



THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER

Translated by
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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
COUNTESS DOWAGER SPENCER

THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION OF THE ODYSSEY, A POEM
THAT EXHIBITS IN THE CHARACTER OF ITS HEROINE
AN EXAMPLE OF ALL DOMESTIC VIRTUE, IS WITH
EQUAL PROPRIETY AND RESPECT INSCRIBED
BY HER LADYSHIP'S MOST DEVOTED
SERVANT, THE AUTHOR.

THE ODYSSEY OF HOMER
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BOOK I

ARGUMENT

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

Muse make the man thy theme, for shrewdness famed
And genius versatile, who far and wide
A Wand'rer, after Ilium overthrown,
Discover'd various cities, and the mind
And manners learn'd of men, in lands remote.
He num'rous woes on Ocean toss'd, endured,
Anxious to save himself, and to conduct
His followers to their home; yet all his care
Preserved them not; they perish'd self-destroy'd
By their own fault; infatuate! who devoured 10
The oxen of the all-o'erseeing Sun,
And, punish'd for that crime, return'd no more.
Daughter divine of Jove, these things record,
As it may please thee, even in our ears.
The rest, all those who had perdition 'scaped
By war or on the Deep, dwelt now at home;
Him only, of his country and his wife
Alike desirous, in her hollow grots
Calypso, Goddess beautiful, detained
Wooing him to her arms. But when, at length, 20
(Many a long year elapsed) the year arrived
Of his return (by the decree of heav'n)
To Ithaca, not even then had he,
Although surrounded by his people, reach'd
The period of his suff'rings and his toils.
Yet all the Gods, with pity moved, beheld
His woes, save Neptune; He alone with wrath
Unceasing and implacable pursued
Godlike Ulysses to his native shores.
But Neptune, now, the Æthiopians fought, 30
(The Æthiopians, utmost of mankind,
These Eastward situate, those toward the West)
Call'd to an hecatomb of bulls and lambs.
There sitting, pleas'd he banqueted; the Gods

In Jove's abode, meantime, assembled all,
 'Midst whom the Sire of heav'n and earth began.
 For he recall'd to mind Ægisthus slain
 By Agamemnon's celebrated son
 Orestes, and retracing in his thought
 That dread event, the Immortals thus address'd. 40
 Alas! how prone are human-kind to blame
 The Pow'rs of Heav'n! From us, they say, proceed
 The ills which they endure, yet more than Fate
 Herself inflicts, by their own crimes incur.
 So now Ægisthus, by no force constrained
 Of Destiny, Atrides' wedded wife
 Took to himself, and him at his return
 Slew, not unwarn'd of his own dreadful end
 By us: for we commanded Hermes down
 The watchful Argicide, who bade him fear 50
 Alike, to slay the King, or woo the Queen.
 For that Atrides' son Orestes, soon
 As grown mature, and eager to assume
 His sway imperial, should avenge the deed.
 So Hermes spake, but his advice moved not
 Ægisthus, on whose head the whole arrear
 Of vengeance heap'd, at last, hath therefore fall'n.
 Whom answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 Oh Jove, Saturnian Sire, o'er all supreme!
 And well he merited the death he found; 60
 So perish all, who shall, like him, offend.
 But with a bosom anguish-rent I view
 Ulysses, hapless Chief! who from his friends
 Remote, affliction hath long time endured
 In yonder wood-land isle, the central boss
 Of Ocean. That retreat a Goddess holds,
 Daughter of sapient Atlas, who the abyss
 Knows to its bottom, and the pillars high
 Himself upbears which sep'rate earth from heav'n.
 His daughter, there, the sorrowing Chief detains, 70
 And ever with smooth speech insidious seeks
 To wean his heart from Ithaca; meantime
 Ulysses, happy might he but behold
 The smoke ascending from his native land,
 Death covets. Canst thou not, Olympian Jove!
 At last relent? Hath not Ulysses oft
 With victims slain amid Achaia's fleet
 Thee gratified, while yet at Troy he fought?
 How hath he then so deep incensed thee, Jove?
 To whom, the cloud-assembler God replied. 80

What word hath pass'd thy lips, Daughter below'd?
Can I forget Ulysses? Him forget
So noble, who in wisdom all mankind
Excels, and who hath sacrific'd so oft
To us whose dwelling is the boundless heav'n?
Earth-circling Neptune—He it is whose wrath
Pursues him ceaseless for the Cyclops' sake
Polypheme, strongest of the giant race,
Whom of his eye Ulysses hath deprived.

For Him, Thoösa bore, Nymph of the sea
From Phorcys sprung, by Ocean's mighty pow'r
Impregnated in caverns of the Deep.
E'er since that day, the Shaker of the shores,
Although he slay him not, yet devious drives
Ulysses from his native isle afar.
Yet come—in full assembly his return
Contrive we now, both means and prosp'rous end;
So Neptune shall his wrath remit, whose pow'r
In contest with the force of all the Gods
Exerted single, can but strive in vain.

90

100

To whom Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed.
Oh Jupiter! above all Kings enthroned!
If the Immortals ever-blest ordain
That wise Ulysses to his home return,
Dispatch we then Hermes the Argicide,
Our messenger, hence to Ogygia's isle,
Who shall inform Calypso, nymph divine,
Of this our fixt resolve, that to his home
Ulysses, toil-enduring Chief, repair.

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

110

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

120

From the Olympian summit down she flew,
 And on the threshold of Ulysses' hall
 In Ithaca, and within his vestibule
 Apparent stood; there, grasping her bright spear, 130
 Mentel¹ she seem'd, the hospitable Chief
 Of Taphos' isle—she found the haughty throng
 The suitors; they before the palace gate
 With iv'ry cubes sported, on num'rous hides
 Reclined of oxen which themselves had slain.
 The heralds and the busy menials there
 Minister'd to them; these their mantling cups
 With water slaked; with bibulous sponges those
 Made clean the tables, set the banquet on,
 And portioned out to each his plenteous share. 140
 Long ere the rest Telemachus himself
 Mark'd her, for sad amid them all he sat,
 Pourtraying in deep thought contemplative
 His noble Sire, and questioning if yet
 Perchance the Hero might return to chase
 From all his palace that imperious herd,
 To his own honour lord of his own home.
 Amid them musing thus, sudden he saw
 The Goddess, and sprang forth, for he abhorr'd
 To see a guest's admittance long delay'd; 150
 Approaching eager, her right hand he seized,
 The brazen spear took from her, and in words
 With welcome wing'd Minerva thus address'd.
 Stranger, all hail! to share our cordial love
 Thou com'st; the banquet finish'd, thou shalt next
 Inform me wherefore thou hast here arrived.
 So saying, toward the spacious hall he moved,
 Follow'd by Pallas, and, arriving soon
 Beneath the lofty roof, placed her bright spear
 Within a pillar's cavity, long time 160
 The armoury where many a spear had stood,
 Bright weapons of his own illustrious Sire.
 Then, leading her toward a footstool'd throne
 Magnificent, which first he overspread
 With linen, there he seated her, apart
 From that rude throng, and for himself disposed
 A throne of various colours at her side,
 Lest, stunn'd with clamour of the lawless band,
 The new-arrived should loth perchance to eat,
 And that more free he might the stranger's ear 170
 With questions of his absent Sire address,
 And now a maiden charg'd with golden ew'r,

