How he has met his death, if, with your own eyes you have seen it,

Or, from some wanderer heard it: because he was born unto sorrow.

And do not soften the tale from pity, to spare my feelings,

But tell me all things truly, exactly the way that you saw it.

And I entreat you, if ever my father the kindly Odysseus

Honoured his plighted troth, in word and deed, to the utmost,

When, on the stricken field, you were sorely pressed by the Trojans,

Think of it now, I beg you, and tell me the truth without failing.”

THE STORY OF NESTOR

Thereupon, spoke in reply, Old Nestor knight of Gerené:

“My friend, since you remind me of what we sons of Achæans,

Daunted at nothing, endured amongst that far-away people,

Whether it were in our ships, on the sea with its mists and its shadows,

Searching for booty wherever the great Achilles might lead us,

Or in the struggle that raged round the steep-walled fortress of Priam:

There, our bravest were slain: there warlike Ajax is buried:

There lies Achilles, and there, Patroclus, in wisdom and counsel

Equal to Gods: and there my own Antilochus perished,

Blameless and strong, so swift to pursue, and so stubborn a fighter.

But not a mortal man could recount the hardships we suffered,

Even suppose that, for five whole years, you should ply us with questions,

Till that, wounded at heart, you came again to your homeland!

Nine long years we besieged them, employing all sorts of devices

For their destruction: which, hardly, did Zeus think fit to accomplish.

But none ever presumed to rival Odysseus in counsel:
For, in all stratagems, he, your father, was easily foremost:
If you are really his son: when I look I am struck with amazement,
For you speak just like him: indeed one could never expect that
Any man so much younger could talk so exactly as he did.
And be assured that, when I and your father were serving
 together,
Never, in general meeting or council, our judgements conflicted,
But, twin souls with one heart, after thought and careful reflection,
Always we showed to the Argives the wisest course and the safest.
But, when at last we had sacked the steep-walled city of Priam,
And were about to sail, some Power dispersed us: and thenceforth
Zeus in his wisdom decreed a sad return for the Argives,
Some of them being nor just nor wise: and therefore they perished,
All from the deadly wrath of the Mighty One’s grey-eyed daughter
Stirring up strife in the hearts of the brothers Atreidæ: and these two,
Summoning all the Achæans to meet in general council,
Rashly, and not in due order, towards the hour of sunset,
(Where they came fuddled with wine), then made their speeches,
declaring
Why they had summoned the people. Now Menelæus was urging
That they should bear in mind what a long sea voyage was before them:
This did not please Agamemnon: for that which to him seemed
the better
Was to remain for a while, and sacrifice hecatombs, thinking
By such a course to appease the terrible wrath of Athené:
Foolish one, not to have known that he could not hope to persuade her.
They are not easily turned, the Gods enduring for ever.
Thus, with bitter words, these brothers twain stood wrangling.
Then, with a mighty shout, sprang up the well-greaved Achæans,
But with divided purpose: and so, for the night, we rested,
Nursing ill will to each other: for Zeus more woes was preparing. Some of us then, next day, drag down our ships to the water, Launch them, and put on board our goods and our deep-bosomed women:

Half of the people however remained with the other Atreides, That Agamemnon, who guarded the Grecian host like a shepherd.

So our half embarked, and we rowed, and made good progress,

For a God calmed the waves of the sea the great whales' playground.

Coming to Tenedos then, we offered sacrifice duly,

Yearning for home: but Zeus did not yet intend us to reach it, Raising up bitter strife for a second time in the army.

Some of us then turned back to our ships rowed port and starboard,

Following king Odysseus, the world-wise, full of devices,
And bringing some consolation to Atreus' son Agamemnon. I, on my part, with the ships that followed me, fled in close order

Hastily, soon as I saw that the Deity purposed us evil: Tydeus' warlike son fled also and roused his companions:

Lastly, there came in our fleet the golden-haired Meneläus:

And 'twas in Lesbos he found us debating what course we should follow,

Whether to sail on the seaward side of the mountains of Chios, Heading for Psyria's isle, but keeping somewhat to starboard,

Or through the wind-swept channel that lies between Chios and Mimas.

Therefore we prayed for a sign: and the Deity graciously answered,

Bidding us steer direct across the sea to Euboea,

So that with least delay we might get clear from our dangers.

And a shrill wind began to blow: and swiftly the ships ran

Over the fishy ways: and so we arrived at Gercestus

During the night: and there we offered haunches of bullocks

Unto Poseidon, the king of the great sea traversed in safety.

'Twas the fourth day of our voyage, when the tamer of horses, Tydides,

Anchored his ships in Argos, all well on board: but I held on

Making for Pylos: nor did the wind which the Powers had sent us,
Once it had started to blow, ever fail or drop till we came there. So I arrived, dear son, without having heard or knowing Which of the Greeks were saved, or which had died: but whatever I may have heard at home, I will tell you, nor will I hide it. It is reported that all of the warrior Myrmidoncs came back Safely, under command of the famous son of Achilles, And Philoctetes as well, the glorious offspring of Poeas: Also Ædómenéus brought to Crete the whole of his comrades Who had escaped from the war: for none were lost on the Ocean. As for Atreides, you must have heard, although at a distance, How he came back, and how Ægisthus compassed his murder, But, for his crime, that man most wretchedly paid the forfeit. For he is blest indeed who leaves a son to succeed him, Even when dead: for the son on his father’s slayer took venge-
ance, Ægisthus the crafty who murdered his glorious father. And you also, my friend, so big and comely to look at, O be brave! that so, men not yet born may approve you.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “O Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of all the Achæans, Great was his vengeance indeed: and therefore his fame shall be chanted ’Midst the Achæan men for generations to follow. O that, to me, the Gods would grant such strength as to compass Vengeance as great as his, and to punish these insolent suitors For the outrageous schemes they are daily contriving against me. But, unto me, the Gods have no such happiness given, Unto my father and me: and it only remains to be patient.” But, in reply, thus spoke old Nestor, knight of Geréné: “Friend, since yourself have spoken and mentioned the matter, I answer: True, the report is spread that, against your will, many suitors, Daring to court your mother, have quartered themselves in your Castle. Tell me, are you content to submit to them, or do the people, Led by some heavenly voice, take part against you? Yet who knows
Whether he will not return and exact revenge for their outrage, Either alone, or perhaps with all the Achæans behind him? For, should it be the will of Athené thus to befriend you, As, in the land of Troy, she cared for the famous Odysseus When we were sorely pressed—for I never saw the Divine ones Openly showing their love in the way that Pallas Athené Openly stood by him—should she thus choose to befriend you, None of those men would be able to think any more about marriage."

But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “Sir, I have serious doubt your advice is beyond my achievement:
This is a very great work that you speak of: it daunts me: nor could I Have any hope to perform it, not even if Heaven were willing.”

But, on her side, then spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athene: “Think, my Telemachus: rash is the word you thoughtlessly uttered.
God, if He wills, can save a man e’en though at a distance. As for myself, I would rather endure any number of hardships So I could come back safe, than only come back to be murdered As Agamemnon was murdered by crafty scheme of Ægisthus On his own hearth with the aid of his own wife’s foul connivance. Death comes alike to all: nor Gods themselves can avert it, E’en from a man beloved, when Death the Reaper shall seize him.”

But, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “Mentor, my heart is sore: let us speak of this matter no longer: In real truth, for him, there remains no hope of returning:
Seeing the Gods have ordained black fate and death as his portion. But there is something else that I wish to enquire of Nestor, For, as they say, he has ruled as king over three generations, So that he seems to me as it were an Immortal to look at: “O Nestor, son of Nelœus, I pray you to answer me truly: How did Atreides die, Agamemnon who ruled so widely? Was Menelæus there? What fate did the crafty Ægisthus Purpose for him? for indeed, a much better man he had murdered: Surely he was in Argos, and not still aimlessly roaming
Over the world: but tell me he plucked up courage and slew him."

And, in reply, thus spoke old Nestor, knight of Gerêné: "Have no fear, my son, I will tell you truly of all things: For, to be sure, you have guessed exactly what would have happened.

If, on returning from Troy, Menelāus, the fair-haired Atreidēs, Had been in time to find Ægisthus still living, he would not Merely have killed him, and then heaped merciful earth on his body,

But would have cast him out for dogs and birds to devour, Far away out on the plain: nor would any Achæan woman Ever have wept his loss: for the deed he committed was heinous. For, while we, before Troy, were enduring hardship and labour, He, very much at his ease, in the safety of horse-feeding Argos, Daily, with plausible words, Agamemnon's wife was beguiling. She, Clytemnestra, at first rejected his shameful proposals, For, in her heart, she was good: and, besides, there was with her a minstrel Whom Agamemnon, ere going to Troy, had charged to protect her.

But, when the fetters of Fate at last had subdued her resistance, That man carried the bard to a desert island, and left him There, for the birds to pick his bones: and then, without hindrance, Willing himself, led her, as a willing bride, to his palace. Then, many haunches he burned on the sacred altars, and set up Images unto the Gods, with gold and fabrics of value, For that they gave him success beyond what he ever expected. Meanwhile Atreides and I, on friendliest terms with each other, Were on the way from Troy, and when we had come to the headland Sunium, that Lands-end of Attica, Phoebus Apollo Slew with his unseen dart the helmsman of king Menelāus, As he was holding the helm, the ship running free in fair weather, Phrontis the son of Onétor, than whom no man was more skilful Safely to handle a ship when violent squalls break upon it.
So Meneläus was there delayed, though in haste for his journey, That he might bury his comrade with all due funeral honours. But, when at last he came to the steep Maleian mountain (Sailing the purple sea in his roomy ships, with a fair wind), Then did all-seeing Zeus a hateful journey decree him, Striking the ships with blasts that whistled and screamed in the rigging Raising a mountainous sea: and so he divided his squadron, Sending the greater part to Crete to seek for a shelter Where the Cydonians dwell at the mouth of Iardanus river. Now, at the point of Gortys amongst the mists and the cloud-wrack, Rises a smooth and precipitous cliff with its face to the billows: There does the south wind drive a mighty swell towards Phæstus, Point of disaster: but yet a small rock parries the impact. There then the ships were driven, the men with much effort escaping: But, on the jagged rocks, the ships were battered to pieces. Five of the vessels, however, with blue prows gaily painted, Drifted by wind and current to Egypt: there Meneläus Wandered about for a while with his squadron of galleys, collecting Gold and riches in plenty amongst the uncivilized natives. Meanwhile Ægisthus at home pursued his gruesome devices Killing Atreides, and brought the people into subjection: So, seven years, he was king of the golden wealth of Mycenæ: But, in the eighth year, came retribution: for godlike Orestes Came back from Athens, and slew the man who had murdered his father, Crafty Ægisthus to wit, who killed his glorious father. Such was the funeral feast that Orestes gave to the Argives Over his mother accurst and the cowardly dastard Ægisthus. And, the same day, there arrived Meneläus quick to the rescue, Bringing a precious cargo of spoil which his galleys had raided. "And it were well, my friend, that you should not long be a-roaming Far from your home, where men avaricious and haughty are quartered,
Lest they should share your wealth and devour your stores and provisions
Till there is nothing left, and so your journey be fruitless.
Also I strongly advise you to ask Meneläus for counsel,
Since he has lately arrived from foreign countries, from which, one
Hardly could hope to return, whom once the tempests had driven
So far out of his course, and into a sea so vast that
Birds, in a year, cannot cross it: so great and terrible is it.
But go now, with your ship and your comrades: or if you like better
Going by land, you can have a car and a good pair of horses.
And I have here my sons who will readily go as your escort
Unto divine Lacedæmon where dwells fair-haired Meneläus.
And he will tell you the truth: for years have endowed him with wisdom."

These were his words: and the sun went down and twilight fell o'er them.
Then, in the midst did speak the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"Sir, the advice you give is much to the purpose: but come now,
Cut off the tongues, and mix the wine for our gift to Poseidon
And to the rest of the Gods, and remember that now it is bedtime:
Seeing the light has gone already: nor is it becoming
Long, at a sacred feast, to linger, but rather go homeward."
Thus said the Daughter of Zeus: and all took heed to her saying.
Then, on the hands of the guests, was water poured by the stewards:
Boys filled up to the brim great bowls of liquor, and served it
Round, when in each of the cups, they had poured the meed of Divine ones:
Then, after casting the tongues in the fire, all made their libation
Standing: and when, this done, they had drunk to their hearts' contentment,
Pallas Athené rose, and with her Telemachus also,
That they might go to their ship: but Nestor, knight of Geréne, Quickly put in his word, and gently chiding detained them:
"Now may Zeus and the rest of the Gods immortal forbid it That you should take your leave and go to your galley as if from
One altogether poor, who has neither wrappers nor blankets Nor aught else in his house, that he and his guests may sleep softly.
But, in my house, are wrappers and beautiful blankets in plenty. Not, if I'm master, shall this dear son of the valiant Odysseus Lie down to sleep on the deck of a ship, that is for so long as I may be living, or, after my death, there be sons in my castle Duly to entertain strangers, whoever may come on a visit."
And, in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"That is well said, my honoured friend; and Telemachus ought to
Do as you say, since that is the course by far the most fitting.
So he will stay with you and sleep in your palace: but I will Go to my ship and my crew to cheer them and give them their orders,
Having the honour to rank as the only elder among them:
But all the others, in age, are the gallant Telemachus' equals, Young men who came for the sake of friendship and love of adventure.
So, for to-night, I will sleep in my good ship roomy and tar-stained,
And, in the morning, be off to the bold Cauconians, where I Have to collect a debt, long due and by no means a small one. But for my young friend here, I pray you of kindness to speed him Guided by one of your sons, in a car with a good pair of horses, Swiftest of all that you have and able to stand a long journey."
Thus having spoken, she left them; the grey-eyed Goddess Athené, Taking the form of an osprey: and wonder seized the Achæans. Nestor too was amazed when he saw this marvellous portent: Taking Telemachus' hand, he called him by name and ad-dressed him,
"Friend, I am fully assured you will never be coward or weakling
Seeing, so young as you are, the Gods thus deign to escort you. This, you may know, is none other of those that inhabit Olympus Than the great Daughter of Zeus, the Trito-born Driver of booty. But, O Queen, be propitious, and give good fame to me also, And to my sons as well, and the wife whom I cherish and honour. And, on my part, I will give Thee a broad-browed heifer, a yearling, One that has never been broken or suffered the yoke of service, And I will gild her horns to make her a sacrifice worthy.” Thus did he speak in his prayer: and Pallas Athené regarded. Then did he lead the way, the aged knight of Gerene, To his own home, and, behind him, his sons and his daughters’ husbands Followed: and when they arrived at the far-famed castle of Neleus, There they sat down in order along the seats and the benches. And, as a welcome, the knight bade mix in a mighty cauldron Mellowest ten year wine, which the dame who guarded the cellar Specially opened for them after carefully loosing the wrappers. And, as he poured the wine, long prayer was made by the ancient Unto the Daughter of Zeus the mighty Pallas Athené. Then, having made their libations and drunk to their hearts’ contentment, Each to his home and to bed the several feasters departed But, for Telemachus, that dear son of the godlike Odysseus, Nestor, Gerenian knight, a bed in his castle provided (Richly carved were the bedsteads they placed in the echoing cloister), And, by his side as a guard, he stationed Peisistratus, bearer Of the stout ashen spear, who alone of his sons was unwedded. As for himself, he slept in a corner tower of the building: There was his bed made ready and shared by his noble lady. But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers, Then, from his bed sprang up the knight, the Gerenian Nestor,
And, going forth, sat down on the seats of glistening marble, Polished and white, in front of the lofty portals, where Neleus formerly used to sit, who equalled Immortals in counsel: But he, worsted by Fate, had passed to the region of shadows, And, in his place, sat Nestor, the warder and guard of Achaeans, Holding a sceptre: and round him, his sons, just come from their chambers, Crowded together, Echephoron and Stratus, Perses, Arétus And Thrasympèdes: and, after these five, Peisistratus entered Leading Telemachus, whom, to a seat by his friend they conducted. Thereupon Nestor arose and spoke, the knight of Gerêné: “Quickly, dear boys, perform the things that I ask you, that I may, First of all, seek favour of Pallas Athené, who deigned to Come, in a visible form, to the joyful feast of Poseidon. Therefore let one of you go to the plain, and, quickly as may be, Choose out a heifer and send her here: a herdsman can drive her. One, to the noble Telemachus’ ship can hasten, and bring back Hither the whole of his crew leaving two men only to guard her: Also let one of you go to Laërces the goldsmith, and bid him Come with all speed, with his tools, to gild the horns of the heifer. Let the rest stay where they are: but some one order the maidens Quickly to set to work and prepare a glorious banquet, Setting the benches and logs for seats and drawing clear water.” Then did all hustle about, as he bade. From the plain came the heifer: And, from the noble Telemachus’ ship, came the whole of his comrades: Also the goldsmith came: in his hands were the tools of his calling, Hammer and anvil and tongs well-made to fashion the gold with: Also Athené came to take part in the rites: and Nestor Furnished the gold: and the smith did gild the horns of the heifer, Working the metal with skill, to please the eyes of the Goddess. Stratius then came up with Echéphron, leading the heifer Each by a horn: and Arétus brought water in garlanded pitcher,
Out of his chamber, and barley meal which he bore in a basket: And Thrasymédes the strong, with both hands grasping a pole-axe, Stood by ready to strike, the while that Perseus his brother Held up the bowl. And Nestor, the aged tamer of horses Dipping his hands in water, with many a prayer to Athené, Sprinkled the meal and cast in the fire a piece of the forelock. But, when they all had prayed and sprinkled the meal before them, Straightway the son of Nestor, that man of stout heart Thrasy- médes, Stepped up and smote with his axe: and the sharp axe severed the tendons Over the neck: and the heifer collapsed: but the daughters of Nestor Cried out in fear, and the wives of his sons, and Eurydicé also, Clymenus’ eldest daughter, the stately consort of Nestor. Then, from the wide-wayed earth, they raised the heifer and held it While that the leader of men, Peisistratus, dealt it the death blow. And, when the black blood flowed, and life had gone from the carcase, Quickly they severed the joints and duly divided the haunches, Wrapping them up in the fat which they folded carefully round them, Piling raw steaks on the top. And, over the faggots, the Ancient Roasted the meat, and from time to time with wine did he baste it: But, when the haunches were cooked, and they duly had tasted the entrails, All that was left of the meat they cut into pieces and toasted. Meanwhile the youngest daughter of Nestor, fair Polycasté, Washed Telemachus, and with a costly unguent anointed: Then she put on him a tunic and threw a cloak o’er his shoulders: And, coming forth from the bath, as ’twere an Immortal to look at, Straightway he took his seat by Nestor the shepherd of peoples. But, when the outside meat was cooked and peeled from the bone, they Sat themselves down to the feast. And men of quality rising
Poured into cups of gold rare draughts of wine for the others. And, when at last their desire for drinking and eating was sated, Nestor arose and began to speak, the knight of Gerené:

"Now, my sons, go bring for Telemachus sleek-coated horses, And get a chariot ready that he may proceed on his journey."

So did he speak: and his sons full readily ran at his bidding, And, to the car, with speed they harnessed a fine pair of horses: In it, the housekeeper dame put bread and wine and dainties Such as are fit for the food of great kings nurtured by Heaven. Then, on the beautiful pair-horse car, Telemachus stepped up: Also that leader of men Peisistratus mounted beside him, Grasped the reins in his hands and lashed the steeds to a gallop: And to the plain they sped from the steep hill fortress of Pylos. All day long they were tossing the pole from one to the other Till the sun set and the ways were veiled in silence and shadow. And unto Pheræ they came, to the house of Diocles (he was Son of Ortilochus, who, in his turn, was the son of Alphæus). There did they stay for the night: and friendly refreshment he gave them.

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then they put to, and mounting the chariot painted so gaily, Whipped up the pair of horses who sped most willingly onward Till they arrived at the wheat-bearing plain, wide stretching: and there they Came to the end of their journey: so swiftly the horses had brought them.
And the sun set: and the ways were veiled in silence and shadow.
BOOK IV

TELEMACHUS IN SPARTA

Thus they had come at last to the coombes of fair Lacedæmon:
And to the palace they drove of the famous king Menelæus.
There did they find the king, in the midst of his friends and relations,
Holding a glorious feast to honour his son and his daughter.
Her, he was sending as bride to the son of warlike Achilles:
For, long ago, in Troy, he had promised with due confirmation
That he would give her to him: and the Gods brought his words to fulfilment:
So he was sending her off with a fine cavalcade to escort her
Unto the Myrmidons' town, o'er whom her husband was ruler.
And, for his son, he was taking the daughter of Spartan Alector.
(Last of his children was he, the strong Megapenthes, the offspring
Of a slave mother: but none did the Gods vouchsafe unto Helen
After Hermione, fair as Aphrodite the golden.)
Thus, in the high-roofed hall, the guests were seated a-feasting,
Neighbours and friends of the king, that man of renown Menelæus,
Feasting and making merry: among them a heaven-born minstrel
Sang to the sound of the harp: in the 'midst, two supple-limbed tumblers
Caught up the strain, and adown the ranks of the guests went whirling.
Meanwhile Telemachus stood, with the son of Nestor his comrade,
Waiting withing the porch, themselves with the car and the horses:
But Eteonæus, the watchful head steward of king Menelæus,
Came to the porch and espied them, and, going his way through the palace,
Hurriedly thus he spoke in the ear of the Shepherd of Peoples:
"There are two strangers here, may it please you, my Lord Meneläus,
Gentlemen both: and they seem of the race of Zeus by their bearing.
Shall we invite them in, my Lord, and unharness their horses,
Or shall we send them on, elsewhere to find entertainment?"

But to him, greatly in wrath, thus spoke fair-haired Meneläus:
"You never used to be silly, Böetheus' son Ëtëônëus,
But you are chattering now as a foolish boy might be doing.
Many a meal you and I, at other men's tables, have eaten
Ere we arrived at home: may Zeus give us rest for the future.
Therefore unharness the horses, and bring these guests to the banquet."

Promptly the steward obeyed, but first he called to some others,
Diligent serving men, to come with him quickly and help him.
So, from the yoke they loosed the sweating horses, and tied them
Up at the mangers, and gave them a feed of oats and of barley:
Then, after tilting the car on the white wall facing the entrance,
Ushered the guests inside that building of beauty supernal.
There, round the house of the king, Zeus-nurtured, they gazed
in amazement:
For, as it were a gleam, of the sun or the moon in its brightness,
Shone through the high-roofed house of that man of fame Meneläus.
And, when they both had feasted their eyes to their hearts' contentment,
Then did they go to bathe in baths that were burnished and gleaming.
And, when the handmaids had washed them, with oil of olive anointed,
Clothed them in tunics, and thrown soft woollen cloaks on their shoulders,
Then they sat down on thrones by the side of king Meneläus.
Promptly a serving maid brought a handwash of sparkling water
Poured from a golden ewer in a beautiful basin of silver
That they might wash their hands: and she set a table beside them.
And the staid housekeeper dame brought bread and set it before them,
And many dainties besides, the best she had in the larder. Also the carver, in upraised hands, brought platters containing Meat of all kinds, and cups of gold for use at their pleasure. Then, with his hand outstretched, Meneläus in welcome addressed them:

"Eat, and good appetite to you, my friends, and when you have finished Supper, we then will ask what men you are: for 'tis plain that There is no fear that the race of your parents will end in disaster. Rather you seem of the race of sceptred kings Zeus-nurtured: Seeing no baser men could beget such persons as you are."

And, having spoken thus, he took up a roasted sirloin Specially set apart for himself, and laid it before them. Then were all hands stretched out to the good things spread on the tables.

But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, Then did Telemachus thus, in a low voice, speak to his comrade, Holding his head quite close, that he might not be heard by the others:

"Look, son of Nestor, O friend to me most dear, do you notice All this gleaming of brass in the echoing halls, and of amber Ivory silver and gold? The hall of Zeus in Olympus Must be a little like this, I think, when once you are in it, Filled with wonderful things: I am struck with awe to behold them."

But the fair-haired Meneläus perceived what it was he was saying, And he turned round and spoke, and in wingéd words he addressed them:

"Dear sons, foolish it were indeed for a mortal to vie with Zeus: for his houses and goods can never crumble to ruin. But, whether any mere man can rival my house and possessions, Is as it may be: but know that much I had suffered and wandered Ere I arrived in port after seven long years of travel Over Phoenicé and Cyprus and through the nations of Egypt. Also I went to Sidon and Æthiop land and Erembé, And unto Libya, where from their birth the lambs are hornéd— For, you must know, in that country the ewes lamb thrice in a twelvemonth:
So neither king nor shepherd need ever be stinted of cheese or Sweet new milk or meat: but they yield a constant supply of Milk from one year to another—Some time I wandered in those parts
Gathering riches in plenty, the while that another man slaught-
ered,
All unaware, my brother, by craft of his consort accursed:
So that, with no light heart, am I lord of these riches around me.
But you have heard, no doubt, of all these things from your
fathers
Whosoever they be: for much have I suffered, and also
Lost my own beautiful home which was stored with treasures uncounted.
Well content should I be with a third of my present possessions, So I could live once more amongst those heroes who perished On the wide plain of Troy so far from horse-rearing Argos. But, so it is that, in grief, bewailing the loss of my comrades, Often I sit in my halls, alone: and sometimes I try to Comfort myself with a groan, and sometimes again I restrain it: For, as one soon finds out, there is not much comfort in groan-
ing.
But, for not one of them all, do I mourn so much in my sadness As for that one whose loss has taken away my desire Either to eat or sleep: since none of all the Achæans Toiled or endured like Odysseus: but Fate, it seems, has ap-
pointed
Cares to my friend, and to me, the grief that can not be forgotten, Grief for the sake of him whom vainly we wait for, and know not Whether he lives or is dead. And now the aged Laërtes Must be bewailing his loss, and Penelopé, pearl of discretion, Also Telemachus, whom as an infant he left in his palace."

So did he speak, and roused in the youth a passion for weeping: And, as he heard of his father, he shed a tear from his eyelids, Holding his purple cloak in front of his eyes to conceal it. This, Menelalus perceived, and awhile in his mind he debated Whether to leave him alone that his thoughts might dwell on his father, Or to ask questions first and find out the whole of his trouble. But, while he thus was in doubt, from her high-roofed scented chamber,
Forth came Helen herself, as heavenly Artemis might come, Bearing her distaff of gold. And a couch was set by Adrasta, Skilfully wrought, and a rug of wool was brought by Alcippé, Also a basket of silver by Philo: (The gift of Alcandra, Polybus' wife, who was queen of Thebes in Egypt, where treasures Many and rare were stored in his palace: he gave Menelæus Two great silvern baths, and a pair of tripods, and also Ten full talents of gold: and, besides, his lady gave Helen Beautiful gifts, and, among them, the distaff of gold, and the basket, Round at the bottom, of silver, with rim of gold as a finish), This, full of finest thread, was placed at her side, and the distaff Wound with violet wool, placed on it by Philo her handmaid. So she sat down on the couch: and under her feet was a footstool: And she began forthwith to ply her husband with questions: "O Menelæus, the favoured of Zeus, do you know the proud strangers
Now come here as our guests? I will not dissemble, but rather Speak as my spirit bids: for none have I ever set eyes on, Man or woman, so like—I cannot look without wonder— As our friend is like to Telemachus, son of Odysseus, Whom, as an infant, he left within the walls of his palace, What time—shame upon me—yourself and all the Achæans Made for the walls of Troy, war swift and sudden intending.”
But, unto her in reply, thus spoke fair-haired Menelæus: "So I am thinking myself, O wife, as now you conjecture: For, just such, are his feet and his hands and his keen way of looking, Also his head and his hair: and when, but now, I was telling How many times Odysseus had toiled and suffered beside me, This, our young friend here, shed many a tear from his eye-lids, Holding his purple robe in front of his eyes to conceal them.”
Then, in his turn, thus spoke Peisistratus, son of Nestor: "O Menelæus, the favoured of Zeus, great chieftain Atreides, 'Tis as you say: my friend is the true-born son of that hero: But he is modest, and feels too shy to begin a discussion
Here with yourself, whose words, like those of a God, we delight in.
But I was sent by Nestor, my father, the knight of Geréné, Now as his escort and guide, because he was longing to see you That you might give him advice both as to his words and his actions.
Many indeed are the troubles a young man meets in his household,
Left by himself, with no father or any one else to advise him. That is Telemachus' case: his father is gone: and no others Stand by him now to defend him from discontent or sedition."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke fair-haired Meneláus: "Ye Gods, sure 'tis a dear friend's son who now sits at my table,
Yes, and a friend who has borne for me many troubles and labours.
And I had sworn that, if ever far-seeing Zeus of Olympus Granted us safe return in our swift ships over the ocean, Then I would give him a welcome beyond all other Achaeans, And would have founded for him a city, and built him a palace In fair Argos, and thither conveyed him from Ithaca's island, Him and his own dear son and his goods and the whole of his people,
Clearing out one of the towns hard by of which I am master. And we should often have talked with each other, and nothing thenceforward Would have divided us two, a loving pair and a gladsome, Till the black cloud of Death together our souls should o'er-shadow. But it appears that God such joy as this has begrudged us, Who, unto him alone, has denied a happy returning."
So did he speak, and awoke in them all a passion for weeping.
Argive Helen wept, for all that Zeus was her father: Also Telemachus wept, and Atreus' son Meneláus: And there were tears in the eyes of Nestor's son, who remembered Noble Antilochus, slain by the glorious Son of the Morning: So, as he thought of him, these words unbidden he uttered: "O son of Atreus, our father, the aged Nestor, was saying,
When we were talking of you and asking questions about you, How very much you excelled all other men in discretion. And now, if you approve, Sir, oblige me, since for my own part, I do not care for lamenting at supper time: also the Morning, Daughter of Dawn, will be here. I do not however begrudge to Weep for the man who is dead and gone to his long habitation. For this is all we can do in honour of sorrowful mortals, Merely to crop our hair, and shed a tear for our lost ones. Seeing I also have lost a brother, by no means the basest He, among Argive men: you probably knew him: for my part, I never saw him nor met: but they say he surpassed all others, Brother Antilochus, swift to pursue and so stubborn a fighter."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke fair-haired Meneläus: "My friend, since you have spoken such things as a man of discretion Would both say and do, even one of mature experience— Just such a one was your father: and so you have spoken discreetly.

For it is easy to know the son of a man for whom Heaven Blessing has foreordained at birth and also in marriage, As it has granted to Nestor, through days of three generations, Both to attain old age in the midst of riches and honour, And to have sons who excel alike in war and in wisdom. But let us now have done with the weeping we lately indulged in, And let us think again of supper: and let them pour water Over our hands once more. There'll be plenty of time in the morning For my young friend and me to discuss our business together."

Then, on the hands of the guests, Asphalion duly poured water: Diligent servant was he of the far-famed king Meneläus. So were all hands stretched out to the good things spread on the tables. Then did the Zeus-born Helen devise a scheme for their comfort: Quickly she poured a drug in the wine from which they were drinking, Foe to all grief and anger, and drowning cares in oblivion. For, if a man should drink a draught of this in his wine cup, Not, for the whole day long, will he shed a tear, though his mother
And his dear father should die, or if they should slay his brother
Or his own son with the sword, and he with his eyes should behold it.
Such were the wondrous drugs that Helen had in her keeping,
Potent ones which the wife of Thon, Polydamna, had given.
(Shewas of Egypt's race, where the earth in its bounty produces
Drugs of all kinds, some healing, but some on the contrary baneful.
For, in that wondrous land, the meanest physician surpasses
All of another race: for they are the children of Pæan.)
But, as they poured the wine, unwitting, and served to the feasters,
Then, for the second time, she spoke to the company present:
"O Menelæus Atreides, Zeus-nurtured, and all our friends here,
Sons of gallant men: God gives, to one and another,
Evil and good as He wills: for He has power o'er all things.
Sit now and feast in our hall, and hear what tales I can tell you,
For I will speak of things that will pleasantly suit the occasion.
Though, by no means, am I able to tell or even to mention
All of the gallant deeds of the much-enduring Odysseus,
Yet I will tell what was done and dared by that valiant hero
Right in the heart of Troy to succour the hard-pressed Achæans.
Bruising himself with degrading blows, and over his shoulders
Throwing unseemly rags like some poor drudge of the household,
Into the fine broad streets of the foemen's city he entered,
In his disguise appearing a different man, a beggar,
He who was far from such when commanding the ships of Achæans.
So did he enter the city: and, who he was, no one suspected:
But I could see at a glance that the man was no common-place beggar,
And I put questions to him, which he by his cunning evaded.
But, when I washed him, and then, with oil of olive anointed,
Clothed him in seemly garments, and swore with great impreca-
tions
Not to betray him or let the Trojans know of his presence
Till he had safely reached the tents and the line of the galleys,
Then did he tell me at length the whole design of the Grecians.
And, after men not a few before his long weapon had fallen,
Safe he arrived at his camp and brought back much information.
Then did the rest of the women begin to wail: but my own heart
Bounded with joy, for already, with longing and hope it was
turning
Back to my home: and I mourned for the wrong which fair
Aphrodité
Wrought when she lured me to Troy, so far from the land of my
fathers,
Leaving in folly my daughter, my bed and my own dear husband,
Who, in his mind and appearance, is just what a husband
should be."
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke fair-haired Meneláus:
"Yes, my wife, you have told these things most wisely and truly:
For I have learnt, ere now, how great was many a hero
Both to perceive and to plan, and much have I seen in my
travels:
But, never yet, have I seen any man to compare with Odysseus,
Steadfast heart, who did and dared what now I will tell you
Where, in the polished horse, we chosen chiefs of the Argives
Then were sitting concealed, to bring slaughter and death to
the Trojans.
You, at that time, came there, urged on no doubt by the Power
Always at hand to confer success on the Trojans: and with you
Followed Deiphobus, godlike to see: and thrice did you walk
round
Feeling the den where we lurked, and calling by name on the
chieftains
Of the Achæans, and feigning the sound of their dear wives' voices.
But Diomedés and I and godlike Odysseus were seated
Crammed in the midst of the others, and heard you when you
were calling.
We two wanted at once to jump from our seats and to rush out
Or to reply from within: but the wise Odysseus restrained us.
Then all the other Achæans were silent: while Anticlus only
Wanted to shout a reply: but Odysseus pressed his hands firmly
Over his mouth, and held it, and thus saved all the Achæans:
Nor did he loose his hold till Athené from thence had with-
drawn you."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"O Meneláus, the favoured of Zeus, great chieftain Atreides,
Grievous indeed was his lot: not all his endeavours could parry Ruin and death, though he bore a heart of steel in his bosom. But come, send us to bed, for now it is time that we all should Lay ourselves down to rest and enjoy the sweetness of slumber.”

Thereupon, Argive Helen commanded the maidens to set out Bedsteads under the cloister, and lay on them blankets of purple, Pleasant and soft, with rugs that were woven in colours above them,

And to put woollen cloaks that the guests might wrap themselves warmly.

Each with a torch in her hand, the maids then went at her bidding:

Deftly they made the beds, while a steward escorted the strangers.

So did Telemachus there, and the glorious offspring of Nestor Lay themselves down to sleep in the entrance hall of the palace:

But Meneläus slept in a corner tower of the building:

And, by his side lay Helen, long robed, divinest of women.

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,

Then, from his bed sprang up Meneläus, the trusty in battle,

Speedily put on his clothes and slung a sharp sword from his shoulder,

And, on his gleaming feet, he bound his beautiful sandals,

And, going forth from his chamber as 'twere an Immortal to look at,

Sat by Telemachus' side and called him by name and addressed him:

"What is the need that has brought you to us, in divine Lacedæmon,

Hero Telemachus, sailing across the broad back of the ocean? Is it of public concern, or private? I pray you to tell me."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"O Meneläus, the favourted of Zeus, great chieftain Atreides, 'Twas in the hope you might tell me some news of my father, I came here.

Strangers devour my goods: my precious crops are neglected: Also my house is invaded by hostile men who are always Slaughtering crowds of sheep and curved-horn lumbering oxen, Men who are courting my mother, outrageous and insolent fellows.
Therefore I ask at your knees: will you tell me the pitiful story
How he has met his death, if with your own eyes you have seen it,
Or from some traveller heard it: for he was born unto sorrow.
And do not soften the tale from pity, for fear you may grieve me,
But tell me all things truly, exactly the way that they happened.
And I entreat you—If ever my father, the kindly Odysseus,
Honoured his plighted troth in word and deed to the utmost
When you were sorely pressed on the battlefield by the Trojans—
Think of it now, I beg you, and tell me the truth without failing."

And, to him, greatly incensed, thus spoke fair-haired Menelæus:
"Sure, 'tis a stout-hearted man, in whose bed these cowardly schemers
Have been attempting to lie! 'Tis as if a poor silly hind should
Lay down her suckling fawns in the lair of the King of the forest,
While she goes forth to search the foot-hills and grass-covered hollows,
Pasturing: but, ere long, to his lair the lion returning
Whelms in a terrible death both hind and sucklings together.
So, in a terrible death these men shall be whelmed by Odysseus
Would that, O Father Zeus and Apollo and Pallas Athené,
Noble Odysseus might come and engage in fight with the suitors,
Such as he was when once, in the fair-built city of Lesbos,
Boldly accepting the challenge, he wrestled a bout with Patroclus,
Throwing him heavily there while all the Achæans applauded:
Then would they all have the shortest of shrift and a wedding most bitter.

But, as to what you ask and beg me to tell you, I will not
Give you untrustworthy news, nor will I try to mislead you:
But, what I learned from the old Sea-God who never speaks falsely,
Proteus, that will I tell, naught hiding and nothing inventing."

**The Story of Menelæus**

"Bent though I was on return, the Powers of Heaven detained me
Waiting in Egypt, because I had not offered my tale of
Hecatombs: Since the Immortals resent that their rites be neglected.

Now, by the coast of Egypt, there lies in the offing an island known to sailors as Pharos, on which the surf beats wildly, just so far from the land as a merchant ship can accomplish during the day, when running before a shrilly Sou-Wester: In it, a sheltered harbour where ships ride safely at anchor waiting to put to sea after filling their tanks with fresh water. Twenty full days, in this island, the Gods detained me, and never once did a seaward breeze spring up to act as a pilot guiding us safe to port across the broad back of the ocean. And, if it had not been that one of the Gods had compassion, all my stores had been spent, and my men reduced to starvation. Eidothéa, it was, whose heart was touched by my trouble, daughter of Proteus, the strong old God of the Ocean: she met me wandering lonely and sad: for always the men of my crew were roaming around the island, and trying to capture with fish hooks something to eat: for our stomachs were sorely wasted with hunger.

And, by my side she stood, and spoke, and thus she addressed me:

"'Are you so foolish as this, O stranger, and slack in your spirit, or do you idle on purpose and find a pleasure in starving, that you are kept so long in this island, and cannot discover some plain clue to escape, while the heart of your comrades is wasting?"

"So did she speak: and in words like these I replied to her question:

'Nothing will I conceal, O Goddess, whoever you may be: 'Tis by no will of mine I am here: but it seems that I must have given offence to the Gods whose home is the vault of the heavens. Tell me however, I pray you, for Gods have knowledge of all things, which of them has me in chains and is holding me back from my journey, and how I best may return o'er the great sea teeming with fishes.'
"So did I speak: and the Goddess divine thus graciously answered:

'Certainly I will tell you, O stranger, both plainly and truly:

There is an old Sea-God who haunts the shores of this island, Protēus by name, an Immortal, who hails from Egypt, and well knows

All the depths of the sea, as retainer of mighty Poseidon. He, they say, is my father, and he the one who begot me. Now, if by any device you could lie in wait for and catch him, He would lay out your route, and inform you as to the distance, And how you best may cross the great sea teeming with fishes: And he would also tell you, Zeus-nurtured, if you desire it, All that, for good or ill, has taken place in your palace Since that time when you started on this long troublesome journey.'

"So did she speak: and in words like these, I addressed her in answer:

'Tell me yourself, I beg, what ambush to set for the Ancient, Lest he should see me first, or find out the trick and escape me: For, by a mortal man, a God is not easily worsted.'

"So did I speak: and the Goddess divine thus promptly made answer:

'Certainly I will tell you, O stranger, both plainly and truly: Soon as the sun in his circuit has passed the midst of the heaven, Then, comes forth from the sea that Ancient who never speaks falsehood,

All in a Western breeze, unseen in the ruffling water, And, in the hollow caves, lies down to sleep: and, around him, Creeping out from the frothy waves, come hundreds of sea-calves. All the ungainly brood of Amphitritē the sea-born, Breathing a pungent smell of the deep salt sea from their nostrils. There will I put you to lie, so soon as it's light in the morning, All in a row. But mind, you must carefully choose, of your comrades, Three, those ones you have found the handiest sailors and bravest. And I will tell you of all the alarming wiles of the Ancient. First he will count the seals, going over them slowly, and after, When he has seen them all and reckoned them up on his fingers,
He will lie down among them as shepherds do in the sheepfold. Now, soon as ever you see him composed and peacefully sleeping,
Then you will need ev’ry ounce of force or strength in your body: Hold him fast, though he struggle and strain each nerve to escape you.
For he will change his form into things you could never imagine, Things that crawl on the earth, and water, and heaven-born fire. But do you hold on firmly and only grasp him the tighter. But, when at length, of his own accord, he shall ask you a question In the same form that he had when he first lay down for his slumber,
Then, O hero, ’tis time to cease from force, and to ask him Quietly, which of the Gods it is who is harming you, also How you may safely return o’er the great sea teeming with fishes.’
“Thus having spoken, she dived ’neath the waves of the heaving ocean:
But I returned to the ships, which stood drawn up on the sand beach,
Brooding on many things: and when I came to my galley, There we prepared our supper: and solemn night closed o’er us. So we lay down to sleep on the smooth soft sand of the sea-shore.
“But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then did I walk by the shore of the wide-wayed sea, and I prayed much Unto the Gods, and I chose three men from amongst my companions Those whom, in any tight corner, I thought were most to be trusted.
Meanwhile the Goddess, diving beneath the bosom of ocean, Brought from the deep the skins, new flayed, of four big sea-calves:
But ’twas a trick she intended to play on her father: then, scooping Four hollow beds in the sand, she sat and awaited our coming. Close to her, came we up: and she made us lie down in the hollows
All in a row, and she covered each one with the skin of a sea-calf.
That was a terrible time when we lay in ambush: for we four were very nearly killed by the seals' overpowering odour.
But, to our help she came, and thought of a way to relieve us, under the nostrils of each, a piece of ambrosia placing which was so wondrous sweet that it drowned the smell of the sea-calves.
So, through that long forenoon, in grievous discomfort we waited.
"And, from the sea, crawled up the seals by hundreds, and lay down, row after row to sleep: and, out of the breakers, at noonday, came up the old Sea-God, and found his charges reposing sleek and fat on the sand: and he carefully counted them over: we were the first he counted, but never a trick he suspected. And, when his task was finished, himself lay down with the others.
Then we jumped up with a shout, and rushed on him, throwing our arms round Body and limbs: but the Ancient began his tricks in a moment. First he became a lion with splendid mane, then a dragon, next 'twas a leopard, and then a huge wild boar, and, to finish, turned into running water, and then to a tree of the forest. Stoutly, however, we kept our hold, nor slacked for a moment; and when he felt himself beaten in spite of all his devices, then did he turn and address me with words and ask me a question:
'Tell me, which of the Gods it is, son of Atreus, who taught you thus to set ambush and catch me. What is it now you desire?'
"So did he speak: and in words like these I addressed him in answer:
'ancient, why do you try to put me off by your questions? well do you know how long I have been detained in this island: nor can I find any clue as my guide, and am almost despairing. But tell me plainly I pray, for Gods have knowledge of all things, which of immortals it is who keeps me back from my journey, so I may pass to my home o'er the great sea teeming with fishes.'
So did I speak: and at once, he thus addressed me in answer:

'What you should rightly have done was to sacrifice handsomely unto
Zeus and the other Immortals before you embarked: and in that way
You would have quickly sailed o'er the wine-dark sea to your homeland.
For you will have no chance to see your friends, or revisit
Your own well-built house and your fatherland, until, once more
Seeking the Zeus-born stream of the River of Egypt, you offer Hecatombs unto the Gods whose home is the vault of the heavens.
So, and not else, will they grant you the passage for which you are longing.'

"Thus did he speak: but my heart was sad and distracted to hear him
For that he bade me sail once more to the country of Egypt
Over the misty sea, a toilsome voyage and a long one.
Nevertheless I spoke, and thus addressed him in answer:

"'All these things will I do, O Ancient, as now you command me.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly,
Whether the whole of the Argives, whom Nestor and I left behind us
When we returned from Troy, came back with their galleys in safety,
Or did e'er one of them meet with fatal disaster on shipboard
Or in the hands of his friends after bringing the war to a finish?'

"So did I speak: and at once, he thus replied to my question:

'Why do you ask me this, son of Atreus? It little beseems you
That you should pry into thoughts which are better concealed:
but I tell you,
When you know all the truth, you will not stay long without weeping,
Seeing full many Achaeans were slain, and many were missing:
But two alone of the leaders amongst the mailèd Achaeans
Died on the homeward voyage—you know what happened in battle—
And one, somewhere or other on this wide sea, is in bondage.
Ajax came to his death amongst the long-oared galleys:
For that Poseidon, at first, on the headland of Gyra had cast him
With its tremendous rocks, and had saved him alive from the water:
And he would then have escaped, for all that Athené was hostile,
Had he not spoken a word of pride and of impious folly:
For 'twas in spite of the Gods, he declared, he had fled from the billows.
Yet did Poseidon hear the boastful words that he uttered,
And, in his mighty hands, he grasped his trident, and with it
Struck the Gyræan rock and splintered a piece from the summit:
Part of the rock stood firm, but into the sea fell the fragment,
On which Ajax was sitting when thus profanely he boasted,
And, in its fall, it swept him beneath the waves of the ocean.
But, as it seems, your brother had come through his perils in safety,
Sailing in roomy ships: for our lady Hera preserved him.
But, when he nearly had reached the steep Maleian headland,
Caught in a sudden squall, he was driven, though vainly lamenting,
Right to the end of the country, where once was the house of Thyestes,
But which was now the home of the son of Thyestes, Ægisthus.
And, when a way of return from that place also was shown him,
And a fair wind was sent by the Gods, and they came to their homeland,
Then, with delight he trod once more on the land of his fathers,
And warm tears did he shed as he greeted his own dear country.
But he was spied by a man on watch whom Ægisthus had posted,
Craftily, on a look out, and had promised to give him in payment
Two whole talents of gold: and the man had kept watch for a twelvemonth,
Lest Agamemnon should give him the slip and make furious onset:
So he went back to present his report to the king at his palace. Then did Ægisthus devise a wily scheme, for he chose out Twenty, the bravest men he could find, and set them in ambush, And, in a place hard by, he bade that a feast be got ready. So, to invite Agamemnon he went with chariots and horses, Planning a dastardly deed: and unsuspecting he brought him Home as his guest and slew him as 'twere an ox at the manger: And not a single one was left of the friends of Atreides Nor of Ægisthus either: but all were slaughtered together.' 

"So did he speak: but my heart was well nigh broken with sorrow: And I sat down on the sand and wept, nor did I desire Either to live any more or look at the sunshine of heaven. But, when with rolling about in my trouble my soul had been sated, Then did the old Sea-God who never speaks falsely address me: 

"'Cease, Son of Atreus, to weep in this obstinate way: for we shall not Make any progress by that: but use your utmost endeavour That, with all possible speed, you may reach the land of your fathers:

For, if you find not Ægisthus alive, be sure that Orestes Must have despatched him first, and you'll only come in for the feasting.'

"So did he speak: and my heart and manly spirit revived, Grieved as I was, and thus, in wingéd words, I addressed him: "'These two men I know: but tell me the name of the third man, Who, whether dead or alive, by an unknown force is detained Far on the boundless sea: though grieved, I am anxious to hear it.'

"So did I speak: and at once, he thus addressed me in answer:

'As for the son of Laërtes, whose home is in Ithaca, him I Saw in a distant isle in the halls of our lady Calypso: And he was often in tears: for she holds him there by compulsion: Nor is he able to find any means to return to his homeland. For that no galleys with oars are at hand, or capable seamen Who may escort him safely across the broad back of the ocean.
BOOK IV

But, for yourself, Menelaus, Zeus nurtured, it is not ordained
That you should meet your fate and die in horse-feeding Argos:
But, to the farthest bounds of Earth, the Immortals will send you,
To the Elysian plain, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus,
(There, is the easiest life that ever man can attain to:
There, is no snow, no pelting rain, no wintry weather:
But there, day after day, the sweet West wind from the ocean
Sings as it sweeps o'er the land, bringing life and health and
refreshment):
Since you are wedded lord to the daughter of Him who is
Mighty.'

"Thus having spoken, he dived 'neath the heaving waves of
the Ocean.
Then I returned to the ships with my three heroic companions,
And, as I went, I pondered on all the divine one had told me.
And, when I came to my ship, where she stood at the edge of
the water,
There, we made ready our supper: and solemn night closed
o'er us.
So we lay down to sleep on the smooth soft sand of the sea-
shore.
But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate
fingers,
First thing of all, we dragged our ships to the blessed salt water,
Put in the masts and sails, and balanced the load of our vessels:
Lastly, ourselves climbed in, and took our seats on the benches.
Then, with our ordered oars, we smote the whitening billows.
So, having set the course for the Zeus-born River of Egypt,
Hecatombs in full tale, did I pay to the Gods, and appeased
Thus the Immortals' wrath: and a mighty mound did I pile up
To Agamemnon's name, that his glory might ne'er be forgotten.
All being duly performed, I sailed once more: the Immortals
Gave me a favouring breeze, and brought me safe to my home-
land."

"But come now, stay on, ten days at least or eleven,
Here in my halls: and then I will speed you with suitable
presents
Such as befit your rank: to begin with, a team of three horses
And a well-burnished car: and after that I will give you,
Rare in design, a cup from which you may make your libations
To the Immortal Gods, and think each day of your visit."

But, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"O son of Atreus, I pray that you will not longer detain me:
Though I would gladly stay and sit by your side for a twelve-
month,
Nor once long for my home or my parents: for 'tis a wondrous
Pleasure to hear you talk: but my comrades are getting im-
patient,
Waiting in Pylos, while I am enjoying your friendly compulsion.
And, for your present, I most should value some kind of an
heirloom:
But I will not take horses to Ithaca: keep them I pray you
In your establishment here to be the pride of your stables.
For you are lord of wide acres in which grow clover and com-
frey
Wheat and rye in plenty, and fields of luxuriant barley:
But, in our isle, there is hardly a place where horses can gallop:
Goats browse there: but, to me, it is dearer than horse-feeding
meadows.
For, in no one of the islands that lie in the lap of the ocean,
Not in Ithaca surely, can horses be pastured or driven."

So did he speak: and, smiling, that trusty friend Meneläus
Stroked his head with his hand, and called him by name and
addressed him:
"'Tis a good stock that you come of, my son, to judge by
your sayings.
Certainly I will change these gifts: I can easily do so,
And, of the treasures I keep stored up in my palace for presents,
What I shall choose will be the most beautiful and most costly:
For I will give you a bowl, very cunningly wrought, of solid
Silver: but round the rim is a band of gold as a finish:
Made by Hephaestus himself. The hero Phædimus, ruler
Of the Sidonians, gave it, what time I stayed in his palace
On my way home: and I wish you to take it with you and
keep it."

With such words, these two held friendly converse together.
Meanwhile the house of the king was thronged with guests from
the city,
Some of them leading sheep, some carrying wine the reviver,
While that their smart-capped wives were bringing bread from the ovens:
So, in the house of the king, they were all preparing a banquet.
But, in a far-off isle, in front of the hall of Odysseus,
As was their wont, the suitors, in insolent manner were sporting,
Trying their skill, on the court, at discus and javelin throwing.
Only Antinoüs sat, and Eurymachus with him, in silence:
They took the lead of the others, for they by far were the bravest.
And, as they sat, Noëmon the son of Phronius came up,
Spoke to Antinoüs thus, and respectfully asked him a question:
"Sir, if you'll pardon my asking, I don't know if you can tell me
How long it's likely to be till Telemachus comes back from Pylos.
He has gone off in my ship: and I find I am wanting it badly,
That I may cross to Elis and take a look at some brood mares,
Twelve of them, with mule foals, very hardy beasts, but unbroken,
And I am waiting, you see, to put them in harness and drive them."
So did he speak: but they both were astonished, because they had said that
He had not really gone to Pylos the city of Neleus,
But was still waiting about with the sheep or else with the swineherd.
And, in reply, thus spoke Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes:
"Tell me the truth: what time did he go, and who were his comrades?
Was it the pick of the boys, or just his own serfs and attendants?
He may have managed the thing after all! And tell me this also,
Whether it was by compulsion, he took your vessel, or whether He just talked you over until you were willing to lend it."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the son of Noëmon:
"Freely I lent him my ship, the same as any one else would,
If any man of his sort should ask for the loan as a favour:
One cannot act as a churl, and not do one's best to oblige him.
And that crew who went with him were quite the pick of the boys here:
Also the man that I saw in command was either Mentor
Or 'twas a God: anyhow, he was just like Mentor to look at.
But what puzzles me is that I myself saw Mentor
Yesterday morn, when the other had sailed already for Pylos."
Thus having spoken, he left them, and went to the house of
his father.
Then were these two proud men indignant, and, calling the
suitors,
Made them to cease from their sports, and hold a council to-
gether:
And, to the company, spoke Antinoüs son of Eupeithes,
Greatly incensed: his black heart also was hot and determined,
And the two eyes in his head like coals of fire were blazing:
"Curse him! 'tis a great work, and carried out too very boldly
By our Telemachus here, whom we said to be only a boaster.
Now, in spite of us all, this boy goes off by himself and
Launches a ship and chooses for crew the pick of the people.
Yes, and there's trouble ahead: but most devoutly I pray that
Zeus may cut off his life before he attains unto manhood.
But come, give me a good swift ship and twenty companions,
That I may lie in wait, and watch for him on his way homeward
In those straits between Samos and here, where the channel is
narrow.
So will his search for his father be likely to end in disaster."
Thus did he speak: and, as one, they applauded and urged
him to action.
Then they arose at once and went to the house of Odysseus.
Nor was it long ere Penelope heard of this scheme of the suitors
Which they had now prepared, and on which they were ponder-
ing darkly:
For it was told her by Medon, the steward, who heard their dis-
cussion
Outside the door of the hall where they their plans were con-
cooking.
And he went straight through the house to tell Penelope: and she,
Ere he had passed the door, thus spoke and questioned him
quickly:
"Steward, what is the reason the noble suitors have sent you?
Is it to order the maids of the godlike Odysseus to leave off
Doing their proper work, and get them ready a supper?
How could I hope and pray 'twere the very last time I should see them
Whether pretending to woo or using this house for their meetings!
You who are wasting so much of my clever Telemachus' fortune,
Coming to feast in crowds, did you never hear from your fathers,
When you were boys, how Odysseus behaved as a chieftain among them,
Never permitting himself an action unsanctioned by custom,
No, nor even a word: though kings are free, by divine right,
As it may please them, to hate one man and favour another:
Yet did he never behave as an irresponsible tyrant.
But your unseemly deeds and churlish hearts are apparent:
Nor do you give any thanks for the kindnesses showered upon you."

And, in reply, did Medon, discreet and prudent, address her:
"It would be well, O Queen, were this the greatest misfortune;
But there is something else, much greater and harder to bear with
Which they are now contriving: the Son of Kronos avert it!
Now they are plotting to kill Telemachus on his way homeward,
Smiting with keen-edged sword: for he went to divine Lace-
dæmon
And to magnificent Pylos to hear some news of his father."

These were his words: but her knees gave way, and her heart stopped beating:
And, for a time, she could not speak: and her two poor eyes were
Filled with tears, and her rich full voice in her throat was choking.

But, at the last, she spoke, and in words like these she addressed him:
"Tell me, why has he gone? He had no need or occasion
Thus to embark on a ship (for ships they say are like horses,
Bearing men swiftly across the wide expanses of water),
Was it in order to leave not even a name behind him?"

Then, in reply, did Medon, discreet and prudent, address her:
"Madam, I do not know whether God inspired, or whether
'Twas his own spirit that sent him to Pylos for news of his father,
Whether he soon would return, or at least in what way he had perished."

...
Thus having spoken, he left her, and passed through the house of Odysseus.
But she was whelmed in woe most soul-destroying, nor could she bear to sit down on one of the many seats in the palace, but, on the floor, she sat, of the costly elaborate chamber, wailing in piteous manner: and round her the handmaidens whimpered,
Young ones and old together, who lived in the house of Odysseus.
And, 'mid her frequent sobs, Penelope thus did address them:
"Hear me, dear friends, for Zeus has given me grief as my portion
More than to any of those who were born or nurtured around me:
For, long ago, I lost my lord with heart of a lion,
Far and away surpassing all other Achaeans in valour,
Kindly, and greatly revered through Hellas and central Argos.
Now, they have snatched from my arms my only son, my beloved one,
Secretly, out of my house: and I never heard he had started.
Wretches! not one of you all ever thought to rouse me from slumber
When he went off to his ship, though well you knew his intention.
For, had I only heard that he such a voyage was proposing,
He would have stayed at home, however impatient he might be,
Or would have left me dead within the walls of the palace.
But go one of you now, with haste, and call my old servant Dolius, who on my marriage, was given to me by my father (He looks after my garden), and bid him, as quickly as may be,
Go and sit down by Laërtes and tell him all that has happened:
He may devise some plan, if only to walk through the city Uttering loud lamentations before the people, whose purpose is to destroy the descendant of him and the godlike Odysseus."
And, in reply, thus spoke her dear old nurse Eurycleia:
"Kill me yourself, my mistress dear, with the pitiless dagger, or let me be, as you will: but I will hide from you nothing.
I knew all these things, and I got for him all that he bade me, bread, and sweet wine in jars: and he made me swear with a great oath,
That I would tell you nothing before twelve days were expired, or you should ask me yourself, and hear of his journey to Pylos,
So that you might not spoil your beautiful face by weeping.
Better to have a wash, and a change, and go with your handmaids
Up to your room in the tower, that there you may, one with
another,
Pray to the mighty daughter of Him who is Lord of the Αegis:
For, from the jaws of death, she is able to save him: but do not
Worry a crippled old man: for of this I am firmly persuaded:
Never the race of Arcesius’ son will cease to be favoured
By the immortal Gods: but there still will be one to inherit
These fair high-roofed halls and the fields far stretching around
them.”

Thus did she lull the moans and dry the tears of her mistress,
So that she bathed herself and changed her garments and
mounted
Up to her room in the tower with all her women attendants:
And, putting barley meal in a basket, she prayed to Athené:
“Hear me, unwearied daughter of Zeus the Lord of the Αegis:
If, in these halls, to Thee the resourceful Odysseus has offered,
Many a time, and burnt fat thighs of sheep or of oxen,
Bear it in mind I pray, and save my son in his danger,
Warding away the suitors, those workers of insolent outrage.”
Thus did she wail aloud: and her prayer was heard by the
Goddess.

But, in the shadowy hall, the suitors were gathered together:
And you might hear one say, with a knowing look, to his
neighbour:
“Tis quite plain that the queen we have courted so long is
prepared to
Wed one of us, not guessing that death is in store for her dar-
ing.”

That was the way they talked: but the truth they never imagined.
Then did Antinoüs rise: and spoke to the company present:
“Sirs, we had better abstain altogether from boastful speeches:
Some one may tell them indoors: but let us rise, and in silence
Put into practice the scheme we all in our minds are agreed on.”

Thus having spoken, he chose some twenty men of the bravest:
And they set out on their way to the shore of the sea and the
galley.
And, to begin with, they dragged the swift ship down to the
water,
Then put on board the mast and the sails, and carefully fitted, 
Into the leathern loops, the ranks of oars in their order: 
While their attendants, alert and bold, brought weapons and armour. 
Then did they moor the ship well out in deep water, and landed, 
And, after supper was done, they awaited the coming of evening. 
Prudent Penelope lay meanwhile in her room in the tower 
Eating and drinking nothing, but thinking over and over whether 
Her blameless son would escape from slaughter, or 
He would become a prey to the haughty and violent suitors: 
Just as a lion may feel, by a posse of hunters surrounded, 
Every moment expecting the treacherous noose to entrap him, 
So did she ponder: and lo, sweet sleep on her eyelids had fallen: 
And she lay back and slept, and her limbs in repose were relaxed. 
Then did the grey-eyed Athéné devise a scheme for her comfort: 
For she created a phantom (in form it was like to a woman, 
Iphthîmê, the daughter of noble Ícarius: she was 
Wife of Eumelîus of Pheræ) and, into the house of Odysseus, 
Sent it, that so she might soothe Penelope’s sorrowful wailing: 
Softly it entered the room, unseen, by the hole of the bolt-thong, 
Stood at the side of the bed and gently called to the sleeper: 
"Are you asleep, Penelope dear, my sister most precious? 
You may be sure it is not the will of the blessed Immortals 
That you should weep and lament: for your son will come homeward in safety: 
For he is no transgressor against the commandments of Heaven."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelope answered, 
As she lay slumbering sweetly within the portals of dreamland: 
"Why, my sister, have you come here? It has not been your custom, 
Living so far away. And why do you bid me to cease from 
Feeling these pangs of grief that trouble my mind and my spirit? 
For, long ago, I lost my lord with heart of a lion, 
Far and away surpassing all other Achaeans in valour, 
Kindly, and greatly revered through Hellas and central Argos 
And, but a few days since, my boy went off in a vessel, 
Foolish fellow, without any knowledge of men or of hardships: 
And 'tis for him I lament even more than I do for my husband.
For I have reason indeed to tremble lest harm should befall him
Either at sea or else from the people with whom he may sojourn:
For many hostile men are contriving evil against him,
Seeking to kill him before he can reach the land of his fathers."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the shadowy phantom:
"Take heart, there is no need to abandon yourself to terror:
For such a one now goes to escort him, as many a man would
Earnestly pray to have as a guardian, one who is mighty
Pallas Athené: and she takes pity to hear you lamenting:
And it was she who sent me here to give you this message."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"If you are really divine, and have heard the voice of divine
ones,
Tell me about that other, the son of sorrow and hardship,
Whether he still is alive and looks on the sunshine of heaven
Or is already dead in the gloomy regions of Hadés."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the shadowy phantom:
"As for that other man, I cannot tell you his story,
Whether he lives or is dead: and meaningless words are evil."

And, as she spoke, through a chink at the side of the door-
bolt she glided
Into the breath of the winds: while the other, Icarius' daughter,
Roused from her sleep, was cheered, and her dear heart found
consolation
For that so clear a dream in the quiet of night had been sent her.

As for the suitors, they put to sea, and sailed on their errand,
Purposing in their hearts, for Telemachus, treacherous murder.
Now, half way between Samos and Ithaca, there is an islet,
Asteris, Rocky and small, with a harbour where ships may lie
safely
On both sides: and there the Achæans waited in ambush.
BOOK V

CALYPSO

MORNING arose from her couch by the side of splendid Tithonus
Shining on mortal men and on blesséd Immortals of Heaven.
Then did the Gods sit down in council: and Zeus was presiding,
For that he thunders on high, and excels all others in power.
And, unto them, spoke Athené, recounting the woes of Odysseus:
For he was ever her care while he dwelt in the home of Calypso:
"Father Zeus, and the rest, of the Gods who are blesséd for ever,
Never let sceptred king hereafter be kindly and gentle,
Nor let him reverence right, but be prone to harshness and outrage,
As not one of his people remembers the godlike Odysseus
Though he was once their king—not so much a king as a father.
But, in an island he lies, sharp pangs of sorrow enduring,
Kept in Calypso's halls, the Nymph, who forcibly holds him
So that he has no means to come back again to his homeland.
For that no galleys with oars are at hand, or capable seamen
Who might escort him safely across the broad back of the ocean.
And now too they are plotting to kill his son, the beloved one,
On his way back to his home: for he went to divine Lacedæmon
And the grand castle of Pylos, to hear some news of his father."
Zeus, who gathers the clouds, forthwith addressed her in answer:
"What is that thoughtless word has escaped from your lips, my daughter!
Was it not you yourself who devised this plan, that Odysseus,
Coming unlocked for back, might requite those men? But consider
How to protect his son on his journey—for well you are able—
So that he come unscathed once more to the land of his fathers,
While that the suitors are forced to return, their scheme unaccomplished."

These were his words: and then he turned to his dear son Hermés:

"Hermés, you are the one who carry messages for us:
Tell to the fair-haired Nymph the immutable counsel of Heaven,
Safe return for Odysseus: that so, without any escort
Either of Gods or men, but just on a raft of pine logs
Lashed together, he may, with hardships uncounted, be able,
Not till the twentieth day, to reach the land of the deep soil
Scheria, where the Phæacians dwell, the Gods' near kinsmen:
They, in their hearts, will pay him the honour due to divine ones,
And, in a ship, will convey him to that dear land of his fathers,
Giving him piles of gold and bronze and raiment in plenty
Such as he ne'er could have hoped to receive as his share of the booty
Out of the city of Troy, had he met with no kind of disaster."

So did he speak: and the other obeyed, the slayer of Argus.
Quickly, beneath his feet, he bound his beautiful sandals,
Golden, immortal, which swift as the winds of heaven did bear him
Over the boundless land and over the plains of water:
Also he took his wand with which he bewitches the eyes of
Those whom he will, and those who are wrapped in slumber he rouses.

Holding the wand in his hand, he flew, strong Slayer of Argus,
O'er the Pierian mount, and swooped from the air to the ocean,
Skimming along as a seagull does o'er the terrible hollows
Of the unfruitful sea the while he is hunting for fishes,
Dipping his wings full oft in the salt sea brine as he passes:
So, for many a league, did Hermés ride o'er the billows.

But, when the lonely isle was reached, he stepped from the blue sea
On to the firm dry land: and forthwith made for the cavern,
Home of the fair-haired Nymph: and within the cavern he found her
Seated: and, piled on the hearth, a cheerful fire was blazing,
Well split cedar logs, and pepperwood boughs that scented
All the island around. She over a loom was bending,
Singing with voice most sweet as the shuttle of gold she was plying.

And, at the front of the cave, grew tall trees spreading and leafy, Alder and poplar, and cypress that sweetened the air with its perfume.

Many a long-winged bird had her nest aloft in the branches, Owls and hawks and chattering crows who work for their living Searching the shore for the harvest the sea in its bounty provides them.

Over the mouth of the cave, a vine with luxuriant branches Carefully had been trained, and with purple clusters was loaded. And, from the rock, there welled four springs of sparkling water, Close to each other, but led to different places by channels: Surely the scene was one which e'en an Immortal beholding Could not but stop to gaze, and his heart be filled with rejoicing.

Thus then he stood and gazed, the Messenger, slayer of Argus, And, having looked at it all to his heart's contentment, he entered Into the spacious cavern: and, when she saw him, Calypso Knew him at once: for Gods, even though they live at a distance, Are not unknown to each other: but, as you may reckon, he did not Find the great-hearted Odysseus: for he at that moment was sitting, As was his wont, on the beach, looking out on the barren ocean, Rending his heart with groans and tears and grief unavailing. But, on a glistening throne, the Nymph our Lady Calypso Sat to receive her guest, and questioned the Messenger Hermés: "Why have you come to me, O Hermés dear and reveré, Lord of the golden wand? You have seldom done us this honour. Say what you want, and be sure I will do my best to perform it, If so be that I can, and you nothing impossible ask me."

So did the Goddess speak, and set a table before him, Piled with ambrosia, and, for his drink, red nectar she mingled: So he did eat and drink, the Messenger, slayer of Argus. But, when the meal was finished, and food had revived his spirit, Then did he answer her question, and thus in turn he addressed her:
"Goddess, you question me, a God, who have journeyed to see you:
And I will tell you the truth, without erring: for so you command me.
Zeus, it was, sent me here, though sorely against my desire:
For who would willingly cross such a dreary stretch of salt water,
Where there are no towns near, of mortal men, who may offer Sacred feasts to the Gods, and the hecatombs which they delight in?
But, by no means can any inferior God in Olympus Either transgress or evade the commands of Zeus of the Aegis. This then is what they say, that a man now dwells in your cavern,
Saddest of all those men who beleaguered the fortress of Priam Nine whole years: though at last, on the tenth, they captured the city,
Sacked it and sailed for home: but, as they returned, they offended Pallas Athené who roused great waves and tempests against them.
Then did they meet their death, the whole of these gallant companions,
All except one, who was driven by wind and wave to your island. And I must urge you at once to send him away to his homeland: Since it is not ordained for him to perish in exile, But to revisit his friends and kinsmen, and come with rejoicing Unto his high-roofed house and the dear old land of his fathers."
So did he speak: but she shuddered, the Goddess Calypso, to hear him:
And, in unbidden words, she broke into speech and addressed him:
"Hard are ye Gods in your dealings and jealous beyond all others,
Ye who grudge that a Goddess should share her couch with a mortal,
Though, in good faith and honour, she take to her bed the beloved one.
Thus, when the blushing Morn was smitten with love for Orion, All that time, ye Gods who dwell at your ease were indignant,
Till, from her golden throne, chaste Artemis rose in her anger, And, in Ortygia's isle, with her unseen arrows she slew him. So, when Deméter of flowing locks to her passion had yielded, And, on the thrice-ploughed earth, was united in love with Jasón, Zeus soon heard the report and with flashes of lightning destroyed him. And just so do ye grudge, O Gods, that a man should me with me Whom I had rescued myself as he clung to the keel of his vessel, Only survivor, when Zeus in his wrath, with flashes of lightning Shattered his ship on the sea in the midst of the darkling waters. There did they meet with their death, the whole of his gallant companions, But, by the wind and current, he drifted alone to my island. Him have I loved and cherished, and even promised to make him Free from infirmity death and decay for days without ending. But, as there are no means by which an inferior God may Either transgress or evade the commands of Zeus of the Ægis, Let him depart, if Zeus thus really commands me and urges, Over the barren sea. But I can conduct him nowhere: For I have neither ships well-fitted with oars, nor companions Who may escort him safely across the broad back of the ocean: Yet, with a ready mind, I am willing to make a suggestion How he may come unscathed once more to the land of his fathers.”

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the Slayer of Argus: “Send him away as you promise, and see you beware of offending Him of the Ægis, for fear he be angered and treat you with harshness.”

Thus having spoken, he left her, the mighty Slayer of Argus. Then did our Lady the Nymph, having heard what Zeus had commanded, Go from the cave to seek great-hearted Odysseus, and found him Sitting, as was his wont, on the beach: and never the tears were Dried from his eyes: and his life was wasting away in lamenting That he could never return: for no longer the Nymph gave him pleasure:
But, you must know, each night he slept as it were by compulsion,
All in the hollow cave, unwilling beside her willing:
And, the day long, he would sit, amongst the rocks and the beaches,
Weeping and gazing out on the barren fields of the ocean.
But, by his side she stood, the divine one, and spoke to him gently:
“Sad one, lament no more, I pray you: and let not your life be Wasted away: for, with all good will, I will speed your departure.
Now come, fell tall trees with a good bronze axe, and securely Dovetail together a raft, a broad one, and fasten upon it Decks fore and aft, that so it may weather the storms of the ocean.
And I will load it with bread and water and wine of the richest, Fit to put heart in a man and make you secure against hunger.
And I will clothe you well and waft you with following breezes, That you may come unscathed once more to the land of your fathers,
If that the Gods so will, whose home is the vault of the heavens:
For they are stronger than I to design and bring to fulfilment.”
So did she speak: but he shuddered, divine much-enduring Odysseus,
And, to his lips, rose words unbidden, and thus he addressed her:
“You have some other scheme, O Goddess, and not a safe escort,
When you advise me to cross, on a raft, the great gulf of the ocean,
Hard and terrible task, which not even ships could accomplish, Steady and swift though they be and wafted by following breezes. Nor will I ever embark on a raft if you are unwilling,
That is, unless you consent, O Goddess, to swear with a great oath
Not to devise in secret some evil misfortune against me.”
So did he speak: but she smiled on him, the Goddess Calypso,
And, with her hand she stroked him, and called him by name and addressed him:
"Surely you must be perverse, for empty headed you are not, That it should enter your mind to utter such words of suspicion. Hear me, O Earth, and Heaven above and River that flowest Into the bottomless depths: I swear by the oath that is greatest And the most dreadful of all amongst the blessed Immortals, That I will not contrive any mischief against you in future: Seeing this plan I propose and am now devising, is just what I should decide on myself were I in such trouble as you are. For I too have a conscience, and reverence mercy and justice, Nor is my heart of iron, but kind and abounding in pity."

