

## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This translation is intended to supplement a work entitled "The Authoress of the Odyssey", which I published in 1897. I could not give the whole "Odyssey" in that book without making it unwieldy, I therefore epitomised my translation, which was already completed and which I now publish in full.

I shall not here argue the two main points dealt with in the work just mentioned; I have nothing either to add to, or to withdraw from, what I have there written. The points in question are:

(1) that the "Odyssey" was written entirely at, and drawn entirely from, the place now called Trapani on the West Coast of Sicily, alike as regards the Phaeacian and the Ithaca scenes; while the voyages of Ulysses, when once he is within easy reach of Sicily, solve themselves into a periplus of the island, practically from Trapani back to Trapani, via the Lipari islands, the Straits of Messina, and the island of Pantellaria.

meats, they cut the rest of the meat up small, put the pieces on the spits and toasted them over the fire.

Meanwhile lovely Polycaste, Nestor's youngest daughter, washed Telemachus. When she had washed him and anointed him with oil, she brought him a fair mantle and shirt, {33} and he looked like a god as he came from the bath and took his seat by the side of Nestor. When the outer meats were done they drew them off the spits and sat down to dinner where they were waited upon by some worthy henchmen, who kept pouring them out their wine in cups of gold. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink Nestor said, "Sons, put Telemachus's horses to the chariot that he may start at once."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said, and yoked the fleet horses to the chariot. The housekeeper packed them up a provision of bread, wine, and sweet meats fit for the sons of princes. Then Telemachus got into the chariot, while Pisistratus gathered up the reins and took his seat beside him. He lashed the horses on and they flew forward nothing loth into the open country, leaving the high citadel of

Pylos behind them. All that day did they travel, swaying the yoke  
upon  
their necks till the sun went down and darkness was over all the  
land.  
Then they reached Pherae where Diocles lived, who was son to  
Ortilochus  
and grandson to Alpheus. Here they passed the night and Diocles  
entertained them hospitably. When the child of morning, rosy-  
fingered  
Dawn, appeared, they again yoked their horses and drove out through  
the  
gateway under the echoing gatehouse. {34} Pisistratus lashed the  
horses  
on and they flew forward nothing loth; presently they came to the  
corn  
lands of the open country, and in the course of time completed their  
journey, so well did their steeds take them. {35}

Now when the sun had set and darkness was over the land,

#### Book IV

THE VISIT TO KING MENELAUS, WHO TELLS HIS STORY--MEANWHILE THE  
SUITORS  
IN ITHACA PLOT AGAINST TELEMACHUS.

they reached the low lying city of Lacedaemon, where they drove  
straight  
to the abode of Menelaus {36} [and found him in his own house,  
feasting  
with his many clansmen in honour of the wedding of his son, and also  
of  
his daughter, whom he was marrying to the son of that valiant  
warrior  
Achilles. He had given his consent and promised her to him while he  
was  
still at Troy, and now the gods were bringing the marriage about; so  
he  
was sending her with chariots and horses to the city of the  
Myrmidons  
over whom Achilles' son was reigning. For his only son he had found  
a  
bride from Sparta, {37} the daughter of Alector. This son,  
Megapenthes,  
was born to him of a bondwoman, for heaven vouchsafed Helen no more  
children after she had borne Hermione, who was fair as golden Venus  
herself.

So the neighbours and kinsmen of Menelaus were feasting and making  
merry  
in his house. There was a bard also to sing to them and play his  
lyre,  
while two tumblers went about performing in the midst of them when

the  
man struck up with his tune.] {38}

Telemachus and the son of Nestor stayed their horses at the gate, whereon Eteoneus servant to Menelaus came out, and as soon as he saw them ran hurrying back into the house to tell his Master. He went close up to him and said, "Menelaus, there are some strangers come here, two men, who look like sons of Jove. What are we to do? Shall we take their horses out, or tell them to find friends elsewhere as they best can?"

Menelaus was very angry and said, "Eteoneus, son of Boethous, you never used to be a fool, but now you talk like a simpleton. Take their horses out, of course, and show the strangers in that they may have supper; you and I have staid often enough at other people's houses before we got back here, where heaven grant that we may rest in peace henceforward."

So Eteoneus bustled back and bade the other servants come with him. They took their sweating steeds from under the yoke, made them fast to the mangers, and gave them a feed of oats and barley mixed. Then they leaned the chariot against the end wall of the courtyard, and led the way into the house. Telemachus and Pisistratus were astonished when they saw it, for its splendour was as that of the sun and moon; then, when they had admired everything to their heart's content, they went into the bath room and washed themselves.

When the servants had washed them and anointed them with oil, they brought them woollen cloaks and shirts, and the two took their seats by the side of Menelaus. A maid-servant brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer, and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands; and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, while the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side.

Menelaus then greeted them saying, "Fall to, and welcome; when you have done supper I shall ask who you are, for the lineage of such men as you cannot have been lost. You must be descended from a line of sceptre-bearing kings, for poor people do not have such sons as you are."

On this he handed them {39} a piece of fat roast loin, which had been set near him as being a prime part, and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them; as soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Telemachus said to the son of Nestor, with his head so close that no one might hear, "Look, Pisistratus, man after my own heart, see the gleam of bronze and gold--of amber, {40} ivory, and silver. Everything is so splendid that it is like seeing the palace of Olympian Jove. I am lost in admiration."

Menelaus overheard him and said, "No one, my sons, can hold his own with Jove, for his house and everything about him is immortal; but among mortal men--well, there may be another who has as much wealth as I have, or there may not; but at all events I have travelled much and have undergone much hardship, for it was nearly eight years before I could get home with my fleet. I went to Cyprus, Phoenicia and the Egyptians; I went also to the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, and the Erembians, and to Libya where the lambs have horns as soon as they are born, and the sheep lamb down three times a year. Every one in that country, whether master or man, has plenty of cheese, meat, and good milk, for the ewes yield all the year round. But while I was travelling and getting great riches among these people, my brother was secretly and shockingly murdered through the perfidy of his wicked wife, so that I have no pleasure in being lord of all this wealth. Whoever your parents may be they must have told you about all this, and of my heavy loss in the ruin {41} of a stately mansion fully and magnificently furnished. Would that I had only a third of what I now have so that I had stayed at home, and all those were living who perished on the plain of Troy, far from Argos. I often grieve, as I sit here in my house, for one and all of them. At times I cry aloud for sorrow, but presently I leave off again, for crying

is  
cold comfort and one soon tires of it. Yet grieve for these as I  
may,  
I do so for one man more than for them all. I cannot even think of  
him  
without loathing both food and sleep, so miserable does he make me,  
for  
no one of all the Achaeans worked so hard or risked so much as he  
did.  
He took nothing by it, and has left a legacy of sorrow to myself,  
for he  
has been gone a long time, and we know not whether he is alive or  
dead. His old father, his long-suffering wife Penelope, and his son  
Telemachus, whom he left behind him an infant in arms, are plunged  
in  
grief on his account."

Thus spoke Menelaus, and the heart of Telemachus yearned as he  
bethought  
him of his father. Tears fell from his eyes as he heard him thus  
mentioned, so that he held his cloak before his face with both  
hands.  
When Menelaus saw this he doubted whether to let him choose his own  
time  
for speaking, or to ask him at once and find what it was all about.

While he was thus in two minds Helen came down from her high vaulted  
and  
perfumed room, looking as lovely as Diana herself. Adraste brought  
her  
a seat, Alcippe a soft woollen rug while Phylo fetched her the  
silver  
work-box which Alcandra wife of Polybus had given her. Polybus lived  
in  
Egyptian Thebes, which is the richest city in the whole world; he  
gave  
Menelaus two baths, both of pure silver, two tripods, and ten  
talents of  
gold; besides all this, his wife gave Helen some beautiful presents,  
to  
wit, a golden distaff, and a silver work box that ran on wheels,  
with a  
gold band round the top of it. Phylo now placed this by her side,  
full  
of fine spun yarn, and a distaff charged with violet coloured wool  
was  
laid upon the top of it. Then Helen took her seat, put her feet upon  
the  
footstool, and began to question her husband. {42}

"Do we know, Menelaus," said she, "the names of these strangers who  
have come to visit us? Shall I guess right or wrong?—but I cannot  
help  
saying what I think. Never yet have I seen either man or woman so

like  
somebody else (indeed when I look at him I hardly know what to  
think)  
as this young man is like Telemachus, whom Ulysses left as a baby  
behind  
him, when you Achaeans went to Troy with battle in your hearts, on  
account of my most shameless self."

"My dear wife," replied Menelaus, "I see the likeness just as you  
do.  
His hands and feet are just like Ulysses; so is his hair, with the  
shape  
of his head and the expression of his eyes. Moreover, when I was  
talking  
about Ulysses, and saying how much he had suffered on my account,  
tears  
fell from his eyes, and he hid his face in his mantle."

Then Pisistratus said, "Menelaus, son of Atreus, you are right in  
thinking that this young man is Telemachus, but he is very modest,  
and  
is ashamed to come here and begin opening up discourse with one  
whose  
conversation is so divinely interesting as your own. My father,  
Nestor,  
sent me to escort him hither, for he wanted to know whether you  
could  
give him any counsel or suggestion. A son has always trouble at home  
when his father has gone away leaving him without supporters; and  
this  
is how Telemachus is now placed, for his father is absent, and there  
is  
no one among his own people to stand by him."

"Bless my heart," replied Menelaus, "then I am receiving a visit  
from  
the son of a very dear friend, who suffered much hardship for my  
sake.  
I had always hoped to entertain him with most marked distinction  
when  
heaven had granted us a safe return from beyond the seas. I should  
have  
founded a city for him in Argos, and built him a house. I should  
have  
made him leave Ithaca with his goods, his son, and all his people,  
and  
should have sacked for them some one of the neighbouring cities that  
are subject to me. We should thus have seen one another continually,  
and nothing but death could have interrupted so close and happy an  
intercourse. I suppose, however, that heaven grudged us such great  
good  
fortune, for it has prevented the poor fellow from ever getting home  
at  
all."

Thus did he speak, and his words set them all a weeping. Helen wept, Telemachus wept, and so did Menelaus, nor could Pisistratus keep his eyes from filling, when he remembered his dear brother Antilochus whom the son of bright Dawn had killed. Thereon he said to Menelaus,

"Sir, my father Nestor, when we used to talk about you at home, told me you were a person of rare and excellent understanding. If, then, it be possible, do as I would urge you. I am not fond of crying while I am getting my supper. Morning will come in due course, and in the forenoon I care not how much I cry for those that are dead and gone. This is all we can do for the poor things. We can only shave our heads for them and wring the tears from our cheeks. I had a brother who died at Troy; he was by no means the worst man there; you are sure to have known him--his name was Antilochus; I never set eyes upon him myself, but they say that he was singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant."

"Your discretion, my friend," answered Menelaus, "is beyond your years. It is plain you take after your father. One can soon see when a man is son to one whom heaven has blessed both as regards wife and offspring--and it has blessed Nestor from first to last all his days, giving him a green old age in his own house, with sons about him who are both well disposed and valiant. We will put an end therefore to all this weeping, and attend to our supper again. Let water be poured over our hands. Telemachus and I can talk with one another fully in the morning."

On this Asphalion, one of the servants, poured water over their hands and they laid their hands on the good things that were before them.

Then Jove's daughter Helen bethought her of another matter. She drugged the wine with an herb that banishes all care, sorrow, and ill humour. Whoever drinks wine thus drugged cannot shed a single tear all the rest of the day, not even though his father and mother both of them drop down dead, or he sees a brother or a son hewn in pieces before his very

eyes.

This drug, of such sovereign power and virtue, had been given to Helen

by Polydamna wife of Thon, a woman of Egypt, where there grow all sorts

of herbs, some good to put into the mixing bowl and others poisonous.

Moreover, every one in the whole country is a skilled physician, for they are of the race of Paeon. When Helen had put this drug in the bowl, and had told the servants to serve the wine round, she said:

"Menelaus, son of Atreus, and you my good friends, sons of honourable

men (which is as Jove wills, for he is the giver both of good and evil,

and can do what he chooses), feast here as you will, and listen while I

tell you a tale in season. I cannot indeed name every single one of the

exploits of Ulysses, but I can say what he did when he was before Troy,

and you Achaeans were in all sorts of difficulties. He covered himself

with wounds and bruises, dressed himself all in rags, and entered the

enemy's city looking like a menial or a beggar, and quite different from what he did when he was among his own people. In this disguise he entered the city of Troy, and no one said anything to him. I

alone

recognised him and began to question him, but he was too cunning for me.

When, however, I had washed and anointed him and had given him clothes,

and after I had sworn a solemn oath not to betray him to the Trojans till he had got safely back to his own camp and to the ships, he told me

all that the Achaeans meant to do. He killed many Trojans and got much

information before he reached the Argive camp, for all which things the

Trojan women made lamentation, but for my own part I was glad, for my

heart was beginning to yearn after my home, and I was unhappy about the wrong that Venus had done me in taking me over there, away from my country, my girl, and my lawful wedded husband, who is indeed by no

means deficient either in person or understanding."

Then Menelaus said, "All that you have been saying, my dear wife, is true. I have travelled much, and have had much to do with heroes, but

I have never seen such another man as Ulysses. What endurance too, and what courage he displayed within the wooden horse, wherein all the



bravest of the Argives were lying in wait to bring death and destruction upon the Trojans. {43} At that moment you came up to us; some god who wished well to the Trojans must have set you on to it and you had Deiphobus with you. Three times did you go all round our hiding place and pat it; you called our chiefs each by his own name, and mimicked all our wives--Diomed, Ulysses, and I from our seats inside heard what a noise you made. Diomed and I could not make up our minds whether to spring out then and there, or to answer you from inside, but Ulysses held us all in check, so we sat quite still, all except Anticlus, who was beginning to answer you, when Ulysses clapped his two brawny hands over his mouth, and kept them there. It was this that saved us all, for he muzzled Anticlus till Minerva took you away again."

"How sad," exclaimed Telemachus, "that all this was of no avail to save him, nor yet his own iron courage. But now, sir, be pleased to send us all to bed, that we may lie down and enjoy the blessed boon of sleep."

On this Helen told the maid servants to set beds in the room that was in the gatehouse, and to make them with good red rugs, and spread coverlets on the top of them with woollen cloaks for the guests to wear. So the maids went out, carrying a torch, and made the beds, to which a man-servant presently conducted the strangers. Thus, then, did Telemachus and Pisistratus sleep there in the forecourt, while the son of Atreus lay in an inner room with lovely Helen by his side.

When the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, Menelaus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulders, and left his room looking like an immortal god. Then, taking a seat near Telemachus he said:

"And what, Telemachus, has led you to take this long sea voyage to Lacedaemon? Are you on public, or private business? Tell me all about it."

"I have come, sir," replied Telemachus, "to see if you can tell me anything about my father. I am being eaten out of house and home; my fair estate is being wasted, and my house is full of miscreants who

keep  
killing great numbers of my sheep and oxen, on the pretence of  
paying  
their addresses to my mother. Therefore, I am suppliant at your  
knees if  
haply you may tell me about my father's melancholy end, whether you  
saw  
it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller; for he  
was  
a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity for  
myself,  
but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave  
father  
Ulysses ever did you loyal service either by word or deed, when you  
Achaean were harassed by the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my  
favour and tell me truly all."

Menelaus on hearing this was very much shocked. "So," he exclaimed,  
"these cowards would usurp a brave man's bed? A hind might as well  
lay  
her new born young in the lair of a lion, and then go off to feed in  
the  
forest or in some grassy dell: the lion when he comes back to his  
lair  
will make short work with the pair of them--and so will Ulysses with  
these suitors. By father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, if Ulysses is  
still  
the man that he was when he wrestled with Philomeleides in Lesbos,  
and  
threw him so heavily that all the Achaeans cheered him--if he is  
still  
such and were to come near these suitors, they would have a short  
shrift  
and a sorry wedding. As regards your questions, however, I will not  
prevaricate nor deceive you, but will tell you without concealment  
all  
that the old man of the sea told me.

"I was trying to come on here, but the gods detained me in Egypt,  
for  
my hecatombs had not given them full satisfaction, and the gods are  
very  
strict about having their dues. Now off Egypt, about as far as a  
ship  
can sail in a day with a good stiff breeze behind her, there is an  
island called Pharos--it has a good harbour from which vessels can  
get out into open sea when they have taken in water--and here the  
gods  
becalmed me twenty days without so much as a breath of fair wind to  
help  
me forward. We should have run clean out of provisions and my men  
would  
have starved, if a goddess had not taken pity upon me and saved me  
in

the person of Idothea, daughter to Proteus, the old man of the sea, for she had taken a great fancy to me.

"She came to me one day when I was by myself, as I often was, for the men used to go with their barbed hooks, all over the island in the hope of catching a fish or two to save them from the pangs of hunger.

'Stranger,' said she, 'it seems to me that you like starving in this way—at any rate it does not greatly trouble you, for you stick here day after day, without even trying to get away though your men are dying by inches.'

"Let me tell you," said I, 'whichever of the goddesses you may happen to be, that I am not staying here of my own accord, but must have offended the gods that live in heaven. Tell me, therefore, for the gods know everything, which of the immortals it is that is hindering me in this way, and tell me also how I may sail the sea so as to reach my home.'

"Stranger," replied she, 'I will make it all quite clear to you. There is an old immortal who lives under the sea hereabouts and whose name is Proteus. He is an Egyptian, and people say he is my father; he is Neptune's head man and knows every inch of ground all over the bottom of the sea. If you can snare him and hold him tight, he will tell you about your voyage, what courses you are to take, and how you are to sail the sea so as to reach your home. He will also tell you, if you so will, all that has been going on at your house both good and bad, while you have been away on your long and dangerous journey.'

"Can you show me," said I, 'some stratagem by means of which I may catch this old god without his suspecting it and finding me out? For a god is not easily caught—not by a mortal man.'

"Stranger," said she, 'I will make it all quite clear to you. About the time when the sun shall have reached mid heaven, the old man of the sea comes up from under the waves, heralded by the West wind that furs the water over his head. As soon as he has come up he lies down, and

goes to  
sleep in a great sea cave, where the seals--Halosydne's chickens as  
they  
call them--come up also from the grey sea, and go to sleep in shoals  
all round him; and a very strong and fish-like smell do they bring  
with  
them. {44} Early to-morrow morning I will take you to this place and  
will lay you in ambush. Pick out, therefore, the three best men you  
have  
in your fleet, and I will tell you all the tricks that the old man  
will  
play you.

"First he will look over all his seals, and count them; then, when  
he  
has seen them and tallied them on his five fingers, he will go to  
sleep  
among them, as a shepherd among his sheep. The moment you see that  
he is  
asleep seize him; put forth all your strength and hold him fast, for  
he  
will do his very utmost to get away from you. He will turn himself  
into  
every kind of creature that goes upon the earth, and will become  
also  
both fire and water; but you must hold him fast and grip him tighter  
and tighter, till he begins to talk to you and comes back to what he  
was  
when you saw him go to sleep; then you may slacken your hold and let  
him  
go; and you can ask him which of the gods it is that is angry with  
you,  
and what you must do to reach your home over the seas.'