And with an argent laver, pouring first
 Pure water on their hands, supplied them, next,
 With a resplendent table, which the chaste
 Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
 And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
 Then, in his turn, the sewer² with sav'ry meats,
 Dish after dish, served them, of various kinds,
 And golden cups beside the chargers placed, 180
 Which the attendant herald fill'd with wine.
 Ere long, in rush'd the suitors, and the thrones
 And couches occupied, on all whose hands
 The heralds pour'd pure water; then the maids
 Attended them with bread in baskets heap'd,
 And eager they assail'd the ready feast.
 At length, when neither thirst nor hunger more
 They felt unsatisfied, to new delights
 Their thoughts they turn'd, to song and sprightly dance,
 Enlivening sequel of the banquet's joys. 190
 An herald, then, to Phemius' hand consign'd
 His beauteous lyre; he through constraint regaled
 The suitors with his song, and while the chords
 He struck in prelude to his pleasant strains,
 Telemachus his head inclining nigh
 To Pallas' ear, lest others should his words
 Witness, the blue-eyed Goddess thus bespake.
 My inmate and my friend! far from my lips
 Be ev'ry word that might displease thine ear!
 The song—the harp,—what can they less than charm 200
 These wantons? who the bread unpurchased eat
 Of one whose bones on yonder continent
 Lie mould'ring, drench'd by all the show'rs of heaven,
 Or roll at random in the billowy deep.
 Ah! could they see him once to his own isle
 Restored, both gold and raiment they would wish
 Far less, and nimbleness of foot instead.
 But He, alas! hath by a wretched fate,
 Past question perish'd, and what news soe'er
 We hear of his return, kindles no hope 210
 In us, convinced that he returns no more.
 But answer undissembling; tell me true;
 Who art thou? whence? where stands thy city? where
 Thy father's mansion? In what kind of ship
 Cam'st thou? Why steer'd the mariners their course
 To Ithaca, and of what land are they?
 For that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
 This also tell me, hast thou now arrived

New to our isle, or wast thou heretofore
 My father's guest? Since many to our house 220
 Resorted in those happier days, for he
 Drew pow'rful to himself the hearts of all.
 Then Pallas thus, Goddess cærulean-eyed.
 I will with all simplicity of truth
 Thy questions satisfy. Behold in me
 Mentès, the offspring of a Chief renown'd
 In war, Anchialus; and I rule, myself,
 An island race, the Taphians oar-expert.
 With ship and mariners I now arrive,
 Seeking a people of another tongue 230
 Athwart the gloomy flood, in quest of brass
 For which I barter steel, ploughing the waves
 To Temesa. My ship beneath the woods
 Of Neïus, at yonder field that skirts
 Your city, in the haven Rhethrus rides.
 We are hereditary guests; our Sires
 Were friends long since; as, when thou seest him next,
 The Hero old Laertes will avouch,
 Of whom, I learn, that he frequents no more
 The city now, but in sequester'd scenes 240
 Dwells sorrowful, and by an antient dame
 With food and drink supplied oft as he feels
 Refreshment needful to him, while he creeps
 Between the rows of his luxuriant vines.
 But I have come drawn hither by report,
 Which spake thy Sire arrived, though still it seems
 The adverse Gods his homeward course retard.
 For not yet breathless lies the noble Chief,
 But in some island of the boundless flood
 Resides a prisoner, by barbarous force 250
 Of some rude race detained reluctant there.
 And I will now foreshow thee what the Gods
 Teach me, and what, though neither augur skill'd
 Nor prophet, I yet trust shall come to pass.
 He shall not, henceforth, live an exile long
 From his own shores, no, not although in bands
 Of iron held, but will ere long contrive
 His own return; for in expedients, framed
 With wond'rous ingenuity, he abounds.
 But tell me true; art thou, in stature such, 260
 Son of himself Ulysses? for thy face
 And eyes bright-sparkling, strongly indicate
 Ulysses in thee. Frequent have we both
 Convers'd together thus, thy Sire and I,

Ere yet he went to Troy, the mark to which
So many Princes of Achaia steer'd.
Him since I saw not, nor Ulysses me.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Stranger! I tell thee true; my mother's voice
Affirms me his, but since no mortal knows 270
His derivation, I affirm it not.

Would I had been son of some happier Sire,
Ordain'd in calm possession of his own
To reach the verge of life. But now, report
Proclaims me his, whom I of all mankind
Unhappiest deem.—Thy question is resolved.

Then answer thus Pallas blue-eyed return'd.
From no ignoble race, in future days,
The Gods shall prove thee sprung, whom so endow'd
With ev'ry grace Penelope hath borne. 280

But tell me true. What festival is this?
This throng—whence are they? wherefore hast thou need
Of such a multitude? Behold I here
A banquet, or a nuptial? for these
Meet not by contribution³ to regale,
With such brutality and din they hold
Their riotous banquet! a wise man and good
Arriving, now, among them, at the sight
Of such enormities would much be wroth.

To whom replied Telemachus discrete. 290
Since, stranger! thou hast ask'd, learn also this.
While yet Ulysses, with his people dwelt,
His presence warranted the hope that here
Virtue should dwell and opulence; but heav'n
Hath cast for us, at length, a diff'rent lot,
And he is lost, as never man before.

For I should less lament even his death,
Had he among his friends at Ilium fall'n,
Or in the arms of his companions died,
Troy's siege accomplish'd. Then his tomb the Greeks 300

Of ev'ry tribe had built, and for his son,
He had immortal glory atchieved; but now,
By harpies torn inglorious, beyond reach
Of eye or ear he lies; and hath to me
Grief only, and unceasing sighs bequeath'd.
Nor mourn I for his sake alone; the Gods
Have plann'd for me still many a woe beside;
For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also, rulers here 310

In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd,
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them; they my patrimony waste
Meantime, and will not long spare even me.

To whom, with deep commiseration pang'd,
Pallas replied. Alas! great need hast thou
Of thy long absent father to avenge
These num'rous wrongs; for could he now appear 320

There, at yon portal, arm'd with helmet, shield,
And grasping his two spears, such as when first
I saw him drinking joyous at our board,
From Ilus son of Mermeris, who dwelt
In distant Ephyre, just then return'd,
(For thither also had Ulysses gone

In his swift bark, seeking some pois'nous drug
Wherewith to taint his brazen arrows keen,
Which drug through fear of the eternal Gods
Ilus refused him, and my father free 330

Gave to him, for he loved him past belief)
Could now, Ulysses, clad in arms as then,
Mix with these suitors, short his date of life
To each, and bitter should his nuptials prove.
But these events, whether he shall return
To take just vengeance under his own roof,
Or whether not, lie all in the Gods lap.
Meantime I counsel thee, thyself to think
By what means likeliest thou shalt expel
These from thy doors. Now mark me: close attend. 340

To-morrow, summoning the Grecian Chiefs
To council, speak to them, and call the Gods
To witness that solemnity. Bid go
The suitors hence, each to his own abode.