Thus having spoken, she led the way, this fair and divine one, Swiftly walking: and he, in the steps of the Goddess, did follow. So they arrived at the cave, the man and the Goddess together: There did the man sit down on the seat from which Hermés had risen Shortly before: and the Nymph set many a dainty beside him, Such good things as are fit to be drunk or eaten by mortals: But she herself sat down on the seat that was facing Odysseus, And, with ambrosia, she was served, and heavenly nectar. Then were their hands reached out to the good things ready before them. And, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, She was the first to speak, the divine one, the Goddess Calypso: "Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices, Do you in truth desire to go back this very moment To your dear fatherland? If so, all blessing attend you. Yet, if you only knew what a crowd of troubles await you Ere you can reach your home, you would rather choose to remain here, Guarding this house with me and enjoying a life without ending: Much though you may be regretting the wife whom daily you long for.

Not that I own myself, for an instant, inferior to her Either in nature or form: for most unfitting 'twould be that Mortal women should vie with Gods in stature or beauty."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "Goddess revered, be not angry at this: full well I acknowledge Prudent Penelopé cannot compare with your stature or beauty, For she is only a mortal, and you are immortal and ageless: Nevertheless it is she whom I daily desire and pine for:
Therefore I long for my home and to see the day of returning. But, if so be that a God on the wine-dark sea should o'erwhelm me,
That will I bear, for I hold an enduring heart in my bosom:
For, ere this, have I toiled full much, and much have I suffered Both on the sea and in war: but, come what will, I can bear it."
So did he speak: and the sun went down, and darkness came o'er them.
Then did they go, these two, to a quiet recess of the cavern,
Near to each other, and so with love themselves they delighted.
But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Straightway Odysseus arose and donned his cloak and his tunic:
While that Calypso the Nymph arrayed herself in a mantle
Woven of silvern thread, of delicate texture, and falling Gracefully round her and girt at the waist with a golden girdle, Threw o'er her head a veil, and then took thought for the journey Of the strong-hearted Odysseus: and first she gave him a great axe Sharp on both edges, of bronze, and fitted with well-balanced handle,
Olive wood carefully wrought, and a good adze into the bargain,
Polished and keen: then led the way to the end of the island Where the tall trees were found, the alder the pine and the poplar, Ripened with age and dry, which lightly would float on the water.
Then, having shown him the place where the trees were growing, Calypso Went to her home, while Odysseus was felling the logs that he needed:
Twenty in all he felled, in no great time, with his bronze axe, Trimmed them with practised hand, and shaped them true by the “T”-square. Meanwhile Calypso had brought him the augers he needed to work with:
So he bored holes in the logs and fitted them each to the other, Making them fast with bolts and clamping them firmly together. And, as a man might design the base of a sea-going wherry In broad rounded lines to fit it to carry a cargo,
Just such a width this raft was built by the skilful Odysseus.
Then he made decks fore and aft that by frequent ribs were supported:
And the whole length of the sides, as a finish, was covered with planking.
Also he put a mast in his craft, which carried a yard-arm:
And, at the stern, he fixed a sweep, in order to steer it:
Also he fenced it round with wattled hurdles of osier,
Bulwark against the waves, and solidly backed them with timber.
Meanwhile the Goddess divine, Calypso, brought canvas in plenty,
Which he could use for sails: these also he wrought like a craftsman,
Fitted the braces and sheets and tacks and the rest of the rigging:
Lastly, with levers, he prized it down to the blessed salt water.

Four full days had passed, and all his work had been finished:
But, when the fifth day came, she bathed him, the Goddess Calypso,
Clothed him in perfumed garments and bid him good speed from the island,
Placed on the raft a skin of good red wine, and another
Large one filled with water, and store of food in a wallet,
Also preserved meats, most strength-sustaining, in plenty:
Then, with a warm and gentle wind she wafted him onward.
Gladly, to catch the breeze, the sails were spread by Odysseus.
But, in the stern he sat and skilfully guided the vessel
With the long sweep: nor ever did slumber fall on his eyelids,
Keeping his eye on the Pleiads and that late watcher Boötes,
And on the Bear which also was called by our fathers the Waggon,
Turning still on its axis and looking across to Orion,
Only one of the Heavenly Host that ne’er dips in the ocean:
For that, the Goddess divine, Calypso, had strictly enjoined him
Always to keep the Bear on the left-hand side of the vessel.
Thus, o’er the trackless sea, for seventeen days he was sailing:
But, on the eighteenth day, appeared the shadowy mountains
Of the Phæacian land, at the point that was nearest towards him,
Shaped as it were like a fig afloat ’mid the fogs of the ocean.

But the great lord the Earth-Shaker from Solymon mountains espied him,
As he returned from the Æthiops’ land: for he clearly discerned him
Sailing upon the sea: and his heart was more wrathful than ever:
And, with a shake of his mighty head, he talked to himself thus:
“Monstrous it is how, of late, the Gods have been changing
their purpose
As to Odysseus, while I was abroad ’mid the Æthiop people:
And he is now quite close to Phæacia, where he is bound to
Come to the end of the troubles with which he is rightly
afflicted.
But he has time enough yet to go through plenty of hardships.”
And, at the word, he gathered the clouds, and seizing his
trident,
Troubled the deep and roused fierce blasts of wind from all
quarters,
Blotting out land and sea in mingled vapour and spindrift.
Darkness fell: East South and North and furious West wind
Blowing at once and rolling a mountainous sea before them.
Then did the knees of Odysseus give way, and his dear heart
melted,
And, in sore anguish, he called on the great-hearted spirit
within him:
“O wretched me, what now will be the end of this trouble?
Much do I fear that the Goddess was speaking only too truly,
Telling me how I should drain my cup of woe to the bottom
Ere I arrived at home: for it all comes true to the letter.
See the black clouds with which great Zeus has encircled the
heavens!
How he has troubled the deep, and how the squalls come
crowding,
Blast upon blast, from all quarters! Now sudden destruction is
certain.
Thrice and four times blessed were those Achæans who perished
On the wide plain of Troy to please the brothers Atreides.
Would that I also had died and met with my fate on the day
when
Trojans in crowds were hurling their bronze-tipped javelins
on me
Guarding Peleides’ corpse: for then I had earned, for a surety,
Splendid funeral rites and glory amongst the Achæans.
But, as it seems, I am fated by death most dismal to perish."

Scarce had he spoken, a towering wave with crest overarchng
Came with a rush, and whirled his raft around like a feather:
Far from the raft he fell, having lost his hold of the rudder:
And a great gust of wind from various quarters united
Took the vessel aback, and snapped the mast in the middle,
And, far into the sea, carried sail and yard together.
Long was the time, as it seemed, he was held under water, nor
could he
Rise to the surface from under the mighty sweep of the billow,
For he was much weighed down by the clothes that Calypso
had given.
But, at the last, emerging, he spat from his mouth the salt
water
While, from his head, great streams over eyes and nostrils were
pouring.
But, though exhausted and faint, he still of his vessel bethought
him,
Made for it through the waves, and barely he managed to
reach it,
And, in the middle he sat, shunning death while yet he was able.
But, by the rush of the wave, the raft was swept hither and
thither.
As, on some August day, the keen North wind may be driving
Thistle seeds over the plain, and they hang in clusters together,
So, by the wind and the sea, was the raft driven hither and
thither,
Now 'twas before the South, and now 'twas before the North wind
While, in its turn, the West succeeded the East as pursuer.
Haply, Leucothea saw him, neat-ankled daughter of Cadmus,
Ino, who once on a time had spoken the language of mortals,
But, on the sea, now shared the honour due to divine ones.
And she took pity upon him thus drifting and suffering hardship,
Came to him, sat on the raft, and called him and spoke to
him kindly:
"What is the reason, unhappy man, the Earth-shaker
Poseidon
Is so outrageously wrath and causes you all this trouble?
There is no fear he will kill you, however angry he may be.
But do you take my advice, for you seem a sensible person:
Throw off these cumbersome clothes, and let the raft drift as it pleases:
Then make the best of your way through the stormy water by swimming
To the Phæacian land, where all your toils will be ended.
But here, take this scarf, 'tis a thing immortal, and bind it
Firmly beneath your breast: and thenceforth nothing can harm you.
But, soon as ever your hands have grasped the shore of the mainland,
Take off the scarf and throw it right out into deep blue water
Clear of the land: then turn your back, and leave it behind you."
Thus having spoken, she gave the scarf to Odysseus, and straightway
Turning, she dived beneath the heaving waves of the ocean
As a sea bird might do: and the black wave closed: and she vanished.
But he was greatly in doubt, the divine much-enduring
Odysseus,
And, in sore anguish, he spoke to the great-hearted spirit within him:
"Ah me, how can I tell that one of the Gods is not seeking
Thus to ensnare me again, when she bids me abandon my vessel:
But, by no means, will I do that yet: for, there in the distance,
Clearly I saw the land where she said was my haven of refuge.
This is what I will do, and it seems to me to be wisest:
During such time as the ties of my raft shall hold her together, Will I remain where I am, and bear whate'er may befall me:
But, if a blow from the waves shall shake my vessel to pieces, Then will I take to the water: but go to meet trouble I will not."

While he was pondering thus, the great Earth-Shaker Poseidon Raised up a mighty wave on the deep, and launched it against him:
Dreadful it was to behold, and terribly overarching.
And, as a gust of wind will suddenly strike on a heap of Light dry chaff, and whirl and scatter it hither and thither, So did the great wave scatter the logs of the raft: but Odysseus Climbed upon one of the logs and rode it astride like a horseman,
And, throwing off the clothes which divine Calypso had given, Quickly, beneath his breast, he fastened the scarf, and falling Prone on the log, he lay, and used each hand as a paddle, Doing his best to swim: but the great Earth-Shaker espied him, And, with a shake of his mighty head, he spoke to himself thus: "Now you can roam the sea and have all the hardships you wish for Ere you arrive at the haunts of civilized men: but I fancy You will have had by then as much and more than will please you.” Thus having spoken, he lashed his horses with manes wild streaming, And, unto Ægæ he came, where stands his glorious palace. Meanwhile the daughter of Zeus yet another scheme was devising: For, by her power, she bound the rest of the winds in their courses, Bade them to cease their rage and lulled them securely to slumber: And, in their stead, she roused the swift North wind, and before it Shattered the waves, to the end that Odysseus, escaping destruction, Might be received as a guest amongst the Phæacian oarsmen. Two whole nights and days on the heaving swell was he drifting Helpless: and many a time his heart foreboded disaster. But, when the fair-haired Dawn had opened the door to the third day, Then the wind dropped to a calm: and, raised on the top of a billow, Keenly he scanned the horizon: and there was the land quite near him. And, as to dutiful sons the life of a father is welcome, Who has long laid in pain, by some hateful Power tormented, Wasting away, and to him the Gods have granted refreshment, Welcome thus to Odysseus was sight of meadow and forest, And he swam hard in his haste to plant his feet on the mainland. But, when no farther away than a man can be heard by shouting,
Then did he plainly hear, on the reefs, the thunder of breakers:
For the great wave belched up from the sea was horribly roaring
Round that iron-bound coast: and the salt spray blanketed all things.
For there was never a harbour, or roadstead where ships might be anchored,
Nought but unsheltered beaches and reefs and threatening stack rocks.
Then did the knees of Odysseus give way, and his dear heart melted,
And, in sore anguish, he called on the great-hearted spirit within him:
"Woe is to me: since Zeus, having granted me more than I hoped for,
Namely to look on the land after crossing the gulf of the ocean,
Now has denied all means to escape from this desert of whiteness:
For the whole coast is studded with rocks: and, swirling around them,
Seethe and roar the waves: and sheer from the edge of the water
Rise tall slippery cliffs affording no possible foothold.
If I should make the attempt, I fear that a billow might catch me,
Dash me against the rock: and my effort would end in disaster.
But, should I still swim on, not far from the shore, in the hope of
Coming to shelving beaches or coves that may shelter me safely,
I am afraid to be caught once more in the tempest, and carried,
Groan as I may, right out to sea as food for the fishes,
Or that the Powers may send a great sea monster against me
Out of the waves: for such does the Sea-Queen keep in abundance:
And I know well how sorely Poseidon is angered against me."
While he was pondering thus, a great wave caught him and swept him
On to the rugged shore: and the skin had been stripped from his body
And each bone had been broken, if grey-eyed Goddess Athené Had not quickened his mind: but, grasping a rock with his two hands
As he was carried along in the rush, he clung to it groaning
Till the great wave passed by: and for once he avoided destruction:
But the return wave struck him, and far out to sea it bore him.
And, as an octopus torn from its bed has on every sucker
Fragments of stone still clinging, just so, from the hands of Odysseus,
Was the skin stripped by the rocks: and over his head went the billow.
Then had the wretched Odysseus most undeservedly perished,
But that with presence of mind the grey-eyed Athené endowed him:
And, as he rose from the wave where it belches forth to the mainland,
Then he swam past the shore, outside of the breakers, and keeping
Ever an eye on the land to see if he could not discover
Sloping beaches, or coves that would give safe shelter: and soon he
Came as he swam to the mouth of a fair-flowing river, and judged it
Just such a place as he wanted, both free from boulders, and sheltered.
But he perceived the set of the current, and prayed in his heart thus:
"Hear me, whoever thou art, O King, for sorely I need thee,
Striving to flee from the sea and escape the wrath of Poseidon.
Even immortal Gods respect the plight of a man who
Comes as a wanderer to them and asks for their succour, as I now,
Broken with many a toil, have come to thy stream for protection.
Pity me then, O King, thy suppliant: proudly I claim it."
So did he pray: and the God forthwith his current restrained,
Smoothed the water before him, and into the mouth of the river,
Brought him in safety. But then his hands dropped helpless beside him,
And both knees gave way: for the toils of the sea had consumed
All the heart of the man: and out of his mouth and his nostrils,
Salt sea water was running: and all his body was swollen:
And he lay speechless and breathless: and deadly faintness came o'er him.
But, soon as ever he found his breath and recovered his senses, Then, without fail, he unbound from his body the scarf of the Goddess, And, far away in the tide of the murmuring river, he threw it. Down and away to the sea a great wave swept it: and Ino Caught it with eager hands. But he turned his back on the river, Threw himself down in the rushes, and kissed Earth, bountiful Mother, And, in sore anguish, he called on the great-hearted spirit within him: "Ah me, what shall I do? what end will there be to my trouble? For, if I pass the night awake on the bank of the river, Likely, the stinging frost and the heavy dew that is coming, Weak as I am, will suck the life from me altogether: Seeing the wind from a river blows chill in the early morning. But, if I go to the rising ground and sleep in the bushes, Under a shady wood, though cold and weariness leave me And I sleep well, I fear to be killed by the beasts of the forest." And, when he thought it over, it seemed the wood was the safer: So, to the wood he went, and near to the water he found it In a clear space: and, by chance, he happened upon twin bushes, One sweet olive, one wild, that out of one stump were growing, Which could defy the strong West winds that are laden with moisture: Nor could the rays of the sun pierce through when blazing at noonday, Nor any shower of rain: so thickly the boughs were entangled. Under these bushes he crept, and, with hands most willing though feeble, Heaped for himself a good broad bed (for the ground was all covered Thickly with fallen leaves) a bed that would easily shelter Two or three men in the winter time, whatever the cold were. Gladly he looked at his work, the divine much-enduring Odysseus, Threw himself down in the middle and piled leaves over his body.
And, as a labouring man may bury a brand in the ashes
Near to some outlying field to which no houses are handy,
Nursing the seed of fire that he may not be forced to relight it,
So did he bury himself in the leaves. And Pallas Athené
Shed sweet sleep on his eyes, to make him forget in a moment
All his labours and toils, and closed his eyelids in slumber.
BOOK VI

NAUSICAA

So, in his bed of leaves, the divine much-enduring Odysseus
Heavily slept, weighed down by slumber and toil: but
Athené,
True to her purpose, repaired to the city where dwelt the
Phæacians,
Men who, once on a time, were living in wide Hypereia,
Near to the land of the Round-eyes, those men overbearing and
savage,
Who were molesting them always, in brute force being the
stronger:
But, from that perilous place, the divine Nausithoüs moved them,
Unto the Scheria land, remote from trouble and turmoil.
There, round the city, he built a wall, and houses provided,
Temples too for the Gods, and portioned out farms for his people.
But he, worsted by Fate, had passed to the region of shadows:
And, in his stead, Alcinoïs reigned with God-given wisdom.
His was the house which she sought, the grey-eyed Goddess
Athené,
All to contrive the return of that great-hearted Odysseus.
Into a beautiful chamber she passed, where a maiden was lying,
Who in appearance and stature was like to a Goddess immortal,
Lovely Nausicaa, daughter of king Alcinoüs Greatheart:
On her, two maids were in waiting, as fair as the Graces could
make them,
One by each door post: and closed were the shining doors that
they guarded.
But, like a breath of wind, did Athené glide to her bedside,
Stood, and bent over her head, and thus she spoke to her gently,
Taking the form of her friend, the daughter of Dymas the sailor,
Who was her equal in age and her sympathetic companion:
So, in her form, thus spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:

"How, Nausicaa, come you to be so thoughtless and idle?
Think how your beautiful frocks are now all lying neglected:
And it will soon be time for your wedding, when really you
must be
Clothed in your best yourself, and give dresses to those who
attend you:
For, if you think of these things, your friends will speak of you
kindly,
And you will also please your father and lady mother.
So, when the morning comes, we will go a-washing together:
For I will come to help you that all may be ready the quicker.
And, you may take my word, you will not be much longer un-
wedded:
For, even now, all men of distinction among the Phaeacians
Wish to solicit your hand; for you come of the same race as
they do.
Rouse yourself, and in the morning, go beg your illustrious father
That he will give you a wagon and mules ready harnessed, to
carry
All your girdles and robes and glossy magnificent mantles.
For it is much more becoming that you should travel in this way
Than on your feet: as the places for washing are far from the
city."
And, having spoken thus, the grey-eyed Athené departed
To her Olympian home, where, they say, the Gods have their
dwelling,
Fixed and secure for ever: and never by storms is it shaken,
Nor by a shower bedewed, nor ever does snow come near it:
Changeless it stands and bathed in the luminous æther of heaven
Clear and without a cloud in pure white radiance gleaming.
There do the blessed Gods live joyful for days without ending.
Thither she went, the grey-eyed one, her message delivered.
Now, from her golden throne, rose Morning, and wakened
the maiden:
And, when she thought of her dream, very strange and wonder-
ful seemed it.
So, through the halls she went to tell these things to her parents,
Her dear father and mother: and there, in the palace, she found
them.
For, by the hearth, sat her mother amongst her women attendants
Winding of purple wool on a distaff, but as to her father,
He was just leaving the house to take his part in a council
With the renowned kings, to which the Phaeacians had called him.

Close by his side she stood, and thus she spoke to her father:
"Father dear, won't you tell them to get me ready a carriage,
One with nice tall wheels, that I may take to the river
All my beautiful clothes which now lie soiled in the wardrobe?
And it is fitting that you yourself, when you sit in the council
Holding debate with the chiefs, should be wearing clothes that are spotless.

And, besides, you have five dear sons who were born in your palace,
Two of them married, but three are smart young bachelors, and these,
When they go out to a dance, are most particular that their clothes should be newly washed: and all this I have to manage."

These were her words: for she felt too shy to speak of her wedding
To her dear father: but he understood her thoughts, and he answered:
"I do not grudge you the mules, my child, or aught that you wish for.
Go when you please: and the servants shall get you ready a carriage,
One with good tall wheels, and a hood above as a shelter."

And, at the word, he called to the servants who ran at his bidding.
Quickly the men in the yard made ready the light-running mule cart,
Led from the stable the mules and harnessed them under the carriage.
And, from her chamber, the maid brought out her garments, and laid them,
Glossy and bright, in the cart: the while that her lady mother packed in a box all kinds of food and savoury dainties,
Filled a goatskin with wine, and just as her daughter was starting,
Gave her a flask of oil to anoint herself and attendants.
Then did she grasp the reins like a practised driver, and smartly whipped up the mules: and their hoofs clattered merrily over the pavement
As, pulling hard at the traces, they carried the clothes and their mistress,
But not alone: for with her there went her maidens in waiting.
But, when at length they came to the beautiful stream of the river
Where there were pools for washing the whole year round, for there failed not
Plenty of good fresh water to cleanse the dirtiest clothing,
Then they unharnessed the mules from under the carriage, and drove them
Close to the eddying river to feed on the honey-sweet herbage.
Then did they lift the clothes from the carriage, and fetching clear water,
Trod them in pits with a will, to see who could do it the quickest.
And, when the clothes were washed and thoroughly spotless, they spread them
All in a row on the beach, just where the waves of the sea had
Washed the pebbles the cleanest. And when they had bathed and anointed
With the sweet oil their bodies, they sat on the bank of the river, Eating their food while they left the clothes to dry in the sunshine.
Then, having finished their meal, they sprang up, mistress and handmaids,
Threw off their coifs, and began to play at ball with each other, While, to mark time, white-armed Nausicaa broke into singing.
And, as the lover of arrows, fair Artemis, sweeps o'er the mountains,
Hunting the fleet-footed stag or untameable boar of the forests, Whether it be on the heights of Taygetus or Erymanthus,
And, all around her, the Nymphs from their haunts in the country are sporting,
Daughters of Zeus of the Aegis (and Leto rejoices to see them) While, by her forehead and head, she towers o'er all her attendants,
And, though they all are fair, herself by far is the fairest, Just so, joyful and free, did the maiden outshine her companions.
But, when the princess thought that the time had come to go homeward,
Then did they fold the clothes and harness the mules to the carriage.
But, by the grey-eyed Athené, another scheme was invented, 
So that Odysseus might wake, and see the beautiful maiden, 
And she might show him the way to the city where dwelt the 
Phæacians.
Thus it fell out that she threw the ball at one of her handmaids, 
And, missing her, it fell in an eddying pool of the river.
Loudly, they all cried out, and wakened the godlike Odysseus: 
And, sitting up to collect his thoughts, he talked to himself 
thus:
"What shall I do? What people are these whose land I have entered?
Are they savage and fierce, regardless of mercy and justice, 
Or are they friendly to strangers, and fearing the Powers of 
Heaven?
Surely I heard the sound of female voices a-calling, 
Young Nymph maids, may be, who haunt the crests of the 
mountains
And cool sources of rivers and meadows where grass is the 
greenest.
Or am I near to a people who speak the language of mortals?
But I will see for myself and find out the truth of the matter."
And, as he spoke, came forth from the bushes the godlike 
Odysseus, 
And, from a tree hard by, tore off a flourishing branchlet, 
Leafy and green, to hide what might in a man be unseemly: 
And he went forth in his strength, as a lion bred in the mountains 
Goes through the wind and rain, while his eyes like fire are 
blazing,
Following trails of sheep or of oxen or may be of roebucks: 
For, if his hunger compels him to capture a sheep, he will venture 
Into a strong-walled house: and so in like manner Odysseus, 
Naked although he was, would have forced himself into the circle 
E’en of these fair-haired maids: for grim necessity drove him. 
But he appeared to them a terrible being, besmeared with 
Brine: and they scattered in fear to the jutting points of the 
beaches.
Yet there was one that remained, Alcinoüs’ daughter: for Pallas, 
Courage, had put in her heart: and never her knees did tremble. 
So she stood firm and faced him. He waited a moment, un-
certain
Whether to clasp with his hands the knees of the beautiful maiden,
Or to remain where he was, and with gentle speeches entreat her
That she would give him some clothes and show him the way
to the city.
And, upon thinking, it seemed much better to stand at a
distance,
And, in a gentle speech, to entreat her, for fear that the damsel,
If he should clasp her knees, might be indignant and angry.
So, without waiting, he spoke, in a manner both courteous and
artful:
"O queen, here I entreat thee: say, art thou a Goddess, or
mortal?
If thou art one of the Gods whose home is the vault of the
heaven,
Seeing thy beauty and form and thy stature, I think thou art
most like
Artemis, that fair daughter of Zeus, great Lord of Olympus:
But, if thou art of the mortals who dwell on this earth of ours,
Then thrice blest is thy father, thrice blest the lady thy mother,
Also thy brothers: for much their hearts must be warmed and
delighted
When they behold the dance being led by so dainty a flower.
But, in his heart, more blessed is he who is destined to lead thee
Back to his home as a bride with the gifts he has showered
upon thee.
For, never yet have I seen any mortal who could be compared,
Man or woman, with thee: as I look I am lost in amazement.
Once indeed, in Delos, I saw by the shrine of Apollo,
Springing aloft from the ground, a tall new shoot of a palm tree:
(For, thither also, I went, and with me many retainers
Bound on the voyage that was fated to be so crowded with
troubles)
And, when I saw that palm, long time I was gazing in wonder,
For, such a tall straight shoot as that, I had never set eyes on,
So now, lady, I gaze at thee with admiring wonder.
Yet I fear greatly to clasp thy knees: the very thought daunts me.
"Yesterday only, I reached this land, after twenty days drifting
Over the wine-dark sea: for all that time I was carried
Hither and thither by wave and squall from Ogygia's island,
And have been cast ashore by the Powers of Heaven in order, May be, that even here I may still continue to suffer: For 'twill be long time yet before they cease to molest me. Therefore, O queen, take pity: to thee, after hardships uncounted,

Have I come first of all: and I know none other whatever Of those men who inhabit this land and its capital city. But I beseech thee to show me the way to the town, and to give me Some poor rag to throw on my shoulders, in case thou hast brought here Aught that may serve as a wrap. And the Gods be gracious to grant thee All that thy heart desires, a husband and home and like-minded Fellowship: for there is nothing more excellent or more lovely Than when a man and a woman, in happy concord together, Keep their home: a source of grief to the wishers of evil, But, to their friends, of joy, and joy beyond all to each other.”

And, unto him in reply, white-armed Nausicaa answered:
“Stranger, you seem to possess good sense and a good disposition. Zeus of Olympus himself apportions blessing to mortals, Both to the good and the evil, to every one as he pleases: As he has laid these trials upon you, you must bear them with patience. But now, since you have come to our land and our city, you shall not Suffer for want of clothes or anything else that is needed By a poor travel-worn stranger who comes and asks for protection. And I will show you the town, and tell you the name of the people. We, who inhabit this land and yonder town, are Phaecians: And myself am the daughter of King Alcinoüs Greatheart, Under whose rule the Phaecians live in wealth and in safety.”

So did she speak, and called aloud to her fair-haired attendants:
“Where are you running, my maidens? Come back! The man will not eat you! Do you imagine this stranger is some uncivilized savage?
There is no man in the world will come to this country of ours
With any hostile intent: for much by the Gods are we favoured:
And far away we live, by a stormy ocean divided,
Last of the nations: and no other men hold intercourse with us.
But this man who has come is some unfortunate wand'r'er,
Whom we must care for and cherish: because all poor men and
strangers
Come from the hands of Zeus: and to give is not costly, yet
precious.
Therefore, my maids, give food and drink to the stranger, and
wash him
In a nice sheltered pool, where chilly wind cannot reach him.”
So did she speak: but they stood, and each bade the other
go forward:
Nevertheless they made him to sit in a place that was sheltered,
Just as Nausicaa, daughter of Noble Alcinoüs bade them,
Also put clothes by his side for his use, a cloak and a tunic,
And, in a golden flask, brought clear-run oil for anointing.
Then could Odysseus forbear no longer to speak to the
handmaids:
“Handmaidens, stay where you are, at a distance from me,
while I wash off
This sea brine from my shoulders and rub some oil on my body:
For it is long indeed since my flesh has had any anointing.
But I refuse to bathe before you: for I should be ashamed
If I were naked in presence of such fair maidens as you are.”
Thus did he speak: and they left him, and told his words to
their mistress.
But, with the water they brought from the river, the godlike
Odysseus
Washed himself free from the brine which clung to his back
and his shoulders,
And, from his head, he wiped the froth of the barren ocean.
And, when he well had washed and anointed his body all over,
And was arrayed in the clothes which the heart-free maiden
had given,
Then did the Daughter of Zeus by her power transform him
and make him
Taller and stouter to see, and, down from his stately temples,
Clustering locks to fall as it were some hyacinth blossom.
And, as a skilful man, whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athéné
Beautiful arts have taught, will overlay gold upon silver,
So, o'er his head and shoulders, was grace outpoured by Athéné.
Then did he go to a distance and sit by himself on the shingle,
Radiant of beauty and grace: but the damsel was watching
him keenly:
And it was thus she spoke, in the midst of her fair-haired
attendants:
"Listen, my white-armed maids, and lay to heart what I
tell you.
Certain it is that some, of the blessed Gods in Olympus
Wish that this man be received amongst us godlike Phæacians:
For, it is true, at first, he appeared unseemly in person,
But now, like to the Gods who inhabit the vault of the heavens.
How I could pray that a man like him might be known as my
husband,
Making our country his home, and pleased to remain with us
always.
Therefore, my maidens, be quick: give food and drink to the
stranger."
Thus did she speak: and the maids full readily sped at her
bidding.
So they set food and drink in store by the side of Odysseus.
You may be sure that he ate and drank, after so many hardships,
Like to a ravenous man, who long time nothing had tasted.
Still was Nausicaa, white-armed maid, as thoughtful as ever:
Neatly she folded the clothes and put them into the carriage,
Harnessed the strong-hoofed mules beneath it and mounted
to drive them.
Then did she call to Odysseus, and thus by name she ad-
dressed him:
"Time to get up, O Stranger, and go to the city, that I may
Show you the way to the house of my wise-hearted father: and
there you
Will be quite certain to meet the leading men of Phæacia.
But you must do as I say, for I think you a man of discretion.
While we are going through fields where men are busy a-
ploughing,
Follow behind the mules and the carriage along with my
maidens:
There is no time to loiter: and take the same turnings that I do. But, when the city begins, where a lofty tower is standing, And, on each side of the city, a beautiful harbour with narrow Entrance, and oar-driven ships drawn up by the side of the roadway, Each in her separate berth: and close at hand is the forum, Filling the space that surrounds the beautiful fane of Poseidon, Fitted together with stones that were quarried and hauled from a distance: And it is here that they store the gear which vessel's require, Mend the cables and sails, and taper the ends of the long oars. For the Phæacians care very little for bow or for quiver, But for the masts and oars of ships, and well-balanced galleys: These are their pride, and with these they traverse the foam-flecked ocean— And 'tis their bitter remarks that I fear, lest any should blame me Afterwards: for not a few of the people have insolent tempers: And, it may chance, some low-minded one might say if he met us: 'Who is this big and handsome man that Nausicaa has there? Where did she pick him up? Mark me, he will soon be her husband. 'Tis some foreigner she has found, who has strayed from his ship and Lost his way: for 'tis certain he's not like the people of these parts: Or he may be an Immortal to whom she has made her petitions Come down from heaven to see her: and all her life she will keep him. Better if she herself had gone to look for a husband In some outlandish place: because she treats with dishonour Those Phæacians at home who, many and noble, now woo her.' Thus they would speak, and thus they would cover my name with reproaches. And I too should be angry were such things done by another: If some maiden, against the will of her father and mother, Were to have dealings with men before she was publicly married. Therefore, O stranger, be quick to take my meaning, and shortly You shall have escort home at the hands of my noble father.
"Close by the side of the road you will find a plantation of poplars 
Sacred to Pallas, and in it a spring, and around it a meadow: 
These, are the private grounds of my father: and there is his vineyard, 
Just so far from the town as a man can be heard by shouting: 
There sit down and wait for a while, till we come to the city 
And to my father's house: and, when you judge we have reached it, 
You must set out to go to the town yourself, and enquire, 
As you go on, for the house of my father Alcinoüs Greatheart: 
But it is easily known, and even a child could direct you: 
For the Phæacian houses are not built after the pattern 
Of this house of my father the hero Alcinoüs. Therefore, 
When you have entered the building, and left the courtyard behind you, 
Quickly go through the hall, in order to come to my mother. 
And by the hearth you will find her, lit up by the blaze of the fire, 
Sitting, and twirling a distaff, sea purple, a marvel to look at, 
Leaning her back on a pillar, her maids being seated behind her. 
And, at her side, is set a reclining chair for my father, 
Seated on which he sips his wine as do the Immortals. 
Pass him by, and clasp with your hands the knees of my mother: 
So shall you quickly return to your distant home with rejoicing."

And at the word, with a flash of the whip she urged the mules onward. 
Off they dashed in a moment, and soon left the river behind them, 
Trotting so fast that their legs would seem to be all in a tangle. 
Yet did she keep them in hand, that so the maids and Odysseus 
Might not be left behind: for the whip she managed with judgement. 
And, as the sun was setting, they came to the grove of Athené: 
There did Odysseus sit down and wait as the maiden had bidden. 
And, to the daughter of Zeus the mighty, he made his petition: 
"Hear me, unwearied one, thou child of Zeus of the Αegis, 
Hear me at last I pray, for thou didst not hear me beforetime,
When on the sea I endured the buffets of famous Poseidon. Grant that men of this land may receive me with friendly compassion."

So did he speak in his prayer: and Pallas Athené regarded. Yet would she not appear, for a time, for she feared the resentment Of her great father's brother, who still in wrath was pursuing Godlike Odysseus until he should reach the land of his fathers.
BOOK VII

ALCİNOÜS, KING OF THE PHÆACIANS

Thus, in the grove, he prayed, the divine much-enduring Odysseus,
while that the maiden was borne by the two strong mules to the city.
She, at the far-famed house of her father Alcinoüs Greatheart,
smartly pulled up in the porch: and her brothers crowded around her,
like to Immortals to see: they, loosing the mules from the carriage,
carried the garments indoors. But Nausicaa went to her chamber,
where old Eurymedusa, her maid who came from Epirus,
lighted a fire on the hearth (from Epirus the galleys had brought her,
special gift to the king: because the Phœacian people
all acknowledged his rule, and, as to a God, were obedient):
She, in Alcinoüs’ house, had been nurse to the white armed maiden:
and it was she who lighted the fire and set out the supper.
then did Odysseus arise to go to the town: but Athené,
mindful to keep him safe, in illusive vapour enwrapped him,
lest it should happen by chance that a haughty Phœacian
should meet him,
curtly accost him, and ask his name and what was his business.
but, when he now was about to enter the beautiful city,
then she herself did meet him, the grey-eyed Goddess Athené,
like to a little maid who was bearing a pitcher of water:
and, when she met him, she stood: and godlike Odysseus addressed her:
"Can you not tell me, my child, the way to Alcinoüs palace,
who, as they say, is king amongst the men of this city?
for I have come to this place a weary and travel-worn stranger,
Far, from a distant land: and therefore it is that I know not One of those men who live in this city of beautiful gardens.”

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Athéné: “Certainly I will show you, Sir Stranger, the house that you ask for,
For it is not far off from the house of my noble father.
But go in silence thus: and I will go first to conduct you:
And, when you meet with a man, look away, and ask him no questions:
Since most men of this place are not very friendly to strangers, Nor do they welcome kindly a man from a foreign country.
All that they care for is ships, the gift of mighty Poseidôn:
Trusting in these they cross, o’er the dreadful expanse of the ocean:
Seeing their ships are as swift as a thought or a bird in the heavens.”

Thus having spoken, she led the way, did Pallas Athéné, Swiftly walking: and close, in the steps of the Goddess, he followed.
And, as he passed through the city amongst the Phæacian sailors, No one observed him at all: because dread Goddess Athéné Lovingly wrapped him round in miraculous gloom to protect him. But with amazement he gazed on the harbours and well-balanced vessels,
And on the heroes themselves in council assembled, and lofty Ramparts with battlements crowned, far stretching, a marvel to look at.
But, when at length they arrived at the king’s most glorious palace,
She was the first to speak, the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné:
"Now we have come to the house, Sir Stranger, you bade me to show you:
And, in the hall, you will find Zeus-nurtured princes a-feasting. Walk straight in: fear nothing: for always a confident man will Come out best in the end, e’en though he be but a stranger.
Now, when you enter the palace, the very first person to meet you Will be the mistress herself, Arêté: and she is descended From the same stock as the king: for, as I must tell you, Poseidon, Great Earth-Shaker, begot Nausithoûs of Peribœa,
Fairest of women, and youngest of bold Eurymedon's daughters, Who, at one time, was king of the proud and quarrelsome Giants. But he destroyed that race, and himself by them was destroyéd. This Nausithoüs then was king amongst the Phæacians, And he begot two sons, Alcinoüs and Rexênor. Now Rexênor was killed, with his silvern bow, by Apollo, When he was not long wedded, and left no son to succeed him, But one daughter, Arêté: and her Alcinoüs married: Also such honour he paid her, as unto none other is given Of all women on earth who now keep house under husbands. Thus, in the time gone by, she was heartily honoured, and still is, Both by the king her husband and by her children belovéd, And by the people, who always, with words respectful salute her As they might do to a God, whenever she walks through the city. For she is gifted in mind, and, thanks to her excellent judgement, Even the quarrels of men, she oft times wisely composes. And, if she likes you well, you may hope to return to your kindred, And to your high-roofed house and that dear land of your fathers.

Thus having spoken, she went her way, the grey-eyed Athené, Over the barren sea, and left fair Scheria's valleys: Soon she to Marathon came, and the fine broad highways of Athens, And to Erectheus' home. But meantime godlike Odysseus Came to the famous house of Alcinoüs, where, in amazement, Dazed for a while he stood, and pondered in front of the threshold. For, as it were, a gleam of the sun or the moon in its brightness Shone from the high-roofed house of the king Alcinoüs Great-heart. For, to the right and left, from the threshold as far as the angle, Ran great walls of brass with a steel-blue cornice along them: Doors too, of massive gold, the interior buildings protected, Hung from door-posts of silver that rested on brazen foundations:

While that the lintel above was of silver, the handle was golden. And, on each side of the door, were dogs of gold and of silver, Dogs immortal and ageless, thus cunningly wrought by the Hephaéstus
That they might guard in safety the house of Alcinoüs Great-heart.

And, by the wall, inside, from the threshold as far as the angle, Seats were at intervals fixed, and with delicate tapestry covered, Work of the women: and there the Phæacian chieftains were seated Eating and drinking: and this, for the whole year round was their habit. And, to complete the scene, there were boys on pedestals standing, Fashioned of gold, and by each a torch of pinewood was carried Turning the night into day for the banqueters all through the palace. And, at allotted tasks, some fifty handmaids were working: Some of them now, in mills, the mellow barley were pounding: Some at the looms were seated, and some were twirling the spindles, White hands all in a flutter like leaves of the quivering aspen, While, from the threads of the warp, the liquid oil drips gently. For, as Phæacian men excel all others in rowing Swift ships over the sea, so likewise their women in weaving Easily beat all others: for this is the gift of Athené, Knowledge of beautiful arts and good understanding in all things. Also, outside of the court, not far from the gate, was an orchard Full four acres in size: and round it a fence had been carried: And, in the space enclosed, grew trees luxuriant and stately, Pears and pomegranates and apples that bent with their glorious burden, Fig trees with luscious fruit and olives with wide-spreading branches. And, on these trees, the fruit never ceases or fails in abundance Summer or winter alike: but the soft West wind from the ocean Nurses the buds of some, and ripens the fruit on others: Pear after pear grows ripe, and apple succeeds to apple, Cluster of grapes to cluster, and figs in endless succession. And, by the side of the orchard, a fruitful vineyard was planted: And, of the vineyard, a part, where the ground is level, lies always Warm in the sun: and here they are gathering clusters already: Some of the grapes they are treading: in front are rows of unripe ones
Just throwing off their bloom, while others are turning colour. And, at the edge of the ground, were beds very carefully tended, bright with all manner of flowers from one year's end to another. Two springs rise in the garden: the one, by various channels, Waters the whole: the other beneath the threshold is carried Into the lofty house, and also supplies the townsfolk. Such were the gifts of the Gods in the home of Alcinoüs Greatheart.

There did he stand and gaze, the divine much-enduring Odysseus. But, after feasting his eyes on the scene to his heart's contentment, Swiftly he strode o'er the threshold and entered the glorious palace, And, in the hall, he found the Phæacian rulers and chieftains Pouring out wine from their cups to the keen-eyed Slayer of Argus, Last libation of all, when of rest and of bed they bethought them. But, through the house, he passed, the divine much-enduring Odysseus, Veiled in bewildering mist, which around him was shed by Athené, 'Till he had safely reached the queen and her royal husband. Then did Odysseus clasp in his hands the knees of Arētē, As he was bidden: and then forthwith the miraculous vapour Melted away: and all who were present were dumb with amazement, Seeing a man appear: but Odysseus spoke and besought them: "Queen Arētē, O daughter of great Rexēnōr the godlike, Through many toils have I come to supplicate thee and thy consort, Also these banqueters here, to whom may the Gods be propitious Unto the end of their life: and may each bequeath to his children All of his stored-up wealth and the honours the people have given. But I beseech thee to grant me an escort that so I may sooner Come to my home: for long is the time I have suffered in exile."

Then he sat down forthwith on the hearth by the side of the fire,
All in the ashes: and those who were present looked at him in silence.

But, at the last, Echinëus, the aged hero, came forward.

Oldest of all the Phæacians and versed in ancient procedure: Counselling well, he thus, with words of wisdom addressed them:

"This does not greatly redound to your honour, Alcinoïs Greatheart,

That, by your hearth, a stranger should sit on the ground in the ashes:

Come now, bid him to rise and take his seat at the table, I like to an honoured guest, and give command that the stewards Mix more wine, that we all may make our parting libation Unto the Thunderer Zeus, the suppliants' guard and companion. And let the housekeeper dame provide him a meal from the larder."

And, when he heard this speech, Alcinoïs, ruler majestic, Took by the hand Odysseus, the world-taught, full of devices, Raised him from off the hearth, and made him to sit on the throne where

His own favourite son, Laodamas, lately was sitting:

For that he specially loved his father and used to sit near him. Then did a serving maid bring a handwash of sparkling water Poured from a golden ewer, in a beautiful basin of silver, That he might wash his hands: and she spread a table beside him,

And the staid housekeeper dame brought bread and set it before him.

And many dainties besides, from the stores she had in the larder.

Well did he eat and drink, the divine much-enduring Odysseus. Then did the sacred might of Alcinoïs speak to the steward:

"Mix a good bowl of wine, Pontonoïs, quickly, and hand it Round to the guests, that so, we may make our parting libation Unto the Thunderer Zeus, the suppliants' guard and companion."

And, at the word, he mixed the honey-sweet wine, and he passed it Round to the guests, when first he had poured in each cup the Gods' portion.

And, when libation was made, and all had drunk at their pleasure, Then did Alcinoïs rise and speak to the company present;
"Listen, and I will tell, Phæacian rulers and chieftains,
That which my spirit bids. Let all, now supper is ended,
Go to their homes and sleep: and, early to-morrow morning,
We will invite yet more of the elders, and so, in our palace,
Royally entertain this stranger, with ritual splendid
To the immortal Gods: and then we will furnish an escort
Fit for our guest, that he may, without any toil or discomfort,
Safely conducted by us, with speed and greatly rejoicing,
Come to his fatherland how distant soever it may be.
And may he suffer no pain or manner of evil before he
Stands on his native soil: but, after that, he must suffer
All that his Fate decreed, and whatever the three dread Spinners
Span in his thread of life the while his mother did bear him.
But, if this stranger is one of the blessed Immortals from heaven,
Then must they have in hand some purpose we cannot unravel,
For, hitherto, they have always appeared to us plainly, whenever
Hecatombs in full tale were with special solemnity offered:
And they will sit with us, and feast like men at our tables:
And, if a wayfaring man, alone on the highway, should meet
them,
They never hide themselves: because we are nearly related,
Just as the Round-eyes are, and the savage hordes of the Giants.
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Let not that be a care, O King, for truly I am not
Like to immortal Gods whose home is the vault of the heavens,
Either in form or nature, but only a simple mortal:
And, of the men whom you know, I think that I rather resemble
Those who have suffered the most, on account of the woes I
have met with.
Nor would my tale ever end, should I tell you in detail of all
things
Which, by the will of the Gods, I have suffered or done in my
travels.
But, with your leave, I first, though troubled, will finish my
supper:
For there is nothing on earth of a more importunate nature
Than a man's hateful belly, which will perforce be remembered
However weary one be or burdened in mind by one's troubles.
So, though with grief in my heart, yet still it unceasingly bids me
Merely to eat and drink and forget the things I have suffered,
Caring for nothing at all except to be filled and in comfort. But, when the morning comes, I beg you, delay no longer: Send me, the suffering one, with speed to the land of my fathers. And I can die in peace when once I have seen my posses-
sions And my retainers, and chiefly, the big high roof of my dwelling.” Thus did Odysseus speak: and the guests all said that the stranger Rightly deserved an escort because he had spoken discreetly. And, when libation was made, and all had drunk at their pleas-
ure, Then, to his home and to bed, each one of the feasters departed. But the divine Odysseus remained in the palace: and with him, Sat Arēté the queen and godlike Alcinoüs also, While that the cups and dishes were cleared away by the servants. And, of the three, white armed Arēté was first to break silence: For, when she looked at the garments, she recognized mantle and tunic Which she herself had woven with help of her women attendants: And, to Odysseus, she spoke, and in winged words she ad-
dressed him: “Honoured guest from abroad, without farther ado, I will ask you Who and from whence you are, and who it was gave you those garments: Surely you cannot say that you walked here over the water.” And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: “Hard would it be, O Queen, to tell in regular order All my adventures, for Heaven has given me hardships in plenty: But I will answer at once the question you specially ask me. “Far, in the distant sea, is an island, Ogygia, hidden, Home of the daughter of Atlas, the wily Calypso, a Goddess Fair and of mighty power: nor does any other Immortal Nor any mortal man hold speech or intercourse with her. But, after Zeus had stricken my ship with a flash of his lightning, Cleaving her through and through in the midst of the wine-dark ocean, Me, the sorrowful one, she brought to her hearth and she cherished.
There did they meet their death, the whole of my gallant companions,
But I, throwing my arms across the keel of my galley,
Drifted for nine whole days: on the night of the tenth, I was guided
(Black and starless it was) to Ogygia, home of Calypso,
Terrible Goddess though fair; and she with kindness received me,
Loved me and tended me well, and even promised to make me
Free from infirmity, death, and decay for days without ending.
But, to her lures, not once the heart in my bosom consented.
There, seven years I remained, still constant and ever bedewing
Sadly, with tears, those garments, divine Calypso had given:
But, when the eighth year came, in appointed cycle recurring,
Then she herself did beg me, and even urge me, to leave her,
Whether by order of Zeus, or it may be some change in her fancy.
So did she send me away on a raft lashed firmly together,
Giving me bread and wine and garments fit for Immortals:
And, with a warm and gentle wind, she wafted me onward.
So, o'er the trackless sea, for seventeen days, I was sailing:
But, on the eighteenth day, I saw like shadows the distant
Mountains of this your land: and my heart with rapture was bounding:
Wretched me: for still there was trouble before me in plenty:
Stirred up it was by Poseidon, who roused the winds to attack me,
Troubled the mighty deep, and barred my way with his billows,
So that I clung to my raft and groaned and came to a standstill.
Soon was it broken to pieces by force of the tempest: and then I
Painfully cleft my way through the gulf of the ocean by swimming,
Till, to this land of yours, the wind and current had borne me.
Barely I missed being dashed on the rocks by the force of the breakers,
As I was trying to land where the iron-bound coast was frowning:
But I drew back in time, and swam till I came to the river,
Where was the easiest landing, both free from boulders and sheltered.
There did I stumble out from the water, collecting my senses
As I best could: and the night closed silent and solemn
around me.
So, going clear of the damps from the Zeus-fallen river, I lay
down
Under a thicket to sleep, and heaped leaves over my body:
And God, out of his pity, shed boundless slumber upon me.
There, in my piled up leaves, in spite of all I had suffered,
Through the whole night I slept, till morning had passed into
noonday,
And till the sun was low, ere I had all the sleep that I needed.
And, on the beach, I saw your daughter's maiden attendants
Playing: but she herself was like a Goddess among them.
Her did I beg for help: and, true to her nature, she acted
Nobly, and as you would hardly expect so youthful a person
Would do on meeting a stranger: for young people often are
foolish.
Plenty of bread did she give me and sparkling wine, and she
washed me
In a clear river pool, and finally gave me these garments.
All these things, in spite of my grief, I have truly recounted."
And, in reply, the king Alcinoïs spoke and addressed him:
"This, Sir Guest, was hardly a suitable thought of my
daughter's:
For that she ought to have brought you, along with her
maidens in waiting,
Into our house: since it was to her that you made supplication."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Do not, I pray, O Hero, reprove your daughter for my sake.
Duly she bade me to follow along with her maiden attendants:
But, I refused, being bashful and fearing you might be offended:
Seeing we races of men are suspicious one of another."
And, unto him in reply, Alcinoïs spoke and addressed him:
"Such by no means, Sir Guest, is the sort of temper I cherish,
Vainly to be incensed: for reason is better in all things.
And I could wish, O Father Zeus, and Apollo, and Pallas,
That, being just as you are, and wholly like-minded as I am,
You might be wed to my daughter, and be a son-in-law to me,
Staying with us: and myself would give you a house and
possessions,
That is, if you were willing: but no one among the Phaeacians
Here shall detain you unwilling: may Zeus our Father forbid it.
And, to this end, I appoint that an escort be ready to-morrow:
So you may rest assured: meanwhile you can sleep at your
pleasure,
Fearing no trouble or ill: for my men will quietly row you
To your own country and home or anywhere else you desire:
E'en though the place you seek be farther away than Euboea,
Which is the farthest land, according to some of our people
Who saw it once themselves, what time they bore Rhadamanthus
Thither to hold discourse with Tityus, Earth's huge offspring.
Safely they reached their goal, and with ease accomplished the
journey,
And in the self-same day, rowed back to the place where they
started.
And you will see for yourself how far my ships are the fleetest,
Just as my lads are the best to thrash the sea with the oar-blade."
Thus did he speak: and Odysseus was glad in spite of his
problems,
And, as was meet, he spoke in prayer to the Father of heaven:
"Father Zeus, those things which Alcinoüs friendly has
promised,
Faithfully may he perform: and, wherever the earth yields
harvests,
He shall have glory. And I shall come once more to my
homeland."
Now, in such words as these, they were holding converse
together.
But the white armed Arête, already, had bidden her handmaids
That they should set in the cloister a bedstead with plenty of
blankets,
Fair ones and purple dyed, and spread a coverlet on it,
And to put woollen cloaks that the guest might wrap himself
warmly.
Each with a torch in her hand, the maids then went at her
bidding,
And, when with diligent care they had piled the bedstead with
wrappers,
Came to the side of Odysseus, and stood, and thus they ad-
dressed him:
"Rise, and lie down, Sir Guest: your bed has been made and is waiting."
And 'twas delightful to sleep in a bed like a civilized person.
Thus did he soundly sleep, the divine much-enduring Odysseus,
Snug, on a bedstead of carven wood, in the echoing cloister:
While that Alcinoüs slept in a lofty tower at the angle:
And, at his side, his bed was shared by his noble lady.
BOOK VIII

THE ATHLETIC GAMES

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers, Straightway the sacred might of Alcinoës rose from his slumbers, Also the Zeus-born hero, the sacker of cities, Odysseus. Then did Alcinoës lead the way to the Place of Assembly, Built by the harbour side, where Phæacians met for discussion. There did they take their seats, on the polished benches of marble, Near to each other. But Pallas went through the streets of the city, Taking the form of a herald of wise Alcinoës Greatheart, That she might better contrive the return of great-hearted Odysseus: And, by the side of each man, she stood, and spoke to him gently:

"Come, ye rulers and chiefs of the great Phæacian people, Haste to the meeting place, to hear what the stranger can tell you, Lately arrived at the house of the wise Alcinoës, fresh from Wandering over the sea: he is like an Immortal to look at."

So, with her words, she stirred the spirit of each one: and, quickly, Gathering crowds of men filled all the seats of the forum. Many an eye, be sure, was fixed on the son of Laërtes, Seeing his warlike mien: for ever the watchful Athené Shed o'er his head and shoulders a grace like that of divine ones, Making him taller and stouter to see, that, by all the Phæacians, He might be loved and revered, and might perform to perfection

Many a feat of athletics at which the Phæacians might try him. Now, when they all were collected, and crowded the Place of Assembly,
Then did Alcinoës rise, and spoke in the midst, and addressed them:

"Hear me, ye leaders and chiefs of the great Phæacian people,
While I shall say those things which my heart commands me to tell you.
This our guest at my side has wandered by chance to our city,
Whether from Eastern men or Western, I know not: and now he
Begs us to send him back, without fail, to the land that he came from.
So, as we always have done, let us lose no time to escort him:
Since it is never my will that one who comes to my palace
Should be detained for long lamenting the want of an escort.
Come, let us drag to the sea a good black sea-worthy vessel,
Bound on her maiden voyage, and let us choose from the people
Sailor lads fifty and two who have proved themselves seamen of merit.
These, after binding the oars, all ready for use, at the benches,
Leaving the ship, will come to my house for some hasty refreshment:
There will be plenty for all. Now these are the orders I issue
As to the men of the crew: but, as to the Lords of the sceptre,
Here I invite you all to come with me to my palace,
That, in a friendly way, we may welcome the stranger among us.
No one, I hope, will refuse. And let somebody call the inspired
Minstrel Demodocus: since, unto him, has the Deity granted
Gift of delightful singing, whatever the theme of his song be."

Then did he lead the way: and together the Lords of the sceptre
Followed behind the king, while a herald was seeking the minstrel.
Also the seafaring men, those fifty and two who were chosen,
Went, as he bade, to the shore, where the good black vessel was lying:
Then did they drag her down to float on the deep sea water,
Carried the mast and sails on board, and fitted the long oars
Each in its leathern loop: the white sails then they unfurléd,
And, well out in the sea, they moored their craft, and returning
Quickly, they hied to the house of the king Alcinoüs Wiseheart:
So, with a throng of men, the courts and cloisters were crowded. He, to provide for his guests, of black sheep, slaughtered a dozen,
And eight white-tusked swine, and two great lumbering oxen:
These, they did flay and cook, and prepared a glorious banquet.
Then did the herald draw near, who was leading the true-hearted minstrel:
Dear was the man to the Muse, who gave him both good and evil,
For she deprived him of sight, but with sweetest song she endowed him.
And, in the midst of the feasters, Pontonoüs placed for the minstrel,
Resting against a pillar, a throne that was studded with silver,
And, from a peg, he hung a clear-toned lyre, and showed him how he could reach it with ease: and he set a basket beside him
And a convenient table, and wine to drink at his pleasure.
Then were all hands stretched out to the good things ready before them.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Then did the Muse incite him to sing the glories of heroes:
And 'twas a tale whose fame rang through the arches of heaven,
All of Odysseus' strife with the son of Peleus, Achilles:
How, at a sacred feast, in time gone by, they contended, speaking outrageous words: but the king of men, Agamemnon,
Deep in his heart, rejoiced that the bravest Achæans were wrangling.
For, that it would be so, was foretold him by Phæbus Apollo
On the remembered day when he crossed the threshold of Pytho,
Seeking response from the God: for then, as Zeus had ordained,
First, over Trojans and Greeks, the wave of misfortune came rolling.
This was the theme he chose, that famous bard: but Odysseus took, in his sturdy hands, a purple wrapper, and drew it over his head, that so his comely face might be hidden:
For that he felt it shame to be weeping before the Phæacians,
Thus, when the bard divine made pause in his singing, Odysseus, Wiping his tears, was fain to withdraw from his head the wrapper, And, from his double cup, would pour to the Gods a libation: But, soon as ever the bard resumed his song at the bidding Of the Phæacian nobles, because they were pleased with his singing, Then, with many a groan, once more his head would he cover. Now there was never a one of the guests who saw he was weeping, But 'twas Alcinoüs only took notice of what was the matter, For he was sitting beside him and heard him heavily groaning: And, without waiting, he spoke to those oar-loving men, the Phæacians:

"Listen to me, I pray, Phæacian rulers and chieftains, Every one, by now, must feel quite sated with eating And with the lyre, though well it is suited to sumptuous banquets: Now let us all go out, and each make trial of athletics, After his taste, that our guest may be able to say to his comrades When he gets home once more, how far, in these sports, we are foremost; Wrestling and boxing and leaping and, most of all, in the foot race."

Then did he lead the way, and the company followed behind him. But, on the peg, the herald did hang the lyre, and gently Taking Demodocus' hand, did lead him out of the building, Following that same road, which the others, the Chiefs of Phæacia, Now were thronging already, to view those wonderful contests. So, to the ground assigned, they went: and people in thousands Crowded behind. And many, young men athletic and skilful, Rose to compete—Ocyalus, Nauteus, Anchialus, Ponteus, Anabesineus, Prorëus, Amphialus grandson of Tecton, Also Euryalus, worthy to match with man-slaughtering Arés Nauboleus' son, who in stature and also in beauty was foremost Of the Phæacian men, bar only Laodamas: lastly Halius and Clytoneus, with noble Laodamas, rose up,
These three sons of the king. And first they competed in foot race,
Where, from the starting post, a level course had been measured:
All got away together, and quickly covered the distance,
Raising the dust as they ran: but far the swiftest in running
Was Clytonéus: for, just as mules leave oxen behind them,
Ploughing in fallow land, so he went ahead of the others,
Reaching the goal alone. Then came a wrestling contest,
Arduous struggle, in which Eurýalus threw all opponents:
And, in the leaping, was proved Amphíalus best of all comers,
Kindly and brave, as befitted the son of Alcinoís Greatheart.
But, when they all had enjoyed as much as they wished of the contests,
Then did Alcinoís' son, Laodamas, speak to his comrades:
"Come, my friends, let us ask our guest what feat of athletics
He may have practised or learnt: he has all the build of an athlete:
Look at his thighs and his knees, and his great hands resting upon them,
Also his neck like a bull's, and enormous strength: and he is not
Either so old as he looks, but much worn down by his hardships.
For you may take my word, no life is so bad as a sailor's
Quickly to break a man up however sturdy he may be."
And, at his word, forthwith Euryalus spoke up in answer:
"What you propose, my friend, for my part I heartily second."
And, when Alcinoís' son, Laodamas, heard his approval,
Forward he came and stood, and thus he spoke to Odysseus:
"Won't you come with us too, Sir Guest, to take part in our contests,
If you are practised in any? No doubt you are skilled in athletics.
Nothing can win respect for a man as long as his life lasts,
More than to fend for himself with his hands and his feet on occasion.
Come, have a try at our games, and brush away cares from your spirit.
Nor will you have much longer to wait for your voyage: for by this time
Has your good ship been launched: and the sailors are waiting your pleasure."

But, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "Thank you, my friend, for this your courteous invitation: But I am thinking more of my troubles than feats of athletics, For I have suffered much, and been through toils without number: And, as I sit in this your great assembly, I still am Making my prayer for help to your king and all of the people."

Then did Euryalus speak, and to his face he reproached him: "To my mind, O stranger, you don't seem much of a sportsman, Though there are plenty of sports in the world that a man may choose from: More like a merchant skipper, who daily is seen on his vessel, Lording it over his crew, a very keen hand at a bargain, Always thinking of cargoes, and keeping an eye on return freights, Yes, and exorbitant profits; and not in the least like an athlete."

But, him sternly regarding, thus answered resourceful Odysseus: "Stranger, not well have you spoken, nor like to a man of discretion:
For so it is, that the Gods bestow not all graces on all men, Whether of nature or mind or power of eloquent speaking.
For one man, it may chance, is of insignificant stature,
Yet, by the Gods, his form is crowned with the glory of language,
So, 'tis a pleasure to see him: for while he speaks with assurance,
Yet is he courteous and modest, distinguished in any assembly:
And, when he goes through the city, men gaze as a God were before them:
While that another man, in form, may be like the Immortals,
Yet, on his words, no crown of grace has Heaven bestowed.
Thus is it then with you: your body is fair: no fairer
Even a God could fashion, but in your mind you are foolish.
You have provoked my temper by this unmannerly speaking.
Nevertheless I am not so completely unskilled in athletics
As you appear to think, but rather was one of the foremost
When I was able to trust in my youth and the strength of my hand-grasp.
Now I am somewhat crippled from all the things I have suffered,
But still, spite of my toils, I will try my hand at athletics, 
Seeing your words are stinging, and you have greatly provoked me.”

Starting up just as he was, with his cloak on, he seized a discus, 
Greater and thicker by far than those which the agile Phaeacians 
Were in the habit of using in contests one with another: 
Whirling it round and round, from his mighty hand he hurled it, 
Hummed the stone in the air: at the rush of it all the beholders 
Fain would crouch on the ground, those oar-loving men the 
Phaeacians.

Lightly it flew from his hand, and easily beating the record, 
Far to the front it fell: and the distance was marked by Athené 
Taking the form of a man: and she called him by name and 
addressed him:

“Even a blind man, stranger, would find your mark with his 
fingers, 
For it is far from the others: this time you are certain of win-
ning,
For no Phaeacian man will beat this or even come near it.”

So did she speak: and Odysseus rejoiced in heart at her 
saying,
Glad, in the heat of conflict, to find a friend and a comrade.
Then, in a lighter vein, he spoke amongst the Phaeacians:

“Reach this discus, my boys: and I think, if I tried, I could 
next time 
Hurl another as big, or may be even a bigger: 
And, if there’s anyone else who wants to make trial of his 
prowess, 
Let him come here and try: because you have angered me 
greatly: 
Boxing or wrestling or running—it’s all one what you may vote 
for—
Any Phaeacian man excepting Laodamas only: 
For who would willingly strive with a man who is showing him 
kindness?

And that man is a fool, and worthy of no estimation, 
Who, in a foreign land, would challenge his host to a contest, 
Clipping his own career. But the challenge of others I shun not: 
All I wish is to face them, and find which of us is the better. 
For, in all manly sports, I think I am fairly proficient: 
Well can I handle a bow, and could pick out a man with an arrow
E'en in a hostile crowd who together were shooting against me, Ere he could hit me first. Philoctetés only surpassed me, When, in the Trojan host, we Greeks made practice in shooting. But, of the rest, I assert that I was easily foremost, That is of men now living and eating the bread of mortals: As for the men of the past, with them I have no competition, Hercules, or that king of Æchalia, prince among bowmen, Eurytus, who once dared to compete with Immortals in shooting: Therefore he died when young, nor reached old age in his palace, For that, in wrath at his challenge, Apollo the Archer destroyed him. And I can throw with a spear, as none else can shoot with an arrow: Only I fear lest, in running, some active Phæacian may pass me: For, from my hardships at sea, I am shockingly out of condition, Since, on board of a ship, from one year's end to another, There is no chance of training: and so my legs are enfeebled."

Thus did he speak: and the guests each one sat speechless and silent:
But 'twas Alcinoüs only, who took up the word and addressed him:

"Friend, we are sure that your words were not ungraciously spoken, Seeing you only wish to maintain your credit for prowess, Being provoked because this man, while the sports were proceeding, Chode you in such a way as reflects on himself no honour, If he has ever learnt to speak what things are becoming. Take in good part my words, that some day when you are feasting, Seated beside your wife, at home with your children around you, You may remember our sports, and lightly tell to the hero Guest at your board, how Zeus, to us not less than to others, Skill in many an art, from father to son has bestowed. For we are not, may be, quite perfect in boxing or wrestling, But we are swift on our feet, and in managing ships are unrivalled. But 'tis the feast and the lyre and the dance, that we chiefly delight in, Garments of varied fashion, warm baths and luxurious bedding.
But come, those of our men who are most accomplished in dancing,
Show us your skill, that our guest may say to his friends and companions
When he gets home once more, how far we surpass all others,
Both in our managing ships, and in running and dancing and singing.
But go, some one with speed, and bring the clear-sounding lyre
For our Demodocus here: it is lying about in the palace.”

Thus did Alcinoüs speak: and quick at his bidding a herald
Started to bring from the palace the lyre so artfully hollowed.
Then did nine umpires rise, who were chosen men of the people
Duly appointed to make for such contests all needful arrange-
ments.
Quickly they smoothed the ground, a fair wide space for the contest.
Soon did the herald arrive and give the lyre to the minstrel
Who then stepped to the front, while the others gathered around him,
Men, in the bloom of youth, well practised in intricate dancing.
And such a measure they trod as Gods might do: but Odysseus
Watched their twinkling feet, and his heart was lost in amaze-
ment

[For matter omitted at this point, see Appendix A.]

Then did Alcinoüs bid that Laodamas should, with his brother Halius, dance for a while by themselves: for no others could match them.

So, taking up in their hands a ball of beautiful purple,
Specially made for their use by the skilful Polybus, one would, Bending his body back, throw it upward till almost it vanished
Lost in the shade of the clouds, while, suddenly leaping, the other
Easily caught it before his feet to the ground had descended.
But, after trying their skill in throwing the ball straight upwards, Backwards and forwards they passed it from one to the other, while dancing
Both, on the grassy lawn: and all the others applauded,
Standing and looking on, ’midst the sound of general clapping.
Then, to Alcinoüs, thus did speak the godlike Odysseus:
"Prince, upon whom the gaze of the people is fastened, you promised
That the Phæacians were able to beat all others in dancing:
Now you have given the proof: and I have been greatly astonished."

Then did the sacred might of Alcinoüs hear him with gladness, And in these words he spoke to those oar-loving men the Phæacians:

"Listen to what I say, Phæacian rulers and chieftains:
This our friend, it seems, is a man of good understanding:
Come, let us give him the gifts that are due to a guest of distinction:
For, over this our people, great lords and wealthy are ruling,
Twelve, not counting myself: and let each contribute a talent
Of fine gold to the store, and a well-washed robe and a tunic.
Let us collect them all with speed, that the guest whom we honour,
Having them safe in his hands, may go to his supper rejoicing.
And, in becoming words, let Euryalus make his atonement,
And with a gift, because the thing that he said was unseemly."

So did he speak: and as one, they did what the king had suggested,
Each one sending a steward to fetch the gifts from his mansion.
Then, as was right and meet, Euryalus spoke to his chieftain:

"Prince, whom with one accord our people regard as the noblest,
Willingly, as you command, do I make amends to the stranger:
For I will give him this sword with a hilt that is fashioned of silver
And a good blade of bronze encased in an ivory scabbard
Newly carved: it will be for him a possession of value."

And, at the word, he placed in the hands of Odysseus the broadsword
Studded with silver, and thus, in unbidden words he addressed him:

"Here's to your health, Sir Guest: and if any word I have spoken
Has been offensive, I pray it be carried away by the tempests.
And may the blest Gods grant you to see your wife and your homeland,
Since, for so many a year, you have suffered sorrow in exile."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Health to you also, my friend: may the Gods grant happiness to you:
And may you never regret, in the future, this beautiful weapon
Which you have given me now, with words so handsomely spoken."
So did he speak: and he girt the silver-bossed sword on his shoulders.
And the sun set: and before him, were spread those glorious presents,
Which, to the house of the king, were borne by magnificent heralds:
There they were placed in the hands of Alcinoüs' sons, who received them
Duly, and laid them in order before their mother revered.
Then did his Majesty lead the way: and, when they were seated, each on a throne, the king Alcinoüs spoke to Arêté:
"Come, my queen, bring hither the finest chest in your chamber,
And in it put a robe that is spotlessly clean, and a tunic,
And set a cauldron of bronze by the fire, and heat for him water,
That he may take a bath, and look at the piled-up treasures
Brought by Phæacian nobles, that so, light-hearted and careless,
He may enjoy the feast and harmonious chant of the minstrel
And, as my present, I give this beautiful goblet, all golden,
That he may think of me each day when he makes his libation
In his own hall to Zeus and the rest of the blessed Immortals."
So did he speak: and the queen Arêté ordered the handmaids quickly to set on the fire a mighty three-footed cauldron:
And, o'er the blazing fire, to warm the water they set it:
Wrapped was the cauldron's bulge in flame: and warm grew the water.
Meanwhile Arêté had brought a beautiful chest from her chamber,
And, in the chest, she placed, for his use, the glorious presents
Which the Phæacians had given, the gold and the garments,
and also,
On her own part, a robe and a handsome tunic to suit it:
And, in unbidden words, 'twas thus she spoke to Odysseus:
"Now you must look to the lid yourself, and cord it directly, Lest, on the way, some man should rob you while you are sleeping Sweetly and unawares, as your black ship speeds on her journey."

And, when he heard these words, the divine much-enduring Odysseus, Straightway he fitted the lid, and then with a cord he secured it, Tied in an intricate knot which the lady Circé had taught him. Then did the housekeeper bid him to go to his bath: and most welcome Was the warm water: because he had not been used to such comforts Since he had left the home of the fair-haired Goddess Calypso, Where, with unfailing care, as a God he had ever been tended. But, when the handmaids had washed him, and then with oil had anointed, Clothed him in tunic, and thrown a beautiful cloak round his shoulders, Stately he went from the bath to the hall where the princes were sitting Over their wine: and there, by a pillar supporting the roof-tree, Graced with God-given beauty, Nausicaa stood: and she marvelled, Seeing Odysseus, and thus, in unbidden words, she addressed him:

"Happiness to you, Sir Guest, and when you are safe in your homeland, Think of me kindly, that I was the first to come to your rescue."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"O Nausicaa, daughter of king Alcinoûs Greatheart, Be it the will of Zeus, the deep-voiced husband of Hera, That I may reach my home and see the day of returning, Then, in that land, to thee, will I pray as it were to a Goddess Long as my life shall last: for thou didst save me, O maiden."

Then did he take his seat by the side of Alcinoûs Greatheart: And, by this time, they were helping the guests and mixing the wine cup.