"Having so said she dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to  
the place where my ships were ranged upon the shore; and my heart  
was  
clouded with care as I went along. When I reached my ship we got  
supper  
ready, for night was falling, and camped down upon the beach.

"When the child of morning rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, I took the  
three  
men on whose prowess of all kinds I could most rely, and went along  
by  
the sea-side, praying heartily to heaven. Meanwhile the goddess  
fetched  
me up four seal skins from the bottom of the sea, all of them just  
skinned, for she meant playing a trick upon her father. Then she dug  
four pits for us to lie in, and sat down to wait till we should come  
up.  
When we were close to her, she made us lie down in the pits one  
after  
the other, and threw a seal skin over each of us. Our ambushade

would  
have been intolerable, for the stench of the fishy seals was most  
distressing {45}--who would go to bed with a sea monster if he could  
help it?--but here, too, the goddess helped us, and thought of  
something  
that gave us great relief, for she put some ambrosia under each  
man's  
nostrils, which was so fragrant that it killed the smell of the  
seals.  
{46}

"We waited the whole morning and made the best of it, watching the  
seals  
come up in hundreds to bask upon the sea shore, till at noon the old  
man  
of the sea came up too, and when he had found his fat seals he went  
over  
them and counted them. We were among the first he counted, and he  
never  
suspected any guile, but laid himself down to sleep as soon as he  
had  
done counting. Then we rushed upon him with a shout and seized him;  
on  
which he began at once with his old tricks, and changed himself  
first  
into a lion with a great mane; then all of a sudden he became a  
dragon,  
a leopard, a wild boar; the next moment he was running water, and  
then  
again directly he was a tree, but we stuck to him and never lost  
hold,  
till at last the cunning old creature became distressed, and said,  
'Which of the gods was it, Son of Atreus, that hatched this plot  
with  
you for snaring me and seizing me against my will? What do you  
want?'

"'You know that yourself, old man,' I answered, 'you will gain  
nothing  
by trying to put me off. It is because I have been kept so long in  
this  
island, and see no sign of my being able to get away. I am losing  
all heart; tell me, then, for you gods know everything, which of the  
immortals it is that is hindering me, and tell me also how I may  
sail  
the sea so as to reach my home?'

"Then,' he said, 'if you would finish your voyage and get home  
quickly,  
you must offer sacrifices to Jove and to the rest of the gods before  
embarking; for it is decreed that you shall not get back to your  
friends, and to your own house, till you have returned to the  
heaven-fed  
stream of Egypt, and offered holy hecatombs to the immortal gods

that  
reign in heaven. When you have done this they will let you finish  
your  
voyage.'

"I was broken hearted when I heard that I must go back all that long  
and  
terrible voyage to Egypt; {47} nevertheless, I answered, 'I will do  
all,  
old man, that you have laid upon me; but now tell me, and tell me  
true,  
whether all the Achaeans whom Nestor and I left behind us when we  
set  
sail from Troy have got home safely, or whether any one of them came  
to a bad end either on board his own ship or among his friends when  
the  
days of his fighting were done.'

"'Son of Atreus,' he answered, 'why ask me? You had better not know  
what  
I can tell you, for your eyes will surely fill when you have heard  
my  
story. Many of those about whom you ask are dead and gone, but many  
still remain, and only two of the chief men among the Achaeans  
perished during their return home. As for what happened on the field  
of  
battle--you were there yourself. A third Achaean leader is still at  
sea,  
alive, but hindered from returning. Ajax was wrecked, for Neptune  
drove  
him on to the great rocks of Gyrae; nevertheless, he let him get  
safe  
out of the water, and in spite of all Minerva's hatred he would have  
escaped death, if he had not ruined himself by boasting. He said the  
gods could not drown him even though they had tried to do so, and  
when  
Neptune heard this large talk, he seized his trident in his two  
brawny  
hands, and split the rock of Gyrae in two pieces. The base remained  
where it was, but the part on which Ajax was sitting fell headlong  
into the sea and carried Ajax with it; so he drank salt water and  
was  
drowned.

"'Your brother and his ships escaped, for Juno protected him, but  
when  
he was just about to reach the high promontory of Malea, he was  
caught  
by a heavy gale which carried him out to sea again sorely against  
his  
will, and drove him to the foreland where Thyestes used to dwell,  
but  
where Aegisthus was then living. By and by, however, it seemed as  
though

he was to return safely after all, for the gods backed the wind into its old quarter and they reached home; whereon Agamemnon kissed his native soil, and shed tears of joy at finding himself in his own country.

"'Now there was a watchman whom Aegisthus kept always on the watch, and to whom he had promised two talents of gold. This man had been looking out for a whole year to make sure that Agamemnon did not give him the slip and prepare war; when, therefore, this man saw Agamemnon go by, he went and told Aegisthus, who at once began to lay a plot for him. He picked twenty of his bravest warriors and placed them in ambuscade on one side the cloister, while on the opposite side he prepared a banquet. Then he sent his chariots and horsemen to Agamemnon, and invited him to the feast, but he meant foul play. He got him there, all unsuspecting of the doom that was awaiting him, and killed him when the banquet was over as though he were butchering an ox in the shambles; not one of Agamemnon's followers was left alive, nor yet one of Aegisthus', but they were all killed there in the cloisters.'

"Thus spoke Proteus, and I was broken hearted as I heard him. I sat down upon the sands and wept; I felt as though I could no longer bear to live nor look upon the light of the sun. Presently, when I had had my fill of weeping and writhing upon the ground, the old man of the sea said, 'Son of Atreus, do not waste any more time in crying so bitterly; it can do no manner of good; find your way home as fast as ever you can, for Aegisthus may be still alive, and even though Orestes has been beforehand with you in killing him, you may yet come in for his funeral.'

"On this I took comfort in spite of all my sorrow, and said, 'I know, then, about these two; tell me, therefore, about the third man of whom you spoke; is he still alive, but at sea, and unable to get home? or is he dead? Tell me, no matter how much it may grieve me.'

"'The third man,' he answered, 'is Ulysses who dwells in Ithaca. I can see him in an island sorrowing bitterly in the house of the nymph Calypso, who is keeping him prisoner, and he cannot reach his home

for  
he has no ships nor sailors to take him over the sea. As for your  
own  
end, Menelaus, you shall not die in Argos, but the gods will take  
you to  
the Elysian plain, which is at the ends of the world. There fair-  
haired  
Rhadamanthus reigns, and men lead an easier life than any where else  
in  
the world, for in Elysium there falls not rain, nor hail, nor snow,  
but  
Oceanus breathes ever with a West wind that sings softly from the  
sea,  
and gives fresh life to all men. This will happen to you because you  
have married Helen, and are Jove's son-in-law.'

"As he spoke he dived under the waves, whereon I turned back to the  
ships with my companions, and my heart was clouded with care as I  
went  
along. When we reached the ships we got supper ready, for night was  
falling, and camped down upon the beach. When the child of morning,  
rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, we drew our ships into the water, and  
put  
our masts and sails within them; then we went on board ourselves,  
took  
our seats on the benches, and smote the grey sea with our oars. I  
again stationed my ships in the heaven-fed stream of Egypt, and  
offered  
hecatombs that were full and sufficient. When I had thus appeased  
heaven's anger, I raised a barrow to the memory of Agamemnon that  
his  
name might live for ever, after which I had a quick passage home,  
for  
the gods sent me a fair wind.

"And now for yourself—stay here some ten or twelve days longer, and  
I  
will then speed you on your way. I will make you a noble present of  
a  
chariot and three horses. I will also give you a beautiful chalice  
that so long as you live you may think of me whenever you make a  
drink-offering to the immortal gods."

"Son of Atreus," replied Telemachus, "do not press me to stay  
longer; I  
should be contented to remain with you for another twelve months; I  
find  
your conversation so delightful that I should never once wish myself  
at  
home with my parents; but my crew whom I have left at Pylos are  
already  
impatient, and you are detaining me from them. As for any present  
you  
may be disposed to make me, I had rather that it should be a piece



of  
plate. I will take no horses back with me to Ithaca, but will leave  
them  
to adorn your own stables, for you have much flat ground in your  
kingdom  
where lotus thrives, as also meadow-sweet and wheat and barley, and  
oats  
with their white and spreading ears; whereas in Ithaca we have  
neither  
open fields nor racecourses, and the country is more fit for goats  
than  
horses, and I like it the better for that. {48} None of our islands  
have  
much level ground, suitable for horses, and Ithaca least of all."

Menelaus smiled and took Telemachus's hand within his own. "What you  
say," said he, "shows that you come of good family. I both can, and  
will, make this exchange for you, by giving you the finest and most  
precious piece of plate in all my house. It is a mixing bowl by  
Vulcan's  
own hand, of pure silver, except the rim, which is inlaid with gold.  
Phaedimus, king of the Sidonians, gave it me in the course of a  
visit  
which I paid him when I returned thither on my homeward journey. I  
will  
make you a present of it."

Thus did they converse [and guests kept coming to the king's house.  
They  
brought sheep and wine, while their wives had put up bread for them  
to  
take with them; so they were busy cooking their dinners in the  
courts].  
{49}

Meanwhile the suitors were throwing discs or aiming with spears at  
a mark on the levelled ground in front of Ulysses' house, and were  
behaving with all their old insolence. Antinous and Eurymachus, who  
were  
their ringleaders and much the foremost among them all, were sitting  
together when Noemon son of Phronius came up and said to Antinous,

"Have we any idea, Antinous, on what day Telemachus returns from  
Pylos?  
He has a ship of mine, and I want it, to cross over to Elis: I have  
twelve brood mares there with yearling mule foals by their side not  
yet  
broken in, and I want to bring one of them over here and break him."

They were astounded when they heard this, for they had made sure  
that  
Telemachus had not gone to the city of Neleus. They thought he was  
only away somewhere on the farms, and was with the sheep, or with  
the

swineherd; so Antinous said, "When did he go? Tell me truly, and what young men did he take with him? Were they freemen or his own bondsmen--for he might manage that too? Tell me also, did you let him have the ship of your own free will because he asked you, or did he take it without your leave?"

"I lent it him," answered Noemon, "what else could I do when a man of his position said he was in a difficulty, and asked me to oblige him? I could not possibly refuse. As for those who went with him they were the best young men we have, and I saw Mentor go on board as captain--or some god who was exactly like him. I cannot understand it, for I saw Mentor here myself yesterday morning, and yet he was then setting out for Pylos."

Noemon then went back to his father's house, but Antinous and Eurymachus were very angry. They told the others to leave off playing, and to come and sit down along with themselves. When they came, Antinous son of Eupeithes spoke in anger. His heart was black with rage, and his eyes flashed fire as he said:

"Good heavens, this voyage of Telemachus is a very serious matter; we had made sure that it would come to nothing, but the young fellow has got away in spite of us, and with a picked crew too. He will be giving us trouble presently; may Jove take him before he is full grown. Find me a ship, therefore, with a crew of twenty men, and I will lie in wait for him in the straits between Ithaca and Samos; he will then rue the day that he set out to try and get news of his father."

Thus did he speak, and the others applauded his saying; they then all of them went inside the buildings.

It was not long ere Penelope came to know what the suitors were plotting; for a man servant, Medon, overheard them from outside the outer court as they were laying their schemes within, and went to tell his mistress. As he crossed the threshold of her room Penelope said: "Medon, what have the suitors sent you here for? Is it to tell the

maids  
to leave their master's business and cook dinner for them? I wish  
they  
may neither woo nor dine henceforward, neither here nor anywhere  
else,  
but let this be the very last time, for the waste you all make of my  
son's estate. Did not your fathers tell you when you were children,  
how  
good Ulysses had been to them--never doing anything high-handed, nor  
speaking harshly to anybody? Kings may say things sometimes, and  
they  
may take a fancy to one man and dislike another, but Ulysses never  
did  
an unjust thing by anybody--which shows what bad hearts you have,  
and  
that there is no such thing as gratitude left in this world."

Then Medon said, "I wish, Madam, that this were all; but they are  
plotting something much more dreadful now--may heaven frustrate  
their  
design. They are going to try and murder Telemachus as he is coming  
home  
from Pylos and Lacedaemon, where he has been to get news of his  
father."

Then Penelope's heart sank within her, and for a long time she was  
speechless; her eyes filled with tears, and she could find no  
utterance.  
At last, however, she said, "Why did my son leave me? What business  
had  
he to go sailing off in ships that make long voyages over the ocean  
like  
sea-horses? Does he want to die without leaving any one behind him  
to  
keep up his name?"

"I do not know," answered Medon, "whether some god set him on to it,  
or  
whether he went on his own impulse to see if he could find out if  
his  
father was dead, or alive and on his way home."

Then he went downstairs again, leaving Penelope in an agony of  
grief.  
There were plenty of seats in the house, but she had no heart for  
sitting on any one of them; she could only fling herself on the  
floor of  
her own room and cry; whereon all the maids in the house, both old  
and young, gathered round her and began to cry too, till at last in  
a  
transport of sorrow she exclaimed,

"My dears, heaven has been pleased to try me with more affliction  
than any other woman of my age and country. First I lost my brave

and  
lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and  
whose  
name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos, and now my darling  
son  
is at the mercy of the winds and waves, without my having heard one  
word  
about his leaving home. You hussies, there was not one of you would  
so  
much as think of giving me a call out of my bed, though you all of  
you  
very well knew when he was starting. If I had known he meant taking  
this  
voyage, he would have had to give it up, no matter how much he was  
bent  
upon it, or leave me a corpse behind him--one or other. Now,  
however,  
go some of you and call old Dolius, who was given me by my father on  
my  
marriage, and who is my gardener. Bid him go at once and tell  
everything  
to Laertes, who may be able to hit on some plan for enlisting public  
sympathy on our side, as against those who are trying to exterminate  
his  
own race and that of Ulysses."

Then the dear old nurse Euryclea said, "You may kill me, Madam, or  
let  
me live on in your house, whichever you please, but I will tell you  
the  
real truth. I knew all about it, and gave him everything he wanted  
in  
the way of bread and wine, but he made me take my solemn oath that I  
would not tell you anything for some ten or twelve days, unless you  
asked or happened to hear of his having gone, for he did not want  
you to  
spoil your beauty by crying. And now, Madam, wash your face, change  
your dress, and go upstairs with your maids to offer prayers to  
Minerva,  
daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, for she can save him even though he  
be in the jaws of death. Do not trouble Laertes: he has trouble  
enough  
already. Besides, I cannot think that the gods hate the race of the  
son  
of Arceisius so much, but there will be a son left to come up after  
him,  
and inherit both the house and the fair fields that lie far all  
round  
it."

With these words she made her mistress leave off crying, and dried  
the  
tears from her eyes. Penelope washed her face, changed her dress,  
and

went upstairs with her maids. She then put some bruised barley into a basket and began praying to Minerva.

"Hear me," she cried, "Daughter of Aegis-bearing Jove, unweariable. If ever Ulysses while he was here burned you fat thigh bones of sheep or heifer, bear it in mind now as in my favour, and save my darling son from the villainy of the suitors."

She cried aloud as she spoke, and the goddess heard her prayer; meanwhile the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloister, and one of them said:

"The queen is preparing for her marriage with one or other of us. Little does she dream that her son has now been doomed to die."

This was what they said, but they did not know what was going to happen. Then Antinous said, "Comrades, let there be no loud talking, lest some of it get carried inside. Let us be up and do that in silence, about which we are all of a mind."

He then chose twenty men, and they went down to their ship and to the sea side; they drew the vessel into the water and got her mast and sails inside her; they bound the oars to the thole-pins with twisted thongs of leather, all in due course, and spread the white sails aloft, while their fine servants brought them their armour. Then they made the ship fast a little way out, came on shore again, got their suppers, and waited till night should fall.

But Penelope lay in her own room upstairs unable to eat or drink, and wondering whether her brave son would escape, or be overpowered by the wicked suitors. Like a lioness caught in the toils with huntsmen hemming her in on every side she thought and thought till she sank into a slumber, and lay on her bed bereft of thought and motion.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter, and made a vision in the likeness of Penelope's sister Iphthime daughter of Icarius who had married Eumelus and lived in Pherae. She told the vision to go to the

house of Ulysses, and to make Penelope leave off crying, so it came into her room by the hole through which the thong went for pulling the door to, and hovered over her head saying,

"You are asleep, Penelope: the gods who live at ease will not suffer you to weep and be so sad. Your son has done them no wrong, so he will yet come back to you."

Penelope, who was sleeping sweetly at the gates of dreamland, answered,  
"Sister, why have you come here? You do not come very often, but I suppose that is because you live such a long way off. Am I, then, to leave off crying and refrain from all the sad thoughts that torture me?  
I, who have lost my brave and lion-hearted husband, who had every good quality under heaven, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos; and now my darling son has gone off on board of a ship--a foolish fellow who has never been used to roughing it, nor to going about among gatherings of men. I am even more anxious about him than about my husband; I am all in a tremble when I think of him, lest something should happen to him, either from the people among whom he has gone, or by sea, for he has many enemies who are plotting against him, and are bent on killing him before he can return home."

Then the vision said, "Take heart, and be not so much dismayed. There is one gone with him whom many a man would be glad enough to have stand by his side, I mean Minerva; it is she who has compassion upon you, and who has sent me to bear you this message."

"Then," said Penelope, "if you are a god or have been sent here by divine commission, tell me also about that other unhappy one--is he still alive, or is he already dead and in the house of Hades?"

And the vision said, "I shall not tell you for certain whether he is alive or dead, and there is no use in idle conversation."

Then it vanished through the thong-hole of the door and was dissipated into thin air; but Penelope rose from her sleep refreshed and comforted, so vivid had been her dream.

Meantime the suitors went on board and sailed their ways over the

sea, intent on murdering Telemachus. Now there is a rocky islet called Asteris, of no great size, in mid channel between Ithaca and Samos, and there is a harbour on either side of it where a ship can lie. Here then the Achaeans placed themselves in ambush.

## Book V

"If Jove were to bring this to pass," replied the stockman, "you should see how I would do my very utmost to help him."

And in like manner Eumaeus prayed that Ulysses might return home.

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile the suitors were hatching a plot to murder Telemachus: but a bird flew near them on their left hand--an eagle with a dove in its talons. On this Amphinomus said, "My friends, this plot of ours to murder Telemachus will not succeed; let us go to dinner instead."

The others assented, so they went inside and laid their cloaks on the benches and seats. They sacrificed the sheep, goats, pigs, and the heifer, and when the inward meats were cooked they served them round.

They mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls, and the swineherd gave every man his cup, while Philoetius handed round the bread in the bread baskets, and Melanthius poured them out their wine. Then they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them.

Telemachus purposely made Ulysses sit in the part of the cloister that was paved with stone; {158} he gave him a shabby looking seat at a little table to himself, and had his portion of the inward meats brought to him, with his wine in a gold cup. "Sit there," said he, "and drink your wine among the great people. I will put a stop to the gibes and blows of the suitors, for this is no public house, but belongs to Ulysses, and has passed from him to me. Therefore, suitors, keep your hands and your tongues to yourselves, or there will be mischief."

The suitors bit their lips, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech;

then Antinous said, "We do not like such language but we will put up with it, for Telemachus is threatening us in good earnest. If Jove had let us we should have put a stop to his brave talk ere now."