Thy mother—if her purpose be resolved
On marriage, let her to the house return
Of her own potent father, who, himself,
Shall furnish forth her matrimonial rites,
And ample dow'r, such as it well becomes
A darling daughter to receive, bestow. 350

But hear me now; thyself I thus advise.
The prime of all thy ships preparing, mann'd
With twenty rowers, voyage hence to seek
Intelligence of thy long-absent Sire.
Some mortal may inform thee, or a word,⁴
Perchance, by Jove directed (safest source

Of notice to mankind) may reach thine ear.
 First voyaging to Pylus, there enquire
 Of noble Nestor; thence to Sparta tend,
 To question Menelaus amber-hair'd, 360
 Latest arrived of all the host of Greece.
 There should'st thou learn that still thy father lives,
 And hope of his return, although
 Distress'd, thou wilt be patient yet a year.
 But should'st thou there hear tidings that he breathes
 No longer, to thy native isle return'd,
 First heap his tomb; then with such pomp perform
 His funeral rites as his great name demands,
 And make thy mother's spousals, next, thy care.
 These duties satisfied, delib'rate last 370
 Whether thou shalt these troublers of thy house
 By stratagem, or by assault, destroy.
 For thou art now no child, nor longer may'st
 Sport like one. Hast thou not the proud report
 Heard, how Orestes hath renown acquired
 With all mankind, his father's murderer
 Ægisthus slaying, the deceiver base
 Who slaughter'd Agamemnon? Oh my friend!
 (For with delight thy vig'rous growth I view,
 And just proportion) be thou also bold, 380
 And merit praise from ages yet to come.
 But I will to my vessel now repair,
 And to my mariners, whom, absent long,
 I may perchance have troubled. Weigh thou well
 My counsel; let not my advice be lost.
 To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
 Stranger! thy words bespeak thee much my friend,
 Who, as a father teaches his own son,
 Hast taught me, and I never will forget.
 But, though in haste thy voyage to pursue, 390
 Yet stay, that in the bath refreshing first
 Thy limbs now weary, thou may'st sprightlier seek
 Thy gallant bark, charged with some noble gift
 Of finish'd workmanship, which thou shalt keep
 As my memorial ever; such a boon
 As men confer on guests whom much they love.
 Then Pallas thus, Goddess cærulean-eyed.
 Retard me not, for go I must; the gift
 Which liberal thou desirest to bestow,
 Give me at my return, that I may bear 400
 The treasure home; and, in exchange, thyself
 Expect some gift equivalent from me.

She spake, and as with eagle-wings upborne,
 Vanish'd incontinent, but him inspired
 With daring fortitude, and on his heart
 Dearer remembrance of his Sire impress'd
 Than ever. Conscious of the wond'rous change,
 Amazed he stood, and, in his secret thought
 Revolving all, believed his guest a God.
 The youthful Hero to the suitors then 410
 Repair'd; they silent, listen'd to the song
 Of the illustrious Bard: he the return
 Deplorable of the Achaian host
 From Ilium by command of Pallas, sang.
 Penelope, Icarius' daughter, mark'd
 Meantime the song celestial, where she sat
 In the superior palace; down she came,
 By all the num'rous steps of her abode;
 Not sole, for two fair handmaids follow'd her.
 She then, divinest of her sex, arrived 420
 In presence of that lawless throng, beneath
 The portal of her stately mansion stood,
 Between her maidens, with her lucid veil
 Her lovely features mantling. There, profuse
 She wept, and thus the sacred bard bespake.

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

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 My mother! wherefore should it give thee pain
 If the delightful bard that theme pursue
 To which he feels his mind impell'd? the bard
 Blame not, but rather Jove, who, as he wills, 440
 Materials for poetic art supplies.
 No fault is his, if the disastrous fate
 He sing of the Achaians, for the song
 Wins ever from the hearers most applause
 That has been least in use. Of all who fought
 At Troy, Ulysses hath not lost, alone,
 His day of glad return; but many a Chief
 Hath perish'd also. Seek thou then again

Thy own apartment, spindle ply and loom,
And task thy maidens; management belongs 450
To men of joys convivial, and of men
Especially to me, chief ruler here.

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

All ye my mother's suitors, though addict
To contumacious wrangling fierce, suspend
Your clamour, for a course to me it seems
More decent far, when such a bard as this,
Godlike, for sweetness, sings, to hear his song.
To-morrow meet we in full council all,
That I may plainly warn you to depart
From this our mansion. Seek ye where ye may 470
Your feasts; consume your own; alternate feed
Each at the other's cost; but if it seem
Wisest in your account and best, to eat
Voracious thus the patrimonial goods
Of one man, rend'ring no account of all,⁵
Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry
Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope
That Jove, for retribution of the wrong,
Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there
To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.⁵ 480

He ended, and each gnaw'd his lip, aghast
At his undaunted hardness of speech.

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

Then prudent thus Telemachus replied. 490
Although my speech Antinoös may, perchance,
Provoke thee, know that I am not averse
From kingly cares, if Jove appoint me such.
Seems it to thee a burthen to be fear'd

By men above all others? trust me, no,
There is no ill in royalty; the man
So station'd, waits not long ere he obtain
Riches and honour. But I grant that Kings
Of the Achaians may no few be found
In sea-girt Ithaca both young and old, 500
Of whom since great Ulysses is no more,
Reign whoso may; but King, myself, I am
In my own house, and over all my own
Domestics, by Ulysses gained for me.

To whom Eurymachus replied, the son
Of Polybus. What Grecian Chief shall reign
In sea-girt Ithaca, must be referr'd
To the Gods' will, Telemachus! meantime
Thou hast unquestionable right to keep
Thy own, and to command in thy own house. 510
May never that man on her shores arrive,
While an inhabitant shall yet be left
In Ithaca, who shall by violence wrest
Thine from thee. But permit me, noble Sir!
To ask thee of thy guest. Whence came the man?
What country claims him? Where are to be found
His kindred and his patrimonial fields?
Brings he glad tidings of thy Sire's approach
Homeward? or came he to receive a debt
Due to himself? How swift he disappear'd! 520
Nor opportunity to know him gave
To those who wish'd it; for his face and air
Him speak not of Plebeian birth obscure.

Whom answered thus Telemachus discrete.
Eurymachus! my father comes no more.
I can no longer now tidings believe,
If such arrive; nor he'd I more the song
Of sooth-sayers whom my mother may consult.
But this my guest hath known in other days
My father, and he came from Taphos, son 530
Of brave Anchialus, Mentès by name,
And Chief of the sea-practis'd Taphian race.