Meanwhile a herald approached, and led Demodocus forward, Honoured by all, and gave him a seat in the midst of the feasters
Where he could lean at his ease against one of the tall roof-pillars. Then the resourceful Odysseus in these words spoke to a steward,
Cutting a slice from the back—there was meat in abundance remaining—
Of a great tusky boar, with plenty of gravy around it:
"Here, Steward, take this meat to Demodocus, and, though in sorrow,
I will embrace him: for bards, from all who dwell on the wide earth,
Honour receive and respect: because each several bard is Dear to the Muse: for to him the gift of song she has granted."
So did he speak: and the steward took up the meat and he gave it Into Demodocus' hands, whose heart was glad when he took it. Then were all hands stretched out to the good things ready before them.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, Then, to the hero bard, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"More than all mortals I praise you, Demodocus: either the Muses,
Daughters of Zeus, have taught you, or even it may be Apollo: For, in due order, you sing of the things which befell the Achæans,
All that they did and suffered, and all their toils without number, Just as if you yourself had been there, or had heard from a witness.
But come, change the strain, and tell us in order the wondrous Tale of the wooden horse, which Epeius by help of Athené Made, and the craft of Odysseus conveyed into Ilion's fortress, Crowded with warrior men who captured and plundered the city. For, if you tell these things judiciously, just as they happened, I will at once declare to all the men I may meet with How a beneficent God, with sweetest song, has endowed you."
Then, by the God inspired, the other recited his story,
Taking it up from the time when the Greeks, having burnt their encampment,
Sailed away in their ships: while the heroes who followed Odysseus Sat concealed in the horse, in the market place of the Trojans,
Who, of their own accord, had dragged it into the fortress.
There then stood the horse: and the Trojans were sitting around it,
Making suggestions at random, of which these three were the chiefest:
Either to chop a hole in the planking of wood with their axes,
Or drag it up with ropes to the brow of the mountain, and cast it down on the rocks, or else to let the great image remain there just as it was, as a gift to appease the anger of Heaven.
And, of these plans, the last was the one that they finally followed:
For their destruction was certain, when once it should enter the city,
That great horse of wood, where the bravest men of the Argives:
Then were sitting concealed, bringing slaughter and fate to the Trojans.
Also he sang how the Greeks came forth from the place of their hiding,
Streaming from out the horse, and began to ravage the city.
Each went a different way through the steep hill town: but Odysseus
Went to Deiphobus' house, and there, by daring prodigious,
Once more, he was the victor, through favour of mighty Athené.
Such was the song of the bard: but the heart of Odysseus was melted
At the remembered tale: and tears stole down from his eyelids.
And, as a woman might weep, who sees her dear lord and husband fall, in the people's sight, before the wall of the city,
Striving, from town and children, to ward the pitiless hour:
And, as he gasps in death, she throws herself on him, and shrilly wailing she clings round his body: but those who are standing behind her
Beat her on back and shoulders with spears, and drag her to bondage,
That she may live henceforth a life of toil and lamenting,
While, with most pitiful sorrow, her once fair cheeks will be wasted:
So, from under his eyebrows, a tear was shed by Odysseus.
Now, of the company there, not one perceived he was weeping:
But 'twas Alcinoüs only took notice of what was the matter,
For he was sitting beside him, and heard him heavily groaning. And, in a moment, he spoke to those oar-loving men the Phaeacians:

"Listen to me, I pray, Phæacian rulers and chieftains:
Let Demodocus now, for a time, give rest to his lyre, Since it appears this song, to one of us here, is distressing.
For ever since we sat down, and the bard has been telling his story,
This, our honoured guest, has not ceased from groans and lamenting.
Come, let the singer cease, that we and the stranger together May have a pleasant time, for to all of us that will be welcome: For, it is just for the sake of our honoured guest, we are holding
This ceremonial feast, and are giving him tokens of friendship: Seeing a suppliant stranger is given in place of a brother To any man who has aught of the heart of a man in his bosom.
So, Sir, I beg you now to discard all thoughts of suspicion, And to reply to my question: for that is both courteous and proper. Tell us your name, by which you were called by your father and mother, And by your friends as well, your fellow townsmen and neighbours: Since there is never a man, whatever his state or condition, Who has no name at all: but, in every country, do parents, Soon as a child is born, make choice of a name that may suit him.
And tell us also your land and your race and the name of your city, So that our clever ships may carry you thither in safety:
For we Phæacian people are never in need of a helmsman, Nor do our ships need rudders, with which all others are furnished, But, of themselves, they feel the thoughts and will of the skipper: And they can find their way to the lands and cities of all men, Even through fog and cloud, across the gulf of the ocean: Nor is there ever a fear that they may be wrecked or disabled. Yet I remember that once my father Nausithoös told me
How we should meet, some day, with the wrath of the jealous Poseidon,
For that we safely conduct all comers across his dominions:
Some day, he said, the God would smite a seaworthy vessel
Of the Phæacian men, on the sea with its mists and its shadows,
As she came home from a voyage, and would girdle our town
with a mountain.
Thus did the old man say: which either the God will accomplish,
Or it will not be accomplished, whichever in wisdom he chooses.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
Where have you wandered abroad, and what are the lands that you came to?
What were the people like? Were their towns in fine situations?
Which of the people were fierce and rude and regardless of justice?
Which of them friendly to strangers, and fearing the Powers of Heaven?
Say too, why did you weep and inwardly groan at the story,
Told of the fate of Troy and the valiant deeds of the Argives?
But 'twas the work of the Gods, who ordained that terrible slaughter
That it might be a theme for the bards of all generations.
Did some kinsman of yours meet death at the hands of the Trojans,
Son or father-in-law? for these to us are the dearest
Next to our own flesh and blood. Or was it one of your comrades
Who was in sympathy with you? for that man is as a brother,
Who, as our daily companion, yet ever remembers discretion."
BOOK IX
POLYPHÉMUS

AND, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Prince, whom, with one accord, the people point out as the noblest,
It is indeed a pleasure to listen, as we have been doing,
Unto a bard whose voice might rival the voice of Immortals:
Since, for my part, I can fancy no end so much to be wished for
As that a cheerful content should pervade the whole of the people,
And that, in every home, the feasters orderly seated
Listen to songs of a bard, the while there stands on the table
Plenty of bread and meat, and the vintner dips from the punch-bowl
Wine of the sweetest, and pours into each man’s goblet a portion:
This is the happiest state that my mind is able to picture..
But, as your heart did prompt you to ask me what were the troubles
Caused me to groan, and so to set me more bitterly groaning,
What shall I tell you first, what last? for the Dwellers in Heaven
Trouble have added to trouble. But since one must make a beginning,
I will declare my name, that so, though I be but a stranger,
I may be welcomed by you, and escape the pitiless hour.
"I am Odysseus, the son of Laërtes: my clever devices
Are in the minds of all: and the fame of me reaches to heaven.
And, if you ask my home, it is Ithaca, where is a mountain,
Neriton, seen from afar, with forests that wave in the breezes.
And, in a cluster beside it, there lie a number of islands
Close to each other, Samé, Dulichium, wooded Zacynthus:
Ithaca, farthest away, lies low on the Western horizon,
While that the rest are apart, towards the East and the sunrise:
K
Rugged it is, but the mother of splendid men: and, for my part, nought in the whole wide world is so sweet as one's own dear country.

True though it be that Calypso detained me for years in her island, and, in her magic halls, the wily Circé of Æa, held me in thrall, still longing to have me for lord and husband: yet, not once, did the heart in my breast consent to their pleading:

For nothing else so dear as his fatherland and his parents. Ever can come to a man: although, in a country of strangers, Splendid may be his home, but yet his parents are absent. But come, let me relate my journeys, and all the disasters which Zeus gave me to bear when we left Troy's city behind us.

**The Story of Odysseus**

"Driven by wind and storm, we reached the Ciconian city, Ismarus: there did I sack the town and slaughter the townsfolk:

And, having captured there much spoil and numbers of women, portioned them fairly round, that none, of his share, be defrauded.

Then did I urge our men to flee with what speed they could muster:

But, like children and fools, they would not listen to reason. Far too much strong wine was drunk, and numbers of sheep were slaughtered beside the shore, and curved-horn lumbering oxen. But the Ciconian men had gone to summon their clansmen, neighbours who lived hard by, on the mainland, both greater in number and more warlike as well, and skilled to fight upon horseback with armed men, or on foot, if occasion required: they came then shrouded in morning mist, as blossoms appear in the springtime.

Then did the vengeful hand of Zeus fall heavily on us victims of cruel fate, to fill the cup of our sorrows.
So we and they stood up, and fought by the side of our galleys, Hurling our bronze-tipped spears, each side at the ranks of the other.

And, through the long forenoon, while the day was waxing in brightness,

Did we withstand their attack, although they outnumbered us greatly.

But, when the noon was past, and the time to loose oxen approaching,

Then were we driven back and forced to give way to their onset.

And, from each ship, some six of our well-greaved gallant companions

Met with their fate: but the rest escaped from death and destruction.

"So we sailed on from thence, our hearts o'erburthened with sorrow,

Glad to be saved from death, but grieved at the loss of our comrades.

Yet did I take good heed that none should weigh anchor, before that

Thrice we had called by name each one of our hapless companions

Who had met death on the plain by the hand of Ciconian foemen.

But the Cloud-gatherer Zeus roused-up, to assail us, the North wind,

In a most furious squall, and with one grey blanket of storm-cloud,

Blotted out land and sea: and sudden darkness fell o'er us.

Then were the ships driven headlong before the gale: and our canvas,

Once and again, was split by the violent force of the tempest.

So for our very lives, we lowered the sails, and we stowed them Safe in the ships, and rowed with all our might to the mainland.

There, for two nights and days, we lay helpless, eating our heart out,

Broken with toil and grief, but when morning rose on the third day,

Golden and fair, we stepped our masts, and, hoisting our canvas,
Rested awhile, and committed our ships to wind and the helmsman.  
And I should then have come unscathed to the land of my fathers,  
Had not the Northerly wind and the current that sets round Maleia  
Driven me out of my course and brought me near to Cytheræ.

"Thence, for nine whole days, by buffeting winds was I driven  
Over the fishy sea: on the tenth, we came to the country Where dwell the Lotus-eaters, the men whose food is a flower.  
There did we go on shore and replenish our barrels with water,  
And, by the side of the ships, we at last had a meal in comfort.  
But, after drinking and eating for needful refreshment, I sent out  
Some of our men as scouts, to explore the country: who had not Gone very far before they encountered the Lotus-eaters.  
These had no thought of harm towards our comrades, but gave them  
Fruit of the lotus to eat, that fruit which is sweeter than honey,  
Which, if a man once tastes, he cares no more for returning,  
Nor to send word to his friends, but to stay with the Lotus-eaters,  
Plucking the lotus flower, forgetful of home and of kindred.  
But I, spite of their tears, did drag them on board our vessels  
Binding them down in the hold, beneath the well-fitted cross-beams.  
And, to the rest of my comrades, I gave most urgent injunctions,  
With not a moment's delay, to hurry on board our galleys,  
Lest they should taste the lotus, and lose all wish for returning.  
Quickly they entered the ships, and took their seats on the benches,  
And, with a rhythmic stroke, they smote the whitening billows.  
"So we sailed on from thence, though our hearts were burdened with sorrow,  
Till we arrived at the land of the men overbearing and lawless Known as the Round-eyes, who, doubtless, on Heaven's protection presuming,  
Never take thought to plough, or plant any crops for their eating,  
But, without ploughing or sowing, the soil untended produces Wheat and barley, and vines that yield from magnificent clusters Rich red wine, being nourished and fed by the showers from heaven.
Place they have none to meet for debate, nor customs established
But, far away of the crests of the lofty mountains, they dwell in
Caves hollowed out of the rock: and each is a law to his children
And to his wives: and none takes thought or cares for his
neighbour.

"There is an islet that lies across the mouth of a harbour
Not very far from the shore of the land which the Round-eyes
inhabit,
Densely wooded: and, in it, are goats in numbers uncounted,
Running at will: for no tread of man comes thither to scare them:
Neither do hunters frequent it, who follow their arduous calling
Searching the forests that lie amongst the peaks of the mountains.
And you will never find there, of course, any cattle or corn-
fields,
Nor is it ploughed or sown from one year’s end to another,
Wholly forsaken of men, but browsed by the bleating wild goats.
For these Round-eyes possess no ships with cheeks of vermilion,
Nor are there shipwrights among them, to build for them well-
benched vessels
Which could accomplish the voyage to distant cities: for, often,
Men cross over the sea in ships to visit each other:
Then would this lonely isle have been studded with fair habita-
tions,
For it is far from barren, but fit to produce, in their season,
Crops of all kinds: for around it, just clear of the shore-line are
meadows,
Rich and well watered, and places where vines would thrive
without failing,
And smooth stretches of ploughland: tall standing crops could
be garnered,
Each as the season came round, so exceedingly rich is the sub-
soil.
And there is in it a harbour, in which is no need of a cable,
Neither to lay down moorings, nor fasten the ships with stern-
haulers:
Run them aground and leave them: and there they will lie in
safety
Till fair breezes blow, and the sailors wish to be going.
And, at the head of the cove, is a spring of sparkling water
Flowing from out a cave, in the midst of a spinney of aspens.
Thither it was that we sailed: and it seems some God must have led us
Through that murky night, when ahead there was nothing but blackness:
For a thick fog enveloped our ships, and a blanket of dense cloud
Covered the moon: and so, we had no sight of the island
Nor did we even perceive the long white line of the breakers
Rolling towards the land, before that our vessels had grounded.
But, when our ships were aground, we hauled down all our canvas,
And, at the edge of the waves, ourselves stepped forth on the shingle:
There we fell sound asleep till the Goddess of Morning should wake us.

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Filled with admiring wonder, we made the tour of the island.
Then did the Nymphs of the place, those daughters of Zeus of the Ægis,
Startle the mountain goats, that my comrades might feast at their pleasure.
Quickly we brought, from the ships, our pliant bows and long-shafted Javelins, and a-shooting we went in three separate parties.
Soon, by help of the God, we were furnished with plenty of venison.
Twelve were the ships of my fleet, and to each nine goats were allotted,
And, as my private share, they picked out ten of the finest.
So, for the whole day long, we sat, till the hour of sunset,
Gorging ourselves with meat and drinking wine of the sweetest:
For we had not come yet to the end of our wine, but we still had Plenty aboard: for the time that we sacked the Ciconian city,
Every crew took care to draw good store in our barrels.
And, on the opposite shore, we looked at the land of the Round-eyes,
Saw the smoke of their fires, and heard their flocks a-bleating.
And, when the sun had set, and the shadows of evening had fallen,
Then, each one in his place, we lay and slept on the sea-beach.
"But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then did I call a meeting, and spoke to the whole of my comrades:
'All the rest of you stay where you are, my trusty companions:
I, with my ship and my crew, will go exploring, to find out
What sort of men those are who live in the land over yonder,
If they are savage and fierce and not regardful of justice,
Or else friendly to strangers and fearing the Powers of Heaven.'
"Thus having said, I embarked, and gave the word to my comrades,
Casting the hawsers loose, to follow me into the vessel:
Into the ship they climbed, and took their seats on the benches:
Then, with a rhythmic stroke, they smote the whitening billows.
But, when we came to the land on the farther side of the narrows,
There on the shore we saw, quite close to the water, a cavern,
Lofty, and overarched with laurel, and sleeping outside it,
Flocks of sheep and of goats, which were safely secured in a paddock
Fenced with big quarried stones and branches of oak and pine logs,
There, asleep, lay a monstrous man, who it seemed was the owner
Of these flocks, and all by himself he fed them and tended,
Never consorting with others, but lone ferocious and savage:
For he was huge and strange in his build, nor was his appearance
Like to a man that eats bread, but more like a forest-clad headland
Jutting out from a mountain range in rude isolation.
"Then did I bid the rest of my trusty companions to wait there
Keeping a guard on the ship: but I carefully chose from my comrades
Twelve of the best, and with these I returned to the cave: and
I carried
One full goatskin of wine, which Maro the son of Eupeithes
Gave me, the priest of Apollo who guards the Ismarian city,
For that we held him in awe, and kept him safe and protected,
Him and his wife and his child: for he lived in the grove of Apollo.
Splendid gifts did he give me, of well-wrought gold, seven talents,
Also he gave me a bowl, of solid silver, and lastly
Drew, in capacious jars, no less than a dozen in number,  
Rich sweet unmixed wine, divinest liquor: and no one  
Knew of his doing this, amongst his slaves and attendants,  
Saving himself, his beloved wife, and one housekeeper only.  
And, when he wanted to drink, he would fill, with this honey-
sweet liquor,  
One cup only of wine, and mix it with twenty of water,  
And there would rise from the bowl such perfume as Gods might
delight in:
Then it were hard indeed for a man to refrain from drinking.  
Filling a large-sized skin with this, I packed, in a wallet,
Store of provisions, because my bold heart guessed in a moment
That this man would attack us, with fury and strength over-
whelming,
And with no notion of justice or laws or civilized customs.
"So did we quickly arrive at the cave: but the giant we found
not,
For he was tending his flocks of good fat sheep in the pasture.
Therefore we entered the cave, and looked at all his belongings:
Baskets loaded with cheeses were there, and pens in due order
Crowded with lambs and kids, the spring lambs firstlings and
new-born,
Each in their separate pens: and there stood, with whey over-
flowing,
Rows of buckets and pails, hand-made, which he used for the
milking.
Then, in their panic and haste, my comrades most urgently
begged me
That I should let them take, for their use, what cheeses they
needed
Then come back and drive from their pens the lambs and the
kidlings,
And, without farther ado, sail off o'er the salt sea water.
But I would not consent: far better it were had I done so:
For I was eager to see the man, and perhaps get a present:
But he was destined to prove no welcome sight to my comrades.
"Quickly we lighted a fire, and killed a sheep for our eating,
Helped ourselves to the cheeses, and sat in the cavern and waited
Till he should come with his flocks: and he came: and over his
shoulder
Was a huge bundle of wood, sun-dried, for cooking his supper: This, with a mighty crash, he dropped on the floor of the cavern, So that in terror we rushed to hide in its farthest recesses. Afterwards, into the cave, he drove his flocks in a body, That is those that he milked, but he left outside of the doorway All the he-goats and rams, shut up in the high-walled enclosure. Then, did he lift in his arms a mighty boulder, and put it So as to block the entrance, so massive that four-wheeled waggons, Twenty and two of the strongest, with all their oxen, could never Haul it an inch from the threshold: the rock was so steep and enormous. Then he sat down and began to milk the ewes and the she-goats, Each in its turn, and then, under each he set her own young one Then did he take one half of the milk, which he curdled by warming, Deftly collecting the curd in woven baskets of osier: But the remainder he kept, and put into jars he could use from If he should wish for a drink, and to be a provision for supper. And, when with wonderful speed the work of his dairy was finished, Then did he kindle a fire, and spied us and questioned us fiercely: "'Strangers, where do you come from, a-sailing the watery pathways? Is it on business, or are you like pirates roving at random, Taking their lives in their hands and woe to the folk that they meet with?'

"Thus did he speak: and our hearts were stricken with sickening terror
Both at the great deep voice of the man and his monstrous body: Nevertheless I plucked up courage and answered him boldly:
"'Know that we are Achæans, and now in course of returning Unto our home from Troy. By ways that we never intended, Driven by various winds across the great gulf of the ocean, Have we arrived thus far: for so great Zeus had ordained. And, as our leader we claim the great Agamemnon Atreidés, Him whose glory is greatest of all men under the heaven: For such a wondrous city he sacked, and men without number Did he destroy. But now to your knees we come and beseech you,
Asking your friendly welcome, or if at least you will grant us Gifts which by common consent are considered the portion of strangers.
But, be in awe of the Gods, good Sir: your suppliants are we: And the avenger of such is Zeus: for he and no other Is the companion of strangers, who claim our respect and protection.'

"Thus did I speak: but sharp, in implacable temper, he answered:
'You are a fool, O stranger, or else the place that you come from Is very far away, if you bid me to fear what the Gods may Threaten or do: for we Round-eyes take little trouble to think of Zeus and his Aegis, because ourselves by far are the stronger. Nor would I spare either you or ever a one of your comrades For any fear of Zeus, unless the fancy so took me. But say, where did you leave your well-built ship when you came here?
Was it far off or near? because I want to be told this.'

"So he tried to entrap me: but clearly I saw through his cunning,
And, with deceitful words, I made reply to his question:

"'As for our ship, it was shattered against the rocks of a headland,
Near to your boundary line, by the great Earth-shaker Poseidon. And 'twas a gale from the sea that drove us: but I and my comrades Managed to reach the shore, and escaped from headlong destruction.'

"But, in a pitiless mood, he never gave me an answer, Only he sprang to his feet, and made a grab at my comrades, And, seizing one in each hand, as it might be a couple of puppies, Dashed them upon the ground, and their brains bespattered the pavement,
Next thing, limb after limb, he tore them to pieces and ate them: And, as he ate, he seemed like a lion bred in the mountains: Blood and entrails and flesh and marrow bones, all was devoured: We could but lift our hands to Zeus in prayer unavailing, Seeing this horrible sight: and our utter helplessness crushed us. But, when the Round-eye at last had gorged his monstrous belly, Eating the flesh of men, and drinking milk by the gallon,
All in the midst of the sheep, he stretched himself out in the cavern.
Then did a mighty resolve come into my soul, to creep softly
Up to his side, and, drawing the long sharp sword that I carried,
Stab him beneath the breast, where the midriff covers the liver.
But, as I clutched the hilt, a wiser counsel restrained me,
For, in that spot, we too should have met with speedy destruction,
For we could never have moved, from the lofty mouth of the cavern,
By our unaided strength, the mighty stone he had placed there.
So there was nothing else but to groan and wait for the morning.

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Straightway he lighted a fire, and milked the ewes that he tended,
Each in its turn, and then, under each he set her own young one.
And, when with wonderful speed the work of his dairy was finished,
Then did he seize two more of our men, and ate them for breakfast.
And, after breakfast, he drove his well-fed sheep from the cavern:
For he removed with ease the enormous door-stone, and put it back in its place, as one might put the lid on a quiver.
Then did the Round-eye drive his thriving flocks to the mountain,
Whistling loudly: but I, in the cave, was painfully thinking
How I could get my revenge, if Athené would grant my petition:
And, at the last, the plan that I thought most likely was this one:
Close by the side of the pens, a pole had been left by the Round-eye,
Olive wood hard and green, which he cut as a stick he might carry
When it was seasoned and dry: and we, from its look as it lay there,
Judged it about the size of the mast of a twenty-oared wherry,
One of the broad black craft that can carry freight o'er the ocean:
Such did it seem in length, and such in thickness: and I then
Took my stand, and chopped, from the end, it might be a fathom:
This did I give to my comrades, and bade them to shave off the roughness:
And, as they made it smooth, I stood looking on, and I sharpened Finely the point, and took it, and charred it at once in the fire:
Then, having carefully hid it beneath the dung that was lying Strewn on the floor of the cave, in heaps, I invited the others Then and there to draw lots, in order to choose from our comrades Those who were ready to join with me in uplifting the stake and Grinding it into his eye, so soon as he sweetly was sleeping:
And it fell out that the four, who by lot were selected, were just those I myself should have chosen: and I of course was the fifth one. Back, in the evening he came, with his fleecy charges before him, And, without waiting, he drove his fat sheep into the cavern, All in a crowd, and left not one outside in the sheepfold, Whether suspecting something, or forced by some God to do so. Next, did he lift in his arms, the mighty stone, and replaced it. And, sitting down, he began to milk the ewes and the she-goats, Each in its turn, and then, under each he set her own young one. And, when with wonderful speed the work of his dairy was finished,
Then did he seize two more of our men, and ate them for supper. Then I came forward: and thus, to his face, I spoke to the Round-eye:
(And in my hand I carried an ivy-wreath tankard of black wine) "'Round-eye, drink this wine, as you've had your supper of man's flesh,
That you may know what sort of drink was stored in our vessel: And I have brought it to you as an offering, that you may send us Kindly upon our way: but now you act like a madman. How do you think, O fool, that any one else will come here From the great cities of men, if thus you outrageously treat them?'
"Thus did I speak: and he took, and drained the cup to the bottom,
Mightily pleased at the sweet strong drink, and a second time asked me:
'Give me some more, good fellow, and tell me your name this moment,
That I may make you a present will give you a great deal of pleasure:
For, you must know, we Round-eyes have fruitful land which produces
Wine from magnificent clusters and vines that are watered from heaven.
But this sample is more like ambrosia mingled with nectar.'
"These were his words: and I brought more wine that flashed in the firelight.
Thrice I brought him the cup, and thrice in his folly he drained it. But, when the wine had begun to mount in the head of the Round-eye,
Then I considered it time, with gentle words, to address him:
"'Round-eye, you ask my renowned name: and I will not conceal it:
Then you will give me the boon that is due to a guest, as you promised.
'Noman,' is my name: and 'Noman' is what they call me,
Both my father and mother, and all my other companions.'
"Thus did I speak: and at once, in implacable temper, he answered:
'Noman, I'll eat you last, of all the men of your party,
After I've finished the others: and that is the present I'll give you.'
"Scarce had he spoken, he reeled, and on his back he fell sprawling
With his great head on one side: for sleep, the subduer of all things,
Had overpowered him wholly: so, heavy with drink, he lay there, While, from his throat, he belched up wine and gobbets of man's flesh.
Then did I push the stake beneath a heap of red ashes,
So as to make it hot, and with cheerful words I encouraged All of my comrades, lest any, through fear should shrink from our purpose.
But, when the stake was heated, and, green as it was, was almost Ready to burst into flame, and the point was terribly glowing, Then, from the fire I drew it, my comrades standing around me:
And, in that desperate moment, some God gave the courage we needed.
They then seized the stake with its point of fire, and rammed it into his eye: while I, with my full weight leaning upon it, screwed it round from above: as a man may bore with an auger some great rib of a ship: while others hold on to it firmly, pulling each way with a thong, and keep it constantly turning, so we held on to the stake, and twisted it round in the socket: and, as the eyeball burnt, and the roots of it cracked in the fire, eyelids and eyebrows were singed as it were by the breath of a furnace.

And, as a worker in bronze, when making an adze or an axehead, dips it red hot into water with mighty crackle and splutter, tempering thus the bronze—and thus too iron is tempered—so, round the olive wood stake, the eye of the Round-eye fizzled. Horribly did he howl, and the rock reëchoed around us:

And we rushed off in terror: but he, with agony frantic, tore out the stake from his eye, and threw it, smoking and blood-stained, far in the distance, and called aloud to his neighbours the Round-eyes who had their dwelling in caves on the wind-swept tops of the mountains.

They, when they heard his shout, came flocking from every quarter, stood round the mouth of the cave, and asked him what was the matter:

"Tell, Polyphemus, the trouble that made you to call out so loudly all in the solemn night, and wake us up from our slumbers. Is some mortal a-driving your sheep, and you cannot prevent him? or is it you yourself he is killing, by force or by cunning?"

"And, from within the cave, thus answered strong Polyphemus:

'Noman is killing me, my friends, by cunning and not force.'

"And, in reply to his words, the others carelessly answered: 'If no man is doing you harm, and you are alone there, know that none can avoid a plague which Zeus has inflicted. But you had better pray to the king, your father Poseidon.'

"So did they speak, and were off: but I was secretly laughing for that my clever device of feigning a name had deceived them.
Round-eye, however, who now was groaning and writhing in anguish,
Felt with his hands for the boulder, and moved it away from the entrance,
And in the doorway he sat, on both sides spreading his hands out,
Hoping, may be, he would catch some one of us trying to pass him
Unperceived with the sheep: for he thought that I knew no better
Than to try that: but I was racking my brains to discover
Some clear way of escape from death for myself and my comrades.
And, in my mind, I revolved all manner of schemes and devices,
Knowing our lives were at stake, for a terrible fate was impending:
And, on the whole, it seemed that the plan I will tell was the best one:
Several rams there were, well-fed, and with wonderful fleeces,
Black, with a purple tinge, all big and handsome: and these I
Bound together with bands that I made by twisting some osiers
Filched from the bed of the Round-eye, that lawless uncivilized monster.
Three by three I bound them: each middle one carried a sailor,
And, on each side, one sheep was shielding my friend with his body:
So, each triplet of sheep was bearing a man: What did I do?
Why, there was one great ram far finer than all of the others:
Him I seized by the back, and wriggling under his belly,
Twined my hands in his wool, and with desperate effort I hung there.
So, in this painful plight, we awaited the Goddess of Morning.
*But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,*
All of the rams rushed out in a crowd to go to the pasture,
While that the ewes stayed bleating unmilked around the enclosures,
For that their udders were bursting: their master, however, by this time
Worn out with pain, felt only the backs of the rams as they passed him,
For they were all on their feet: but he had not the sense to suspect that,
Under their woolly breasts, my men were fastened like bundles.
Lastly, the big young ram came staggering slow to the doorway,
Weighted down by his wool, and by me who was weighted with terrors:
And, as he stroked his back, thus spoke the strong Polyphémus:
" 'Ram, my pet, how is it you come like this to the cavern,
Last of the sheep? Never yet were you left behind by the others,
But, with your great long stride, are always the first to be cropping
Tender blossoms of grass, and to reach the clear-running rivers,
And you are always first to return at eve to the sheepfold.
Now you are last of them all. I wonder if you are grieving
After the eye of your master, that cursed villain has blinded,
He, and his baneful crew, having mastered my senses with wine-cup.
Noman his name: but I say No fear he shall 'scape from destruction.
Ah, could you only know what I feel, and be able to tell me
Where he is hiding now, in hope to escape from my vengeance.
Then would his brains be spattered all over the floor of the cavern
As he was dashed to the ground: and thus, for a moment, my heart would
Get some relief from the pains that niddering Noman has brought me.'
"So did he speak: and he let the ram pass out at the doorway.
And, when we soon were clear of the cave and the sheepfold before it,
First I let go the ram and then I untied my companions.
Quickly we rounded up the long-legged sheep, and we drove them,
Fat as they were, without stopping, until we arrived at our galley.
Truly our comrades were glad to see us, or those of us rather
Who had escaped from death: but when they began lamentations
Over the men who were killed, I sternly forbade them from weeping,
Frowning and shaking my head, but to bundle into our vessel
All of the sheep that they could, and sail away o'er the water.
Quickly they went on board, and took their seats on the benches,
And, with a rhythmic stroke, they smote the whitening billows.
But, when so far from the shore as the voice of a man can carry,
Then, with sarcastic words, I called out thus to the Round-eye:
"'Round-eye, you see it was not your luck to devour the comrades
Of a defenceless man, while thinking yourself were the stronger:
And there was never a doubt but your evil deeds would o'er-take you.
Ruffian! who had no scruple to eat the men you were keeping
Guests in your house: so Zeus and the rest of the Gods have repaid you.'
"Thus did I speak: and my words made him well-nigh crazy with anger.
Breaking the topmost rock from a peak of the mountain, he hurled it
Right in front of our ship: and the monstrous fragment of granite
Fell with a mighty splash: and the wave that it threw up around it,
More like an ocean tide, was washing us on to the shallows.
But I, seizing a pole, very stout and long, in my two hands,
Pushed our vessel aside, and I called aloud to my comrades:
'Pull with a will, my lads, if you wish to escape from disaster,'
Signing, and nodding my head: and they reached out, pulling their hardest.
"But, when with might and main we had rowed for double the distance,
I was beginning to call to the Round-eye again: but my comrades,
Speaking from here and there, with soft words tried to restrain me:
'Are you mad, to provoke a furious man still farther,
Who, just now, with that rock that he threw, very nearly had swept us
Back to the shore again: and we thought all was over for certain?"
But, if he only had heard you, this second time, calling or speaking,
He would have smashed our heads and all the planks of our vessel
With a great jagged rock: he throws such a terrible distance.'
"Thus did they speak: but they failed to bend my firm resolution:
And, in a wrathful mood, I shouted back to the Round-eye:
'Round-eye, if ever some mortal man should ask you to tell him
What was the reason you lost your eye in this manner unseemly,
Say 'twas Odysseus the sacker of cities, by whom you were blinded,
He who in Ithaca dwells, the valiant son of Laërtes.'
"So did I speak: but he wailed aloud, and thus did he answer:
'Cursed be my fate! I remember an oracle long ago spoken.
Once, in this country, there dwelt a prophet, a great and a brave man,
Telemus, Eurymus' son, who excelled in the art of divining,
And, till he reached old age, foretold to the Round-eyes their fortunes:
And he foretold that this would fall out just as it has done,
That I should lose my sight some day at the hands of Odysseus.
But I expected always that some great hero would come here,
Splendid and big, and clothed with enormous strength as a mantle:
But, as it seems, a man who is little and feeble and no man,
Now has deprived me of sight, after quenching my senses in wine-cup.
But come hither, Odysseus, that I may give you a guerdon
Fit for a guest, and call on Poseidon to grant you safe conduct.
I am his son: and he is proud to be known as my father:
And he, if he so wills, can cure me: which never another,
Either of blessed Immortals or mortal men can accomplish.'
"But, in these bitter words, I curtly replied to the Round-eye:
'Would I were able, outright, of breath and life to deprive you,
And to dismiss you to dwell in the house of Hadés, as surely
As the Earth-Shaker himself will never restore you your eyesight.'
“So did I speak: and straightway he called on his father Poseidon,
Stretching his hand in prayer to the starry vault of the heaven:
‘Hear me, thou God of the raven locks, Earth-clasper Poseidon,
If I am really thy son, and thou dost acknowledge thy offspring,
Grant that Town-sacker Odysseus may never return to his homeland,
But, if by Fate’s decree he shall come to the land of his fathers
And to his well-built house, and see his friends and his kinsmen,
Late, and in pain may he come, having lost the whole of his comrades,
Borne in a foreign ship, and find a curse in his dwelling.’
“Thus did he speak in his prayer: and his father Poseidon heard him.
Straightway he lifted a stone that was greater far than the other,
Swung it round, and with all his enormous power he hurled it:
And the great boulder fell quite close to our blue-prowed vessel,
Ever so little behind, just missing the end of the rudder,
Making a mighty splash: and the wave that it threw up before it swept our vessel ahead towards the shore in the distance.
“But, when we safely had reached the island, where, ranged in close order,
All the remaining ships were waiting in safety, and round them were our companions seated, lamenting and wondering whether we should return no more, right soon, where the bottom was sandy,
Ran we the ship aground, and ourselves stepped out on the sea-beach.
Then, from the hold of the ship, we took the sheep of the Round-eye,
Sharing them round, that none might be of his portion defrauded.
But, as a private boon, to me, my booted companions gave, in addition, the ram, which I with solemn observance sacrificed on the shore, and burnt the thighs to the name of Zeus son of Kronos, the king, who reigns supreme in the storm-cloud.
Yet did he take no heed to our sacred rites, but debated how to destroy my ships and my well-proved trusty companions. So, for the whole day long, we sat till the hour of sunset,
Gorging ourselves with meat, and drinking wine of the strongest:

"But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,

Then, without farther delay, I gave the word to my comrades,

Having cast loose the hawsers, to climb on board of the vessel.

Quickly they did as I bade, and took their seats on the benches,

And with a rhythmic stroke, they smote the whitening billows.

"So we sailed on from thence, our hearts o'erburdened with sorrow,

Glad to be saved from death, but grieved for the loss of our comrades.
BOOK X
ÆOLUS, THE LAESTRYGONS, AND CIRCE

AND, in due course, we came to the island Æolia, home of Æolus, Hippotas' son, on friendly terms with Immortals:
(Now this isle was afloat, and the whole by a wall was encircled, Bronze that no power could break, on the sheer perpendicular cliff-edge)
And, unto him, twelve children were born in his beautiful palace,
Six of them fine tall sons, and six of them blooming daughters:
And, to each one of his sons, he gave a daughter in marriage.
And, at their father's board, each day, with their mother revered,
Sit they, and hold a feast of savoury dainties unnumbered:
While, with the plaintive notes of the flute, the palace reëchoes All day long: and at night, they sleep with the wives whom they honour,
Softly, 'neath woollen quilts on bedsteads artfully carven.
Such were the men whose city of fair habitations we entered.
And, in the friendliest way, for a month did he entertain me,
Asking all manner of questions concerning Ilion's fortress
And of the Argive ships and the chances we met in returning:
And, on my part, I told him the story in every detail.
But, when I told him at last that I wanted to sail, and was urgent
That he should let me go, he agreed, and arranged for my journey.
Then did he strip the hide from a nine year bullock, and in it Tightly secured the courses of every wind that blusters:
(For the great Son of Kronos has set them under his orders,
Either to rouse or lull each separate one at his pleasure)
And, in the hold of the ship, with a cord of silver he bound it, So that no contrary wind might blow were it ever so gently:
But, in their stead, he sent me a soft West wind, which might carry

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Us and our ships: yet, in this, he was destined to fail of his purpose:
For, by the foolish act of our own selves, we were ruined.
"Still, for nine whole days, both night and day we were sailing,
And, on the tenth, showed up, quite plainly, the land of my fathers:
So very close did we come, we could see folk lighting their fires.
Then, being quite tired out, at last sweet sleep overcame me:
For I had been at the helm, nor given it up for a moment,
All the time of our voyage, the sooner to reach our homeland.
But my companions began to mutter one to another
That I was carrying home great store of gold and of silver
Given by Hippotas' son, great hearted Æolus, till that
One of them spoke at last, with a knowing look at his neighbour:
"'Mates, 'tis a shame how the old man here is befriended and honoured
Everywhere that we go, by all the men that we meet with:
For, to begin with, he has on board many treasures and costly
Looted from Troy: while we, who have made the same journey as he has,
Come back with empty hands. And now, it seems, out of friendship,
Æolus gives him this. But come, we will see in a minute
How much silver and gold there is in this skin of a bullock.'
"Thus did they speak: and the others gave way to the evil suggestion:
So they untied the bag: and out rushed, all in confusion,
Every wind that blows: and, caught by the tempest, our ship was
Whirled from our fatherland (while the crew were helplessly weeping)
Out to the open sea. But I, being suddenly wakened,
Doubted whether to leap, and take my chance in the waters,
Or to endure in silence, and hope to remain with the living.
Quickly I made up my mind, and stayed, huddled up in a corner:
While that my ship, with the others, was driven along by the tempest
Back to king Æolus' isle, my companions all groaning and helpless.

"There we stepped out on the land, and filled our barrels with water,

Snatching a meal in haste as we stood by the side of our galleys. But, with no more than a taste of food and of drink, I set forward (Taking a man of my crew as a herald and also companion) Unto the royal abode of Æolus: and, as aforetime, Found him beside his wife, with his children around him, a-feasting.

And, when we reached the house, we sat on the ground by the door-posts.

But they were all astonished to see us, and questioned us sharply: "'Why are you here, Odysseus? what Power has done you a mischief? Surely we sent you away with all good wishes in order That you might get to your country and home or wherever you wanted.'

"So did they speak: but I, with heart full of bitterness answered:

'Comrades unfaithful and sleep untimely have been my undoing. Only repair the misfortune, my friends, for well you are able.'

"Thus, in persuasive words, I strove to win their compassion. But they said nothing at all: 'twas their father who answered severely:

'Get you gone from this island, at once, most wretched of mortals: Right and custom forbid me to help or to speed on his journey Any man who, beyond doubt, by the Gods immortal is hated. Get you gone: for 'tis plain, from your coming again, that they hate you.'

"Thus did he drive me away from his house most bitterly groaning.

So we sailed on from thence, our hearts o'erburdened with sorrow.

Also the heart of my men, with toilsome rowing was broken, Toil to no purpose: because no farther escort was granted. Yet, during six whole days, both night and day, we were sailing, And, on the seventh, we reached the Læstrygon fortress of Lamus,
Steep Telepylus: there, each shepherd bound for the homestead
Calls, and is answered by, him who is driving his herd to the
pasture.
So, if a man never slept, he could earn his wages twice over,
Once for tending the sheep, and once for tending the cattle:
For, between night and day, the interval is but a short one.
"And, in this place, we found a famous harbour, protected
Perfectly, this side and that, by a range of precipitous moun-
tains:
And, at the mouth, two beaches, in parallel lines to each other,
Jut out into the sea, with a narrow entrance between them.
And it was here that my skippers decided to anchor their galleys:
Snug, in the sheltered cove, they lay moored close to each other:
For there was never a wind came there that could raise a dis-
turbance
Great or small: but the surface reflected the sky like a mirror.
But I alone thought best to remain outside of the harbour,
Leaving my ship by the entrance, secured to the rock by a cable.
Then, from a point of rock, I surveyed the landscape around me:
But there was nought to be seen of the works of men or of oxen:
Only, in places, we saw the smoke of fires arising.
So I despatched a party to search the country, and find out
What sort of men these were, for at least they were bread-eating
humans,
Choosing out two, with a third to go as companion and herald.
"Leaving the ships, they followed a well-made road, where
the waggons
Carried down wood for the town from the forests high up on the
mountains.
Here did they meet a maid, with a pitcher, in front of the city,
(Stalwart daughter was she of Antiphatés Laestrygon chieftain)
Who, as her wont, went down to the spring of Artakia, flowing
Clear and cool, and from which the townspeople carried their
water.
And, when they met her, they stood, and spoke and asked her
to tell them
Who was the king of the place, and what were the people he
governed.
Readily then she showed them the high-roofed house of her
father.
But, when they entered the house and saw the wife of the chieftain,
Big as a mountain peak, she seemed to them to be dreadful. And, in an instant, she called to her husband to come from the market,
Famous Anti'phatés, who, when he came, showed baleful intentions:
For, in a moment, he grabbed one man and promptly devoured him:
But the two others dashed out, and succeeded in reaching our vessels.
Then, through the town, he raised the hue and cry: and the townspeople,
Læstrygons, hearing his call, flocked in from every quarter,
Thousands there were, more like to monsters than bread-eating humans.
Then, with pieces of rock as big as a man could carry
Torn from the cliffs, they began to pelt our men: and a sudden Horrible hubbub arose from the ships, of the cracking of timber And of the slaughter of men, whom they threaded like fishes and bore off
For their disgusting meal. And, while, in the harbour, our men were
Thus being done to death, I promptly drew out my cutlass,
And, with a blow, I severed the cable that fastened my vessel:
And, without losing a moment, I urgently called to my comrades:
‘Lay on, boys, with a will, if you wish to escape from disaster.’
So, for the fear of their lives, they churned the sea with their oar-blades.
And it was welcome indeed to be clear of the cliffs that o'er-hung us,
Safely at sea in our ship: for the rest all perished together.
“So we sailed on from thence, our hearts o'erburdened with sorrow,
Glad to be saved from death, but grieved for the loss of our comrades.
Soon, to the island Ææa we came, in which had her dwelling Circé, the fair-haired Goddess of incantations and magic:
Whole-blood sister was she of the baleful wizard Æëtes:
For, of them both, the father was he who brings daylight to mortals, Helios: and their mother was Persé, Oceanus' daughter. Silently, there on the beach, in a harbour where ships might lie safely, Ran we our vessel aground: and it seems some God must have led us. Then, stepping out on the land, two days and nights we lay resting, Thoroughly broken with toil, while sorrow gnawed at our heart-strings. "But, when the fair-haired Morn had opened the door to the third day, Then did I take my spear and my good sharp cutlass, and quickly Mounted a hill to get an all-round view of the country, If I should see, perchance, some fields, or hear any voices. And, having climbed to a rock, that projected above the tree tops, There, rising up from the ground, I saw the smoke of a fire Curling up through a coppice, in which was the palace of Circe. Quickly I strove to decide, as reason and instinct should guide me, If I should make at once for the smoke showing white in the distance: And, as I pondered thus, it seemed to me to be better First to go back to my ship, now lying close to the breakers, Give my comrades a meal, and send them to make reconnaissance. "But when, hurrying on, I was now not far from my galley, Some God pitied my plight, and sent for my comfort a great stag, Antlered, brow bay and tray, to the very path I was treading: He had been browsing the wood, and was coming to drink at the river For that the sun was hot: and as he came out of the thicket, Fair on the back I struck him, and severed the spine: and the spear-head Passed through and out of his body: and in the dust he fell screaming: So did he die: but I, with my foot set firmly against him, Dragged from the wound the spear, which I laid on the ground beside me. Then did I make a cord, at both ends twisting it tightly,
Out of some brushwood and withies I tore for the purpose, a fathom
Fully in length, and with this, the huge beast’s feet did I fasten
Firmly together, and thus, I staggered back to my vessel,
Bearing him over my neck, and supporting my weight with my spear-shaft:
For he was much too big to hold with one hand on my shoulder.
And, when I threw him down by the ship in sight of my comrades,
Then, with a cheerful word to each, I endeavoured to rouse them:
"‘Well, we have had our trials, my friends, but we shall not, for all that,
Go to the house of Hadés before the season appointed.
Take heart: while we have plenty to eat and drink in our vessel,
Let us enjoy our meals, not slowly die of starvation.’
"‘So did I speak: and my men full readily did as I bade them:
And, coming out of their quarters, they stood by the edge of the water
Gazing upon the stag which indeed was a wonderful monster.
And, after looking him over with much satisfaction, they set to,
Washed their hands, and began to prepare for a glorious banquet.
So, for the whole day long, we sat, till the hour of sunset,
Gorging ourselves with meat and drinking wine in abundance.
But, when the sun had set, and the shadows of evening had fallen,
Then, each one in his place, we lay and slept on the sea-beach.
"‘But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then did I call a council, and spoke in the midst of my comrades:
‘Friends, I have called you because we have lost our bearings, and know not
Which is the East or West, nor where is the sunset or sunrise.
But, without losing time, let us well consider if any Plan for our safety remains: and I feel quite sure we shall find one.
For, having scaled a peak, and scanned the horizon, I found out
That we are now on an island, by limitless ocean surrounded:
And it is low and fertile; and clearly I saw in the middle,
Out of a coppice of oak, a column of smoke arising.'
"So did I speak: but their hearts were stricken with terror to hear me:
Only too well, they remembered Antiphates Laestrygon chieftain,
Also the violent deeds of the ruthless cannibal Round-eye.
Shrilly they cried in fear, and shed their tears in abundance:
But, as no practical plan was produced by weeping and wailing,
I, having called the roll, divided my-booted companions into two squads, and appointed a man as captain of each one:
One, I commanded myself, and Eurylochus captained the other.
Straightway, we shook the lots in a brass-bound helmet of leather:
And the first lot to be drawn was that of Eurylochus Greatheart.
So he set out on his way, and twenty and two men followed,
Weeping with fear: and behind them, they left the rest of us groaning.

"And, among glades, they found the beautiful palace of Circé,
Fashioned of smooth cut stones, with a spacious clearing around it:
Lions were roaming about, and savage wolves of the mountains,
Which she herself had charmed, for with potent drugs she had plied them.
These never tried to attack them, but came and stood quiet before them,
Wagging their tails and fawning, as dogs will do on their master When he returns from a feast: for he always brings them some dainties:
So were the strong-clawed wolves and the lions fawning upon them.
But they were struck with fear at the sight of these terrible monsters.
And, when they stood in the porch of Circé the fair-haired Goddess,
Then, within doors, they heard her voice delightfully singing
As she was weaving a web both great and of beauty transcendent,
Delicate, graceful and splendid: for such are the works of Immortals.
First of the band to speak was the warrior hero Polités,
Who, among all my men, was the one most trusty and cherished: "'There is a lady inside, my friends, who is singing most sweetly
Over a splendid web—and all the terrace reëchoes—
Goddess or woman I know not. But let us shout to her quickly.'
"So did he speak: and the men all shouted together to call her. Promptly she came at the sound, and the shining doors she threw open,
Calling them in: and they, in their silly simplicity, followed:
Only, some treachery fearing, Eurylochus stayed in the porch-way.
But, after bringing them in, she made the others to sit on Benches and chairs, and fed them with biscuits and cheese and new honey,
Wine of Pramné to boot: but, along with their food, she had mingled
Drugs that might make them forget their home and the land of their fathers.
And, when the whole of the food and the drink that she gave them was swallowed,
Then, with her wand she struck them, and shut them up in the hog-sty:
And they became like hogs, in head and voice and appearance E'en to their bristles: but yet their minds were clear as before-time.
So they, helplessly weeping, were shut in the hog-sty: but Circé Threw to them acorns to eat, and cornel berries, the common Food of the swine which wallow and rout in the ground for their living.
Then, to the swift black ship, with speed Eurylochus hastened That he might tell the tale of the bitter fate of his comrades:
But, though he strove full sore, not a word of sense could he utter,
For, with a mighty grief his soul was stricken; and both eyes Filled and o'erflowed with tears: and his heart was set on lamenting.
But, as we all, in wonder, kept plying our comrade with questions, Then, at the last, he told us what fate had befallen the others:
"'As you had bidden, we went, through the oak wood, noble Odysseus,
Where, in a peaceful glade, we found a beautiful palace:
And, within doors, we heard the voice of a lady a-singing
Over a splendid web, but whether Goddess or woman
We cannot tell: but the others all shouted together to call her:
Promptly she came at the sound, and the shining doors she
threw open,
Calling them in: and they, in silly simplicity, followed:
But I, fearing some trick, remained outside of the doorway:
And, when they got inside, of a sudden the whole of them
vanished:
And, though I sat long watching, not one did I ever set eyes on.'
"Thus did he speak: and straightway I slung o'er my shoulder
a broadsword,
Bronze, with a silvery hilt, and took my bow and my arrows:
Also I urged him to come and show me the track we must follow.
But he could only clasp my knees and entreat me in terror:
"'Don't take me there again, Zeus nurtured, but leave me to
stay here:
For you will never come back, nor will you be able to rescue
One of your comrades: but let us, with these who still are re-
main ing,
Flee while we can: for, perchance, we yet may escape from
destruction.'
"These were the words that he spoke: and thus I answered
my comrade:
'Stay in the place where you are, Eurylochus, eating and
drinking
Safe in the hold of the ship, if you have no heart to come with
me:
But I will go by myself: for strong necessity drives me.'
"Thus I left him and the ship, and alone I mounted the
hillside:
And, when I now was close, as I went through the glades of
the forest,
Unto the palace of Circe, that mistress of drugs and enchant-
ment,
Hermés, there, of the golden wand, on a sudden appeared
As I was nearing the house, like a young man comely to look at
Just showing down on his chin, the pleasantest age one can
fancy:
Kindly he held my hand, and called me by name and addressed me:

"'Whither away, poor man, for you seem to be strange to the country, All by yourself on the hills? While here, in the palace of Circé, Are you companions imprisoned in close-barred styes like porkers. Did your come here to release them? 'Tis much more likely yourself will Never go back any more, but remain with the others a captive. "'But come, I will untangle the perilous snare that besets you. Take this herb, and, unharmed, you may go to the palace of Circé. (Tis a most excellent drug, will shield your head from disaster) And I will tell you in full, of all her pernicious devices: First she will make you a posset, with drugs in it potent for evil: Yet she will fail to bewitch you: for here I give you a medicine Still more potent for good: and, of all you must do, I forewarn you, When, with a long thin rod, the sorceress Circé shall strike you, Then make a dash at her straight as if you were going to kill her. But she will cower in fear, and unto her bed will invite you. Then you must not persist in refusing the bed of the Goddess, That she may free your companions and start you fair on your journey: But first make her to swear a dreadful oath by the Blest Ones Not to devise or plan any other mischief against you, Lest she should strip you naked and make you unmanly and wretched.' "Then did he give me the herb, the mighty Slayer of Argus, Pulling it out of the ground, and showed me its form and appearance:

Black, in the root it was, but white as milk was the flower:

Moly, the Gods it call: to dig it up is not easy,
For us mortals at least: but the Gods know how to do all things. "Then, through the wooded isle, to his home in lofty Olympus, Hermés wended his way, and myself to the palace of Circé, While, with conflicting thoughts, my troubled spirit was darkened: Soon, I had come to the porch, of the Goddess with beautiful tresses.
There did I stand and call: and my voice was heard by the Goddess:
And, coming quickly out, the shining doors she threw open,
Bidding me enter: and I, with a pang at my heart-strings, consented.
Then, on a chair of state that was studded with silver, she set me,
And, in a golden cup, she mixed me a posset: but in it,
Secretly dropped a drug: for she purposed evil against me.
And, when I took the cup, and drank it (it did not bewitch me) Then, with her rod she struck me, and sharply gave me the order:
'Off you go to the sty, and lie down with the rest of your comrades.'
"So did she speak: but instead, I drew the cutlass I carried,
Making a furious rush at Circe as if I would kill her.
But she, screaming aloud, ran up, and clasping my two knees,
Thus, in a wailing voice, with hurried words she implored me:
"'Who among men are you? and what is your city? and parents?
How can it be that you drank these drugs, and they did not bewitch you?
For not a man in the world could ever resist their compulsion
If he should once allow them to pass the teeth that protect him.
Are you Odysseus, the man of resource? for the Slayer of Argus,
He of the golden wand, has warned me oft to expect you
On the way back from Troy, in a good ship speedy and tar-
stained.
But come, sheathe your sword, and, mounting my bed together,
Now let us seal our friendship and show our trust in each other.'
"Yet 'twas in cautious words, to her fervent appeal I responded:
'How can you bid me, O Circé, be gentle and kindly towards you
When you have changed into hogs my men who were guests in
your palace?
And now, holding me here, you are plotting against me, and
bid me
Enter your chamber with you, and lie beside you, in order
That you may strip me naked and make me unmanly and
wretched.
Nor shall I ever be willing, O Goddess, to seek your embraces,
If you will not consent to swear with great imprecations
That you will never contrive any farther mischief against me.'
"So did I speak: and she swore, at my bidding, to do me
no mischief.
But, when the oath was sworn, and confirmed with all due
observance,
Not till then did I mount the beautiful bedstead of Circe.
"But, meanwhile, four maidens were busy at work in the
palace:
These are the daughters of Nature, who spring from the groves
and the fountains
And from the sacred rivers which ever seaward are flowing.
One of them set two thrones, and bespread them with beautiful
wrappings,
Purple, were those on the top, with plenty of others beneath
them:
Also, in front of the thrones, the next of the maidens unfolded
Tables of silver, and decked them with golden baskets of
dainties:
And, by the third, sweet wine was mixed, delicious as honey,
All in a silvern bowl with golden goblets beside it:
While that the fourth brought water, and kindled a fire of pine
boughs
Under a mighty cauldron: and quickly the water was heated.
"And, when the water boiled in the brass that gleamed in
the firelight,
Then, in a bath, she set me, and washed me with plenty of water
Mixed to a genial warmth from out of the three-footed cauldron,
Poured it o'er head and shoulders, until she had freed me com-
pletely
From the intense fatigue with which my body was aching.
But, when she thus had washed, and with oil of the finest
anointed,
Clothed me in tunic, and thrown round my shoulders a beautiful
mantle,
Then, to a chair of state that was studded with silver, she led me:
(Cunningly wrought was the chair, and under my feet was a
footstool)
Then did she bid me to eat: but I had no heart for eating,
But, with my thoughts far off, I sat foreboding misfortune.

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And, soon as Circé perceived that I sat without moving, or ever
Reaching out hands to my food, by some hateful sorrow con-
strained,
Came she, and stood by my side, and in words unbidden addressed me:

"'Why are you sitting like this, Odysseus, like to a dumb man Brooding in silence? for nothing of food or drink have you tasted:
Are you suspicious still? Indeed it no longer becomes you
Thus to distrust me: because I have sworn I will do you no mischief.'

"These were the words she spoke: and thus I answered her
question:
'Where is the man, O Circé, who cares for honour or justice
Either could eat or drink before he had rescued his comrades From such a piteous plight, and his eyes had beheld them in safety?
But, if really it is that from kindness of heart you invite me, Set my companions free, that so with my eyes I may see them.'

"Straightway, adown the hall, and through and out of the doorway,
Walked she with wand in hand, and opened the door of the hog-
sty, Driving my comrades out as it might be hogs of nine seasons. Facing her then they stood: and she through the midst of them going,
Rubbed, on the back of each, a drug of a different virtue. And, from their limbs, dropped off that unsightly growth of the bristles Caused by the former drug which the lady Circé had given. So they were men once more, and younger too than beforetime, And they were fairer by far in appearance and greater in stature. Yes, and they knew me too: and each man clung to me fondly: And, from each man, broke forth a sob of gladness resounding Through the big hall: and the Goddess herself was moved to compassion,
And, by my side she stood, the divine one, and thus she addressed me:

"'Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Go, with all haste, to the shore, where your ship is lying, and quickly
Haul her up on the beach where the waves cannot reach her, and that done
Carry the gear of your ship, and all your goods, to the caverns:
Then bring back with you here the whole of your trusty companions.'

"So did she speak: and my manly heart to her will was obedient.
And I at once set out for the shore of the sea and my galley.
And, on the ship, in a crowd, I found my trusty companions
Sadly bewailing their lot, and shedding tears in abundance.
And, as country bred calves, when the cows come back to the farmyard
Out of the meadows, will frisk, and jump the fences before them,
And, as they skip round their mothers, they bellow in chorus
So did these comrades of mine, when they saw me standing before them,
Melt into tears: for they seemed, to have come once more in their fancy
Unto the rugged isle of Ithaca, land of their fathers,
And to their very own city in which they were born and nurtured,
Thus, 'twixt weeping and joy, in unbidden words they addressed me:

"'We are as glad, Zeus-nurtured, to see you returning in safety,
As we had come once more to Ithaca, land of our fathers.
But come, tell us in full the fate of our other companions.'

"But, in a quiet voice, I thus admonished my comrades:
'Ere we do anything else, we will drag our ship beyond wave-mark:
Then we will store our goods and the gear of our vessel in caverns:
Then come along with me, with all the speed you can muster,
And you shall see your companions in Circé's magical palace
Eating and drinking at will: for constantly they are a-feasting.'

"So did I speak: and they, to my words gave ready obedience:
Only Eurylochus tried to dissuade the rest of my comrades:
"‘Wretched ones, where are you going? why wilfully run into trouble, Going to Circe’s hall? Before you know, she will change you into the form of hogs, or wolves or it may be of lions. There we should have to guard her house under dire compulsion: That’s how we should have fared in the Round-eye’s cave, when our comrades Entered his den in the train of this fool-hardy Odysseus: For ’twas his madman’s schemes that brought them all to destruction.’

“So did he speak: but I, in my mind, debated a moment Whether to draw from my thigh the long sharp sword that I carried, And, with a mighty stroke, to smite his head from his shoulders, Near though he was of kin, to myself: but from every quarter, This one and that of my men, with soft words, tried to restrain me: ‘‘Zeus-born, let us allow this man, if we have your permission, Here to remain by the ship, to guard it and keep it in order: But do you show us the way to the magical palace of Circe.’

“Thus having spoken, they left him, and mounted the path on the hillside. Yet did he, after all, not linger behind with the vessel, But came along with the rest: for my violent gestures had scared him.

“Now, in her mansion the while, with hearty kindliness, Circe Washed the rest of my men, and with costly unguent anointed, Clothed them in tunics, and threw fine woollen cloaks o’er their shoulders. And, in her palace, we found them, right royally feasting together. And, soon as face to face, they beheld and knew one another, Wailing and weeping broke forth, and the hall reëchoed around them. But by my side, she stood, the divine one, and thus she addressed me:

‘‘Why do you groan like this? for well I know without telling How many pains you have borne on the great sea teeming with fishes, And, on the land, what harm you have suffered from barbarous foemen.
But come, eat your food, and drink your wine in contentment
Till that the heart in your breast once more becomes steadfast
and hopeful,
Such as it was when at first, you sailed from the land of your
fathers,
Ithaca's rugged island: but now, worn out and dejected,
Always you think of your voyage and your hardships: nor ever
your spirit
Dwells upon cheerful thoughts, because many things you have
suffered.'

"Thus, by her friendly words, our manly hearts were per-
suaded.
So, day in day out, for a whole year long we sat feasting,
Eating unlimited meat, and drinking wine of the sweetest.
But, when a year was past, and the seasons in order returning,
Then, having called me aside, my trusty companions addressed
me:
"Sir, it is now high time to bethink you again of your
country,
If you are destined indeed to come, after all your adventures,
Safe to your high-roofed house, and that dear land of your
fathers.'

"Thus did they speak: and my manly heart acknowledged
their reason.
So, for the whole day long, we sat till the hour of sunset,
Eating unlimited meat, and drinking wine of the sweetest.
But, when the sun was set, and the shades of evening had fallen,
Each in the place he chose, they lay and slept in the palace.
But I, mounting, alone, the beautiful bedstead of Circé,
Clasped her knees and besought her: and graciously did she
receive me:
"Lady Circé, I pray you to grant me the boon which you
promised,
That you would send me home: for my spirit is growing im-
patient,
And my companions as well, who now are wearing my heart out
Mourning on my account, when you are not near to console me.'

"Thus I besought her: and she, as a Goddess, made answer
immediate:
'Zeus-born son of Laërtés, Odysseus of many devices,
Stay no longer, I beg you, unwilling guests in my palace.
But, ere you reach your home, another road must be trodden
Unto the gloomy abode of Persephoné and dread Hadés,
Counsel to ask of the soul of Teiresias, sēer though sightless,
Erstwhile of Thebes: for his mind is clear and undimmed as beforetime:
Since, unto him though dead, Persephoné reason has granted,
While that the rest, like shadows, flit aimlessly hither and thither.'

"Thus did she speak: and my heart was crushed and hopeless to hear her:
And, as I sat on the bed, I wept, for I had not the heart to
Live on the earth any more, or to look on the sunshine of heaven.
But, when with rolling about in my trouble my soul had been sated,
Then did I find my voice, and in wingéd words I addressed her:
"'Whom shall I find, O Circé, to guide me on such an adventure?
For never man in a ship has sailed to the regions of Hadés.'

"Thus did I speak: and the Goddess made answer at once to my question:
'There is no need to wish for a pilot on board of your vessel:
When you have stepped the mast, and spread your sails to the breezes,
Sit, and the North wind’s breath will carry you safe on your journey.
But, soon as ever your ship has crossed the River of Ocean,
You will arrive at a little beach, where fruit-shedding willows
And tall poplars are growing, the trees to Persephoné sacred:
There must you ground your ship by the deep dark eddies of Ocean,
But you must go yourself to the mouldering palace of Hadés,
Where, to the river of Woe, flows down the river of Fire,
Also the river of Wailing, that bursts from the river of Hatred.
There you will find a rock, where two streams join with resounding Thunder: and you, O hero, must creep up close as I bid you:
There dig a pit, each way about the length of your forearm,
And, on each side of it, pour, to make your peace with the dead men,
Honey and milk at first, and sweet wine next, and thirdly
Pure spring water: and sprinkle white barley meal as a finish.
And, if you seek good will, from this shadowy folk, you must promise
That, when you come once more, to your Ithacan home, you will offer
In your own hall to the dead, a barren heifer, the choicest
One that you have in your herd, and pile the pyre with dainties,
And, for the seer himself, as a special guerdon of honour,
Slaughter a great black sheep, without spot, the pick of the sheepfold:
And, after making your prayer, to the famous nations of dead men,
Sacrifice then a ewe, coal-black, and a ram without blemish,
Placed that their heads may point to the region of Darkness: yourself then
Turn, and make for the river: and, flocking towards you in thousands,
Souls will appear of men, who have passed to the country of shadows.
Then you must bid your comrades to flay the sheep which are lying
Slaughtered by pitiless knife, and to burn their carcases wholly,
And, to the Nether Gods, make prayer, to all-powerful Hades,
And to that Goddess of dread, Persephone: then, with your cutlass,
Take your seat on the ground, nor suffer the fluttering dead men E’en to come near the blood, before you have questioned, and also
Heard the response of the seer: who will come at thy bidding O captain.
He will direct your way, and tell you how far you must travel,
And how you best may pass, o’er the great sea teeming with fishes.’

“And, on her golden throne, forthwith the Morning appeared. And, in a seemly cloak, and a tunic, the Goddess did clothe me: But she herself did array, in a great robe woven of silver, Soft, and gracefully falling, and girt at the waist with a girdle, Fashioned of gold: and she draped with a veil her beautiful tresses,
But, through the house I went, and urged my comrades to action,
Stood by the side of each, and with words persuasive addressed them:
‘Sleep and slumber no more, my men, but let us be going:
That is the word which now the lady Circé has given.’
“So did I speak: and their manly hearts gave ready obedience.
But, not even from thence, was I able to lead my companions
Wholly free from disaster: for one, Elpenor, the youngest,
Not very valiant in war, and not over gifted with wisdom,
Heavy besides with wine, had laid himself down in the palace
Choosing a corner apart, as it seems, for sleep and for coolness,
And, when he heard the noise of the voices and tramp of the others
Moving about, sprang up, and scarce awake from his slumber,
Had not the sense to remember he had to go down by a stair-case:
So he fell fair on a roof: and his spine was broken asunder
Just at the neck: and his soul went down to the regions of Hadés.
“And, when they gathered around me, ’twas thus I spoke to my comrades:
‘Say to yourselves, if you will, that we now are on point of returning
Unto our home: but Circé, another road, has appointed,
That which descends to the house of Persephoné and dread Hadés,
Counsel to ask of the soul of Teiresias, seer of the Thebans.’
“Thus did I speak: but the hearts of my men were dismayed when they heard me,
So they sat down on the ground, a-groaning and tearing their hair out:
But, as no practical plan from all this mourning resulted,
Slowly we went on our way to the shore of the sea and our galley,
Heavy at heart with grief, and shedding tears in abundance:
Circé, meanwhile, had gone to the good black ship, and, beside it,
Tied up a fine young ram and a coal-black ewe for our offering,
Easily passing unseen: for who could see a Divine one,
Whithersoever he chose to go, unless he so willed it?
BOOK XI
HADES

"BUT, when we came to the sea, to the place where our vessel was lying,
First did we drag her down to float on the blessed salt water,
Lifted the mast on board, and set the sails in their places:
Then we put in the sheep which Circé had given, and lastly Climbed o'er the bulwarks ourselves, for all that we freely were weeping.
Soon, in the wake of our ship, with her bows blue-painted and shining,
Circé, the fair-haired Goddess of incantations and magic,
Sent us a sail-filling breeze, the best of companions for seamen.
We, when by dint of hard work we had set the rigging in order, Sat, and committed the ship to the care of wind and the helmsman.
So, with her sails stretched taut, the good ship passed on her journey
All through the live-long day, till the ways of the world were o'ershadowed.
And to the limits we came, of the deep-flowing River of Ocean,
Where the Cimmerians dwell, and where is their state and their city,
Hidden in mist and cloud: nor ever the sun in his splendour Sends them his cheering rays, when he mounts to the starry heavens,
Or when he sinks once more, to the earth from which he had risen:
But, by a pall as of night, these wretched mortals are covered.
There we grounded our vessel, and landed the sheep, and on foot we Followed along the shore, by the side of the River of Ocean,
Coming at last to the place of which Our Lady had told us.
There, were the sacred rites, by Eurylochus and Perimèdés,
Duly performed: but I, having drawn my sword from beside me, Scooped out a pit, each way about the length of my forearm, And, on each side of the pit, to make my peace with the dead men, Poured out honey and milk, then wine of the sweetest, and thirdly Pure spring water, and sprinkled white barley meal as a finish. And, to secure good will from this shadowy people, I promised That, when I came once more to my Ithacan home, I would offer, In my own halls to the dead, a barren heifer, the choicest One of the herd, and would build and pile with dainties a pyre, And, as his special due, for Teiresias, slaughter a great sheep, Black without spot, the finest of all that I had in my sheepfold. And, having duly invoked, with many a prayer and entreaty, These, the nations of dead men, I cut the throats of the victims Over the pit: and the dark blood flowed: then, swarming towards me, Souls of the dead appeared from out the regions of darkness, Brides new wedded, and strong young men, and trouble-worn elders, Delicate maidens now stricken with unfamiliar sorrow, Many with gaping wounds by brazen spear-head inflicted, Warriors also, whose arms were red with the gore of battle: These, to the side of the pit, came flocking from every quarter With a most wondrous clamour: but sickening terror possessed me: Promptly I bade my comrades to flay the sheep, which were lying Slaughtered by pitiless bronze, and to flay their carcases wholly, And to the Nether Gods, make prayer, to all-powerful Hadés, And to Persephoné, Goddess of dread: then, drawing my cutlass, Seated myself on the ground, and warded away the dead men, Shadowy folk, from the blood, till I, the seer, had consulted. 

"First of the souls to approach, was that of Elpenor our comrade: For, not yet, 'neath the wide-wayed earth, had his body been buried: For we had left his corpse behind in the palace of Circé Neither bewept nor buried: for other work was more urgent.
And, when I saw him, I wept, and my heart was melted with pity:
And, in unbidden words, I called him by name and addressed him:

‘How did you reach this land, Elpenor, of gloom and of shadow?
You have come quicker afoot, than we, in our well fitted vessel.’
Thus did I speak: and thus, with a moan, he answered my question:
Evil fate and that cursed wine have been my undoing.
Hardly aroused from sleep, in the hall of Circe, I did not
See where I went, when I came to the top of the staircase, but
fell down
Fair on the ridge of a roof: and my spine was broken asunder,
Just at the neck, and my soul went down to the regions of Hadés.
But I entreat you by those who remain far off in the homeland,
Yes, by your wife, and the father by whom as a child you were
nurtured,
And by Telemachus, him whom you left like an orphan behind you,
(For I know well that so soon as you leave these regions of Hadés,
You, with your well-built ship, will call at the island Æaea:
And, in that case, O king, I adjure you not to forget me)
Do not go back and leave me unburied unwept and forgotten,
Lest I become the occasion, of wrath from the Powers of Heaven.
But I entreat you to burn me with all my arms, and to pile up,
Hard by the foaming sea, a mound which men in the future
Seeing, may learn that there a man of misfortune is buried:
And, when the rites are completed, to fix upright on the summit
That stout oar that I rowed with, when living amongst my com-
panions.’

‘So did he speak: and thus I sadly addressed him in answer:
‘All, my unhappy friend, that you ask, I will do and will
finish.’

‘Thus, with distressful words, we two sat talking together,
I still guarding the blood with my sword, while the shade of my
comrade,
From the far side of the pit, unceasingly plied his entreaties.
And, when he passed from my sight, the soul of my mother came forward, Anticlea, the daughter of king Autolycus Greatheart, Whom I had left alive, when I sailed for Ilion's fortress. And, when I saw her I wept, for the sight of her moved me to pity:

But, though it grieved me sore, I could not do other than keep her Far from the blood till first I had sought Teiresias' counsel.

'Thereupon came the soul of Teiresias seer of the Thebans. Holding a sceptre of gold; and he knew me at once, and addressed me:

'Why have you also come, unhappy one, out of the sunlight Into the realms of gloom, to see the home of the dead men? But stand back from the pit, I pray you, and lower your sword-point
That I may drink of the blood, and tell you the truth without erring.'

"So I drew back from the pit, and sheathed my sword in the scabbard
At his request: and, soon as a draught of the blood had refreshed him,
Thus did the blameless seer in words of wisdom address me:

"'That which you seek is a pleasant voyage, most famous Odysseus,
But 'tis a hard one the God will give you: for small is the hope that
You will elude the Earth-Shaker, who nurses his anger against you,
For that you blinded his son, Polyphemus, whom dearly he cherished:
Yet, even so, there remains some hope that, through many a hardship,
You may reach home at last, if only you have the endurance For to restrain your hunger, and also that of your comrades. When, as you range the sea with its purple shadows, you once have
Guided your well-benched ship within sight of Thrinakia's island, And, in the meadows, you see the herds of oxen a-feeding, And the fat sheep of the Sun, the observer and hearer of all things,
Then, if you let them alone, and think of nought but your journey,
Through many hardships, you may, in time, reach Ithaca's island:
But, if you raid them at all, why then I foretell the destruction
Both of your ship and your men: and, if yourself should be rescued,
Late and in pain you will come, having lost the whole of your comrades,
Borne in a foreign ship, and find a curse in your dwelling,
Crowds of outrageous men, who are fain to devour your substance,
Wooing your godlike wife, and giving her marriage presents.
Yet, their insults at least, you are sure to avenge at your coming.
But, when within your halls, you have slaughtered these insolent suitors,
Whether it be by guile, or by open force with the sword point,
Then set out on a march, with a well-fitted oar on your shoulder,
Till you shall come to a people who never have seen blue water,
Neither have learnt to season their food with salt, and know nothing
Either of smart trim ships, with cheeks gay painted with crimson,
Or of the well-fitted oars which serve them as wings o'er the ocean.
And I will tell you a sign there can be no fear of mistaking:
Soon as you meet on the road a man who thus shall accost you:
"Why, 'tis a winnowing fan that your honour has got on his shoulder,"
Then, having fixed in the ground your well-fitted oar as a standard,
Offer a sacrifice fair to the lord of the ocean, Poseidon,
Ram and bull and the mate of swine, the untameable wild boar:
Then turn homewards again, and sacred hecatombs offer
To the immortal Gods whose home is the vault of the heavens,
All in their order due. And, at length, from the sea, shall Death come,
Gently as ever can be, to yourself, and lull you to slumber
Weighted by prosperous years, with all your people around you
Happy and well content. And this is the truth without erring.
"So did he speak: and, in words like these, I addressed him in answer:
Sir, I suppose these things, by the Gods themselves, were determined.

But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
Not far away, I see the soul of the mother who bore me,
Sitting beside the blood, in silence, nor has she the spirit
Even to look in the face or speak to the son that she cherished.
How may I bring her to know me, O prince, for her very own offspring?

“So did I speak: and at once, the seer thus answered my question:

‘That is not hard to tell, nor readily will you forget it:
Whosoever it be, of the souls of the dead, that you suffer
Freely to taste of the blood, will tell you the truth without erring:
But, if you grudge them that, they will shrink and fade in the distance.’

“And, with these words, the soul of Teiresias, prince of the Thebans,
Entered the house of Hadés, the counsel divine being spoken.
But I remained in my place until the soul of my mother
Came up and drank of the blood: and straightway, reviving, she knew me,
And, with a wailing voice, in unbidden words she addressed me:

‘How did you come, my child, beneath the gloom and the darkness,
Not having died? These things are hard for the living to look on:
Seeing that mighty streams and rivers of terror divide us:
First is the River of Ocean, which none has been able to traverse
On his own feet, but only by aid of a well-fitted vessel.
Have you been, all this time, on ship-board amongst your companions
Wandering back from Troy, and never yet have arrived at Ithaca, nor have seen in your halls the wife whom you cherish?’

“So did she speak: but I, in these words answered her question:

‘Mother dear, it was the call of necessity brought me to Hades,
Counsel to ask of the soul of Teiresias, seer of the Thebans.
For I have never set foot on my native country, or even
Reached any part of Achaia, but always have wandered in sorrow
Since that day when first, in the train of divine Agamemnon,
All of us sailed for Troy, to fight it out with the Trojans.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
What was the form in which the Reaper Death overcame you?
Was it a wasting disease, or did Artemis Heavenly Archer
Steal on you unperceived, and suddenly smite with her arrow?
Tell me too of my father, and son whom I left as an infant,
If they are still in charge of my property, or if another
Holds it by force, and themselves despair of my ever returning.
Tell me too of my wife: how stands her mind and her purpose?
Does she remain with my son, and prudently govern the household,
Or has she married already the man that she thinks to be noblest?'