Thus spoke Antinous, but Telemachus heeded him not. Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy hecatomb through the city, and the Achaeans gathered under the shady grove of Apollo.

Then they roasted the outer meat, drew it off the spits, gave every man his portion, and feasted to their heart's content; those who waited at table gave Ulysses exactly the same portion as the others had, for Telemachus had told them to do so.

But Minerva would not let the suitors for one moment drop their insolence, for she wanted Ulysses to become still more bitter against them. Now there happened to be among them a ribald fellow, whose name was Ctesippus, and who came from Same. This man, confident in his great wealth, was paying court to the wife of Ulysses, and said to the suitors, "Hear what I have to say. The stranger has already had as large a portion as any one else; this is well, for it is not right nor reasonable to ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes here. I will, however, make him a present on my own account, that he may have something to give to the bath-woman, or to some other of Ulysses' servants."

As he spoke he picked up a heifer's foot from the meat-basket in which it lay, and threw it at Ulysses, but Ulysses turned his head a little aside, and avoided it, smiling grimly Sardinian fashion {159} as he did so, and it hit the wall, not him. On this Telemachus spoke fiercely to Ctesippus, "It is a good thing for you," said he, "that the stranger turned his head so that you missed him. If you had hit him I should have run you through with my spear, and your father would have had to see about getting you buried rather than married in this house. So let me have no more unseemly behaviour from any of you, for I am grown up now to the knowledge of good and evil and understand what is going on, instead of being the child that I have been heretofore. I have long seen you killing my sheep and making free with my corn and wine: I have put



up with this, for one man is no match for many, but do me no further violence. Still, if you wish to kill me, kill me; I would far rather die than see such disgraceful scenes day after day--guests insulted, and men dragging the women servants about the house in an unseemly way."

They all held their peace till at last Agelaus son of Damastor said, "No one should take offence at what has just been said, nor gainsay it, for it is quite reasonable. Leave off, therefore, ill-treating the stranger, or any one else of the servants who are about the house; I would say, however, a friendly word to Telemachus and his mother, which I trust may commend itself to both. 'As long,' I would say, 'as you had ground for hoping that Ulysses would one day come home, no one could complain of your waiting and suffering {160} the suitors to be in your house. It would have been better that he should have returned, but it is now sufficiently clear that he will never do so; therefore talk all this quietly over with your mother, and tell her to marry the best man, and the one who makes her the most advantageous offer. Thus you will yourself be able to manage your own inheritance, and to eat and drink in peace, while your mother will look after some other man's house, not yours.'"

To this Telemachus answered, "By Jove, Agelaus, and by the sorrows of my unhappy father, who has either perished far from Ithaca, or is wandering in some distant land, I throw no obstacles in the way of my mother's marriage; on the contrary I urge her to choose whomsoever she will, and I will give her numberless gifts into the bargain, but I dare not insist point blank that she shall leave the house against her own wishes. Heaven forbid that I should do this."

Minerva now made the suitors fall to laughing immoderately, and set their wits wandering; but they were laughing with a forced laughter. Their meat became smeared with blood; their eyes filled with tears, and their hearts were heavy with forebodings. Theoclymenus saw this and said, "Unhappy men, what is it that ails you? There is a shroud of darkness drawn over you from head to foot, your cheeks are wet with tears; the air is alive with wailing voices; the walls and roof-beams drip blood; the gate of the cloisters and the court beyond them are

full  
of ghosts trooping down into the night of hell; the sun is blotted  
out  
of heaven, and a blighting gloom is over all the land."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily. Eurymachus then said, "This stranger who has lately come here has lost his senses. Servants, turn him out into the streets, since he finds it so dark here."

But Theoclymenus said, "Eurymachus, you need not send any one with me. I have eyes, ears, and a pair of feet of my own, to say nothing of an understanding mind. I will take these out of the house with me, for I see mischief overhanging you, from which not one of you men who are insulting people and plotting ill deeds in the house of Ulysses will be able to escape."

He left the house as he spoke, and went back to Piraeus who gave him welcome, but the suitors kept looking at one another and provoking Telemachus by laughing at the strangers. One insolent fellow said to him, "Telemachus, you are not happy in your guests; first you have this importunate tramp, who comes begging bread and wine and has no skill for work or for hard fighting, but is perfectly useless, and now here is another fellow who is setting himself up as a prophet. Let me persuade you, for it will be much better to put them on board ship and send them off to the Sicels to sell for what they will bring."

Telemachus gave him no heed, but sate silently watching his father, expecting every moment that he would begin his attack upon the suitors.

Meanwhile the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, had had a rich seat placed for her facing the court and cloisters, so that she could hear what every one was saying. The dinner indeed had been prepared amid much merriment; it had been both good and abundant, for they had sacrificed many victims; but the supper was yet to come, and nothing can be conceived more gruesome than the meal which a goddess and a brave man were soon to lay before them--for they had brought their doom upon themselves.

## Book XXI

### THE TRIAL OF THE AXES, DURING WHICH ULYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF TO EUMAEUS AND PHILOETIUS

Minerva now put it in Penelope's mind to make the suitors try their skill with the bow and with the iron axes, in contest among themselves, as a means of bringing about their destruction. She went upstairs and got the store-room key, which was made of bronze and had a handle of ivory; she then went with her maidens into the store-room at the end of the house, where her husband's treasures of gold, bronze, and wrought iron were kept, and where was also his bow, and the quiver full of deadly arrows that had been given him by a friend whom he had met in Lacedaemon--Iphitus the son of Eurytus. The two fell in with one another in Messene at the house of Ortilochus, where Ulysses was staying in order to recover a debt that was owing from the whole people; for the Messenians had carried off three hundred sheep from Ithaca, and had sailed away with them and with their shepherds. In quest of these Ulysses took a long journey while still quite young, for his father and the other chieftains sent him on a mission to recover them. Iphitus had gone there also to try and get back twelve brood mares that he had lost, and the mule foals that were running with them. These mares were the death of him in the end, for when he went to the house of Jove's son, mighty Hercules, who performed such prodigies of valour, Hercules to his shame killed him, though he was his guest, for he feared not heaven's vengeance, nor yet respected his own table which he had set before Iphitus, but killed him in spite of everything, and kept the mares himself. It was when claiming these that Iphitus met Ulysses, and gave him the bow which mighty Eurytus had been used to carry, and which on his death had been left by him to his son. Ulysses gave him in return a sword and a spear, and this was the beginning of a fast friendship, although they never visited at one another's houses, for Jove's son Hercules killed Iphitus ere they could do so. This bow, then, given him by Iphitus, had not been taken with him by Ulysses when he sailed for

Troy; he had used it so long as he had been at home, but had left it behind as having been a keepsake from a valued friend.

Penelope presently reached the oak threshold of the store-room; the carpenter had planed this duly, and had drawn a line on it so as to get it quite straight; he had then set the door posts into it and hung the doors. She loosed the strap from the handle of the door, put in the key, and drove it straight home to shoot back the bolts that held the doors; {161} these flew open with a noise like a bull bellowing in a meadow, and Penelope stepped upon the raised platform, where the chests stood in which the fair linen and clothes were laid by along with fragrant herbs: reaching thence, she took down the bow with its bow case from the peg on which it hung. She sat down with it on her knees, weeping bitterly as she took the bow out of its case, and when her tears had relieved her, she went to the cloister where the suitors were, carrying the bow and the quiver, with the many deadly arrows that were inside it. Along with her came her maidens, bearing a chest that contained much iron and bronze which her husband had won as prizes. When she reached the suitors, she stood by one of the bearing-posts supporting the roof of the cloister, holding a veil before her face, and with a maid on either side of her. Then she said:

"Listen to me you suitors, who persist in abusing the hospitality of this house because its owner has been long absent, and without other pretext than that you want to marry me; this, then, being the prize that you are contending for, I will bring out the mighty bow of Ulysses, and whomsoever of you shall string it most easily and send his arrow through each one of twelve axes, him will I follow and quit this house of my lawful husband, so goodly, and so abounding in wealth. But even so I doubt not that I shall remember it in my dreams."

As she spoke, she told Eumaeus to set the bow and the pieces of iron before the suitors, and Eumaeus wept as he took them to do as she had bidden him. Hard by, the stockman wept also when he saw his master's bow, but Antinous scolded them. "You country louts," said he, "silly simpletons; why should you add to the sorrows of your mistress by crying

in this way? She has enough to grieve her in the loss of her husband;  
sit still, therefore, and eat your dinners in silence, or go outside if  
you want to cry, and leave the bow behind you. We suitors shall have to  
contend for it with might and main, for we shall find it no light matter  
to string such a bow as this is. There is not a man of us all who is  
such another as Ulysses; for I have seen him and remember him, though I  
was then only a child."

This was what he said, but all the time he was expecting to be able to  
string the bow and shoot through the iron, whereas in fact he was to  
be the first that should taste of the arrows from the hands of Ulysses,  
whom he was dishonouring in his own house--egging the others on to  
do so also.

Then Telemachus spoke. "Great heavens!" he exclaimed, "Jove must have  
robbed me of my senses. Here is my dear and excellent mother saying she  
will quit this house and marry again, yet I am laughing and enjoying  
myself as though there were nothing happening. But, suitors, as the  
contest has been agreed upon, let it go forward. It is for a woman whose  
peer is not to be found in Pylos, Argos, or Mycene, nor yet in Ithaca  
nor on the mainland. You know this as well as I do; what need have I to  
speak in praise of my mother? Come on, then, make no excuses for delay,  
but let us see whether you can string the bow or no. I too will make  
trial of it, for if I can string it and shoot through the iron, I shall  
not suffer my mother to quit this house with a stranger, not if I can  
win the prizes which my father won before me."

As he spoke he sprang from his seat, threw his crimson cloak from him,  
and took his sword from his shoulder. First he set the axes in a row, in  
a long groove which he had dug for them, and had made straight by line.  
{162} Then he stamped the earth tight round them, and everyone was  
surprised when they saw him set them up so orderly, though he had never  
seen anything of the kind before. This done, he went on to the pavement

to make trial of the bow; thrice did he tug at it, trying with all his might to draw the string, and thrice he had to leave off, though he had hoped to string the bow and shoot through the iron. He was trying for the fourth time, and would have strung it had not Ulysses made a sign to check him in spite of all his eagerness. So he said:

"Alas! I shall either be always feeble and of no prowess, or I am too young, and have not yet reached my full strength so as to be able to hold my own if any one attacks me. You others, therefore, who are stronger than I, make trial of the bow and get this contest settled."

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door [that led into the house] with the arrow standing against the top of the bow. Then he sat down on the seat from which he had risen, and Antinous said:

"Come on each of you in his turn, going towards the right from the place at which the cupbearer begins when he is handing round the wine."

The rest agreed, and Leiodes son of Oenops was the first to rise. He was sacrificial priest to the suitors, and sat in the corner near the mixing-bowl. {163} He was the only man who hated their evil deeds and was indignant with the others. He was now the first to take the bow and arrow, so he went on to the pavement to make his trial, but he could not string the bow, for his hands were weak and unused to hard work, they therefore soon grew tired, and he said to the suitors, "My friends, I cannot string it; let another have it, this bow shall take the life and soul out of many a chief among us, for it is better to die than to live after having missed the prize that we have so long striven for, and which has brought us so long together. Some one of us is even now hoping and praying that he may marry Penelope, but when he has seen this bow and tried it, let him woo and make bridal offerings to some other woman, and let Penelope marry whoever makes her the best offer and whose lot it is to win her."

On this he put the bow down, letting it lean against the door, {164}  
with the arrow standing against the tip of the bow. Then he took his  
seat again on the seat from which he had risen; and Antinous rebuked  
him  
saying:

"Leiodes, what are you talking about? Your words are monstrous and  
intolerable; it makes me angry to listen to you. Shall, then, this  
bow  
take the life of many a chief among us, merely because you cannot  
bend  
it yourself? True, you were not born to be an archer, but there are  
others who will soon string it."

Then he said to Melanthius the goatherd, "Look sharp, light a fire  
in  
the court, and set a seat hard by with a sheep skin on it; bring us  
also  
a large ball of lard, from what they have in the house. Let us warm  
the  
bow and grease it--we will then make trial of it again, and bring  
the  
contest to an end."

Melanthius lit the fire, and set a seat covered with sheep skins  
beside  
it. He also brought a great ball of lard from what they had in the  
house, and the suitors warmed the bow and again made trial of it,  
but  
they were none of them nearly strong enough to string it.  
Nevertheless  
there still remained Antinous and Eurymachus, who were the  
ringleaders  
among the suitors and much the foremost among them all.

Then the swineherd and the stockman left the cloisters together, and  
Ulysses followed them. When they had got outside the gates and the  
outer  
yard, Ulysses said to them quietly:

"Stockman, and you swineherd, I have something in my mind which I am  
in  
doubt whether to say or no; but I think I will say it. What manner  
of  
men would you be to stand by Ulysses, if some god should bring him  
back  
here all of a sudden? Say which you are disposed to do--to side with  
the  
suitors, or with Ulysses?"

"Father Jove," answered the stockman, "would indeed that you might  
so  
ordain it. If some god were but to bring Ulysses back, you should

see  
with what might and main I would fight for him."

In like words Eumaeus prayed to all the gods that Ulysses might return;  
when, therefore, he saw for certain what mind they were of, Ulysses said, "It is I, Ulysses, who am here. I have suffered much, but at last,  
in the twentieth year, I am come back to my own country. I find that you  
two alone of all my servants are glad that I should do so, for I have not heard any of the others praying for my return. To you two, therefore, will I unfold the truth as it shall be. If heaven shall deliver the suitors into my hands, I will find wives for both of you,  
will give you house and holding close to my own, and you shall be to me  
as though you were brothers and friends of Telemachus. I will now give  
you convincing proofs that you may know me and be assured. See, here is  
the scar from the boar's tooth that ripped me when I was out hunting on  
Mt. Parnassus with the sons of Autolycus."

As he spoke he drew his rags aside from the great scar, and when they  
had examined it thoroughly, they both of them wept about Ulysses, threw  
their arms round him, and kissed his head and shoulders, while Ulysses  
kissed their hands and faces in return. The sun would have gone down upon their mourning if Ulysses had not checked them and said:

"Cease your weeping, lest some one should come outside and see us, and  
tell those who are within. When you go in, do so separately, not both  
together; I will go first, and do you follow afterwards; let this moreover be the token between us; the suitors will all of them try to  
prevent me from getting hold of the bow and quiver; do you, therefore,  
Eumaeus, place it in my hands when you are carrying it about, and tell the women to close the doors of their apartment. If they hear any  
groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they must not come out; they must keep quiet, and stay where they are at their work.  
And I charge you, Philoetius, to make fast the doors of the outer court,  
and to bind them securely at once."

When he had thus spoken, he went back to the house and took the seat



that he had left. Presently, his two servants followed him inside.

At this moment the bow was in the hands of Eurymachus, who was warming it by the fire, but even so he could not string it, and he was greatly grieved. He heaved a deep sigh and said, "I grieve for myself and for us all; I grieve that I shall have to forgo the marriage, but I do not care nearly so much about this, for there are plenty of other women in Ithaca and elsewhere; what I feel most is the fact of our being so inferior to Ulysses in strength that we cannot string his bow. This will disgrace us in the eyes of those who are yet unborn."

"It shall not be so, Eurymachus," said Antinous, "and you know it yourself. Today is the feast of Apollo throughout all the land; who can string a bow on such a day as this? Put it on one side--as for the axes they can stay where they are, for no one is likely to come to the house and take them away: let the cupbearer go round with his cups, that we may make our drink-offerings and drop this matter of the bow; we will tell Melanthius to bring us in some goats tomorrow--the best he has; we can then offer thigh bones to Apollo the mighty archer, and again make trial of the bow, so as to bring the contest to an end."

The rest approved his words, and thereon men servants poured water over the hands of the guests, while pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water and handed it round after giving every man his drink-offering. Then, when they had made their offerings and had drunk each as much as he desired, Ulysses craftily said:--

"Suitors of the illustrious queen, listen that I may speak even as I am minded. I appeal more especially to Eurymachus, and to Antinous who has just spoken with so much reason. Cease shooting for the present and leave the matter to the gods, but in the morning let heaven give victory to whom it will. For the moment, however, give me the bow that I may prove the power of my hands among you all, and see whether I still

have  
as much strength as I used to have, or whether travel and neglect  
have  
made an end of it."

This made them all very angry, for they feared he might string the bow,  
Antinous therefore rebuked him fiercely saying, "Wretched creature, you  
have not so much as a grain of sense in your whole body; you ought to think yourself lucky in being allowed to dine unharmed among your betters, without having any smaller portion served you than we others  
have had, and in being allowed to hear our conversation. No other beggar  
or stranger has been allowed to hear what we say among ourselves; the  
wine must have been doing you a mischief, as it does with all those who  
drink immoderately. It was wine that inflamed the Centaur Eurytion when  
he was staying with Peirithous among the Lapithae. When the wine had got into his head, he went mad and did ill deeds about the house of Peirithous; this angered the heroes who were there assembled, so they  
rushed at him and cut off his ears and nostrils; then they dragged him  
through the doorway out of the house, so he went away crazed, and bore  
the burden of his crime, bereft of understanding. Henceforth, therefore,  
there was war between mankind and the centaurs, but he brought it upon  
himself through his own drunkenness. In like manner I can tell you that  
it will go hardly with you if you string the bow: you will find no mercy  
from any one here, for we shall at once ship you off to king Echetus,  
who kills every one that comes near him: you will never get away alive,  
so drink and keep quiet without getting into a quarrel with men younger  
than yourself."

Penelope then spoke to him. "Antinous," said she, "it is not right that  
you should ill-treat any guest of Telemachus who comes to this house.  
If the stranger should prove strong enough to string the mighty bow of  
Ulysses, can you suppose that he would take me home with him and make me  
his wife? Even the man himself can have no such idea in his mind:

none of you need let that disturb his feasting; it would be out of all reason."

"Queen Penelope," answered Eurymachus, "we do not suppose that this man will take you away with him; it is impossible; but we are afraid lest some of the baser sort, men or women among the Achaeans, should go gossiping about and say, 'These suitors are a feeble folk; they are paying court to the wife of a brave man whose bow not one of them was able to string, and yet a beggarly tramp who came to the house strung it at once and sent an arrow through the iron.' This is what will be said, and it will be a scandal against us."

"Eurymachus," Penelope answered, "people who persist in eating up the estate of a great chieftain and dishonouring his house must not expect others to think well of them. Why then should you mind if men talk as you think they will? This stranger is strong and well-built, he says moreover that he is of noble birth. Give him the bow, and let us see whether he can string it or no. I say--and it shall surely be--that if Apollo vouchsafes him the glory of stringing it, I will give him a cloak and shirt of good wear, with a javelin to keep off dogs and robbers, and a sharp sword. I will also give him sandals, and will see him sent safely wherever he wants to go."

Then Telemachus said, "Mother, I am the only man either in Ithaca or in the islands that are over against Elis who has the right to let any one have the bow or to refuse it. No one shall force me one way or the other, not even though I choose to make the stranger a present of the bow outright, and let him take it away with him. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants. This bow is a man's matter, and mine above all others, for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned

her dear husband till Minerva sent sweet sleep over her eyelids.