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart
Knew well his guest a Goddess from the skies.
Then they to dance and heart-enlivening song
Turn'd joyous, waiting the approach of eve,
And dusky evening found them joyous still.
Then each, to his own house retiring, sought
Needful repose. Meantime Telemachus
To his own lofty chamber, built in view 540

Of the wide hall, retired; but with a heart
 In various musings occupied intense.
 Sage Euryclea, bearing in each hand
 A torch, preceded him; her sire was Ops,
 Pisenor's son, and, in her early prime,
 At his own cost Laertes made her his,
 Paying with twenty beeves her purchase-price,
 Nor in less honour than his spotless wife
 He held her ever, but his consort's wrath
 Fearing, at no time call'd her to his bed. 550
 She bore the torches, and with truer heart
 Loved him than any of the female train,
 For she had nurs'd him in his infant years.
 He open'd his broad chamber-valves, and sat
 On his couch-side: then putting off his vest
 Of softest texture, placed it in the hands
 Of the attendant dame discrete, who first
 Folding it with exactest care, beside
 His bed suspended it, and, going forth,
 Drew by its silver ring the portal close, 560
 And fasten'd it with bolt and brace secure.
 There lay Telemachus, on finest wool
 Reposed, contemplating all night his course
 Prescribed by Pallas to the Pylian shore.

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- ¹ We are told that Homer was under obligations to Mentès, who had frequently given him a passage in his ship to different countries which he wished to see, for which reason he has here immortalised him.
- ² Milton uses the word—Sewers and seneschals.
- ³ ἑρᾶνος, a convivial meeting, at which every man paid his proportion, at least contributed something; but it seems to have been a meeting at which strict sobriety was observed, else Pallas would not have inferred from the noise and riot of this, that it was not such a one.
- ⁴ Ὅσσα—a word spoken, with respect to the speaker, casually; but with reference to the inquirer supposed to be sent for his information by the especial appointment and providential favour of the Gods.
- ⁵ There is in the Original an evident stress laid on the word Νήπιοι, which is used in both places. It was a sort of Lex Talionis which Telemachus hoped might be put in force against them; and that Jove would demand no satisfaction for the lives of those who made him none for the waste of his property.
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BOOK II

ARGUMENT

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

Aurora, rosy daughter of the dawn,
Now ting'd the East, when habited again,
Uprose Ulysses' offspring from his bed.
Athwart his back his faulchion keen he flung,
His sandals bound to his unsullied feet,
And, godlike, issued from his chamber-door.
At once the clear-voic'd heralds he enjoin'd
To call the Greeks to council; they aloud
Gave forth the summons, and the throng began.
When all were gather'd, and the assembly full, 10
Himself, his hand arm'd with a brazen spear,
Went also; nor alone he went; his hounds
Fleet-footed follow'd him, a faithful pair.
O'er all his form Minerva largely shed
Majestic grace divine, and, as he went,
The whole admiring concourse gaz'd on him,
The seniors gave him place, and down he sat
On his paternal Throne. Then grave arose
The Hero, old Ægyptius; bow'd with age
Was he, and by experience deep-inform'd. 20
His son had with Ulysses, godlike Chief,
On board his fleet to steed-fam'd Ilium gone,
The warrior Antiphus, whom in his cave
The savage Cyclops slew, and on his flesh
At ev'ning made obscene his last regale.
Three sons he had beside, a suitor one,
Eurynomus; the other two, employ
Found constant managing their Sire's concerns.
Yet he forgat not, father as he was
Of these, his absent eldest, whom he mourn'd 30
Ceaseless, and thus his speech, weeping, began.
Hear me, ye men of Ithaca, my friends!

Nor council here nor session hath been held
 Since great Ulysses left his native shore.
 Who now convenes us? what especial need
 Hath urged him, whether of our youth he be,
 Or of our senators by age matured?
 Have tidings reach'd him of our host's return,
 Which here he would divulge? or brings he aught
 Of public import on a diff'rent theme? 40
 I deem him, whosoe'er he be, a man
 Worthy to prosper, and may Jove vouchsafe
 The full performance of his chief desire!
 He ended, and Telemachus rejoiced
 In that good omen. Ardent to begin,
 He sat not long, but, moving to the midst,
 Received the sceptre from Pisenor's hand,
 His prudent herald, and addressing, next,
 The hoary Chief Ægyptius, thus began.
 Not far remote, as thou shalt soon thyself 50
 Perceive, oh venerable Chief! he stands,
 Who hath convened this council. I, am He.
 I am in chief the suff'rer. Tidings none
 Of the returning host I have received,
 Which here I would divulge, nor bring I aught
 Of public import on a different theme,
 But my own trouble, on my own house fall'n,
 And two-fold fall'n. One is, that I have lost
 A noble father, who, as fathers rule
 Benign their children, govern'd once yourselves; 60
 The other, and the more alarming ill,
 With ruin threatens my whole house, and all
 My patrimony with immediate waste.
 Suitors, (their children who in this our isle
 Hold highest rank) importunate besiege
 My mother, though desirous not to wed,
 And rather than resort to her own Sire
 Icarius, who might give his daughter dow'r,
 And portion her to whom he most approves,
 (A course which, only named, moves their disgust) 70
 They chuse, assembling all within my gates
 Daily to make my beeves, my sheep, my goats
 Their banquet, and to drink without restraint
 My wine; whence ruin threatens us and ours;
 For I have no Ulysses to relieve
 Me and my family from this abuse.
 Ourselves are not sufficient; we, alas!
 Too feeble should be found, and yet to learn

How best to use the little force we own;
 Else, had I pow'r, I would, myself, redress 80
 The evil; for it now surpasses far
 All suff'rance, now they ravage uncontroul'd,
 Nor show of decency vouchsafe me more.
 Oh be ashamed⁶ yourselves; blush at the thought
 Of such reproach as ye shall sure incur
 From all our neighbour states, and fear beside
 The wrath of the Immortals, lest they call
 Yourselves one day to a severe account.
 I pray you by Olympian Jove, by her
 Whose voice convenes all councils, and again 90
 Dissolves them, Themis, that henceforth ye cease,
 That ye permit me, oh my friends! to wear
 My days in solitary grief away,
 Unless Ulysses, my illustrious Sire,
 Hath in his anger any Grecian wrong'd,
 Whose wrongs ye purpose to avenge on me,
 Inciting these to plague me. Better far
 Were my condition, if yourselves consumed
 My substance and my revenue; from you
 I might obtain, perchance, righteous amends 100
 Hereafter; you I might with vehement suit
 O'ercome, from house to house pleading aloud
 For recompense, till I at last prevail'd.
 But now, with darts of anguish ye transfix
 My inmost soul, and I have no redress.
 He spake impassion'd, and to earth cast down
 His sceptre, weeping. Pity at that sight
 Seiz'd all the people; mute the assembly sat
 Long time, none dared to greet Telemachus
 With answer rough, till of them all, at last, 110
 Antinoüs, sole arising, thus replied.
 Telemachus, intemp'rate in harangue,
 High-sounding orator! it is thy drift
 To make us all odious; but the offence
 Lies not with us the suitors; she alone
 Thy mother, who in subtlety excels,
 And deep-wrought subterfuge, deserves the blame.
 It is already the third year, and soon
 Shall be the fourth, since with delusive art
 Practising on their minds, she hath deceived 120
 The Grecians; message after message sent
 Brings hope to each, by turns, and promise fair,
 But she, meantime, far otherwise intends.
 Her other arts exhausted all, she framed