"So did I speak: and thus my mother revered made answer:
'As for your wife, she abides, with heart still patient and steadfast,
Waiting for your return: and the nights that she passes in sorrow
Each in its turn gives place to a day of desolate weeping.
Still does Telemachus rule your demesne, and share in the banquets
Given, as custom demands, by the judges: for all men invite him.
As to your father, of late, he never has come to the city,
But he remains on the farm: and he has no bedding to speak of,
But in the winter he sleeps in the ashes beside of the fire,
Just like the farm hands, and wears the same rough clothing as they do.
But, when the summer comes, and the fruit-bearing season of autumn,
Then will they spread him a bed of fallen leaves in the vineyard,
Low on the wholesome earth: and there he lies in his sorrow
Longing for your return, in old age bitter and painful.
And it was much like this, my days allotted were ended:
For it was not that She, the far-seeing Archer of Heaven,
Stole on me unperceived, and suddenly smote with her arrow,
Nor did some fever seize my frame, and with wasting consumption,
In its own deadly way, drain out the soul from the body:
But it was longing and care for you, my splendid Odysseus,
And your own dear kind spirit, that robbed me of life and its sweetness.'

"So did she speak: but I, with conflicting thoughts was distracted,
Longing to clasp in my arms the soul of my mother departed:
Thrice, then, I started forward, my heart being eager to grasp it,
And thrice, out of my hands, as it might be a dream or a shadow,
Lightly it fluttered away: and the pang at my heart grew sharper:
And, in unbidden words, I called her by name and addressed her:

"'Why do you slip from my arms, dear Mother, who long
to embrace you,
That, in each other's arms, we two enfolded, and weeping,
E'en in the house of Hadés, may find some sad consolation?
Or is it merely an image that haughty Persephoné sends me,
Vain and unreal, that so, she may make my groaning more bitter?'

"So did I speak: and thus my mother reveréd made answer:
'Woe is to me, my son: most wretched art thou above all men:
Think not the daughter of Zeus, Persephoné, wills to deceive you:
But 'tis the law of mortals, when life has gone from the body:
Seeing their strength resides no longer in bones or in muscles:
These, by the mighty force of blazing fire, are resolved
Into a handful of dust, when the bones are bereft of the spirit:
Then does the soul go forth, and dreamlike flutters at random.
Make for the light while you may: and these things note and remember,
That, in the time to come, to your own dear wife you may tell them.'

"Thus did we two hold converse: but still, in a stream
without ending,
Souls of the women came on: for so did Persephoné urge them,
Those who were daughters or wives of the noblest men of the ancients.
Till, round the dark red blood, in crowds they were gathered together. 
But I debated how best I might ask a question of each one: 
And, as by instinct, I saw that the plan I will tell was the wisest: 
Drawing my long sharp sword from my sturdy thigh, I stood sentry, 
And did not suffer them all to drink of the blood in confusion: 
So they came forward in turn: and each in turn did I question: 
And, in her turn, each one did tell her descent and her story. 
"First of the women I saw was Tyro, nobly descended, 
Proudly declaring herself the daughter of royal Salmoneus, 
She who was married to Crētheüs the son of Æolus, yet was 
Smitten with hopeless love for that fairest of streams the Enipeus: 
But, in the form of Enipeus, the great Earth-clasper Earth-shaker Lay, and embraced her beside the mouth of the eddying river: 
And, like a mountain, the deep blue wave rose round them, and arching 
Over, it hid from view the God and the mortal woman. 
But, when the rites of love had been by the God completed, 
Holding her hand, he called her by name and spoke to her gently: 
"'Lady, rejoice in love: and, during the year that is coming, 
Splendid sons shall you bear: for not in vain are embraces 
Of the Immortals: 'tis yours to tend them and bring them to manhood. 
And now go to your home, and keep your counsel and never 
Utter my name: but I am the great Earth-shaker Poseidon.' 
"And, at the word, he dived 'neath the heaving waves of the ocean. 
She, in due time, gave birth to Neleüs and Pelias, two strong 
Servants of mighty Zeus: now Pelias, owner of cattle, 
Dwelt in the plains of Iolcus: his brother, in sandy Pylos. 
But, unto Cretheüs, the others were born by this queen among women, 
Æson and Pherés and famed Amythaon the lover of horses. 
"And, after her, did I see Antíopé child of Asopus 
Her who was proud to have slept in the arms of Zeus of Olympus. 
She too bore twin sons, and named them Amphion and Zethus: N
These were the founders of Thebes, the city whose gateways were seven,
And, on its wall, built towers: for strong as they were, they could not
Hold the long wall of Thebes without the aid of the towers.

"And, after her, I saw Amphitryon's wife Alcméné,
Who, in the arms of Zeus, in love was united, and brought forth Héraclés, steadfast and bold, the hero with heart of a lion.
Megara also I saw, the daughter of Creon the haughty,
Whom the unwearied might of the son of Amphitryon married.

"Also I saw the mother of ΟEdipus, fair Epicaste,
Her who, unwitting, unwilling, committed a crime most heinous,
Married to her own son, who had slain and stripped of his armour his own father: but soon was the deed made public to all men.
He, in delightful Thebes, long time, though with pangs at his heart-strings,
Ruled o'er the people at Cadmus, the sentence of Heaven fulfilling.
But, in her anguish, his mother suspended a noose from the ceiling,
And in this manner she passed to the house of all-powerful Hadés,
Swept from her sense by grief, and leaving woes, to her husband Numberless, such as are wreaked by the soul of a mother in vengeance.

"Chloris also I saw, the fairest of women, whom Neleus Married because of her beauty, and dowered with thousands of presents:
Youngest daughter was she of Amphion the son of Iāsis,
Who once mightily ruled in Orchomenos, Minyan city:
She, in Pylos, was queen, and splendid sons to her husband, Lordly in temper she bore, Periclýmenus, Chromius, Nestor:
And, besides these, she bore one daughter, magnificent Pero,
Whom all dwellers around were courting: Neleis however Would not bestow her on any, except on the painful condition That he should drive the herd, of cattle savage and broad-browed Out of the land of Iphícles. And one man only was found who Dared to accept this task, and he was a high-souled prophet:
But, by decree of the Gods, the prophet was captured and bound in
Painful fetters, by rough and uncivilized herdsmen of those parts. But, when a year had passed, and the seasons in order returned, And his appointed months and days of captivity ended, Then, when his message was spoken, at last the mighty Iphícles Save him his freedom: and so the will of Zeus was fulfilléd. "Leda, as well, did I see, the wife of Tyndaréis, her who Bore, to her lord and husband, a pair of stout-hearted brothers, Castor the tamer of horses and Pollux invincible boxer, These, in her teeming womb, the Earth now holds as her cap-tives: Yet, even under the Earth, great Zeus has granted them honour: For, on alternate days, they share the lot of the living. "And, after her, I saw the famous wife of Alöeus, Iphimédeia, who said she had shared the bed of Poseidón: Two great sons did she bear (but to early death they were destined) Otus, huge as a God, and his brother the famed Ephialtátes, Who were the tallest men that ever rich plough-land nourished, And the most handsome by far, excepting renownéd Oríon: For that at nine years old, 'tis said, nine cubits they measured Shoulder to shoulder across, but in height they measured nine fathoms. These in their pride made threats to the Gods who dwell in Olympus That they would raise the cry of impetuous warfare against them, For that they meant to crown Olympus with Ossa, and pile on Pelion forests and all, that so they might climb to the heavens. And, had they reached their prime, no doubt they would have succeeded: But the great son of Zeus, the offspring of fair-haired Leto, Slew them both one and the other, before that, under their temples Down had grown, and their chins with the bloom of manhood were covered. "Phaedra also I saw, and Procris and fair Ariadne, Daughter of baleful Minos, whom, long since, Theseus was bringing Home as a bride from Crete to the fruitful gardens of Athens, Bringing, but not to enjoy her, for ere their journey was finished, Artemis slew her in Dia, the God Dionysus accusing.
Clymené also was there, and Mæra, and base Eriphylé, 
Who, for the price of gold, betrayed the life of her husband. 
But I should fail to describe, or even to mention the names of 
All of the women I saw, the wives and daughters of heroes, 
Ere that the night had waned: for I think that, even already, 
Is it the time for sleep, maybe with the crew in the galley, 
Or where I am: but to Gods and yourselves I trust for my 
escort."

These were his words: and the guests, each one, were speech-
less and silent, 
And, in the shadowy hall, were held as it were by enchantment, 
Till, by the white-armed queen, Arêté, the silence was broken: 
"Noble Phæacians all, I wish to ask your opinion
Touching our honoured guest, his stature form and discretion:
And, although I am his host, yet each of you shares in the
honour.
Send him not therefore away, I beg you, with hurry unseemly,
Neither curtail your gifts: for, thanks to the favour of Heaven,
Many and rich are the treasures that lie stored up in your
houses."

And, to the company present, thus spoke Echinēüs the aged:
"That which the queen has spoken, my friends, is much to the
purpose:
And, as we all approve, let us carry out her suggestion.
But, with the king, it remains to give the appropriate orders."

And, in his turn, the king Alcinoüs gave his decision:
"It shall be done as you say, that is if Heaven allows me
Still to be ruler and king of the noble Phæacian oarsmen.
But I am sure that our guest, however he longs for his homeland,
Will be content to remain with us, at least till to-morrow,
Till I complete my gifts. And every man will take part in
Speeding him homeward, but chiefly myself, who here am the
ruler."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Prince, upon whom the gaze of all your people is fastened,
If you should bid me to stay where I am till a year is completed,
And, at the end, should speed my return and load me with
presents,
That would delight me well: and more would it be to my profit
That, with a fuller hand, I should reach the land of my fathers: For, in that way, I should meet with much more honour and welcome, Whether from high or low, when I came to Ithaca's island."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke Alcinoüs Greatheart:

"Noble Odysseus, each one of us here can see in a moment, From your appearance, that you are no trickster or charlatan, such as,
Scattered all over the earth, pick up a precarious living
Weaving plausible lies: 'tis a wonder how they invent them:
You can express yourself well, and are clearly a man of discretion:
And, like a practised bard, you have duly recounted the story
Of those troubles which you and all the Achæans have suffered. But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
Did you see any of those your godlike comrades, who with you Sailed to the city of Troy, and faithfully followed your fortunes? Surely the night is as long as one could desire: and bed-time Has not arrived just yet: so tell us some more of your exploits. And, for my part, I could listen with pleasure till morning, if only You would be willing to talk of all your trials and adventures."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Prince, whom, with one accord, your people regard as the noblest,
There is a time for words, a time there is also for sleeping. But, if you still would wish to listen, it would be a pleasure Both to continue my tale, and also to tell you of other
Still more grievous disasters which caused the death of my comrades,
Who, having safely withstood the shout and the charge of the Trojans,
Perished, ere reaching home, through the will of an evil woman.

Odysseus continues his Story

"Now, when the awful voice of Persephoné scattered the women
Hither and thither, the soul of the great Agamemnon came forward,
Laden with grief: and around him a group of others were gathered, All who had met with death in the house of the traitor Ægisthus. And, in a moment he knew me, so soon as the blood he had tasted: And, with a bitter cry, he shed tears many and frequent, Stretching out feeble hands towards me, and trying to grasp me: Effort in vain, for no longer the sturdy strength and the vigour Was at his call which once his supple limbs had directed. And, when I saw him, I wept, and my heart was melted with pity, Also I called him by name, and in words unbidden addressed him:

"'Glorious son of Atreus, great king of men, Agamemnon, What was the form of death by which the Reaper subdued you? Did you meet death in your ships, by the act of mighty Poseidon Raising a horrible blast of wind that no vessel could weather? Or were you done to death on the land by the onset of foemen While you were raiding their cattle or driving flocks from the sheepfold? Or did you fall in fighting to capture a city or women?'

"So did I speak: and at once, he thus replied to my question: 'Zeus-born son of Laërtès, Odysseus of many devices, Neither on board my ships, was I slain by the act of Poseidon, Nor was I done to death on the land by the onset of foemen, But Ægisthus contrived my death, with the aid and connivance Of my accurséd wife: having called me as guest to a supper, Fouly did he slay me as 'twere an ox at the manger. So, by a death most wretched, I died: and my comrades around me, Like unto so many swine, one after another were slaughtered, As when a wealthy man a marriage feast is preparing, Or a subscription dinner, or grand ceremonial banquet. You have been present yourself at the death of many a hero Either in single combat or in the furious mêlée: But, had you seen that sight, you had groaned as never before-time, As, round the wassail bowl and table loaded with dainties, Lay our corpses piled, and blood o'er the pavement was streaming.
Then did I hear, at my side, the most pitiful voice of Cassandra, Daughter of Priam, and murdered by Clytemnestra the crafty: And, in the throes of death, I lifted my hands and feebly Clutched at my sword: but she, the shameless one, though I was passing Into the house of Hadés, had not the heart nor the pity Either to raise my jaw or close my eyelids, but left me. For, than an evil woman, nought lives more dreadful and shameless, Such as was she, who devised a deed abhorrent, the murder Of her own wedded lord. For truly I looked for a welcome, On my return, from my children and all my household retainers: But, by her wicked designs, not only herself has she shamed, But other women to follow, how virtuous ever they may be.' 

"So did he speak: and I, in answer thus did address him: 'Monstrous it is how of old the house of Atreus was hated By the far-seeing Zeus on account of woman's devices: First, for the sake of Helen, full many Achæans did perish: Then, for your absent self, Clytemnestra plotted destruction.' 

"So did I speak: and thus, he gravely addressed me in answer: 'Therefore, my friend, take heed: be not soft-hearted to woman, E'en to your wife: and refrain from telling her all that you know of: Some things tell: about others, 'twere best that you keep your own counsel. But your own wife, Odysseus, will never plot evil against you: Seeing Icarius' daughter, Penelope, prudence possesses Far above other women, and rules her acts with discretion. Well I remember the time when we together were sailing Off to the war, and left her, a youthful wife with an infant Boy at her breast, who now must be taking his place with his elders: Happy man: for his father shall come to his home and behold him, And, as a loving son, he shall fold in his arms his father. While that the wife who was mine allowed not my eyes to be gladdened Gazing upon my son, but slew me before I could see him. But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and clearly,
Whether my own dear boy is still in the land of the living, 
Either in sandy Pylos, or may be Orchomenos, or else 
In the broad plains of Sparta, with king Menelaeus my brother. 
For that he cannot be dead, my son, the godlike Orestes.’

"Thus did he speak: and in words like these I answered his question:

‘Why do you ask me this, son of Atreus? For truly I know not
Whether he lives or is dead: and to speak at random is evil.’

‘Thus, with grief at our hearts, we two stood talking together, 
Speaking unwelcome words, the while that we freely were weeping.

Then did approach the souls of the son of Peleus, Achilles, 
And of Antilochus, also of noble Patroclus, and Ajax,
Who, among all the Greeks, in stature and form was the grandest,
Only excepting the son of Peleus, the noble Achilles.

And, though he was but a shade, the offspring of Æacus knew me,

And, with a mournful wail, in unbidden words he addressed me:

‘Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Why will you seek adventures each one more hard than the other?

How did you dare to descend to the land of Hadés, and visit
These ineffectual dead, mere shadows of toiling mortals?’

“So did he speak: and I, in these words, answered his question:

‘Son of Peleus, Achilles, unrivalled amongst the Achæans,
This was the reason I came, to ask of Teiresias counsel
How I might safely arrive at rugged Ithaca’s island:
For I have never set foot on my native country, nor even
Come near the land of Achaia: but always misfortune pursued me.

But, than yourself, Achilles, no man was more fortunate ever,
Neither will be, for of old, we Argives honoured you living,
Like to a God: and here you have great authority also
Over the dead: so lament not your death beyond measure, Achilles.’

“So did I speak: and at once, he thus addressed me in answer:

‘Speak not unfitting words about death, renowned Odysseus. 
So I could be once more on the wholesome earth, I would rather
Serve as a slave to a man who had neither fortune nor comforts
Than be the king of all the dead in the region of shadows.
But, can you give me word, of my son who went with the army,
Whether he proved to be, as he promised, a leader of heroes.
Say too what you have heard of the noble Peleus my father:
Is he yet treated with honour in all the Myrmidon cities,
Or do they set him at nought in Phthia and all over Hellas,
For that, by age, the strength of his hands and his feet has been
crippled?

I am no champion now, to fight in the sunshine of heaven,
Such as I was when erst, on Troy's wide pastures, I slaughtered
Many of Ilion's bravest to succour the hard-pressed Achaeans.
But, if for one short moment, I came to the house of my father,
Then would I make them feel the terrible weight of my sword-arm,
Those who deny him his due, and treat him with insult and outrage.'

"So did he speak: and thus did I to Achilles make answer:
'As for the noble Peleus, tis true no tidings have reached me,
But, of your own dear son, who joined the army the latest,
All the truth will I tell: for I, it was, and no other
Brought him away from Skyros, to join the well-greaved Achaeans,
Safely in my own vessel, well trimmed, seaworthy and roomy.
And, I assure you, whenever we met together in council
Under the walls of Troy, though Nestor and I might oppose him,
He would be ever the first to speak, and that with discretion.
Also, when we Achaeans engaged the Trojans in battle,
Never he lagged behind, along with the crowd, but he always
Ran on in front of the others, and yielded in courage to no one,
And, in the desperate conflict, he slew men many and valiant.
But I should fail to describe, or even to mention the names of
All of the men he killed in maintaining the cause of the Argives,
But I will only say that he slew a warrior no less
Than great Telephus' son, around whom many Ceteians
Fell on account of the gifts that were used for seducing a woman.
Memnon excepted, a man more handsome I never set eyes on.
But, when we entered the HORSE, we chosen men of the
Argives,
Marvellous work of Epeius, to me the command was entrusted,
Either to open or close the door of the den that concealed us.
Then all the rest of us there, the rulers and chiefs of the Argives, wept, and were wiping their eyes: and the knees of each were a-tremble:

But, as to **his** fair face, it never blanched for a moment, nor did he wipe off a tear: but he earnestly begged me to let him Rush from the horse at once: and his hand was grasping the sword-hilt

And his great spear of bronze, as he brooded on ill to the Trojans.

But, when at length we had sacked the steep-walled city of Priam, then, with his share of the spoil, he embarked for home on my galley,

With not a single scratch: for never an arrow had struck him, nor, in the thick of the fight, was he ever wounded: and wounds are not uncommon in war: for the War-God rages at random.'

"So did I speak: but the soul of the swift-footed offspring of Peleus passed, with his lengthy strides, away o'er the asphodel meadow, joyful to hear that his son was honoured amongst the Achæans.

"But the remainder of those who had passed from the land of the living, stood in a sorrowful crowd, and each was telling his troubles: only the soul of Ajax was standing apart from the others, Telamon's valiant son, who was angry because I had conquered when I preferred my claim to the arms of the noble Achilles; yet 'twas his lady mother, herself had ordered the contest, and, as the jurors, were sons of Trojans and Pallas Athené. Would that I never had won in such a contest as this was: since, for the armour's sake, a splendid hero lies buried under the sod, a man, in deeds and in beauty unrivalled by any man of the Argives, the son of Peleus excepted.

Him I approached, and thus, in persuasive words, I addressed him:

"'Noble Telamon's son, great Ajax, are you not willing even when dead to forget your wrath at that cursed armour? surely the Gods have made it a source of woe to the Grecians: you were a tower of strength to them: and we the Achæans"
Ever are mourning your loss as we mourned for the death of Achilles.
Zeus and none else was the cause, who hated the host of the Argives
With an outrageous hate: and you did he choose as the victim.
But come hither, O king, and listen to what I am saying,
And put a curb on your might: for your soul is too manly and headstrong.'
"So did I speak: but he gave me no answer, but followed the others
Unto the dark abode of those held captive by Hadés.
Yet, had I spoken again, he might even then have responded,
Wrath as he was: but the heart in my breast was constantly urging
That I should see the rest of the souls who had passed through the river.

[For the omitted passage see Appendix B.]
And I should yet have seen the famous heroes of old time:
But, with a wondrous clamour, the tribes of dead men assembled,
Tens of thousands together: and sickening terror possessed me
Lest, from the realms of Hadés, Persephoné's self might be hurling,
On her intrusive guest, the monstrous head of the Gorgon.
Losing no time, I hied to the ship, and called to my comrades:
'Hurry on board, my men: Cast loose with speed the stern hawsers.'
Quickly they mounted the ship, and took their seats on the benches.
Helped by our oars at first, and then by following breezes,
Borne on the rolling swell we sailed o'er the River of Ocean.
"But, soon as ever our galley had left the River of Ocean, Sailing again the waves where ships have plenty of sea-room, And had arrived at Æaea, the island home of the Morning, Daughter of Dawn, where the Nymphs do dance and Helios rises, There, on the sandy beach, we ran her aground: and my comrades, Leaving the ship, were glad, once more, to have landed in safety: There we fell sound asleep till the Goddess of Morning should wake us. But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers, Then I despatched a party to go to the palace of Circe, Thence to bring back the body of our dead comrade Elpenor. And, cutting stakes for a pyre where the highest headland projected, There did we bury our friend, and weep without stint o'er his ashes. And, when at last his corpse was consumed with the weapons he carried, Then did we pile up a mound, and drag to the summit a menhir, And, on the top of all, we fixed his oar as a beacon. "Thus we performed each rite according to custom: but Circe Failed not at once to observe us returned from the regions of Hadés: Quickly, in splendid apparel, she came, with attendants around her Carrying bread and meat, and rich red wine for our comfort: And, in our midst she stood, the divine one, and thus she addressed us:
Wretched men, who alive, have entered the palace of Hades,
Destined to die twice over, not once as is common to mortals:
Come now, take some food, and drink good wine at your pleasure
Here for the rest of the day, and soon as Morning shall wake you,
Sail if you wish: and myself will tell you your route, and will point out
Where you must be on your guard, lest by any untoward mischances
Either on sea or land, you may meet with grievous disaster.'
"Thus did she speak: and our manly hearts full quickly consented.
So, for the live-long day, we sat to the hour of sunset
Feasting our fill of meat, and drinking wine of the sweetest.
But, when the sun had set and the shades of evening had fallen,
All of my men lay down to sleep by the side of the hawsers:
Then by the hand, she took me, and led me apart from the others,
Made me to sit by her side, and asked me of all that had happened:
And I recounted the whole, in due proportion and order.
"Then, in such words as these, did my lady Circe address me:
'All these things have been put to the proof: now hear, with attention
What I shall tell you more: and God himself shall remind you.
First you will come to the Sirens' haunt, who bewitch the unwary
Traveller passing their way: for whoever, unwitting of danger,
Comes within reach, and once has heard the sound of their voices,
Never again in his home shall wife and children rejoicing
Meet him and stand by his side, and welcome him back from his travels:
But, as they sit on the grass, and warble their ravishing ditty,
Strewn around them lie bones of men and carcases rotting.
But, without fear, row past them, when once with kneaded-up beeswax
You shall have stopped the ears of your comrades, lest any perchance should
Hear their seductive song: but if you should desire to hear it, Bid them to bind you, both hand and foot, upright in the mast hole, Fixing the ends of the rope to the timbers, that so you may safely List to the Sirens' song: and should you entreat them to loose you, Let them with extra ropes, at once still bind you the tighter. "But, soon as ever your men have passed beyond reach of the Sirens, Then I am able no longer to tell you which way you should follow, But I will state the choice: and you must make the decision. For, from this point, rise rocks overhanging: and breaking against them, Thunders for ever the wave of Amphitrite the blue eyed: These are the rocks which are known to the blessed Gods as the Shifters. And, by this way, no birds can pass in safety, not even Those wild doves who, to father Zeus, Ambrosia carry: And some, even of these, are killed on the slippery rock-face Now and again: but Zeus sends another to make up the number. Still, no vessel of man from thence has ever escaped, But there are planks of ships, and corpses of men in confusion Drifted about by waves and furious tempests of fire. One ship alone sailed by, of all that traverse the waters, Argo, beloved of all, on her way to the home of Ætës: And even she, on the rocks, would soon have been shattered: but Hera Guided her past because her heart was friendly to Jason. "Now, of the rocks on each hand, the one of them reaches to heaven With a sharp pointed peak to which a cloud-cap of blue-black Always is clinging: nor does it, not even in summer or autumn, Shift from its place: and the peak shows sharp and clear in the heaven: And not a mortal man could climb to the summit or stand there, Not if he had a score of feet and hands at his bidding: Seeing the rock is as smooth as if it were purposely polished. There, half way up the cliff, you will dimly perceive in the shadow,
Facing the West, a cave, past which yourself and your comrades
Will be obliged to steer, most honoured captain Odysseus:
Nor would a powerful man, from the deck of a sea-going vessel,
Shoot as he might, be able to reach that cave with an arrow.
And, in the cave, lives Scylla, whose cry will make you to shudder
E'en though it be no louder than that of a new-born puppy:
But she herself is a monster of horrible aspect, whom no one,
Not even one of the Gods, could endure to meet without terror.
Twelve is the number of feet that she has, misshapen abortions,
Also six necks of enormous length: and each of the six necks
Bears a terrific head: and in each of the heads you may reckon
Three dense crowded rows of teeth, the bearers of black death.
And, all the hinder part of her body, she hides in the cavern,
But, from this chasm of dread, thrusts out her heads of a sudden,
And thence, peeping around the rock, she fishes for dolphins,
Sea-dogs or any of those still greater beasts which are reared by
Amphitrite the Roarer, within her domain in abundance.
And there was never a ship whose crew were able to boast that
They had gone by her unscathed: but, with every head, the monster
Snatches and carries off, from the blue-prowed vessel, a sailor.

"As to the rock you will see on the other side, it is lower,
Not far away: perhaps you might shoot across with an arrow:
On it, a great wild fig tree, with flourishing leafage, is growing,
Under the branches of which, the mouth of the awful Charybdis
Swallows the deep black water: for thrice in the day she spouts it
Out of the depths, and thrice, to unfathomed abysses, she gulps it.
And, above all things, beware that you be not near when she swallows:
For, in that case, Earth-shaker himself could not save you from ruin.
But it were better to run close under the rock of Scylla,
Rowing with all your might, because you had better be reft of
Six men out of your crew, than that all should perish together."

"So did she speak: and I, to her words thus shortly made answer:
'If you so please, O Goddess, I pray you to answer me truly:
Is there a chance to avoid in safety the deadly Charybdis,  
And yet beat off Scylla when making her raid on my comrades?'

"So did I speak: and she, the divine one, answered my question:

'Wretched man, your thoughts will ever be running on warfare  
And upon toil: but will you not yield to the Gods that are deathless?  
This is no mortal thing, be assured, but a pest without ending,  
Dreadful, unyielding and fierce, against whom battle is hopeless:  
Nor is there any help: to flee is your only salvation:  
For, if you linger a moment, whatever your arms or your courage,  
Much do I fear she will strike for a second time, and with each head  
Pick up a man of your crew. There is nothing to do but to row hard,  
And, in the meantime call on Kratais the mother of Scylla,  
Her who gave birth to this monster to be a curse unto mortals:  
She will prevent her from making another attack on your comrades.

"'Then you will come to the isle of Thrinakia, where there are many  
Oxen and fine large sheep of mighty Helios feeding,  
Oxen in seven herds, with fifty in each, and of fat sheep,  
Flocks of an equal number: and none of them breed: at the same time  
None of them ever die: and Goddesses care for and tend them,  
Fair-haired Nymphs, the sisters Lampetia and Phaethusa,  
Who by Neæra were born to the Great one who rides in the heavens.  
These then were born and reared by their lady mother, who sent them,  
When they were come to age, to dwell in Thrinakia's island,  
Guarding the curved-horn oxen and well-grown sheep of their father.  
Now if you leave these alone, and busy yourself with your journey,  
Then you are likely to reach, though not without hardship, your homeland  
But, if you raid them at all, why then I foretell the destruction
Both of your ship and your crew: and supposing yourself should be rescued, Late will you come to your home, bereft of the whole of your comrades.'

"And, on her golden throne, forthwith the Morning appeared. Then, up the island path, the stately Goddess retired. But, to the ship I returned, and urgently bade my companions Casting the hawsers loose, to climb on board of the vessel. Promptly the men embarked, and took their seats on the benches:

And, in the wake of our ship, with her blue prow cleaving the water,

Circe, the fair-haired Goddess of incantations and magic, Sent us a sail-filling breeze, the best of companions for seamen. We, when by diligent work we had set the rigging in order, Sat, and committed the ship to the care of wind and the helmsman.

Then, with a pang at my heart, I made this speech to my comrades:

"'Friends, as it is not right that one or two only should know of Those inspired commands which the Goddess Circe has given, I will inform you myself, that knowing the dangers beforehand, We may have better chance to escape from death and destruction. Firstly, she bids you to shun the perilous song of the Sirens Sitting in flowery mead: for I, and I only, may hear it: But you must bind me tight, with a rope, upright in the mast-hole, So that I cannot stir either hand or foot: and the rope ends Must be made fast to the framework: and if I entreat you to loose me, Then you must use more cords, and only bind me the tighter.'

"You may be sure that I dinned these things in the ears of my comrades, While that our good stout ship was swiftly approaching the island Where these Sirens dwell: for a favouring breeze was blowing. Then did the wind drop down, and a dead calm came of a sudden: And, by the God of the sea, the billows were lulled into slumber.
Then did my comrades rise, and furl the sails and they stowed them
Safe in the hold of the ship: and taking their seats on the benches,
Each with his polished oar, they churned the whitening water.
Then did I take from our store a big round cake of beeswax,
Cut it in pieces, and squeezed it, with all my strength, in my fingers:
Quickly the wax grew warm, in part from the pressure I gave it,
And from the heat of the sun which at that time blazed in the heavens:
And, with the wax, I plugged the ears of my men in succession.
Then, both by hands and feet, they bound me upright in the mast-hole,
Making the ends of the rope secure to the timbers around it,
And, sitting down to their oars, they smote the sea into whiteness.
But, when no farther away than the voice of a man can carry,
As we were speeding along, the Sirens caught sight of our vessel,
And, in their high clear notes, they struck up a chantey in chorus:

"'Hither, much praised Odysseus, great glory of all the Achæans,
Stay your ship, and approach, and listen awhile to our singing.
For, never yet, has a man rowed past in his well-tarred galley
But he has stayed to hear our sweet and melodious voices:
Then, having drunk of delight, and tasted of knowledge, he leaves us.
For, be assured, we know full well how the Greeks and the Trojans
Fought on the plains of Troy, and toiled by the will of Divine ones:
And we know all things that happen on Earth, the food-giving
Mother.'

"Thus, with delightful voice, they sang: and my heart was in rapture,
Longing to stay and hear: and I bade my companions to loose me,
Signing with frowns and nods: but they only rowed harder and harder.
Yet two sprang up at once, Eurylochus and Perimèdes, 
And, with additional cords, they still more tightly secured me. 
But, when we well were clear of the haunt of the Sirens, and 
could not 
Either distinguish their words or hear the tune they were singing, 
Then they removed the wax, those faithful and trusty com-
panions, 
Which I had put in their ears, and set me free from my fetters. 
“Now, soon as ever the island was left in the distance, I 
sighted 
Clouds of mist and of spray, and heard the roaring of waters. 
Then, in a panic, my men let drop the oars they were holding, 
And, with a plump, they fell in the current beside us: and so we 
Came to a sudden stop: for the oars no longer were driving. 
But, through the ship I went, and tried to rouse my companions, 
Standing by each man’s side, and gently persuading and 
cheering: 
“‘Many a time ere this, my friends, have we tasted of trouble, 
And are in no worse case this time than we were when the 
Round-eye 
Caught us within his cave and made us to taste of his power: 
But, from that horrible den, by my valour and wit and con-
trivance, 
We were delivered then: and I think you will never forget it. 
Pluck up courage, my boys, and all now do as I tell you. 
Take your seats on the benches, and, close to the line of the 
breakers, 
Smite the sea with your oars: if it be great Zeus has ordained 
That, from this present danger, we pass unscathed and in safety. 
And to you, helmsman, I give these orders: take heed that 
you bear them 
Ever in mind as you handle the sweep that guides our vessel: 
Keep our ship well clear of that spray and tide-rip yonder, 
Steering her close to the rock, lest ere you expect it you let her 
Drift to the other side, and you bring us all to disaster.’ 
“So did I speak: and promptly my comrades did as I bade 
them. 
But I said nothing at all, about Scylla, an evil past mending, 
Lest, being seized with a panic, my men might cease from their 
rowing,
Hurry away from their places, and hide themselves under the hatches.

And it was then that myself forgot the commandment of Circé Which was so hard to obey, that I should not take to my armour:

But I put on my arms, so trusty and famous, and seizing Two long spears in my hands, I mounted the fo’c’sle and waited: For, from that place, I thought I should likely be first to get sight of Scylla who dwelt in the rock and was soon to bring woe to my comrades.

But I could nowhere descry her, though straining my eyes to examine Carefully all the face of the great rock dim in the shadow.

Thus, up the strait, we sailed, bemoaning our plight, for on one side Scylla the monster lay: on the other, the awful Charybdis, Into her horrible maw, gulped down the salt sea water. And, when again she disgorged it, the whole sea boiled like a cauldron Set on a blazing fire: and the salt spray tossed to the heavens Fell in showers and drenched the opposite rocks to the summit. But, when she swallowed again the salt sea water, a turmoil Raged in her monstrous throat: and rocks, one side and the other, Thundered an echo back till the black sand showed at the bottom, Dreadful to see: and my men turned green with sickening terror. And, as we all were looking that way, in dread of destruction, Scylla meanwhile had seized no less than six of my comrades Out of the waist of the ship, the men most handy and strongest. And, looking back at the ship to see what my comrades were doing, There, up aloft, I caught sight of their hands and their feet as they struggled, Held in the monster’s grip, and calling me vainly to help them Out of their desperate plight before they were silent for ever. And, as a fisher may stand with his rod on a rocky projection Scattering food in the sea as bait for the little fishes: Then lets artfully down in the water a fish-hook of ox-horn
Hooks them, and throws them gasping upon the pebbles beside him,
Just so, gasping, my men were lifted up to the rock-face,
Where, in the mouth of her den, the monster devoured them screaming
And, in their mortal pain, appealing to me for deliv'rance.
That was the saddest sight that ever these eyes have behelden,
As with uncounted toils I have scoured the paths of the ocean.
"But, when we now were clear of the rocks and the awful Charybdis,
Also of Scylla, we came to the sacred island where broad-browed Oxen and fine large sheep were feeding, the herds of the Sun-God,
Helios riding on high. And, while I was still in my vessel
Far on the sea, I heard the lowing of oxen in farm-yard
Also the bleating of sheep: and there flashed on my mind the warning
Uttered by that blind prophet, Teiresias seer of the Thebans,
And by Ææan Circe, who often and urgently charged me
Not to go near to the isle, of the Sun the Refresher of mortals.
Then, with a pang at my heart, I spoke these words to my comrades:
"Listen to me, my friends, though I know you are suffering hardship,
That I may tell you the warning the seer Teiresias gave me,
Also Ææan Circe, who often and urgently charged me
Not to go near to the Isle, of the Sun the Refresher of mortals:
For, if we did, a disaster, the worst in our lives, would befall us.
So, my good fellows, lay on, and row us clear of the island.'
"Thus did I speak: but the hearts of my men were crushed at the order,
And, in a growling voice, Eurylochus spoke up and answered:
"You are a hard one, Odysseus, with strength prodigious, and never
Tired, and think that we all are made of iron like you are:
And now, when we have toiled too much as it is, and are almost Dropping with sleep, you forbid us to set our foot on an island
Where, with no danger at all, we may get something tasty for supper,
Bidding us alter our course, and all night aimlessly wander,
Just in the same old way, amid the fogs of the ocean.
Now, very violent gales that are most destructive to shipping
Often get up in the night: and for sure we should go to the
bottom
If it should chance that a squall should strike our ship of a
sudden,
Whether from South or West: for a storm from these quarters
will often
Smash any ship into pieces, in spite of Father Poseidon.
But you may make yourself easy: we'll do as the darkness
compels us,
Camp this night by the ship, and cook our supper in comfort,
And, in the morning, embark, and try our luck in the open.'
"Thus did Eurylochus speak: and the rest of my comrades
applauded.
And it was then I perceived that the Powers meant evil
against us,
And, on the spur of the moment, I thus to my comrades made
answer:
"' You are too many, my friends, and alone I cannot resist you:
But come, all of you swear, with a mighty oath, that you will not
(If we should come to a herd of oxen a-feeding, or fat sheep)
That no one of you will, in wicked and impious folly,
Slay either ox or sheep, but will, in peace and in quiet,
Thankfully eat the provisions immortal Circé has given.'
"So did I speak: and at once they swore to refrain as I
bade them.
And, when the oath was sworn, and confirmed with all due
observance,
Then, in a land-locked cove, we found a berth for our galley
Near to a spring of water: and leaving the ship, my comrades
Landed, and like good sailors, they cooked an excellent supper.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Then they bethought them of those their comrades whom Scylla
had eaten,
Snatched from the waist of the ship: and they shed a few tears
in their sorrow:
But, ere they long had wept, sweet sleep had stolen upon them.
Now, when the third watch came, and new constellations had
risen,
Zeus who gathers the clouds raised up a gale that broke on us
In a terrific squall: and one black curtain of storm cloud
Blotted out land and sea: and darkness fell from the heavens.
But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then we dragged up our ship, and moored her safe in a cavern,
Where the Sea Nymphs would dance, or sit and sing at their leisure.
Then did I call a meeting, and thus I spoke to my comrades:
"'Listen, my friends, there is plenty of food and drink in our vessel:
Let us not touch these oxen, for fear that mischief befall us:
Seeing these oxen and sheep belong to a terrible Power,
Helios, whose keen eye sees all things under the heaven.'
"So did I speak: and my men gave heed to the warning I uttered.
But, for a whole long month, the South wind held, and no other Wind ever blew but the South, unless it were East on occasion.
And, while the bread held out, with wine in plenty to cheer them,
Though they were hungry for food, they refrained from touching the oxen.
But, when the stock of provisions we had on board was exhausted,
Then were my men compelled to roam the island in search of Fishes and birds, or whatever of eatable game they contrived to Capture with home-made hooks: for hunger gnawed at their belly.
Then I would wander alone, about the island, a-praying Unto the Gods, if perchance, they might show me a way of returning.
And, as I walked one day through the island, avoiding my comrades,
When I had washed my hands, as was meet, in a place that was sheltered,
Heartily did I pray to all the Gods of Olympus:
And, in their pity, they poured sweet sleep on my eyelids: but meanwhile,
Hard by the ship, my kinsman, Eurylochus, stirred up rebellion:
"'Listen to me, my mates, you are suffering hardships unneeded:
Many the ways by which we wretched mortals may perish,
But, of all deaths in the world, the worst is death by starvation.
But come, let us drive off the best of Helios' oxen,
And give a right good feast to the Gods immortal of heaven.
And, if we ever come back to our homeland of Ithaca, why then
We will set up a shrine, and deck it superbly with statues
Many and costly to Him, the Sun God who rides in the heavens.
But, if in wrath for the loss of these long-horned oxen he has here,
He should destroy our ship, and the rest of the Gods should approve him,
Why, I had rather die quickly, at sea, a-gulping salt water,
Than starve slowly to death on an uninhabited island.'
"Thus did Eurylochus speak: and the rest of my comrades applauded.
And, to the shore, forthwith, they drove the best of the oxen:
('Twas but a little way: for our ship with her bows blue painted
Lay not far from the place where the broad-browed oxen were grazing.)
And, having plucked some leaves from a tall green oak tree, because that
They had no barley meal in store on board of the vessel,
Then did they stand round the oxen, and pray to the Gods of Olympus,
And, after making their prayer, they slaughtered the oxen and flayed them
Cut out the thighs, which they wrapped in a layer of fat from the carcase,
Folding it double, and placed raw flesh in slices for garnish,
And, having no sweet wine to pour on the sacrifice, dipped up
Pure spring water, and basted the entrails as custom demanded.
And, when the thighs were burnt, and they duly had tasted the entrails,
All that was left of the meat, they cut into pieces and toasted.
"And then, all of a sudden, my sweet sleep left me, and I was Hurrying off to the shore, where my good swift galley was lying,
And, by the time I had come within easy reach of my vessel,
Then I became aware of the smell of suet a-burning,
And, in despair I cried aloud to all the Immortals:
"'Father Zeus, and ye rest of the Gods who are blessed for ever,
Surely it was for my hurt that you lulled me in pitiless slumber:
And, in my absence, a crime most dread has been wrought by my comrades.'

"But a swift messenger came to Him who rides in the heavens,
Long-robed Lampétia, telling that we had slaughtered his oxen.
Then, with rage in his heart, he addressed the assembled Immortals:

"'Father Zeus, and ye rest of the Gods who are blessed for ever,
Punish, I pray you, the crew of Odysseus the son of Laërtes,
Who have presumed to kill those oxen of mine, which I always
Looked on with joy when I rose to run my course in the heavens
And when I downwards turned, my course above being finished.
But, if they do not pay, for my oxen, a fair compensation,
I will go down to Hades, and shed my light on the dead men.'

"But the Cloud-gatherer Zeus thus gravely addressed him in answer:

'Helios, this is my will, that you shine on the Gods as before-time,
Also on mortal men, who labour on fruitful ploughland:
But, as for these, I will smite them with one great flash of my lightning
All on the wine-dark sea, and cleave their ship into splinters.'
This was the tale that I heard from the fair-haired Goddess Calypso,
Which, as she said, herself had heard from the Messenger Hermès.

"But, soon as ever I came to the shore of the sea and my galley,
Standing by each man's side, I reproved him, but yet was unable
Now, to undo the deed: for the oxen were slaughtered already.
And the Immortals, at once, showed signs of displeasure by portents:
Hides began to crawl, and the meat on the spits to bellow,
Both the cooked and the raw: and the voice was the voice of the oxen.
Yet, with no thought or care, for six whole days, my companions
Feasted themselves at will on the best of Helios' oxen:
But when the seventh day had been brought by Zeus in its order, then the wind ceased to blow in gusty squalls: and together Going on board our ship, we trusted ourselves in the open; first having fixed our mast, and hoisted the sails in their places.

"But, soon as ever the island was left in the distance, and nothing was to be seen around us but sky and water, a blue-black storm cloud formed overhead, which Zeus son of Kronos had set there, under the shadow of which the sea grew dark: and our vessel came to the end of her course: for, not long after, the West wind struck with a shrieking squall: and both the forestays were broken by the great blast of wind: and the mast fell backwards: and rigging, mixed with the gear of the ship, fell into the hold in a tangle. Now, in its fall, the mast had struck the head of the helmsman, there, in the stern of the ship: and his skull was shattered to pieces: and, like a tumbler man showing off to the people, our helmsman fell from the quarter deck, and his manly spirit departed. But, in a mingled crash of thunder and lightning, the great Zeus struck our ship with his bolt and whirled it around like a feather: and it was filled with brimstone: and overboard jumped my companions: and, for a time, they floated like sea crows round our vessel, struggling amongst the waves: but to them no rescue was granted.

"Hardly I clambered along to the place where the force of the wave had wrenched the keel from the sides, and left it floating un-cumbered: and it had washed the mast quite close to the keel: and upon it clung the remains of a stay—as it chanced, of the toughest of ox-hide—so, with this stay, I lashed the mast and the keel to each other, and, sitting firm on the two, by the violent gale I was driven. Then did the West wind cease from its sudden and furious rushes,
And, in its place, there came the South, new laden with terror
Lest it should drive me back to the deadly jaws of Charybdis.
All night long I drifted, and just at the hour of sunrise
I was abreast of Scylla's rock and the dreadful Charybdis
Who, at that very time, was gulping the salt sea water:
But I, reaching as high as I could, to the trunk of the fig tree,
Caught it, and clung like a bat, but could get not an atom of
purchase
So as to plant my feet, or to climb up into the branches:
Seeing its roots were below, and its branches a long way above
me,
Great, and out of my reach, and overhanging Charybdis.
Grimly I kept my hold, till again the whirlpool should vomit
Mast and keel: and I seemed to be waiting in vain for a life-
time.
And, as a man will rise from the Court house to go to his
supper,
Who, all day, has been judging the suits of litigious freemen,
So did I feel when at last the beams reappeared from Charybdis.
Loosing my hands and feet, I let myself drop from the trunk,
and
Fell with a plump in the water, just clear of the two long timbers:
Climbing on these I sat, with my two hands working as paddles.
Nor did the Father of Gods, and of men, permit that the
monster
Scylla should see me again: or else I had met with destruction.
"Thence, for nine days, I drifted: but, during the night time,
the Powers
Carried me near to the island Ogygia, home of Calypso,
Goddess whose voice is a charm: She loved me and carefully
tended.
But why tell it again? 'Twas yesterday only I told it
Here to yourself and your queen: and to me it is always dis-
tasteful
If I repeat the tales I have told very fully already."

End of the Story of Odysseus.
BOOK XIII

RETURN OF ODYSSEUS TO ITHACA

THIS was his tale: and the guests sat each one speechless and silent,
Held, as it were by enchantment, within the shadowy palace.
But, after courteous pause, Alcinoüs spoke to Odysseus:
“Noble Odysseus, since now you have graced with your presence our dwelling,
High roofed, founded on bronze, I think that you will not of purpose,
Ere you get home once more, be seeking for other adventures.
And, unto each one here, my friends, I give this injunction,
All who, within these walls, are accustomed daily to drink of Wines reserved for the Elders, and listen to songs of the minstrel.
Now, in a chest well polished, our guest has with him the treasures
Which have been brought to this hall by Phæacian Lords of the Council,
Garments and works of art and jewels of intricate pattern:
But let us give him as well a mighty tripod and cauldron,
So that each man may contribute: Ourselves will collect the donations
And will pay over the sum, too great for a single man’s bounty.”
Thus did Alcinoüs speak: and all approved his proposal,
So, to his home and to bed, each one of the feasters departed.
But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
All hurried off to the ship, bringing money the parent of boldness.
There did the king see well that everything was in order,
Going himself through the ship, and gauging the height of the cross-beams,
Lest, when making a spurt, some seaman should meet with a damage.
Then, to the house of the king, they went to make ready a supper:
And, to provide the feast, the king Alcinoûs offered
Unto the son of Kronos, who dwells in the storm-cloud, a bullock.
So, after burning the thighs, they enjoyed a glorious banquet.
And, in the midst of the guests, the bard Demodococus rising
Sang for their entertainment: but now and again would Odysseus
Turn and look round at the sun, which still was high in the heavens,
Such was his haste to embark: for his heart was set on returning.
And, as a man will long for his supper, who has since the morning
Guided the plough, slow dragged by a pair of drowsy-eyed oxen,
And he is happy, when once the sun goes down o'er the hillside,
That he may go to his food, for all that his knees may be aching,
So the last ray of the sun was a welcome sight to Odysseus.
And, without waiting, he rose, and addressed the Phaeacian oarsmen,
But 'twas Alcinoûs chiefly for whom his words were intended:
"Prince, whom with one accord your people regard as the noblest,
Give me good speed on my way, with libations. May blessings attend you:
For, by your kindness, already, the wish of my heart has been granted,
Convoy, and precious gifts: and I pray that the Dwellers in Heaven
Prosper your work, and permit that I may, when I come to my homeland,
Meet with my blameless wife and my friends in health and in safety.
But stay at home yourselves, and cheer your wives and your children:
And may the blest Gods grant, to be your constant companion,
Every virtue, that so no evil find lodging amongst you."
Thus did he speak: and they all approved, and said 'twas a right thing
Friendly to speed their guest, because he had spoken discreetly.
Then did the sacred might of Alcinoûs speak to the herald:
“Mix a great bowl of wine, Pontonoüs, pouring a portion
Round to each guest in the hall, that so we may make supplica-
tion
Unto our father Zeus, and speed our friend to his homeland.”
So did Alcinoüs speak: and Pontonoüs mingled the wine-cup,
And, for each several guest, he poured the wine in succession.
Then, to the blessed Gods who inhabit the heavens, the feasters
Made their libations seated. Then rose up godlike Odysseus,
And, in the hand of Arêté, he placed the cup double-handled,
And, in these wingéd words, with courtly manner addressed her:
“Health unto thee, O queen, and joy unceasing, till old age
Greet thee and Death: for these are the common portion of
all men.
Now must I say farewell: but dwell thou here ever blessed,
Blest in thy children and people and King Alcinoüs Great-
heart.”
Thus having spoken, Odysseus passed over the threshold in
silence,
And with him also a herald, sent on by Alcinoüs’ orders,
Leading the way to the shore where the swift ship lay at her
moorings:
And, on her part, Arêté commanded the maids of the household
That they should go in his train: and one of them carried a
casket
Solidly wrought, and one a well-washed robe and a tunic:
And yet another one carried both bread and wine of the choicest.
But, when they came to the shore, where the swift ship lay at
her moorings,
Smartly, the things that they brought were received by the
dignified escort,
All of the food and wine, and stored in the waist of the vessel:
Also they spread a rug and linen sheets for Odysseus
High on the quarter-deck, that his slumber might not be dis-
turbéd.
Then he himself embarked, and lay down to sleep in silence.
Quickly the men of the crew took each his seat on the benches,
Loosing the rope from the great pierced stone to which it was
fastened:
And, as with measured swing they thrashed the sea with the
oar-blade,
Gentle and unobserved, sleep fell on the eyes of Odysseus,
Sleep that was sweet and profound, like the sleep from which none may awaken.
And the good ship—as, perchance, you have seen four stallion horses,
Lashed into speed on the plain, like one, dash forward together,
And, with amazing bounds, they quickly accomplish their journey—
So did her stern-post heave, and the deep blue water beside her,
Churned into whitening foam, rushed past her seething and roaring.
Steady and safe, the ship ran on: not even a falcon,
Swiftest of all the birds that fly in the air, could outstrip her:
So did she run on and cleave her way through the waters,
Bearing a man whose thoughts were akin to the thoughts of Immortals,
One whose heart had been wrung, erstwhile, by many a trouble,
Warring with hostile men and buffeting waves of the ocean,
Sleeping at last in peace, forgetful of all he had suffered.
Now, when the brightest star was on high, the chief of the heralds
Coming to tell the approach of the Daughter of Dawn, the Morning,
Then, having crossed the sea, the ship drew near to an island.
Now, in the Ithacan land, is a harbour that boasts the protection
Of the old Sea-God Phorcys, on each side guarded by beaches
Lying detached from the shore, that huddle close to the entrance,
Bulwark against the waves, should the weather chance to be stormy.
Once inside of the beaches, the ships, each one in her station,
Lie where they are in safety without either mooring or anchor.
Now, at the head of the cove, is an olive with wide-spreading branches,
And, in the cliff hard by, a cave deliciously shady,
Haunt of the Nymphs, who to folk of that country are known as the Mermaids.
And, in the cave, are found great bowls, and jars double-handled,
All of stone: and, around them, the combs of the honey bees
cluster.
And there are tall stone pillars which serve as looms for the
Mermaids
When they are weaving those robes, sea purple, a marvel to
look at.
Lastly, there well from the rock clear springs of perennial water.
And there are two ways in: the one to the Northward is trodden
Often by men, but that to the South is reserved for Divine ones:
No men enter by that, for that is the path of Immortals.
Into this cove they rowed, for they knew it aforetime: and
there they
Grounded their galley, which ran full half her length on the
shingle:
Such was the power with which the skilful Phæacians drove her.
And, on the firm dry land they stepped: and firstly they lifted
Out of the ship with care the still unconscious Odysseus,
Just as he lay, himself and the sheets and the glistening
wrappers,
Laying him down on the sand, with toil and sleep overpowered:
And they took out the treasures the noble Phæacians had given,
Prompted by watchful Athené, to carry with him to his homeland:
These they laid down in a heap beside the root of the olive,
Clear of the pathway, for fear any man who chanced to be
passing
While he was still asleep, might do him 'a damage and rob him.
So they returned to their home. But the great Earth-shaker
Poseidon
Had by no means forgotten the threats he had formerly uttered
As to Odysseus, and hied to ask great Zeus for his counsel:
"Father Zeus, no longer, for certain, amongst the Immortals
Shall I be held in honour, if mortals thus openly flout me
As the Phæacians are doing who boast of being my kinsmen.
For I had given consent that Odysseus should come to his
homeland,
But with much trouble and pain: and I did not prevent his
returning
Altogether, because I had faith in thy Nod and thy promise.
Now they have brought him home in a swift ship over the ocean
Peacefully sleeping, and put him ashore on Ithacâ's island,
Giving him presents uncounted, both gold and copper and raiment
Such as he ne'er could have hoped, to receive as his share of the booty
Out of the city of Troy, had he met with no kind of disaster."
But thus answered Zeus who gathers the clouds in the heavens:
"Shame on thee, great Earth-Shaker, for words thus reckless and idle.
Not any slight do the Gods intend: indeed, 'twould go hard with
One who insulted thee, who of all art most honoured and oldest.
But, if a man giving way to a stubborn and insolent temper
Pays thee no honour, with thee it rests to punish him rightly:
Do to them what thou pleasest, whatever appears the most fitting."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke Earth-Shaker Poseidon:
"Readily would I do as thou sayest, O Zeus of the storm-cloud,
But I regard with awe thy wrath, and fear to provoke it.
And now this is the thing that I chiefly desire: to shatter
One of the choicest ships of these Phæacian people,
All on the misty sea, as she comes from her work of a convoy,
That they may cease henceforth, from ferrying men: and I then would
Shut off the sea for ever, by girding their town with a mountain."
And, unto him, said Zeus who gathers the clouds in the heavens:
"Heart of my heart, this course appears to me to be wisest:
When all the crowd in the town are collected, watching the vessel
Pass on her way, to fix a great rock near to the shore line,
Shaped like a swift black ship, a wonder to all that behold it."
But, soon as ever this answer was heard by Earth-Shaker Poseidon,
Straightway he made for the land which the noble Phæacians inhabit,
Lying in wait, while the ship drew near, her passage accomplished.
Swiftly she drove on her course: but the great Earth-Shaker approaching,
Struck with the palm of his hand, and rammed her down to the bottom,
Turning her into a stone: this done, unseen he departed.
While that the men on the shore talked one to the other at random,
Famous Phæacian seamen, and skilful to handle the long oars:
And you might hear one say as he turned to his neighbour beside him:
"What in the world is the matter? That ship has stuck fast like a stack rock
As it was rowed along: just now one could see it quite clearly."
That was the way they spoke: but the truth they never imagined,
Till that the king himself took up the word with the people:
"This is most wondrous strange, and it makes me remember a saying
Which long ago I heard from my father, that, some day, Poseidon
Would be indignant with us because in presumption we ferry All men over the sea. He said that Poseidon would shatter One of our choicest ships returning from such an adventure:
And, to shut off the sea, would girdle our town with a mountain.
Thus did the ancient speak: and his words have come to fulfilment.
But come, let us now act, each one, as here I advise you: Cease from conveying our guests in ships, whoever it be that Comes to visit our town: and, unto offended Poseidon, Twelve choice bulls will we offer, that he may take pity upon us And not girdle our town with an inaccessible mountain."
Thus did he speak: and in fear, they provided the bulls as their ransom.
Then did the leaders and chiefs of the noble Phæacian people Stand round the altar and pray to the king of the ocean, Poseidon.
As for Odysseus, he woke from his sleep in the land of his fathers Not knowing where he was: so long time had he been absent:
Also Athené, the daughter of Zeus, in bewildering vapour Clouded the view, that so, he might ask all manner of questions Just like a stranger would, and his wife and the men of the city
Never might have an idea that he might be the long-lost Odysseus
Till he had fully repaid the deeds of the insolent suitors.
Therefore it was that the place had an unfamiliar appearance:
Everything seemed changed, the short cuts over the island,
Snug little coves, steep rocks and green trees spreading and leafy.
So he sprang up and stood, and looked on the land of his fathers:
And, in a moment, a cry of pain broke from him, and wildly
Slapping his thighs with his palms, he thus gave vent to his
anguish:

"Ah me, what are the men who inhabit this land I have
come to?
Are they savage and fierce and not regardful of justice,
Or are they friendly to strangers, and fearing the Powers of
Heaven?
And now, where am I going to take these treasures? and
where too
Am I to go myself? I had better have stayed where I last was
With the Phæacian men: for then I should surely have met with
Some other one of the kings by whom the country is governed,
Who would have treated me friendly and set me well on my
journey.
Certain, I know not where I can put these things: and I cannot
Let them remain as they are, to be the booty of others.
Cursed mischance, it seems the Phæacian leaders and chieftains
Were not so wise or imbued with the sense of right as I thought
them:
For they have brought me here to some foreign land, when
they said that
They would conduct me to Ithaca's isle: and their promise is
broken.
May Zeus give them their due, the suppliants' friend who is
watching
Every man in the world to punish the doer of evil.
But I may just as well count over these treasures, and see what
Those good fellows who brought me here have been pleased to
decamp with."

And, with these words, he began to count the beautiful tripods
Cauldrons and cups of gold, and garments artfully woven.
Nothing however was missing: but still he mourned for his
country,
Creeping along the shore by the side of the thundering breakers:
And, as he went, he moaned: And Athené was standing before him,
Looking like some young man who is overseer of the sheep flocks,
Gently nurtured, as are the sons of chieftains, and wearing,
Doubled across her shoulders, a mantle of beautiful texture:
And, on her feet, were sandals, and grasped in her hand was a jav'lin.

She was a welcome sight to Odysseus, who hastened to meet her,
And, in unstudied words, he hailed and spoke to the Goddess:
"Friend, since yourself are the first I have chanced to meet in this country,
Blessings upon you: and do not, I pray, be suspicious about me,
But be protector of these my goods, and protector of me too:
For, as it were to a God, I come to your knees and beseech you.
And now tell me the truth that I may know it for certain:
What is this land? This nation? What kind of men are the natives?
Is it some sunny island, or does this beautiful sea-beach sloping away to the water belong to the fertile mainland?"

And, in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"You know little, O stranger, or else you come from a distance,
If you are really asking the name of this land: for its name is Far from being unknown: 'tis a name familiar to thousands,
Whether they live in the lands which lie to the East and the Sunrise
Or on the Western side, towards the gloom and the sunset.
And, I must tell you, the land is rough and not fitted for horses,
But it is not so poor after all, though it is not extensive:
For the amount of corn it produces is wonderful: wine too
Often is made in the isle: for showers and dew are abundant.
And it has capital grazing for goats and for cattle, and woodland
Plenteous and varied, and springs that fail not summer or winter.
Therefore I tell you, stranger, the name of Ithaca reaches Even to Troy which they say is a long way off from Achaia."

Thus did she speak: and the other was glad, much-enduring Odysseus,
Looking with joy on the land of his fathers which now was revealed by
Pallas Athené, the daughter of Zeus the Lord of the Ægis.
And, on the spur of the moment, in cautious words he addressed her,
Yet he did not speak truth, but twisted his words into falsehood,
For there was ever a crafty mind at work in his bosom:
"Yes, I had heard before of Ithaca, when I was living
In the broad lands of Crete, far over the sea, and have come here
Now with these treasures you see, having left behind me an equal
Share for my sons, being forced to flee from Idomeneus' vengeance:
For I had slain his son Orsilochus, who through the breadth of
Crete's wide plain could with ease out-distance the gillies in running,
For that he tried to rob me of all my hard gotten booty
Which I had won in Troy, by means of labour and sorrow,
Warring with hostile men and buffeting waves of the ocean:
And, for this reason, I was not disposed to serve as esquire
Unto his father in Troy, but commanded a separate squadron.
So, with a trusty comrade, I laid in wait for and smote him
With a bronze-headed spear as he came from the town to the country:
And it was very dark that night, and no one perceived us:
So it was never discovered that I was the man who had killed him.
But, soon as ever I had, with the point of my weapon, despatched him,
Then did I go to a ship, and besought the Phoenician sailors
(Giving them such a share of the spoil as I thought would content them)
That they would sail to Pylos, and kindly put me ashore there,
Or to magnificent Elis in which the Epeians are rulers.
But, by a violent gale, they were driven away from the landing,
Sorely against their will, for they did not wish to deceive me:
And, as we drifted at random, we reached this place in the night time,
And, without any delay, we rowed on into the harbour,
Nor did we think of supper although we needed it badly:
No sooner out of the ship, we threw ourselves down on the shingle
Just as we were: and sleep, profound and dreamless, o'ercame me.
But the Phœnicians carried my goods from the hold of the vessel,
Laying them down on the shore at the place where myself was
a-sleeping:
And they, going on board, were off to beautiful Sidon,
Leaving me there to brood as I might on reverses of fortune."
   So did he speak: but she smiled, the grey-eyed Goddess
   Athené,
   And, with her hand, she stroked him (and lo, she was like to a
   woman
   Fair and tall, and accustomed to act with glorious wisdom).
   Gentle and light were her words: and thus she spoke to
   Odysseus:
   "He should be crafty indeed who could undertake to excel you
   In any kind of trick, whether God or mortal he might be:
   You rogue, there is no end to your schemes: could you not be
   contented,
   Now that you stand on your native soil, to cease from deceiving?
   For, from the soles of your feet, you are full of guile, and you
   love it.
   But come, let us not speak of this any longer: we both are
   Masters of craft: for you are by far the first among mortals
   In wise counsel and speech: and I, in the ranks of Immortals,
   Ever am counted the first, in like manner. But did you not
   know me,
   Pallas Athené the daughter of Zeus, who in all of your troubles
   Still have been standing beside you, and warding off every
danger?
   For it was I who who made the Phœacian people so friendly:
   And I have now come here to contrive some plan for your
   safety,
   And to conceal these treasures, which through my thought and
   suggestion,
   By the Phœacian nobles, were given and sent with you hither,
   Also to tell you what trials you still are destined to suffer
   After you reach your home: but bear what is fated in patience,
   And never utter a word, to man or woman, to tell them
   Why you have come like this as a beggar: because it is better,
   Though it may cause you pain, to endure men's insults in
   silence."
   And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"It is a hard thing, Goddess, for one that is mortal to know thee,
Though he be ever so wise: so many forms thou assumest.
But, thus much, I know well, that thou wert gentle towards me
When, on the plains of Troy, we sons of Achæans were warring.
Yet, when we once had sacked the steep-walled fortress of Priam,
And had embarked on our ships, and God had dispersed the Achæans,
After that time, O Daughter of Zeus, I saw thee no longer
Nor did I know it was thou who wast on board to defend me:
But, each day, did I wander, with heart distracted and doubtful,
When, after all, 'twas the Gods who guarded and kept me from evil:
That is, until thou didst, mid the wealthy Phæacian people,
Cheer me with words, and thyself didst conduct me into their city.
Now, in the name of thy dread Sire—for I cannot believe that I have, in truth, set foot upon sunny Ithaca—Surely
This is some foreign land, and thou art mocking my sorrow,
Telling me idle tales in order to cheat and deceive me—
Say, is it really true I have come to the land of my fathers?"

And, in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"Always you have some thought like this concealed in your bosom:
But you are so quick witted, so sensible, open to reason,
That I have never the heart to leave you alone in your troubles.
For any other man who had come to his home, after wand'ring
Over the world, had been off to see his wife and his children
In his own house: but you will not even ask questions about them
Till you have made some proof of your wife, who sits in your palace,
Waiting for your return: and the nights that she passes in sorrow,
Each in its turn, gives place to a day of desolate weeping.
As for myself, I was never in doubt, but was fully persuaded
That you would come to your home, having lost the whole of your comrades:
But I took care to avoid offending the mighty Poseidon"
Brother of my own father, who harboured anger against you,
Being enraged at your deed of blinding a son whom he
cherished.
Come, I will show you where Ithaca is, and then you will
trust me.
This is the little harbour, the haunt of Phorcys the Sea-God:
Here, at the head of the cove, is the leafy and wide-spreading
olive:
This is the cave that you know so well, wide arching, where,
often,
Hecatombs in full tale, to the Nymphs of the place you have
offered:
And this mountain you see is Neriton clothed in his forest."
So she dispersed the mist: and clearly shone out the
landscape:
Then was he glad indeed, the divine much-enduring Odysseus,
Seeing his native country, and kissed the bountiful plough-land:
And, with his hands upraised, he prayed to the Nymphs of the
cavern:

"Naiad Nymphs, O daughters of Zeus, I said I should never
See you again: but now, with gentle prayers I salute you:
But I will also give presents, as was my custom aforetime,
If that the Daughter of Zeus, the driver of spoil, be propitious
Granting life to myself, and protecting my son unto manhood."

And, in return, thus spoke the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"Take heart: as to these matters, you have no need to be
anxious.
Now, let us waste no time, but hide these things in a corner
Of this wonderful cave: for, there, you may leave them in safety.
And let us then take thought how best to meet the occasion."

Thus having spoken, the Goddess did enter the shadowy
cavern,
Feeling along the sides for crannies for hiding the treasures.
Then by Odysseus was brought the gold and bronze everlasting,
Also the dainty garments the noble Phæacians had given,
Laying them carefully down in the cave: but 'twas Pallas
Athené,
Daughter of Zeus, who placed the great stone blocking the
entrance.
Then did the two sit down, by the root of the sacred olive,
Planning how best they might compass the death of the insolent suitors.
She was the first to speak, the grey-eyed Goddess Athené:
"Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Tell me the way you propose to lay hands on these men overbearing,
Who, for at least three years, have been lording it over your household,
Wooing your godlike wife and giving her marriage presents.
But she, mourning your loss, and looking each day for your coming,
Holds out hopes to all, and sends some message to each one
Making a promise, while yet, in her heart, she has other intentions."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Now do I see that the fate of Atreus' son, Agamemnon,
Dastardly done to death, had been the fate of me also
In my own halls, hadst thou not timely forewarned me, O Goddess.
Come, devise me a scheme, and teach me how to requite them,
Standing thyself at my side and inspiring strength to do all things,
As when we loosed from Troy her head-dress of glittering towers.
If thou wouldst be my support thus strenuous, thou of the grey-eyes,
I should be ready to meet three hundred men in the battle
With thee, Goddess revered, to be my friend and protector."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Athené:
"Certainly I will be with you as helper: nor shall you be ever
Out of my sight so long as our task is in hand: and I think that
Some one at least of these suitor men who devour your substance Will, with his blood and brains, unseemly bespatter the threshold.
But come, I will disguise you so well that no mortal shall know you:
Blemish and scar your flesh, for all that your limbs remain supple,
Wither the golden hairs on your head, and clothe you in tattered Rags that will raise disgust in any man that beholds you:
And I will blear your eyes that shine so brilliant and cheerful,
That, to each one of the suitors, you may be an object of
loathing,
And to your wife as well, and the son whom you left as an infant.
But, before anything else, you must go to visit the swineherd,
Him who has charge of your swine, and for you has heartfelt
affection:
Also he loves your son and Penelope, pearl of discretion.
Him you will find sitting down by the side of the swine which
are feeding
Near to the Rock of the Crow hard by the spring Arethusa,
Eating the wholesome acorns and drinking the deep clear water:
That's how they put on the fat which rejoices the heart of the
farmer.
Sit down there by his side and ask him to tell you of all things.
Meanwhile, myself will be off to Sparta, the nurse of fair women,
Calling Telemachus home, your own dear son, my Odysseus,
Who, for your sake, has sought Lacedaemon, to ask Meneläus
If he has heard any news of you, if still you be living.”

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
“Why didst thou never tell him, in whose mind all things
are pictured?
Was it that he, as well as myself, might wander in sorrow
Over the barren sea, while others devoured his substance?”

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Athené:
“Let not the thought of him distress you: for I and no other
Led him to Sparta that so he might win fair fame for his courage.
But he endures no hardship, but sits in comfort and quiet,
Guest in Atreides’ house. Yet a terrible danger awaits him:
Men, in a well-tarred galley are lying in wait to destroy him,
Hoping to kill him before he can reach the land of his fathers.
Yet, before this takes place, I think that the earth will have
covered
Some of these suitor men who now devour your substance.”

And, at the word, she gave him a touch with the wand that
she carried:
And his fair flesh was blemished and scarred, though his limbs
remained supple:
And, from his head, she withered the golden hairs that adorned
it:
And his fair skin became like an old man's, shrivelled and wrinkled:
Also she bleared his eyes that shone so brilliant and cheerful,
And, on his shoulders, she put a rag of a shirt and a tunic
Tattered and filthy and black with the grimy smoke of a cabin,
And, over all, she threw a great stag's hide for a mantle,
Old with the hair worn off, and gave him a staff and a wallet
Dirty and full of holes, and slung with a cord o'er his shoulder.
So they conversed and took counsel together. Then Pallas Athené
Went to divine Lacedæmon to summon the son of Odysseus.
BOOK XIV

ODYSSEUS WELCOMED BY EUMÆUS

So, up the rugged path, he went, that winds through the forest
Skirting the tops of the hills, to the place where Pallas Athené
Said he would find the swineherd, the man who, of all his retainers,
Watched with the greatest care o'er the goods of the godlike Odysseus.
There, sure enough, he sat, in the porch o'erlooking the farm-yard
Which, with its high strong wall, showed far and wide on the hill top.
This had the swineherd built, without any help from Laërtes
Or from his mistress, with massive stones he had hauled from a distance,
That he might safely guard the herds of his king who was absent.
And, on the top, he planted a hedge of cactus, and outside
Made he a palisade of tall split stakes of the ilex,
Driven down deep in the ground, and standing closely together.
And, inside of the yard, were the houses where sows were bedded
Twelve of them, side by side; and, shut up in each of the houses,
Breeding sows, two score and ten, there wallowed and grunted.
But, in the yard outside, were boars, far fewer in number:
For the luxurious feasts of the suitors had greatly reduced them:
Seeing the swineherd, whenever he heard that a porker was wanted,
Always would send the pick of the fatted hogs to the gentry:
Thus was the number of boars no more than three hundred and fifty.
And, by his side each night, four dogs, as savage as wild beasts,
Always slept, which he, the swineherd, had trained for protection:
And, just then, on his feet, he was fitting mocassins of oxhide, Supple, and cut into strips. Now all but one of these dogs would Follow the herd of swine when they wandered to feed in the country:
But, the remaining dog, he would send off alone to the city Driving a hog: for this he was forced to do when the suitors Wanted a sacred feast and to gorge unlimited hog's flesh.
But, of a sudden, the dogs caught sight of Odysseus, and dashed out Barking and growling: but promptly he sat himself down by the roadside,
Laying his staff on the ground: yet there, so to say, at his own stall,
He would have perished unseemly: but quickly the swineherd perceiving,
Dropped the skin that he held, and rushed through the forecourt and shouted.
After the dogs as he ran, and scattered them hither and thither Throwing great chunks of stone: and thus he spoke to Odysseus:
"Old man, one minute more and the dogs would have done you a mischief:
Then you had put the blame upon me. And yet there are other Things, by the will of Heaven, that give me cause for lamenting: For I sit here and bewail the loss of a king who was godlike: While the fat porkers I rear with care are eaten by others: But he himself, perchance, may be begging his food at this moment All in a foreign land in the midst of a city of strangers, If he is still alive and looks on the blessed sunshine. But follow me, old man, let us go to my cabin: and after You have had food and wine, as much as you want, you will tell me Where you have come from and what are the hardships and trials you have met with."
So did the swineherd speak, and led the way to his cabin, Made him sit down within, having scattered armfuls of brushwood
Over the floor, and upon them, a wild goat's skin for a cover,
Where he could snugly sleep: and the heart of Odysseus was joyful
That he had welcomed him thus: and he called him by name and addressed him:

"May Zeus grant you, O stranger, and all the blesséd Immortals,
That which you most desire, because you received me with kindness."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:

"Stranger, it would not be right to treat a guest with dishonour, Were he more wretched than you: because all strangers and poor men
Come from the hand of Zeus: and that which we give is a trifle, But 'tis a pleasure to give it: for servants under young masters
Always must live in fear. And 'tis certain the Gods have denied him
Ever to come back again. But he would have heartily loved me And would have given me gifts besides, to last me my lifetime, House, and money, and wife to be won by diligent wooing,
Such as a kindly master is glad to give to a servant,
One who has worked for him hard, and whose work the Gods have made fruitful:
Just as this work of mine has prospered which daily I toil at. He would have helped me much had he reached old age 'mid his people.
But he is dead. Would God that Helen and all of her kindred
Low on their knees had perished: for she was the death of a thousand.
And 'twas along of her that he sought Ilion's fortress,
Fighting the Trojan host for the glory of great Agamemnon."