The swineherd now took up the bow and was for taking it to Ulysses, but the suitors clamoured at him from all parts of the cloisters, and one of them said, "You idiot, where are you taking the bow to? Are you out of your wits? If Apollo and the other gods will grant our prayer, your own boarhounds shall get you into some quiet little place, and worry you to death."

Eumaeus was frightened at the outcry they all raised, so he put the bow down then and there, but Telemachus shouted out at him from the other side of the cloisters, and threatened him saying, "Father Eumaeus, bring the bow on in spite of them, or young as I am I will pelt you with stones back to the country, for I am the better man of the two. I wish I was as much stronger than all the other suitors in the house as I am than you, I would soon send some of them off sick and sorry, for they mean mischief."

Thus did he speak, and they all of them laughed heartily, which put them in a better humour with Telemachus; so Eumaeus brought the bow on and placed it in the hands of Ulysses. When he had done this, he called Euryclea apart and said to her, "Euryclea, Telemachus says you are to close the doors of the women's apartments. If they hear any groaning or uproar as of men fighting about the house, they are not to come out, but are to keep quiet and stay where they are at their work."

Euryclea did as she was told and closed the doors of the women's apartments.

Meanwhile Philoetius slipped quietly out and made fast the gates of the outer court. There was a ship's cable of byblus fibre lying in the gatehouse, so he made the gates fast with it and then came in again, resuming the seat that he had left, and keeping an eye on Ulysses, who had now got the bow in his hands, and was turning it every way about, and proving it all over to see whether the worms had been eating

into  
its two horns during his absence. Then would one turn towards his  
neighbour saying, "This is some tricky old bow-fancier; either he  
has  
got one like it at home, or he wants to make one, in such  
workmanlike  
style does the old vagabond handle it."

Another said, "I hope he may be no more successful in other things  
than  
he is likely to be in stringing this bow."

But Ulysses, when he had taken it up and examined it all over,  
strung it  
as easily as a skilled bard strings a new peg of his lyre and makes  
the twisted gut fast at both ends. Then he took it in his right hand  
to prove the string, and it sang sweetly under his touch like the  
twittering of a swallow. The suitors were dismayed, and turned  
colour  
as they heard it; at that moment, moreover, Jove thundered loudly as  
a  
sign, and the heart of Ulysses rejoiced as he heard the omen that  
the  
son of scheming Saturn had sent him.

He took an arrow that was lying upon the table {165}--for those  
which the Achaeans were so shortly about to taste were all inside  
the  
quiver--he laid it on the centre-piece of the bow, and drew the  
notch of  
the arrow and the string toward him, still seated on his seat. When  
he had taken aim he let fly, and his arrow pierced every one of the  
handle-holes of the axes from the first onwards till it had gone  
right  
through them, and into the outer courtyard. Then he said to  
Telemachus:

"Your guest has not disgraced you, Telemachus. I did not miss what I  
aimed at, and I was not long in stringing my bow. I am still strong,  
and  
not as the suitors twit me with being. Now, however, it is time for  
the Achaeans to prepare supper while there is still daylight, and  
then otherwise to disport themselves with song and dance which are  
the  
crowning ornaments of a banquet."

As he spoke he made a sign with his eyebrows, and Telemachus girded  
on  
his sword, grasped his spear, and stood armed beside his father's  
seat.

THE KILLING OF THE SUITORS--THE MAIDS WHO HAVE MISCONDUCTED  
THEMSELVES  
ARE MADE TO CLEANSE THE CLOISTERS AND ARE THEN HANGED.

Then Ulysses tore off his rags, and sprang on to the broad pavement with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, "The mighty contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe it to me to hit another mark which no man has yet hit."

On this he aimed a deadly arrow at Antinous, who was about to take up a two-handled gold cup to drink his wine and already had it in his hands. He had no thought of death--who amongst all the revellers would think that one man, however brave, would stand alone among so many and kill him? The arrow struck Antinous in the throat, and the point went clean through his neck, so that he fell over and the cup dropped from his hand, while a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked the table from him and upset the things on it, so that the bread and roasted meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground. {166} The suitors were in an uproar when they saw that a man had been hit; they sprang in dismay one and all of them from their seats and looked everywhere towards the walls, but there was neither shield nor spear, and they rebuked Ulysses very angrily. "Stranger," said they, "you shall pay for shooting people in this way: you shall see no other contest; you are a doomed man; he whom you have slain was the foremost youth in Ithaca, and the vultures shall devour you for having killed him."

Thus they spoke, for they thought that he had killed Antinous by mistake, and did not perceive that death was hanging over the head of every one of them. But Ulysses glared at them and said:

"Dogs, did you think that I should not come back from Troy? You have wasted my substance, {167} have forced my women servants to lie with you, and have wooed my wife while I was still living. You have feared neither God nor man, and now you shall die."

They turned pale with fear as he spoke, and every man looked round about

to see whither he might fly for safety, but Eurymachus alone spoke.

"If you are Ulysses," said he, "then what you have said is just. We have done much wrong on your lands and in your house. But Antinous who was the head and front of the offending lies low already. It was all his doing. It was not that he wanted to marry Penelope; he did not so much care about that; what he wanted was something quite different, and Jove has not vouchsafed it to him; he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. Now, therefore, that he has met the death which was his due, spare the lives of your people. We will make everything good among ourselves, and pay you in full for all that we have eaten and drunk. Each one of us shall pay you a fine worth twenty oxen, and we will keep on giving you gold and bronze till your heart is softened. Until we have done this no one can complain of your being enraged against us."

Ulysses again glared at him and said, "Though you should give me all that you have in the world both now and all that you ever shall have, I will not stay my hand till I have paid all of you in full. You must fight, or fly for your lives; and fly, not a man of you shall."

Their hearts sank as they heard him, but Eurymachus again spoke saying:

"My friends, this man will give us no quarter. He will stand where he is and shoot us down till he has killed every man among us. Let us then show fight; draw your swords, and hold up the tables to shield you from his arrows. Let us have at him with a rush, to drive him from the pavement and doorway: we can then get through into the town, and raise such an alarm as shall soon stay his shooting."

As he spoke he drew his keen blade of bronze, sharpened on both sides, and with a loud cry sprang towards Ulysses, but Ulysses instantly shot an arrow into his breast that caught him by the nipple and fixed itself in his liver. He dropped his sword and fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the

earth with his forehead in the agonies of death, and he kicked the stool with his feet until his eyes were closed in darkness.

Then Amphinomus drew his sword and made straight at Ulysses to try and get him away from the door; but Telemachus was too quick for him, and struck him from behind; the spear caught him between the shoulders and went right through his chest, so that he fell heavily to the ground and struck the earth with his forehead. Then Telemachus sprang away from him, leaving his spear still in the body, for he feared that if he stayed to draw it out, some one of the Achaeans might come up and hack at him with his sword, or knock him down, so he set off at a run, and immediately was at his father's side. Then he said:

"Father, let me bring you a shield, two spears, and a brass helmet for your temples. I will arm myself as well, and will bring other armour for the swineherd and the stockman, for we had better be armed."

"Run and fetch them," answered Ulysses, "while my arrows hold out, or when I am alone they may get me away from the door."

Telemachus did as his father said, and went off to the store room where the armour was kept. He chose four shields, eight spears, and four brass helmets with horse-hair plumes. He brought them with all speed to his father, and armed himself first, while the stockman and the swineherd also put on their armour, and took their places near Ulysses. Meanwhile Ulysses, as long as his arrows lasted, had been shooting the suitors one by one, and they fell thick on one another: when his arrows gave out, he set the bow to stand against the end wall of the house by the door post, and hung a shield four hides thick about his shoulders; on his comely head he set his helmet, well wrought with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, {168} and he grasped two redoubtable bronze-shod spears.

Now there was a trap door {169} on the wall, while at one end of the pavement {170} there was an exit leading to a narrow passage, and



this  
exit was closed by a well-made door. Ulysses told Philoetius to  
stand by  
this door and guard it, for only one person could attack it at a  
time.  
But Agelaus shouted out, "Cannot some one go up to the trap door and  
tell the people what is going on? Help would come at once, and we  
should  
soon make an end of this man and his shooting."

"This may not be, Agelaus," answered Melanthius, "the mouth of the  
narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance to the outer court.  
One  
brave man could prevent any number from getting in. But I know what  
I  
will do, I will bring you arms from the store-room, for I am sure it  
is  
there that Ulysses and his son have put them."

On this the goatherd Melanthius went by back passages to the store-  
room  
of Ulysses' house. There he chose twelve shields, with as many  
helmets  
and spears, and brought them back as fast as he could to give them  
to  
the suitors. Ulysses' heart began to fail him when he saw the  
suitors  
{171} putting on their armour and brandishing their spears. He saw  
the  
greatness of the danger, and said to Telemachus, "Some one of the  
women  
inside is helping the suitors against us, or it may be Melanthius."

Telemachus answered, "The fault, father, is mine, and mine only; I  
left  
the store room door open, and they have kept a sharper look out than  
I have. Go, Eumaeus, put the door to, and see whether it is one of  
the  
women who is doing this, or whether, as I suspect, it is Melanthius  
the  
son of Dolius."

Thus did they converse. Meanwhile Melanthius was again going to the  
store room to fetch more armour, but the swineherd saw him and said  
to  
Ulysses who was beside him, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, it is  
that  
scoundrel Melanthius, just as we suspected, who is going to the  
store  
room. Say, shall I kill him, if I can get the better of him, or  
shall  
I bring him here that you may take your own revenge for all the many  
wrongs that he has done in your house?"

Ulysses answered, "Telemachus and I will hold these suitors in check, no matter what they do; go back both of you and bind Melanthius' hands and feet behind him. Throw him into the store room and make the door fast behind you; then fasten a noose about his body, and string him close up to the rafters from a high bearing-post, {172} that he may linger on in an agony."

Thus did he speak, and they did even as he had said; they went to the store room, which they entered before Melanthius saw them, for he was busy searching for arms in the innermost part of the room, so the two took their stand on either side of the door and waited. By and by Melanthius came out with a helmet in one hand, and an old dry-rotted shield in the other, which had been borne by Laertes when he was young, but which had been long since thrown aside, and the straps had become unsewn; on this the two seized him, dragged him back by the hair, and threw him struggling to the ground. They bent his hands and feet well behind his back, and bound them tight with a painful bond as Ulysses had told them; then they fastened a noose about his body and strung him up from a high pillar till he was close up to the rafters, and over him did you then vaunt, O swineherd Eumaeus saying, "Melanthius, you will pass the night on a soft bed as you deserve. You will know very well when morning comes from the streams of Oceanus, and it is time for you to be driving in your goats for the suitors to feast on."

There, then, they left him in very cruel bondage, and having put on their armour they closed the door behind them and went back to take their places by the side of Ulysses; whereon the four men stood in the cloister, fierce and full of fury; nevertheless, those who were in the body of the court were still both brave and many. Then Jove's daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the voice and form of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her and said, "Mentor, lend me your help, and forget not your old comrade, nor the many good turns he has done

you. Besides, you are my age-mate."

But all the time he felt sure it was Minerva, and the suitors from the other side raised an uproar when they saw her. Agelaus was the first to reproach her. "Mentor," he cried, "do not let Ulysses beguile you into siding with him and fighting the suitors. This is what we will do: when we have killed these people, father and son, we will kill you too. You shall pay for it with your head, and when we have killed you, we will take all you have, in doors or out, and bring it into hotch-pot with Ulysses' property; we will not let your sons live in your house, nor your daughters, nor shall your widow continue to live in the city of Ithaca."

This made Minerva still more furious, so she scolded Ulysses very angrily. {173} "Ulysses," said she, "your strength and prowess are no longer what they were when you fought for nine long years among the Trojans about the noble lady Helen. You killed many a man in those days, and it was through your stratagem that Priam's city was taken. How comes it that you are so lamentably less valiant now that you are on your own ground, face to face with the suitors in your own house? Come on, my good fellow, stand by my side and see how Mentor, son of Alcimus shall fight your foes and requite your kindnesses conferred upon him."

But she would not give him full victory as yet, for she wished still further to prove his own prowess and that of his brave son, so she flew up to one of the rafters in the roof of the cloister and sat upon it in the form of a swallow.

Meanwhile Agelaus son of Damastor, Eurynomus, Amphimedon, Demoptolemus, Pisander, and Polybus son of Polyctor bore the brunt of the fight upon the suitors' side; of all those who were still fighting for their lives they were by far the most valiant, for the others had already fallen under the arrows of Ulysses. Agelaus shouted to them and said, "My friends, he will soon have to leave off, for Mentor has gone away after having done nothing for him but brag. They are standing at the doors unsupported. Do not aim at him all at once, but six of you throw your

spears first, and see if you cannot cover yourselves with glory by killing him. When he has fallen we need not be uneasy about the others."

They threw their spears as he bade them, but Minerva made them all of no effect. One hit the door post; another went against the door; the pointed shaft of another struck the wall; and as soon as they had avoided all the spears of the suitors Ulysses said to his own men, "My friends, I should say we too had better let drive into the middle of them, or they will crown all the harm they have done us by killing us outright."

They therefore aimed straight in front of them and threw their spears. Ulysses killed Demoptolemus, Telemachus Euryades, Eumaeus Elatus, while the stockman killed Pisander. These all bit the dust, and as the others drew back into a corner Ulysses and his men rushed forward and regained their spears by drawing them from the bodies of the dead.

The suitors now aimed a second time, but again Minerva made their weapons for the most part without effect. One hit a bearing-post of the cloister; another went against the door; while the pointed shaft of another struck the wall. Still, Amphimedon just took a piece of the top skin from off Telemachus's wrist, and Ctesippus managed to graze Eumaeus's shoulder above his shield; but the spear went on and fell to the ground. Then Ulysses and his men let drive into the crowd of suitors. Ulysses hit Eurydamas, Telemachus Amphimedon, and Eumaeus Polybus. After this the stockman hit Ctesippus in the breast, and taunted him saying, "Foul-mouthed son of Polythereses, do not be so foolish as to talk wickedly another time, but let heaven direct your speech, for the gods are far stronger than men. I make you a present of this advice to repay you for the foot which you gave Ulysses when he was begging about in his own house."

Thus spoke the stockman, and Ulysses struck the son of Damastor with a spear in close fight, while Telemachus hit Leocritus son of Evenor in the belly, and the dart went clean through him, so that he fell forward full on his face upon the ground. Then Minerva from her seat on the rafter held up her deadly aegis, and the hearts of the suitors quailed. They fled to the other end of the court like a herd of cattle maddened

by the gadfly in early summer when the days are at their longest. As eagle-beaked, crook-taloned vultures from the mountains swoop down on the smaller birds that cower in flocks upon the ground, and kill them, for they cannot either fight or fly, and lookers on enjoy the sport--even so did Ulysses and his men fall upon the suitors and smite them on every side. They made a horrible groaning as their brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with their blood.

Leiodes then caught the knees of Ulysses and said, "Ulysses I beseech you have mercy upon me and spare me. I never wronged any of the women in your house either in word or deed, and I tried to stop the others. I saw them, but they would not listen, and now they are paying for their folly. I was their sacrificing priest; if you kill me, I shall die without having done anything to deserve it, and shall have got no thanks for all the good that I did."

Ulysses looked sternly at him and answered, "If you were their sacrificing priest, you must have prayed many a time that it might be long before I got home again, and that you might marry my wife and have children by her. Therefore you shall die."

With these words he picked up the sword that Agelaus had dropped when he was being killed, and which was lying upon the ground. Then he struck Leiodes on the back of his neck, so that his head fell rolling in the dust while he was yet speaking.

The minstrel Phemius son of Terpes--he who had been forced by the suitors to sing to them--now tried to save his life. He was standing near towards the trap door, {174} and held his lyre in his hand. He did not know whether to fly out of the cloister and sit down by the altar of Jove that was in the outer court, and on which both Laertes and Ulysses had offered up the thigh bones of many an ox, or whether to go straight up to Ulysses and embrace his knees, but in the end he deemed it best to embrace Ulysses' knees. So he laid his lyre on the ground between the mixing bowl {175} and the silver-studded seat; then going up to Ulysses

he caught hold of his knees and said, "Ulysses, I beseech you have mercy on me and spare me. You will be sorry for it afterwards if you kill a bard who can sing both for gods and men as I can. I make all my lays myself, and heaven visits me with every kind of inspiration. I would sing to you as though you were a god, do not therefore be in such a hurry to cut my head off. Your own son Telemachus will tell you that I did not want to frequent your house and sing to the suitors after their meals, but they were too many and too strong for me, so they made me."

Telemachus heard him, and at once went up to his father. "Hold!" he cried, "the man is guiltless, do him no hurt; and we will spare Medon too, who was always good to me when I was a boy, unless Philoetius or Eumaeus has already killed him, or he has fallen in your way when you were raging about the court."

Medon caught these words of Telemachus, for he was crouching under a seat beneath which he had hidden by covering himself up with a freshly flayed heifer's hide, so he threw off the hide, went up to Telemachus, and laid hold of his knees.

"Here I am, my dear sir," said he, "stay your hand therefore, and tell your father, or he will kill me in his rage against the suitors for having wasted his substance and been so foolishly disrespectful to yourself."

Ulysses smiled at him and answered, "Fear not; Telemachus has saved your life, that you may know in future, and tell other people, how greatly better good deeds prosper than evil ones. Go, therefore, outside the cloisters into the outer court, and be out of the way of the slaughter--you and the bard--while I finish my work here inside."

The pair went into the outer court as fast as they could, and sat down by Jove's great altar, looking fearfully round, and still expecting that they would be killed. Then Ulysses searched the whole court carefully over, to see if anyone had managed to hide himself and was still living, but he found them all lying in the dust and weltering in their blood.

They were like fishes which fishermen have netted out of the sea,  
and  
thrown upon the beach to lie gasping for water till the heat of the  
sun  
makes an end of them. Even so were the suitors lying all huddled up  
one  
against the other.

Then Ulysses said to Telemachus, "Call nurse Euryclea; I have  
something  
to say to her."

Telemachus went and knocked at the door of the women's room. "Make  
haste," said he, "you old woman who have been set over all the other  
women in the house. Come outside; my father wishes to speak to you."

When Euryclea heard this she unfastened the door of the women's room  
and came out, following Telemachus. She found Ulysses among the  
corpses bespattered with blood and filth like a lion that has just  
been  
devouring an ox, and his breast and both his cheeks are all bloody,  
so  
that he is a fearful sight; even so was Ulysses besmirched from head  
to foot with gore. When she saw all the corpses and such a quantity  
of  
blood, she was beginning to cry out for joy, for she saw that a  
great  
deed had been done; but Ulysses checked her, "Old woman," said he,  
"rejoice in silence; restrain yourself, and do not make any noise  
about  
it; it is an unholy thing to vaunt over dead men. Heaven's doom and  
their own evil deeds have brought these men to destruction, for they  
respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor poor, who came  
near them, and they have come to a bad end as a punishment for their  
wickedness and folly. Now, however, tell me which of the women in  
the  
house have misconducted themselves, and who are innocent." {176}

"I will tell you the truth, my son," answered Euryclea. "There are  
fifty  
women in the house whom we teach to do things, such as carding wool,  
and all kinds of household work. Of these, twelve in all {177} have  
misbehaved, and have been wanting in respect to me, and also to  
Penelope. They showed no disrespect to Telemachus, for he has only  
lately grown and his mother never permitted him to give orders to  
the  
female servants; but let me go upstairs and tell your wife all that  
has  
happened, for some god has been sending her to sleep."