This stratagem; a web of amplest size
 And subtlest woof beginning, thus she spake.
 Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
 Ulysses is no more, press not as yet
 My nuptials, wait till I shall finish, first,
 A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads decay) 130
 Which for the antient Hero I prepare,
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
 Else I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
 So spake the Queen, and unsuspecting, we
 With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 She wove the ample web, and by the aid
 Of torches ravell'd it again at night.
 Three years by such contrivance she deceived 140
 The Grecians; but when (three whole years elaps'd)
 The fourth arriv'd, then, conscious of the fraud,
 A damsel of her train told all the truth,
 And her we found rav'ling the beauteous work.
 Thus, through necessity she hath, at length,
 Perform'd the task, and in her own despatch.
 Now therefore, for the information clear
 Of thee thyself, and of the other Greeks,
 We answer. Send thy mother hence, with charge
 That him she wed on whom her father's choice 150
 Shall fall, and whom she shall, herself, approve.
 But if by long procrastination still
 She persevere wearing our patience out,
 Attentive only to display the gifts
 By Pallas so profusely dealt to her,
 Works of surpassing skill, ingenious thought,
 And subtle shifts, such as no beauteous Greek
 (For aught that we have heard) in antient times
 E'er practised, Tyro, or Alcmena fair,
 Or fair Mycene, of whom none in art 160
 E'er match'd Penelope, although we yield
 To this her last invention little praise,
 Then know, that these her suitors will consume
 So long thy patrimony and thy goods,
 As she her present purpose shall indulge,
 With which the Gods inspire her. Great renown
 She to herself insures, but equal woe
 And devastation of thy wealth to thee;
 For neither to our proper works at home
 Go we, of that be sure, nor yet elsewhere, 170

Till him she wed, to whom she most inclines.

Him prudent, then, answer'd Telemachus.

Antinoüs! it is not possible

That I should thrust her forth against her will,

Who both produced and reared me. Be he dead,

Or still alive, my Sire is far remote,

And should I, voluntary, hence dismiss

My mother to Icarius, I must much

Refund, which hardship were and loss to me.

So doing, I should also wrath incur

180

From my offended Sire, and from the Gods

Still more; for she, departing, would invoke

Erynnis to avenge her, and reproach

Beside would follow me from all mankind.

That word I, therefore, never will pronounce.

No, if ye judge your treatment at her hands

Injurious to you, go ye forth yourselves,

Forsake my mansion; seek where else ye may

Your feasts; consume your own; alternate feed

Each at the other's cost. But if it seem

190

Wisest in your account and best to eat

Voracious thus the patrimonial goods

Of one man, rend'ring no account of all,

Bite to the roots; but know that I will cry

Ceaseless to the eternal Gods, in hope

That Jove, in retribution of the wrong,

Shall doom you, where ye have intruded, there

To bleed, and of your blood ask no account.

So spake Telemachus, and while he spake,

The Thund'rer from a lofty mountain-top

200

Turn'd off two eagles; on the winds, awhile,

With outspread pinions ample side by side

They floated; but, ere long, hov'ring aloft,

Right o'er the midst of the assembled Chiefs

They wheel'd around, clang'd all their num'rous plumes,

And with a downward look eyeing the throng,

Death boded, ominous; then rending each

The other's face and neck, they sprang at once

Toward the right, and darted through the town.

Amazement universal, at that sight,

210

Seized the assembly, and with anxious thought

Each scann'd the future; amidst whom arose

The Hero Halitherses, antient Seer,

Offspring of Mastor; for in judgment he

Of portents augural, and in forecast

Unerring, his coevals all excell'd,

And prudent thus the multitude bespake.

Ye men of Ithaca, give ear! hear all!

Though chief my speech shall to the suitors look,
For, on their heads devolved, comes down the woe. 220

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

Him, then, Eurymachus thus answer'd rough
The son of Polybus. Hence to thy house,
Thou hoary dotard! there, prophetic, teach 240
Thy children to escape woes else to come.
Birds num'rous flutter in the beams of day,
Not all predictive. Death, far hence remote
Hath found Ulysses, and I would to heav'n
That, where he died, thyself had perish'd too.
Thou hadst not then run o'er with prophecy
As now, nor provocation to the wrath
Giv'n of Telemachus, in hope to win,
Perchance, for thine some favour at his hands.

But I to *thee* foretell, skilled as thou art 250
In legends old, (nor shall my threat be vain)
That if by artifice thou move to wrath
A younger than thyself, no matter whom,
Woe first the heavier on himself shall fall,
Nor shalt thou profit him by thy attempt,
And we will charge thee also with a mulct,
Which thou shalt pay with difficulty, and bear
The burthen of it with an aching heart.

As for Telemachus, I him advise,
Myself, and press the measure on his choice 260
Earnestly, that he send his mother hence
To her own father's house, who shall, himself,

Set forth her nuptial rites, and shall endow
 His daughter sumptuously, and as he ought.
 For this expensive wooing, as I judge,
 Till then shall never cease; since we regard
 No man—no—not Telemachus, although
 In words exub'rant; neither fear we aught
 Thy vain prognostics, venerable sir!
 But only hate thee for their sake the more. 270
 Waste will continue and disorder foul
 Unremedied, so long as she shall hold
 The suitors in suspense, for, day by day,
 Our emulation goads us to the strife,
 Nor shall we, going hence, seek to espouse
 Each his own comfort suitable elsewhere.
 To whom, discrete, Telemachus replied.
 Eurymachus, and ye the suitor train
 Illustrious, I have spoken: ye shall hear
 No more this supplication urged by me. 280
 The Gods, and all the Greeks, now know the truth.
 But give me instantly a gallant bark
 With twenty rowers, skill'd their course to win
 To whatsoever haven; for I go
 To sandy Pylus, and shall hasten thence
 To Lacedemon, tidings to obtain
 Of my long-absent Sire, or from the lips
 Of man, or by a word from Jove vouchsafed
 Himself, best source of notice to mankind.
 If, there inform'd that still my father lives, 290
 I hope conceive of his return, although
 Distress'd, I shall be patient yet a year.
 But should I learn, haply, that he survives
 No longer, then, returning, I will raise
 At home his tomb, will with such pomp perform
 His fun'ral rites, as his great name demands,
 And give my mother's hand to whom I may.
 This said, he sat, and after him arose
 Mentor, illustrious Ulysses' friend,
 To whom, embarking thence, he had consign'd 300
 All his concerns, that the old Chief might rule
 His family, and keep the whole secure.
 Arising, thus the senior, sage, began.
 Hear me, ye Ithacans! be never King
 Henceforth, benevolent, gracious, humane
 Or righteous, but let every sceptred hand
 Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
 Since none of all his people, whom he sway'd

With such paternal gentleness and love,
 Remembers the divine Ulysses more! 310
 That the imperious suitors thus should weave
 The web of mischief and atrocious wrong,
 I grudge not; since at hazard of their heads
 They make Ulysses' property a prey,
 Persuaded that the Hero comes no more.
 But much the people move me; how ye sit
 All mute, and though a multitude, yourselves,
 Opposed to few, risque not a single word
 To check the license of these bold intruders!