And, as he spoke, he fastened his smock at the waist with a girdle,

And he went out to the styies where the pigs lay sorted in classes. Thence did he pick out two, which he brought to the cottage and slaughtered,

Scalded, and cut them up, and on spits he threaded the pieces. And, when the meat was cooked, he set it in front of Odysseus, Broiling hot from the spits, with meal of barley besprinkled:
And, in an ivy-wreath bowl, red wine he mingled and honey: Then he himself sat down to cheer and encourage the stranger:
"Eat, O stranger, the best that servants like us can provide you,
Hog flesh: for pork of the prime must always be kept for the suitors,
Men who care nothing for mercy or good report of their neighbours.
Yet the Immortal Gods love not the deeds of the wicked,
But they do honour to those who do what is lawful and righteous.
And, even violent hostile men, when making a raid on
Foreigners' lands—and Zeus has given them spoil in abundance,
And they have loaded their ships with treasure, and sailed away homewards—
Even such men as these fear much the opinion of others.
But they have heard, may be, these suitors, some message from Heaven:
For they are sure he is dead: and that's why they will not at present
Either straightforwardly woo or return to the homes that they came from,
But, neither sparing nor caring, they plunder his goods without hindrance.
For there is never a day nor a night that Heaven do send us
When they will be content with one or a couple of victims.
As for the wine, they draw what they please in wasteful profusion.
For he was richer than I can tell: not one of the heroes,
Either in Ithaca here or on the black soil of the mainland,
Is so wealthy as he, nor twenty of them together.
See, I will reckon it up. He has, you must know, on the mainland,
Twelve large herds of cattle, of sheep flocks also a dozen,
Twelve large herds of swine, and flocks of goats on the mountains,
Guarded partly by men of his own and partly by strangers.
And, on this island, large flocks of goats, no less than eleven,
Browse in the outlying parts: and trustworthy men oversee them,
Each one of whom brings daily the beast that he judges the fattest
For those suitors to eat. But I am in charge of the swine here,
And I select the best and send it off to the palace."
So did he speak: but the other was eating and drinking in silence,
Being too hungry to talk, though all this while he was brooding
Ill to the suitors: but soon as his heart had been cheered by
his supper,
Then did he fill with wine the cup in which he was drinking
Up to the brim for the herd (and the same received it with
gladness)
And, in unstudied words, he spoke and friendly addressed
him:
"Tell me, my friend, the name of the powerful chieftain who
bought you,
This man who was so rich and prosperous as you have told me,
But who, you say, was killed for the glory of great Agamemnon.
Tell me: perhaps I may know such a man as the one that
you speak of:
For I suppose this is known to Zeus and the other Immortals,
And I might give you some news of him: for much have I
wandered."

And, unto him, thus spoke that leader of men the swineherd:
"Old man, no one who comes a-wandering here and pretending
That he has news of my master, would find anyone to believe
him.
Beggars in search of a meal are not very much to be trusted,
Caring nothing for truth: and, if one of that brotherhood comes
here,
Straightway he goes to my mistress, and tells her deceitful
inventions:
But she receives him kindly, and asks him all manner of
questions:
Then she will heave a sigh, and tears will fall from her eyelids,
Which is the way of women whose husbands have died in a far
land.
And you also, old man, would be quick to cook up a story
If one should give you some clothes, a respectable cloak and
a tunic.
But, as for him, the dogs and the birds of prey will be ere long
Tearing the skin from his bones: for his soul has already
departed:
Or it may be that the fishes, by now, have devoured his body
While that his bones lie rolled in the drifting sand of the sea-
shore.
Thus he has died far off, and to all of his friends left sorrow, Most, of them all, to me: for I never shall meet with another Master so kind as he, whatever the place that I go to, Not though I came again to the house of my father and mother, Where I was born, and where they brought me up from a baby. Not that I mourn so much for them: though sometimes my heart aches, Longing to be in my home, and to look once more on their faces: But 'tis the love and respect for the absent Odysseus that grips me. And I will tell you, stranger, though now he is absent, I cannot Lightly mention his name, who heartily cared for and loved me: But, unto me, he is honoured and dear, wherever he may be."

And, unto him, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:

"Friend, as you will not believe me, and still persist in denying That he will come to his home, and your mind can be never persuaded, I will not only say it, but with an oath I will swear it That he is now on his way. And I want no reward for my tidings, Not till himself shall come and enter his palace as master: But, though I need it sorely, till then, I will take from you nothing. For that man is as hateful to me as the portals of Hadés, Who, on account of his need, will say things false and deceitful. Hear me, O father Zeus, and hear me, this table of welcome, Also the kindly hearth of Odysseus by which I am seated, All these things that I tell you are now in course of fulfilment:

Now, in this month that is waning, or that which we shortly shall enter, He will arrive, and take vengeance on every man in his palace Who may have treated his wife and his noble son with dishonour."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, Eumæus the swineherd: "Old man, never from me will you get a reward for your tidings, Nor will Odysseus return any more to his home: but be quiet, Drink your wine, and bethink you of something else, nor remind me
Longer of things like these: for my heart aches sorely whenever
Anyone mentions the name of the master I mourn for and honour.
And we will say no more of the oath: but the wish of my heart is
That he may come again, and the wish of Penelopé also,
And of Telemachus, and, not less, of the aged Laërtes.
Now do I also lament for Telemachus, son of Odysseus,
Who, by the Gods, was nurtured like some fair shoot of a palm tree:
And I had always said he would grow up as strong and as handsome
As was the father he loves: but some one, perhaps an Immortal,
Has put a crazy idea in his head: and now he has gone off
Sailing to Pylos the sacred, on chance to get news of his father.
But these insolent suitors are lying in wait to destroy him
On his way home, that so the race of Arcesius may be
Nameless and brought to an end for ever in Ithaca's island.
But we will let that be: for, whether they catch him, or whether Zeus with his mighty hand will shield him, we can do nothing.
But come, tell me, old man, the things that yourself may have suffered:
Who, and from whence are you? and where is your city, and parents?
What sort of ship did you come in? and what was the reason the sailors
Brought you to Ithaca? What is the tribe that they claim to belong to?
For I presume that you could not have walked here over the water."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Certainly I will tell you the things that you ask very plainly:
If we could only sit quiet, we two, as now we are doing,
Here in your cabin, enjoying your food and drinking your wine-cup,
Leaving such things as work to be done by others, why, gladly I could go on for a year before I had finished recounting
All those troubles and toils which the Gods have caused me to suffer.
"Crete is the land that I claim as the home of my clansmen, and I was
Son of a wealthy man: many other sons, had my father,
Born and brought up in his house by his lawful wife: but my mother
Once had been bought by him as a mistress: but yet I was treated
Just like his lawful sons, by Castor the son of Hylax,
That is my father, who then, amongst the Cretans, was honoured
As 'twere a God, for his wealth, his splendid sons and his fortune.
But, you must know, the Fates of Death came on him, and bore him
Down to the shadowy land: and my brothers, disdainful and haughty,
Portioned amongst themselves, by lot, the goods of our father.
While, unto me, they assigned a house and little beside it.
Yet did I marry a wife, the daughter of wealthy people,
Through my own personal worth, for I was by no means a coward
Neither devoid of sense: though that is past and forgotten:
Yet, when you look, I think you can trace the remains of my manhood
E'en as you see me now, oppressed with sorrow and hardship.
For, I assure you, 'twas Arés and Pallas Athené who bade me
Charge at the serried ranks of foemen: and, when I was leading
Men picked out for an ambush to compass the enemy's slaughter,
Never I thought of death, but leaping in front of the others
Often would grasp the spears of those too slow to escape me.
That was my way in war: but work was not to my fancy,
Nor being useful at home, though that is good training for children,
But I was always fond of ships and oar-driven galleys
And any kind of war, and darts and well-polished arrows,
Which, to some people, are dreadful things, and make them to shudder,
Yet they're delightful to me. I suppose 'tis the way God made me:
Thus one man likes one sort of work, and another another.
"Even before we sailed for Troy, we sons of Acheans,
Thrice three times had I been in command of men and of galleys
Raiding some foreign land: and much spoil fell to my portion:
And, out of this, I chose as much as I wanted: and since then,
Many more raids did I make, and quickly my house grew wealthy:
So, among all the Cretans, I was both feared and respected.
But, when far-seeing Zeus devised that hateful adventure
Which was the cause of death to so many brave fellows, they
urged me,
Me, and Idomeneus also, to take command of a squadron
Unto the war at Troy: nor were there means of refusing.
Think what we might: for the voice of public opinion com-
pelled us.
There, for nine years, we maintained the fight, we sons of Achæans,
And, in the tenth, we sacked the fortress of Priam, and started,
We and our ships, for home. But God dispersed the Achæans,
And, for unhappy me, great Zeus the disposer of all things,
Evil had fore-ordained: for it was but a month that I rested
Happy at home with my wealth and my wedded wife and my
children.
"But, after that, my spirit impelled me to sail unto Egypt:
So I equipped a squadron with splendid men as my comrades:
Nine were the ships of my fleet: and quickly the crews were
collected.
And, after that, for six whole days, my trusty companions
Feasted: while I was supplying the victims that custom de-
manded
Both to appease the Gods and provide my men with a banquet.
And, on the seventh day, we embarked, and easily running
As it might be downstream, with a brisk North wind on our
quarter,
Sailed from the land of Crete without any trouble or damage,
Leaving our ships for the time to the charge of wind and the
helmsman.
And, in five days, we came with a clean bill of health unto Egypt,
Where, in the river of Egypt, I moored my oar-driven galleys.
And I gave strict injunctions to all my trusty companions
That they should stay by the ships, and keep them guarded
securely:
Also I bade the sentries to go at once to their stations.
But, like undisciplined men, presuming too much on their
power,
Soon they began to ravage the fields so carefully tended
By the Egyptians, and also they carried off some of the women, Killing the men: and quickly the news had spread to the city: And, at the break of day, the natives flocked to the rescue: And the whole plain around was full of footmen and horsemen And of the gleam of bronze. And Zeus who delights in the thunder Struck, with unseemly panic, the hearts of my comrades: and no one Dared to stand up to his foe: for evil faced us on all sides. And, at that time, full many a man was slain with the sword-point: Others, they carried away to work as slaves by compulsion. But it was Zeus himself who suggested the thought I will tell you— Would that I then and there had died by the River of Egypt Meeting my fate like a man: for evil times were before me— Straight, I put off from my head my well-stitched helmet of leather, Cast my shield from my shoulders, and dropped the spear that I carried, And, as their king came near, I ran in front of his horses, Clasped his knees and kissed them: and out of his pity he saved me, Made me to sit by his side, and bore me, bitterly weeping, Home in the car as his guest. But crowds of the natives assembled, Who, with their ashen spears, made furious rushes against me: But the king warded them off, because with awe he regarded Zeus the protector of strangers who punishes doers of evil. "There, for seven whole years, I remained with the king and collected Wealth from the men of Egypt: for all men gave to me freely. But, when the eighth year came, there arrived a crafty Phœnician Who, with his swindling schemes, was a curse wherever he wandered: And, by his wily tongue, he induced me to sail in his vessel Unto Phœnicia, where, as he said, were his home and possessions: There did I stay with him until a year was completed. But, when the months and days were past, and the seasons returned,
Then did he put me on board of a sea-going ship that was bound for Libya, under pretence of taking me there as his partner. Sharing the cargo, but really, to kidnap me over and sell me for some extravagant price: and I, though I had my suspicions, could not do other than go. And the ship with a favouring North wind, ran outside of Crete: but Zeus had ordained their destruction. Now, soon as Crete was passed, and nothing was seen in the distance Saving the sea and sky, just then, right over the mast-head, Zeus set a blue-black cloud: and the sea grew dark in its shadow. Then, with a sudden crash, his thunderbolt struck our vessel: and, whirled round by the shock, the ship was smothered in brimstone, and ev'ry soul on board was hurled in the sea: yet for some time, round the black ship they drifted like so many crows in the water: rescue however was none. But though I was almost despairing, Zeus to my aid did come, and bring me the mast of the vessel, floating it into my reach, that so my life might be saved. This I clasped in my arms, and by furious winds was I driven. "Nine whole days I drifted: the night of the tenth was a black one, when the great rolling wave, upon the Thesprotian country, washed me ashore: and the king of these same Thesprotians, Pheido, saved me of pure good will: for his own dear son, having found me lying half dead on the beach, exhausted by toil and exposure, lifted me up by the hand, and brought me safe to his father, giving me cloak and tunic and all the clothes that I needed. And it was there that I heard of Odysseus: for Pheido informed me that, as a guest and friend, he had given him speed on his journey. Also he showed me the treasures this same Odysseus had gathered, heaps of gold and of bronze, and iron artfully tempered,
Plenty to keep a man if he lived through ten generations. All these treasures, the king was guarding stored in his palace. But, as he told me, Odysseus himself had gone to Dodona, Counsel to ask of Zeus, from his great high-flourishing oak tree, How, after so long absence, he might be safely restored To the rich Ithacan land, by force or it may be by cunning. Also he swore to myself, in his house, when making libation, That a good ship had been launched, and that all the seamen were ready
Who would convey him again to the much loved land of his fathers.

"But, before that, I had left: for there chanced to be in the roadstead, Lying at anchor, a ship that was owned by Thesprotian merchants, Bound for Dulichium: these he kindly engaged to convey me Unto Acastus the king: but they plotted evil against me, That, to the bitter end, I might drain the cup of my sorrow. Thus, when the sea-going ship was well on her way, they conspired Secretly, how they would sell me for slave next port that they entered, Stripped me of cloak and tunic, and all the clothes I had on me, And then gave me to wear these filthy garments, the cast off Clothes of some other man, as you may perceive without telling. And, in the evening, we came to the sunny fields of this island. Then, with a twisted rope, they bound me down to the cross-beams, Thinking me firmly secured: and, hastily leaving the vessel, Sat down there on the shore, to enjoy their supper at leisure: But 'twas the Gods themselves, who loosed the knots I was bound with. So, having wrapped my head in an old bit of canvas to hide it, Quickly I slid down the sweep till my breast was touching the water: Then did I paddle away with my hands: and 'twas but a moment Ere I was out of sight: then leaving the water, I lay down Hiding myself on the ground, in a thicket of blossoming copse-wood. But, when they found I was gone, they hunted about for a little,
Grumbling: and soon as they found that farther searching was useless,
Into their ship they went: and the Gods very easily hid me,
Led me themselves by the hand, and brought me safe to the cottage
Of a wise-hearted man: for I shall not die till my time comes."
And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:
"Ah, unfortunate stranger, you greatly have moved my compassion,
Telling these wondrous tales of all your toils and adventures.
But, to my mind, your story is not very likely, nor will you
Make me believe what you say with regard to Odysseus: and wherefore
Say what is false to no purpose? I know very well without telling,
As to my master's return, that by all the Gods he is hated:
Else had he died in war, amid the host of the Trojans,
Or in the care of his friends after bringing the war to a finish.
Then, with one mind, the Achæans had raised a tomb in his honour,
And he had left a name for his noble son to inherit.
But he is snatched away, unseen and unpraised, by the Harpies.
Therefore I live near the swine, in this lonely cottage, and seldom
Come to the city: except that the prudent Penelope sometimes
Sends to consult me, if haply some news of importance may reach her:
While that the others sit by, and ply the stranger with questions,
Those who are grieved that my king should still be absent, and also
Those who are only too glad to feed in his house without payment.
But, for myself, I have never much cared to question a stranger
Since I was fooled by the tale which a man from Ætolia told me,
Who, having killed a man, had roamed the world as an outlaw
Till that he chanced at my door: and with open heart I received him.
And he declared he had seen him amongst the Cretans in safety,
Guest of Ídómeneús, mending his ships which the tempests had damaged:
And he was sure to be here in the summer, or autumn at latest,
Bringing great store of wealth, with a splendid set of companions.
And, as for you, old suffering man, since Providence brought you
Into my care, don't say false things in order to please me:
For it is not for your tales that I shall love and respect you,
But out of pity, and since I fear the Protector of Strangers."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Truly you have in your breast a most incredulous spirit,
Since not even an oath can bring you round to believe me.
But let us make a bargain, about this matter: and great Gods
Watching on high from Olympus shall witness to what we are saying.

If that your master returns to this house in which we are sitting,
Then you shall clothe me well, in cloak and tunic, and send me
Unto Dulichium's isle, for that is the place I am bound for:
But, if he come not back, your master, in spite of my promise,
Then set your men upon me, and throw me over the cliff top,
So that the next poor man may shun to play the deceiver."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the godlike Eumæus:
"'Twere a strange way, my guest, to win, both now and hereafter,
Fame with my fellow men for just and kindly behaviour,
If, after bringing you home to my cabin and giving you welcome,
I were to rob you of life which is man's dearest possession.
How could I dare thenceforward to pray to the Ruler of Heaven?
But it is time for our meal: my men will be here in a minute
And we will then set to and prepare a luxurious supper."

Thus, in a friendly way, these two were talking together,
When there came up the herds of swine in charge of the herdsmen.
Then did they shut up the sows for the night according to custom:
Which, as they entered their yards, set up a deafening uproar.
And, thereupon, the swineherd in these words called to his servants:
"Drive in the best of the swine as a sacred feast for the stranger
Come from afar: and, besides, 'tis a bit of a treat for us others:
For we have plenty of work in tending them daily: while men who
Take no trouble at all are enjoying the fruit of our labour."

Then, with his axe of bronze, he split some logs for a fire,
While that a five years' hog, very fat, was brought by the herdsmen:
This they led up to the hearth: and the swineherd was not forgetful
Of the immortal Gods: for his was a good disposition.
Firstly he cut some hairs from the head of the tusker, and threw them
Into the fire, and prayed to all the Gods of Olympus
That they would bring Odysseus again to the land of his fathers.
And then, raising himself to his height, with a split oak rail, he Felled the hog to the ground: and they cut its throat, and singed it.
Quickly they severed the joints: and the swineherd, for solemn commencement,
Cut, from each limb a snippet, and wrapped it in fat, and threw it,
Sprinkled with barley meal, to burn in the flame of the fire.
But, what was left of the meat, they cut into pieces and toasted,
(Threaded with care on spits) and, when they were browned to perfection,
Drew them from off the spits, and laid in a heap on the dresser.
Then, being mindful as ever of fitting observance, the swineherd Rose to distribute the meat which in seven parts he divided,
And, having prayed, he reserved one part for the Nymphs and for Hermés,
Maia's son, but the rest he distributed round to each person.
But, to Odysseus, he gave as a token of honour the whole chine Of the white-tuskéd hog, and delighted the heart of his master.
Then did Odysseus call him by name, and thus he addressed him:

"Zeus our father love you, Eumæus, as truly as I do,
Seeing that, poor as I am, you load me with honour and dainties."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:
"Eat, most honoured of strangers, the good plain fare that we give you,
And may you like it well: but God who rules over all things
Gives or withholds from men each several good as he pleases."
Then, to the Gods ever living, he offered the first of the dainties,
And, having made his libation, he handed the cup to Odysseus Sacker of towns, and himself sat down to his portion appointed.
Bread was then handed round by Mesaulius servitor faithful Whom, from some Taphian pirates, erstwhile the swineherd had purchased
Out of his private means, without any help from Laërtes
Or from his mistress, because his master Odysseus was absent. Then were all hands stretched out to the good things ready before them.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Quickly Mesaulius cleared the remains of the food: and the feasters
Hurried away to sleep, well filled with bread and with swine's flesh.
And, upon that, there followed a night that was stormy and moonless:
All night long did it rain, with a West wind gustily blowing.
Then did Odysseus speak in their midst to make trial of the swineherd,
If he would strip himself of his cloak to shelter the stranger, Or bid one of his men to do so, for care of his comfort:
"Listen to me, Eumæus, and other mates who are present, While I am asking a favour: this strong wine makes me the bolder:
Wine has made many a man of discretion to burst into singing, Softly to laugh to himself, and even to dance with excitement: And it has prompted a word which perhaps would be better unspoken:
Yet, as I now have begun to speak, I will not conceal it. Would I were only as young, and my strength as firm, as it then was
When, under Troy's great town, our troop was laying an ambush:
And Menelæus Atreidés and noble Odysseus were leaders: I was the third in command with them: for they gave the orders.
But, when we came to the place where steep rose the wall of the fortress,
There, mid the swamps and the rushes, we threw ourselves down in our armour,
Taking what cover we could, in the scrub that grew thick round the city:
Then, as the evening fell, a wind sprang up from the Northward Bringing a frosty night and a sprinkle of snow over all things, Bitterly cold: and, with ice, the rims of our shields were encrusted.
Now, all the rest who were there had brought their cloaks and their tunics, So that they slept in comfort, their shields hugged close to their shoulders:
I, in my folly, however, had left my cloak with my comrades When I set out, not thinking the night was like to be frosty, But came along with the rest, having only my shield and my sword-belt.
But, when the third watch came, and new constellations had risen, Then did I speak to Odysseus who chanced to be lying beside me, Nudging him with my elbow: and he understood in an instant:
"Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices, I shall be frozen to death if I stay in this cold any longer, For I have got no cloak: some evil spirit misled me Only to bring my tunic: and now 'tis too late to be altered." So did I speak: and at once he devised this plan to relieve me, Such as he only, the foremost in counsel and fight, could have thought of:
Quick, without turning his head, in a very low voice he whispered: 'Don't speak now, lest one of the other Achæans should hear you.'
Then did he raise himself up on his elbow, and spoke to his comrades:
"Listen, my friends, a dream has been sent from Heaven to warn me That we have come very far from the ships: but some one had better Run to our guardian lord, Agamemnon Atreidés, and ask him If he can send, with speed, some reinforcements to help us."
So did he speak: and Thoas sprang up, the son of Andæmon, Quickly, and casting away his cloak close-woven of purple, Started to run to the ships: and I rolled up in his garment, Lay there in comfort and warmth till golden Morning was shining.

Would I were now as young, and my strength as firm as it then was:
Possibly one of the swineherds here would lend me a garment, Both out of kindness of heart and also respect for my courage: But, as it is, they neglect me because my clothing is wretched."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus: "Sir, let me say the respect which we have for yourself is unbroken:
Nor have you said one word which appears ill-timed or ungracious:
So, in your present need, you shall not want for a garment
Neither for anything else that a stranger who comes from a distance
Asking for help may claim: but as soon as the Morning awakens,
Then you shall fling your own old rags once more on your shoulders.
For we have no great store of cloaks, or superfluous tunics
Which we can wear for a change: but each has his own and no other."

And, springing up at the word, he placed a couch by the fire, And, for the sake of softness, he spread on it sheepskins and goatskins.
There did Odysseus lie down: and he covered him up with a mantle
Thick and heavy, which he himself would wear on occasion
When 'twas excessively cold, or more than commonly stormy.

There did Odysseus lie down to sleep: and the young men around him
Lay and slept on the ground. But to make his bed in the cottage,
Far from the herd of swine, was not to the taste of the swineherd
So, going out, he armed himself. And glad was Odysseus,
Seeing him take such care of the herds of his absent master.
First, o'er his sturdy shoulders, he slung his trusty old cutlass,
Wrapped himself up in a cloak, would defy the coldest of tempests,
Took up the hide of a great big goat, that was cured with the hair on,
Also a pointed dart to keep off the dogs and the robbers.
So did he go to lie down, in the place where the tuskers were sleeping,
Sheltered from cold North wind, beneath a rock overhanging.
MEANWHILE, Pallas Athené had gone to wide Lacedæmon, 
Having in mind to talk to the famous son of Odysseus, 
Cause him to think of his home, and hasten his plans for return-ing. 
And it fell out that she found him, and with him Peisistratus also, 
Near to each other, asleep, in the porch of king Menelæus. 
Nestor's son, indeed, was sleeping profoundly and sweetly, 
While that Telemachus seemed to be troubled: for, times with-out number, 
All through the scented night, his thoughts were turned to his father. 
And, by his side, stood Athené: and softly thus she addressed him: 
“Surely it is not wise, Telemachus, longer to tarry 
Far from your home, and leave those haughty men in possession, 
Lest they should share your goods, and so your journey be fruitless. 
Lose no time, but request Menelæus, that trusty companion, 
Promptly to send you back, lest you find your mother already 
Gone from her home: for now, her father and brothers are saying 'Marry Eurymachus': since it is he who is far the most lavish Giver of wedding gifts, and is always outbidding the others. 
Therefore, while you are away, beware lest your house should be plundered. 
For you know well the spirit that dwells in the heart of a woman: Always she wants to enrich the house of the man that she marries, 
And, if she marries again, she thinks no more of her first love 
Or of her children by him, nor ever asks questions about them. 
But, when you come to your home, make over the charge of the household 
Unto that one of the women you judge most clever and faithful, 
Till such time as the Gods shall show you a wife who is worthy.
And there is something else, I must tell you: take heed you remember:
Some of the foremost men, amongst these suitors, are lying
Hid in the narrow strait between Samos and Ithaca's island
Fully determined to kill you before you can come to your home-
land:
But, before that can happen, I think the sod will have covered
Some of these suitor men who now devour your substance.
But, in your well-built ship, you had better keep clear of the
islands:
Also, for choice, make sail by night: and the God who protects
you,
Still on the watch, will send you a breeze that will carry you
safely.
And, when you come abreast of the first sea-beach in your island,
Steer your ship for the town, and summon all your companions:
But, before anything else, you must go to visit the swineherd
Who is in charge of your swine, and who also loves you sincerely.
There you must sleep for the night, then bid him to go to the city
Bearing a message from you to the prudent Penelope, telling
How you have come from Pylos, and now are safe in the
country."
She, having spoken thus, departed to lofty Olympus:
Then did Telemachus rouse the son of Nestor from slumber,
Gave him a touch with his foot: and thus he spoke to his
comrade:
"Haste and get up, son of Nestor, Peisistratus, lead out the
horses:
Let us put to at once, and so get on with our journey."
Bluntly, however, the son of Nestor, Peisistratus, answered:
"Though we were ever so much in a hurry, my comrade, we
cannot
Drive in the dark: but ere long, the golden Morn will be with us:
Therefore be patient, until our host the hero Atreides
Spear-renowned Menelaüs shall load our car with the presents
Meet for a parting guest, and with complimentary phrases
Send us away: for a well-bred guest is considerate always
To his reveréd host who is giving him welcome and kindness."
And, on her golden throne, forthwith the Morning appeared:
And Menelaüs, that steadfast friend, was coming towards them:
Lately risen was he from his couch by the side of his consort Helen of glorious hair: and soon as Telemachus saw him, Hastily did he clothe his fair white skin with his tunic, Then, o'er his sturdy shoulders, he threw a plaid, and he went forth
As 'twere a hero to meet his host, and thus he addressed him:
“Great Menelæus Atreides, Zeus-nurtured chieftain of peoples, Send me away, I pray you, at once to the land of my fathers, Since, for my own dear home, my spirit already is pining.”
And, in reply, thus spoke that trusty friend Menelæus:
“Far be it from me to keep you, Telemachus, inmate unwilling, Now that you want to return: and I should myself be indignant With any host who loved, or disliked, the guests in his palace In an extravagant way: moderation is better in all things.
One is as bad as the other, to treat your friend as unwelcome When he desires to stay, or to keep him when anxious to leave you.
Therefore be kind to your guest when present, and speed him at parting.
But you must give me time to put some gifts in your carriage Which you can see at your leisure: and then I will order the women, Out of the stores in the house, to prepare you a suitable breakfast: For 'tis a credit to me, and much for your comfort and welfare That you should have a meal before setting out on your journey. But we will go, if you like, through Argos the centre of Hellas, So that myself may go with you: and I will provide you the horses:
And I will introduce you to cities of men: nor will any Send you away without guerdon: but each will give a present, Whether it be a tripod, of well-wrought bronze, or a cauldron, Or, it may be, a pair of mules or a golden goblet.”
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
“Great Menelæus Atreides, Zeus-nurtured chieftain of peoples, Let me go home to-day: for, when I set out on my journey, No one was left behind in charge of my house and possessions: Lest, while I seek for news of my father, myself should be murdered,
Or some heirloom of value be stolen out of my castle.”
And, at his words, that friend in need, the king Menelæus,
Straightway did charge his wife and the maids of the house to get ready
In the big hall, a breakfast from what was stored in the larder. Then did Boeotus' son, Eteoneus, come for his orders, Hastily risen from bed, for his room was not far from his master's. And, unto him, Menelaus gave orders to kindle a fire, And to set meat to roast: and promptly he did what was bidden. But Menelaus himself went down to the perfumed chamber, And, with him also, went Helen the queen and his son Megapenthes.
And, when they came to the room where the stored-up treasures were lying,
Then did Atreides choose for his guest a cup double-handled: Also he bade his son Megapenthes to take up a punch-bowl Fashioned of silver: but Helen was standing in front of the wardrobes,
And, of the robes, she chose, queen Helen, divinest of women, That which was fairest of all in its colours and also the largest: And like a star it shone, the last of the pile that you came to. Then they went back through the house till they met the son of Odysseus:
And, unto him, thus spoke the king, fair-haired Menelaus:
"May the great Zeus, O friend, the deep-voiced husband of Hera,
Grant you your heart's desire, to reach your homeland in safety: And, for a present, of all the treasures I have in my palace, That which I give you shall be most beautiful and most costly: For I will give you a bowl, very cunningly wrought, of solid Silver: and round the rim is a band of gold as a finish: Work of Hephaestus himself. 'Twas Phædimus gave it, the hero King of Sidonians, when, as a guest, I stayed in his palace After the fall of Troy: and I wish you to take it and keep it."
Then, in Telemachus' hand he placed the cup double-handed. As for the glistening bowl of silver, the strong Megapenthes Set it to rest on the ground in front of the son of Odysseus. And, at his side, stood Helen, in face the fairest of women, Holding the robe in her hands, and called him by name and addressed him:
"I, on my part, dear son, will give you this robe as a present, Keepsake of Helen's work: and, when you are happily married,
Give it to your own wife: meanwhile, in charge of your mother, Let it remain in your hall. And I pray that, scatheless and joyful, You may arrive at your well-built house and the land of your fathers."

Then did she place the robe in his hands: and he gladly received it:
And, in the wickerwork cart, Peisistratus piled up the presents,
Making a note in his mind of everything that he put there,
While that the king himself did lead the way to the palace:
There did they take their seats upon the chairs and the benches.
Then did a maiden bring them a handwash of sparkling water,
Poured from a golden ewer in a beautiful basin of silver:
And, for their use, she spread a table carefully polished:
Also the housekeeper dame brought bread and set it beside them:
And Eteoneus carved the meat and apportioned the helpings:
But 'twas the son of the king who served his guests with the wine cup.
Then were all hands stretched out to the good things ready before them.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Harness the Telemachus, helped by the glorious son of Nestor,
Harness the horses, and mount on the car that was painted so gaily,
And, without pausing, they drove, from the porch and the echoing cloister.
But the fair-haired Menelaus, the son of Atreus, o'ertook them,
Holding a golden cup of wine that was sweet and delicious,
That they might make a libation before beginning their journey:
Standing in front of the horses, with outstretched hand he saluted:
"May you be happy, my sons: and give a like message to Nestor,
Shepherd and guide of peoples: because he was kind as a father
Unto myself, when the sons of Achaeans were fighting in Troyland."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Certainly will I tell him, Zeus-nurtured, all that you bid me,
Soon as we meet him again: and would that I in like manner, Safely arrived at home, might say to Odysseus, my father,
In his own house, what kindness within your walls you have shown me:
Witness the many treasures and costly with which I am laden."
And, as he thus was speaking, a bird flew by to the eastward:
It was an eagle, and bore a great white goose in his talons,
One he had snatched from the yard: and a crowd of men and of women
Followed it shouting: but it, flying up to where they were standing,
Darted from left to right in front of the horses: and each man, When he beheld that sight, was cheered with glad expectation. Then was the son of Nestor, Peisistratus, first to break silence:
"Tell us, I pray, Meneläus, Zeus-nurtured shepherd of peoples, Was it for you or for us, this portent divine was intended?"
Thus did he speak: and at first, the king Meneläus was puzzled
How he might solve the question and give an answer judicious:
But, ere he thought of the word, the long-robed Helen fore-stalled him:
"Listen to me: 'tis I will act the prophet, and tell you What, as it seems to me, the immortal Gods have suggested: Just as this lonely bird, having left its brood in the mountains, Carried away from the yard this goose that was fattened on dainties,
So shall Odysseus at last, after many a trial and adventure, Come and requite those men: or, it may be, while I am speaking, He is already at home, and preparing death for the suitors."
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"So Zeus grant it to be, the great-voiced husband of Hera:
Then, in my own far land, as a God would I pray to thee, Lady."
Smartly he whipped up the horses, who bounded eagerly forward,
Straining to reach the plain, and sped through the streets of the city.
All day long, they were tossing the pole from one to the other Till the sun sank in the West, and all the ways were o'ershadowed. And unto Pheræ they came, to the house of Diocles, who was Son of Ortilochus, him whom Alphæus begot as his offspring.
There did they stay for the night: and friendly refreshment he gave them.
But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then they put to, and mounted the chariot painted so gaily,
And, without waiting, they drove from the porch and the echoing cloister.
Then did he whip up the horses, who sped full willingly onward:
Nor was it long ere they came to the steep-walled fortress of Pylos.

Then did Telemachus speak to the son of Nestor beside him:
"Son of Nestor, I hope you will promise, nor shrink from performing
That which I ask: because we not only inherit the friendship
Made by our fathers, but also ourselves are equals and comrades.
Do not, I beg of you, drive me beyond my vessel, but leave me There, lest your father should wish, from kindness of heart, to detain me
Guest in his house unwilling: for home I must go at all hazards."
So did he speak: and awhile the son of Nestor debated
How he could grant the request without any breach of his duty:
And, as he thought on the matter, this plan was the one he adopted:

Driving direct to the shore where the ship was lying, he lifted
Out of the car the gifts which king Meneläus had given,
Beautiful garments and gold, which he placed in the stern of the vessel.

Then, in a few short words, he bade his companion be hasty:
"Lose no time, but embark, and give what orders are needful
Ere I can reach my home and tell the news to my father,
Seeing I know full well his proud and masterful temper:
He will not let you go, but will come himself to invite you,
Nor will accept a refusal, because he will greatly be angered."

Thus, having spoken, he drove with his pair of flowing-maned horses,
Back to the Pylians' city, and quickly he came to the castle.
But, with such words as these, did Telemachus hasten his comrades:
"Put all gear in its place, my friends, in our well-tarred vessel,
And let us go on board ourselves, and get on with our journey."

So did he speak: and they heard, and readily did as he bade them,
Going on board with haste, and taking their seats on the benches.

Thus was he working and praying and making his vows to Athené

Hard by the stern of the ship, when he saw a stranger approaching,

Who, having slain a man, was fleeing from Argos, a prophet Sprung from Melampus who once, in Pylos famed for its sheep flocks,

Dwelt in a stately mansion amidst the Pylian people:
But, at the last he fled from his fatherland, and from Neleus, Proudest and haughtiest king, and made his abode among strangers.

But, for a whole long year, this Neleus kept his possessions, Seized and held them by force, while he, in anguish of spirit, Captive and bound with chains, was kept in Phylacus' castle, All on account of the daughter of Neleus, and heaven-sent madness

Which had been put in his heart by the Goddess of Horror, the Fury.

But he escaped from death, and drove the bellowing oxen Safely to Pylos, and then he avenged himself upon Neleus For his unseemly act, and, unto the house of his brother, Brought him a wife: but himself, in a strange land, took up his dwelling,

Argos, the mother of horses: in which same place he was destined, King of a prosperous people, to rule over thousands of Argives. There did he marry a wife, and build a magnificent palace:

And, to him, sturdy sons were born, Antíphatés first and Mantius, and, to the former, was born great-hearted Oicles, Father of Amphiaráus who roused the peoples to battle, And, in all friendly regards, was dear to the Lord of the Ægis And to Apollo: but yet he reached not the threshold of old age, But he was slain at Thebes, through gifts that beguiled a woman: And, unto him, were born Amphilochos and Alcméon.

Mantius also had sons, Polypheides and Cleitus his brother. But, as to Cleitus, they say that the golden Queen of the Morning Snatched him away for his beauty, to keep him amongst the Immortals.

Now the high-souled Polypheides was made, by Apollo, a prophet
First by far among mortals, when Amphiaräus had perished:
But he resought Hyperèsia's land when at strife with his father:
There did he dwell, and dispense his answers prophetic to all
men.
And it was this man's son, by name Theoclymenus, who now
Came up, and stood by the side of Telemachus as he was praying,
Praying and making libation beside the swift black galley:
And, in unstudied words, he spoke, and thus he addressed him:
"Friend, since I find you engaged in this pious task, I im-
plore you
Both by the Power you worship, and by your libation, and also
As you may value your head and your life and the life of your
comrades,
Answer the question I ask without either fraud or concealment:
Who among men are you? and where is your city? and parents?"
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Certainly I will tell you, O stranger, quite plainly and truly.
Ithaca is my country, and, if he were living, Odysseus
Would be my father: but he has already most wretchedly
perished.
And, for this reason, I came in my good black ship with my
comrades,
That I might hear some news of him who so long has been
absent."
And, unto him in reply, godlike Theoclymenus answered:
"Also myself am an exile, because I have compassed the death of
One of the men of my tribe who had many brothers and clans-
men
Scattered throughout all Argos, great rulers amongst the
Achæans:
And, to escape from death at their hands, I am fleeing the
country,
For, from henceforth, I must wander, pursued from nation to
nation.
Take me on board your ship: a hunted man, I beseech you,
Lest they should kill me: already, I think they are close on
my footsteps."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Heaven forbid I should wish to drive you by force from my
galley."
Come with our party, and share what cheer we are able to give you."

Thus having spoken, he took from his hands the spear bronze-headed,

Laying it down on the deck, and himself went on board of the vessel,

And, as the captain should, sat down in the stern, and beside him
Made Theoclymenus sit, while the crew cast loose the stern hawsers.

Then did he give the word to get to work on the rigging,

Losing no time: and the men full readily did as he bade them:

So they upraised the mast of pinewood, and planted it firmly

Into the deep mast hole, and braced it tightly with forestays,

Hoisting the white sails up with twisted halyards of ox hide.

Soon was a following breeze vouchsafed them by grey-eyed Athené;

Rushing in boisterous mood, in order that, speeding before it

Over the salt sea water, the ship might accomplish her journey.

(And the sun sank in the West, and the ways of the world were o'ershadowed.)

Running before the breeze, she soon was abreast of Phéæ:

Then she passed sacred Elis of which the Epeians are masters:

And, after that, with haste, he set his course for the islands,

Pondering if after all he should 'scape from death, or be captured.

Meanwhile Ódysseus, and with him the godlike swineherd,

were sitting

Over their meal in the hut, and the labourers supping beside them.

But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,

Then did Ódysseus speak in the midst to make trial of the swineherd,

If he would still entertain him in hearty friendship, and bid him

Stay where he was in the cottage, or tell him to go to the city:

"Listen to me, Eumæus, and other comrades around us,

Early to-morrow morning, I wish to be off to the city

Begging for alms, that I be not a burden to you and your comrades.

Tell me what I shall do, and give me a trusty companion

Just to show me the way: but, once in the city, I then must
Go by myself and beg for a bite and a sup from the townsmen. And I shall find my way perchance to the house of Odysseus, Where I can tell some news to the prudent Penelopé: also, If I have luck, I may meet with a few of these gentlemen suitors: They may provide me a meal out of all their abundance of dainties. And I am ready to do them whatever service they wish for. For you may mark my word, and I think you will catch at my meaning: If you will only except the Messenger Hermés, who crowns with Credit and good success the undertakings of mortals, There is no man in the world can beat me in excellent service, Whether 'tis lighting a fire or splitting cordwood for burning, Cooking, or carving a joint, or pouring out wine at a banquet, Or aught else that is done by men who wait on the gentry.”

But, in a choleric mood, did you answer, O swineherd Eumæus:

“Bless my soul, O stranger, how came you to have such a notion? That is, unless you wish to be killed on the spot by the suitors: For, if you show your face in their midst, that is what will befall you, Seeing their violent crimes reach up to the vault of the heavens. And, you must know, their attendants are not such persons as you are, But they are smart young men, well clad in cloaks and in tunics, Always with hair well oiled, and with faces handsome to look at. These are the servants they have: and their tables are carefully polished, And they are loaded with bread, and wine and meat in abundance. But stay here with us all: for to none do you give any trouble, Neither to me nor to any one else of the men who are with me. But, when the well-loved son of Odysseus comes back from his travels, He will supply you with cloak and tunic and all that is needful, And will convey you in safety wherever your heart may desire.”

And, in reply, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus: “May you become as dear, Eumæus, to Zeus our father, As you are dear to me, whom you saved from pain and from travel:
Seeing a wandering life is the worst that can happen to mortals: For men are always in pain on account of their cursed belly, When they are once given over to toil and travel and hardship. But, as you bid me to stay and to wait for him that you speak of, Tell me, how does it fare with the mother of godlike Odysseus, And with his father, who was, when he left, on the threshold of old age? Tell me if still they live, and rejoice in the sunshine of heaven, Or are already dead and passed to the regions of Hadés?"

And, in reply, thus spoke that leader of men, the swineherd: "Have no fear, my guest, I will tell you the truth without erring:
Still is Laërtes alive, but ever to Zeus he is praying That, 'neath his own roof-tree, his soul may be reft from his body:
For, when his son went off to the war, he was terribly shaken: Also the loss of his wife, on whom he greatly depended,
Utterly broke his spirit and rendered him feeble and wretched.
But 'twas from grief for her glorious son that the wife of Laërtes Died of a broken heart: and I pray that none of my neighbours,
If he be kindly and good, may die in such trouble as she did.
Now, so long as she lived, 'twas a pleasure, in spite of her sorrow,
For me to talk with my mistress and ask her how she was faring:
Since she had brought me up from a boy as a sort of companion Unto her handsome daughter, the long-robed Ctiméné (youngest Was she of all her children) and treated us almost as equals.
But, when we two had arrived at the season of maiden and manhood, Her they dispatched as a bride to Samé, for presents uncounted: But upon me my mistress bestowed a cloak and a tunic, Both of the best, and besides a stout pair of sandals for walking, Then sent me off to the fields: yet at heart she was fond of me always.
Now I have lost both these: but, as for myself, the blest Gods Prosper the work that I do, which supplies each day for my comfort
Plenty to eat and drink and to give to the stranger and needy. But, as affairs are now, I never can have from my lady
Even a kindly word, because of these insolent suitors
Who are a curse to the house: and you know all servants
expect to
Stand and talk with their mistress and hear what news may be
going,
Have a good meal in the kitchen, and then carry home to their
cottage
Something nice: for 'tis that which keeps them contented and
happy."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Why, bless me, Eumæus the swineherd, how much you have
travelled
When you were quite a boy, away from your home and your
parents.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly,
Whether that city of men, with its fine broad streets, where your
father
Dwelt with your lady mother, was captured in battle and ravaged,
Or were you kidnapped by pirates, when left alone in the country
Watching the oxen or sheep, and taken on shipboard, and
lastly
Sold to this man as a slave, for a good round payment in silver."

And in reply, thus spoke that leader of men, the swineherd:
"Stranger, although it is plain that you wish to ply me with
questions,
Take my advice, sit quiet, and sip your wine-cup in silence.
Yet they are terribly long, these nights: some want to be sleep-
ing,
Some like better to listen: and there is no sort of occasion
That you should go to bed before the hour that suits you.
Too much, even of sleep, is unpleasant: and as for the others,
Any can sleep outside, if he wishes, and then with the day-
light,
After his breakfast, be off to follow the swine of our master.
But we will sit where we are, we two, with our drink and our
victuals
Like old cronies, and comfort ourselves by telling our troubles
One to another: for, e'en in his pains a man will find pleasure
If he has travelled much, and gone through numberless hardships.
And now, being alone, I will tell you all that you ask me."

The Story of Eumæus

"Maybe you've heard of an island which men call Syria, lying
Outside Ortygia's isle, at the point where the sun swerves downwards:
Not many men live there, but none the less is it fertile,
Bringing forth cattle and sheep and wine and wheat in abundance.
And there is never a famine comes near the people, nor any
Of the diseases with which we wretched mortals are troubled:
But, in this favoured land, when people are aged, Apollo
Coming with silvern bow, or Artemis silently slays them.
There you will find two cities to which the land is apportioned,
And, over both of these cities, my noble father was ruler,
Ctesius, Ormenus' son, a king who was like the Immortals.
"And, to this island, there came those seafaring men the Phœncians,
Greedy knaves, who brought in their ship all manner of trinkets.
Now, in my father's household, there was a Phœnician woman,
Tall and handsome to look at and skilled in excellent hand-work:
And, by their flattering arts, the Phœnician sailors deceived her.
Firstly a man of the crew seduced her, near to their galley,
Where she was washing clothes: which ends in beguiling the heart of
Every womanly woman, however good worker she may be.
Then did he ask her name, and what was the country she came from:
And she full readily told of the high-roofed house of her father:
"'Proudly I claim to belong to the city of Sidon, where bronze is
Common as stones: and my father was Arybas, princely in riches.
But, as I came one day from the country, some Taphian pirates
Caught me and carried me here across the water and sold me
Unto this man as a slave: and no small price did he pay them.'

"And, unto her thus spoke, the man who seduced her in secret:

'How would you like to go home, along with us in our galley, Unto the high-roofed house of your dear father and mother, Yes, and to see them too: for still they are living and wealthy?'

"And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the Phœnician woman:

'That might be possible also, provided your sailors will promise, And with a sacred oath, to bring me unharmed to my home-land.'

"So did she speak: and they all made promise by oath as she bade them.

But, when the oath was sworn, and confirmed with all due observance,

Then did she speak again, and thus in her turn she addressed them:

"'Silence now: and beware that never a one of your comrades Speak any word to me should he meet me by chance in the city Or it may be at the well, and this should be told to the master, And his suspicion be roused, and he bind me in rigorous fetters, And should take care that yourselves were put beyond power of mischief.

Keep your own counsel well, and hurry the purchase of cargo For your return: and so soon as your lading is fully completed, Then let a message be sent, with speed, to me at the palace, And I will bring with me what gold I may chance to lay hands on: And I would willingly pay even more than that for my passage: Seeing that I am in charge of this brave man's son in his palace, Regular cunning young rascal, who runs with me just where he pleases:

Him will I bring to the ship—he is worth ten thousand of others—

And you can easily sell him at any port you may come to.'

"And, when she thus had spoken, she went away to the palace:

And, for a whole year long, they stayed with their ship in our harbour

Buying and selling until they had gathered a cargo of value. But, when the hold was full, and the men were on point of returning,
Then was a messenger sent, as agreed, to bring word to the woman:
For to our house, there came a man of wonderful shrewdness,
Bringing a necklace of gold with alternate pieces of amber.
And, as my lady mother was sitting amongst her attendants
Fingering over the necklace, inspecting the details and making
Offers as to the price, he made a sign to the woman,
And, having done so, he left the hall and was off to the galley.
Then did she take my hand, and lead me out of the doorway.
And, in the porch, were tables, and golden cups were upon them,
Left by my father's suite who there had been feasting and drinking
And had gone on to the council to hold debate with the people:
Quickly she snatched up three, and, hiding them under her bosom,
Carried them off: and I, in childish simplicity, followed.
And the sun set, and the streets were veiled in silence and shadow.

We, then, hurrying on, soon came to the glorious harbour
Where, sure enough, we found the Phœnician ship at its mooring:
Then did they put us on board, and climbing into their vessel
Sail o'er the watery ways: and Zeus sent favouring breezes.
So, for six nights and days, in spite of our crime, we were sailing
Safely: but when great Zeus to the tale had added the seventh,
Then was the woman smitten by Artemis, lover of arrows,
And, with a thud, she fell in the hold, as plunges a sea-gull.
Then did they throw her body, as food for the seals and the fishes,
Over the side: and I was left alone in my sorrow.
And, by the wind and tide, we were driven to Ithaca's island,
Where, with his stored-up wealth, it chanced I was bought by Laërtes.
That's how it came to pass that I first set eyes on this country."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the Zeus-born Odysseus:
"Truly, Eumæus, your tale of all the things you have suffered
Greatly has touched my heart: but yet I am thinking that Zeus has
Mixed some good with the evil: because, after all your adventures,
You have been brought to the house of a man that is kindly, who gives you, Willingly, food and drink: and your life is healthy: while I have Wandered through cities of men long time ere I came to your cottage.”

Now, in such words as these, the two were talking together: Nor did they spend long time in bed, but ever so little: For, on her golden throne, the Morning quickly appeared.
And, in his ship, meanwhile, Telemachus came: and his comrades
Lowered the sails and unstepped the mast, and into the basin Rowed their vessel with oars, and threw out boulders as anchors, Mooring the stern with ropes: and then, stepping out on the shingle,
Quickly they set to work preparing their food and their wine-cup,
And, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,
Then did that prudent man Telemachus speak to his comrades:
“All of you now must row our good black ship to the city:
But I will go myself to visit the farm and the herdsmen,
And, after seeing the fields, will come to the town in the evening.
Then, when the morning has come, as part of your pay and allowance,
You shall sit down to a meal of meat and wine of the choicest.’
And, unto him in reply, godlike Theoclymenus answered:
“Where shall I go, dear son? And what man’s house shall I enter
First, among all the chiefs who rule in Ithaca’s island?
Shall I go straight to the house that belongs to you and your mother?”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
“If ’twere a different case, of course I would gladly invite you:
There is no lack with us of good entertainment: however, Seeing myself shall be absent, and also my mother, most likely, Stay upstairs in her room, at work on her web, for she seldom Shows herself now to the suitors, you surely would find it unpleasant.
But I can tell you of someone else who I think, would receive you, That is Eurymachus, son of the warlike Polybus, whom now Most of the Ithacan people admire as 'twere an Immortal: For he is far the best of the suitors, and also determined That he will marry my mother and hold the place of Odysseus. But, it is only Zeus, who dwells in the heavens, could tell us Whether the day of his death will come before he is married.”

And, as he thus was speaking, a bird flew by to the eastward, Messenger swift of Apollo, a falcon, which, clutched in its talons, Carried a cushat dove, and, cruelly plucking its feathers, Strewed them upon the ground 'twixt the ship and the son of Odysseus. But Theoclymenus signed him to come apart from his comrades, And then, taking his hand, he called him by name and addressed him:

"Know 'twas a God who sent that bird which flew to the eastward,
For I could see at once that 'twas a bird with a message. But, in this Ithacan land, there is never a race more kingly, No, nor will be, than yours: but you will be powerful always."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"Friend, 'tis the wish of my heart that your word may come to fulfilment:
Then you would soon have proof of my friendship, and gifts in abundance
Coming from me, so that all whom you met would envy your fortune."

Then did he turn, and speak to Peiræus, his trusty companion:

"Clytius' son, Peiræus, of all the comrades who with me Sailed unto Pylos, you always were first to act at my bidding: And, what I ask you now, is to take our friend to your dwelling, And, till myself shall return, to entertain him with honour.”

And, unto him in reply, Peiræus the warrior answered:

"Captain Telemachus, long though it be you may choose to be absent,
I will look after him well: for at home we have ample provision.”

Then did he mount the deck, and gave the word to his comrades,

Having cast loose the hawsers, to climb up into the vessel:
Quickly the men embarked, and took their seats on the benches.
Then, on his feet, he bound a pair of beautiful sandals,
And, from the quarter-deck, he took his spear, stout-shafted,
And with a sharp bronze point. So the crew cast loose the stern-hawsers,
And, pushing out to sea, they steered their course to the city
Just as Telemachus ordered, dear son of the absent Odysseus.
But he himself strode on with speed till he came to the farmyard,
Thronged with the swine: where often the swineherd would sleep to protect them:
Faithful retainer, he loved his masters and studied their welfare.
NOW, in the shack, those two, the swineherd and godlike Odysseus,
Rising betimes from bed, were busy preparing their breakfast:
For they had sent away the herdsmen to go to the hillside,
Guarding the herds of swine. But when Telemachus came near,
All of the savage dogs began to fawn on him gently,
Never a bark or a growl: and godlike Odysseus not only
Noticed them wagging their tails but heard the sound of a footstep.
And, in a careless way, 'twas thus he spoke to Eumæus:
“Look, Eumæus, it seems there’s one of your neighbours a-coming,
Some one at least that you know: because your dogs are not barking,
But stand wagging their tails; and I hear the sound of a footstep.”
Ere he had finished the word, his dear son stood in the doorway.
But, in surprise, Eumæus sprang up, and dropped, in his hurry,
Out of his hands, the vessels in which he was mixing the wine-cup:
And, running up to his prince, both hands did he cover with kisses,
Also his beautiful eyes and his head, nor stinted his weeping.
And, as a loving father may fondle the son he delights in,
Newly arrived at home, after nine long years among strangers,
Darling and only son, full often bewept and prayed for,
So, as to one from the dead, did the stately old swineherd Eumæus
Cling to Telemachus godlike to see, and kissed him all over:
And, in a tearful voice, these words unbidden he uttered:
“Light of my eyes, have you come, Telemachus? I had expected
Never to see you again when you sailed in your vessel to Pylos.
But come indoors, dear son, and let my eyes be delighted
Seeing you seated there in safety returned from your travels.
For it is seldom now that you visit the farm or the herdsmen,
But stay, most of the time, in the town, because you like better
Thus to be able to watch what these pestilent suitors are doing.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
“So shall it be, my Daddy: and ’twas for your sake that I came
That I might see your face, and hear from your lips what has
Whether my mother abides in the house, or is wedded already
Unto another man: while the bedstead made by Odysseus
Lies, without blankets or rugs, neglected and covered with cob-
webs.”

And, in reply, thus spoke that leader of men, the swineherd:
“Still does your mother remain in your halls with patient en-
Waiting her lord’s return: and at night she broods on her sorrow,
And, after that, she spends the day in weeping and moaning.”

Thus having spoken, he took from his hand the spear bronze-
headed,
While that Telemachus stepped, across the stone of the threshold,
Into the house: and his father rose up from his seat as he entered,
Making room for his son: but he, with courtesy, checked him:
“Keep your seat, O stranger: there ’s plenty of room in our
cottage:
And this man at my side will find me a seat in a minute.”

So did he speak: and Odysseus went back to his seat: but
the swineherd
Piled, for the other, green brushwood, and on it a fleece as a
 cushion:
And upon this soft heap he sat, the dear son of Odysseus.
And then platters of meat were set by the swineherd before them,
Cooked and cold, the remains which were left from yesterday’s
 supper.
Hastily too he piled some bread in a couple of baskets,
And, in an ivy-wreath bowl, he mixed some honey-sweet wine-cup:
But he himself sat down in front of the godlike Odysseus.
Then were all hands stretched out to the good things ready
before them.
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, Then did Telemachus speak these words to the stately old swineherd:

"Whence did this stranger come, my Daddy? and how did the sailors
Bring him to Ithaca? What is the race that they claim to belong to? For he could never have come, 'tis sure, on his feet by walking."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:

"You may be sure, my son, I will tell you the truth about all things. This man claims to belong by race to the land of the Cretans, And to have gone the round, in his travels, of men and of cities: For it was thus that his thread was spun by the heavenly Powers, And now, having escaped from a ship of Thesprotian pirates, He has come here to my cottage: and into your hands I commit him. Do to him what you please: he is proud to claim your protection."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"This which you tell me now, Eumæus, is grieving me sorely: For I am quite at a loss, as you see, to welcome the stranger Suitably in my own house: for I am but a youth, and I could not Hold my own in a fight against a practised aggressor: And, as regards my mother, she never can make the decision Whether to stay at home with me, and manage the household, Showing respect to her own good name and the bed of her husband, Or to go off with the one, who, of all the Achæans that woo her, Proves to be bravest man, and giver of costliest presents. But, as the stranger here has come to your house, I will surely Clothe him with cloak and tunic and anything else that is needful, Give him a two-edged sword and a pair of excellent sandals, And then send him wherever his heart and his fancy desire. But, if it suits your wish, take care of him here in your cottage: And I will send you the clothes and all the food that is needed So that he may not become a burden to you and your comrades. But I will never allow him to go to the town 'mid the suitors, Seeing they ever are prone to commit all manner of outrage, Lest they should treat him with insult: and that would greatly distress me.

And it is hard for a man to maintain his cause among numbers,
However valiant he be: the odds are too heavy against him.”

And, unto him, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:
“Since it is only right, my friend, I should give you an answer,
This I will say, that my heart is torn at hearing your story
Telling of all the deeds these outrageous men are committing
In your own halls and against your will, who are hardly a man yet.
Tell me, do you submit without resistance? or are you
Banned by the people because of some fancied message from Heaven?
Or have you fault to find with your brothers? for many a man
will
Look unto these for support if any great trouble arises.
And I will tell you, my friend, if I were as young as I once was,
Or was the son of the noble Odysseus, or if he himself should
Suddenly come from his travels (for yet there is hope of his coming)
Then any foreigner man might slice my head from my shoulders
If, when I came to the hall of Odysseus, son of Laërtes,
I did not prove a bane to that cowardly crowd of the suitors.
But if, being alone, I were overpowered by numbers,
Why, I had rather be slain and meet with death like a soldier
In my own hall, than behold their disgraceful doings for ever,
Rudely maltreating strangers, and dragging the maids of the household
In an unseemly manner about my fair habitation,
Letting the wine-tap run, and consuming with waste that is sinful
Food of all kinds, giving work to the servants unceasing and endless.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
“You may be sure, O guest, I will tell you the truth without erring:
Neither the mass of the people is hostile and causing me trouble,
Nor have I cause to complain of brothers: for many a man will
Trust to his brothers to help him if any great struggle arises.
For ’twas the will of Zeus that ever our race should be lonesome.
Firstly, Arcesius left one son and one only, Laërtes:
Then did Laërtes beget one son, my father Odysseus:
He also left one son whom he never has seen from an infant.
So it has come to pass that lawless men by the thousand
Swarm in our house at will: for all the chiefs of the islands,
Who, in Dulichium, Samé, and wooded Zacynthus, are foremost, Taking no count of the others who rule 'mid the Ithacan people, Now are wooing my mother and wasting away our possessions. Still she can neither refuse their hateful offer of marriage, Nor will she carry it out: meanwhile they are eating my house up, And, before long, no doubt, they will make an end of me also. But, on the knees of the Gods lie all these things to determine. And now, Daddy, go quickly and tell my wise-hearted mother That I am sound and well, and come back safely from Pylos. I will remain where I am, and do you, when your message is given, Come back here: but beware lest any one else of the Grecians Hear of your news: for many are plotting mischief against me.”

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus: “I understand, I know: a hint is all that is needed. But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly, If, on the way, I shall tell this news to unhappy Laërtes Who, at one time, though he grieved full sore for the absent Odysseus, Used to look over the farm, and eat and drink with the servants When they were having their meals, if it chanced the fancy so took him. But, ever since that time when you sailed in your vessel to Pylos, Day after day until now, he refuses his drink and his victuals, Nor will he look at the farm, but sits bewailing his sorrow, Groaning and moaning, until he is nigh to a skeleton wasted.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: “Truly his lot is sad: but yet we must leave him at present: For, if by happy chance all things could be as we wish them, First thing of all I should ask would be the return of my father. But do you come straight back, when once you have given your message, Rather than spend your time in searching about for Laërtes: But you must bid my mother to send her faithful attendant Secretly, who with speed will carry the news to the ancient.”

Urgently thus he spoke: and the other one, taking his sandals, Bound them beneath his feet: but he did not, on leaving the homestead
As he set out for the town, escape the eye of Athené:
She, then, stately approached: (in form she was like to a woman,
Handsome and tall to behold and skilled in glorious handwork) Paused she, and stood at the door, and showed herself to Odysseus. But, though she stood before him, Telemachus did not perceive her: For not yet do the Gods reveal themselves plainly to all men: Only Odysseus saw her: the dogs also saw her, and whining Cowered away in fear to the farther side of the chamber. But, with her eyebrows, she signed to Odysseus, who, quickly perceiving, Went from the door of the cottage beyond the wall of the courtyard: Facing the Goddess he stood: and thus by name she addressed him: "Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices, Now is the time to speak to your son without any concealment, So that you two, having planned destruction and death to the suitors, Straightway may go to the town. So be of good courage: I will not Long be away from your side, because I am eager for battle." And, with her wand of gold, the Goddess lightly did touch him, And o'er his shoulders she threw a well-washed robe and a tunic: Larger his stature grew, and he seemed in the flower of manhood, Swarthy again and full-blooded, with jaws that were massive and firm-set: And on his chin was a thick, strong beard, coal-black like a raven. Having transformed him thus, she passed from his sight: but Odysseus Entered the shack: and his son was struck with amazement to see him, And, with his eyes downcast for fear he might be an Immortal, Thus, with a trembling heart, in unbidden words he addressed him: "Guest, you appear of a sudden to be a different person From what you were just now: your clothes are different also, And your complexion is not the same: I doubt but you may be One of the Gods immortal whose home is the vault of the heavens. But be propitious, I pray, and acceptable rites will we pay thee, Gifts moreover of gold well wrought, if only thou spare us."
And, unto him, made answer divine much-enduring Odysseus:

"I am no God, I assure you: why say I am like the Immortals? I am your very own father, for want of whose help and protection You have been groaning in secret beneath men's insult and outrage."

Thus having spoken, he kissed his son: and a tear from his eyelid
Ran down his cheek and fell, for he could no longer restrain it,
Yet even now did the other not fully believe that his father
Really was standing there, and again incredulous answered:

"Thou art not truly my father Odysseus, but a Divine one
Cheating my senses, that so he may make my sorrow more bitter: Seeing no mortal man could work a marvel of this sort
By his unaided will, though a God who was present in person
Haply could make a man either young or old as it pleased him.
For, but a moment ago, thou wast old and in garments unseemly: Now, thou art like to the Gods whose home is the vault of the heavens."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"It is not fitting, my son Telemachus, that you should wonder Or think it strange to behold your father at home and in safety: Seeing none other than I will ever come here as Odysseus:
But I, just as I am, after travels and hardships uncounted,
Now, in the twentieth year, have returned to the land of my fathers.
But you must know 'tis Athené, the Driver of booty, who made me
Such as you see me now; 'twas her good pleasure to do so,
Making me like sometimes to an aged beggar, and sometimes
Like to a fresh young man arrayed in beautiful garments.
And it is easy for Gods, whose home is the vault of the heavens,
Now to exalt and now to abase a man that is mortal."

So did he speak and sat down: but Telemachus, clinging around him,
Wept, shedding tears of joy o'er his father so worthy of honour: And from them both broke forth the sobs which could not be restrained.
Then were their cries more frequent and shrill than the cries of the lone birds,
Vulture and lammergeier, whose brood the rustics have stolen
Ere they were fledged: so these, in pitiful manner, were weeping.
And, till the sun had set, they would not have ceased from lamenting,

Had not Telemachus thus, ere long, interrupted and asked him:

“What was the kind of ship, dear father, in which your companions

Brought you to Ithaca? What is the land that they claim to belong to?

For you could never have come, 'tis sure, on your feet by walking.”

And in reply thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:

“You may depend on my word, my son: I will answer you truly:

'Twas the Phæacians who brought me, those famous sailors, who ferry

All men across the sea, whoever may visit their city:

For they conveyed me home lying fast asleep in their vessel,

Landed me safe on the shore, and gave me glorious presents,

Heaps of gold and of bronze and garments artfully woven,

Which, by the will of the Gods, lie safely hidden in caverns.

And I have come here now, by suggestion of gracious Athené,

That we may make some plan to slaughter the men who infest us.

But come, give me a list of the suitors, and tell me their number,

So shall I know the odds, and the kind of men we must deal with:

Then will I, arguing for and against to the best of my judgement,

Calculate if we two shall be able to struggle against them

By our unaided strength, or must look for others to help us.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

“Father, you know I have heard the fame of your deeds from my childhood,

How you were wondrous in fight and most sagacious in counsel:

But 'tis a great undertaking: it daunts me: nor can I imagine

How two men may contend with warriors many and valiant.

'Tis not as if they were only a dozen or two dozen, even,

But they are many times more: I will tell you the sum in a moment.

Out of Dulichium come, of young men warlike and able,

Fifty and two, and besides, six serving men in attendance:

Also, from Samé, come five and twenty: and, out of Zacynthus,

Twenty Achaean men: and twelve from our Ithacan island:

Picked men every one: and the bard and Medon the herald
Go in their train, besides two of our house who are skilful in carving.
And, if we happen to come on them all in the palace together,
You may secure, for their violent deeds, but grim satisfaction.
Yet 'twould be well to think if you might not find us a helper,
One who with right good will, would come to our aid in the struggle.

And, unto him, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:

"Surely, my son, I will speak: and ponder well my suggestion:
Do you consider Athené and with her Zeus our father
Good enough helpers for us, or shall we search for another?"

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"They are good helpers indeed, those two that you speak of,
and even though they be seated aloft in the clouds of heaven, they govern
Not only mortal men but also the Gods who are deathless."

And, unto him, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:

"You may be sure that the mighty pair will not linger uncertain
Whether to come to our aid, when the cause between us and
the suitors
Is being tested within my halls by wager of battle.
But, when the morning has come, set out at once for our castle,
Take your place with the suitors and talk as if nothing had
happened:
I, after waiting awhile, shall be brought to the town by the
swineherd,
Looking for all the world like some poor wretched old beggar.
But, if they treat me with insult, my son, where I ought to be
master,
Yet your dear heart must endure in patience howe'er they
abuse me:
And, if they even should pelt me with anything handy or drag me
Out of the house by my feet, you must only look on and be quiet.
Still, if you like, you can ask the suitors to cease from their
fooling,
Speaking in courteous manner: but no attention whatever
Will they return to that: for their day of fate is impending.
And this too will I say: pray lay it to heart and remember:
Soon as Athené the wise in council shall make the suggestion,
I, as a sign, will nod my head: and on seeing the signal
You must collect all arms you are able to find in the castle
Lying about, and, taking them up to the room in the tower,
Hide them there in a corner: and, if the suitors should ask you
Where you have put them, say, in a quiet and courteous manner,
That you have taken them out of the smoke, because they were damaged
Being too close to the fire, and no one would think them the same arms
Which, when he sailed for Troy, were left behind by Odysseus:
And that the Son of Kronos another thought had suggested,
Lest, when merry with wine, there might be a quarrel amongst you
And you might wound one another, and so your feast and your wooing
Would be disgraced: for, when man carries sword, the sword is the leader.
But you must leave for ourselves two swords and a couple of lances,
Also two targes of wild bull's hide, in a place that is handy
Where we can pick them up when we make our rush on the suitors
Who will be lulled into folly by Zeus and Pallas Athené.
And this too I will say, pray lay it to heart and remember:
If you are truly my son, and your blood is the blood of Odysseus,
Breathe not the news to a soul, that I have come back to my dwelling:
For not Laërtes himself must know it, nor faithful Eumæus,
Nor any one of the maids in the house, nor even your mother:
But you and I by ourselves can discover the women's intentions,
And we can also make trial of some of the men of the household:
So we shall soon find out who treats us with love and obedience,
Or who regards us not nor pays you the honour befitting."

And, unto him in reply, his son most glorious answered:
"Father, you will not object that I should both now and in future
Say what I think: for at least I am not light-headed or thoughtless.
I do not think that the plan you propose will be for the profit
Either of you or me: I beg you consider it farther.
'Twould be a very long task to learn the temper of each man
Going from farm to farm: meanwhile in your palace the suitors,
Much at their ease, devour and waste your goods without limit.
But 'twill not take us long to learn what the women are doing
Those who are bringing you shame, and also those who are guiltless:
And it is not worth while to make the round of the homesteads Testing the men, because there is plenty of time for that later: That is, if Zeus of the Αἰγίς in truth has sent you a token.”
Now, in such words as these, they two were talking together, While that the well-built ship which brought Telemachus home-ward With his companions from Pylos, was being rowed round to the city Ithaca. Then did the crew, when safe in the deep-water harbour, Drag, high up on the beach, their well-tarred ship: and the stevedores, Ready and strong, unloaded the gear of the ship: while the sailors Quickly, to Clytius’ house, conveyed the beautiful presents. But they had sent on a herald to go to the house of Odysseus, Bearing a message from them to the prudent Penelope, telling How that Telemachus now had arrived in the country, and bade them Promptly to row to the town, that her gracious Majesty might not Fear for his safety and shed a tender tear from her eyelids.
And it fell out that these, the herald and grand old swineherd, Met one another, each bearing the very same news to my lady. Now, when they came to the house of the heaven-born monarch Odysseus, Then did the herald blurt out his tale in the midst of the women: “There is good news, O queen: thy son has come back in safety.”
As for the swineherd, he stepped to the side of his mistress, and standing Near her, recounted the things which her son had bidden him tell her:
And, having given in full his message, he turned and departed, Went to look after the swine, and left the courtyard and palace. But, on their part, the suitors were greatly annoyed and discouraged, And, going out of the hall beyond the wall of the courtyard, Sat down in front of the gates to talk things over together, Then did Eurymachus, Polybus’ son, begin the discussion:
“Friends, we must own that this voyage of Telemachus here was a bold deed, nsmartly accomplished, although we were sure 'twas beyond his achievement. But let us now choose out a swift black galley and launch her, Getting together a crew of practised seamen as rowers, Who, with all speed, will warn those others to make their way homeward.”

Hardly the word had been spoken, it chanced that Amphinomus, turning Round in his place, espied the ship in the harbour, and sailors Stowing away the sails and carrying oars on their shoulders: And, with a pleasant laugh, 'twas thus he spoke to his comrades: “There is no need to send word: for here they are in the harbour. Either some God has told them, or else themselves they have sighted That other ship as she passed, and they were unable to catch her.” So did he speak: and they all rose up and made for the harbour. Quickly, they dragged the ship high up on the beach: and the stevedores, Ready and strong, unloaded the gear and the oars of the vessel: While that themselves, in a body, went off to the place of assembly, Suffering nobody else, whether young or old, to be present. Then rose up and addressed them Antinoiis, son of Eupeithes: “Monstrous it is how the Gods have preserved this man from disaster. Every day our sentries on wind-swept headlands were posted Taking their regular turns: and never, at hour of sunset, Went we on shore to sleep, but always sailed in our vessel Keeping the sea, and awaited in patience the Goddess of Morning. Thus did we lie in wait for Telemachus hoping to kill him, While that some Power unknown was bringing him homeward in safety. But let us here and now contrive for him doleful destruction: Yet there is time: and I hope that he may not escape us: for surely While that man is alive, we shall never accomplish our purpose,
For he is sharp as a needle and full of resource: and the people
Bring us no more, as you see, their accustomed tribute of honour.
Let us then act at once, before he can call the Achæans
Unto a meeting: because by him will be nothing omitted,
But he will think of all, and will rise in the council and tell them
How we have schemed to kill him, and how our plan has mis-
carried.
And they will hear these things with much the reverse of approval,
And, it is likely enough, will do us a mischief, and drive us
Out of our land, and compel us to make our home among
strangers.
But we shall be too quick, and capture him out in the country
Or on the road, and ourselves will seize his goods and possessions.
Sharing them fairly round: and, as for this building before us,
That we will give to his mother, and him whom she chooses to
marry.
But, if you do not approve my proposal and think it is better
We should allow him to live and to keep whate'er he inherits
Let us no longer remain, as now, in a party together
Eating our meals in his house, though I own it is far from un-
pleasant,
But let us leave this palace, and woo the widow with presents,
Each on his own account: and then she can, if she chooses,
Marry the lucky man whose gifts shall prove the most costly."
So did he speak: and the others received his proposal in
silence.
And, as they doubted, Amphinomus rose and addressed the
assembly.
He was the famous son of Nisus the son of Arêtes,
And was the leader of those who came from Dulichium, island
Fertile in grass and wheat: and him Penelope favoured,
For that his words were fair and his disposition was kindly.
So he, counselling well, thus spoke in the midst and addressed
them:
"As for myself, my friends, I will have no part in contriving
Death for Telemachus: since 'tis a crime most grievous to
murder
One of a kingly race. But let us ask counsel of Heaven:
And, if the answer of Zeus approves the course you are choosing,
I would be first to strike, and also encourage the others:
But, if the Gods dissuade, I advise you to cease from your purpose."