"Do not wake her yet," answered Ulysses, "but tell the women who  
have  
misconduct themselves to come to me."

Euryclea left the cloister to tell the women, and make them come to Ulysses; in the meantime he called Telemachus, the stockman, and the swineherd. "Begin," said he, "to remove the dead, and make the women help you. Then, get sponges and clean water to swill down the tables and seats. When you have thoroughly cleansed the whole cloisters, take the women into the space between the domed room and the wall of the outer court, and run them through with your swords till they are quite dead, and have forgotten all about love and the way in which they used to lie in secret with the suitors."

On this the women came down in a body, weeping and wailing bitterly. First they carried the dead bodies out, and propped them up against one another in the gatehouse. Ulysses ordered them about and made them do their work quickly, so they had to carry the bodies out. When they had done this, they cleaned all the tables and seats with sponges and water, while Telemachus and the two others shovelled up the blood and dirt from the ground, and the women carried it all away and put it out of doors. Then when they had made the whole place quite clean and orderly, they took the women out and hemmed them in the narrow space between the wall of the domed room and that of the yard, so that they could not get away: and Telemachus said to the other two, "I shall not let these women die a clean death, for they were insolent to me and my mother, and used to sleep with the suitors."

So saying he made a ship's cable fast to one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the domed room, and secured it all around the building, at a good height, lest any of the women's feet should touch the ground; and as thrushes or doves beat against a net that has been set for them in a thicket just as they were getting to their nest, and a terrible fate awaits them, even so did the women have to put their heads in nooses one after the other and die most miserably. {178} Their feet moved convulsively for a while, but not for very long.



As for Melanthius, they took him through the cloister into the inner court. There they cut off his nose and his ears; they drew out his vitals and gave them to the dogs raw, and then in their fury they cut off his hands and his feet.

When they had done this they washed their hands and feet and went back into the house, for all was now over; and Ulysses said to the dear old nurse Euryclea, "Bring me sulphur, which cleanses all pollution, and fetch fire also that I may burn it, and purify the cloisters. Go, moreover, and tell Penelope to come here with her attendants, and also all the maidservants that are in the house."

"All that you have said is true," answered Euryclea, "but let me bring you some clean clothes--a shirt and cloak. Do not keep these rags on your back any longer. It is not right."

"First light me a fire," replied Ulysses.

She brought the fire and sulphur, as he had bidden her, and Ulysses thoroughly purified the cloisters and both the inner and outer courts. Then she went inside to call the women and tell them what had happened; whereon they came from their apartment with torches in their hands, and pressed round Ulysses to embrace him, kissing his head and shoulders and taking hold of his hands. It made him feel as if he should like to weep, for he remembered every one of them. {179}

## Book XXIII

PENELOPE EVENTUALLY RECOGNISES HER HUSBAND--EARLY IN THE MORNING ULYSSES, TELEMACHUS, EUMAEUS, AND PHILOETIUS LEAVE THE TOWN.

Euryclea now went upstairs laughing to tell her mistress that her dear husband had come home. Her aged knees became young again and her feet were nimble for joy as she went up to her mistress and bent over her head to speak to her. "Wake up Penelope, my dear child," she exclaimed, "and see with your own eyes something that you have been wanting this long time past. Ulysses has at last indeed come home again, and has killed the suitors who were giving so much trouble in his house,

eating  
up his estate and ill treating his son."

"My good nurse," answered Penelope, "you must be mad. The gods  
sometimes  
send some very sensible people out of their minds, and make foolish  
people become sensible. This is what they must have been doing to  
you;  
for you always used to be a reasonable person. Why should you thus  
mock  
me when I have trouble enough already--talking such nonsense, and  
waking  
me up out of a sweet sleep that had taken possession of my eyes and  
closed them? I have never slept so soundly from the day my poor  
husband  
went to that city with the ill-omened name. Go back again into the  
women's room; if it had been any one else who had woke me up to  
bring me  
such absurd news I should have sent her away with a severe scolding.  
As  
it is your age shall protect you."

"My dear child," answered Euryclea, "I am not mocking you. It is  
quite  
true as I tell you that Ulysses is come home again. He was the  
stranger  
whom they all kept on treating so badly in the cloister. Telemachus  
knew  
all the time that he was come back, but kept his father's secret  
that he  
might have his revenge on all these wicked people."

Then Penelope sprang up from her couch, threw her arms round  
Euryclea,  
and wept for joy. "But my dear nurse," said she, "explain this to  
me;  
if he has really come home as you say, how did he manage to overcome  
the  
wicked suitors single handed, seeing what a number of them there  
always  
were?"

"I was not there," answered Euryclea, "and do not know; I only heard  
them groaning while they were being killed. We sat crouching and  
huddled  
up in a corner of the women's room with the doors closed, till your  
son came to fetch me because his father sent him. Then I found  
Ulysses  
standing over the corpses that were lying on the ground all round  
him,  
one on top of the other. You would have enjoyed it if you could have  
seen him standing there all bespattered with blood and filth, and  
looking just like a lion. But the corpses are now all piled up in  
the

gatehouse that is in the outer court, and Ulysses has lit a great fire  
to purify the house with sulphur. He has sent me to call you, so come  
with me that you may both be happy together after all; for now at last  
the desire of your heart has been fulfilled; your husband is come home  
to find both wife and son alive and well, and to take his revenge in his  
own house on the suitors who behaved so badly to him."

"My dear nurse," said Penelope, "do not exult too confidently over all  
this. You know how delighted every one would be to see Ulysses come home--more particularly myself, and the son who has been born to both  
of us; but what you tell me cannot be really true. It is some god who is  
angry with the suitors for their great wickedness, and has made an end  
of them; for they respected no man in the whole world, neither rich nor  
poor, who came near them, and they have come to a bad end in consequence  
of their iniquity; Ulysses is dead far away from the Achaean land; he  
will never return home again."

Then nurse Euryclea said, "My child, what are you talking about? but you  
were all hard of belief and have made up your mind that your husband is  
never coming, although he is in the house and by his own fire side at this very moment. Besides I can give you another proof; when I was  
washing him I perceived the scar which the wild boar gave him, and I wanted to tell you about it, but in his wisdom he would not let me, and  
clapped his hands over my mouth; so come with me and I will make this  
bargain with you--if I am deceiving you, you may have me killed by the  
most cruel death you can think of."

"My dear nurse," said Penelope, "however wise you may be you can hardly  
fathom the counsels of the gods. Nevertheless, we will go in search of  
my son, that I may see the corpses of the suitors, and the man who has  
killed them."

On this she came down from her upper room, and while doing so she

considered whether she should keep at a distance from her husband and question him, or whether she should at once go up to him and embrace him. When, however, she had crossed the stone floor of the cloister, she sat down opposite Ulysses by the fire, against the wall at right angles {180} [to that by which she had entered], while Ulysses sat near one of the bearing-posts, looking upon the ground, and waiting to see what his brave wife would say to him when she saw him. For a long time she sat silent and as one lost in amazement. At one moment she looked him full in the face, but then again directly, she was misled by his shabby clothes and failed to recognise him, {181} till Telemachus began to reproach her and said:

"Mother--but you are so hard that I cannot call you by such a name--why do you keep away from my father in this way? Why do you not sit by his side and begin talking to him and asking him questions? No other woman could bear to keep away from her husband when he had come back to her after twenty years of absence, and after having gone through so much; but your heart always was as hard as a stone."

Penelope answered, "My son, I am so lost in astonishment that I can find no words in which either to ask questions or to answer them. I cannot even look him straight in the face. Still, if he really is Ulysses come back to his own home again, we shall get to understand one another better by and by, for there are tokens with which we two are alone acquainted, and which are hidden from all others."

Ulysses smiled at this, and said to Telemachus, "Let your mother put me to any proof she likes; she will make up her mind about it presently. She rejects me for the moment and believes me to be somebody else, because I am covered with dirt and have such bad clothes on; let us, however, consider what we had better do next. When one man has killed another--even though he was not one who would leave many friends to take up his quarrel--the man who has killed him must still say good bye to his friends and fly the country; whereas we have been killing the

stay  
of a whole town, and all the picked youth of Ithaca. I would have  
you  
consider this matter."

"Look to it yourself, father," answered Telemachus, "for they say  
you  
are the wisest counsellor in the world, and that there is no other  
mortal man who can compare with you. We will follow you with right  
good  
will, nor shall you find us fail you in so far as our strength holds  
out."

"I will say what I think will be best," answered Ulysses. "First  
wash  
and put your shirts on; tell the maids also to go to their own room  
and  
dress; Phemius shall then strike up a dance tune on his lyre, so  
that if  
people outside hear, or any of the neighbours, or some one going  
along  
the street happens to notice it, they may think there is a wedding  
in  
the house, and no rumours about the death of the suitors will get  
about  
in the town, before we can escape to the woods upon my own land.  
Once  
there, we will settle which of the courses heaven vouchsafes us  
shall  
seem wisest."

great chieftain, but you never saw such prizes as silver-footed  
Thetis  
offered in your honour; for the gods loved you well. Thus even in  
death  
your fame, Achilles, has not been lost, and your name lives evermore  
among all mankind. But as for me, what solace had I when the days of  
my  
fighting were done? For Jove willed my destruction on my return, by  
the  
hands of Aegisthus and those of my wicked wife."

Thus did they converse, and presently Mercury came up to them with  
the  
ghosts of the suitors who had been killed by Ulysses. The ghosts of  
Agamemnon and Achilles were astonished at seeing them, and went up  
to them at once. The ghost of Agamemnon recognised Amphimedon son of  
Melaneus, who lived in Ithaca and had been his host, so it began to  
talk  
to him.

"Amphimedon," it said, "what has happened to all you fine young  
men—all  
of an age too—that you are come down here under the ground? One

could  
pick no finer body of men from any city. Did Neptune raise his winds  
and  
waves against you when you were at sea, or did your enemies make an  
end  
of you on the mainland when you were cattle-lifting or sheep-  
stealing,  
or while fighting in defence of their wives and city? Answer my  
question, for I have been your guest. Do you not remember how I came  
to  
your house with Menelaus, to persuade Ulysses to join us with his  
ships  
against Troy? It was a whole month ere we could resume our voyage,  
for  
we had hard work to persuade Ulysses to come with us."

And the ghost of Amphimedon answered, "Agamemnon, son of Atreus,  
king of  
men, I remember everything that you have said, and will tell you  
fully  
and accurately about the way in which our end was brought about.  
Ulysses  
had been long gone, and we were courting his wife, who did not say  
point  
blank that she would not marry, nor yet bring matters to an end, for  
she  
meant to compass our destruction: this, then, was the trick she  
played  
us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room and began to work  
on an  
enormous piece of fine needlework. 'Sweethearts,' said she, 'Ulysses  
is indeed dead, still, do not press me to marry again immediately;  
wait--for I would not have my skill in needlework perish  
unrecorded--till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes,  
against  
the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women  
of  
the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.' This is what  
she  
said, and we assented; whereupon we could see her working upon her  
great  
web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again  
by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years without our  
finding it out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth  
year,  
in the waning of moons and many days had been accomplished, one of  
her  
maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the  
act  
of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or  
no;  
and when she showed us the robe she had made, after she had had it  
washed, {186} its splendour was as that of the sun or moon.

"Then some malicious god conveyed Ulysses to the upland farm where his swineherd lives. Thither presently came also his son, returning from a voyage to Pylos, and the two came to the town when they had hatched their plot for our destruction. Telemachus came first, and then after him, accompanied by the swineherd, came Ulysses, clad in rags and leaning on a staff as though he were some miserable old beggar. He came so unexpectedly that none of us knew him, not even the older ones among us, and we reviled him and threw things at him. He endured both being struck and insulted without a word, though he was in his own house; but when the will of Aegis-bearing Jove inspired him, he and Telemachus took the armour and hid it in an inner chamber, bolting the doors behind them. Then he cunningly made his wife offer his bow and a quantity of iron to be contended for by us ill-fated suitors; and this was the beginning of our end, for not one of us could string the bow--nor nearly do so. When it was about to reach the hands of Ulysses, we all of us shouted out that it should not be given him, no matter what he might say, but Telemachus insisted on his having it. When he had got it in his hands he strung it with ease and sent his arrow through the iron. Then he stood on the floor of the cloister and poured his arrows on the ground, glaring fiercely about him. First he killed Antinous, and then, aiming straight before him, he let fly his deadly darts and they fell thick on one another. It was plain that some one of the gods was helping them, for they fell upon us with might and main throughout the cloisters, and there was a hideous sound of groaning as our brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with our blood. This, Agamemnon, is how we came by our end, and our bodies are lying still uncared for in the house of Ulysses, for our friends at home do not yet know what has happened, so that they cannot lay us out and wash the black blood from our wounds, making moan over us according to the offices due to the departed."

"Happy Ulysses, son of Laertes," replied the ghost of Agamemnon, "you are indeed blessed in the possession of a wife endowed with such rare excellence of understanding, and so faithful to her wedded lord as Penelope the daughter of Icarius. The fame, therefore, of her virtue shall never die, and the immortals shall compose a song that shall

be  
welcome to all mankind in honour of the constancy of Penelope. How  
far  
otherwise was the wickedness of the daughter of Tyndareus who killed  
her  
lawful husband; her song shall be hateful among men, for she has  
brought  
disgrace on all womankind even on the good ones."

Thus did they converse in the house of Hades deep down within the  
bowels  
of the earth. Meanwhile Ulysses and the others passed out of the  
town  
and soon reached the fair and well-tilled farm of Laertes, which he  
had reclaimed with infinite labour. Here was his house, with a lean-  
to  
running all round it, where the slaves who worked for him slept and  
sat  
and ate, while inside the house there was an old Sicel woman, who  
looked  
after him in this his country-farm. When Ulysses got there, he said  
to  
his son and to the other two:

"Go to the house, and kill the best pig that you can find for  
dinner.  
Meanwhile I want to see whether my father will know me, or fail to  
recognise me after so long an absence."

He then took off his armour and gave it to Eumaeus and Philoetius,  
who  
went straight on to the house, while he turned off into the vineyard  
to  
make trial of his father. As he went down into the great orchard, he  
did  
not see Dolius, nor any of his sons nor of the other bondsmen, for  
they  
were all gathering thorns to make a fence for the vineyard, at the  
place  
where the old man had told them; he therefore found his father  
alone,  
hoeing a vine. He had on a dirty old shirt, patched and very shabby;  
his legs were bound round with thongs of oxhide to save him from the  
brambles, and he also wore sleeves of leather; he had a goat skin  
cap on  
his head, and was looking very woe-begone. When Ulysses saw him so  
worn,  
so old and full of sorrow, he stood still under a tall pear tree and  
began to weep. He doubted whether to embrace him, kiss him, and tell  
him  
all about his having come home, or whether he should first question  
him  
and see what he would say. In the end he deemed it best to be crafty  
with him, so in this mind he went up to his father, who was bending



down  
and digging about a plant.

"I see, sir," said Ulysses, "that you are an excellent gardener--  
what  
pains you take with it, to be sure. There is not a single plant, not  
a  
fig tree, vine, olive, pear, nor flower bed, but bears the trace of  
your  
attention. I trust, however, that you will not be offended if I say  
that you take better care of your garden than of yourself. You are  
old,  
unsavoury, and very meanly clad. It cannot be because you are idle  
that  
your master takes such poor care of you, indeed your face and figure  
have nothing of the slave about them, and proclaim you of noble  
birth.  
I should have said that you were one of those who should wash well,  
eat  
well, and lie soft at night as old men have a right to do; but tell  
me,  
and tell me true, whose bondman are you, and in whose garden are you  
working? Tell me also about another matter. Is this place that I  
have  
come to really Ithaca? I met a man just now who said so, but he was  
a  
dull fellow, and had not the patience to hear my story out when I  
was  
asking him about an old friend of mine, whether he was still living,  
or  
was already dead and in the house of Hades. Believe me when I tell  
you  
that this man came to my house once when I was in my own country and  
never yet did any stranger come to me whom I liked better. He said  
that  
his family came from Ithaca and that his father was Laertes, son of  
Arceisius. I received him hospitably, making him welcome to all the  
abundance of my house, and when he went away I gave him all  
customary  
presents. I gave him seven talents of fine gold, and a cup of solid  
silver with flowers chased upon it. I gave him twelve light cloaks,  
and as many pieces of tapestry; I also gave him twelve cloaks of  
single  
fold, twelve rugs, twelve fair mantles, and an equal number of  
shirts.  
To all this I added four good looking women skilled in all useful  
arts,  
and I let him take his choice."

His father shed tears and answered, "Sir, you have indeed come to  
the  
country that you have named, but it is fallen into the hands of  
wicked  
people. All this wealth of presents has been given to no purpose. If

you could have found your friend here alive in Ithaca, he would have entertained you hospitably and would have requited your presents amply when you left him--as would have been only right considering what you had already given him. But tell me, and tell me true, how many years is it since you entertained this guest--my unhappy son, as ever was? Alas! He has perished far from his own country; the fishes of the sea have eaten him, or he has fallen a prey to the birds and wild beasts of some continent. Neither his mother, nor I his father, who were his parents, could throw our arms about him and wrap him in his shroud, nor could his excellent and richly dowered wife Penelope bewail her husband as was natural upon his death bed, and close his eyes according to the offices due to the departed. But now, tell me truly for I want to know. Who and whence are you--tell me of your town and parents? Where is the ship lying that has brought you and your men to Ithaca? Or were you a passenger on some other man's ship, and those who brought you here have gone on their way and left you?"

"I will tell you everything," answered Ulysses, "quite truly. I come from Alybas, where I have a fine house. I am son of king Apheidas, who is the son of Polypemon. My own name is Eperitus; heaven drove me off my course as I was leaving Sicania, and I have been carried here against my will. As for my ship it is lying over yonder, off the open country outside the town, and this is the fifth year since Ulysses left my country. Poor fellow, yet the omens were good for him when he left me. The birds all flew on our right hands, and both he and I rejoiced to see them as we parted, for we had every hope that we should have another friendly meeting and exchange presents."

A dark cloud of sorrow fell upon Laertes as he listened. He filled both hands with the dust from off the ground and poured it over his grey head, groaning heavily as he did so. The heart of Ulysses was touched, and his nostrils quivered as he looked upon his father; then he sprang towards him, flung his arms about him and kissed him, saying, "I am he, father, about whom you are asking--I have returned after having been

away for twenty years. But cease your sighing and lamentation--we have no time to lose, for I should tell you that I have been killing the suitors in my house, to punish them for their insolence and crimes."

"If you really are my son Ulysses," replied Laertes, "and have come back again, you must give me such manifest proof of your identity as shall convince me."

"First observe this scar," answered Ulysses, "which I got from a boar's tusk when I was hunting on Mt. Parnassus. You and my mother had sent me to Autolycus, my mother's father, to receive the presents which when he was over here he had promised to give me. Furthermore I will point out to you the trees in the vineyard which you gave me, and I asked you all about them as I followed you round the garden. We went over them all, and you told me their names and what they all were. You gave me thirteen pear trees, ten apple trees, and forty fig trees; you also said you would give me fifty rows of vines; there was corn planted between each row, and they yield grapes of every kind when the heat of heaven has been laid heavy upon them."