Then thus Liocritus, Evenor's son. 320
 Injurious Mentor! headlong orator!
 How dar'st thou move the populace against
 The suitors? Trust me they should find it hard,
 Numerous as they are, to cope with us,
 A feast the prize. Or should the King himself
 Of Ithaca, returning, undertake
 T' expell the jovial suitors from his house,
 Much as Penelope his absence mourns,
 His presence should afford her little joy;
 For fighting sole with many, he should meet 330
 A dreadful death. Thou, therefore, speak'st amiss.
 As for Telemachus, let Mentor him
 And Halytherses furnish forth, the friends
 Long valued of his Sire, with all dispatch;
 Though him I judge far likelier to remain
 Long-time contented an enquirer here,
 Than to perform the voyage now proposed.

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

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

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

Telemachus! thou shalt hereafter prove
 Nor base, nor poor in talents. If, in truth,
 Thou have received from heav'n thy father's force
 Instill'd into thee, and resemblest him
 In promptness both of action and of speech,
 Thy voyage shall not useless be, or vain. 360
 But if Penelope produced thee not
 His son, I, then, hope not for good effect
 Of this design which, ardent, thou pursuest.
 Few sons their fathers equal; most appear
 Degenerate; but we find, though rare, sometimes
 A son superior even to his Sire.
 And since thyself shalt neither base be found
 Nor spiritless, nor altogether void
 Of talents, such as grace thy royal Sire,
 I therefore hope success of thy attempt. 370
 Heed not the suitors' projects; neither wise
 Are they, nor just, nor aught suspect the doom
 Which now approaches them, and in one day
 Shall overwhelm them all. No long suspense
 Shall hold thy purposed enterprise in doubt,
 Such help from me, of old thy father's friend,
 Thou shalt receive, who with a bark well-oar'd
 Will serve thee, and myself attend thee forth.
 But haste, join thou the suitors, and provide,
 In sep'rate vessels stow'd, all needful stores, 380
 Wine in thy jars, and flour, the strength of man,
 In skins close-seam'd. I will, meantime, select
 Such as shall voluntary share thy toils.
 In sea-girt Ithaca new ships and old
 Abound, and I will chuse, myself, for thee
 The prime of all, which without more delay
 We will launch out into the spacious Deep.
 Thus Pallas spake, daughter of Jove; nor long,
 So greeted by the voice divine, remain'd
 Telemachus, but to his palace went 390
 Distress'd in heart. He found the suitors there
 Goats slaying in the hall, and fatted swine
 Roasting; when with a laugh Antinoüs flew
 To meet him, fasten'd on his hand, and said,
 Telemachus, in eloquence sublime,
 And of a spirit not to be controul'd!
 Give harbour in thy breast on no account
 To after-grudge or enmity, but eat,
 Far rather, cheerfully as heretofore,
 And freely drink, committing all thy cares 400

To the Achaeans, who shall furnish forth
A gallant ship and chosen crew for thee,
That thou may'st hence to Pylus with all speed,
Tidings to learn of thy illustrious Sire.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Antinoüs! I have no heart to feast
With guests so insolent, nor can indulge
The pleasures of a mind at ease, with you.
Is't not enough, suitors, that ye have used
My noble patrimony as your own 410
While I was yet a child? now, grown mature,
And competent to understand the speech
Of my instructors, feeling, too, a mind
Within me conscious of augmented pow'rs,
I will attempt your ruin, be assured,
Whether at Pylus, or continuing here.
I go, indeed, (nor shall my voyage prove
Of which I speak, bootless or vain) I go
An humble passenger, who neither bark
Nor rowers have to boast my own, denied 420
That honour (so ye judg'd it best) by you.

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

I see it plain, Telemachus intends
Our slaughter; either he will aids procure
From sandy Pylus, or will bring them arm'd 430
From Sparta; such is his tremendous drift.
Even to fruitful Ephyre, perchance,
He will proceed, seeking some baneful herb
Which cast into our cup, shall drug us all.

To whom some haughty suitor thus replied.
Who knows but that himself, wand'ring the sea
From all his friends and kindred far remote,
May perish like Ulysses? Whence to us
Should double toil ensue, on whom the charge
To parcel out his wealth would then devolve, 440
And to endow his mother with the house
For his abode whom she should chance to wed.

So sported they; but he, ascending sought
His father's lofty chamber, where his heaps
He kept of brass and gold, garments in chests,
And oils of fragrant scent, a copious store.

There many a cask with season'd nectar fill'd
The grape's pure juice divine, beside the wall
Stood orderly arranged, waiting the hour
(Should e'er such hour arrive) when, after woes 450
Num'rous, Ulysses should regain his home.
Secure that chamber was with folding doors
Of massy planks compact, and night and day,
Within it antient Euryclea dwelt,
Guardian discrete of all the treasures there,
Whom, thither call'd, Telemachus address'd.

Nurse! draw me forth sweet wine into my jars,
Delicious next to that which thou reserv'st
For our poor wand'rer; if escaping death
At last, divine Ulysses e'er return. 460
Fill twelve, and stop them close; pour also meal
Well mill'd (full twenty measures) into skins
Close-seam'd, and mention what thou dost to none.
Place them together; for at even-tide
I will convey them hence, soon as the Queen,
Retiring to her couch, shall seek repose.
For hence to Sparta will I take my course,
And sandy Pylus, tidings there to hear
(If hear I may) of my lov'd Sire's return.
He ceas'd, then wept his gentle nurse that sound 470
Hearing, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

My child! ah, wherefore hath a thought so rash
Possess'd thee? whither, only and belov'd,
Seek'st thou to ramble, travelling, alas!
To distant climes? Ulysses is no more;
Dead lies the Hero in some land unknown,
And thou no sooner shalt depart, than these
Will plot to slay thee, and divide thy wealth.
No, stay with us who love thee. Need is none
That thou should'st on the barren Deep distress 480
Encounter, roaming without hope or end.

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

He ended, and the antient matron swore 490
Solemnly by the Gods; which done, she fill'd
With wine the vessels and the skins with meal,

And he, returning, join'd the throng below.

Then Pallas, Goddess azure-eyed, her thoughts
Elsewhere directing, all the city ranged
In semblance of Telemachus, each man
Exhorting, at the dusk of eve, to seek
The gallant ship, and from Noëmon, son
Renown'd of Phronius, ask'd, herself, a bark,
Which soon as ask'd, he promis'd to supply.