Thus did Amphinomus speak: and they all approved his suggestion.

Then did they rise from their seats, and go to the house of Odysseus,
And, in the hall, sat down on chairs that were carefully polished.

Then did the notion occur to Penelope, pearl of discretion,
That she herself would confront and speak to these insolent suitors.
For she had heard how the men were plotting to kill her beloved,
Having been told it by Medon who overheard their discussion.
So she set out to go to the hall with her women attendants.

But, when she came to the suitors, she stood, this Goddess-like woman,
Hard by a post that upheld the massive beam of the roof-tree,
Holding in front of her face the flaps of her glistening head-dress:
And to Antinoüs thus she spoke and by name did upbraid him:
"Haughty Antinoüs, plotter of evil! so you are the one whom Ithacan people declare to be foremost amongst your companions
Whether in counsel or speech: it seems they were greatly mistaken.

How is it, madman, that now you are scheming to compass the murder
Of my beloved son? Nor care you for suppliants even,
Whom Zeus specially guards: and he himself will avenge them.
Do you not know that your father, in this very city took refuge,
Fleeing in fear from his people who then were greatly incensed?
For the Thesprotian men with whom we were living in friendship
Strongly resented his act in pursuing the pirates of Taphos.
Him they wished to destroy, and to tear his heart from his body
And to devour at will his plentiful stores of provisions:
But 'twas Odysseus himself restrained them in spite of their fury.
Now, in return, you are wooing his wife, consuming his goods and
Plotting to kill his son. You cause me grief beyond measure.
Cease from these acts, I pray you, and bid the others to do so."

Then, with such words as these, did Eurymachus also confront her:
"Noble Icarius' daughter, Penelope, pearl of discretion,
Calm your fears, I beg you: there's no real cause to be anxious.
There is no man in the world—nor shall be so long as I live and see with my eyes—who will dare to lay hands on the son whom you cherish:
And I will tell you this, and I swear that it shall be accomplished: Quickly, around my spear, his dark life blood would be spouting. Often, when I was a boy, Odysseus the sacker of cities Made me sit on his knees, and gave me savoury slices Cut from the joint, with a draught of rich red wine as a finish. Therefore to me, by far, is Telemachus dearest of all men. So you need have no fear that ever his death will be compassed, Not by the suitors at least: but God's stroke none can escape from."
Yet, though he spoke thus fair, himself was planning his murder. But she, going aloft to her glistening room in the tower, Wept for her lord most dear, until that sleep on her eyelids, Gentle and sweet, was shed by the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné. But, in the evening, the swineherd returned to the farm and Odysseus And to his son: and the three worked hard preparing the supper, Killing a one-year porker. But Pallas Athéné was standing Watchful and yet unseen, at the side of the son of Laërtes: And, with a touch of her wand, once more she made him a beggar, Clothed in unseemly rags: for fear it might chance that the swineherd, If he should see his face, might recognize him, and unthinking, Not have the sense to be silent, but tell his idea to his mistress. Also, forestalling his words, Telemachus thus did address him: "So you have come back again, my godlike Eumæus: now tell us What is the news from the town. Have the suitors returned from their ambush, Or are they watching still to catch me as I come homeward?"
And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus: "As to that matter, I never took thought to ask any questions When I was in the town, because I was getting impatient Just to deliver my message and come back straight to the cottage. But, I must tell you, a herald was there despatched by your comrades, Who, before ever I spoke, had given the news to your mother. And this too I can tell, because I happened to see it:
When I had come to the ridge of Hermēs o'erlooking the city,  
On my way back, I saw, coming into the harbour, a galley  
Crowded with armed men, and swords and spears double-pointed.  
And I suppose 'twas the suitors: but yet I cannot be certain.”  
Thus did the swineherd speak: and Telemachus glanced at  
his father  
Gently, not turning his head, and avoiding the eye of Eumæus.  
So, having finished their work, and prepared a plentiful supper,  
These three shared in the meal: and nought they could wish for  
was lacking.  
But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated,  
Then they bethought them of bed, and rejoiced in the blessing  
of slumber.
BUT, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then did Telemachus rise, dear son of the godlike Odysseus,
Bind, on his gleaming feet, his beautiful sandals, and grasping
Firmly a long stout spear whose shaft he could skilfully handle,
Started to go to the city: and thus he spoke to the swineherd:
"Daddy, I'm off to the city to show myself to my mother: For she will never cease, I'm sure, from mourning and weeping Till she has seen me herself. And this is what I enjoin you:
Take our unhappy guest to the town: and there he can freely Beg for a bite and a sup from those who are willing to give it. But, by no means, have I strength to resist the whole of the suitors All by myself. And suppose that the stranger loses his temper, So much the worse for him: for I like to speak plainly at all times."

But unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Neither have I, my friend, any wish to trouble you longer: Since, for a poor old man, it is better to beg in the city Than in the fields, that so kind folk may give him a trifle. For I am getting too old to remain on a farm where I might be Ordered about at will by an inconsiderate bailiff. But come, this man here will show me the way as you bid him, Soon as I've stood by the fire, and got some warmth in my body: For they are terribly poor, these clothes: and I fear to be nipped by Frost in the early morn: and he said it was far to the city."

So did he speak: but, already, his son had passed through the homestead,
Striding swiftly along, but brooding ill to the suitors. But, when he came to the house which stood so pleasant and cheerful,
Then did he lean his spear against the side of a pillar, Entered the door, and crossed the stone-paved floor at the threshold. And the first person to see him, by far, was his nurse Eurycleia, As she was laying a fleece upon each of the chairs for a cushion.
Straightway she ran to greet him, and burst into tears: and the other Maids of the house of Odysseus were quickly assembled around him As, with affectionate love, they kissed his head and his shoulders. And, forthwith, from her chamber, Penelopé came, as it might be Artemis stately to see or Aphrodité the golden, And, round the neck of her son, she threw her arms: and her tears fell Fast, as she kissed his head and his eyes in which she delighted. And, 'mid her plaintive sobs, her words came pouring unbidden: "Light of my soul, have you come, Telemachus? I had expected Never to see you again, when you went in your vessel to Pylos, (Telling me nothing about it) to hear some news of your father. But come, tell me your story, and what you have seen in your travels."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "Mother mine, do not distress me, and rouse me to groans and lamenting Just when, by favour of Zeus, I have 'scaped from headlong destruction. Better to have a bath, and change your garments, and promise Hecatombs in full tale to all the Gods of Olympus, If it so be that Zeus may grant us deeds of requital. As for myself, I will go to the place of assembly, to summon One whom I brought as my guest when sailing hither from Pylos. Him did I send with my comrades, requesting Peiræus to bring him Into his house, and there, by all the means in his power, Honour and entertain him till I should again be returning."

These were the words he spoke, and they did not flutter unheeded: But, having taken a bath, and changed her garments, she promised Hecatombs in full tale to all the Gods of Olympus, If it were so that Zeus should accomplish deeds of requital. Then, with his spear in hand, Telemachus strode through the doorway, Also, close at his heels, two swift dogs followed to guard him. Over him, godlike grace was shed by Pallas Athéné: And, on him, every eye was fastened as he came forward.
Also there gathered around him those men overbearing and lawless,
Speaking in courteous phrase, while their hearts were brooding on evil.
But, before long, he withdrew to a place less crowded and noisy,
Taking a seat near Mentor and Antiphus and Alitherses,
And, as he told them his news, he saw Peirēús approaching,
Leading his guest through the streets to come to the place of assembly.
Promptly Telemachus turned, and stood before them in welcome:
But 'twas Peirēús who first thus spoke to the son of Odysseus:
"Will you not send your maids, Telemachus, quickly as maybe,
Unto my house to fetch the presents of King Meneläus?"
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Why, I can hardly tell, Peirēús, how this may be managed. Should these outrageous men be able to kill me in secret
In my own hall, and share my ancestral possessions between them,
I should prefer that you, or one of my comrades, should keep and Use these things for yourself: but if I chance to be victor,
Then you will cheerfully bring them to me, and I gladly receive them."
Thus having spoken, he led the travel-worn guest to his palace:
And, when they came to the buildings that stood so fair and so pleasant,
First they bade rugs of wool to be spread on the chairs and the couches,
Then did they go to the baths, and bathed in luxurious comfort. And, when the servants had washed and with oil had anointed their bodies,
Clothed them in tunics and thrown soft woollen shawls on their shoulders,
Forth from the baths they went, and took their seats on the benches. Then did a serving maid bring a handwash of sparkling water,
Poured from a golden ewer in a beautiful basin of silver, That they might wash their hands: and she spread a table beside them:
And the staid housekeeper dame brought bread and set it before them,
Doing the best that she could from the stores she had in the larder.
Also Penelopé came, and reclined on a couch by the roof-post
Facing her son, the while she was daintily twirling a distaff. Then were all hands stretched out to the good things spread on the tables.

But, when at last their desire of drinking and eating was sated, Prudent Penelope then was the first to begin conversation:

"Well, I will go to my chamber, Telemachus, since you desire it, there to lie down on my bed on which I have sobbed so often, and have bedewed it with tears each night from the time that Odysseus Sailed unto Troy in the train of the brothers Atreidæ: Nor did you think it worth while to tell me, before we met with the suitors, if you were able to hear any news of your father returning."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:

"Mother dear, have no fear: I will tell you truly of all things. First did we go to Pylos, to Nestor, the shepherd of peoples: Where, in his lofty castle, he made me right heartily welcome: And, as a father might welcome a son who had lately returned from a long sojourn abroad, just such was the greeting he gave me, he, and his glorious sons who dwell with the chieftain their father. But, not a word, so he said, had he heard from the men he had met with As to my father Odysseus, if still he lived or had perished. But, in a smartly-built car, with a good pair of horses, he sent me off to the son of Atreus, the spear-renowned Menelæus. And it was there that I saw the Argive Helen, for whose sake Greeks and Trojans endured uncounted labours and hardships. And he enquired at once, that trusty friend Menelæus, What was the reason for which I had come to divine Lacedæmon: And, in reply, I told him, without any fraud or concealment. And, having heard my tale, he spoke thus kindly in answer:

"Sure, 'tis a stout-hearted man in whose bed these cowardly schemers Thought they were going to lie: 'tis as if a poor silly hind should Lay down her suckling fawns in the lair of the king of the forest, While she goes forth to search the foot-hills and grass-covered hollows, Pasturing: but, ere long, to his lair the lion returning, Whelms in a terrible death both hind and sucklings together: So, in a terrible death, these men shall be whelmed by Odysseus. Would that, O Father Zeus, and Apollo and Pallas Athené, Noble Odysseus might come and engage in fight with the suitors"
Such as he was when once, in the fair-built city of Lesbos,
Taking his stand in the ring, he wrestled a match with Patroclus,
Throwing him heavily there, while all the Achæans applauded:
Then would they all have the shortest of shrift and a wedding
most bitter.
But, as to what you ask, and beg me to tell you, I would not
Give you untrustworthy news, nor will I try to mislead you:
But, what the old Sea-God who never speaks falsely did tell me,
That will I tell to you, nought hiding and nothing inventing.
For he declared he had seen him in bitter grief on an island,
Kept in the halls of Calypso the Nymph, who forcibly holds him:
Nor is he able to find any means to return to his homeland,
Seeing no galleys with oars are at hand, nor capable seamen
Who may escort him safely across the broad back of the ocean.'
Thus said the son of Atreus, the spear-renowned Meneláus.
So, having finished my work, I returned: and the Powers immortal
Gave me a favouring breeze and brought me safe to my home-
land."
Thus did he speak: and her heart was warmed with hope at
his saying.
Then Theoclymenus put in a word, and spoke to the others:
"Honoured lady, the wife of Odysseus, son of Laërtes,
I can assure you that much has occurred which your son does
not know of:
For 'tis the simple truth I will tell, and will not conceal it.
Hear me, O Zeus, the first of the Gods, and this table of welcome;
Also this sacred hearth of Odysseus by which I am seated,
When I declare that already Odysseus is here in his homeland:
Sitting, or creeping by stealth, he is searching out the misdoings
Wrought by these suitor men, and preparing for all of them
slaughter:
Which was the meaning of that lone bird which I noticed, and
pointed
Out to Telemachus, while we two were aboard of his galley."
And, unto him in reply the prudent Penelope answered:
"Sir, 'tis indeed my hope that your words may come to fulfilment:
Then you would soon receive from my hands such proof of our
friendship
That any one whom you met would congratulate you on your
fortune."
So, in such words as these, the three were talking together:
But, on the levelled court, in front of the hall of Odysseus,
All this time the suitors, in insolent manner, were sporting,
Keeping themselves amused with discus and javelin throwing.
But when the supper time came, and the sheep returned to the homestead,
Out of the fields, in the care of men for that purpose appointed,
Then came Medon, and spoke: for he, of all of the stewards,
Pleased them the best, and always presided over their banquets:
“Gentlemen, if you have now had as much as you wish of athletics,
Come to the house, that we others may get you ready a banquet:
For 'tis a very good habit to dine at the regular hour.”
Thus did he speak: and they all rose up and went at the summons.
But, when they came to the house that looked so pleasant and cheerful,
Then did they spread out plaid upon the seats and the benches:
Some of them slaughtered fine large sheep and goats well fattened:
Porkers too did they kill, and a bullock fresh from the meadow,
All for their feast. But Odysseus, the while, and Eumæus the swineherd
Were in a hurry to leave the country and go to the city.
First of the two to speak was that leader of men, the swineherd:
“Since it appears, O stranger, you want to be off to the city
This very day, as was ordered by my young master—though I would
Rather have left you behind to keep an eye on the homestead,
But that I fear to neglect his commands in case he should chide me
Afterwards: for the reproofs of masters are hard to put up with—
Come now, let us be off: for already the day is declining,
And, very likely, 'twill come on cold as the evening approaches.”
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
“I understand your meaning: a hint is all that is needed.
So let us start at once: and you shall show me the way there.
And, if you have a good stout stick that is handy to lean on,
Give it to me: for they say there 's a terribly slippery doorstep.”
Thus did he speak, and he slung his dirty old bag o'er his shoulder,
Tattered and torn: and a piece of cord was all that it hung by:
And, when Eumæus had brought him a stick he could handle
with comfort,
They two went on their way, and left the dogs and the herdsman
Guarding the farm: and Eumæus conducted his lord to the city,
Like to a poor old man, in garments ragged and filthy,
Leaning upon a stick: a wretched object to look at.
But when, tramping along the rugged path on the hillside,
They had come near the town, and had reached the fair-flowing

Filling a basin of stone (this Ithacus made, and Polyktor,
Neritus too) from whence the townsfolk carried their water.
And, in a circle around, were poplars that throve in the moisture:
While, from the rock above, ice-cold the water was trickling.
Here had an altar been built to the Nymphs: and wayfaring

people
Passing that way would perform the accustomed rites in their
honour.
There, as it happened, Melantheus the son of Dolius met them,
Driving some fatted goats, the pick of the flocks of his master:
These for the suitors to eat: and two of his herdsman were
with him:
And, when he saw those others, he curtly accosted them, shouting
Shameful outrageous words, which roused Odysseus to anger:
"Here's a pretty plain case of a bad one leading a bad one:
Birds of a feather, I see, are sure to be flocking together.
Swineherd, you wretched fool, will you tell me where you are
taking
This old filthy beggar, to spoil the feasts of the gentry?
He'll only stand and rub his dirty back on the door-posts:
All that he wants is the scraps, not weapons or works of
Hephaestus.
If you should give him to me as a man to attend to the hovels,
Clean out the byres, or carry a branch for the kids to run after,
He would but drink the whey and become as fat as a porker.
But, as it's clear he has learnt bad habits by this time, he will not
Do any work, but instead go cringing about the country
Asking for alms, that so he may fill his insatiate belly.
But I will tell you, if ever he goes to the house of Odysseus,
They'll throw things at his head, and there'll be many a footstool
Broken against his ribs, if so be his head does not shield him."
So did he speak, and in passing, through insolent folly and madness,
Gave him a kick on the rump: but with never a stagger, Odysseus
Kept in the path: though he doubted within himself for a moment
Whether to take his stick and beat the life from his body,
Or pick him up in his arms and dash his head on the pathway.
But he restrained his wrath, and was silent: the swineherd,
however,
Chode the man to his face, and prayed with his hands uplifted:
"Nymphs of the fountain, ye daughters of Zeus, if ever
Duly has burnt in your honour the thighs of kids or of lambkins
Wrapped in their fat, I pray you to grant this prayer that I offer:
Grant he may come back safe, and the Powers of Heaven pre-
serve him:
Then would he scatter like chaff, O goatherd, your swagger and
boasting:
For that is all the work that you do, as you lounge in the city,
Leaving your flocks to die in the charge of incapable herdsmen."
And, in reply, thus spoke Melanthius, chief of the goatherds:
"Here is an impudent dog! What 's this the fellow is saying?
Whom I will take, some day, in a ship well-benchéd and speedy,
Somewhere to foreign parts, and sell at a thundering profit.
If I were only as sure that Apollo would with his arrows
Strike Telemachus dead, or else that the suitors would kill him,
As I am sure that Odysseus will never come back to his home-
land."
And, with these words, he left them (while they two leisurely followed)
And, as he walked on fast, soon came to the house of his chieftain.
Straightway he entered the door and took his seat with the suitors
Facing Eurymachus, since 'twas with him he was specially friendly.
Therefore the serving men brought meat for his use on a platter:
And the staid housekeeper dame set bread on a table beside him:
Then, in a little while, Odysseus arrived with the swineherd:
Who, as they stood at the door, were aware of the sound of a lyre:
For, at that time, the bard was beginning to sing to the feasters. But, taking hold of his hand, Odysseus spoke to the swineherd:

"Truly, Eumæus, this house of Odysseus is splendid to look at, quite unlike any other: there would be no chance to mistake it: Buildings rise upon buildings: and even the courtyard is furnished
With a high corniced wall and close-fitting gates to protect it. 'Twould be a difficult place for a well-armed man to break into. And I perceive that a number of men are having a banquet Now in the house, for I smell roast meat: and somebody too is Playing the lyre, which Gods have devised as queen of the banquet."

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:

"Ah, so you noticed that: you are fairly quick-witted in most things. But come now, let us think how best to manage the business. Either you go in first, to these buildings pleasant and cheerful, Taking your place with the suitors while I wait here by the doorway,
Or, if you like, stay here, and I will see how the land lies. Do not be long however, lest anyone seeing you loiter Outside the door, should strike you: now bear in mind what I tell you."

And, in reply, thus spoke the divine much-enduring Odysseus:

"I see well what you mean: a hint is all that is needed. So do you go on first, and I will remain at the entrance. Many a time, ere now, have I been pelted or beaten, But I have learned to endure, because many things have I suffered
Both on the sea and in war: and one trial more is no matter. Yet I can never succeed in repressing this ravenous belly — Bad luck to it—which brings upon men all kinds of misfortune: 'Tis for the belly's sake they fit out vessels and sail forth Over the barren sea, to raid on enemies' countries."

Now, in such words as these, the two were talking together. But old Argus the hound, who lay by the side of the doorway, Pricked up his ears and raised his head: Odysseus had reared him,

Reared and trained him himself, but before he could use him for hunting,
He had gone off to Troy, and young men long ago used him
When they were chasing the hare or the mountain goat or the
roebuck:
Now that his master was gone, he lay neglected and outcast
All in the dung of mules and oxen, which lay about thickly
Heaped in front of the gates, until such time as the house slaves
Carried it off in carts to manure the big field of Odysseus.
There did the old hound lie, neglected and covered with vermin.
But, at that moment, so soon as he saw Odysseus before him,
Feebly he wagged his tail, and laid back his ears in welcome,
As for Odysseus, he turned, and wiping a tear from his eyelid,
"'Tis very strange that they leave this dog to lie on a dung-heap.
He is a good-looking dog: but this I should like you to tell me,
If he was swift to run as well as handsome to look at,
Or of the useless kind, as dogs that are fed from the table
Quickly become, which are kept for nothing but show by their masters?"
And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:
"'Tis a true sportsman's dog: though his master has died
among strangers.
If he were only the same, to-day, in his body and powers
As when Odysseus left him and sailed to fight with the Trojans,
Soon would you see with your eyes the proof of his courage
and swiftness:
For he would never turn back from any wild beast he was chasing,
E'en in the thickest wood: and he knew one trail from another.
But he is fallen on evil times: for his master has perished
Far from his home and friends: and the maids never trouble
about him.
For 'tis the way with servants, so soon as their masters are
absent:
They will no longer perform the service that duty requires:
Seeing that Zeus has deprived a man of half of his virtue,
When, by his stern decree, the day of bondage o'ertakes him."
Then did he enter the building so pleasant and fair to inhabit,
And he made straight for the hall, to join the swaggering suitors.
But, upon Argus, fell forthwith the hour of darkness,
When, in the twentieth year, he had seen his master Odysseus.

Long before anyone else, Telemachus noticed the swineherd
As he came into the hall; and beckoned to him: and Eumæus,
Spying a bench (where the carver was wont to lay out the slices
When he was dealing round their portions of meat to the suitors)
Brought it, and set it down to serve as a table in front of
Godlike Telemachus: there did he also sit down: and the steward
Brought him a helping of meat, and bread from out of a basket.

And then, following close, Odysseus entered the palace,
Looking, for all the world, like some poor wretched old beggar,
Leaning upon his staff, and clad in filthiest garments.

And he sat down on the ash-wood floor inside of the doorway,
Resting his back on a post of cypress wood which the builder
Once had artfully planed and shaped it true with the "T" square.
But, when he saw him there, Telemachus called to the swineherd,
Taking a whole good loaf of bread from the basket beside him,
Also some meat as well, a large double-handful of victuals:

"Give this food to the stranger, and tell him to go to the
suitors
Making the round of them all, and begging from each one a trifle;
For that it ill becomes a man in need to be bashful."

Thus did he speak: and at once the swineherd went at his
bidding,
And, in a few quick words, 'twas thus he spoke to Odysseus:

"Stranger, Telemachus sends this food which I carry, and
bids you,
Making the round of the suitors, to ask from each one a trifle;
For that it ill becomes a beggar man to be bashful."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Grant, I beseech, king Zeus, to Telemachus, honour and
blessing,
And do thou bring to pass whatever his heart may desire."

Then, with both hands, he took the gift of food from the
swineherd,
Laying it down on the ground, on top of his shabby old wallet:
And, like a hungry man, he ate while the bard was a-singing:
Nor, till the bard had finished his song, had he finished his
supper.

Now, with the riotous noise of the suitors, the hall was re-
sounding.
But, coming close to Odysseus, Athéné stood, and she bade him
go to the suitors and beg, from each one, morsels of victual:
Thus should he recognize those who had conscience and those
who were lawless:
But, even so, as it happened, not one escaped from his vengeance.
So, in the lucky direction, he made the round of the suitors,
holding his hand to each, like one well practised in begging.
And they admired the man, and gave to him freely from pity,
Wondering who he might be, and what was the place he had
come from.
Then did Melanthius rise, and spoke to the company present:
"Listen to me, good sirs, who are courting the queen whom
we honour,
As to this stranger here: for myself have seen him before this:
And 'twas Eumæus the swineherd who brought him in to the
banquet:
But I don't rightly know what nation he claims to belong to."
Then did Antinoës turn, and roughly spoke to the swineherd:
"Just like you, O swineherd: what made you bring to the city
Such an old fellow as this? As if we had not already
Plenty of wandering beggars to spoil the fun of our banquets.
How can you find any fault if beggars in crowds should collect
here
Eating the food of your master? For you were the person who
brought him."
And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:
"Sir, for a man of your rank, the things that you say are unworthy.
Nowadays, never a man, though himself a guest in a household,
Thinks of inviting another unless he be specially skilful,
Teller of fortunes perhaps, or physician, or hewer of roof-beams,
Or, it may be, a bard, who divinely can sing for his pleasure:
For that such persons as these find welcome wherever they
wander:
But never one will invite poor men to share in his dainties.
And, of the whole of the suitors, you ever have been the harshest
Unto the household slaves of Odysseus, and me more than others:
Yet it is nothing to me, so long as my mistress is living
Safe in her halls, and with her, the godlike Telemachus also."
Then did Télemachus turn, and thus he spoke to Eumæus:
"Silence, it is not fit you should bandy words with his honour:
But it was ever the way of Antinoiüs here to make use of
Harsh and bitter reproach, and encourage others to do so."

Then, to Antinoiüs turning, he spoke on the spur of the
moment:

"Sir, you're concerned for my good in a truly fatherly fashion,
Bidding me drive from my door without compassion or pity
This poor stranger before us: but God forbid I should do so.
Give him whatever you will: I grudge it not, but command it.
And it's no business of yours what my mother may think, or
the servants
Whosoever they be, who live in the house of Odysseus.
But, such a kindly thought, I'm sure, you never have harboured,
For you like better to eat your fill than to give to another."

And, unto him in reply, thus rudely Antinoiüs answered:
"You're a most powerful speaker, no doubt: but it's well to be
careful:
For, if each one of the suitors should give him as much as you
order,
He would be here for the next three months as a guest in your
household."

So did he speak, and drew from under the table a footstool
Where he would rest his feet when he sat at his ease at a banquet:
But all the others gave something, and soon they filled up his
wallet
Both with bread and with meat. But Odysseus, in act of return-
ing
Unto his place by the door to taste the gifts of the suitors,
Suddenly came to a stand by Antinoiüs' side, and addressed him:
"Give, my friend, for you seem to me very far from the meanest
Of the Achæans, but rather to be like a king in your bearing:
Therefore you ought to give with more liberal hand than the
others:
And, through the length and breadth of the earth, I will tell of
your bounty.
For I, too, in my time, was a prosperous man 'mid my neighbours,
Lived in a house of my own, and often gave to a beggar
Such as you see me now, whatever his sort or his business.
And I had thousands of servants and other things in abundance
Proper to wealthy men who live in comfort and splendour.
But Zeus drained me of all: 'twas his good pleasure to do so:
For he put this in my mind, to make a voyage into Egypt
Taking a crew of pirates: and that became my undoing.
So, in the River of Egypt, I moored my oar-driven galleys.
There I gave strict injunctions to all my trusty companions
That they should stay where they were by the ships, and keep
them in safety:
Also I posted sentries on various points of advantage:
But, like undisciplined men, presuming too much on their
power,
Soon they began to ravage the fields so carefully tended
By the Egyptians, and also they carried off some of their women,
Killing the men: and soon the alarm had reached to the city:
And, at the summons, the natives came, when daylight was
breaking:
And the whole plain around was full of footmen and horsemen
And of the gleam of bronze. And Zeus who delights in the
thunder
Struck with unseemly panic the hearts of my comrades: and no
one
Dared to stand up to his foe: for disaster faced us on all sides.
And, at that time, full many a man was slain with the sword
point:
Others were carried away to work as slaves by compulsion.
As for myself, they gave me away to a friend of their nation,
Dmetor, Tásus' son, who with strong hand ruled over Cyprus.
Thence, after many a trial, I escaped, and have come to this
island."

And, in reply to his words, thus roughly Antinoüs answered:
"'Twas some devil that brought you here to spoil our banquets.
Stand out there in the middle, and keep away from my table
Or you will find this place no better than Egypt or Cyprus:
For, such a shameless rogue 'twas never my lot to set eyes on,
Pestering each one in turn: and every one that you come to
Gives without thought like a fool: and they feel no restraint or
compunction
Over another man's goods: for each has more than is needed."

And, as he turned away, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Merciful Heaven! how sorely your mind belies your appear-
ance.
Never a grain of salt would you give to a beggar although you
Sit at another man’s board: and you will not of common good
nature
Hand me a piece of bread, from the heap that lies on the table.”
Thus did he speak: and his words excited the other to fury,
And, with a savage scowl, he broke into hasty invective:
“Now, as I fancy, you’ve lost your chance, old fellow, of getting
Safely away from the house, since you come to deal in re-
proaches.”

Stooping, he picked up the stool and threw it hard at Odysseus,
Striking his shoulder-blade on the right hand side: but the other
Stood like a rock, nor staggered the least at Antinoüs’ missile,
But, without speaking, he shook his head and brooded on ven-
geance.

Then he went back to the platform, sat down and laid down
his wallet
Crammed with food, and thus did he speak to the company
present:

“Listen to me, good sirs, who are courting the queen whom
we honour,
While I shall venture to speak as the heart in my bosom com-
dands me.
There is no reason to feel any grief or sorrow if ever
One should receive a wound in fighting to guard his possessions,
Whether it be for his oxen or white sheep dotting the pastures.
But it was all on account of my belly that this man has struck me,
Plague on it, for ’tis the cause of many an evil to mortals.
But, if there be any Gods who avenge the cause of the poor man,
Then may Antinoüs die or ever he come to be married.”

And, in reply, thus spoke Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes:
“Sit down there and be quiet, O stranger, or else leave the palace,
Lest the young men, for your talking, should drag you out of
the doorway
Either by hands or feet, and scrape the skin from your body.”

So did he speak: but the others were all indignant and angry:
And, here and there, some men would make so bold as to chide
him:
“This was ill done, my comrade, to strike an unfortunate
vagrant,
Since, if there be a God keeps watch over men in the heavens,
It will go hard with you: for Gods come oft to our cities
Under the guise, may be, of pilgrims and strangers, and notice
Every deed that is done by men, whether lawless or righteous."
Thus did the suitors speak: but he took no heed of their
counsel:
But, in Telemachus' heart, there surged a tempest of anger,
Seeing his father struck: yet he shed no tears from his eyelids,
But, without speaking, he shook his head, and brooded on
vengeance.
Now, when Penelopé heard that the poor old stranger had
thus been
Shamefully struck in the hall, she said, with her maidens around
her:
"Would that Apollo would strike thee too, thou murderous
villain."
Then did the housekeeper dame, Eurynomé, answer her mistress:
"Madam, if all our prayers could have their proper fulfil-
ment,
There is not one of these gentry would see the sunrise to-
morrow."
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelopé answered:
"Nurse dear, I hate them all, because they are plotters of evil:
But 'tis Antinoüs chiefly who seems black Murder in person.
Here an unfortunate stranger comes wandering into our palace,
Asking the gentry for alms, for poverty drives him to do so:
Then, while the others were kindly, and filled his wallet with
victuals,
This one alone has wounded the man in the back with a foot-
stool."
Now, as she sat in her chamber amongst her women attendants,
Thus she was talking: the while that Odysseus was eating his
supper.
Then did Penelopé call to the swineherd and give him her orders:
"Hither, my good Eumæus, go straight to the stranger and
bid him
Come to me here, that so I may give him a welcome and ask him
If he has seen with his eyes, or heard any news of Odysseus,
Him who has suffered so much: for he looks like a man who has
travelled."
And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus:
"Gladly, O queen, will I do it, if but the Achæans allow me:
Since, with the talk of this man, your heart would be soothed and delighted:
For he has been my guest three nights and days in my cottage,
Having escaped from a ship: and I was the first man he met with.
But not yet has he finished the tale of the things he has suffered:
And 'tis as if one gazed on the face of some heaven-born minstrel
Taught by the Gods such words as excite the longing of mortals:
And, as he sings, men feel they could sit and listen for ever:
So, as he sat by my side in my cottage, he fairly bewitched me.
And he professes to be an ancestral friend of Odysseus,
Native of Crete, the land where dwell the descendants of Minos.
And it is thence that now he has come after many adventures,
Rolling stone that he is, to this isle: and he stoutly maintains that
He has had news of Odysseus amongst the Thesprotian people,
Living and well: and, moreover, he brings much treasure and costly.

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Go, call him hither to me, to tell me his story in person.
But let these gentlemen sit outside, and play at backgammon,
Or each one in his home, if that is more to their liking:
For they have plenty of food in their houses lying untasted,
Bread and strong sweet wine, or only consumed by the servants:
Yet they will, day after day, come flocking into our palace,
Slaughtering oxen and sheep and fatted goats for their banquets,
Drinking the best of our wine in reckless profusion: but most things
Are only wasted and spoilt: for no one is left in our home now
Such as Odysseus was, to ward the curse from our household.
But, if himself should come, and reach the land of his fathers,
Quickly, with help of his son, will he punish these men for their outrage."

So did she speak: and it chanced that Telemachus, that very instant,
Sneezed till the house did ring: and Penelope laughed at the omen,
And, on the spur of the moment, she hastily spoke to Eumæus:
"Go, I say, and call this stranger into my presence.
Did you not hear how Telemachus sneezed at what we were saying?
Therefore the destined fate shall certainly fall on the suitors..."
For not a single man shall escape from death and destruction. But there is something else I will tell you: and do not forget it: If I shall find that his tale is true in every detail, I will array him in cloak and in tunic, and both of the finest.”

Thus did she speak: and at once, the swineherd went at her bidding, Stood by the stranger’s side, and with wingéd words he addressed him: “Honoured stranger, my mistress, Telemachus’ mother, has sent me, Saying, she wishes to ask you some questions concerning her husband, Though it may cause her pain. And, if you answer her truly, she will provide you with cloak and tunic you sorely are needing. Then you can beg for bread in the streets of the city, and people Who may be kindly disposed will give and keep you from hunger.”

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke much-enduring Odysseus: “I am quite ready, Eumaeus, to tell to Icarius’ daughter, Prudent Penelopé, all that she wishes to hear of her husband, Seeing I knew him well: for we bore many hardships together. But I am somewhat afraid to be mixed in the crowd of the suitors: For, when the man who was nearest had dealt me a blow with a footstool, As I was quietly walking, and interfering with no one, Neither Telemachus came to my aid, nor ever another. Therefore, I beg you, advise your mistress, however impatient, That she should wait in her room until the hour of sunset. Then she can sit at my side, in front of the fire, and ask me All that she pleases about her husband: for I and you also Know that my garments are wretched: for you were the first one who saw them.”

Then did Eumæus go to report these words to his mistress. And, as he entered the door, Penelopé thus did address him: “Have you not brought him, Eumæus? Of what can the stranger be thinking? Is he afraid to be hurt by some lawless man, or in some way Not at his ease in the house? A beggar must never be bashful.”

And, in reply, you thus did speak, O swineherd Eumæus: “He talks quite in a sensible way, as any one else might, Fearing such folk as these might chance to do him a mischief:
But he requests you to wait until the hour of sunset. And, for yourself, O queen, I think it were certainly better That you should see him alone, and hear what news he may bring you."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered: "Let that be as it may: there is much good sense in the stranger: For I have never yet seen such men as these who are quartered Here in our house, and plotting their deeds of crime and of outrage."

Thus was she talking: but he, the grand old swineherd, retired Unto the crowd of suitors, his message fully delivered: And, in Telemachus' ear, he spoke a word as he passed him, Holding his head quite close, that he might not be heard by the others:

"Master dear, I must be off to see to the swine and the homestead, Which are your living and mine: but things here you must attend to. But, above all, take care of yourself, and be on the watch lest Any ill chance should befall you: for many are wishing you evil, And I pray Zeus may destroy them before they are able to hurt us."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "So shall it be, my Daddy: but stay where you are for the evening, And, in the morning, go home, and bring back a well-fatted victim. I, with the help of Immortals, will do whatever is needful."

So did he speak: and the other sat down once more on the settle Whence he had risen, and then, having eaten and drunk to his pleasure, Went to look after the swine and left the hall and enclosures Thronged with the feasters, who then were seeking amusement in dancing And in the song: for already the shadows of evening had fallen.
NOW, there arrived ere long a notorious vagrant who often
Begged in the Ithacan town: and as for eating and drinking
'Twould not be easy to match him: but, spite of his gorging, he
had not
Any great courage or strength, though a big stout fellow to look at.
Rightly, his name was Arnaeus: his mother, respectable woman,
Gave him that name at his birth: but the lads all knew him as
Irus,
Since he would run on an errand for such as would give him a
trifle:
And, soon as ever he came, he would dog the steps of Odysseus,
Trying to drive him away, and at last he began to revile him:
"Get from the porch, old man, before you are dragged feet
foremost.
Don't you perceive how the guests are tipping the wink to bid me
Drag you out by the heels? though I'll give you a chance to
avoid it.
Come, if you don't get out, our fists must settle the matter."
But, him sternly regarding, thus answered resourceful
Odysseus:
"Man, I am doing no harm, nor am I complaining against you,
Nor do I grudge you your alms, though you seem to do well
by your begging.
But there is room for us both: and you need not envy a stranger
In a big house like this: for you, I think, are a vagrant
Just like myself: and to such the Gods are wont to be gracious.
Better not urge me to fight, for fear that at last you provoke me,
And, old man though I be, I should drive you out of the doorway
Streaming with blood from your mouth: and we all should en-
joy on the morrow
Much more quiet and peace: because it is very unlikely
You will come back to the house of Odysseus, son of Laërtes."
And, unto him in a rage, thus called out Irus the vagrant:
"Listen to him! how glibly this gluttonous rogue is a-railing
Like an old stoker wife: but see how I'll settle his business,
Hitting him right and left till he spits his teeth by the dozen
Out of his mouth like a sow that's routing about in the cornfields.
Now then, buckle your skirts, that people may see we are fighting:
Though you have mighty poor chance with a man much younger
than you are."

Thus these two, in front of the lofty gates of the palace,
With their insulting words, were provoking each other to fury.
But the sharp eyes of the prince Antinoüs quickly observed them:
And, with a chuckle, he called to the suitors gathered around him:
"Here is a piece of luck, my friends, that the Powers have
sent us:
For we are going to have such sport as we never have witnessed.
Irus here and the stranger are pledged to fight one another,
And to a finish, with fists: we soon will set them to business."

So did he speak: and, laughing, they all jumped up from the
benches,
Forming a ring around the pair of unsavoury beggars.
Then did Eupeithes' son, Antinoüs, speak to his comrades:
"Listen to me, proud suitors, I have a proposal to make you.
Here are some paunches of goats, on the fire, which lately we
set there,
Stuffed with fat and with blood, as a dainty dish for our supper:
And I propose that, whichever of these two men is the winner,
He shall pick out for himself any one of the lot that he chooses:
And he shall take his meals in the hall with us: and we will not
Let any other man in to go a-begging amongst us."

Thus did Antinoüs speak: and they all were pleased at his
saying:
Yet, being wary, Odysseus thus spoke to the suitors around him:
"My good friends, a man that is old and wasted with hardships
Hasn't much chance of winning a fight against one that is
younger:
But 'tis this cursed belly that drives me to get myself beaten.
Come, will you all now swear, with a mighty oath, that you will
not,
That not a man of you will, to give advantage to Irus,
Strike me unfairly, and so I be overpowered by numbers?"

Thus did he speak: and they all made promise by oath as
he bade them.
But when the oath was sworn, and confirmed with proper observance,
Then did the sacred might of Telemachus speak 'mid the suitors:
"If so be, friend stranger, your heart and your spirit of manhood
Bid you to fight this man, be sure that none other shall strike you
Of the Achaeans here: for myself will take part in the quarrel.
I, in this place, am host: and Antinoüs also approves me,
Likewise Eurymachus, princes both, and men of discretion."
These were his words: and they said 'twas but right and fair:
so Odysseus
Girt himself round with his rags, and displayed to those who were present,
His great well-formed thighs and his chest and his massive shoulders
And his stout powerful arms: and Athené, standing beside him,
Filled out and strengthened the limbs of Odysseus, the shepherd of peoples,
Making the crowd of the suitors to gaze in unmeasured amazement:
And you might hear one say, with a sidelong glance at his neighbour:
"Irus! there won't be much of Irus left in a minute,
If one may judge from the thigh which peeps from the old man's tunic."
Thus did they talk: but the heart of Irus was quaking with terror.
Yet the attendants did gird him, and drag him scared and reluctant
Into the ring, although his limbs were all of a tremble.
But, with a name of contempt, Antinoüs spoke and reproached him:
"Now may you live no longer, Bull-boaster, but perish for ever,
Since you are trembling thus, and are so deadly afraid of
This old man bowed down with all his sorrows and hardships.
But I will tell you plainly, and 'twill not fail of fulfilment:
If this man shall beat you, and prove that he is the better,
I will soon pack you off, on board of a ship, to the mainland
Where King Echetus dwells, the scourge and tormentor of mortals."
He will cut off your nose and ears with the pitiless hatchet."

And, at his words, the other did quake still more: but they dragged him into the ring: and the two, with hands up, faced one another. Then did he ponder a moment, divine much-enduring Odysseus, whether it would be best to strike him dead in an instant, or, with a gentler blow, to stretch him at length on the pavement. And, when he thought it over, it seemed more prudent to strike him gently, for fear the Achæans might recognize him by his prowess.

So they squared up: and Irus got in a blow on the shoulder, but his opponent countered beneath the ear, and he crushed in muscle and bone: and out of his mouth the red blood spouted: screaming he fell in the dust, and clashing his teeth, and wildly kicking the ground with his feet. But all the swaggering suitors held up their hands and laughed to split their sides: but Odysseus dragged him out by his feet, right through the porch and the courtyard, and to the cloister gate: and, against the wall of the courtyard, set him and propped him up, and put in his hands his cudgel, and, ere he went, he spoke, and with careless words he addressed him:

"Sit there now, and keep off the pigs and the dogs as you best may, and never try any more to lord it o'er strangers and beggars, cur that you are, for fear that a still worse fate should o'ertake you."

Thus did he speak, and slung his dirty old bag o'er his shoulders, tattered and torn, and with nought but a piece of cord to depend on. So he went back to the platform, and down he sat: but the others came in merrily laughing, and gave him a boisterous welcome:

"May Zeus give you, O Stranger, and all the other Immortals, that which you most desire and what you chiefly delight in, since you have stopped this greedy rogue from begging amongst us:

For it will not be long, ere we send him off to the mainland."
Where King Echetus dwells, the scourge and tormentor of mortals."
So did they speak: and Odysseus at hearing the omen was joyful.
Then did Antinoüs set at his side, as he promised, a goat's paunch
Stuffed with fat and with blood: and Amphinomus took from a basket
Two whole loaves of bread, and civilly laid them beside him,
And, from a golden cup, he drank to his health, and saluted:
"Here's to your health, Sir Guest. Good fortune be with you henceforward:
Though it appears just now that a host of troubles beset you."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"You, Amphinomus, seem, to my mind, a man of discretion,
As was your father before you: because Dulichian Nisus
Always was well reported as being both rich and courageous:
And I can easily see you inherit his courteous manners.
Therefore I give you a hint: and take it as kindly intended:
Of all creatures that breathe or crawl on this earth we inhabit,
None is more silly than man: for he never provides against evil
While that his limbs are strong, and the Gods give him courage and manhood:
But, if the time should come that the Gods bring trouble upon him,
All he can do is to bear it, with what good grace he is able.
Such is the habit of mind which the Father of Gods and of mortals,
Deep in the heart of man, the wide world over, has planted.
Yes, for I too, some time, bid fair to be happy and wealthy,
And, on my power presuming, committed many an outrage:
For I relied on my father and brothers to back me in all things.
Therefore let each beware that he be not utterly lawless,
But let him hold without boasting the things which the Gods may have given.
Witness the violent deeds these suitors are always devising,
Wasting a man's possessions and treating his wife with dishonour.
But, I assure you, his friends ere long will see him returning,
For he is quite close now. And I pray the Power who guards us,
Bring you in safety home, to avoid that terrible meeting
When he shall come once more, and visit the land of his fathers.
For, as I think, the dispute between that man and the suitors
Will not be closed without blood, when once he has entered his
castle."

Then did he make libation, and drained the cup to the bottom,
And he returned it again to the hands of this shepherd of peoples.
And, with a pang at his heart, the other one paced through the
palace
Shaking his head: for, already, his spirit foreboded misfortune.
Yet, he escaped not his fate: for Pallas Athené in vengeance
Doomed him to die by Telemachus’ hands and the thrust of his
spear-head.

So he went back to his seat on the chair from whence he had risen.
Now, with her watchful care, the grey-eyed Goddess Athené
Put the idea in the mind of Penelope, pearl of discretion,
That she should show herself to the suitors, and clearly discover
What their intentions were, and so might earn the approval,
More than she ever had done, of her son and her husband
Odysseus.

And, with a mirthless laugh, she spoke to her woman in waiting:
"Something has put in my mind, Eurynomé, all of a sudden,
That I should show myself to the suitors, for all that I hate them,
And I will give a hint to my son, that 'tis better he should not
Be in the company, overmuch, of these arrogant people,
Seeing they speak him fair, but are plotting against him in secret."

Then did the housekeeper dame thus speak to her lady in
answer:
"All that you say, dear child, is wise and much to the purpose.
Go as you wish, and speak to your son without any concealment:
But first wash your face, and anoint your cheeks, that you may not
Go with your face all marred by tears (for 'tis ill to be weeping
Always) and think that now the Immortals have granted the
deepest
Wish of your heart, that your son might attain to the flower of
manhood."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Give me not bad advice, Eurynomé, e'en out of kindness,
Bidding me wash my face and freshen my cheeks with ointment:
For, when my lord set sail in his hollow ships, the Immortals,
Dwellers in lofty Olympus, destroyed my glory and beauty.
But send Autonoë here, I pray, and Hippodameia,
That they may stand by my side when I go to the hall: for I will not
Go by myself among men: for that, to my mind, is immodest."
So did she speak: and the dame went off at once through the palace,
Taking the word to the women, and bidding them come to their mistress.

Then did the grey-eyed Athéné still work for Penelope's comfort,
Shedding a gentle sleep on the eyes of Icarius' daughter:
So she lay back and slept, and her limbs were relaxed and restful. And, as she lay on the couch, the Divine one granted the blessings
Only the Gods can bestow, that the Greeks might behold her with wonder.
First she did clear from her face all traces of sorrow, with essence Of that immortal beauty which beams from fair Cythereia
When she goes forth to join in the rapturous dance of the Graces:
Taller in stature she seemed, and fuller in form, and her fair skin Smoother and whiter to see than ivory sawn by the craftsman.
Then, with her mission performed, the stately Goddess departed.
And thereupon there came the white-armed maiden attendants, All of them talking at once, and woke their mistress from slumber:
And she, rubbing her eyes, sat up and spoke to her maidens:
"Why, I had fallen asleep, and quite forgotten my troubles. Ah, what a joy it would be should holy Artemis grant me, This very moment, a death thus sweet and gentle, no longer Pining away in grief, and ever lamenting my husband, Virtuous hero and brave, far foremost amongst the Achæans."
Thus did she speak: and down, from her glistening chamber descended,
But not alone: for with her, there went two maidens in waiting:
And, when she came to the suitors, she stood, this pearl among women,
Close by a post which supported the massive weight of the roof-tree,
Holding, in front of her face, the flaps of her glistening head-dress:
And, with a watchful mien, on each side stood an attendant.
Then were the knees of the men in a tremble: for love had bewitched them:
And one and all were impatient to share the bed of the lady.
But, unto none did she speak, but her son Telemachus only:

"Greatly, my son, do I fear that your strength of mind and your judgement
Is not so sound as it was: for, when you were small, you would often
Think out difficult schemes: but, now you are grown into manhood,
And any stranger would say, when he saw your stature and beauty,
That 'twas a fortunate man who was blest with such promising offspring,
Where is the quickness of wit that you had, or sensible judgement?
Look at this dastardly deed which has just been wrought in our palace,
When you allowed our guest to be treated thus with dishonour.
How would you feel if a stranger, when seated here at our table, Met with some serious hurt from the roughness with which he was handled?
Shame and disgrace, be sure, would be your lot with your neighbours."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Mother, I do not resent your being thus angered against me: But I am well aware of all that is done in our palace,
Some of it good, some bad: though I was but a child until lately.
Yet it is sometimes hard to decide what course is the wisest:
Seeing these evil men who are always hanging around me Drive me out of my wits: nor can I find one to depend on.
But, you must know, this fight between the stranger and Irus Was not the suitors' fault: and the stranger, it proved, was the stronger.
And I could wish, O Father Zeus, and Apollo and Pallas, That I could see these suitors a-wagging their heads in our palace And in the courtyard, as men who are beaten and cowed and unable
Either to use their limbs or hold up their heads; as Irus Sits at the courtyard gates, and wags his head like a drunkard, Nor can he stand upright on his feet or make his way homeward, Wheresoever that be: for his wretched legs will not bear him."

So, in such words as these, the two were talking together. Then did Eurymachus speak to the queen, and thus he addressed her:
"Hear me, Icarius' daughter, Penelope, pearl of discretion,
Could all the sons of Achæans throughout Ionian Argos
See you as now you are, you would find in your halls, by to-
morrow,
Many more suitors a-feasting: because, both in beauty and
stature,
You are the first among women, still more in your dignified
calmness."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Sir, the immortal Gods have marred my form and my beauty
Even my strength of mind, since the time when the sons of
Achæans
Sailed in their ships for Troy, and amongst them my husband,
Odysseus.

But, if himself were to come, and share my life as beforetime,
That would be happier far, and much more glorious also.

But I am now in grief: for God has whelmed me in troubles.
Well I remember how, when he left the land of his fathers,
Taking my little right hand in his own, he spoke to me gravely:
'Dear wife, it is not likely that all the well-greaved Achæans
Safe will return from Troy without any kind of disaster:
For it is said these Trojans are brave and terrible fighters:
Well can they hurl the dart, and straight can they shoot with
the arrow:
Yes, and they're horsemen too: and horsemen it is that most
quickly
Turn the scale in a battle, when forces are evenly balanced.
Therefore I cannot tell whether Heaven will keep me in safety,
Or let me die in Troy. But all things here are in your charge.
Keep my father and mother at home, and treat them with
kindness,
As you do now, or more so, when I am not here to protect them.
But, soon as ever our son has attained to the season of manhood,
Then you are free to depart and marry whoever may please you.'
These were his words: and all is coming to pass as he said it.

Soon will the night be here when a hateful marriage will face me,
Sad unto me as death: for Zeus my joy has destroyéd.
But there is something else that troubles my mind and my spirit:
Never before was this the accepted custom of suitors:
Those who desire to woo a noble woman, the daughter
Of some wealthy man, and are vieing one with another,
Always are wont to bring fat sheep and oxen as gracious Feasts for their lady's friends, and to give her glorious presents, But do not quarter themselves in another man's house without payment."

Thus did she speak: and it pleased the divine much-enduring Odysseus
That, while she soothed their tempers with gentle words, she was drawing
Gifts from the suitors, although, in her heart, she had other intentions.

And, in reply, thus spoke Antinoïs, son of Eupeithes:
"Noble Icarius' daughter, Penelope, pearl of discretion,
Will you be pleased to accept the gifts of whatever Achæans
Wish to present them here? To refuse a gift is ungracious.
As for ourselves, we will neither go home nor budge from your palace,
Till you shall choose and wed whichever Achæan is noblest."

Thus did Antinoïs speak: and all approved his suggestion.

Then did each send, to his house, a steward to bring back his present:
And, to Antinoïs, brought they a great robe skilfully woven,
Broidered in colours, and furnished with buckles of gold to secure it:
Twelve were the buckles in all, with tongues of artful contrivance.
And to Eurymachus brought they a necklace of intricate pattern,
Golden, with amber beads, that shone like the sun in its brightness.
And two attendants brought for Eurydamas glittering earings,
Each with three gems, which shed a radiant beauty around them.
And, from the room of Peisander, the son of the chieftain Polyctor,
Brought they a collar, a triumph to see of the art of the goldsmith.
So, by each one of the Greeks was offered some beautiful present.

Then, with the mien of a goddess, she mounted the stair to her chamber,
Whither her maids did bring the presents and lay them before her.
As for the suitors, they turned to dance and song for amusement:
And, ere their songs were finished, the shades of evening had fallen.
Straightway they set three cressets to light up the hall, and they piled on
Wood that was dried in the oven and freshly split with the hatchet,
All very seasoned and dry, and mixed with it slithers of pitch pine.
Then, as the maids were about to set the cressets on fire,
One at a time, himself, Zeus-born resourceful Odysseus,
Spoke to the maids of his house, and thus he gave them his orders:
"Maids of the house of Odysseus your king, who so long has been absent,
Go to the dwelling rooms, and present yourselves to your mistress:
Sit by her side in her chamber, and keep her amused and cheerful,
While you are combing wool with your fingers or twirling the distaff.
I will myself take care that the lights are kept up for the gentry:
For, if they wish to remain till the golden Morning has risen,
They will not tire me out: because I am very enduring."
Thus did he speak: but they giggled, and looked aside at each other:
And, in an insolent manner, the rosy Melantho reproached him,
Daughter of Dolius she, whom Penelope specially favoured,
Pampered her like a child, and gave her all sorts of indulgence:
But, even so, no care did she have for Penelope's sorrow,
Nor did she think it shame to live as Eurymachus' mistress:
So, in insulting words, 'twas thus she spoke to Odysseus:
"Wretched stranger, I think you have got a bee in your bonnet:
Why won't you go to sleep all snug and warm in the smithy
Or in the common lounge, but stay with these gentlemen present
Making impertinent speeches as if you were lord of the castle?
Is it the wine that has got in your head, or is your behaviour
Always the same, and you talk this ridiculous folly from habit,
Or are you crazy because you have conquered Iris the beggar?
Likely a man may come very soon who is better than Iris,
Who, with his sturdy hands, will hit you over the head and
Drive you out of the house, while blood from your nostrils is streaming."
And, her sternly regarding, thus answered resourceful Odysseus:
"Hussy, I'll let Telemachus know the way you've been talking:
And there's no doubt but, limb by limb, he will cut you in pieces."
Thus, by his words and look, he thoroughly frightened the women
And, in a hurry, they went through the house: and their knees were a-tremble
From sheer terror, because they were sure he meant what he threatened.
As for Odysseus, he stood by the cressets, in light of the fire,
Plain to be seen by all: yet not of these was he thinking
But of far other things which shortly should come to fulfilment.
Yet did Athéné forbid the suitors to cease altogether
From their despiteful words, that so, more keenly than ever,
Sorrow might pierce the heart of Odysseus, son of Laërtes.
And, with insulting mien, Eurymachus spoke to the others,
Taunting Odysseus, and raising a laugh amongst his companions:
"Listen to me, ye suitors, who court the queen whom we honour,
And I will tell you the thought that occurred to my mind this moment:
Seems that 'twas Providence sent this man to the house of Odysseus:
Anyhow, all the light in the room appears to be coming
Out of his head, because it's so splendidly bald and shiny."
Then did he turn and speak, to Odysseus the sacker of cities:
" Stranger, if I were to take you to one of my outlying meadows,
Would you be willing to work for me—I'd pay you good wages—
Picking up stones for a wall or making a new plantation?
I would supply your food from one year's end to another,
And I would clothe you well, and give you sandals to walk in.
But, as it seems you have learned bad habits already, I don't think
That you will buckle to work, but rather crawl round the country
Begging for alms, that so you may feed your insatiate belly."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Nothing would please me more, Eurymachus, than in the springtime,
Soon as the days are long, to have a match with you cutting
Hay in a meadow, provided you give me a well-curved sickle,
Using a like one yourself, to prove which of us is the better.
Let there be plenty of grass, and nothing to eat until nightfall.
Or we might try our hand at ploughing with oxen, the best ones,
Dun coloured, tall, and with long curved horns, and evenly pulling,
Fed with plenty of grass, and whose strength is never exhausted,
Over a field of four acres where clods yield well to the ploughshare:
Then you would see for yourself I am able to drive a straight furrow.
Or, if the son of Kronos should stir up battle against us
This very day, and you gave me a shield and a couple of lances
Also a helmet of brass that fitted well to my temples,
Then, in the thick of the fight, you would see me one of the foremost,
And you would talk no more about an insatiate belly.
But you are harsh to extreme and overbearing in judgement,
Thinking yourself I suppose to be somebody great and important,
Only because your companions are men of indifferent merit.
But, if Odysseus should come and reach the land of his fathers,
You would soon find the doors, although they are passably wide ones,
Far too narrow for you as you bolted out of the entrance."
Thus did he speak: and the heart of the other with fury was raging,
And, looking fiercely upon him, his words broke forth on a sudden:
"Wretched cur, I will do you a harm for your insolent speeches.
Aren't you afraid to speak that way to men such as we are,
Valiant and many? You're drunk: or is it your regular habit,
Playing the fool like this, and talking as if you were silly?"
And, as he spoke, he seized a stool: but Odysseus, in fear that
He might receive a hurt, to Amphinomus went for protection,
Clasping his knees: but the stool struck hard on the hand of the vintner,
Missing its mark: and the jug fell down on the floor with a clatter,
While that the vintner fell, with a cry, on his back in the ashes.
Then did an uproar arise in the dim hall thronged with the suitors:
And you might hear one say, with a sidelong glance at his neighbour:

"From my heart, I could wish this wandering stranger had perished anywhere rather than come to make this noise and disturbance. For we do nothing but quarrel about these rascally beggars, and we can't even sit and eat our dinner in comfort."

Then did Telemachus speak to the guests in the palace assembled:

"Gentlemen, surely you're mad to forget, in the middle of supper, all about eating and drinking: some Power unseen has bewitched you. Come, having feasted well, go home and sleep in your houses soon as your fancy prompts: though far be it from me to drive you."

These were his words: but they bit their lips and stared in amazement, hearing Telemachus speak in this masterful manner among them.

Then did Amphinomus rise and address the company present:

"No one, my friends, would wish to take offence or to cavil in any quarrelsome way, when a man has spoken discreetly. And let us not maltreat the stranger or any domestic servant who has his home in the house of the godlike Odysseus. Come, let the vintner pour, in the cup of each one, the Gods' portion, that, with libation performed, we may go and sleep in our houses. But we will leave the stranger, within the halls of Odysseus, unto Telemachus' care: for 'tis he who has given him shelter."

So did he speak: and all who were present approved his suggestion.

Then was a great bowl mixed by the hero Mulius, herald from the Dulichian isle: and he was Amphinomus' squire: standing by each in turn, he served it: and, pouring a portion to the immortal Gods, they drank the honey-sweet wine-cup. And, when libation was made, and all had drunk as they listed, then, to his home and to bed, each one of the feasters departed.
BOOK XIX
ODYSSEUS MEETS PENÉLOPÉ

So he was left behind in the hall, the godlike Odysseus, Scheming, by grace of Athené, to compass the death of the suitors.

Soon as the thought occurred, he spoke to Telemachus shortly:

"All these arms must be hidden, Telemachus, somewhere in safety
Inside the house: and suppose the suitors should ply you with questions,
Wanting to know where they are, you must answer in courteous phrases:
Say 'I have put them away from the smoke, for no one would think that
They were the same that Odysseus, before he sailed in his galley, Left in his hall at home: the fire has scorched them so badly. And, what is more important, some Power divine has suggested That, being flushed with wine, disputes might spring up amongst you,
And you might wound one another, disgracing your suit and the banquet:
For, if a man bears sword, not man but sword is the leader.'"

Thus did he speak to his son: and Telemachus did as he bade him:

Calling her out from the rest, he spoke to his nurse Eurycleia:

"Nurse dear, I want you to see that the maids are kept in the palace
Till I have put away, in an attic, the arms of my father,
For, although splendidly made, they are spoilt by the smoke of the fire,
Since they have lain neglected, and I was too young to preserve them.
But now I wish to store them in safety from smoke and from scorching."
And, to him answered then his dear old nurse Eurycleia:
"It would be well indeed, my child, if you have the idea of
Taking the household in charge and guarding all your possessions.
But come, who will there be to help you, and light up the passage,
Since you forbid the maids of the house to conduct you with
torchers?"
And, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Here is the man: for the stranger who drinks of my tankard
must also
Work for his bite and his sup, e'en though he comes from a
distance."
Thus did he speak to the nurse: and the word did not flutter
unheeded:
Promptly she locked the doors of the house so fair to inhabit.
Then did Odysseus spring up, and his notable son in a moment,
Carried in all the helmets, and targes with boss in the centre
And the sharp-pointed spears: and, before them, Pallas Athené,
Holding a golden lamp, diffused soft radiance round her.
Then, in a sudden surprise, Telemachus spoke to his father:
"Father, there's something strange: but I'm certain I can't
be mistaken:
All the walls of the building, and all the beautiful panels,
Beams of pinewood and posts supporting the roof are illumined
As by a blazing fire: I see them all quite clearly.
Surely one of the Gods who dwell in the heavens is with us."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Keep your thoughts to yourself, my son, nor seek to enquire
Farther: for this is the way of the Gods who inhabit Olympus.
But go now, and lie down, and I will stay by myself here,
So shall I rouse the servants and also your mother to wonder:
And she will heave a sigh, and ask me all manner of questions."
Thus did he speak: and Telemachus passed through the
length of the palace,
Lighted by phantom torches, until he came to the chamber
Where he was used to rest when gentle slumber did call him:
There did he then lie down, and await the Goddess of Morning.
As for the other, he stayed in the hall, the godlike Odysseus,
Scheming, by help of Athené, to compass the death of the suitors.
Now, from her chamber, came forth the prudent Penelopé, like to
Artemis stately to see or Aphrodite the golden:
And, from the house, came also the white-armed maidens, who quickly
Set by the fire a couch that there she might rest her in comfort,
Ivory turned in the lathe and jointed together with silver,
Work of Ismalius, who, underneath it, had fastened a footstool
All of one piece with the rest: and a fleece was thrown o'er it for softness.
There did she take her seat as became the queen of the household.
Then did the maidens remove the piles of bread and the tables.
Also the cups from which those haughty men had been drinking:
And they threw down from the cressets the half-burnt brands,
and they piled on
Fresh dry wood in plenty, for warmth and also for brightness.
Then, for the second time, did Melantho scold at Odysseus.
"Stranger, do you intend to stay till the morning to plague us,
Prowling about the house, and making eyes at the women?
Out of the door, I say, you wretch, and get yourself victuals,
Or we must drive you out with a red-hot brand from the fire."
But, her sternly regarding, thus answered resourceful Odysseus:
"Why is it, girl, that you still, in this angry temper attack me?
Is it because my clothes are bad, and my body uncared for,
And I go begging for alms? 'Tis necessity drives me to do it.
That is the way of all poor men and wandering beggars.
For I too have been held a prosperous man by my neighbours,
Lived in a splendid house, and often gave to a beggar
Such as myself, whatever he was and whatever he needed:
And I had thousands of servants, and many other possessions
Suited to those who are rich, and live in a sumptuous manner.
But Zeus drained me of all: 'twas his good pleasure to do so.
Therefore, woman, beware, lest some day you may be losing
All that splendour with which you outshine the other domestics,
Lest, in her anger, your mistress should chance to treat you with harshness,
Or that Odysseus should come, as there's reason to hope that he may do:
But, even if he has died, as they say, and will ne'er be returning,
Yet has Telemachus now, his son, by grace of Apollo,
Reached to an age when none of the women folk of the household
Will go scatheless and free, if she acts with insolent folly."
These were the words he spoke: and the prudent Penelope heard him,
And she turned round to her maid, and, sharply, thus she rebuked her:

"Never you think, you brazen hussy, that I do not hear you,
For, with the hair of your head, you shall wipe up your insolent speeches:
For, very well, you knew, since with my own lips I have told you,
How that I meant to question the stranger, here in my palace,
As to my lord and husband: for sore is the grief that I suffer."

So did she speak, and then she turned to the housekeeper matron:

"Bring me a bench with a fleece, Eurynome, so that the stranger,
Seated in comfort, may listen, and answer the various questions
Which I desire to ask him, and tell me his tale without hindrance."

Thus did she speak: and the other full speedily went at her bidding,
Brought her a polished bench, with a fleece spread on it for softness.
There did he take his seat, the divine much-enduring Odysseus:
And 'twas the prudent Penelope then who began conversation:

"Stranger, before we go farther, I wish to ask you the question
Who, and from whence you are, and what is your city, and parents."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Lady, there is not a man on this broad earth who would venture
Here to dispute your will: for your fame has reached unto heaven,
As has also the fame of your noble lord: and I pray that,
Ruling, as 'twere a God, over men both many and valiant,
He may uphold the right, and the deep black soil of his country
Bring forth barley and wheat, and the fruit trees bend with their burden,
Ewes never drop their lambs, and the sea yield its harvest of fishes,
Fruit of his righteous rule, and that all his people may prosper.
Therefore I beg you to ask me, as now I sit in your palace,
Anything else that you please, but not my race or my country,
Lest you should fill my heart with still more grief in the telling.
For I am truly a man of many sorrows: nor is it
Seemly that I should sit as a guest in the house of another
Groaning and moaning: because to be constantly mourning is evil:
And, if I did so, some one of your servants, or even yourself, might
Say I was shedding tears because I was maudlin drunken."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Friend, you flatter me much: but the Gods have ruined my beauty
Since that time when the Greeks, and, with them, my husband Odysseus,
Sailed in their ships to Troy. But, if only he were to come back,
Taking a part once more in my life, my glory and beauty
Would be restored in full. But now the Powers of heaven
Ply me with trouble on trouble. For all the chiefs of the islands,
Who, in Dulichium, Samé and wooded Zacynthus, are foremost,
Also those others who dwell in this Ithacan isle as our neighbours,
Woo me against my will, and are wasting away our substance.
Therefore I take no heed what suppliant strangers may tell me,
Nor even heralds: for all are deceivers alike by profession.
But, for the love of Odysseus, my heart is pining in sorrow:
And, as they urge their suit, I put them off with excuses.
This was the first of the schemes that some friendly spirit sugges-
ted:
That I should have a loom set up in my chamber, and on it
Weave a magnificent web: and I said forthwith to the suitors:
'Gallant gentlemen all, since godlike Odysseus has perished,
Cease from urging your suit, at least until I shall finish
This pall which you now see, lest all my work should be wasted:
Funeral robe it is for the aged hero Laërtes,
Ready against the time when Death the Reaper shall seize him:
For it may happen, perchance, some Grecian woman would blame me,
If he should want for a shroud, who once had many possessions.'
Such were the words I spoke: and their manly hearts were per-
suaded.
And, from that time, all day, I would busily keep to my weaving,
But, each night, I unravelled the fruit of my labour by torchlight.
Thus, for three years, I contrived to befool the sons of Achæans:
But, when the fourth year came, and hour on hour was passing,
Days were changing to months, and month upon month was wasted,
Then, being told by the maids, who cared no more than a dog would,
These men found me unpicking the web, and roughly reproached me.
Then did I finish the web, as I had no choice in the matter. But I can now no longer avoid this marriage, or think of Other excuse for delay: and my parents are constantly urging That I should choose a husband: and also my son is displeased That they despoil our goods: for Telemachus now can be trusted Well to direct a household: and Zeus makes blessing attend him. But, even as things are, pray tell me the race that you spring from: For you are not the son of a rock or a mythical oak tree."
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "Lady, the honoured wife of Odysseus son of Laërtes, Will you not cease from asking the name of the race that I spring from? Well, I will tell you all: it is true you will load me with sorrows, More than I have already: but this is what must be expected When one has wandered abroad for the number of seasons that I have,
Drifting from city to city, and suffering hardships uncounted. Nevertheless I will answer your question as truly as may be. There is a land called Crete, in the midst of the wine-dark ocean: Fair and fertile it is, an island: and in it are peoples Countless in number, who dwell in ninety inhabited cities. Also the language they speak is a mixture of many; Achæans Live there, and Ἐτεοκρετες, a haughty race, and Cydonés, Dorian too, three tribes, and divinely descended Pelasgi. And, in the midst of the land, is the great vast city of Gnossus, Which, for nine years, was ruled by Minos (the friend and companion Was he of Zeus), and himself was my father Deucalion's father. Now Deucalion's sons were two, myself and another, Idomenéus, the prince who sailed with the brothers Atreidæ Unto the war at Troy, in the curvéd vessels: but I was Younger and less renowned than he: and my name it is Æthon. And 'twas in Crete that first I saw Odysseus, and gave him Gifts that are due to a guest: for the violent force of a tempest
Drove him to Crete, although he had weathered Maleia in safety. And, in Amnisus it set him, a dangerous harbour, in which is Eileithuia's cave: so barely he ran into shelter: And, going up at once to the town, he asked for the house of Idomèneus the prince: for they as he said were united Closely in love and regard: but the other had parted already, Ten or eleven days before, for Troy, in the galleys. So, to my home I took him, and royally entertained him, Making him free of the fare that my house contained in abundance.

And, for the men in his train, I commandeered from my people Sparkling wine of the best, and unlimited bannocks of barley, Bidding them slaughter some oxen to give good cheer to the strangers. So they remained with us twelve days, these godlike Achaians: For they were held storm-bound by a great North wind, and could hardly Manage to stand on their feet: for some hostile Power assailed them."

Thus he continued to weave false tales that seemed to be true ones: And, as she listened, her tears flowed fast, and her flesh seemed to wither:

And, as the snow which is piled by the West wind laden with moisture Wastes from the mountain peaks when the warm East breezes are blowing,

And, while it melts on the mountains, with flood the rivers are brimming,

So did her fair face wither, and tears on her cheeks were a-streaming

As she bewailed her lord, who there was sitting beside her. As for Odysseus, for all that her moaning had moved his compassion,

Yet were his eyes as steady as if of horn or of iron: Nor did an eyelid quiver: so well his tears he dissembled. But, when her tears and moans had brought relief to her trouble, Then did she speak again, and thus she addressed him in answer: "Now, O stranger, I think it is time to test you, and find out If it is true, as you say, that, within the walls of your palace,
You entertained my husband with all his godlike companions.
Tell me, what were the kind of clothes that he wore on his body:
What was he like himself, and who were his trusty companions?'

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus
"Lady, 'tis hard to tell exactly of things that have happened
So long ago: for 'tis twenty years since he sailed from my country
But I will tell you all, as well as my memory serves me.

Godlike Odysseus was wearing a shawl of royal purple,
Woven of thick soft wool, and folding over the bosom,
Pinned by a cunning brooch, of gold, with a pair of sockets:
And on the front was graven a hound, which, under his forefeet,
Held down a dappled fawn, and watched it convulsively gasping.
And, as one looked at the hound, who was choking the fawn,
while the other

Struggled in vain to escape, 'twas a marvel to all who beheld it
How these figures of gold could seem as if they were living.
Also, beneath his shawl, I noticed the sheen of his tunic
Next to his body, as silky and soft as the peel of an onion
So did it seem to me, as it caught the glint of the sunlight.
You may be sure that the women were always crowding to see it.
But there is something more which I beg you well to remember:
I cannot tell if these were worn at home by Odysseus,
Or had been given to him on board by one of his shipmates,
Or, it may be, by a friend: for Odysseus, wherever he travelled,
Ne'er was in want of a friend: because he was one of a thousand.
As for myself, I gave him a sword of bronze, and a tunic
Purple and ankle-long, and folding across the bosom,
And, in a well-benched ship, with honour I sped his departure.
And, in attendance on him, was a herald, a man who was older
Slightly than he: and what this herald was like, I will tell you:
Hunchbacked, swarthy of skin, with hair that was crisp and curly,
Known as Eurýbatés: he, by Odysseus, was loved and respected
More than the rest of his crew: for their minds were attuned to
each other."