Laertes' strength failed him when he heard the convincing proofs which his son had given him. He threw his arms about him, and Ulysses had to support him, or he would have gone off into a swoon; but as soon as he came to, and was beginning to recover his senses, he said, "O father Jove, then you gods are still in Olympus after all, if the suitors have really been punished for their insolence and folly. Nevertheless, I am much afraid that I shall have all the townspeople of Ithaca up here directly, and they will be sending messengers everywhere throughout the cities of the Cephalenians."

Ulysses answered, "Take heart and do not trouble yourself about that, but let us go into the house hard by your garden. I have already told Telemachus, Philoetius, and Eumaeus to go on there and get dinner ready as soon as possible."

Thus conversing the two made their way towards the house. When they got there they found Telemachus with the stockman and the swineherd cutting up meat and mixing wine with water. Then the old Sicel woman took Laertes inside and washed him and anointed him with oil. She put him on a good cloak, and Minerva came up to him and gave him a more imposing presence, making him taller and stouter than before. When he came back his son was surprised to see him looking so like an immortal, and said to him, "My dear father, some one of the gods has been making you much taller and better-looking."

Laertes answered, "Would, by Father Jove, Minerva, and Apollo, that I were the man I was when I ruled among the Cephallenians, and took Nericum, that strong fortress on the foreland. If I were still what I then was and had been in our house yesterday with my armour on, I should have been able to stand by you and help you against the suitors. I should have killed a great many of them, and you would have rejoiced to see it."

Thus did they converse; but the others, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, left off working, and took each his proper place on the benches and seats. Then they began eating; by and by old Dolius and his sons left their work and came up, for their mother, the Sicel woman who looked after Laertes now that he was growing old, had been to fetch them. When they saw Ulysses and were certain it was he, they stood there lost in astonishment; but Ulysses scolded them good naturedly and said, "Sit down to your dinner, old man, and never mind about your surprise; we have been wanting to begin for some time and have been waiting for you."

Then Dolius put out both his hands and went up to Ulysses. "Sir," said he, seizing his master's hand and kissing it at the wrist, "we have long been wishing you home: and now heaven has restored you to us after we had given up hoping. All hail, therefore, and may the gods prosper you."

{187} But tell me, does Penelope already know of your return, or shall we send some one to tell her?"

"Old man," answered Ulysses, "she knows already, so you need not trouble about that." On this he took his seat, and the sons of Dolius gathered round Ulysses to give him greeting and embrace him one after the other; then they took their seats in due order near Dolius their father.

While they were thus busy getting their dinner ready, Rumour went round the town, and noised abroad the terrible fate that had befallen the suitors; as soon, therefore, as the people heard of it they gathered from every quarter, groaning and hooting before the house of Ulysses.

They took the dead away, buried every man his own, and put the bodies of those who came from elsewhere on board the fishing vessels, for the fishermen to take each of them to his own place. They then met angrily in the place of assembly, and when they were got together Eupheithes rose to speak. He was overwhelmed with grief for the death of his son

Antinous, who had been the first man killed by Ulysses, so he said, weeping bitterly, "My friends, this man has done the Achaeans great wrong. He took many of our best men away with him in his fleet, and he has lost both ships and men; now, moreover, on his return he has been

killing all the foremost men among the Cephallenians. Let us be up and doing before he can get away to Pylos or to Elis where the Epeans rule, or we shall be ashamed of ourselves for ever afterwards. It will be an

everlasting disgrace to us if we do not avenge the murder of our sons and brothers. For my own part I should have no more pleasure in life, but had rather die at once. Let us be up, then, and after them, before they can cross over to the main land."

He wept as he spoke and every one pitied him. But Medon and the bard Phemius had now woke up, and came to them from the house of Ulysses. Every one was astonished at seeing them, but they stood in the middle of

the assembly, and Medon said, "Hear me, men of Ithaca. Ulysses did not do these things against the will of heaven. I myself saw an immortal

god  
take the form of Mentor and stand beside him. This god appeared, now  
in  
front of him encouraging him, and now going furiously about the  
court  
and attacking the suitors whereon they fell thick on one another."

On this pale fear laid hold of them, and old Halitherses, son of  
Mastor,  
rose to speak, for he was the only man among them who knew both past  
and  
future; so he spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying,

"Men of Ithaca, it is all your own fault that things have turned out  
as  
they have; you would not listen to me, nor yet to Mentor, when we  
bade you check the folly of your sons who were doing much wrong in  
the  
wantonness of their hearts--wasting the substance and dishonouring  
the  
wife of a chieftain who they thought would not return. Now, however,  
let  
it be as I say, and do as I tell you. Do not go out against Ulysses,  
or  
you may find that you have been drawing down evil on your own  
heads."

This was what he said, and more than half raised a loud shout, and  
at  
once left the assembly. But the rest stayed where they were, for the  
speech of Halitherses displeased them, and they sided with  
Eupeithes;  
they therefore hurried off for their armour, and when they had armed  
themselves, they met together in front of the city, and Eupeithes  
led  
them on in their folly. He thought he was going to avenge the murder  
of his son, whereas in truth he was never to return, but was himself  
to  
perish in his attempt.

Then Minerva said to Jove, "Father, son of Saturn, king of kings,  
answer  
me this question--What do you propose to do? Will you set them  
fighting  
still further, or will you make peace between them?"

And Jove answered, "My child, why should you ask me? Was it not by  
your  
own arrangement that Ulysses came home and took his revenge upon the  
suitors? Do whatever you like, but I will tell you what I think will  
be most reasonable arrangement. Now that Ulysses is revenged, let  
them  
swear to a solemn covenant, in virtue of which he shall continue to  
rule, while we cause the others to forgive and forget the massacre

of  
their sons and brothers. Let them then all become friends as  
heretofore,  
and let peace and plenty reign."

This was what Minerva was already eager to bring about, so down she  
darted from off the topmost summits of Olympus.

Now when Laertes and the others had done dinner, Ulysses began by  
saying, "Some of you go out and see if they are not getting close up  
to us." So one of Dolius's sons went as he was bid. Standing on the  
threshold he could see them all quite near, and said to Ulysses,  
"Here  
they are, let us put on our armour at once."

They put on their armour as fast as they could--that is to say  
Ulysses,  
his three men, and the six sons of Dolius. Laertes also and Dolius  
did  
the same--warriors by necessity in spite of their grey hair. When  
they  
had all put on their armour, they opened the gate and sallied forth,  
Ulysses leading the way.

Then Jove's daughter Minerva came up to them, having assumed the  
form  
and voice of Mentor. Ulysses was glad when he saw her, and said to  
his son Telemachus, "Telemachus, now that you are about to fight in  
an  
engagement, which will show every man's mettle, be sure not to  
disgrace  
your ancestors, who were eminent for their strength and courage all  
the  
world over."

"You say truly, my dear father," answered Telemachus, "and you shall  
see, if you will, that I am in no mind to disgrace your family."

Laertes was delighted when he heard this. "Good heavens," he  
exclaimed,  
"what a day I am enjoying: I do indeed rejoice at it. My son and  
grandson are vying with one another in the matter of valour."

On this Minerva came close up to him and said, "Son of Arceisius---  
best  
friend I have in the world--pray to the blue-eyed damsel, and to  
Jove  
her father; then poise your spear and hurl it."

As she spoke she infused fresh vigour into him, and when he had  
prayed  
to her he poised his spear and hurled it. He hit Eupeithes' helmet,  
and  
the spear went right through it, for the helmet stayed it not, and

his armour rang rattling round him as he fell heavily to the ground. Meantime Ulysses and his son fell upon the front line of the foe and smote them with their swords and spears; indeed, they would have killed every one of them, and prevented them from ever getting home again, only Minerva raised her voice aloud, and made every one pause. "Men of Ithaca," she cried, "cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter at once without further bloodshed."

On this pale fear seized every one; they were so frightened that their arms dropped from their hands and fell upon the ground at the sound of the goddess' voice, and they fled back to the city for their lives. But Ulysses gave a great cry, and gathering himself together swooped down like a soaring eagle. Then the son of Saturn sent a thunderbolt of fire that fell just in front of Minerva, so she said to Ulysses, "Ulysses, noble son of Laertes, stop this warful strife, or Jove will be angry with you."

Thus spoke Minerva, and Ulysses obeyed her gladly. Then Minerva assumed the form and voice of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.

#### FOOTNOTES

{1} Black races are evidently known to the writer as stretching all across Africa, one half looking West on to the Atlantic, and the other East on to the Indian Ocean.

{2} The original use of the footstool was probably less to rest the feet than to keep them (especially when bare) from a floor which was often wet and dirty.

{3} The [Greek] or seat, is occasionally called "high," as being higher than the [Greek] or low footstool. It was probably no higher than an ordinary chair is now, and seems to have had no back.

{4} Temesa was on the West Coast of the toe of Italy, in what is now the gulf of Sta Eufemia. It was famous in remote times for its copper



mines,  
which, however, were worked out when Strabo wrote.

{5} i.e. "with a current in it"--see illustrations and map near the end  
of bks. v. and vi. respectively.

where is the navel of the sea, a woodland isle, and therein a goddess hath her habitation, the daughter of the wizard Atlas, who knows the depths of every sea, and himself upholds the tall pillars which keep earth and sky asunder. His daughter it is that holds the hapless man in sorrow: and ever with soft and guileful tales she is wooing him to forgetfulness of Ithaca. But Odysseus yearning to see if it were but the smoke leap upwards from his own land, hath a desire to die. As for thee, thine heart regardeth it not at all, Olympian! What! Did not Odysseus by the ships of the Argives make thee free offering of sacrifice in the wide Trojan land? Wherefore wast thou then so wroth with him, O Zeus?'

The "Odyssey" (as every one knows) abounds in passages borrowed from the "Iliad"; I had wished to print these in a slightly different type, with marginal references to the "Iliad," and had marked them to this end in my MS. I found, however, that the translation would be thus hopelessly scholasticised, and abandoned my intention. I would nevertheless urge on those who have the management of our University presses, that they would render a great service to students if they would publish a Greek text of the "Odyssey" with the Iliadic passages printed in a different type, and with marginal references. I have given the British Museum a copy of the "Odyssey" with the Iliadic passages underlined and referred to in MS.; I have also given an "Iliad" marked with all the Odyssean passages, and their references; but copies of both the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" so marked ought to be within easy reach of all students.

Any one who at the present day discusses the questions that have arisen round the "Iliad" since Wolf's time, without keeping it well before his reader's mind that the "Odyssey" was demonstrably written from one single neighbourhood, and hence (even though nothing else pointed to this conclusion) presumably by one person only--that it was written

certainly before 750, and in all probability before 1000 B.C.--that the writer of this very early poem was demonstrably familiar with the "Iliad" as we now have it, borrowing as freely from those books whose genuineness has been most impugned, as from those which are admitted to be by Homer--any one who fails to keep these points before his readers, is hardly dealing equitably by them. Any one on the other hand, who will mark his "Iliad" and his "Odyssey" from the copies in the British Museum above referred to, and who will draw the only inference that common sense can draw from the presence of so many identical passages in both poems, will, I believe, find no difficulty in assigning their proper value to a large number of books here and on the Continent that at present enjoy considerable reputations. Furthermore, and this perhaps is an advantage better worth securing, he will find that many puzzles of the "Odyssey" cease to puzzle him on the discovery that they arise from over-saturation with the "Iliad."

Other difficulties will also disappear as soon as the development of the poem in the writer's mind is understood. I have dealt with this at some length in pp. 251-261 of "The Authoress of the Odyssey". Briefly, the "Odyssey" consists of two distinct poems: (1) The Return of Ulysses, which alone the Muse is asked to sing in the opening lines of the poem. This poem includes the Phaeacian episode, and the account of Ulysses' adventures as told by himself in Books ix.-xii. It consists of lines 1-79 (roughly) of Book i., of line 28 of Book v., and thence without intermission to the middle of line 187 of Book xiii., at which point the original scheme was abandoned.

(2) The story of Penelope and the suitors, with the episode of Telemachus' voyage to Pylos. This poem begins with line 80 (roughly) of Book i., is continued to the end of Book iv., and not resumed till Ulysses wakes in the middle of line 187, Book xiii., from whence it continues to the end of Book xxiv.

In "The Authoress of the Odyssey", I wrote:

the introduction of lines xi., 115-137 and of line ix., 535, with the writing a new council of the gods at the

beginning of Book v., to take the place of the one that was removed to Book i., 1-79, were the only things that were done to give even a semblance of unity to the old scheme and the new, and to conceal the fact that the Muse, after being asked to sing of one subject, spend two-thirds of her time in singing a very different one, with a climax for which no-one has asked her. For roughly the Return occupies eight Books, and Penelope and the Suitors sixteen.

I believe this to be substantially correct.

Lastly, to deal with a very unimportant point, I observe that the Leipsic Teubner edition of 894 makes Books ii. and iii. end with a comma. Stops are things of such far more recent date than the "Odyssey," that there does not seem much use in adhering to the text in so small a matter; still, from a spirit of mere conservatism, I have preferred to do so. Why [Greek] at the beginnings of Books ii. and viii., and [Greek], at the beginning of Book vii. should have initial capitals in an edition far too careful to admit a supposition of inadvertence, when [Greek] at the beginning of Books vi. and xiii., and [Greek] at the beginning of Book xvii. have no initial capitals, I cannot determine. No other Books of the "Odyssey" have initial capitals except the three mentioned unless the first word of the Book is a proper name.

S. BUTLER.

July 25, 1900.

#### PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Butler's Translation of the "Odyssey" appeared originally in 1900, and The Authoress of the Odyssey in 1897. In the preface to the new edition of "The Authoress", which is published simultaneously with this new edition of the Translation, I have given some account of the genesis of the two books.

The size of the original page has been reduced so as to make both books uniform with Butler's other works; and, fortunately, it has been possible, by using a smaller type, to get the same number of words into each page, so that the references remain good, and, with the

exception

of a few minor alterations and rearrangements now to be enumerated so far as they affect the Translation, the new editions are faithful reprints of the original editions, with misprints and obvious errors corrected--no attempt having been made to edit them or to bring them up to date.

(a) The Index has been revised.

(b) Owing to the reduction in the size of the page it has been necessary to shorten some of the headlines, and here advantage has been taken of various corrections of and additions to the headlines and shoulder-notes made by Butler in his own copies of the two books.

(c) For the most part each of the illustrations now occupies a page, whereas in the original editions they generally appeared two on the page. It has been necessary to reduce the plan of the House of Ulysses.

On page 153 of "The Authoress" Butler says: "No great poet would compare his hero to a paunch full of blood and fat, cooking before the fire (xx, 24-28)." This passage is not given in the abridged Story of the "Odyssey" at the beginning of the book, but in the Translation it occurs in these words:

"Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible; even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single-handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors."

It looks as though in the interval between the publication of "The Authoress" (1897) and of the Translation (1900) Butler had changed his mind; for in the first case the comparison is between Ulysses and a paunch full, etc., and in the second it is between Ulysses and a man who turns a paunch full, etc. The second comparison is perhaps one which a great poet might make.

In seeing the works through the press I have had the invaluable assistance of Mr. A. T. Bartholomew of the University Library,

Cambridge, and of Mr. Donald S. Robertson, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. To both these friends I give my most cordial thanks for the care and skill exercised by them. Mr. Robertson has found time for the labour of checking and correcting all the quotations from and references to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and I believe that it could not have been better performed. It was, I know, a pleasure for him; and it would have been a pleasure also for Butler if he could have known that his work was being shepherded by the son of his old friend, Mr. H. R. Robertson, who more than half a century ago was a fellow-student with him at Cary's School of Art in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury.

HENRY FESTING JONES.

120 MAIDA VALE, W.9.

4th December, 1921.

## THE ODYSSEY

### Book I

#### THE GODS IN COUNCIL--MINERVA'S VISIT TO ITHACA--THE CHALLENGE FROM TELEMACHUS TO THE SUITORS.

Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them from ever reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, oh daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.

So now all who escaped death in battle or by shipwreck had got safely home except Ulysses, and he, though he was longing to return to his wife

and country, was detained by the goddess Calypso, who had got him into a large cave and wanted to marry him. But as years went by, there came a time when the gods settled that he should go back to Ithaca; even then, however, when he was among his own people, his troubles were not yet over; nevertheless all the gods had now begun to pity him except Neptune, who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home.

Now Neptune had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world's end, and lie in two halves, the one looking West and the other East. {1} He had gone there to accept a hecatomb of sheep and oxen, and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met in the house of Olympian Jove, and the sire of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of Aegisthus, who had been killed by Agamemnon's son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

"See now, how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly. Look at Aegisthus; he must needs make love to Agamemnon's wife unrighteously and then kill Agamemnon, though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Mercury to warn him not to do either of these things, inasmuch as Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to return home. Mercury told him this in all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full."

Then Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right, and so it would any one else who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Ulysses that my heart bleeds, when I think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all his friends. It is an island covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of the magician Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep heaven and earth asunder. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Ulysses, and keeps

trying  
by every kind of blandishment to make him forget his home, so that  
he  
is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but how he may once more see  
the  
smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet  
when  
Ulysses was before Troy did he not propitiate you with many a burnt  
sacrifice? Why then should you keep on being so angry with him?"

And Jove said, "My child, what are you talking about? How can I  
forget  
Ulysses than whom there is no more capable man on earth, nor more  
liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in heaven?  
Bear  
in mind, however, that Neptune is still furious with Ulysses for  
having  
blinded an eye of Polyphemus king of the Cyclopes. Polyphemus is son  
to  
Neptune by the nymph Thoosa, daughter to the sea-king Phorcys;  
therefore  
though he will not kill Ulysses outright, he torments him by  
preventing  
him from getting home. Still, let us lay our heads together and see  
how  
we can help him to return; Neptune will then be pacified, for if we  
are  
all of a mind he can hardly stand out against us."

And Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, if, then,  
the  
gods now mean that Ulysses should get home, we should first send  
Mercury  
to the Ogygian island to tell Calypso that we have made up our minds  
and  
that he is to return. In the meantime I will go to Ithaca, to put  
heart  
into Ulysses' son Telemachus; I will embolden him to call the  
Achaean  
in assembly, and speak out to the suitors of his mother Penelope,  
who  
persist in eating up any number of his sheep and oxen; I will also  
conduct him to Sparta and to Pylos, to see if he can hear anything  
about  
the return of his dear father—for this will make people speak well  
of  
him."

So saying she bound on her glittering golden sandals, imperishable,  
with which she can fly like the wind over land or sea; she grasped  
the  
redoubtable bronze-shod spear, so stout and sturdy and strong,  
wherewith  
she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her, and down she

darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, whereon forthwith she was in Ithaca, at the gateway of Ulysses' house, disguised as a visitor, Mentès, chief of the Taphians, and she held a bronze spear in her hand.

There she found the lordly suitors seated on hides of the oxen which they had killed and eaten, and playing draughts in front of the house.