500

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

510

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

520

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

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

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

530

Then, led by Pallas, went the prince on board,
Where down they sat, the Goddess in the stern,
And at her side Telemachus. The crew
Cast loose the hawsers, and embarking, fill'd
The benches. Blue-eyed Pallas from the West
Call'd forth propitious breezes; fresh they curled

The sable Deep, and, sounding, swept the waves.
He loud-exhorting them, his people bade 540
Hand, brisk, the tackle; they, obedient, reared
The pine-tree mast, which in its socket deep
They lodg'd, then strain'd the cordage, and with thongs
Well-twisted, drew the shining sail aloft.
A land-breeze fill'd the canvas, and the flood
Roar'd as she went against the steady bark
That ran with even course her liquid way.
The rigging, thus, of all the galley set,
Their beakers crowning high with wine, they hail'd
The ever-living Gods, but above all 550
Minerva, daughter azure-eyed of Jove.
Thus, all night long the galley, and till dawn
Had brighten'd into day, cleaved swift the flood.

⁶ The reader is to be reminded that this is not an assembly of the suitors only, but a general one, which affords Telemachus an opportunity to apply himself to the feelings of the Ithacans at large.

BOOK III

ARGUMENT

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

The sun, emerging from the lucid waves,
Ascended now the brazen vault with light
For the inhabitants of earth and heav'n,
When in their bark at Pylus they arrived,
City of Neleus. On the shore they found
The people sacrificing; bulls they slew
Black without spot, to Neptune azure-hair'd.
On ranges nine of seats they sat; each range
Received five hundred, and to each they made
Allotment equal of nine sable bulls. 10

The feast was now begun; these eating sat
The entrails, those stood off'ring to the God
The thighs, his portion, when the Ithacans
Push'd right ashore, and, furling close the sails,
And making fast their moorings, disembark'd.
Forth came Telemachus, by Pallas led,
Whom thus the Goddess azure-eyed address'd.
Telemachus! there is no longer room
For bashful fear, since thou hast cross'd the flood
With purpose to enquire what land conceals 20
Thy father, and what fate hath follow'd him.
Advance at once to the equestrian Chief
Nestor, within whose bosom lies, perhaps,
Advice well worthy of thy search; entreat
Himself, that he will tell thee only truth,
Who will not lye, for he is passing wise.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
Ah Mentor! how can I advance, how greet
A Chief like him, unpractis'd as I am
In manag'd phrase? Shame bids the youth beware 30
How he accosts the man of many years.

But him the Goddess answer'd azure-eyed,
Telemachus! Thou wilt, in part, thyself

Fit speech devise, and heav'n will give the rest;
For thou wast neither born, nor hast been train'd
To manhood, under unpropitious Pow'rs.

So saying, Minerva led him thence, whom he
With nimble steps attending, soon arrived
Among the multitude. There Nestor sat,
And Nestor's sons, while, busily the feast 40
Tending, his num'rous followers roasted, some,
The viands, some, transfix'd them with the spits.
They seeing guests arrived, together all
Advanced, and, grasping courteously their hands,
Invited them to sit; but first, the son
Of Nestor, young Pisistratus, approach'd,
Who, fast'ning on the hands of both, beside
The banquet placed them, where the beach was spread
With fleeces, and where Thrasymedes sat
His brother, and the hoary Chief his Sire. 50

To each a portion of the inner parts
He gave, then fill'd a golden cup with wine,
Which, tasted first, he to the daughter bore
Of Jove the Thund'rer, and her thus bespake.
Oh guest! the King of Ocean now adore!
For ye have chanced on Neptune's festival;
And, when thou hast, thyself, libation made
Duly, and pray'r, deliver to thy friend
The gen'rous juice, that he may also make
Libation; for he, doubtless, seeks, in prayer 60
The Immortals, of whose favour all have need.
But, since he younger is, and with myself
Coeval, first I give the cup to thee.

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

Hear, earth-encircler Neptune! O vouchsafe
To us thy suppliants the desired effect 70
Of this our voyage; glory, first, bestow
On Nestor and his offspring both, then grant
To all the Pylians such a gracious boon
As shall requite their noble off'ring well.
Grant also to Telemachus and me
To voyage hence, possess'd of what we sought
When hither in our sable bark we came.

So Pallas pray'd, and her own pray'r herself
Accomplish'd. To Telemachus she gave

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

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

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

Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece!
Thou askest whence we are. I tell thee whence. 100
From Ithaca, by the umbrageous woods
Of Neritus o'erhung, by private need,
Not public, urged, we come. My errand is
To seek intelligence of the renown'd
Ulysses; of my noble father, prais'd
For dauntless courage, whom report proclaims
Conqueror, with thine aid, of sacred Troy.

We have already learn'd where other Chiefs
Who fought at Ilium, died; but Jove conceals
Even the death of my illustrious Sire 110
In dull obscurity; for none hath heard
Or confident can answer, where he dy'd;
Whether he on the continent hath fall'n
By hostile hands, or by the waves o'erwhelm'd
Of Amphitrite, welters in the Deep.

For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
That thou would'st tell me his disast'rous end,
If either thou beheld'st that dread event
Thyself, or from some wanderer of the Greeks
Hast heard it: for my father at his birth 120
Was, sure, predestin'd to no common woes.
Neither through pity, or o'erstrain'd respect
Flatter me, but explicit all relate
Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
E'er gratified thee by performance just

Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
So num'rous slain in fight, oh, recollect
Now his fidelity, and tell me true.

Then Nestor thus Gerenian Hero old.

Young friend! since thou remind'st me, speaking thus, 130

Of all the woes which indefatigable

We sons of the Achaians there sustain'd,

Both those which wand'ring on the Deep we bore

Wherever by Achilles led in quest

Of booty, and the many woes beside

Which under royal Priam's spacious walls

We suffer'd, know, that there our bravest fell.

There warlike Ajax lies, there Peleus' son;

There, too, Patroclus, like the Gods themselves

In council, and my son beloved there, 140

Brave, virtuous, swift of foot, and bold in fight,

Antilochus. Nor are these sorrows all;

What tongue of mortal man could all relate?

Should'st thou, abiding here, five years employ

Or six, enquiring of the woes endured

By the Achaians, ere thou should'st have learn'd

The whole, thou would'st depart, tir'd of the tale.

For we, nine years, stratagems of all kinds

Devised against them, and Saturnian Jove

Scarce crown'd the difficult attempt at last. 150

There, no competitor in wiles well-plann'd

Ulysses found, so far were all surpass'd

In shrewd invention by thy noble Sire,

If thou indeed art his, as sure thou art,

Whose sight breeds wonder in me, and thy speech

His speech resembles more than might be deem'd

Within the scope of years so green as thine.

There, never in opinion, or in voice

Illustrious Ulysses and myself

Divided were, but, one in heart, contrived 160

As best we might, the benefit of all.