So did he speak, and more deeply he stirred her passion for
weeping
As she recalled the signs which could by no chance be mistaken.
But, when her tears and moans had brought relief to her spirit,
Then did she speak again, and thus addressed him in answer:
"Now, O stranger, whereas you were but an object of pity,
you shall become henceforward, a welcome guest and an
honoured:
For it was I myself, who gave him the garments you tell of,
Out of my store: and I folded the cloak and fastened upon it
That bright golden brooch as a thing of glory and beauty.
But he will come no more to my arms and the land of his fathers:
For 'twas an evil day when destiny drove him to visit
Ilion, name abhorred, that land of unspeakable sadness."
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Lady, the honoured wife of Odysseus son of Laërtes,
Cease, I pray you, to spoil your beauty and wear out your spirit
Thus bewailing your lord: though indeed I can well under-
stand it.
Many a woman would mourn for a far worse man than Odysseus
If she were lawfully wedded to him, and had borne to him
children;
For it is commonly said that Odysseus is like the Immortals.
But pray cease from your moaning, and lay to heart what I tell
you:
For I will speak the truth without erring, and will not conceal it,
That I have heard already about the return of Odysseus:
How he is not far off 'mid the rich Thesprotian people
Living and well, and will bring, when he comes, much treasure
and costly
Begged from the neighbours around. But, as for his trusty
companions,
They with their ship were lost on the way from Thrinakia's island,
Whelmed in the wine-dark sea: because the Gods were indignant
For that his comrades, in folly, had slaughtered Helios' oxen.
So, one and all, they died 'mid the seething waves of the ocean.
But he alone clung fast to the keel of the ship: and a great wave
Washed him ashore on the land where dwell the Phæacian
people,
Men who are kin to the Gods: and like to a God they received
him,
Loaded him richly with gifts, and would have conducted him
safely
Unto his home: and Odysseus would there have rested in comfort
Long before now: but, as was his way, he thought 'twould be
better
First to scour the land collecting objects of value:
For, in amassing wealth, was he the sharpest of all men,
And, in that sort of work, no mortal was ever his rival.
This was the story that Pheido, the king of Thesprotians, told me.
Also he swore to myself, in his house, when making libation
Unto the Gods, that a ship had been launched, and the crew
were in waiting
Who would conduct Odysseus to this dear land of his fathers.
But, before that, I had left: for there chanced to lie in the harbour
Bound for Dulichium's isle, a ship of Thesprotian merchants.
Also he showed me the riches this same Odysseus had gathered,
Plenty to keep a man if he lived to the tenth generation:
Such were the treasures that lay stored up in the house of the
monarch.
But he himself had gone, so said the king, to Dodona,
That, from the tall green oak of Zeus, he might ask for instructions
How he might, safe and well, return to the land of his fathers
Openly or in secret, his years of exile completed.
So be assured he is safe, and will soon, very soon, be returning:
Nor will he stay much longer so far from his friends and his
kinsmen
And from his home. However, to satisfy you, I will swear it:
First, in the presence of Zeus, of Gods the best and the highest,
Also the sacred hearth of Odysseus, at which I am welcomed,
Solemnly do I declare that all will be as I tell you:
That, in this very year, Odysseus will come to his homeland,
Whether it be in the month now waning or that which is coming."
And unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Would that the word you have spoken, O guest, might come
to fulfilment:
Then you would quickly have proof of my friendship, and gifts
of such value
That any person you met would congratulate you on your fortune.
But, when I reckon the chances, I think it is much the more likely
That he will never return, and also that you will be baulked of
Getting your convoy: because we have no one here to give orders,
Such as Odysseus was, whom men would obey on the instant,
One who would worthily welcome his guests, and worthily speed
them.
But you must wash his feet, my maids, and pile, on a bedstead,
Wrappers and rugs, that so he lie cosy and warm till the morning:
And, the first thing in the morning, I bid you to bathe and
anoint him,
That he may sit and feast at Telemachus' side in the palace:
And if a single man insult or trouble the stranger,
So much the worse for him: nor shall he, while he remains here,
Find any sort of success, how angry soever he may be.
For what proof would you have, my guest, that I really am wiser
Than most women you meet, should I leave you to sit at my table
Sunburnt and clothed in rags, while nobodies ruffle in splendour.
For, if a man be cruel, at heart and also in action,
All men, behind his back, are invoking curses upon him
During his life, and when dead, they still pursue him with scoffing:
But, if a man be blameless, at heart and also in action,
Then is his fair fame spread by his friends among every nation,
So that, wherever he goes, there are men who acknowledge his
merit.”

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
“Lady, the honoured wife of Odysseus son of Laërtes,
Glistening wrappers and cloaks are distasteful to me, I assure
you,
Since that time when we left Crete's snow-clad peaks in the dis-
tance:
And I had rather lie hard, for this to me is a habit:
For there is many a night I have passed unresting and sleepless
Stretched on the roughest of beds, awaiting the Goddess of
Morning.
Nor do I care any more for such delicate comforts as foot-baths,
Nor shall my foot be touched by any one of the women
Who, in this house of yours, perform what service is needed:
But, if you have some aged dame who is careful and trusty,
One who has known such trouble as I myself have endured,
One such as this might touch my feet, and I should not be-
grudge it.”

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
“Dear guest, for I must call you so, since no one so prudent
Of any friends from afar has hitherto entered my palace,
Who, in your graceful words, say just what suits the occasion,
There is an aged dame in my house, most wise and resourceful,
Who, from an infant did cherish and rear my unfortunate husband,
Taking him up in her arms when first his mother did bear him: She is the one who shall wash your feet, though feeble she may be. Come now, rise when I bid you, my wise old nurse Eurycleia, You will be willing to tend a man of the age of your master: And, I suppose, by now, the hands and feet of Odysseus Look very much like his: for men age quickly by hardship.”

Thus did she speak: but the dame she buried her face in her two hands, And, as her hot tears fell, she waited for the absent Odysseus: “Ah, my son, my son, how little the help I can give you: Zeus has been jealous, for certain, because your spirit was godlike. For, never yet, has man burnt so many haunches, or even Hecatombs in full tale to Him who delights in the thunder, As you have given to him, with many a prayer that yourself might Come to a green old age, and rear a son to be famous: Yet, 'tis for you alone, he has cut off the day of returning. And I suppose that the women in those outlandish countries Used to make merry at him when he came to your house in his travels,

Just as these shameless hussies here make mock at your honour: And 'tis because of their insults, and all their impertinent talking, That you forbid them to wash your feet: but Icarius' daughter, Prudent Penelope, bids what I myself would desire. So I will wash your feet for Penelope's sake, my mistress, And for your own sake too, for my pity is stirred by your troubles. Also I pray you will not be offended at what I am saying: Many a man from afar has come to this house in his travels, But, I assure you, not one of them all was so like to Odysseus, Both in his figure and voice and even his feet, as you are.”

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: “So say they all, O dame, whoever has seen us together, That we are strangely alike: and you have also observed it.”

Thus did he speak: and the dame took a burnished cauldron, and from this Set about washing his feet: and first she poured in the cauldron Plenty of water, cold, then poured in warm: but Odysseus Sat with his back to the fire and turned his face to the shadow, Thinking how likely it was that, handling his foot, she might chance to Notice a scar on his leg, and all his plot be discovered.
But she went near, and, beginning to handle his feet, in a moment Recognized that old scar which a boar's white tusk had inflicted When, in Autolycus' train, with his sons, he had gone to Parnassus. —Excellent father was he of Odysseus' mother, surpassing All other men in deceit and persuasive swearing: for Hermés Gave him this gift, and was ever his comrade and friendly protector, All for the sake of the lambs and kids, which he burnt on his altar. And it fell out that he went to visit the Ithacan country, Where, in the palace, he found the new-born son of his daughter: Him, Eurycleia laid on his knees: and he paused from his supper While that she called him by name: and these were the words that she uttered:

"Now, must you choose a name, Autolycus, suited and proper, For the dear child of your daughter, so much and so earnestly prayed for."

And, in reply to her words, 'twas thus he spoke to his children:

"Daughter and son-in-law mine, let this be his name which I tell you: For, ere I came to your house, I have quarrelled, with men and with women, Many a time, on the bosom of Earth our bountiful mother: Call him Odysseus, the man of loves and of quarrels: and later, When he has come to years, he shall visit the home of his mother, Hard by Parnassus, where lie my great ancestral possessions: And I will give him a share, and send him homeward rejoicing."

Therefore Odysseus went to receive these glorious presents: Him, when he came, the king, with his sons all standing around him, Greeted with outstretched hands and words of kindliest welcome: But Amphithéa, the mother of his own mother, in both arms, Clasping him to her, did kiss his beautiful eyes and his forehead. Then did Autolycus call to his famous sons to make ready Supper to honour the guest: and they willingly sped at his bidding. Quickly they brought, to the house, a five year bull from the paddock, Flayed, and dressed the carcase, and cut into suitable portions, Then did they slice it in pieces, and these they spitted and toasted,
THE ODYSSEY

Drawing them off from the spits when each was grilled to perfection.
So, for the whole day long, they sat till the hour of sunset,
Feasting: and never a man but had full share of the banquet:
But, when the sun had set, and the shades of evening had fallen,
Then they lay down to rest and courted the blessing of slumber.

But, when the Daughter of Dawn stretched forth her roseate fingers,
Then they set out for the hunt, the hounds and also the hunters,
Sons of Autolycus (and, in their midst, went godlike Odysseus)
Making their way direct to the forest-clad steeps of Parnassus,
And, before long, they had reached the wind-swept folds of the mountain
Just as the sun, from his bed in the deep fair stream of the Ocean,
Struck, with his first slant beams, the rich red soil of the ploughland.

Nor was it long ere the beaters arrived at a thicket: before them,
Hard on a trail, were the hounds: and, pressing closely behind them.
Followed Autolycus' sons, and with them the godlike Odysseus:
Nearest was he to the hounds, with a long spear poised in his right hand.

There, lay a huge wild boar in the tangled thicket, a shelter
Which could defy the strong West winds heavy laden with moisture:
Nor could the rays of the sun pierce through when blazing at noonday,

Nor any shower of rain; so densely the boughs were entangled:
And a thick carpet of fallen leaves was strewn underneath it.
But the boar heard the sound of the footsteps of hounds and of huntsmen,

As they came hurrying on: and he rose from his lair to meet them,
And, with his eyes a-blaze, and crest a-bristle, he halted

Only a few feet off from the men: but Odysseus, the foremost,
Levelled his long stout spear in his sturdy hand: and he charged him,

Thinking to wound him to death: but the boar was too quick, and it struck him

Over the knee, and, quick as a flash, the tusk of the monster
Made a great rent in the flesh, but it did not reach to the thigh-bone.
Yet did the spear of Odysseus strike home just under the shoulder, So that the gleaming point passed through and out of the body: And, with a scream, the great beast fell, and the life fluttered from it.
Then did they gather around, and gave him the aid that was needed:
Defly they bound up the wound of the splendid and godlike Odysseus,
And, with a magic chant, they staunched the blood that was flowing,
And, with all speed, they bore their friend to the house of their father.

Then did Autolycus, helped by his sons, take charge of their comrade,
Skilfully nurse him to health, and, giving him glorious presents,
Joyful themselves in his joy, they sped him to Ithaca's island.
And you may well be assured that his father and lady mother Welcomed him back right gladly, and anxiously plied him with questions
How he had come by his wound: and he told them the story in detail,
How that a great wild boar had ripped his thigh with his white tusk,
When he had gone on a hunt, with Autolycus' sons, to Parnassus.—
Thus the old dame, who was holding his foot in her hand as she wiped it, Recognized this old scar, and dropped his foot of a sudden: And his leg fell from her hand, and, striking the cauldron, upset it, Making the brass to ring: and the water was spilt on the pavement But, o'er her mind, swept joy and grief commingled: and both eyes Filled with tears: and she choked with words that she hardly could utter.
Yet did she touch the chin of Odysseus, and thus she addressed him: 
"Why, 'tis Odysseus himself. Dear son! To think that I did not Know you until I had handled my king and felt him all over."
And, as she spoke, she cast a glance at Penelope, wishing
That she could say that her lord had returned. But the other
saw nothing,
Nor did she look that way: for Athené her mind was distracting.
Promptly, however, Odysseus caught hold of her throat with his
right hand,
And, with the other, he drew her close, and sternly he whispered:
“Nurse, do you want to destroy me? For you have fondled
me often
On your own breast: and now, after troubles and hardships
uncounted,
Not till the twentieth year, have I come to the land of my fathers.
But, as suggestion divine has made you discover my secret,
Say not a word, lest some other within the palace should hear it.
For I will tell you this, which will not fail of fulfilment:
If, by the help of God, I should yet overpower the suitors,
Not though you be my nurse would I have compassion or spare
you
When I shall slay the rest of the serving maids in my palace.”
And, unto him in reply, thus answered the sage Eurycleia:
“What is the word, my son, which the fence of your teeth has
escaped?
Seeing you know full well how steadfast I am, and unyielding:
And I will hold to my purpose as I were of stone or of iron.
And this too I will say, and think of it well, I entreat you:
If, by the help of God, you shall overpower the suitors,
Then I will give you a list of all the maids in the palace,
Those who dishonour your name, and likewise those who are
guiltless.”

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
“Nurse, you may spare your trouble: there’s no occasion to
tell them:
For I can well find out by myself what each has been doing.
But never utter a word, and trust to the Gods to protect you.”

So did he speak: and the dame she brought more water for
washing,
Drawn from the well outside: for all the first had been wasted.
And, when his feet were washed and anointed with oil of the finest,
Then did he draw his couch once more close up to the fire,
So as to warm himself, and covered the scar with his tatters.
First to begin to speak was Penelopé, pearl of discretion:
“Stranger and friend, there are few things more I desire to ask you:
For 'twill be soon high time to enjoy the sweetness of slumber,
That is for those who are able to sleep in spite of their sorrow.
As for myself, the Gods have given me grief beyond measure:
For, in the day, I find some consolation in moaning,
Minding my broidery work and directing the maids of the household:
But, when the night has come, and all the others are sleeping,
Then do I lie awake on my bed: and, crowding upon me,
Come the sharp pangs of care and sorrow that trouble my spirit.
As when, in early Spring, the Nightingale, Pandareus' daughter,
Scarce to be seen as she sits in the leafy screen of the copsewood,
Sings her delightful song, a flood of melody pouring
Now this way, now that, as she mourns for her boy and her darling,
Italus, Zethus' son, whom by fatal mistake she had murdered:
So with myself: for, this way and that, my spirit is driven,
Whether to stay with my son, and keep my household in safety,
All my possessions, my servants, this high-roofed beautiful dwelling,
Guarding my own good name, and respecting the bed of my husband,
Or go away with him who, of all the Achæans who woo me,
Proves himself to be bravest, and brings the costliest presents.
Since, while my son was a child, nor braced to resist an aggressor,
I was not able to marry and leave the house of my husband:
But now, when he has grown, and has reached the measure of manhood,
He is beginning to urge me to leave him alone in his palace,
Being annoyed at the loss that is caused by these greedy Achæans.
But come, hear what a dream I have had, and interpret the meaning:
Twenty geese have I got in my yard, fresh brought from the goose-pond,
Now being fattened on corn: and it gives me pleasure to see them:
But, from the mountain, there came an eagle, monstrous and hook-beaked,
Broke the necks of them all and killed them, leaving their bodies Strewn in heaps in the yard: but the eagle soared to the heavens.
And, though it was but a dream, I began to wail and lament them: And my Achæan maidens were wondering what was the matter As I was wailing because my geese had been killed by the eagle. But he came back again, and perched on the end of the roof-tree, And, in the voice of a man, he checked my grief, and addressed me:

'Be of good cheer, I bid you, far-famed Icarius' daughter, 'Tis not a dream, but a vision, which shortly will come to fulfilment. For these geese are the suitors, and I, who was lately an eagle, Now have come back once more, to greet you as lord and husband: For I will whelm these men, one and all, in a terrible slaughter.' So did he speak: and, at once, my honey-sweet slumber forsook me:

And, looking out of the window, I saw the geese in the farmyard Picking up corn by the trough as if nothing whatever had happened."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Lady, in no other way can a man interpret the vision Than as you now have done: for Odysseus himself has told you How it will come to pass: for death is foretold to the suitors: Nor will a single one escape from the fate that is destined."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:

"Friend, for all that you say, all dreams are confusing and, sometimes, Quite impossible things, and often fail of fulfilment. For there are gateways twain through which these shadowy visions Come to our ken, of which the one is of horn, and the other Ivory. And those dreams which come through the ivory gateway Cheat us with empty hopes that never are brought to fulfilment: While that the others which come, through the gates of horn, to our senses, Pass into actual fact: if a mortal is favoured to see them. But, as I think, it was not through these that a vision so awesome Came unto me: though welcome indeed would it be if it were so. And do you lay this also to heart, that the day which is dawning, Ere it has passed, will be marked as a day of disaster, and banish Me from the house of Odysseus: for now I propose to the suitors That they should try their skill with the axe-heads, which, when at home here,
He would arrange in a row, a dozen in number, like keel-blocks:
And, from a long way off, he would shoot through them all with
an arrow.
And, upon these conditions, I set this match for the suitors:
Who, with the greatest ease, shall string the bow of Odysseus,
Draw it, and shoot his dart through the whole long line of the
axe-heads,
Him will I follow as lord, and leave this house of my husband,
Though 'tis my lawful home, and fair and abounding in riches,
And I shall never be able, not even in dreams, to forget it."
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Lady, the honoured wife of Odysseus son of Laërtes,
Let there be no delay in the competition you speak of:
For, ere the suitors are able that bow well-polished to handle,
String it, and shoot with an arrow through that long line of the
axe-heads,
I can assure you himself will be here, the resourceful Odysseus."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"If you were willing, friend stranger, to sit by me here in our
castle
Charming me thus with your talk, I could stay without sleeping
for ever.
But, as it cannot be that men should always be sleepless,
Seeing that this is the lot which the Gods impose upon mortals,
I will go up to my room at the top of the building, and there will
Lie and rest on my bed which always reminds me of weeping,
Having been watered with tears so many a time since Odysseus
Went to spy out that town whose name is too hateful to mention.
There will I lay me down: but do you sleep here in the palace,
Either on rugs on the floor: or let them set you a bedstead."
Thus having spoken, she mounted the stairs to her glistening
chamber,
Not unattended: for with her there went her maidens in waiting.
And, having reached the room along with her women attendants,
There did she weep for Odysseus her lord and husband, till
sweet sleep
Over her eyelids was shed by the grey-eyed Goddess Athené.
BOOK XX

PREPARING FOR THE SLAUGHTER

As for the godlike Odysseus, he slept in the porch of the palace, spreading an untanned hide on the ground to lie on, and piling Plenty of fleeces upon it of sheep the Achæans had slaughtered: And, when composed for sleep, Eurynomé then with a wrapper Covered him snugly: but yet he was long time wakeful and sleepless, Brooding on ill to the suitors. And, out of the hall, the women, Those who had lived till now as the paramours of the suitors, Went in a crowd as they giggled and jested one with another. But the dear heart of Odysseus was stirred in his breast when he saw it, And he debated much with himself, by reason and instinct, Whether to rush at them straight, and kill each one on the instant, Or to allow them to sleep once more with the swaggering suitors, Once, but never again: yet his heart cried loudly within him. And, as a hound who is standing amongst her litter of puppies Barks when a stranger appears, and braces herself to defend them, So, as it were, his heart with indignation was barking, And, as he smote his breast, he called on the spirit within him: "Bear it a-while my heart: worse things ere now have you suffered, As on the day when the Round-eye, resistless monster, devoured Those my valiant companions. You bore it till that my cunning Led you from out the cavern and what seemed certain destruction."

So did he speak, and restrained the dear heart throbbing within him: And, at his bidding, it stayed enduring and steadfast, the while he, Tossed to and fro by his thoughts, tried one scheme after another: And, as a man may stand in front of a blazing fire, Busily cooking a paunch well stuffed with blood and with suet,
And, as he turns it over, he wonders how soon 'twill be ready, So he, one against many, tried one scheme after another, How to lay forcible hands on the shameless and insolent suitors. But, in the form of a woman, Athené descended from heaven, Stood, and looked down on his face, and in audible words she addressed him:

"Why are you wakeful again, O man most wretched of all men? This is your very own house, and your wife is with you in safety, So is your son, who is just such a son as a man would desire."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "All that Thou sayest, O Goddess, is true and rightfully spoken: But it is this which now gives cause for anxious debating, How I, being alone, may lay hands on the suitors, who always Keep in a body together: and farther, I have to consider (If, by the favour of Zeus and of Thee, I am able to stay them) Where I could flee for refuge: this too I pray Thee to tell me."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the grey-eyed Athené: "Foolish man! Yet men will willingly follow a comrade Far less trusty than me, who knows but the wisdom of mortals: But myself am a God, who always am with you to guard you When you are sorely tried. And now I speak to you plainly: If there were fifty troops of speaking mortals around us, And, of each troop, each man were fully determined to slay you, And you should make a raid on their fine fat sheep and their oxen, And should be overcome by sleep (for 'tis hard to keep watching All the night long), even so, you would come through your troubles in safety."

These were her words: and soon she had poured sweet sleep on his eyelids:

And, in a moment, the Goddess had come to her home in Olympus.

But, at the time when Sleep the Consoler was clasping Odysseus Into her arms, his wife, so prudent and thoughtful, was sitting Wakeful and shedding tears on her bed of luxurious comfort:

And, when at last her tears had soothed the pangs of her spirit, Then, unto Artemis first, thus prayed this Goddess-like woman: "Artemis, Goddess revered, Thou Child of Zeus, how I long that Thou with thy dart wouldst pierce me, and free my soul from its fetters,
This very moment, or else that the blast of the tempest should snatch me,
Whirl me through misty ways, and cast me into the outlets
Whence pours forth the stream of the world-encircling Ocean,
Just as, in oldentime, the storms snatched Pandareus’ daughters.”
(For the Immortals had slain the parents of these: and the maids were
Left in their home bereaved: but divine Aphrodité, in pity,
Cared for, and fed them with cheese and wine and sweetest of honey:
And, on them, Hera bestowed both beauty and wisdom,
exceeding
All other women besides: and Artemis, greatness of stature,
Gave them: and glorious arts were taught by Pallas Athené.
But, when Divine Aphrodité approached the Lord of Olympus,
Zeus who delights in the thunder—for He knows all in his wisdom,
What is the fate most fitting and what unfitting for mortals—
Begging that he would crown their joys with the blessing of wedlock,
Then did the storm-fiends snatch from their home the unfortunate maidens,
Giving them up as slaves to those Beings of Horror, the Furies.)
“So’tis my earnest wish that the Dwellers in Heaven may slay me,
Or may the fair-haired Artemis smite me, and then, when imprisoned
Under the earth, I should gaze on my lord and husband Odysseus,
Nor, of some lesser man, become the sport and amusement.
For sad indeed is the lot, of him who weeps o’er his sorrows
During the day, and then by night is folded in slumber
Burying evil and good alike in unconscious oblivion:
Worse is my lot by far: for Heaven sends dreams to pursue me:
Only last night, there slept by my side his very own likeness,
Just such a one as he was when he left me to go with the army:
And I was glad, for I said it was not a dream but a vision.”
Soon, on her golden throne, the rosy Morning appeared.
And, to the ear of Odysseus, there came the voice of her weeping:
And, as he listened, she seemed herself to be standing beside him,
Knowing him as of old. So, taking the robe and the fleeces
Which he had used for his bed, he laid them on one of the benches
In the big hall, and the ox-hide, he carried and left in the forecourt:
Then, with his hands upraised, he prayed unto Zeus our father:
"Father Zeus, since now thou hast brought me safe to my homeland
Over both land and sea, although through hardships uncounted,
Send me some guiding voice from the house when people are stirring,
And, from without, a sign from thyself that may not be mistaken."
Thus did he speak in his prayer: and Zeus in his wisdom regarded:
And, from the radiant heights of Olympus he answered in thunder
High from above the clouds: and godlike Odysseus rejoiced.
And, from within the house, there came the voice of a woman
Grinding hard by in a place where the mills of the master were standing.
Now, at these mills, twelve women had long been bending and toiling,
Pounding of barley and wheat for the cakes which are strong men's marrow.
All except one were asleep, having finished their portions allotted, But she was still at work, being not so strong as the others.
So she set down her mill and unconsciously uttered the signal:
"Father Zeus, who art king, alike of Gods and of mortals, That was a mighty clap thou didst send from the starry heavens: Nor is there ever a cloud: 'tis a portent thou showest to some one. Grant a poor woman like me whatever request I may make thee: Grant that this day be the last on which these terrible suitors Sit at a dainty meal in the house of my master Odysseus: For they have worn me out, and made my knees of a tremble Making their barley cakes: but never no more may they eat them."
Thus did the woman speak: and Odysseus rejoiced at the omen And at the thunder of Zeus: and he swore to repay the offenders. Now, with a godlike mien, Telemachus rose from his slumber, Put on his clothes and slung a keen-edged sword from his shoulder,
And, on his gleaming feet, he bound his beautiful sandals,  
And, with a sturdy spear, that was pointed with bronze of the sharpest,  
Paused on the threshold, and spoke a word to his nurse Eurycleia:  
"Nurse dear, what sort of bed and food did you give to the stranger?  
Or does he lie in our house as best he may, and uncared for?  
For, though my mother is clever, her ways are rather uncertain:  
Madly she pays respect to some inferior person,  
But the more worthy man, she sends away with dishonour."  
And, in reply, thus spoke his nurse Eurycleia discreetly:  
"You should not blame your mother, my child, who does not deserve it:  
Seeing he sat o'er his wine, and drank as long as he wanted  
But, when she asked him, he said he was not yet hungry for supper.  
And, when his thoughts were turned to bed and to sleep, she gave orders  
Unto the maids to prepare him a bed in the usual manner:  
But he, just like a man who was poor and accustomed to hardship,  
Would not consent to sleep in a proper bed under blankets,  
Choosing to lie in the porch, on an untanned ox-hide and fleeces,  
But, of our own accord, we covered him up with a wrapper."  
Thus did she speak: but he strode through the hall and out at the doorway  
Holding his spear: and, close at his heels, two swift dogs followed:  
And, to the market place he went, to meet the Achæans.  
But, to the maids, then called once more that woman of honour Eurycleia the daughter of Ops the son of Pisenor:  
"Come now, hustle about, besprinkle the flooring and sweep it,  
Shake out the purple rugs, and spread them over the couches:  
Clean out the bowls and cups: and tell off a party to hasten  
Down to the spring for water, and lose no time on the journey.  
For it will not be long ere the suitors come in to their breakfast:  
And they will come very early, because 'tis a general feast day."  
So did she speak: and the maids took heed and did as she bade them:  
Twenty went off to the spring, to carry the clear cool water,  
While that the others, indoors, were doing the work that was set them.
Then did the serving men come in, and promptly begin to 
Cleave the wood for the fire: and back from the well, came the 
women:
And, after these, came the swineherd who drove three hogs of 
the choicest:
These he turned out for a while to feed on the grass in the 
paddock,
While that, with courteous words, himself thus spoke to Odysseus:
"Tell me, O guest, if the suitors are more respectful towards 
you,
Or do they treat you still, as they did at first, with dishonour?"
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"I could devoutly wish, Eumæus, that Heaven would punish 
All the unseemly acts their insolent hearts are devising,
Guests in another man's house, without either shame or com-
punction."
Now, in such words as these, the two were talking together:
And, to their side, came up Melanthius chief of the goatherds,
Driving some goats, the finest of all that fed in the pastures,
Meant for the suitors' supper: and with him were two of his 
helpers.
He, having tied up the goats beneath the echoing cloister,
Turned to Odysseus, and thus, in abusive words he addressed him:
"So you are still here, stranger, as much of a nuisance as ever,
Hanging about the house, and begging for alms of the gentry. 
There is no sort of hope we two shall settle our quarrel 
Till we have come to blows: for we've had too much of your 
begging.
And you can go elsewhere if you like to look for a dinner."
Thus did he speak: but to him the resourceful Odysseus in 
answer
Said not a word, but he shook his head, and brooded on vengeance.
And, after this, that leader of men Philætius joined them 
Leading a barren heifer and sheep as gifts for the suitors:
And 'twas the ferrymen brought them across, whose trade is to 
ferry 
Other men over the straits, whoever may come to their dwelling.
These did he tie securely beneath the echoing cloister,
And then, turning, went up to the swineherd and asked him a 
question:
"Who is this stranger with you, O swineherd, who must have but lately
Come to our house? What race of men does he claim to have sprung from?
Where is the home of his tribe, and where the estates of his fathers?
He has the air of a king who has chanced to meet with misfortune.
But 'tis no wonder the Gods are hard on the homeless and vagrant,
Seeing that, even to kings, they allot their portion of trouble."

So did he speak, and came forward, and held out his hand in welcome,
And, in such friendly words as rose to his lips, he addressed him:
"Happiness to you, Sir Guest: in future may blessing attend you,
Though, for the present, it seems that a host of troubles beset you.
O our father Zeus, no God is more deadly than thou art:
Thou hast no pity on men: for thou thyself didst beget them
Only that they should wallow in pain and grievous disaster:
That 's how it seems to me. But tears well into my eyelids
When I remember Odysseus: because he too may have wandered,
Just in such clothes as these, amongst the cities of strangers,
That is if yet he is living, and looks on the sunshine of heaven.
But, if he now is dead, and passed to the region of Hadés,
Then I am for Odysseus, who put me in charge of his cattle
When I was quite a lad in the Kephallenian country.
And 'tis astonishing how these cattle are thriving; and no man
Could have his broad-faced bullocks in better condition than they are.
But it is not for him, that I drive them in to be eaten,
But for those men who take no thought of the son of Odysseus,
Nor of the vengeance of Heaven: and all that they care for at present
Is to divide the wealth of the king who so long has been absent.
And there is this thing too, upon which I find that I cannot
Make up my mind. So long as the son of Odysseus is living,
It would be ill to take my cattle, and go among strangers
Into a foreign land: but worse would it be to remain here
Quiet, and break my heart while tending the cattle of others.
Otherwise I should have fled, long since, to the court of some distant
Chieftain of might: because these men can no longer be borne with.

But, even now, I think my unfortunate master, if ever He should return to his home, would make short work of the suitors."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Herdsman, you seem to me very far from worthless or foolish, Also I well can see you are not devoid of discretion, So I will tell you this, and, more than that, I will swear it: Hear me, O Zeus, the first of the Gods, and this table of friendship, Also the sacred hearth of Odysseus at which I am welcomed: Surely, while you are here, Odysseus will come to his homeland: And, with your very own eyes, you shall see him, if so you desire, Slaughter those suitor men who are lording it over his household."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the chief of the herdsmen:

"Would that the son of Kronos may bring your words to fulfilment:

Then you would know my strength, and the stout pair of hands at your service."

And, in like manner, Eumæus made prayer to all the Immortals That the wise-hearted Odysseus might come to his castle in safety.

Such were the words in which these three were talking together. But, for Telemachus, all this time, the suitors were planning Bloodshed and murder: when, lo, a bird flew by to the Westward:

It was a soaring eagle, and held a timorous ring dove:

And, when he saw the bird, Amphinomus spoke to his comrades:

"Friends, this design of ours to kill Telemachus, will not Run very smoothly for us: so let us bethink us of supper."

Thus did Amphinomus speak: and all approved his suggestion:

So, going in once more to the palace of godlike Odysseus, Wrappers they spread and rugs upon the seats and the benches: Some of them slaughtered rams, meanwhile, or goats that were stall-fed,

Fat young porkers, and also a bullock fresh from the meadow. Duly they cooked the entrails, and served them round, and in punch-bowls

Mixed the wine: but the cups were handed to each by the swine-herd:

Also, in beautiful baskets, Philætius handed the bread round,
While that the wine was poured in the cups by the goatherd Melantheus.
Then were all hands stretched out to the good fare ready before them.
But, with his mind full of shemes, Telemachus spoke to his father:
Bidding him sit in the hall, by the raised stone floor of the threshold,
Placing a rough-hewn bench for his use and a plain little table:
And, upon this, he put his share of the entrails, and poured wine
Into a golden cup, and, in resolute tone, he addressed him:
"Sit down there, my friend, and drink your wine with the others,
And I myself will see that none of the suitors molest you
Either by word or deed: for this house belongs to Odysseus,
Not to the public, and I, under him am now in possession.
And, to you suitors, I say, Refrain yourselves from reproaches,
Not to say outrage, for fear of strife and troubles arising."
So did Telemachus speak: and they all did stare in amazement,
Biting their lips to think he should speak in this confident manner.
Then, to the company, spoke Antinoüs son of Eupeithes:
"Well sirs, nothing remains but to do as Telemachus bids us:
Though 'twas uncivilly said, with many threats that were needless,
Seeing that Zeus son of Kronos the other course has forbidden:
Otherwise, we should have stopped his mouth in spite of his ranting."
Thus did Antinoüs speak, not heeding the words he was saying.
And, through the streets, just then, was a sacred hecatomb passing,
Led by the heralds: and crowds of the long-haired Achæans collected,
Under the sacred shade, in the grove of far-darting Apollo.
Now, when the outside meat had been browned to a turn at the fire,
Each one, receiving his share, partook of the glorious banquet.
And, in due course, the servants did set in front of Odysseus Just such a share as the rest: for so had Telemachus ordered.
Yet did Athené forbid that the suitors should cease altogether
From their offensive acts, that indignation and anguish
Still more deeply might pierce the heart of the son of Laërtes.
Now there was one of the suitors, a man of no feeling or con-

science,

Known as Ctesippus by name, who lived in the island of Samé:
He, being full of presumption because his father was wealthy,
Ventured to court the wife of the long time absent Odysseus:
And it was he who spoke to the haughty suitors around him:

“Listen to what I say, O noble high-spirited suitors.
This old stranger has had already a share in the banquet
Equal to us: for we may not misuse or treat with dishonour
One of Telemachus’ guests, whoever may come to his palace.
But look at me: I too will give him a present which he can
Give to the hand-wash man, or any one else of the servants
Who are employed in the house of Odysseus son of Laërtes.”

And, as he spoke, he picked, from out of a basket, an ox hoof,
Throwing it hard at Odysseus: but he with no trouble escaped it,
Slightly moving his head: and he smiled to himself, but somehow
"Twas a sardonic smile: and the hoof hit the stonework behind
him.

Then did Telemachus speak, and thus he upbraided Ctesippus:

"It was a fortunate thing for you, Ctesippus, that just then
You did not hit the guest, but himself avoided your missile:
For, had you done so, I surely had run my spear through your
body:
And 'tis a funeral feast that your father would now be preparing,
'Stead of a wedding, for you. Let no one therefore in this house
Venture to act unseemly: for, whether becoming or shameful,
Nothing escapes my eye: though I was but a child until lately.
Nevertheless I have borne to see my sheep being slaughtered,
Also my wine being drunk, and food consumed in profusion:
Since it is hard for one to restrain so many. But come now,
Cease from behaving here like a party of insolent brigands.
But, if your mind is made up to put me to death with the
sword-point,
I should be well content: and indeed to die would be better
Than to look on for ever at such disgraceful proceedings,
Guests being roughly handled, and men who ought to know
better
Pulling about the maids in this house of fair reputation."
So did he speak: and they all said nothing, but heard him in silence.
But, at the last, there spoke Agelaüs the son of Damastor: "Friends, no sensible man has reason to think himself injured, Or to be captious, when one has spoken discreetly and justly. Let us not therefore molest or interfere with the stranger Or any one of the servants who live in the house of Odysseus. But I would say a word to Telemachus and to his mother Civilly, if perchance it may prove acceptable to them: During such time as you still had hope that resourceful Odysseus Might come in safety home, no blame was incurred by the suitors If they remained your guests nor pressed their suit to an issue: For it were better so, in case of Odysseus returning. But, as it now is clear there is no more chance of his coming. Go, and sit down by your mother, and say, with no circumlocution, 'Marry the man who is bravest and brings the costliest presents': Then can yourself in peace enjoy your ancestral possessions, Eating and drinking, while she presides o'er the house of another."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "No, Agelaüs, by Zeus, and the hardships endured by my father, Who, in some distant land, now wanders or, maybe, has perished, I am not causing delay of my mother's wedding, but bid her Marry whomever she will: and dowry immense I will give her. But I should feel it shame, by a positive order, to drive her Out of her home unwilling: may God forbid I should do so."
Thus did Telemachus speak: but Athené excited the suitors Into unquenchable laughter, and made their senses to wander: But 'twas a forced and unnatural laugh: the while they were gnawing Pieces of meat all bloody: and tears their eyes were suffusing: And, in the deep of their heart, was a brooding sense of disaster. Then, with the mien of a god, Theoclymenus rose and addressed them: "Wretched men, what brings this trouble upon you? Your heads and Faces are wrapped in night, and your knees are a-stagger beneath you:
Groaning has gripped you fast: with tears your cheeks are bedabbled,
And the fair-panelled walls, with blood, are foully sprinkled:
Also the porch of the house, and the courtyard, are crowded with phantoms
Hurrying under the gloom to the land of unspeakable darkness:
Also the sun is dead, and the mist of horror has fallen."

So did he speak: but they laughed, in a maudlin way, at his warning.
Then did Eurymachus, Polybus' son, thus speak to his comrades:
"This other man is a fool, wherever it be that he comes from.
But let us put him outside, my boys, and he can, if he wishes, Go to the market place, as he finds it too dark in the palace."

And, unto him in reply, godlike Theoclymenus answered:
"I will not trouble you, Sir, to provide any men to escort me: For there is nothing wrong with my eyes or my feet or my hearing: Also the mind in my breast is clear and sound as it should be: These are sufficient for me. But I see disaster impending Over each one of you suitors, who, here in the house of Odysseus, Hatch your unlawful schemes, and deeds of criminal outrage."

Thus having spoken, he bade farewell to this fair habitation, And, to the house of Peiræus, he went, who friendly received him. And, thereupon, the suitors cast glances one at another, Rousing Telemachus' anger by making fun of the strangers: And you might hear one say, 'mid the crowd of roystering fellows: "Hullo, Telemachus, these your friends are the queerest assortment:
Look at this one you've found, this gluttonous wandering beggar: All that he wants is bread and wine: hard work's his abhorrence, Nor does he know any craft: he is only a burden to farmers. Now comes this other man, professing to tell our fortunes: But, if you take my advice, you would find it far better business If we packed off these two, in a ship well furnished with benches To the Sicilian land: they would bring you a notable profit."

Thus did the suitors talk: but he took no heed of their sayings, And, without speaking, he watched his father, each moment expecting That he would rise in fury, and rush at the insolent suitors. Meanwhile Icarius' daughter, the prudent Penelope, ordered That they should place a bench in the hall in front of the suitors:
And upon this she sat, and listened to what they were saying. Now, amid mirth and laughter, these men were preparing a
supper
Pleasant and strength-sustaining, for many a beast had they
slaughtered:
But a more gruesome meal no mortal man could partake of
Than that meal which a Goddess and one strong man were
preparing,
As was their due who first had committed actions unseemly.
BOOK XXI

THE CONTEST OF THE BOW

And so it was that then, the grey-eyed Goddess Athéné
Put in Penelopé's mind, to propose as a prize for the suitors,
Steel and a bow, for which to compete in the house of Odysseus
Both as a trial of prowess, and may be occasion for slaughter.
So, with her women attendants, she mounted the stairs of the
tower
(And, in her soft plump hand, she carried a well-crooked
door-key
Artfully fashioned of bronze, and fitted with ivory handle)
Unto the room where lay, in her keeping, the royal treasures,
Heaps of gold and of bronze and iron wrought with the hammer.
And in the room was a bow, unstrung, and a quiver beside it:
And in the quiver was stored full many an arrow and deadly,
Gifts to the king as it chanced, from a friend in fair Lacedæmon,
Iphitus, Eurytus' son, a man who was like the Immortals.
For, as it happened, the two, in Messena had met one another
Once in Ortilochus' house: now Odysseus had gone there in
order
That he might press for a debt which was due from the state
of Messena:
For some Messenian men had been raiding the Ithacan island,
And they had taken from thence three hundred sheep with
their shepherds:
Which was the reason Odysseus had gone on so toilsome a
mission
Though but a lad: for his father and other elders had sent him.
Iphitus, on his part, had come to Messena to search for
Twelve brood mares he had lost, with hardy mule foals beneath
them
Which same mares, by and by, became the cause of his slaughter
When he encountered that son of Zeus, that man lion hearted,
Heracles ever in search for deeds beyond human achievement,
Who, in his own house, murdered the man who claimed his protection,
Impious, setting at nought the vengeance of Gods and the table
Spread for his guest: and so he not only slew him but also
Kept all the strong-hoofed mares for himself, as spoil in his stable.
And'twas when looking for these, that Iphitus met with Odysseus,
Giving him then the bow which Eurytus formerly carried
And, at his death, did leave in his hall for his son to inherit.
And, unto him in return, a sword Odysseus presented
Also a sturdy spear, beginning of friendly alliance.
Yet, never once, at their boards did they meet one another:
for too soon
That strong son of Zeus slew Iphitus like to Immortals,
Him who had given the bow. But Odysseus left it behind him
When he set out for the war in his well-tarred ships: and it
still hung,
Stored where it was in his halls, as a valued token of friendship,
Though, when at home sometimes, he would carry and use it
for hunting.
Now, when this Goddess of women had mounted the stairs
of the tower
Unto the doorstep of oak, which a skilful builder had fashioned,
Smoothing it well with the plane and shaping it true with the
T-square,
Fixing the door-posts firm, and hanging the doors on their
hinges,
Straight she untied the thong from the ring to which it was
fastened,
Then she put in the key, and pushing it straight through the
key-hole,
Struck back the bolts of the doors: and both of the great doors
rumbled
Like to a bull in a meadow: so loud did the fair doors rumble
When they were pressed by the key: and quickly they opened
before her.
Then she stepped up on a platform where chests in order were
standing,
(And, in the chests, were robes well sprinkled with spice to
preserve them:)
And, from its peg, reached down the mighty bow of Odysseus
Still in the glistening sheath with which it was carefully covered:
Then, sitting down on the floor, on her knees she lovingly laid it,
Weeping aloud as she drew from its sheath the bow of her husband.
And, when with moaning and tears she had eased the pain of her spirit,
Then she returned to the hall, to face the swaggering suitors,
Bearing the bow in her hand, and the quiver for holding the arrows:
And, in the quiver, was stored full many an arrow and deadly.
And, at her side, a chest was borne by her maidens, containing Copper and iron in plenty, the trophies won by Odysseus.
But, when at length she came to the suitors, this Goddess-like woman,
Promptly she took her stand by a post that supported the roof-tree,
Holding, in front of her cheeks, the flaps of her glistening head-dress:
And, without any delay, she spoke to the suitors assembled:
"Listen to me, you haughty men, who have made it your habit
Daily to eat and drink, at the cost of this household of ours,
While that my husband and lord long time has been absent:
nor could you
Find any other pretence to excuse your stay in my palace
Than that each one of you wishes to marry and make me his consort.
But come, suitors, I now will give you something to strive for:
And I will set as the prize this bow of the godlike Odysseus:
And whosoever it be shall both most easily string it,
And shall be able to shoot through the rings of a dozen of axe-heads,
Him will I follow: and though I here am lawfully mistress,
Yet I will leave my home, so fair and stored with provisions,
Which, though it be but in dreams, I think I shall ever remember."
So did she speak: and she bade the grand old swineherd Eumæus
That he should hand to the suitors, the bow and the grey-steel axe-heads:
And, with a tear, he took them and laid them in front of the suitors.
Also the herdsman wept when he looked on the bow of his master.
And, when he saw them weep, Antinoüs spoke and reviled them:

"Pair of clodhopping fools, who have no more sense than an infant,
Why are you blubbering there, and upsetting the lady you mistress?
She has got plenty of trials as it is, through losing her husband
Let alone being annoyed by a couple of asses like you are.
But, if you can't sit down, and eat your supper in silence,
You can go out and weep, and leave the bow and the arrows
That we may try our skill: but somehow I have a suspicion
'Twill be a mighty hard trial: for to string such a bow is not easy
Since there is no one now, among all this company present,
Such as Odysseus was: and indeed myself I have seen him,
And I remember him well, though I was but a youngster at that time."

But, though he spoke like this, he secretly hoped to succeed in
Stringing the bow and shooting throughout that line of th' axe-heads.
But he was destined to prove the first that would taste of an arrow
Shot by the hand of Odysseus, the man in whose hall he was seated,
Whom he was treating with scorn, and inciting the rest to do likewise.

Then did the sacred might of Telemachus speak to the suitors:

"Heavens above! it seems that Zeus must have made me a trifier:
Here is my own dear mother, for all her discretion and prudence
Wanting to leave our home and become the wife of another,
And I am cheerful and gay, meanwhile, as if nothing had happened.
But come, suitors, since now the prize that is set for your winning
Is of a wife whose equal cannot be found in Achaia,
Neither in sacred Pylos nor yet in Mycené or Argos,
As you yourselves know well—But why should I praise my own mother?
Come now, no more excuses, but brace yourselves to the task of..."
Stringing the bow, that we all may see the proof of your prowess.
And I should also myself be glad to take part in the contest:
For, could I string the bow and shoot through the line of the axe-heads,
I should be well content though my mother should leave our home and
Marry another man, since I should be left in our castle
Able to win and keep the trophies gained by my father.”

Promptly he sprang to his feet, and cast his cloak from his shoulders,
And he unbuckled also the keen-edged sword that he carried:
And, to begin with, he dug a long straight trench, and he shaped it
True with the line: and along it he placed in succession the axe-heads,
Piling the earth at the sides: and those who were watching him wondered
How he could do it so neatly without any practice beforehand.
Then did he take his stand on the platform to make his endeavour:
Thrice did he strain at the bow till his arms with the effort did tremble:
Thrice was he also forced to slacken his pull, though he still hoped
That he would stretch the string, and shoot through the line of the axe-heads.
And, very like, at the fourth attempt, he might have succeeded,
Had not his father restrained him by shaking his head as a signal.
Then did he speak once more to the suitors assembled around him:

“Comrades, it seems, alas, I shall be a weakling for ever,
Or, it may be, I am still too young, and have not acquired
Strength to resist a man who wantonly seeks to insult me.
But come, those of you here whose strength is greater than mine is,
Make your trial of the bow, and bring this match to a finish.”

So he resigned the bow for the use of the man who would follow,
Laying it gently down on the polished planks of the platform:
As for the arrow, he stood it upright in a rack that was handy:
And he again sat down on the seat from whence he had risen.

Then did Antinoës rise and speak to the company present:

"Comrades, let each in turn rise up and make trial of his prowess,
Starting, from left to right, at the place where the vintner is standing."

Thus did Antinoës speak: and they all approved his suggestion.
And the first man to rise was the son of Ἀἐνόπ, Ἀδές,
He was their ritual priest, and he always sat in a corner
With a big bowl at his side: and he, above all, was possessed by
Hate and unreason and envy against the rest of the suitors,
And it was he was the first to take up the bow and the arrow.
So, having taken his stand on the platform, he made his
endeavour:
Yet, did he fail in his end, for his hands being soft and
unseasoned,
Soon as he pulled, gave way: and thus he spoke to the others:
"I cannot string it, my friends: let anyone take it who
wishes:
For I perceive this bow will bring to confusion and ruin
Many a princely man: for death itself would be better
Than to live on disgraced, and fail in attaining the object
Which we are met to pursue, and which we are daily expecting.
Now I daresay there are some who still have the hope and
intention
Shortly to marry the wife of Odysseus, son of Ὑαίρτης:
But, when they see this bow, and have made their effort to
string it,
Then let them seek elsewhere for a dame of the long-robed
Achaeans
Whom they may woo with gifts: and let the lady our hostess
Marry the destined man who brings the costliest presents."

So he resigned the bow for the use of the man who would
follow,
Laying it down by his side on the well-planed planks of the
flooring.
As for the arrow, he stood it upright in a rack that was handy:
Then he sat down once more, on the seat from whence he had risen.
Then did Antinoüs call him by name, and sharply reproached him:

"What sort of word is this, that has slipped through your teeth, Leödes?

'Twas an outrageous word that makes me indignant to hear it. Is it so sure that the bow will bring to confusion and ruin Many a princely man, because yourself cannot string it?
And I will say to your face that never the lady your mother Made you the sort of man to handle a bow or an arrow.
But 'twill be strung very soon by some one else of the suitors."

So did he speak, and he called to Melanthius, chief of the goatherds:

"Come now, kindle a fire, Melanthius, here on the hearthstone,
And put a bench with a fleece, in front of the fire to sit on,
And then bring from the larder a lump of suet, that we men
When we have warmed the bow, and rubbed it well with the ointment,
May have another try, and bring this match to a finish."

So did he speak: and a red-hot fire Melanthius kindled,
Placing a bench with a fleece in front of the fire to sit on:
Also a great lump of suet he brought from the store in the larder:
And, having greased the bow, once more they attempted to string it,
But, in this matter, they failed: for their strength was far from sufficient.
Meanwhile, Antinoüs held aloof, and Eurymachus also,
These were the chief of the suitors, for they by far were the bravest.

Then did the herdsman depart, and with him also the swineherd,
Walking together: for both were retainers of godlike Odysseus:
And, after waiting a while, Odysseus quietly followed,
And, having passed outside, of the gates and the courtyard beyond it,
Then did he call to the men, and in courteous words he addressed them:

"Herdsman, and swineherd too, there's something I'm wishing to tell you:
Or shall I leave it unsaid? But my heart is bursting to say it: What sort of men would you be to give help to your master Odysseus

If, by the favour of Heaven, he came to his home unexpected? Would you give help to him, or would you give help to the suitors?

Answer me just as your heart and the spirit within you is prompting."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the chief of the herdsmen:

"Zeus our father, if only Thou wouldest grant my petition, That, by the favour of Heaven, our king may return to his country,

Then would a stout pair of hands, I vow, be brought to his service."

And, in like manner, Eumæus made prayer to all the Immortals That the wise-hearted Odysseus might come back safe to his homeland.

But, when Odysseus was thus assured of their friendship towards him,

Then did he speak again: and these were the words that he uttered:

"Here is my very own self: after toils and troubles uncounted, Now, in the twentieth year, have I reached the land of my fathers.

But I know well that, to you alone of all my retainers, Am I a welcome guest: for never a one of the others Have I yet heard to pray that I might return in safety.

But, to you two, will I tell exactly that which will happen. If it shall be that God will subdue these insolent suitors Under my hand, you shall each have wife and plenty of riches, And shall have houses too, built close to my own, and thenceforward

Shall you be honoured by me as my son's own comrades and brothers.

And I will give you now a proof that cannot be mistaken, That you may be convinced beyond all possible doubting: Here is the scar, where once the tusk of the wild boar gashed me When I had gone on a hunt with Autolycus' sons to Parnassus."
Then, he drew back his rags, and the ancient scar was uncovered.
And those two, when they saw it and recognized every detail, Threw their arms round Odysseus the world-wise and burst into weeping, Fondled him lovingly over, and kissed his head and his shoulders. Also Odysseus kissed their heads and their hands in like manner. And, it may be, that they would have continued a-moaning till sunset, Had he not spoken a word to calm their minds and restrain them:
"Cease from groaning and tears, my friends, lest any one coming Out of the hall should see us, and so our plans be discovered. But let us enter the house in succession and not in a body, Firstly myself, then you: and let this be agreed on between us, (For I perceive that those others, the insolent suitors, will surely Try to prevent you from giving to me the bow and the quiver) Do you, godlike Eumæus, come straight through the building, and put them Into no hands but mine: and then you must order the women Promptly to shut and lock the door of the dwelling apartments. And, should a groan be heard, or din of foemen in mortal Combat within our walls, let no one go forth to enquire, But let him take no notice, and keep to his business in silence. And, for your share in the work, Philætius, these are my orders: Shoot the bolts of the courtyard gates, and chain them securely."
Thus having spoken, he entered the building so pleasant and cheerful,
Taking his seat once more, on the bench from which he had risen:
And, in due course, those two, his faithful retainers, did follow, Just as Eurymachus held the bow, and was turning it over, Warming it here and there at the fire: he was not however Able to string it, but groaned aloud for hope disappointed: And, in his rage and despair, his words broke forth as a torrent:
"Curse my luck: I am sick at heart for myself and the others. Not that I grieve so much for losing my chance of the marriage: For, to be sure, we can find Achaean women in plenty, Both in this island here, and in many a town of Achaia:"
But, if we prove so far less strong than the godlike Odysseus
That, when we handle his bow, we are not able to string it,
Why, we should be disgraced for generations to follow."

But, unto him, thus spoke Antinoüs, son of Eupeithes:
"That will not be the case, Eurymachus: and I believe you
See it yourself: for to-day, is a sacred feast to Apollo
Held by the people: and who, at a time like this, could succeed in
Stringing a bow? So 'tis best to put it away and be quiet:
And, if we leave the axes to stay where they are, why I don't
think
Any one's likely to come to the hall of Odysseus to steal them.
Come, let the vintner pour, into each man's tankard, the portion
Due to the Gods, and then, when libation is made, we will lay
down
Arrows and bow, and bid that Melanthius, early to morrow,
Bring to the house the pick of all the goats in the pastures,
That, having offered the thighs to the glorious archer Apollo,
We may make trial of the bow, and bring this match to a finish."

Thus did Antinoüs speak: and all approved his suggestion.
Then, on the hands of the feasters, the stewards poured water,
and young men
Served the Gods' portion first, then crowned the goblets with
liquor.
And when libation was made, and all had drunk to their
pleasure,
Then, with a crafty design, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Listen to me, good Sirs, who are courting the queen whom
we honour,
And 'tis Antinoüs chiefly, and also Eurymachus, whom I
Here am addressing, because he spoke just now with discretion:
Better to rest for a while, and entrust the issue to Heaven:
And, in the morning, will God give strength to whomever he
pleases.
But come, give me a turn with the bow, that here in your
presence
I may make trial of my skill, and see if I yet have remaining
Some of the vigour I had when my limbs were youthful and
supple,
Or if my strength has been sapped by my life of roaming and
hardship."
So did he speak: and the men were indignant and angry, although they
Feared he might string the bow after all: but Antinoüs straightway
Called him a name of reproach, and thus he roughly reviled him:
"Wretched fool of a stranger, with no more sense than an infant,
Aren't you contented to sit, and feast in quiet amongst us
Nobles and princes here, and share our banquet, and listen
As you may please to our talk? for, besides you, never another
Beggarly vagrant can sit, and hear what we say to each other.
But 'tis the wine has got in your head: which brings into trouble
Many a man who swills it down without moderation.
Wine was the cause of the wounds which the centaur Eurytion suffered,
Guest in Peirithoüs' hall: for there he had gone on a visit
Into the Lapithae land: but with wine he fuddled his senses,
And, like a madman, wrought havoc within Peirithoüs' castle.
Then did the warriors rise in wrath, and seizing the centaur,
Dragged him beyond the porch, and straightway, with pitiless hatchet,
Cut off his ears and his nose: so he, as one that was moonstruck,
Wandered in pain and endured the hurt that drove him to madness.
That is the way that the strife began 'twixt men and the centaurs.
And it was he himself, whom first his drunkenness injured.
So, to you also, I promise a mighty disaster, if ever
You were to string that bow: for you may expect no mercy
Here, in this house of ours: but straight on the spot we shall ship you
Off to king Echetus' land, the dread destroyer of mortals,
Whence you will never return. But take my advice, and be quiet,
Drink your wine, nor contend with men who are younger than you are."

Then did Penelopé take up the word, and thus she addressed him:
"'Twould not be seemly or just, Antinoüs, so to mishandle
One of Telemachus' friends, whoever may come to his palace.
Even supposing our guest, on his strength and vigour relying,
Should be successful in stringing the mighty bow of Odysseus,
Do you expect he will lead me home, and make me his consort?
I should be much surprised if himself has any such notion.
Neither let any of you be anxious or troubled on this score
While he is feasting here: for the thing is out of the question."

Then did Eurymachus, Polybus' son, thus plainly address her:
"Noble Icarius' daughter, Penelope pearl of discretion,
I have no fear that the man will make you his wife: 'tis unlikely:
But I feel shame when I think of the talk both of men and of
women,
Lest some low-class Achæan should say, perchance, to his fellow:
'Those fine men who are courting the wife of our king must be vastly
Weaker than he, for they can't even string the bow that he carried:
While that a wretched tramp who chanced to come to the castle
Easily strung the bow, and shot through the line of the axe-heads
And it will prove for us a disgrace that will ne'er be forgotten."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"Sir, if you talk of esteem, you will not be esteemed by the people
Should you continue, as now, with scorn to consume the
possessions
Of a distinguished man: why fear these imagined reproaches?
As for the stranger, his well-knit frame and his greatness of
stature
Prove him to be, as he claims, of a father nobly descended.
Come now, give him the bow, and then we can judge of his
prowess:
For I will tell you plainly, and this will not fail of fulfilment,
If he shall string the bow, and Apollo shall grant his petition,
I will array him bravely, in tunic and cloak of the choicest,
And I will give him a dart to ward off the dogs and the robbers,
Also a two-edged sword, and sandals into the bargain:
And I will send him wherever his heart or fancy may lead him."

But, unto her in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"Mother, no other Achæan has right more certain than I have
Either to give the bow to whom I may please, or withhold it,
Whether it be some chief of our rugged Ithaca, or of
One of the other islands that lie off horse-rearing Elis:
But not one of them all shall put on me any compulsion
If, for his very own, I should give this bow to the stranger.
And now go to your chamber, attend to the web and the distaff, Which are your special work, and bid your maiden attendants Busy themselves with their tasks: but bows are for men to deal with,
And for myself above all: for I, in this house, am the master.”

And, in amazement, the queen went back to the women’s apartments, For she had laid to heart her son’s most prudent injunction. And, going up to her chamber along with her women attendants, There did she weep for her lord, till sleep the soother of sorrow Over her eyelids was shed by the grey-eyed Goddess Athené. As for the swineherd, he took the bow and the arrows to give them Into Odysseus’ hand: but a shout rose up from the suitors, And one of these proud men called out as Eumæus was passing: “Where are you taking that bow, and the arrows, disgusting old swineherd? Fool: very soon your dogs will be making a meal of your carcase Where you have none to help, but only the swine: if Apollo Sends us good luck, and the rest of the blessed Immortals of heaven.”

So did they talk: and he stopped, and laid the bow on the pavement, Being afraid of the crowd that was shouting in anger against him. But, from the other side, Telemachus threatening called out: “Daddy, take the bow on, and don’t mind what they are saying, Or I shall pelt you with stones, and drive you out of the city, For I am younger than you, and stronger into the bargain. And I could wish that I was by so much stronger than all these Suitors within these walls, for then would I drive them in panic Out of the house: for in truth they are nothing but plotters of evil.”

So did he speak: and his words set all the suitors a-laughing Merrily: so they forgot their bitter anger against him, While that the swineherd bore, through the hall, the bow and the arrows, And, coming close to his lord, in the hands of Odysseus he placed them. Then did he call the nurse Eurycleia, and spoke to her softly: “Dame Eurycleia the prudent, ’tis thus Telemachus orders:
Shut, and lock with the key, the doors of the dwelling apartments:
And, should a groan be heard, or the din of foemen in mortal Combat within our walls, let no one go forth to enquire,
But let him take no notice, and keep to his business in silence."

Thus did he speak: and the word did not flutter unheeded and fruitless:
But she locked fast the doors of the dwelling rooms pleasant and cheerful:
While, without saying a word, Philætius sprang through the doorway,
And, in a moment, had shut the gates of the strongly-fenced courtyard.
Now, in the cloister, there lay the hempen rope of a galley:
And, having fastened the gates with this, he re-entered the palace,
Where he sat down once more, on the seat from which he had risen,
Keeping his eye on Odysseus, who now had the bow in possession
Turning it this way and that, and feeling it over to test it,
Lest, while it hung in the loft, the worms might have eaten the horn-tips.
And, you might hear one say, with a sidelong glance at his neighbour:
"This man must be an expert in bows, or perhaps a collector: I should not wonder to find he has similar ones in his workshop:
Or, it may be, he wants to make one like it, the rascal:
See how he feels it and tests it, and turns it over and over."
And then another of these young roystering fellows would answer:
"Wouldn't it be good fun if he should be able to string it?"
Thus then the suitors were talking: but as for resourceful Odysseus,
When he had handled the bow, and examined each separate detail,
Just as a man who is skilled in singing and playing the lyre Easily stretches a string, on a peg which has needed renewal,
Fastening neatly the ends of a length, well twisted, of sheep-gut,
So, without trouble or haste, was the great bow strung by Odysseus.
Then, with his right-hand fingers, he gently plucked at the bowstring:
And it gave forth a sweet soft note like the song of a swallow.
And, through the suitors, there shot a pang of terror: their faces Paled when they heard it: and Zeus loud thundered from heaven in warning.
Then was he glad at heart, the divine much-enduring Odysseus,
For that a signal had come from the son of Kronos the crafty, And he picked up an arrow which lay on the table before him Out of its sheath: but the rest were lying inside of the quiver Ready against the time when the boastful Achæans should taste them.
Laying it over his wrist, he pulled the notch and the bowstring, Nor did he trouble to rise from the bench, but aiming straight forward,
Shot with the bow right through the entire line of the axe-heads. In at the first of the row, and out at the last went the arrow, Missing not one. And then did he say, to Telemachus turning:
"See, Telemachus, how that your guest hasn't brought you discredit.
Even though sitting, I made no miss, nor was I a long time Stringing the bow. 'Tis plain my strength is as trusty as ever. Not at this rate will the suitors be able to scorn and insult me. But it is now high time to prepare the Achæans a supper While it is day, and then, with music and song to make merry After a different fashion: for these are the crown of a banquet."
Then did he sign with his brows: and Telemachus, quick at the signal,
Girt a sharp sword at his side, dear son of the godlike Odysseus, And in his dear hand grasped his spear, and, close to his father, Stood by the side of his chair full armed with glittering weapons.
BOOK XXII

SLAUGHTER OF THE SUITORS

THEN he stripped off his beggarly rags, the resourceful Odysseus,
And, on the broad raised platform, he leaped with his bow and the quiver
Bursting with arrows: and these he poured out in order before him
Down on the ground: and thus he spoke to the crowd of the suitors:
"There you behold this task, impossible seeming, accomplished.
Now, at a different mark, will I aim, a strange and a new one, And I shall see if Apollo will grant me the glory to hit it."
And, even as he was speaking, he pointed the death-dealing arrow
Straight where Antinoüs stood, who was just in the action of raising
Gracefully, unto his lips, a cup of gold double-handled, So as to drink his wine, little thinking of death or of slaughter. For who would think that a man, in the midst of a party of feasters, One among many, though strong and exceeding valiant he might be, Had in his mind to deal black fate and violent murder?
So 'twas at him that he aimed: and the point of the death-bearing arrow Struck in the front of his throat, and passed right through and beyond it: And, in a heap, he collapsed: and the golden cup he was holding Fell from his hand at the stroke: and a thick dark jet of his life-blood Gushed from his nostrils: and falling, he struck the table before him,
And, on the ground were strewn the various dainties it carried, 
So that the bread and meat were soaked in his gore. But a 
hubbub 
Rose from the whole of the suitors on seeing the fall of their 
comrade: 
And, in all parts of the hall, they sprang from their seats in 
excitement, 
Eagerly scanning the walls in search of possible weapons: 
But there was never a shield or a sturdy spear at their service. 
So, in their rage and fear, they began to rail at Odysseus: 
"You will pay dearly, O stranger, for shooting at men with 
your arrows: 
And you will shoot no more: for now your destruction is certain: 
Seeing this man you have slain was, of all the Ithacan chieftains, 
Far and away the foremost: and therefore the vultures shall eat 
you."
Then did they check themselves, for they said that he had 
not intended 
Really to kill the man: but they did not perceive in their folly 
How that each one of them all, was poised on the brink of 
destruction.
But, them sternly regarding, thus spoke the resourceful 
Odysseus:
"Dogs, who were always so sure that never again would you see 
me 
Safely returned from Troy, that you dared to devour my sub-
stance 
And, by compulsion and force, to sleep with the maids of the 
household, 
And to pay infamous court to my wife while still I was living, 
Having no fear of the Gods whose home is the vault of the 
heavens, 
Nor of the vengeance that men will surely exact for your outrage. 
Know that each man of you all, is poised on the brink of 
destruction."
So did he speak: and they all turned green with sickening 
terror: 
But 'twas Eurymachus only, took heart and addressed him in 
answer: 
"If you are truly Odysseus of Ithaca come to your homeland
All that you say is just, of the way the Achæans have acted: For, many wanton deeds, have they done in farm and in mansion. But he is dead already, who was at the root of the trouble, That is Antinoüs, who, in this mischief, was ever the leader: Not that he cared very much for this marriage, or strongly desired it, But he had other ideas, which Zeus was not pleased to accomplish, Namely, that he himself might be king of the Ithacan nation: And, for that end, he lay wait for your son, with purpose to kill him. Now he is justly slain: and we will atone for his error Publicly: for, of the men who have eaten and drunk in your palace, Every one shall bring a score of oxen as ransom: And we will give you gold and silver as much as you wish for, So you will spare our lives: for we, after all, are your people. But, until then, we admit that you had good right to be angry.” But, him sternly regarding, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: “Sir, should you choose to restore in full my ancestral possessions, All that you have in your hands, and anything else in addition, Not even so should my hand be stayed from slaughter, until that I had repaid you suitors for every insolent outrage. Now, if you wish to escape from death, the choice is before you, Either to stand and fight, or to flee as best you are able: But I opine that none will escape from headlong destruction.” So did he speak: and their knees gave way, and their hearts were a-tremble. Then, for the second time, Eurymachus spoke to his comrades: “Friends, it is plain that the man will not stay his hand from the slaughter, Now he has got in his hands his well-polished bow and his quiver, But will continue to shoot, from the platform where he is standing Till he has slain us all. So here’s for blood and for glory. Draw your swords, my friends, and hold up the tables before you Warding his arrows away, and then, in a body together Charge at the man, and push him by main force out of the doorway.
Then let us go through the city, and summon the townsmen to help us:
And it will quickly appear that the man has shot his last arrow.”
And, as he spoke, he drew his keen bronze sword from the scabbard,
(Sharp on both edges it was) and sprang with a bound on Odysseus,
Uttering horrible cries: but he, at the very same instant,
Let fly an arrow which pierced his breast by the side of the nipple,
And, in the liver, the dart stuck fast: and the sword he was grasping
Flew from his hand: and he, collapsing over the table,
Fell in a heap face downwards and struck the earth with his forehead:
And, on the floor, were spilt the dainties and cup double-handled:
And, in the struggles of death, he kicked, upsetting the bench where
He had before been sitting: and darkness closed o'er his eyelids.
Then did Amphinomus spring to his feet, and rushed at Odysseus,
Straight to his face, as he drew his sharp bronze sword from the scabbard,
Hoping his foe would give way: but Telemachus smartly forestalled him,
And, with his bronze-tipped spear, between the shoulders he struck him,
Thrusting him through from behind: and, right through the lungs, did he pierce him:
And, with a thud, he fell, and his face struck flat on the pavement.
Back did Telemachus spring, but left withal the long-shafted Spear in Amphinomus' corpse: for he feared lest any Achæan Might, with a rush, if he stooped to pull the spear from the body, Do him to death with his sword, or strike him prone on the flooring:
So he was fain to run: and quickly he came to his father,
And, as he stood by his side, these words he hurriedly uttered: “Father, I'll go at once, and bring two spears and a buckler, Also a helmet of bronze that easily fits on the temples,
Also get arms for myself, and bring some arms for the swine-
herd
And for the herdsman: because to be armed is half of the battle.”
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
“Bring them, but run, and be back while I still have arrows
remaining,
Lest, being only one, they should drive me away from the plat-
form.”
So did he speak: and Telemachus did as his father had bidden,
Making his way to the room where the glorious weapons were
lying:
And, from the store, he chose four shields, four brass-fitted
helmets
Decked with long horsehair plumes, and eight spears also for
throwing,
And, thus loaded, he ran, and quickly he came to his father.
Then, before anything else, he arrayed himself in his armour:
And the retainers as well girt on their beautiful weapons,
And, in a group, they stood round the wise and resourceful
Odysseus.
Now, while an arrow remained to defend himself and his party,
Still, with his deadly aim, he maintained the fight with the suitors,
Piercing them one by one: and they fell in constant succession.
But, when at last the king had no more arrows to shoot with,
Then did he stand the bow against the side of a pillar
Near to the shining wall that one faced at the entrance, and
quickly
Slung o' er his shoulders a shield of fourfold thickness of oxhide,
And, on his mighty head, he placed a well-fashioned helmet
Graced with a horse-tail crest which nodded grimly above it:
Also he grasped two spears with bronze heads skilfully fitted.
Now, in the massive wall, at the side of the hall, was a postern
Door, that was reached by steps from the farther end of the
platform:
This gave on to a passage, and close-fitting panels secured it.
And it was near to this door that Odysseus stationed the swine-
herd,
Bidding him watch it well: for there was but one way to ap-
proach it.
This Agelæus perceived, and said to the suitors around him:
"Friends, could not one of us manage to get to the postern, and call out,
Summoning help from the people, who surely would come to the rescue?
Then it would quickly appear that the man had shot his last arrow."

But, unto him, thus spoke Melanthius chief of the goatherds:
"That is not possible, Sir, because the end of the passage Leads by the courtyard door, and the outlet is terribly narrow; And, in that place, a determined man could keep back a hundred. Come, let me bring you some arms, with which you may fight to advantage,
Out of the attic: for there and nowhere else, as I fancy, Have they been stored away by the king and his notable offspring."

Thus having spoken, he mounted, Melanthius, chief of the goatherds,
(Finding his way through the building by passages secret and narrow)
Unto the room in the attic, and thence took a dozen of bucklers And the same number of spears and of helmets crested with horsehair,
And, running back, he soon had delivered them all to the suitors. Then did the knees of Odysseus give way, and his heart was a-flutter
Soon as he saw that his foes were donning their armour, and poising Spears in their hands: and he spoke to his son Telemachus quickly: "One of the maids in the house, it appears, is working against us, Helping the cause of the suitors: or else 'tis that villain Melantheus."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "Father, 'twas I was to blame, and no one else, for I did not Think to make fast the door of the room in the tower, but left it Just as it was: and the others were rather more watchful than we were.
But go, godlike Eumæus, and shut the door of the chamber, And watch well whether this is the work of one of the women, Or, as I rather expect, of Dolius' son, Melantheus."

Talking in words like these, the three took counsel together, While, for a second time, Melanthius went to the chamber
That he might fetch more arms: but the godlike swineherd perceived him,
And, in a hurry, he spoke to Odysseus close at his elbow:
"Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
There is the very man that we thought was doing the mischief
Going again to the room: but in plain words give me your orders,
Whether to kill him, in case it proves that I am the stronger,
Or bring him here to you, to atone for all the transgressions
Which he has planned and committed within the house of your honour."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Have no fear but I, with Telemachus' aid shall securely
Hold these suitors at bay, however fiercely attacking:
But you must wrench back his hands and his feet and bind them together,
Cast him into the chamber, and fasten the doors behind you:
Then make him fast to the end of a twisted cart-ropе, and hoist him
Up by the side of a post, till he almost touches the rafters,
That he may hang there alive, for a long time suffering torment."

So did he speak: and they took good heed and did as he bade them.
Up to the chamber they went: and the man neither saw them nor heard them,
For he was searching for arms, inside the room, in a corner:
But they, one on each side, stood waiting without, by the door-posts.
And, when he passed through the door, Melanthius, chief of the goatherds,
Bearing, in one of his hands, a helmet of beautiful pattern,
And, in the other, a shield, broad, ancient and covered with mildew,
Which, in the time of his youth, was borne by the hero Laërtes—
And it had lain there long, and the seams of the handles were rotten—
Then, from each side, they sprang on the man, and seizing him roughly,
Dragged him inside by the hair, and threw him face down on the flooring:
And they wrenched backwards his hands and his feet, and bound them together
Tightly with painful cords, as their master Odysseus had bidden:
And, making fast to his limbs the end of a cart rope, they hauled him
Up by the side of a post, very nearly as far as the rafters.
Then, with these mocking words, did you taunt him, O swine-herd Eumæus:

"Now you will keep awake all night, Melanthius, lying
In your luxurious bed: and that you have richly deserved:
And you will not be asleep when Morning pays you a visit,
Risen from Ocean's streams, at the time when you ought to be driving
Those fat goats to the house, for the suitors to cook for their breakfast."