Men-servants and pages were bustling about to wait upon them, some mixing wine with water in the mixing-bowls, some cleaning down the tables with wet sponges and laying them out again, and some cutting up great quantities of meat.

Telemachus saw her long before any one else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Minerva and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. "Welcome," said he, "to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for."

He led the way as he spoke, and Minerva followed him. When they were within he took her spear and set it in the spear-stand against a strong bearing-post along with the many other spears of his unhappy father, and he conducted her to a richly decorated seat under which he threw a cloth of damask. There was a footstool also for her feet, and he set another seat near her for himself, away from the suitors, that she might not be annoyed while eating by their noise and insolence, and that he might ask her more freely about his father.

A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by



their  
side, and a manservant brought them wine and poured it out for them.

Then the suitors came in and took their places on the benches and seats.

{3} Forthwith men servants poured water over their hands, maids went round with the bread-baskets, pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine

and water, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink they wanted

music and dancing, which are the crowning embellishments of a banquet,

so a servant brought a lyre to Phemius, whom they compelled perforce to sing to them. As soon as he touched his lyre and began to sing Telemachus spoke low to Minerva, with his head close to hers that no man might hear.

"I hope, sir," said he, "that you will not be offended with what I am

going to say. Singing comes cheap to those who do not pay for it, and

all this is done at the cost of one whose bones lie rotting in some wilderness or grinding to powder in the surf. If these men were to see

my father come back to Ithaca they would pray for longer legs rather than a longer purse, for money would not serve them; but he, alas, has

fallen on an ill fate, and even when people do sometimes say that he is

coming, we no longer heed them; we shall never see him again. And now,

sir, tell me and tell me true, who you are and where you come from. Tell

me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how your

crew brought you to Ithaca, and of what nation they declared themselves

to be--for you cannot have come by land. Tell me also truly, for I want

to know, are you a stranger to this house, or have you been here in my

father's time? In the old days we had many visitors for my father went

about much himself."

And Minerva answered, "I will tell you truly and particularly all about

it. I am Mentès, son of Anchialus, and I am King of the Taphians. I have

come here with my ship and crew, on a voyage to men of a foreign tongue

being bound for Temesa {4} with a cargo of iron, and I shall bring

back  
copper. As for my ship, it lies over yonder off the open country  
away  
from the town, in the harbour Rheithron {5} under the wooded  
mountain  
Neritum. {6} Our fathers were friends before us, as old Laertes will  
tell you, if you will go and ask him. They say, however, that he  
never  
comes to town now, and lives by himself in the country, faring  
hardly,  
with an old woman to look after him and get his dinner for him, when  
he comes in tired from pottering about his vineyard. They told me  
your  
father was at home again, and that was why I came, but it seems the  
gods  
are still keeping him back, for he is not dead yet not on the  
mainland.  
It is more likely he is on some sea-girt island in mid ocean, or a  
prisoner among savages who are detaining him against his will. I am  
no  
prophet, and know very little about omens, but I speak as it is  
borne  
in upon me from heaven, and assure you that he will not be away much  
longer; for he is a man of such resource that even though he were in  
chains of iron he would find some means of getting home again. But  
tell  
me, and tell me true, can Ulysses really have such a fine looking  
fellow  
for a son? You are indeed wonderfully like him about the head and  
eyes,  
for we were close friends before he set sail for Troy where the  
flower  
of all the Argives went also. Since that time we have never either  
of us  
seen the other."

"My mother," answered Telemachus, "tells me I am son to Ulysses, but  
it  
is a wise child that knows his own father. Would that I were son to  
one  
who had grown old upon his own estates, for, since you ask me, there  
is no more ill-starred man under heaven than he who they tell me is  
my  
father."

And Minerva said, "There is no fear of your race dying out yet,  
while  
Penelope has such a fine son as you are. But tell me, and tell me  
true,  
what is the meaning of all this feasting, and who are these people?  
What  
is it all about? Have you some banquet, or is there a wedding in the  
family--for no one seems to be bringing any provisions of his own?  
And

the guests--how atrociously they are behaving; what riot they make over the whole house; it is enough to disgust any respectable person who comes near them."

"Sir," said Telemachus, "as regards your question, so long as my father was here it was well with us and with the house, but the gods in their displeasure have willed it otherwise, and have hidden him away more closely than mortal man was ever yet hidden. I could have borne it better even though he were dead, if he had fallen with his men before Troy, or had died with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes, and I should myself have been heir to his renown; but now the storm-winds have spirited him away we know not whither; he is gone without leaving so much as a trace behind him, and I inherit nothing but dismay. Nor does the matter end simply with grief for the loss of my father; heaven has laid sorrows upon me of yet another kind; for the chiefs from all our islands, Dulichium, Same, and the woodland island of Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying their court to my mother, who will neither point blank say that she will not marry, {7} nor yet bring matters to an end; so they are making havoc of my estate, and before long will do so also with myself."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Minerva, "then you do indeed want Ulysses home again. Give him his helmet, shield, and a couple of lances, and if he is the man he was when I first knew him in our house, drinking and making merry, he would soon lay his hands about these rascally suitors, were he to stand once more upon his own threshold. He was then coming from Ephyra, where he had been to beg poison for his arrows from Ilus, son of Mermerus. Ilus feared the ever-living gods and would not give him any, but my father let him have some, for he was very fond of him. If Ulysses is the man he then was these suitors will have a short shrift and a sorry wedding."

"But there! It rests with heaven to determine whether he is to return,

and take his revenge in his own house or no; I would, however, urge you to set about trying to get rid of these suitors at once. Take my advice, call the Achaean heroes in assembly to-morrow morning--lay your case before them, and call heaven to bear you witness. Bid the suitors take themselves off, each to his own place, and if your mother's mind is set on marrying again, let her go back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts that so dear a daughter may expect. As for yourself, let me prevail upon you to take the best ship you can get, with a crew of twenty men, and go in quest of your father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell you something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct you. First go to Pylos and ask Nestor; thence go on to Sparta and visit Menelaus, for he got home last of all the Achaeans; if you hear that your father is alive and on his way home, you can put up with the waste these suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, come home at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make your mother marry again. Then, having done all this, think it well over in your mind how, by fair means or foul, you may kill these suitors in your own house. You are too old to plead infancy any longer; have you not heard how people are singing Orestes' praises for having killed his father's murderer Aegisthus? You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story. Now, however, I must go back to my ship and to my crew, who will be impatient if I keep them waiting longer; think the matter over for yourself, and remember what I have said to you."

"Sir," answered Telemachus, "it has been very kind of you to talk to me in this way, as though I were your own son, and I will do all you tell me; I know you want to be getting on with your voyage, but stay a little longer till you have taken a bath and refreshed yourself. I will then give you a present, and you shall go on your way rejoicing; I will give

you one of great beauty and value—a keepsake such as only dear friends give to one another."

Minerva answered, "Do not try to keep me, for I would be on my way at once. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, keep it till I come again, and I will take it home with me. You shall give me a very good one, and I will give you one of no less value in return."

With these words she flew away like a bird into the air, but she had given Telemachus courage, and had made him think more than ever about his father. He felt the change, wondered at it, and knew that the stranger had been a god, so he went straight to where the suitors were sitting.

Phemius was still singing, and his hearers sat rapt in silence as he told the sad tale of the return from Troy, and the ills Minerva had laid upon the Achaeans. Penelope, daughter of Icarius, heard his song from her room upstairs, and came down by the great staircase, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids. When she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing posts that supported the roof of the cloisters {8} with a staid maiden on either side of her. She held a veil, moreover, before her face, and was weeping bitterly.

"Phemius," she cried, "you know many another feat of gods and heroes, such as poets love to celebrate. Sing the suitors some one of these, and let them drink their wine in silence, but cease this sad tale, for it breaks my sorrowful heart, and reminds me of my lost husband whom I mourn ever without ceasing, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos." {9}

"Mother," answered Telemachus, "let the bard sing what he has a mind to; bards do not make the ills they sing of; it is Jove, not they, who makes them, and who sends weal or woe upon mankind according to his own good pleasure. This fellow means no harm by singing the ill-fated return of

the Danaans, for people always applaud the latest songs most warmly. Make up your mind to it and bear it; Ulysses is not the only man who never came back from Troy, but many another went down as well as he. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others {10}--for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then, going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes. But the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloisters {11}, and prayed each one that he might be her bed fellow.

Then Telemachus spoke, "Shameless," he cried, "and insolent suitors, let us feast at our pleasure now, and let there be no brawling, for it is a rare thing to hear a man with such a divine voice as Phemius has; but in the morning meet me in full assembly that I may give you formal notice to depart, and feast at one another's houses, turn and turn about, at your own cost. If on the other hand you choose to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall be no man to avenge you."

The suitors bit their lips as they heard him, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech. Then, Antinous, son of Eupeithes, said, "The gods seem to have given you lessons in bluster and tall talking; may Jove never grant you to be chief in Ithaca as your father was before you."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, do not chide with me, but, god willing, I will be chief too if I can. Is this the worst fate you can think of for me? It is no bad thing to be a chief, for it brings both riches and honour. Still, now that Ulysses is dead there are many great men in Ithaca both old and young, and some other may take the lead among them; nevertheless I will be chief in my own house, and will rule those

whom  
Ulysses has won for me."

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered, "It rests with heaven to decide who shall be chief among us, but you shall be master in your own house and over your own possessions; no one while there is a man in Ithaca shall do you violence nor rob you. And now, my good fellow,  
I want to know about this stranger. What country does he come from? Of what family is he, and where is his estate? Has he brought you news about the return of your father, or was he on business of his own? He seemed a well to do man, but he hurried off so suddenly that he was gone in a moment before we could get to know him."

"My father is dead and gone," answered Telemachus, "and even if some rumour reaches me I put no more faith in it now. My mother does indeed sometimes send for a soothsayer and question him, but I give his prophecy no heed. As for the stranger, he was Mentos, son of Anchialus, chief of the Taphians, an old friend of my father's." But in his heart he knew that it had been the goddess.

The suitors then returned to their singing and dancing until the evening; but when night fell upon their pleasuring they went home to bed each in his own abode. {12} Telemachus's room was high up in a tower {13} that looked on to the outer court; hither, then, he hied, brooding and full of thought. A good old woman, Euryclea, daughter of Ops, the son of Pisenor, went before him with a couple of blazing torches. Laertes had bought her with his own money when she was quite young; he gave the worth of twenty oxen for her, and shewed as much respect to her in his household as he did to his own wedded wife, but he did not take her to his bed for he feared his wife's resentment. {14} She it was who now lighted Telemachus to his room, and she loved him better than any of the other women in the house did, for she had nursed him when he was a baby. He opened the door of his bed room and sat down upon the bed; as he took off his shirt {15} he gave it to the good old woman, who folded it tidily up, and hung it for him over a peg by his bed side, after which she went out, pulled the door to by a silver catch, and drew the

bolt home by means of the strap. {16} But Telemachus as he lay covered with a woollen fleece kept thinking all night through of his intended voyage and of the counsel that Minerva had given him.

## Book II

ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF ITHACA--SPEECHES OF TELEMACHUS AND OF THE SUITORS--TELEMACHUS MAKES HIS PREPARATIONS AND STARTS FOR PYLOS WITH MINERVA DISGUISED AS MENTOR.

Now when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared Telemachus rose and dressed himself. He bound his sandals on to his comely feet, girded his sword about his shoulder, and left his room looking like an immortal god. He at once sent the criers round to call the people in assembly, so they called them and the people gathered thereon; then, when they were got together, he went to the place of assembly spear in hand--not alone, for his two hounds went with him. Minerva endowed him with a presence of such divine comeliness that all marvelled at him as he went by, and when he took his place in his father's seat even the oldest councillors made way for him.

Aegyptius, a man bent double with age, and of infinite experience, was the first to speak. His son Antiphus had gone with Ulysses to Ilius, land of noble steeds, but the savage Cyclops had killed him when they were all shut up in the cave, and had cooked his last dinner for him. {17} He had three sons left, of whom two still worked on their father's land, while the third, Eurynomus, was one of the suitors; nevertheless their father could not get over the loss of Antiphus, and was still weeping for him when he began his speech.

"Men of Ithaca," he said, "hear my words. From the day Ulysses left us there has been no meeting of our councillors until now; who then can it be, whether old or young, that finds it so necessary to convene us? Has he got wind of some host approaching, and does he wish to warn us, or would he speak upon some other matter of public moment? I am sure he is



an excellent person, and I hope Jove will grant him his heart's desire."

Telemachus took this speech as of good omen and rose at once, for he was bursting with what he had to say. He stood in the middle of the assembly and the good herald Pisenor brought him his staff. Then, turning to Aegyptius, "Sir," said he, "it is I, as you will shortly learn, who have convened you, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I have not got wind of any host approaching about which I would warn you, nor is there any matter of public moment on which I would speak. My grievance is purely personal, and turns on two great misfortunes which have fallen upon my house. The first of these is the loss of my excellent father, who was chief among all you here present, and was like a father to every one of you; the second is much more serious, and ere long will be the utter ruin of my estate. The sons of all the chief men among you are pestering my mother to marry them against her will. They are afraid to go to her father Icarius, asking him to choose the one he likes best, and to provide marriage gifts for his daughter, but day by day they keep hanging about my father's house, sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness; we have now no Ulysses to ward off harm from our doors, and I cannot hold my own against them. I shall never all my days be as good a man as he was, still I would indeed defend myself if I had power to do so, for I cannot stand such treatment any longer; my house is being disgraced and ruined. Have respect, therefore, to your own consciences and to public opinion. Fear, too, the wrath of heaven, lest the gods should be displeased and turn upon you. I pray you by Jove and Themis, who is the beginning and the end of councils, [do not] hold back, my friends, and leave me singlehanded {18}--unless it be that my brave father Ulysses did some wrong to the Achaeans which you would now avenge on me, by aiding and abetting these suitors. Moreover, if I am to be eaten out of

house and home at all, I had rather you did the eating yourselves,  
for  
I could then take action against you to some purpose, and serve you  
with  
notices from house to house till I got paid in full, whereas now I  
have  
no remedy." {19}

With this Telemachus dashed his staff to the ground and burst into  
tears. Every one was very sorry for him, but they all sat still and  
no  
one ventured to make him an angry answer, save only Antinous, who  
spoke  
thus:

"Telemachus, insolent braggart that you are, how dare you try to  
throw  
the blame upon us suitors? It is your mother's fault not ours, for  
she  
is a very artful woman. This three years past, and close on four,  
she  
had been driving us out of our minds, by encouraging each one of us,  
and  
sending him messages without meaning one word of what she says. And  
then  
there was that other trick she played us. She set up a great tambour  
frame in her room, and began to work on an enormous piece of fine  
needlework. 'Sweet hearts,' said she, 'Ulysses is indeed dead, still  
do not press me to marry again immediately, wait--for I would not  
have  
skill in needlework perish unrecorded--till I have completed a pall  
for  
the hero Laertes, to be in readiness against the time when death  
shall  
take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if  
he is  
laid out without a pall.'

"This was what she said, and we assented; whereon we could see her  
working on her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick  
the  
stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three  
years  
and we never found her out, but as time wore on and she was now in  
her  
fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us,  
and  
we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish  
it  
whether she would or no. The suitors, therefore, make you this  
answer,  
that both you and the Achaeans may understand--'Send your mother  
away,  
and bid her marry the man of her own and of her father's choice';

for I  
do not know what will happen if she goes on plaguing us much longer  
with  
the airs she gives herself on the score of the accomplishments  
Minerva  
has taught her, and because she is so clever. We never yet heard of  
such  
a woman; we know all about Tyro, Alcmena, Mycene, and the famous  
women  
of old, but they were nothing to your mother any one of them. It was  
not  
fair of her to treat us in that way, and as long as she continues in  
the mind with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go  
on  
eating up your estate; and I do not see why she should change, for  
she  
gets all the honour and glory, and it is you who pay for it, not  
she.  
Understand, then, that we will not go back to our lands, neither  
here  
nor elsewhere, till she has made her choice and married some one or  
other of us."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, how can I drive the mother who bore  
me  
from my father's house? My father is abroad and we do not know  
whether  
he is alive or dead. It will be hard on me if I have to pay Icarius  
the  
large sum which I must give him if I insist on sending his daughter  
back  
to him. Not only will he deal rigorously with me, but heaven will  
also  
punish me; for my mother when she leaves the house will call on the  
Erinyes to avenge her; besides, it would not be a creditable thing  
to  
do, and I will have nothing to say to it. If you choose to take  
offence  
at this, leave the house and feast elsewhere at one another's houses  
at  
your own cost turn and turn about. If, on the other hand, you elect  
to  
persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall  
reckon  
with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall  
be  
no man to avenge you."

As he spoke Jove sent two eagles from the top of the mountain, and  
they  
flew on and on with the wind, sailing side by side in their own  
lordly  
flight. When they were right over the middle of the assembly they  
wheeled and circled about, beating the air with their wings and

glaring  
death into the eyes of them that were below; then, fighting fiercely  
and  
tearing at one another, they flew off towards the right over the  
town.  
The people wondered as they saw them, and asked each other what all  
this  
might be; whereon Halitherses, who was the best prophet and reader  
of  
omens among them, spoke to them plainly and in all honesty, saying:

"Hear me, men of Ithaca, and I speak more particularly to the  
suitors,  
for I see mischief brewing for them. Ulysses is not going to be  
away much longer; indeed he is close at hand to deal out death and  
destruction, not on them alone, but on many another of us who live  
in  
Ithaca. Let us then be wise in time, and put a stop to this  
wickedness  
before he comes. Let the suitors do so of their own accord; it will  
be better for them, for I am not prophesying without due knowledge;  
everything has happened to Ulysses as I foretold when the Argives  
set  
out for Troy, and he with them. I said that after going through much  
hardship and losing all his men he should come home again in the  
twentieth year and that no one would know him; and now all this is  
coming true."

Eurymachus son of Polybus then said, "Go home, old man, and prophesy  
to  
your own children, or it may be worse for them. I can read these  
omens  
myself much better than you can; birds are always flying about in  
the  
sunshine somewhere or other, but they seldom mean anything. Ulysses  
has  
died in a far country, and it is a pity you are not dead along with  
him, instead of prating here about omens and adding fuel to the  
anger of  
Telemachus which is fierce enough as it is. I suppose you think he  
will  
give you something for your family, but I tell you--and it shall  
surely  
be--when an old man like you, who should know better, talks a young  
one  
over till he becomes troublesome, in the first place his young  
friend  
will only fare so much the worse--he will take nothing by it, for  
the  
suitors will prevent this--and in the next, we will lay a heavier  
fine,  
sir, upon yourself than you will at all like paying, for it will  
bear  
hardly upon you. As for Telemachus, I warn him in the presence of

you  
all to send his mother back to her father, who will find her a  
husband  
and provide her with all the marriage gifts so dear a daughter may  
expect. Till then we shall go on harassing him with our suit; for we  
fear no man, and care neither for him, with all his fine speeches,  
nor  
for any fortune-telling of yours. You may preach as much as you  
please,  
but we shall only hate you the more. We shall go back and continue  
to  
eat up Telemachus's estate without paying him, till such time as his  
mother leaves off tormenting us by keeping us day after day on the  
tiptoe of expectation, each vying with the other in his suit for a  
prize  
of such rare perfection. Besides we cannot go after the other women  
whom  
we should marry in due course, but for the way in which she treats  
us."