So he was left by himself, tight stretched in torturing bondage. But those, arming themselves, and closing the door of the chamber,
Went back at once to their king, the wise and resourceful Odysseus.
There, on the daïs they stood, four strong men breathing defiance,
Facing the crowd of the suitors, for all they were warlike and many,
And, at their side, stood Athené, the daughter of Zeus of the Ægis,
Making herself like Mentor in voice and also in figure.
Then did Odysseus rejoice, and thus he spoke to the Goddess:

"Mentor, repel their attack: remember your love for your comrade.
Oft have I come to your help as becomes a friend and an equal."
These were his words: but he guessed 'twas Athené the Rouser of nations.
Now, on the other side, the suitors were shouting together:
And 'twas Damastor's son, Agelaïs, was first in reproaches:

"Mentor, beware lest Odysseus, with wily words should persuade you
Now to come to his aid, and engage in fight with the suitors.
For this is what we intend, and also shall surely accomplish:
Whatever time we kill these two, the son and the father,
Then shall you also be killed with them, because of the mischief Which you desire to do, and for which your head shall be forfeit.
And, when with stroke of sword we have put an end to your
outrage,
We will take all your goods, both indoor and outdoor, and add
them
Unto the goods of Odysseus: and neither your sons nor your
daughter
Will we allow to live in their father's house any longer,
Nor shall your cherished wife remain in the Ithacan city."
So did he speak: but wrath welled up in the heart of Athené,
And, with indignant words, the Goddess upbraided Odysseus:
"You must have lost your strength, Odysseus, nor is your
courage
Like what it was when you fought, for nine long years, with the
Trojans,
All for the white-armed Helen, the daughter of glorious sire:
And many warrior men did you slay in the terrible battle,
And, by your counsel, we captured the splendid city of Priam.
Why do you now, when at last, you have come to your home
and possessions,
Whine in the face of the suitors because you are called to be
valiant?
Come now, and stand by me, my tender darling, and mark well
What I shall do, and see how the son of Alcimus never
Fails to repay his friends when pressed by furious foemen."
So did she speak, but yet she withheld a triumph decisive
Till she had farther proved the strength and the firm resolution,
Both of Odysseus himself, and his son Telemachus also:
But, flying up to the roof of the smoke-dimmed hall, she re-
mained there,
Perched on a beam, and looking for all the world like a swallow.
Then, thus spoke to the crowd Agelaüs the son of Damastor,
He and five others, by far the bravest men of the suitors,
That is of those who remained, and were fighting for life with
Odysseus:
For, by this time, the stream of his arrows had slaughtered the
others.
This was the counsel he gave, addressing the whole of his
comrades:
"Friends, you can see that the man is about to abandon
the contest:
Mentor has gone already, in spite of his swagger and boasting:
And they are left by themselves, these four, in front of the doorway.
Therefore I thus advise: don't throw your spears in a volley,
But let us six, to begin, take deliberate aim: and, it may be,
Zeus will give glory to us, and death or wounds to Odysseus.
And never mind for the rest, when once the leader has fallen.”
So did he speak: and the six, with right good will, as he bade them,
Hurled their spears: but they all fell harmless by grace of Athené:
One of them struck a post of the massive hall, and another
Stuck in the solid door, and another, of ash, bronze-headed,
Struck on the wall. But no sooner the spears of the suitors had missed them,
Than, in his turn, he spoke, the divine much-enduring Odysseus:
“Now it is our turn, my friends, to throw our jav’lins
Into the midst of that crowd who are fully determined to kill us
And to strip off our arms, to crown their other misdoings.”
Thus did he speak: and they aimed each man at the man he was facing.
Then Demoptolemus fell by Odysseus: Euryades also
Was by Telemachus slain, and Ellatus fell by the swineherd:
Also Peisander was killed by Philætius, chief of the herdsmen.
So these fell in a heap, and bit the ground in their struggles.
And the remainder drew back to a farther corner for shelter,
While their opponents dashed forward, and dragged their spears from the bodies.
Then, with a right good will, did another party of suitors
Hurl their spears: but by grace of Athené, they mostly fell harmless.
One of them struck a post in the massive hall, and another
Stuck in the solid door, and another, of ash, bronze-pointed,
Struck on the wall: but Amphimedon’s spear, as it chanced, very lightly
Wounded Telemachus’ hand, the bronze just grazing the surface:
Also the spear of Ctesippus glanced over the shield of Eumæus,
Making a scratch on the shoulder, and then to earth it fell harmless.
And, in their turn, once more, did the friends of resourceful Odysseus hurl their sharp-pointed spears in the midst of the crowd of the suitors.

Then was Eurydamas struck by Odysseus, the sacker of cities, and, by Telemachus one, and one was killed by the swine-herd:

Also Ctesippus was struck with a spear by the chief of the herdsmen,

Fair on the breast: who thus, in exulting fashion, reproached him:

"It is not good, Ctesippus, to yield to insolent boasting,
But to leave speech to the Gods, who are greater and stronger than we are.

Here is a present for you, in return for the ox-hoof you kindly gave to the godlike Odysseus when begging for food in the palace."

Thus did the herdsman speak. But, in hand to hand conflict, Odysseus, wounded, with long stout spear, Agelaus, the son of Damastor:

Also Telemachus pierced Leocritus, son of Evenor,

Under the ribs, and drove right through his body the spear-head:

And on the ground he fell, and smote the earth with his forehead.

Then, from on high in the roof, Athené uplifted the aegis, deadliest terror to men: and the hearts of the suitors were fluttered,

And, in a panic fear, they fled like cows in a meadow stung by the gadfly, that pest insistent, elusive and painful,

All in the lengthening days of spring, when the pastures are sunny.

As for the others, like vultures, those birds crook-beaked and taloned, which, from the mountains swoop on the harmless fowl of the lowlands,

While these cower in fear, and make for the shadows for refuge, so did they pounce on the men: nor was there a chance of resistance

Nor of escape: and men like beasts find pleasure in hunting.
Thus, with o'erwhelming force, these four men rushed at the suitors,
slaying on every side: and as heads were smitten, a dreadful Groaning arose: and the floor ran deep with the blood of the slaughtered.

But, there was one man only, Leôdes, who ran to Odysseus, Clasping his knees, and with words of hurried entreaty, implored him.

"Here I beseech you, Odysseus, to show me forbearance and
pity:
For, I assure you, I never have done or even have spoken
Any unseemly thing to the maids of your house, but have rather Tried to restrain the others, who might in this way be transgressing.
But they would not be persuaded to keep their hands from misdoing:
So, as their folly deserved, they met with a fate that was dreadful. As for myself, I have done no more than interpret the omens, Yet I must die with the rest: good deeds are never rewarded."

But, him sternly regarding, thus answered resourceful Odysseus:

"If, as you say, you remained with these to interpret the omens, You must have often prayed, as you sat in my hall with the others,
That I might never behold my day of joyful returning,
And that my wife might become your own, and bear to you children.
Therefore a painful death shall now most surely o'ertake you."

And, having spoken thus, he picked up a sword that was lying Close to his feet, on the ground, (Ageläus when dying had dropped it)
And, with a sturdy stroke, he smote the neck of Leôdes:
And, in the midst of his speech, his head was rolled on the pavement.

But there was yet one man had escaped from slaughter, the singer Phemius, who, by compulsion, was forced to sing to the suitors: And he was standing near, beside the steps to the postern, Holding the clear-toned lyre: and this way and that he debated Whether to take his seat by the altar of Zeus of the Ægis,
Built in the courtyard, on which Laërtes and also Odysseus,
Many a time, had burnt fat thighs of oxen, or rather
Run up and clasp the knees of Odysseus and beg him for mercy.
And, as he thought it over, the course which seemed to be better
Was to take hold of the knees of Odysseus, son of Laërtes.
So, on the ground, he laid the hollow lyre, for safety.
Hidden between a bowl, and a seat that was studded with silver.
Then he ran forward himself, and clasped the knees of Odysseus,
And, in his fear, poured forth these words of hurried entreaty:
“Here, I beseech you, Odysseus, to show me forbearance
and pity:
For, by and by, your heart will be grieved, if now in your anger
You should destroy a bard who sings to Gods and to mortals.
And I have never been taught: for God in my mind has im-
planted
Songs of all kinds: and, whenever I sing to your Honour, me-
thinks I
Sing to a God: and why should you cut my throat like a
butcher?
Also Telemachus here, your son, will be able to tell you
That ’twas against my will, I used to come to the banquets
Held in this hall of yours, in order to sing to the suitors:
But, being many in number, and stronger far, they compelled me.”
Thus did he speak: and the sacred might of Telemachus
heard him:
And it was thus he spoke to his father standing beside him:
“Hold your hand, my father, nor wound a man who is guilt-
less:
And we will also save the herald Medon, who always
Used to take care of me here at home when I was a youngster:
That is to say if the swineherd, or may be Philætius, has not
Killed him already, or else he has chanced upon you in your
anger.”
So did he speak: and Medon o’erheard the words he was saying,
As he lay crouching beneath a bench, wrapped up in the new-
flayed
Skin of an ox, in hope to escape black Death and destruction.
Quickly, from under the bench, he sprang, and threw off the
oxhide,
And, running up, he clasped the knees of the son of Odysseus, and, as he did so, he spoke in words of hurried entreaty:

"Here am I, dear young master, have pity and speak to your father,
That, in his overwhelming strength, he may not destroy me:
For he was justly incensed at the suitors, who clipped his possessions,
Living at his expense: and you in their folly they slighted."

And, unto him, with a smile, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Have no fear: for my son has gained you forgiveness already,
That you may know in your heart, and be able to tell to another,
How it is safer far not even to dally with evil.
But you must leave at once, this hall that is reeking of slaughter,
You and the minstrel bard, and sit by yourselves in the courtyard,
That I may do, inside the house, whatever is needful."

So did he speak: and the two went out as quickly as might be,
And, with much haste, sat down by the altar of Zeus in the forecourt,
Looking around in fear, lest death might lurk in a corner.
Meanwhile Odysseus was searching throughout his house, on the chance that
Someone might yet lie hid, in hope to escape from destruction.
But, one and all of the suitors were found 'mid the blood and the ashes,
Lying where each had fallen, in heaps, like fish whom the fishers Newly have dragged from the foam, in a net with its thousands of meshes,
On to the curving beach: and there they are piled in confusion
Over the sand, and gasp for the clear salt wave of the ocean:
Soon does the blazing sun suck out the life from their bodies:
Just so, one on another, in heaps the suitors were lying.
And, to Telemachus, then, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"Go, my Telemachus, bid your nurse Eurycleia to come here,
That I may speak of a matter I think of no common importance."

So did Odysseus speak: and Telemachus did as he bade him,
And, pushing open the door, he called to his nurse Eurycleia:
"Rise and come here, dame nurse, who have the care and direction
Over the serving maids in this palace of ours; my father
Calls you to go to him, having something important to tell you."
Thus did he speak to the nurse: and the word did not flutter unheeded:
But she threw open the doors, of the house so fair to inhabit,
Starting at once on her way, Telemachus going before her.
Then did she find Odysseus, who stood in the midst of the corpses,
Spattered with blood and gore, for all the world like a lion
Fresh from his meal on an ox he has killed in the meadow:
and both cheeks
Drip with the crimson blood, a visage most fearsome to look at:
So was Odysseus on hands and feet and body bespattered.
But, when she saw the corpses in pools of blood on the pavement,
Straightway she raised a wail, for the work she beheld was appalling:
Yet, though she trembled with fear, Odysseus calmly restrained her,
Speaking unstudied words: and this was the way he addressed her:
"You should be glad, old dame, this is not an occasion for wailing:
Though it is ill to exult over men who have fallen: yet these men
Justly deserved their doom for the evil deeds they committed:
For that they paid respect to never a man or a woman,
Neither to good nor bad, whomever it chanced that they met with.
So, through their impious folly, a fate unseemly o'ertook them.
But come, give me a list of the maids who are under your orders,
Those who dishonour my name, and also those who are blameless."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the nurse Eurycleia:
"Surely, my son, I will tell you the truth without fraud or evasion:
Know there are fifty maids that are now employed in your palace
Who, by my mistress and me, have been carefully trained in their duties,
Combing and carding wool, or doing the work of the household:
Twelve and no more of these have committed acts that were shameful,
Paying no heed to me, and even defying their mistress,  
Yes, and Telemachus too, who was hardly grown up: and his  
mother  
Did not allow him to interfere with the women attendants:  
But I will go upstairs to the glistening chamber, and there will  
Speak to your lady, to whom some God, sweet slumber, has  
granted.”  

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:  
“Do not awake her yet, but go and summon the women,  
All who, before this time, have committed actions unseemly.”  
Thus did he speak: and the dame passed through to the  
dwelling apartments,  
Taking his word to the women, and bidding them come on the  
instant.  
Then, to his side, he called his son and his faithful retainers,  
Herdsman and swineherd, and thus, in hurried words he  
addressed them:  
“Make a beginning yourselves, of clearing the hall of the  
corpses,  
Then set the women to work, and afterwards set them to washing  
All the tables and chairs with water and honeycomb sponges.  
But, soon as things in the house are thoroughly cleansed and in  
order,  
Bring them outside the hall, and there, ’twixt the back of the  
kitchen  
And the high wall of the court, with long sharp swords, you  
must surely  
Put them to death each one: and so they will no more remember  
All the lascivious acts which they and the suitors committed.”  
So did he speak: and the women, they came in huddled  
together,  
Uttering piteous wails: and tears on their faces were streaming.  
First, they took up the bodies of those who were slaughtered,  
and bore them  
Out of the hall, and in rows, in the porch of the forecourt, they  
laid them,  
Propping them one on another: Odysseus gave them directions,  
Urging them on: and the women obeyed his commands by  
compulsion.  
Then did they set to work to cleanse the seats and the tables,
Washing them perfectly clean with water and honeycomb sponges.
Meanwhile, Telemachus, helped by the swineherd and chief of the herdsman,
Thoroughly scraped with scrapers the solid floor of the building:
While that the women tipped down the dirt outside in the courtyard,
But, soon as things in the house were thoroughly cleansed and in order,
Then did they bring them outside, and into the courtyard, and there they
crowded them into a corner from which was no hope of escaping,
Hemmed in between the wall of the court and the back of the kitchen.
Then did the prudent Telemachus speak, and sharply accost them:
"Heaven forbid I should kill, without some mark of dishonour,
Those who have brought disgrace on the head of myself and my mother,
Thinking no shame to become the paramours of the suitors."
So did he speak, and he stretched the mooring rope of a galley
Tightly between a solid post and the roof of the kitchen,
Fixing it high, that none, with her feet, might reach to the pavement.
And, as perchance you have seen the long-winged pigeons or fieldfares
Strike their heads on a rail which is fixed half hid in a thicket
As they are going to roost (but a hateful roosting awaits them),
So were their heads in a row, and around each neck was a slip knot,
That they might, one and all, most wretchedly die: and they struggled,
Just for a little while, with their feet: it was but a little.
Then did they bring Melanthius out through the porch and the courtyard:
And they cut off his nose and his ears with the pitiless hatchet,
And, with an axe, they chopped off his hands and his feet in their anger.
Then, having washed with water, their hands and their feet, they returned
Into the house of Odysseus: and all their work had been finished. Then did Odysseus turn, and speak to his nurse Eurycleia:

"Bring me sulphur, old dame, that cures all evils, and bring me Fire to fumigate this hall: and say to your mistress That I desire her presence along with her women attendants: And will you call as well, the whole of the maids in the palace."

And, in reply, thus spoke his dear old nurse Eurycleia:

"All that you say, my son, is perfectly right and becoming: But let me bring you first some clothes, a cloak and a tunic, And do not stand in the hall like that, with nothing but tatters Wrapped round your great strong shoulders: 'twould make us sorry to see it."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

"First, we must give this hall a good fumigation with sulphur."

Thus did he speak: and his dear old nurse was not disobedient, But she brought brimstone and fire, as bidden: and, with it, Odysseus Purified well the hall and the buildings around and the forecourt. Then the old dame went back through the beautiful house of Odysseus Bidding the women to come with speed as the king had commanded. So, with their torches in hand, they came from the dwelling apartments:

And, as they gathered around him, they greeted and clung to Odysseus, Holding his hands in theirs, and kissed his head and his shoulders: And, in the heart of Odysseus, arose a sad yet delicious Passion to burst into tears, as each kind face he remembered.
BOOK XXIII

PENELOPE RECOGNIZES ODYSSEUS

But the old dame, meanwhile, had gone to the room of her mistress,
Laughing aloud with joy, to tell of her husband's arrival:
Strode she along so fast that her feet did seem in a twinkle:
And, by the head of her mistress, she stood, and thus she addressed her:

"Wake, Penelope, wake, dear child, and see with your own eyes
What you have longed to see, and prayed for days without number.
He has come back to his home at last, the godlike Odysseus,
And he has killed those men, the haughty suitors, who long time
Rudely coerced his son, and robbed his house and possessions."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:

"Nurse dear, the Gods must have made you mad, for indeed
they will sometimes
Utterly rob of his mind a person of good understanding,
As they have now, it appears, set Folly astride of your senses,
Though, hitherto, there was no one more sober of judgement
than you were.

Why do you mock me thus, who have so much to distress me,
Saying such random words? for you woke me up from a slumber
Sweeter than ever closed my tired eyes in oblivion:
For I had never enjoyed a sleep like that, since Odysseus
Sailed to the siege of Troy, that name too hateful to mention.
But you had better go down, and back to the hall that you came from,
For had it been some other of these my women attendants
Brought me a tale like this, and waked me up from my slumber,
I should have sent her off very soon with something to cry for
Into the servants' room: but, for once, your age shall excuse you."

And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the nurse Eurycleia:
"I am not speaking in jest, dear child, but really and truly
He has come back to his home, and is now in the house as
I tell you:
He was the stranger whom all those men in the hall were
insulting:
Yes, and a long time ago, Telemachus knew of his coming,
But he had kept concealed the designs of his father from
prudence
That he might fitly requite the deeds of these insolent suitors."
So did she speak: but, in joy, Penelope sprang to her feet, and
Threw both arms round the neck of the dame, while a tear
from her eyelid
Stole down her cheek, and words from her lips flowed fast and
unbidden:
"Tell me the truth, dear nurse: whatever it be I can bear it.
If he has really come back, and is now in his home, as you
tell me,
How did he lay strong hands on the shameless and insolent
suitors,
All by himself, while the others remained indoors in a body?"
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke dear nurse Eurycleia:
"Nothing at all have I seen or been told: but only a groaning
Reached us, of men being slain: but we all sat huddled together,
Quaking with fear, shut in by the doors of the women's apart-
ments
Which were kept tightly closed, till at last Telemachus entered,
Sent from the hall by his father to summon us into his presence.
Then did I find Odysseus, erect in the midst of the corpses,
Standing alone: and the corpses were strewn on the pavement
around him,
Heaps upon heaps: 'twould have warmed the heart in your
breast to have seen it.
Now have the bodies been piled, in a row, at the gates of the
courtyard,
While that with fumes of sulphur, Odysseus is cleansing the
palace,
Kindling a red hot fire: and he sent me forward to call you.
But come, follow me now, that your dear hearts newly united
May be refreshed and glad: for many a trial have you suffered.
For, now at last, your prayer, so long delayed, is accomplished:
He has come back to his hearth, and has found, alive and in safety,
Both yourself and his son: and, to all those insolent suitors
Who were destroying his house, he has dealt well-merited vengeance."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelopé answered:
"It is too soon, dear nurse, for exaltation and laughter:
But you must know how welcome, to all, would be his appearance
Here in his halls, but chiefly, to me and the son whom I bore him.
Nevertheless 'tis not really true, this story you tell me,
But some immortal God has killed those men overbearing,
Angered against their pride and deeds of criminal outrage.
Seeing they paid respect to never a man or a woman,
Neither to good nor bad, who by ill luck happened to meet them:
So, in their insolent folly, they died. But Odysseus has perished,
Far from his native land, and will never return to Achaia."

And, in reply, thus spoke the dear old nurse Eurycleia:
"What is the thoughtless word, my child, from your lips has escaped,
That he will come no more, though even now he is standing
Safely beside his hearth? Your mind was incredulous always.
Come, I will give you a proof which even yourself will acknowledge:
Do you remember the scar where the tusk of the wild boar gashed him?
When I was washing his feet, I noticed this, and I wanted
Sorely to tell you: but this he perceived in an instant, and
firmly
Closed my mouth with his hand, that not one word could I utter.
But, if you follow me now, I will pledge myself as a surety,
And, if I play you false, then put me to death without mercy."

And, unto her in reply, the prudent Penelopé answered:
"Nurse dear, though clever you be and wise, you cannot unravel
All these wiles of the Gods who never have known a beginning:
Nevertheless we will go to find my son and to gaze on
These proud men who are slain, and see the man who has killed them."

So she went down the stairs, and much in her mind did she ponder
Whether to stay at a distance, and ply her husband with questions,
Or to take hold of his hands, and cover his head with kisses.  
But, when she entered the hall, and had crossed the stone-paved threshold,  
Then she sat down by herself, in the firelight, facing Odysseus, Close to the opposite wall: but her lord was sitting in silence Hard by a pillar, with downcast eyes, and wondering whether Ever a word would come from his wife when at last she had seen him.  
Long did she sit without speaking, by contrary impulse bewildered:  
Sometimes she met his eye, and then, with sudden revulsion, Could not believe that this ill-clothed man was really her husband.  
Then did Telemachus speak in reproof, and thus he addressed her:  
"Mother! strange mother indeed, with spirit so stern and unfeeling:  
Why do you stay like this, so far from my father, and do not Sit by his side and ask him of all his trials and adventures?  
No other woman than you, with such unnatural coldness, Would keep away from her husband, who, worn with hardships uncounted,  
Now, in the twentieth year, had come to the land of his fathers.  
But it was always so: your heart is more hard than a millstone."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:  
"Patience, my son, for the heart in my breast is bewildered and doubtful,  
Nor can I make up my mind to address him or ask him a question,  
Neither to look in his face: but if he is really Odysseus Safely returned, why then we shall soon understand one another:  
For we have signs, we two, which none but ourselves may discover."

So did she speak: but he smiled, the divine much-enduring Odysseus:  
And, to Telemachus, gave he a hint, though playfully spoken:  
"Leave your mother, my son, to ask me what questions she pleases:  
For she will quickly be able to see the truth of the matter.  
But, as I now am dirty and clothed in villainous garments,
Therefore she does not respect me nor own me as really her husband.
But let us think how best we may meet the dangers that face us. For, if a man, by chance, should kill one citizen neighbour, One whose companions are few, that might possibly help or avenge him, Yet must he leave his kinsmen, and flee from his country for safety: But we have killed those men on whom the city depended, Lords in the Ithacan isle: and this gives cause for reflection."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered: "Think this out for yourself, dear father, for you have the wisest Judgement in all the world, for so they tell me: nor is there One, among mortal men, who in this respect is your rival."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "That being so, I will tell you the course that I think we must follow.
First, do you all have a bath, and clothe yourselves neatly in tunics:
Then bid the maids in the house put on their holiday dresses:
And let the heaven-sent bard, as he fingers his clear-toned lyre, Play us a merry tune, to guide our steps in the dancing,
So that the neighbours may say, or any who chance to be passing, 'There is a wedding on hand in our lady Penelope's palace.'
Thus the report of the slaughter will not spread over the city Ere we have time to retreat to our sheltered farm in the forest. Then we shall see what plan great Zeus will put in our power."

So did he speak: and they took good heed and did as he bade them.
First did they bathe themselves, and clothe themselves neatly in tunics:
Also the women put on their smartest frocks: and the minstrel,
Bringing his clear-toned lyre, did rouse their passionate longing
Both for delightful song, and the measured movements of dancing.
And, from the floor to the roof, as the dance was in progress,
the big house
Rang with the merry tramp of men and of beautiful women.
You may be sure some man outside thus spoke when he heard it:
"One of those men in there must have married the queen they are courting:
She is of no account, for she had not the spirit or courage
Even to guard that great big house till her husband should come back."

Thus would some passer speak: but, what really had happened, they knew not.
Meanwhile, the housekeeper dame had washed great-hearted Odysseus,
Clothed him in tunic, and thrown a beautiful cloak o'er his shoulders:
But 'twas Athené who poured, on his head, such power and beauty,
Making him taller and stouter to see, and, down on his shoulders, Clustering locks to fall as it might be some hyacinth blossom.
And, as a skilful man, whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athené Various arts have taught, may overlay gold upon silver,
And, by his cunning skill, bring beautiful works to perfection, So, o'er his head and shoulders, was dignity poured by Athené:
And, as he came from the bath, he was like an Immortal in presence. Then he sat down once more on the seat from which he had risen, Facing his wife, and thus, in courteous words, he addressed her:
"Madam, it seems that the Gods, the dwellers in blessed Olympus, Made you more hard of heart than the race of womanly women: Where could you find a wife who thus would, cold and constrained, Hold aloof from her husband, who after incredible hardships, Had, in the twentieth year, come back to the land of his fathers. But I depend on you, good nurse, to make me a nice bed Where I may sleep: for I think your mistress's heart is of iron."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelopé answered:
"I am not haughty, my lord, nor too obsequious either,
Nor do I wish to slight you, for well indeed I remember What you were like when your long-oared ship sailed out of the harbour.
But come, nurse Eurycleia, make ready the massive old bedstead
Outside the door of the room which his own hands builded so strongly:
Carry the bedstead outside, and spread soft bedding upon it,
Wrappers and fleeces of sheep, and glistening rugs for his comfort."
So did she speak to test what her lord might know: but Odysseus,
Answered in anger and spoke to his wife too cautiously minded:
"Lady, it grieves me much to hear the word you have spoken. Who, I must ask you, has moved that bed? 'Twere a difficult matter E'en for a skilful man: though of course an Immortal from heaven Could put it where he liked, and with ease, if so he desired. But not a mortal man could move that bed with a crowbar, Though in the prime of life: because there's a wondrous contrivance Hid in that well-wrought bed, which myself and no other invented.
Once, in the courtyard, there grew a leafy and wide-spreading olive, Flourishing and full-grown, and like to a pillar in thickness: Round it, I built a wall with great stones fitted together, Making a chamber, and then, on top, I roofed it securely. And I made folding doors of solid construction to guard it. Then I cut off the boughs of the leafy and wide-spreading olive: Then I cut off the trunk, and smoothed the stump with the hatchet, As a good craftsman should, and shaped it true with the T-square So as to form a post, and bored in it holes with an auger: And, from the trunk, I hewed a bedstead and wrought as a finish Inlaid patterns of gold, and ivory varied with silver: And, for a mattress, I laced it across with strippets of leather. And I am telling you this as a token. But, lady, I know not Whether the bed is still where I fixed it, or whether already Some one has moved it away; after cutting the pedestal olive."
So did he speak: but her knees gave way, and her heart was a-flutter,
As she recalled the tokens which could by no chance be mistaken.
And, as she burst into tears, she ran to her husband Odysseus,Throwing her arms round his neck, and she kissed his head and she sobbed out:

"Won't you forgive me Odysseus, for you know, better than all men,
What I have suffered, and how the Gods have begrudged us the blessing
That, till we reached old age, we should joyfully live with each other.

But be not angry now, or indignant because that I did not,
When I beheld you first, at once thus fondle and love you:
Seeing the heart in my breast would always shrink with a shudder,
Lest 'twere some other man, who had come with wily professions
Trying to lead me astray: for evil schemers are many.

Never had Argive Helen, that daughter of Zeus of the ægis,
Yielded herself to love, and the bed of the prince of the Trojans,
If she had known from the first that the warlike sons of Achaia Would, by the force of arms, conduct her back to her homeland.
But 'twas a Power divine that inspired that action unseemly,
Else would she never have harboured a thought so mad and so deadly,

One that has proved unto us the source of all our troubles.

But now, since you have told me of tokens surely convincing
As to our marriage bed, which not a mortal can know of
But you and I alone, and one of our women attendants,
Actoris, who was in charge of the close-fitting doors of our chamber:

(She, when I left my home, was a present to me from my father)
Though I be stubborn indeed, my heart can no longer resist you."

Thus did she speak, and roused still more his passion for groaning:

And, as he clasped in his arms his wife so wise and so lovely,
Fast flowed his tears. And as land is delightful and welcome
to look on

Unto the struggling swimmers whose ship has been smashed by Poseidon,

Driven before the blast and swept by the great green billows:
And but a few have escaped to the shore from the rage of the waters,
Swimming for life: and their limbs with salt sea brine are encrusted,
And, from the jaws of death, they climb to the land with rejoicing:
So 'twas a gladsome sight when Penelope looked on her husband. But, with her fair arms clasped on his neck, still closely she held him:
And, till the morning light, they might have been sweetly lamenting,
Had not the grey-eyed Athené devised this plan for their comfort:
Long she maintained the night in the realms of darkness, and held back
Morning beneath the sea, nor would she permit to be harnessed Lampos and Phaethon, those swift steeds of the car of the Morning.
But, to his wife at last, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Dear wife, not even yet, have we come to the end of our troubles:
One more labour remains, and that the last and the greatest,
Which, though painful and hard, I am bound to perform to the utmost.
For thus answered the soul of Teiresias, seer of the Thebans, On that eventful day when I entered the Regions of Hadés Seeking to learn some means of return for myself and my comrades.
But come, let us to bed, my wife, that, after our labours, We may lie down in peace, and enjoy our slumber together."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered: "Yes, dear lord, our bed shall be ready whenever you wish it, Since that the blessed Gods have brought you home in their mercy Unto your well-built house and unto the land of your fathers. But this labour to come, what is it? I think I shall hear it Some day, whether or no: but to hear it now would be better."
And, unto her in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "Why will you urge me thus, dear lady, to talk about hardships? Yet I will tell you all, though painful it be in the hearing, Painful to me as well: for he bade me to start on a journey, Tramping through cities of men with a well-fitted oar on my shoulder,
Till I should come to a people who never had seen blue water,
Neither made use of salt to season their food, and knew nothing
Either of well-built ships, their cheeks gay painted with crimson,
Or of the tapering oars which serve them as wings o'er the ocean.
Also he gave me a sign there could be no chance of mistaking:
Soon as I met on the road, a man who thus should accost me,
'Why, 'tis a winnowing fan which your honour has got on his
shoulder,'
Then, having fixed in the ground my well-fitted oar as a
standard,
I should a sacrifice pay to the Lord of the Ocean, Poseidon,
Ram and bull and the mate of swine, the untameable wild boar,
Then turn homewards again, and sacred hecatombs offer
Unto the Gods immortal whose home is the vault of the heavens,
All in their order due: and at length, from the sea, should
Death come,
Gently as ever can be, to myself, and lull me to slumber,
Weighted by prosperous years, with all my people around me
Happy and well content: and of this he pledged the fulfilment."
And, unto him in reply, the prudent Penelope answered:
"If 'tis the will of the Gods that the end of our life shall be
happy,
Then there is hope indeed, we shall find an escape from our
troubles."
Now, in such words as these, the two were talking together,
While that Eurynome, helped by the ancient dame, was
preparing,
Under the light of torches, a bed that was soft and inviting.
And, having carefully spread the couch with plenty of wrappers,
Promptly the dame retraced her steps to the women's apartments.
Then did the maid of the chamber, Eurynome, gravely conduct
them,
Holding a torch in her hand, to the bed already prepared:
And, at the chamber door, she turned and left them: and they
then
Came to their ancient bed, the seal of their longed-for reunion.

Meanwhile Telemachus had, and Eumæus, and also the
herdsman,
Brought their dance to an end, and bidden the women do
likewise.
But when those other two, with love's delights, had been sated, Then did they turn with joy, to tell each other their story: She, what griefs she had borne in the house, this Goddess-like woman, Being compelled to behold the ruin wrought by the suitors Who, under pretext of courtship, were slaughtering oxen and wethers, While full many a jar of wine was wastefully emptied: But, on his part, Zeus-born Odysseus recounted the havoc, Which he had wrought among men, and all that himself had endured: Everything did he tell: and she, delighted, did listen, Nor did her eyelids close before he had finished his story. And, to begin with, he told how he sacked the Ciconian city, Then how he came to the land where dwell the Eaters of Lotus: Then of the Round-eye's cave, and how he avenged the murder Of his stout-hearted comrades, that savage monster had eaten: Then of king Æolus' isle, who friendly received him, and sped him: But not yet was he destined to reach the land of his fathers, But he was caught in a squall which swept his vessels, before it, Back o'er the fishy sea, while he was helplessly groaning: Then how he came to the Læstrygon town, where the truculent natives Battered to pieces his ships, and killed his booted companions: Also he told of Circe's craft and wily devices: And how he found his way to the mouldering regions of Hadés, There to consult the soul of Teiresias, seer of the Thebans: And how he came, in his galley, and saw his former companions, Not only them, but the mother who bore him and reared him in childhood: And how he managed to hear the ravishing song of the Sirens: And how he came to the Shifter rocks and the dreadful Charybdis, And unto Scylla, whose den no man had weathered in safety: And how his comrades had slaughtered and fed on Helios' oxen: Also how Zeus, who thunders on high, with sulphurous lightning, Shattered his ship on the sea, and his gallant companions had perished,
Every one, but himself had barely escaped from destruction: And how he came to Ogygia's isle, and Our lady Calypso, Who there held him in thrall within her hollowed-out cavern, Longing to have him as lord: and she fed him, and promised to make him Free from infirmity, death, and decay, for days without ending: And how he came at last to the friendly Phæacians' country, Who, as he were an Immortal, did honour and entertain him, Sending him back in a ship to the dear old land of his fathers, Giving him bronze and gold in abundance and beautiful raiment. This was the last of his tales: for sleep, the dissolver of troubles, Stole on him unawares: and care was lost in oblivion. But, for his welfare and safety, still planned the grey-eyed Athené: When she considered that he had enjoyed, as long as was needful, Slumber in arms of his wife, she roused, from her couch in the ocean, Morning, and bade her shine unto men. Then sprang up Odysseus From his luxurious bed, and gave his wife an injunction: "Dear wife, we have already, had more than sufficient of troubles, Both of us, you while you wept and prayed for my day of re-turning, Here by yourself, and I when Zeus and the other Immortals Bound me in exile sad, though longing to come to my homeland. But now, since we have come, we two, to the bed we have prayed for, We must keep watch and ward o'er the treasures I have in my palace: And, to make up for the sheep these haughty suitors have eaten, I shall be able, in raids, to capture a number, and others Will the Achæans give till all my folds are replenished. But I have made up my mind to go to our farm in the forest, That I may visit my father, who sorely for me has been grieving. And, upon you, I enjoin, dear wife, and I know your discretion, Since, with the rising sun, a report will be spread through the city, Touching the fate of the suitors whom I, in my palace, have slaughtered: Go to the upper chamber, along with your women attendants,
There sit quiet, and see no stranger, nor ask any questions."

So did he speak, and strapped, on his shoulders, his beautiful armour:
Then did he rouse from their sleep, his son and the herdsman and swineherd,
And, these three did he bid to arm themselves with their weapons.
Then did they promptly obey, and, buckling on their breastplates,
Opened the doors and went out: but Odysseus marched as their leader.
And, by this time, the light was flooding the land: but Athéné Hid them in darkness, and, quickly, conducted them out of the city.

THE ODYSSEY
BOOK XXIV

LAËRTÉS AND TREATY OF PEACE

AND, in due course, came Hermés to summon the souls of the suitors,
Bearing his golden wand, with which he bewitches the eyes of Those whom he will: and those who are wrapped in slumber he wakens:
So, with a wave of the wand, he led them: they, twittering, followed,
As, in a nook of some vast cave, the flittermice twitter,
Fluttering round when one, on the crannied wall of the cavern,
Breaks from the pendent chain where they all were clinging together:
So these flew in a crowd: four acres they covered: and Hermés, Guide and Deliverer, led them along that mouldering highway.
And, by the streams of Ocean, they passed, and the mountain of Leucas,
And by the Gates of the Sun, and the shadowy people of Dreamland,
And, with a wondrous speed, they came to the asphodel meadow
Where is the home of souls, mere phantoms of toiling mortals.
There did they find the soul of Achilles offspring of Peleus,
And of Patroclus and noble Antilochus, also of Ajax
Who, in his stature and beauty, surpassed all other Achæans,
Saving, of course, the son of Peleus, the noble Achilles:
For, in attendance on him, the rest were assembled: there came too,
Sadly lamenting, the soul of the great Agamemnon Atreidés,
Round whom gathered the others, as many as, feasting beside him,
Met with their fate and died in the house of the traitor Ægisthus.
First of the two to speak was the soul of the son of Peleus:
"Noble Atreidés, they say that, of all our warrior heroes,
You were the dearest by far to Zeus who delights in the thunder,
Since you were chief in command of men both many and valiant
Facing the Trojan host when we such hardships did suffer.
But 'twas the will of fate that you should, untimely, be struck by
Death the Destroyer, whose blow none born of a woman can
parry.
Surely you ought to have reaped in full the reward of your
kingship,
And to have met with death in the war-swept land of the Trojans:
Then would the tribes of Achæans have raised a tomb in your
honour;
And, for your son as well, you would have won glory hereafter:
But you were fated, it seems, by a death most wretched, to
perish."
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the soul of Atreidés:
"Thrice-blest offspring of Peleus, Achilles like to Immortals,
Slain in the land of Troy, far distant from home and from Argos,
While that around you the bravest of both the Achæans and
Trojans
Fell in the desperate fight to secure your body. But you there
Lay, in the whirl of dust, unconscious of horses and horsemen,
Calm as became a prince. And we, your former companions,
Fought for the livelong day, and would never have ceased from
the contest
Had it not been that Zeus cut short the strife with his whirlwind.
Then did we bear you away from the field to the line of our
galleys,
Cleansed your beautiful limbs with lukewarm water and oint-
ment,
And, on a bier, we laid you: and, standing around you, the
Grecians
Shed warm tears, and clipped their flowing locks in your honour.
And, from the sea, came forth, with her train of Immortals, your
mother,
Hearing report of your death: and, over the water, a wondrous
Cry of lament did sweep: and trembling seized the Achæans.
And, very likely, they might have rushed to their galleys in panic,
But for a man who had learnt, from experience ancient and
varied,
Nestor, whose counsel in war had ofttimes proved to be sound-
est:
He then spoke in the midst, and with words of wisdom addressed them:

‘Rally your ranks, men of Argos! Flee not, ye sons of Achæans!
This is the hero’s mother, with all her attendant Immortals,
Come to pay last respect to her son who lies slain by the Trojans.’

So did he speak: and they paused, great-hearted sons of Achæans.

And, round your body, there stood in a ring, the daughters of Nereus,
Bitterly wailing, but clothed in robes of celestial beauty.
And, with their tuneful voices, the band of Muses in answer Chanted a dirge: and then, not one could you see of the Argives But was in tears: so clear and sweet was the melody swelling.
Then, full seventeen days, both night and day did we mourn you, Mortal men and immortal Gods their voices commingling:
But, on the eighteenth day, we gave your corpse to the fire, And, at your side, we slew fat sheep and curved-horn oxen. Thus was your body burnt, with ointment and honey anointed, Clothed in the raiment of Gods. And many Achæan heroes, Footmen and horsemen, around the pyre, as your body was burning,
Brandished and clashed their arms: and the din rose up to the heavens.
But, when at last the flame of Hephaestus its work had accomplished,
Then, by the morning light, your whitened bones we collected Into a vase, with wine and precious ointment: your mother Brought us the golden vase, two-handled: the giver, however, Was, as she said, Dionysus, renowned Hephaestus the artist. There do your white bones rest in honour, most famous Achilles, Mingled with those of your friend who died before you, Patroclus, But yet apart from those of Antilochus whom you regarded Dearest of all your comrades, the dead Patroclus excepted. And, o’er your bones, did we, the sacred host of the Argives, Pile up a glorious mound on a jutting point of the coast line, Where it might overlook the Hellespont stretching beneath it, And, from afar on the sea, be seen by wandering sailors Who may be living now, or shall be living hereafter.
Also his mother did beg, from the Gods, very beautiful prizes, Which the most valiant chiefs might strive for in fair competition. You have been present yourself, ere now, at the funeral rites of Many a hero man, when, some great king having perished, Young men gird up their loins, and equip themselves for the contests
But, never yet, have you seen any prizes of marvellous beauty Such as, in honour of you, were brought by the lady your mother, Thetis of silvern foot: for much were you loved by Immortals. So, not even in death, have you lost your glory, Achilles. But, small profit had I for bringing the war to a finish, Whom, on the threshold of home, at the hands of the crafty Ægisthus And of my curséd wife, Zeus doomed to doleful destruction.”
So, in such words as these, the two were talking together, When the Conductor of souls came near, the Slayer of Argus, Leading the souls of the suitors whom lately Ódysseus had slaughtered,
And, when they saw the crowd, they both approached in amazement:
And, forthwith, did the soul of Atreus’ son, Agamemnon, Recognize Melaneus’ son, Amphimedon, for that the latter Living in Ithaca once had been bound to Atreidés in friendship. First of the two to speak was the soul of the son of Atreus:
“What is the cause you have come, Amphimedon, you and your comrades,
Unto this dismal land, picked men in the flower of manhood? It could not happen by chance, that one should have chosen the foremost
Men from each several town. But say, were you slain by Óseidon Whelming you, ships and all, with mountainous billows and tempest?
Or was it fighting by land that hostile foemen destroyed you, As you were raiding their sheep or herds of lumbering oxen, Or, it may be, when attempting to capture a city, or women? Answer, I pray you, for know that I claim your alliance and friendship. Don’t you remember, when once I came to your home in your island,
That I might urge Ódysseus to join in our great expedition,
Sailing in well-benched ships, along with divine Meneläus,
Unto the siege of Troy: and, hardly persuading Odysseus,
Sacker of cities, in one full month, we accomplished our
journey?"
And, unto him in reply, the soul of Amphimedon answered:
"Well I remember these things, Zeus-nurtured, of which you
remind me,
And, on my part, I will tell you, without any fraud or evasion,
How we were done to death, exactly the way that it happened.
All of us here were wooing the wife of the absent Odysseus:
But she would neither refuse a marriage she felt to be hateful,
Nor would she carry it out, for she thought to compass our
slaughter.
This is but one of the schemes which she in her cunning
concocted:
Having a loom put up in her chamber, she set about weaving:
Large, and of the finest thread, was the web: and thus she
addressed us:
"Gallant gentlemen all, since godlike Odysseus has perished,
Cease, for a while, from urging your suit, until I shall finish
This pall which you now see, lest all my work should be wasted:
Funeral robe it is, for the aged hero Laëretes,
Ready against that time when Death the Reaper shall seize him:
Lest it should happen, perchance, some Grecian woman might
blame me,
If he should want for a shroud, who once had many possessions.'
Thus did she speak: and thus our manly hearts were persuaded.
So, till the day was done, she would busily keep to her weaving,
But, in the night, she unravelled the fruit of her labour by
torchlight.
Thus, for three years, by her craft, she contrived to befoul the
Achæans:
But, when the fourth year came, and hour on hour was passing,
Then was the story told by a maid who knew of the secret,
And, in the act of unpicking the glorious web, we surprised
her.
Thus she completed her work, for she had no choice in the
matter.
"Then, when her weaving was done, she showed the pall to
the suitors
Which, after washing, appeared like the sun or the moon in its brightness:

And, at that juncture, some Power malign conducted Odysseus Unto the outlying farm where stood the house of the swineherd. There, at the very same time, arrived the son of Odysseus, Lately returned in his ship from the sandy beaches of Pylos. Then, having laid their plans by craft to murder the suitors, These two went to the town: Telemachus here was the foremost, Going to spy the ground: and Odysseus leisurely followed, Led by the swineherd, and clothed in garments ragged and filthy, Leaning upon his staff like some poor wretched old beggar: So that not one of our party, not even the elders amongst us, Knew who the old man was, who thus appeared of a sudden: But we reviled him, and threw at his head whatever came handy. “Now, for a while, he bore this scurrilous treatment in silence, Pelted, and called vile names, in the house where he rightly was master:

But, when the spirit of Zeus, the Lord of the Aegis, possessed him, Then he removed the weapons adorning the walls of his palace, Put them away in an attic, and bolted the doors securely. Then, in his craft, he incited his wife to propose, to her suitors, Steel and a wondrous bow, as a prize they all might compete for, Which, to our wretched selves, soon proved the occasion of slaughter:

For never one of us all, could press the string of the weapon Into its notch, because our strength was far from sufficient: But, when a man did attempt to deliver the bow to Odysseus, Then, one and all, did we shout at the man, and threatening bade him Not to give up the bow, however the other might urge him: Yet did Telemachus still insist, and bade him to give it. And, when he had the bow in his hands, the godlike Odysseus, Easily, did he stretch the string, and shoot through the axe-heads:

Then he sprang up on the platform, and poured out the arrows before him, Terribly glaring: and, first, Antinoüs fell by his arrow, (He was our chief) and then he shot his darts at the others, Aiming straight forward: and they, in quick succession, were falling.
And it was easy to see some God was directing his efforts:
For, giving reign to their might, they ranged through the hall
in their fury,
Smiting this way and that: and, as heads were stricken, a
dreadful
Groaning arose: and the floor ran deep with the blood of the
slaughtered.
And it was thus, Agamemnon, we perished: and still do our
bodies
Lie unburied, uncared for, within the halls of Odysseus:
For, not yet, do the friends we had left behind in our houses
Know of our fate, that so they may render the service befitting,
Cleanse our wounds from gore, and lay us to rest and bewail us."
But, without deigning reply, thus spoke the soul of Atreidés:
"Thrice-blest son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Sure 'twas with mighty valour you gained your wife and regained
her
Noble Icarius' daughter, Penelope, Pearl of discretion:
And what an excellent mind she displayed, and how she re-
cmembered
Always her wedded lord: and therefore the fame of her virtue
Never shall perish: but bards shall chant, in ages to follow,
Songs of delight in the praise of Penelope, wife of Odysseus.
Different far were her actions from those of Tyndareus' daughter
Killing her wedded lord: which theme will be heard with ab-
horrence
Through generations to come, and cast reproach and discredit
Over the name of woman, e'en those whose deeds may be
blameless."
Now, in such words as these, the two were talking together,
Standing in secret vaults of the earth in the regions of Hadés.
Meanwhile the band of Odysseus was wending its way from the
city
Till they arrived at the farm laid out long since by Laërtes:
And 'twas Laërtes himself had toiled and laboured upon it:
There was his house, and around it, on every side, was a lean-to:
And, in the lean-to, the household slaves who were under his
orders
Took their meals and slept, and sat and talked in their leisure.
And, in the house, there lived an old Sicilian woman
Who, in this lonely spot, looked after the old man kindly. Then did Odysseus speak to his son and his faithful retainers: "Go, you three, to the house, and choose of the porkers you find there. One that you think the best, and kill it and cook for our breakfast: As for myself, I will first make trial what my father remembers, If he will recognize me, when he sees me standing before him, Or if, in so many years, he has altogether forgotten."

And, with these words, he handed his warlike arms to his servants, Who, at his bidding went off, and entered the house: but Odysseus Wended his way till he came to the place where the fruit trees were planted. But, when he entered the orchard, he found not Dolius, neither Any of all his sons or the men of the farm: for they all were Busy collecting stones that day, for a wall to the vineyard: (Dolius working himself and directing the work of the others) Therefore it was that he found his father alone in the orchard Hoeing around a tree, and clad in a dirty tunic, Patched and unseemly: and round his legs were gaiters of leather, Mended and old and tied with string, to guard him from scratches: And he had hedger's mitts on his hands because of the briars, And a rough goatskin cap on his head: for he cherished his sorrow. Now, when he saw him thus, the divine much-enduring Odysseus, Wearing away with age and a great grief tugging his heart-strings, Fain would he shed a tear, as he stood unseen 'neath a pear tree. Then did he hold debate with himself 'twixt reason and impulse, Whether to throw his arms round the neck of his father and kiss him, Tell him of all his adventures, and how he was safe in his homeland, Or to find out the state of his mind by asking him questions. And, as he thought it over, the course that seemed to be better
Was to make trial of him first, by speaking with something of harshness.
With this idea in his mind, Odysseus went up to his father. He was then holding the top of a fruit tree, and digging around it, Just as his famous son came up and stood and addressed him:
"Old man, it's easy to see you've learnt by plenty of practice,
How to look after an orchard: there isn't a tree to be seen here Neither a fig tree nor vine nor pear tree nor olive nor even One little garden patch, that isn't well tended and cared for. But I must tell you this, and I hope you will not be offended: You are not cared for yourself as you ought to be, for you are aged,
Wretched, unkempt and dirty, with clothes that are simply dis-graceful. 'Tis not because you are idle, that thus your seigneur neglects you:
Nor should a man like you thus toil as a slave: for I deem you One of a kingly race, to judge by your stature and bearing. But it would better become you to have a bath and a dinner, Then to sleep soft on a bed: for that is the right of an elder. But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
Whose bond-servant are you? and whose is this orchard you work in?
And tell me also this, that there be no doubt in the matter, Is it the Ithacan land, this ground on which I am standing? So a man told me just now whom I met on the road as I came here:
But he was not very friendly, because he would not be troubled Either to answer my questions or listen to what I was saying When I was asking for news of a man I am pledged to in friend-
ship, Whether he still was alive or had passed to the regions of Hadés. For I will tell you the truth: pray listen and give your attention: Once, in my dear homeland, I chanced to meet with a stranger Lately arrived, the first, of all my foreign acquaintance Bound to myself in friendship, who ever had entered my palace. And he professed to belong to the Ithacan race, and asserted That he was son of Arcesius' son, the hero Laërtes. Him did I bring to my house, and gave him a royal welcome, And, with a right good will, the run of all my possessions.
And, as an honoured guest, I gave him according to custom Seven talents of gold, well wrought and refined by the goldsmith, Also a silvern bowl adorned with a pattern of flowers, Twelve cloaks too, single breasted, of tapestry mats the same number, Twelve very handsome rugs and a dozen of excellent tunics: And, in addition, I gave for his service four beautiful women Skilled to perfection in arts: and he himself had the choosing.”

And, as he shed a tear, thus answered his father Laërtes: " Stranger and friend, 'tis true you have come to the land that you speak of: But it is now in the hands of men without conscience or mercy: Nor will you get a reward for your gifts were they ten times as many:
For, had you found him alive and ruling the Ithacan people,
He would have sent you away with good entertainment and handsome Gifts in return for yours: for this is the custom accepted.
But come, tell me this, and tell it me plainly and truly:
How long is it ago, you were entertaining the stranger?
For your unfortunate guest was my son (I would he were living)
Born to an evil fate: whom, maybe, the fishes have eaten
Far from his friends, at sea, or in some desolate country
Beasts and birds have devoured. No tender mother has wept him,
Decking his corpse with care, nor father: (for we are his parents)
Nor did his wife, so self-possessed and dowered so richly,
When she had closed his eyes as he lay on their bed of marriage,
Wail for her lord most dear, last tribute of honour to heroes.
Tell me this also, that so I may know the truth of the matter,
Who, and from whence are you? and where is your city? and parents?
Where is your good ship berthed, in which you came to this island,
You and your godlike companions? or have you come as a merchant,
Paying your fare: and the crew have put you ashore and departed?"

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus: "Have no fear: I will tell you exactly the way that it happened.
I am from Wanderland, where I live in a glorious palace, Son of Apheidés the king, who reigns in that country: myself am Known as Epēritus, who, by the will of some Heavenly Power, Have, from Sicana’s land, o’er the stormy water been driven. As for my ship, she is berthed on a distant part of the coast line. And it is five years ago, that Odysseus, after his visit, Went on his journey, and left the land of my fathers behind him, Man of ill fortune: and yet the signs of the birds were propitious, All flying Eastward: and so I bade him farewell without sorrow: Also himself was glad to depart: for our hearts were persuaded That we should meet as friends, and again give glorious presents.”

Thus did he speak: but grief as a cloud enveloped the other: And, picking up the soot-black dust in handfuls, he threw it Over his poor white head, and gave way to a tempest of groaning.

Greatly Odysseus was moved: and a lump, in spite of his efforts, Rose in his throat on beholding the grief of his father beloved. And, with a bound, he threw his arms round his neck, and he kissed him,

Crying out, “Father, ’tis I, your very own son that you seek for: Now, in the twentieth year, I have come to the land of my fathers. But there is no time now for groaning and tears and bewailing: For I will tell you the truth: and ’tis needful to act on the in-

stant:

With these hands, I have slain those men who infested our palace, Taking revenge for their bitter taunts, and all their misdoings.”

And, in reply to his words, thus spoke his father Laërtes :

“If you are really Odysseus my son come back to your home-

land,

Tell me a sign which is certain and clear, that I may believe you.”

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:

“First look well at this scar, where the tusk of the wild boar gashed me

When I had gone on a hunt with Autolycus’ sons to Parnassus: For you were sending me there, both you and the lady my mother, Unto her father’s house, to receive and return with the presents Which, when he stayed in our home, he had solemnly promised to give me.
But let me tell you some trees that there are in this orderly orchard,
Those that you gave me yourself, long since, when I was a youngster
Following you in your rounds, and asking all manner of questions,
While that you told me the names of the trees, and what they were good for.
And it was thirteen pear trees you gave me, ten apples and forty Fig trees: and, into the bargain, you promised expressly to give me Fifty rows of vines, that fruited in constant succession,
Bearing all manner of grapes, and all of them loaded with clusters,
That is, in years when Zeus had sent us showers in season."

Then did his father's knees give way, and his heart stopped beating,
As he recalled those signs that could by no chance be mistaken:
And, as he threw his arms round his son, the godlike Odysseus Clasped him tight to his breast, for with joy the old man was fainting.

Then he began once more, to speak to Odysseus in answer:
"Father Zeus, it is sure that ye Gods still reign in Olympus If, in real truth, these suitors have paid for their impious outrage.
But, when I come to think, I fear that the Ithacan people, Ere very long, not only will gather in force to attack us,
But will send summons for help to the Kephallenian cities."

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"Think no more about that: there is no occasion to worry:
But let us go to the house, which stands quite close to the orchard, For I have sent Telemachus on, with the herdsman and swineherd,
Bidding them lose no time to get us ready a supper."

Thus having spoken, the two walked back to the homestead together:
And, when they came to the buildings, which stood so cheerful and pleasant,
There was Telemachus standing, and with him the herdsman and swineherd,
Busily carving meat and mixing the sparkling wine-cup.
But the Sicilian woman, meanwhile, who served in the household, Washed and anointed with oil her lord and master Laërtes, And, o'er his shoulders, she threw a beautiful cloak: but Athené, Standing unseen at his side, filled out his limbs that were shrunken, Making him greater to see, as became a shepherd of peoples. And, as he went from the bath, his son gazed at him in wonder, For, when he looked in his face, he seemed to be like an Im-

Then did he call him by name, and in words unbidden addressed him:
“Father, some one of the Gods who never has known a be-
ginning
Surely has made you more fair to look at and greater in stature.”
And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the prudent Laërtes:
“Would that, O Father Zeus, and Apollo and Pallas Athené, I had been with you yest’reen, in that desperate fight in our

Armed for attack and defence, and strong as when I commanded Brave Kephallenian men, and captured that fort on the mainland, Nericus perched on its cliff: I soon would have dealt with the suitors:
And 'twould have made you glad to see their knees of a tremble.”
With such words as these, the two were talking together.

But, when the others had finished their work and got ready the

Each sat down in his order, upon the seats and the benches.
Then they set to at their meal: and, while they were eating, the old man Dolius came, and with him, his sons who were helping their father,

Tired and soiled from their work: for the old Sicilian woman, More like a mother, who got them their meals, and looked after Laërtes
Now he was weak and infirm, had gone to the paddock to call them.

But, when the men caught sight of Odysseus, and realized fully That he was come indeed, they stood and gazed in amazement. But he forestalled their speech, and in gentle words he addressed them:
"Sit down to supper, old man, nor let your wonder distress you:
For we have been in this room for ever so long without eating,
Waiting till you should come, although we were terribly hungry."

And, forthwith, at his words, the old man, stretching his hands out,
Ran to Odysseus, and kissed his hand in fond veneration:
And, in such words as came unbidden, he spoke and addressed him:

"So you have come again, dear Master: our prayers have been answered:
Though we had ceased to expect it, the Gods have brought you in safety.
Happiness to you and health: may every blessing attend you.
And may I be so bold as to ask, for I want to be certain,
Whether Penelope knows, my prudent mistress, already
That you are safe at home: or shall we send some one to tell her?"

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the resourceful Odysseus:
"She knows already, old man: you need not trouble about it."

So did he speak: and the other sat down on the shiny old settle.
And, in like manner, his sons, who stood round the famous Odysseus,
Clung to his hands, and, in simple speech, they uttered their welcome.
Then they sat down on the bench, in a row, beside of their father.

Thus, these men in the cottage were busily eating their supper.
But, before long, a report had spread abroad in the city
Telling the news of the fate and terrible death of the suitors
Which, when the citizens heard, they assembled from every quarter,
Uttering moans and groans in front of the house of Odysseus:
And each carried away and buried the corpse of his kinsman.
As for the rest of the dead, who were natives of neighbouring cities,
Those, in the fishermen's boats, they sent to the places they came from:

While that themselves, in a body, o'erborne by sorrow and anger,
Hied to the market place: and, when they were gathered together,
Then did Eupeithes rise, and speak to the multitude round him:
For there lay heavy upon him, a grief that could not be for-
gotten,
Namely, the death of his son, the first to be slain by Odysseus.
So he, shedding a tear, thus spoke in the midst, and harangued
them:
“Friends, there has terrible havoc been wrought, among
noble Achæans,
By this Odysseus here: for first, he took many brave fellows,
Them and their ships, to sea, and lost both ships and com-
panions:
And, just now, he has slain the chief Kephallenian princes.
But come, ere he has time to hurry away unto Pylos,
Or unto sacred Elis of which the Epeians are masters,
Let us attack him: unless we intend all men to despise us:
For, to unborn generations, with scorn will our name be
remembered,
If we should fail to avenge the death of our sons and our
brothers:
And, for myself, I should have no wish to live any longer,
But should prefer to rest with the dead as quickly as might be.
So let us make all haste, lest he get to Pylos before us.”

Thus, with a tear, he spoke: but pity seized the Achæans.
And, at that moment, the bard came forward with Medon the
herald,
Fot they had just awakened, and come from the house of
Odysseus,
And, in the midst they stood, while the others were gazing in
wonder.
Then, with judicious words, did Medon the prudent address
them:
“Listen to me, I pray, men of Ithaca: godlike Odysseus
Has not achieved these deeds, without the help of Immortals:
For I myself perceived an immortal God who was standing
Close to Odysseus, but yet had all the appearance of Mentor.
And I could see him at first, quite clearly, in front of Odysseus,
Cheering him on: and then he rushed through the hall like
a whirlwind,
Scaring the suitors, who fell in succession like corn to the
reaper.”
So did he speak: and they all turned green with sickening terror.

Then rose up and addressed them the hero, old Alitherses, Mastor's son, who alone could see the past and the future:

He then, counselling well, thus spoke in the midst and addressed them:

"Listen, and lay to heart, men of Ithaca, what I shall tell you: 'Twas your own fault, my friends, that these misfortunes have happened:

For that you took no heed of me nor of Mentor your shepherd

Bidding you make your sons to cease from their madness and folly,

Who, in their wicked presumption, committed a crime that was heinous,

In that they wasted the goods and treated with insult the consort

Of a distinguished man: for they thought he would ne'er be returning.

Now, therefore, take my advice: be persuaded, and do as I tell you:

Let us not go, for fear self-sought disaster befall us."

So did he speak: but more than the half of the people assembled

Sprang to their feet with a shout (though many there were who resisted)

For they were not well pleased with his words, but rather agreed with

What Eupeithes had said: and in haste they ran for their weapons,

And, when they all were arrayed in armour that gleamed in the sunlight,

Met on the spacious parade that stretches in front of the city. And 'twas Eupeithes who took the lead in their rashness and folly,

Swearing to have revenge for the death of his son: though the truth was

He would return no more, but himself would meet with destruction.

Then did Athené speak to the Son of Kronos, her father:

"O Son of Kronos, our father, of Heavenly Powers the highest, Answer me when I ask. In thy mind what purpose is hidden?
Is it to wreak dread war and the battle cry with its terrors,  
Or to establish peace betwixt the rivals henceforward?"

And, to her, answered Zeus who gathers the clouds in the heavens:
"Why do you ask these things, my daughter, and ply me with questions?  
Was it not you yourself, who devised this scheme, that Odysseus  
Might come back to his home, and requite those insolent suitors?  
Do whatever you will, but beware it be nothing unfitting.  
And, since the godlike Odysseus at last has taken his vengeance,  
Let them a covenant make, and let him be confirmed in his kingdom:  
And we will cause the others to think no more of the slaughter  
Of their dear brothers and sons: and may they love one another  
As in old time, and enjoy both riches and peace in abundance."

Thus did he farther incite the already willing Athené:  
Who, like a flash, down darted from off the crests of Olympus.  
Now, when the men in the cottage had eaten as much as they wanted,  
He was the first to speak, the divine much-enduring Odysseus:  
"Go out, some one, and look: those men will be here in a minute."

And, at the word, a son of Dolius went as he ordered,  
But, at the threshold, he stopped: for there, quite close, were the others:  
And, in surprise and haste, he called out thus to Odysseus:  
"Here they are, quite close up. We must arm without losing a moment."

So did he speak: and they all sprang up and put on their armour,  
Four of the band of Odysseus, and six of Dolius' household:  
Also the aged Laërtes and Dolius armed for the battle,  
Though they were old and grey-headed, and not by choice were they fighting.  
And the whole party, when clothed in armour burnished and gleaming,  
Threw the door open, and forth they rushed: but Odysseus was leader.  
Then did the Daughter of Zeus, the grey-eyed Athené, approach them,
Making herself like Mentor in voice and also in figure.
And he was glad when he saw her, divine much-enduring Odysseus,
And he at once called out to Telemachus dearly belovéd:
"Now, my Telemachus, shall you learn, by actual fighting,
Here, in the deadly strife where each man's mettle is tested,
How to uphold the name of your fathers: for we, the world over,
Both in our manly strength, and in courage, have ever been foremost."

And, unto him in reply, the prudent Telemachus answered:
"You shall soon see, if you wish, dear father, of that I'm determined,
One who will not disgrace your name, as now you have charged me."

So did he speak: and Laërtes was glad at heart, and he burst forth:
"Dear Gods, what a great day is this! To think I should live to See my son and my grandson as rivals in courage and manhood."

And, by his side, there stood and spoke, the grey-eyed Athené:
"Son of Arcesius, dearest by far of all your companions,
Pray to the grey-eyed Daughter of Zeus and to Zeus our father,
Then must you poise your spear long-shafted, and mightily hurl it."

And, at the word, she breathed in his soul the spirit of power:
Then did he make his prayer to the Daughter of Him who is mighty,
And, in an instant, he poised his spear long-shafted and hurled it:
Full on the brazen helm, it struck Eupeithes: but helmet Nothing availed, nor visor, to stop the rush of the spear-head: And, with a thud, he collapsed, and his arms fell clanging upon him.

Then did Odysseus charge, with his glorious son, at the foremost Ranks of the foe, and smite with sword and spear double-headed.
And, very like, they had killed them all, and not one had escapéd,
Had not Athené, the Daughter of Zeus the Lord of the ægis
Sounded the call with her voice, and held them back from the slaughter:

"Ithacans, stay your hands, and desist from war with its horrors,
That you may settle your feuds, and come to terms without bloodshed."

Thus did Athené speak: and their faces blanched in their terror,
And, in a panic, they dropped their arms, which clattered unheeded
On to the ground when they heard the mighty voice of the Goddess.
And, for that life is dear, they turned to flee to the city.
But, with a terrible yell, the divine much-enduring Odysseus Gathered himself for a bound, as an eagle swoops on his quarry.
Then, at the last great Zeus launched forth the bolt of his thunder:
And, at the feet, it fell, of the Daughter of Him who is mighty.
And she obeyed, the grey-eyed one, and spoke to Odysseus:

"Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Stay your hand, and desist from a strife that is evenly balanced,
Lest you incur the wrath of Him whose eye is on all things."

Thus did Athené speak: and he, obeying, was joyful.
And thereupon an oath was sworn, of peace and of friendship,
'Twixt the opposing sides, by the Daughter of Zeus of the Ægis,
Under the likeness of Mentor, in voice and also in figure.
APPENDIX A

FROM ODYSSEY VIII

The following passage, being regarded as of doubtful authority, has been removed from its context.

THEN did he strike up a lay that charmed each listener present,
All of the loves of Arés and Aphrodité the golden,
Telling their stolen love within the house of Hephæstus:
Many a gift did he give, and dishonoured the bed of Hephæstus, Prince of renown: but, at once, a messenger hurried to tell him, Helios, whose keen eye had seen their stolen embraces.
Then did Hephæstus, so soon as he heard this story of outrage, Hie to his smithy, and there, his dark heart brooding on vengeance,
Place, on the anvil-block, a mighty anvil, and set to Forging such fetters as ne'er could be broken or loosened or shifted.
And, having forged these chains, in his wrath against treacherous Arés, Then he set out for the chamber where stood the bed of his dear one.
There did he wind the chain on every side round the bed-posts, Passing it over and over the roof-tree above to secure it As 'twere a spider's web, so fine that none could discern it Were he a God immortal: the chain was so artfully fashioned: And, when he had with his snare completely enveloped the bedstead, Hied he away to Lemnos that city of beautiful buildings, Which, of all places on this wide earth, to him was the dearest. Arés, meanwhile, who handles the golden reins, was a-watching, And, very easily, saw when renowned Hephæstus departed:

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Promptly he went on his way to the house of the famous Hephaestus,
Drawn by his love for her, Cytherēa of beautiful garlands.
She, having lately arrived from Zeus son of Kronos her father
Went and sat down in the house: and, just at that moment, he entered:
Fondly he held her hand, and called her by name and addressed her:
"Let us to bed, dear love, and sleep in each other's embraces,
Seeing Hephaestus has gone away, and already, I fancy,
Come to the Lemnian isle, 'mid the rough-tongued Sintian people."
Thus he persuasive spoke: and she full willing consented:
And, on the bed, they two lay down: but the chains of Hephaestus,
Cunningly wrought, had entangled them round and held them securely
So that they could not rise, nor stir so much as a finger.
Then they perceived for sure that they had no chance of escaping.
And, at that moment, appeared that prince of the smithy, the Hobbler,
Having turned back again before arriving at Lemnos:
For he had heard the news from Helios, spyer of all things:
And, in the porch, he stood, and savage fury possessed him:
And, with a terrible roar, he called to all the Immortals:
"Father Zeus, and ye other Gods who are blessed for ever,
Come, 'tis no matter for laughing, and see these shameful proceedings,
How, just because I am lame, the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite,
Always despises me, and loves that ruffian Arês,
Simply because he is sound on his feet and handsome, whereas I Was, from my birth, a cripple: but that is the fault of my parents,
Not of myself at all: for they were the ones who begot me.
But you shall see these shameless two now sleeping together,
Having gone into my bed: and I am enraged to behold it.
But I expect 'twill be no short time that they there will be lying,
Loving pair that they are: perhaps, ere very much longer,
They would be glad to be gone: but my cunning fetters will hold them
Unto such time as her father repays those gifts of betrothal
Which I once put in his hand for the sake of his brazen-faced daughter:
For she is fair indeed, but chaste she certainly is not."

Then, at the palace with floor of bronze, the Immortals assembled:

Came the Earth-clasper Poseidon: came too the Luck-bringer Hermés,
Also Apollo the Prince of Gods, who strikes from a distance:
While that the Goddesses stayed at home, because they were bashful:
There did they stand in the porch, the Gods, the source of all blessings:

And an unquenchable laugh arose 'mid the happy Immortals
When they beheld the snares contrived by the wiles of Hephaéstus.

And it was thus that one of them spoke, looking round at his neighbour:

"I'll deeds never succeed: the hare is caught by the tortoise:
Even as Arés, the swiftest of all the Gods of Olympus,
Now has been caught by Hephaéstus, for all that he is but a hobbler,
By his ingenious arts: and, therefore, he owes compensation."

Such was the way in which the Gods were talking together.
Then did Apollo the prince turn round to Hermés his brother:

"Hermés, swift son of Zeus, our guide and Luck-bringer, tell me,
If you were forced to be bound like that with chains never-ending,
Would you still choose to sleep with Aphrodité the golden?"

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke the slayer of Argus:
If I could have the chance, my prince, far-striking Apollo,
There might be thrice so many chains wound tightly around me,
And you Gods might be looking on, and Goddesses also,
Yet would I choose to sleep with Aphrodité the golden."

Thus spoke Hermés: and laughter arose amongst the Immortals.

Only Poseidon did not laugh, but begged of Hephaéstus,
Urgently, that he should loose the chain with which Arés was fastened:
And, in such words as came to his mind, thus hastily spoke he:
"Let him go! and I, amongst the assembled Immortals, Here guarantee that Arès shall pay you fair compensation."

And, unto him in reply, the far-famed Hobbler answered:
"Make me not such a request, I beg, Earth-clasper Poseidon: He who trusts worthless folk will find their pledges are worthless. How could I ask you to pay my claim, in the court of Immortals, If he absconded, and broke his bond when loosed from his fetters?"

And, unto him in reply, thus spoke Earth-shaker Poseidon:
"If he should break his bond, Hephaestus, and fly from the country, I will myself repay you whatever sum is agreed on."

And, unto him in reply, the far-famed Hobbler answered:
"It were not fitting or right to refuse your liberal offer."

And, at the word, the chain was loosed by the might of Hephaestus.

So these two, when freed from the mighty chain which had bound them, Sprang to their feet: and Arès was off to the Thracian country, But Aphrodité, that fountain of smiles, hurried quickly to Paphos In her own Cyprian isle, where stands her altar of incense. There her attendant Graces did wash their queen and anoint her With that ambrosial oil reserved for the use of Immortals, And in delightful garments did robe her, a marvel of beauty.

This was the end of the song of the famous bard: but Odysseus Listened with much delight to his words, and so did the others, Chiefs of Phæacia, men of long oars, renowned as sailors.
The following passage, being regarded as of doubtful authority, has been removed from its context.

"THERE, with these very eyes, I beheld the glorious Minos, Offspring of Zeus, enthroned, and dealing laws to the dead men, Holding his sceptre of gold: and the others were asking for judgements, Standing or seated around his throne in the palace of Hadés. "And, after him, I perceived the monstrous form of Orion Swiftly corralling the beasts that ranged on the asphodel meadow, Those which himself had slain on the lonely slopes of the mountains, And, in his hand, he grasped a club of bronze everlasting. "Tityos also I saw, the son of Earth whom we worship, Stretched on the plain: by whose vast bulk, four acres were covered: And, on each side, was perched a vulture, which tore at his liver, Burrowing into the bowels, his hands being helpless to guard him: For that he ravished by force the famous mistress of great Zeus, Leto, within fair Panopé town, as she journeyed to Pytho. "Tantalus too did I see, who suffered unspeakable torment, Standing upright in a pool, which rose till his chin was bedabbled: Yet he continued athirst, and never could reach to the water: For when he bent his head, in his passionate longing for drinking, All of it sank in the ground, through some supernatural Power,
And, round his feet, the black earth showed, and left him unsated.
And, o'er his head, tall trees were shedding their dainties around him.
Pears and pomegranates were there, and others with glorious apples,
Fig trees with luscious fruit, and olives wide-spreading and leafy:
But when the ancient tried to pick one up and to eat it,
Then came a gust of wind, and whirled them away to the heavens.
"Sisyphus also I saw: he too was suffering torment,
Pushing, with might and main, an enormous stone to a hill-top:
And when with hands and feet, by utmost strain, he had nearly
Toppled it over the edge, its ponderous weight overbore him,
And, without conscience or shame, it rolled to the plain that it came from.
Then he began once more to strain at the stone, till the sweat would
Stream from his limbs, and a cloud of steam rise up from his temples.
"And, after him I saw that man of might overwhelming,
Heracles: and, all round him, there rose the chatter of dead men,
As 'twere of startled birds: but he, like the figure of black Night,
Held in his hands a bow, and on the string was an arrow:
And, as in act to shoot, he was terribly glaring around him:
While that around his breast, a grim-looking baldrick was hanging,
Fashioned of gold, and graven with art that was wondrous and godlike,
Lions with gleaming eyes and boars and bears from the forest,
Battles and slaughter and fights unto death and killing of heroes.
And may the man who made that belt make never another,
Since he has once achieved such a marvel of art of the goldsmith.
And, on his part, he knew me, when once with his eyes he beheld me,
And, in a mournful voice, these words unbidden he uttered:
"'Zeus-born son of Laërtes, Odysseus of many devices,
Ah, my poor friend, you also by evil fortune are shadowed,
Such as myself endured when I lived in the sunshine of heaven. Son though I was of Zeus the son of Kronos, I suffered Sorrow and toil without ending, because I was bound as a servant Unto a far worse man, who with tasks most grievous, oppressed me. Once did he send me here to bring him the Hound: for he thought that Ne’er in the world could be found, a work more toilsome and hopeless. Yet did I bring him up on a leash from the regions of Hadés: But I had escort safe from Hermés and Pallas Athené.’ “Thus having spoken, he passed within the palace of Hadés: But I remained, to see if still one more would come forward Of the heroic men who died in past generations.”