Then Telemachus said, "Eurymachus, and you other suitors, I shall  
say no  
more, and entreat you no further, for the gods and the people of  
Ithaca  
now know my story. Give me, then, a ship and a crew of twenty men to  
take me hither and thither, and I will go to Sparta and to Pylos in  
quest of my father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell  
me something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some  
heaven-sent message may direct me. If I can hear of him as alive and  
on  
his way home I will put up with the waste you suitors will make for  
yet  
another twelve months. If on the other hand I hear of his death, I  
will  
return at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build  
a  
barrow to his memory, and make my mother marry again."

With these words he sat down, and Mentor {20} who had been a friend  
of  
Ulysses, and had been left in charge of everything with full  
authority  
over the servants, rose to speak. He, then, plainly and in all  
honesty  
addressed them thus:

"Hear me, men of Ithaca, I hope that you may never have a kind and  
well-disposed ruler any more, nor one who will govern you equitably;  
I hope that all your chiefs henceforward may be cruel and unjust,  
for  
there is not one of you but has forgotten Ulysses, who ruled you as  
though he were your father. I am not half so angry with the suitors,  
for  
if they choose to do violence in the naughtiness of their hearts,

and  
wager their heads that Ulysses will not return, they can take the  
high  
hand and eat up his estate, but as for you others I am shocked at  
the way in which you all sit still without even trying to stop such  
scandalous goings on--which you could do if you chose, for you are  
many  
and they are few."

Leiocritus, son of Evenor, answered him saying, "Mentor, what folly  
is  
all this, that you should set the people to stay us? It is a hard  
thing  
for one man to fight with many about his victuals. Even though  
Ulysses  
himself were to set upon us while we are feasting in his house, and  
do  
his best to oust us, his wife, who wants him back so very badly,  
would  
have small cause for rejoicing, and his blood would be upon his own  
head  
if he fought against such great odds. There is no sense in what you  
have  
been saying. Now, therefore, do you people go about your business,  
and  
let his father's old friends, Mentor and Halitherses, speed this boy  
on  
his journey, if he goes at all--which I do not think he will, for he  
is more likely to stay where he is till some one comes and tells him  
something."

On this he broke up the assembly, and every man went back to his own  
abode, while the suitors returned to the house of Ulysses.

Then Telemachus went all alone by the sea side, washed his hands in  
the  
grey waves, and prayed to Minerva.

"Hear me," he cried, "you god who visited me yesterday, and bade me  
sail  
the seas in search of my father who has so long been missing. I  
would  
obey you, but the Achaeans, and more particularly the wicked  
suitors,  
are hindering me that I cannot do so."

As he thus prayed, Minerva came close up to him in the likeness and  
with  
the voice of Mentor. "Telemachus," said she, "if you are made of  
the same stuff as your father you will be neither fool nor coward  
henceforward, for Ulysses never broke his word nor left his work  
half  
done. If, then, you take after him, your voyage will not be  
fruitless,

but unless you have the blood of Ulysses and of Penelope in your veins  
I see no likelihood of your succeeding. Sons are seldom as good men as  
their fathers; they are generally worse, not better; still, as you are  
not going to be either fool or coward henceforward, and are not entirely  
without some share of your father's wise discernment, I look with hope  
upon your undertaking. But mind you never make common cause with any of  
those foolish suitors, for they have neither sense nor virtue, and give  
no thought to death and to the doom that will shortly fall on one and  
all of them, so that they shall perish on the same day. As for your voyage, it shall not be long delayed; your father was such an old friend  
of mine that I will find you a ship, and will come with you myself. Now, however, return home, and go about among the suitors; begin getting  
provisions ready for your voyage; see everything well stowed, the wine  
in jars, and the barley meal, which is the staff of life, in leathern  
bags, while I go round the town and beat up volunteers at once. There  
are many ships in Ithaca both old and new; I will run my eye over them  
for you and will choose the best; we will get her ready and will put out  
to sea without delay."

Thus spoke Minerva daughter of Jove, and Telemachus lost no time in doing as the goddess told him. He went moodily home, and found the suitors flaying goats and singeing pigs in the outer court. Antinous came up to him at once and laughed as he took his hand in his own, saying, "Telemachus, my fine fire-eater, bear no more ill blood neither  
in word nor deed, but eat and drink with us as you used to do. The Achaeans will find you in everything--a ship and a picked crew to boot--so that you can set sail for Pylos at once and get news of your  
noble father."

"Antinous," answered Telemachus, "I cannot eat in peace, nor take pleasure of any kind with such men as you are. Was it not enough that  
you should waste so much good property of mine while I was yet a boy?  
Now that I am older and know more about it, I am also stronger, and whether here among this people, or by going to Pylos, I will do you all

the harm I can. I shall go, and my going will not be in vain--  
though,  
thanks to you suitors, I have neither ship nor crew of my own, and  
must  
be passenger not captain."

As he spoke he snatched his hand from that of Antinous. Meanwhile  
the  
others went on getting dinner ready about the buildings, {21}  
jeering at  
him tauntingly as they did so.

"Telemachus," said one youngster, "means to be the death of us; I  
suppose he thinks he can bring friends to help him from Pylos, or  
again  
from Sparta, where he seems bent on going. Or will he go to Ephyra  
as  
well, for poison to put in our wine and kill us?"

Another said, "Perhaps if Telemachus goes on board ship, he will be  
like  
his father and perish far from his friends. In this case we should  
have  
plenty to do, for we could then divide up his property amongst us:  
as  
for the house we can let his mother and the man who marries her have  
that."

This was how they talked. But Telemachus went down into the lofty  
and  
spacious store-room where his father's treasure of gold and bronze  
lay  
heaped up upon the floor, and where the linen and spare clothes were  
kept in open chests. Here, too, there was a store of fragrant olive  
oil,  
while casks of old, well-ripened wine, unblended and fit for a god  
to  
drink, were ranged against the wall in case Ulysses should come home  
again after all. The room was closed with well-made doors opening in  
the  
middle; moreover the faithful old house-keeper Euryclea, daughter of  
Ops the son of Pisenor, was in charge of everything both night and  
day.  
Telemachus called her to the store-room and said:

"Nurse, draw me off some of the best wine you have, after what you  
are keeping for my father's own drinking, in case, poor man, he  
should  
escape death, and find his way home again after all. Let me have  
twelve  
jars, and see that they all have lids; also fill me some well-sewn  
leathern bags with barley meal--about twenty measures in all. Get  
these  
things put together at once, and say nothing about it. I will take



everything away this evening as soon as my mother has gone upstairs for the night. I am going to Sparta and to Pylos to see if I can hear anything about the return of my dear father."

When Euryclea heard this she began to cry, and spoke fondly to him, saying, "My dear child, what ever can have put such notion as that into your head? Where in the world do you want to go to--you, who are the one hope of the house? Your poor father is dead and gone in some foreign country nobody knows where, and as soon as your back is turned these wicked ones here will be scheming to get you put out of the way, and will share all your possessions among themselves; stay where you are among your own people, and do not go wandering and worrying your life out on the barren ocean."

"Fear not, nurse," answered Telemachus, "my scheme is not without heaven's sanction; but swear that you will say nothing about all this to my mother, till I have been away some ten or twelve days, unless she hears of my having gone, and asks you; for I do not want her to spoil her beauty by crying."

The old woman swore most solemnly that she would not, and when she had completed her oath, she began drawing off the wine into jars, and getting the barley meal into the bags, while Telemachus went back to the suitors.

Then Minerva bethought her of another matter. She took his shape, and went round the town to each one of the crew, telling them to meet at the ship by sundown. She went also to Noemon son of Phronius, and asked him to let her have a ship--which he was very ready to do. When the sun had set and darkness was over all the land, she got the ship into the water, put all the tackle on board her that ships generally carry, and stationed her at the end of the harbour. Presently the crew came up, and the goddess spoke encouragingly to each of them.

Furthermore she went to the house of Ulysses, and threw the suitors into a deep slumber. She caused their drink to fuddle them, and made them drop their cups from their hands, so that instead of sitting over their

wine, they went back into the town to sleep, with their eyes heavy and full of drowsiness. Then she took the form and voice of Mentor, and called Telemachus to come outside.

"Telemachus," said she, "the men are on board and at their oars, waiting for you to give your orders, so make haste and let us be off."

On this she led the way, while Telemachus followed in her steps. When they got to the ship they found the crew waiting by the water side, and Telemachus said, "Now my men, help me to get the stores on board; they are all put together in the cloister, and my mother does not know anything about it, nor any of the maid servants except one."

With these words he led the way and the others followed after. When they had brought the things as he told them, Telemachus went on board, Minerva going before him and taking her seat in the stern of the vessel, while Telemachus sat beside her. Then the men loosed the hawsers and took their places on the benches. Minerva sent them a fair wind from the West, {22} that whistled over the deep blue waves {23} whereon Telemachus told them to catch hold of the ropes and hoist sail, and they did as he told them. They set the mast in its socket in the cross plank, raised it, and made it fast with the forestays; then they hoisted their white sails aloft with ropes of twisted ox hide. As the sail bellied out with the wind, the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed against her bows as she sped onward. Then they made all fast throughout the ship, filled the mixing bowls to the brim, and made drink offerings to the immortal gods that are from everlasting, but more particularly to the grey-eyed daughter of Jove.

Thus, then, the ship sped on her way through the watches of the night from dark till dawn,

### Book III

#### TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR AT PYLOS.

but as the sun was rising from the fair sea {24} into the firmament of heaven to shed light on mortals and immortals, they reached Pylos

the  
city of Neleus. Now the people of Pylos were gathered on the sea  
shore  
to offer sacrifice of black bulls to Neptune lord of the Earthquake.  
There were nine guilds with five hundred men in each, and there were  
nine bulls to each guild. As they were eating the inward meats {25}  
and burning the thigh bones [on the embers] in the name of Neptune,  
Telemachus and his crew arrived, furled their sails, brought their  
ship  
to anchor, and went ashore.

Minerva led the way and Telemachus followed her. Presently she said,  
"Telemachus, you must not be in the least shy or nervous; you have  
taken  
this voyage to try and find out where your father is buried and how  
he  
came by his end; so go straight up to Nestor that we may see what he  
has  
got to tell us. Beg of him to speak the truth, and he will tell no  
lies,  
for he is an excellent person."

"But how, Mentor," replied Telemachus, "dare I go up to Nestor, and  
how am I to address him? I have never yet been used to holding long  
conversations with people, and am ashamed to begin questioning one  
who  
is so much older than myself."

"Some things, Telemachus," answered Minerva, "will be suggested to  
you by your own instinct, and heaven will prompt you further; for I  
am  
assured that the gods have been with you from the time of your birth  
until now."

She then went quickly on, and Telemachus followed in her steps till  
they  
reached the place where the guilds of the Pylia people were  
assembled.  
There they found Nestor sitting with his sons, while his company  
round  
him were busy getting dinner ready, and putting pieces of meat on to  
the  
spits {26} while other pieces were cooking. When they saw the  
strangers  
they crowded round them, took them by the hand and bade them take  
their  
places. Nestor's son Pisistratus at once offered his hand to each of  
them, and seated them on some soft sheepskins that were lying on the  
sands near his father and his brother Thrasymedes. Then he gave them  
their portions of the inward meats and poured wine for them into a  
golden cup, handing it to Minerva first, and saluting her at the  
same  
time.

"Offer a prayer, sir," said he, "to King Neptune, for it is his feast that you are joining; when you have duly prayed and made your drink offering, pass the cup to your friend that he may do so also. I doubt not that he too lifts his hands in prayer, for man cannot live without God in the world. Still he is younger than you are, and is much of an age with myself, so I will give you the precedence."

As he spoke he handed her the cup. Minerva thought it very right and proper of him to have given it to herself first; {27} she accordingly began praying heartily to Neptune. "O thou," she cried, "that encirclest the earth, vouchsafe to grant the prayers of thy servants that call upon thee. More especially we pray thee send down thy grace on Nestor and on his sons; thereafter also make the rest of the Pylia people some handsome return for the goodly hecatomb they are offering you. Lastly, grant Telemachus and myself a happy issue, in respect of the matter that has brought us in our ship to Pylos."

When she had thus made an end of praying, she handed the cup to Telemachus and he prayed likewise. By and by, when the outer meats were roasted and had been taken off the spits, the carvers gave every man his portion and they all made an excellent dinner. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, Nestor, knight of Gerene, began to speak.

"Now," said he, "that our guests have done their dinner, it will be best to ask them who they are. Who, then, sir strangers, are you, and from what port have you sailed? Are you traders? or do you sail the seas as rovers with your hand against every man, and every man's hand against you?"

Telemachus answered boldly, for Minerva had given him courage to ask about his father and get himself a good name.

"Nestor," said he, "son of Neleus, honour to the Achaean name, you ask whence we come, and I will tell you. We come from Ithaca under Neritum, {28} and the matter about which I would speak is of private not public

import. I seek news of my unhappy father Ulysses, who is said to have sacked the town of Troy in company with yourself. We know what fate befell each one of the other heroes who fought at Troy, but as regards Ulysses heaven has hidden from us the knowledge even that he is dead at all, for no one can certify us in what place he perished, nor say whether he fell in battle on the mainland, or was lost at sea amid the waves of Amphitrite. Therefore I am suppliant at your knees, if haply you may be pleased to tell me of his melancholy end, whether you saw it with your own eyes, or heard it from some other traveller, for he was a man born to trouble. Do not soften things out of any pity for me, but tell me in all plainness exactly what you saw. If my brave father Ulysses ever did you loyal service, either by word or deed, when you Achaeans were harassed among the Trojans, bear it in mind now as in my favour and tell me truly all."

"My friend," answered Nestor, "you recall a time of much sorrow to my mind, for the brave Achaeans suffered much both at sea, while privateering under Achilles, and when fighting before the great city of king Priam. Our best men all of them fell there--Ajax, Achilles, Patroclus peer of gods in counsel, and my own dear son Antilochus, a man singularly fleet of foot and in fight valiant. But we suffered much more than this; what mortal tongue indeed could tell the whole story? Though you were to stay here and question me for five years, or even six, I could not tell you all that the Achaeans suffered, and you would turn homeward weary of my tale before it ended. Nine long years did we try every kind of stratagem, but the hand of heaven was against us; during all this time there was no one who could compare with your father in subtlety--if indeed you are his son--I can hardly believe my eyes--and you talk just like him too--no one would say that people of such different ages could speak so much alike. He and I never had any kind of difference from first to last neither in camp nor council, but in singleness of heart and purpose we advised the Argives how all might be ordered for the best.

"When, however, we had sacked the city of Priam, and were setting sail in our ships as heaven had dispersed us, then Jove saw fit to vex

the

Argives on their homeward voyage; for they had not all been either wise or understanding, and hence many came to a bad end through the displeasure of Jove's daughter Minerva, who brought about a quarrel between the two sons of Atreus.

"The sons of Atreus called a meeting which was not as it should be, for

it was sunset and the Achaeans were heavy with wine. When they explained

why they had called the people together, it seemed that Menelaus was for sailing homeward at once, and this displeased Agamemnon, who thought

that we should wait till we had offered hecatombs to appease the anger

of Minerva. Fool that he was, he might have known that he would not prevail with her, for when the gods have made up their minds they do not

change them lightly. So the two stood bandying hard words, whereon the

Achaeans sprang to their feet with a cry that rent the air, and were of

two minds as to what they should do.

"That night we rested and nursed our anger, for Jove was hatching mischief against us. But in the morning some of us drew our ships into

the water and put our goods with our women on board, while the rest, about half in number, stayed behind with Agamemnon. We--the other half--embarked and sailed; and the ships went well, for heaven had smoothed the sea. When we reached Tenedos we offered sacrifices to the

gods, for we were longing to get home; cruel Jove, however, did not yet

mean that we should do so, and raised a second quarrel in the course of

which some among us turned their ships back again, and sailed away under

Ulysses to make their peace with Agamemnon; but I, and all the ships that were with me pressed forward, for I saw that mischief was brewing.

The son of Tydeus went on also with me, and his crews with him.

Later on

Menelaus joined us at Lesbos, and found us making up our minds about our

course--for we did not know whether to go outside Chios by the island

of Psyra, keeping this to our left, or inside Chios, over against the

stormy headland of Mimas. So we asked heaven for a sign, and were shown

one to the effect that we should be soonest out of danger if we headed

our ships across the open sea to Euboea. This we therefore did, and

a  
fair wind sprang up which gave us a quick passage during the night  
to  
Geraestus, {29} where we offered many sacrifices to Neptune for  
having helped us so far on our way. Four days later Diomed and his  
men  
stationed their ships in Argos, but I held on for Pylos, and the  
wind  
never fell light from the day when heaven first made it fair for me.

"Therefore, my dear young friend, I returned without hearing  
anything  
about the others. I know neither who got home safely nor who were  
lost  
but, as in duty bound, I will give you without reserve the reports  
that  
have reached me since I have been here in my own house. They say the  
Myrmidons returned home safely under Achilles' son Neoptolemus; so  
also  
did the valiant son of Poias, Philoctetes. Idomeneus, again, lost no  
men  
at sea, and all his followers who escaped death in the field got  
safe  
home with him to Crete. No matter how far out of the world you live,  
you  
will have heard of Agamemnon and the bad end he came to at the hands  
of  
Aegisthus--and a fearful reckoning did Aegisthus presently pay. See  
what  
a good thing it is for a man to leave a son behind him to do as  
Orestes  
did, who killed false Aegisthus the murderer of his noble father.  
You  
too, then--for you are a tall smart-looking fellow--show your mettle  
and  
make yourself a name in story."

"Nestor son of Neleus," answered Telemachus, "honour to the Achaeans  
name, the Achaeans applaud Orestes and his name will live through  
all  
time for he has avenged his father nobly. Would that heaven might  
grant  
me to do like vengeance on the insolence of the wicked suitors, who  
are ill treating me and plotting my ruin; but the gods have no such  
happiness in store for me and for my father, so we must bear it as  
best  
we may."

"My friend," said Nestor, "now that you remind me, I remember to  
have  
heard that your mother has many suitors, who are ill disposed  
towards  
you and are making havoc of your estate. Do you submit to this  
tamely,

or are public feeling and the voice of heaven against you? Who knows but what Ulysses may come back after all, and pay these scoundrels in full, either single-handed or with a force of Achaeans behind him? If Minerva were to take as great a liking to you as she did to Ulysses when we were fighting before Troy (for I never yet saw the gods so openly fond of any one as Minerva then was of your father), if she would take as good care of you as she did of him, these wooers would soon some of them forget their wooing."

Telemachus answered, "I can expect nothing of the kind; it would be far too much to hope for. I dare not let myself think of it. Even though the gods themselves willed it no such good fortune could befall me."

On this Minerva said, "Telemachus, what are you talking about? Heaven has a long arm if it is minded to save a man; and if it were me, I should not care how much I suffered before getting home, provided I could be safe when I was once there. I would rather this, than get home quickly, and then be killed in my own house as Agamemnon was by the treachery of Aegisthus and his wife. Still, death is certain, and when a man's hour is come, not even the gods can save him, no matter how fond they are of him."