But after Priam's lofty city sack'd,

And the departure of the Greeks on board

Their barks, and when the Gods had scatter'd them,

Then Jove imagin'd for the Argive host

A sorrowful return; for neither just

Were all, nor prudent, therefore many found

A fate disast'rous through the vengeful ire

Of Jove-born Pallas, who between the sons

Of Atreus sharp contention interposed. 170

They both, irregularly, and against

Just order, summoning by night the Greeks
 To council, of whom many came with wine
 Oppress'd, promulgated the cause for which
 They had convened the people. Then it was
 That Menelaus bade the general host
 Their thoughts bend homeward o'er the sacred Deep,
 Which Agamemnon in no sort approved.
 His counsel was to slay them yet at Troy,
 That so he might assuage the dreadful wrath 180
 Of Pallas, first, by sacrifice and pray'r.
 Vain hope! he little thought how ill should speed
 That fond attempt, for, once provok'd, the Gods
 Are not with ease conciliated again.
 Thus stood the brothers, altercation hot
 Maintaining, till at length, uprose the Greeks
 With deaf'ning clamours, and with diff'ring minds.
 We slept the night, but teeming with disgust
 Mutual, for Jove great woe prepar'd for all.
 At dawn of day we drew our gallies down 190
 Into the sea, and, hasty, put on board
 The spoils and female captives. Half the host,
 With Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stay'd
 Supreme commander, and, embarking, half
 Push'd forth. Swift course we made, for Neptune smooth'd
 The waves before us of the monstrous Deep.
 At Tenedos arriv'd, we there perform'd
 Sacrifice to the Gods, ardent to reach
 Our native land, but unpropitious Jove,
 Not yet designing our arrival there, 200
 Involved us in dissension fierce again.
 For all the crews, followers of the King,
 Thy noble Sire, to gratify our Chief,
 The son of Atreus, chose a diff'rent course,
 And steer'd their oary barks again to Troy.
 But I, assured that evil from the Gods
 Impended, gath'ring all my gallant fleet,
 Fled thence in haste, and warlike Diomed
 Exhorting his attendants, also fled.
 At length, the Hero Menelaus join'd 210
 Our fleets at Lesbos; there he found us held
 In deep deliberation on the length
 Of way before us, whether we should steer
 Above the craggy Chios to the isle
 Psyria, that island holding on our left,
 Or under Chios by the wind-swept heights
 Of Mimas. Then we ask'd from Jove a sign,

And by a sign vouchsafed he bade us cut
 The wide sea to Eubœa sheer athwart,
 So soonest to escape the threat'ned harm. 220
 Shrill sang the rising gale, and with swift prow
 Cleaving the fishy flood, we reach'd by night
 Geræstus, where arrived, we burn'd the thighs
 Of num'rous bulls to Neptune, who had safe
 Conducted us through all our perilous course.
 The fleet of Diomede in safety moor'd
 On the fourth day at Argos, but myself
 Held on my course to Pylus, nor the wind
 One moment thwarted us, or died away,
 When Jove had once commanded it to blow. 230
 Thus, uninform'd, I have arrived, my son!
 Nor of the Grecians, who are saved have heard,
 Or who have perish'd; but what news soe'er
 I have obtain'd, since my return, with truth
 I will relate, nor aught conceal from thee.
 The spear-famed Myrmidons, as rumour speaks,
 By Neoptolemus, illustrious son
 Of brave Achilles led, have safe arrived;
 Safe, Philoctetes, also son renown'd
 Of Pæas; and Idomeneus at Crete 240
 Hath landed all his followers who survive
 The bloody war, the waves have swallow'd none.
 Ye have yourselves doubtless, although remote,
 Of Agamemnon heard, how he return'd,
 And how Ægisthus cruelly contrived
 For him a bloody welcome, but himself
 Hath with his own life paid the murth'rous deed.
 Good is it, therefore, if a son survive
 The slain, since Agamemnon's son hath well
 Avenged his father's death, slaying, himself, 250
 Ægisthus, foul assassin of his Sire.
 Young friend! (for pleas'd thy vig'rous youth I view,
 And just proportion) be thou also bold,
 That thine like his may be a deathless name.
 Then, prudent, him answer'd Telemachus.
 Oh Nestor, Neleus' son, glory of Greece!
 And righteous was that vengeance; *his* renown
 Achaia's sons shall far and wide diffuse,
 To future times transmitting it in song.
 Ah! would that such ability the Gods 260
 Would grant to me, that I, as well, the deeds
 Might punish of our suitors, whose excess
 Enormous, and whose bitter taunts I feel

Continual, object of their subtle hate.
But not for me such happiness the Gods
Have twined into my thread; no, not for me
Or for my father. Patience is our part.

To whom Gerenian Nestor thus replied.
Young friend! (since thou remind'st me of that theme)
Fame here reports that num'rous suitors haunt 270
Thy palace for thy mother's sake, and there
Much evil perpetrate in thy despight.
But say, endur'st thou willing their controul
Imperious, or because the people, sway'd
By some response oracular, incline
Against thee? But who knows? the time may come
When to his home restored, either alone,
Or aided by the force of all the Greeks,
Ulysses may avenge the wrong; at least, 280
Should Pallas azure-eyed thee love, as erst
At Troy, the scene of our unnumber'd woes,
She lov'd Ulysses (for I have not known
The Gods assisting so apparently
A mortal man, as him Minerva there)
Should Pallas view thee also with like love
And kind solicitude, some few of those
Should dream, perchance, of wedlock never more.

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
That word's accomplishment I cannot hope;
It promises too much; the thought alone 290
O'erwhelms me; an event so fortunate
Would, unexpected on my part, arrive,
Although the Gods themselves should purpose it.

But Pallas him answer'd cærulean-eyed.
Telemachus! what word was that which leap'd
The iv'ry guard⁷ that should have fenced it in?
A God, so willing, could with utmost ease
Save any man, howe'er remote. Myself,
I had much rather, many woes endured,
Revisit home, at last, happy and safe, 300
Than, sooner coming, die in my own house,
As Agamemnon perish'd by the arts
Of base Ægisthus and the subtle Queen.
Yet not the Gods themselves can save from death
All-levelling, the man whom most they love,
When Fate ordains him once to his last sleep.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Howe'er it interest us, let us leave
This question, Mentor! He, I am assured,

Returns no more, but hath already found 310
 A sad, sad fate by the decree of heav'n.
 But I would now interrogate again
 Nestor, and on a different theme, for him
 In human rights I judge, and laws expert,
 And in all knowledge beyond other men;
 For he hath govern'd, as report proclaims,
 Three generations; therefore in my eyes
 He wears the awful impress of a God.
 Oh Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me true;
 What was the manner of Atrides' death, 320
 Wide-ruling Agamemnon? Tell me where
 Was Menelaus? By what means contrived
 Ægisthus to inflict the fatal blow,
 Slaying so much a nobler than himself?
 Had not the brother of the Monarch reach'd
 Achaian Argos yet, but, wand'ring still
 In other climes, his long absence gave
 Ægisthus courage for that bloody deed?
 Whom answer'd the Gerenian Chief renown'd.
 My son! I will inform thee true; meantime 330
 Thy own suspicions border on the fact.
 Had Menelaus, Hero, amber hair'd,
 Ægisthus found living at his return
 From Ilium, never on *his* bones the Greeks
 Had heap'd a tomb, but dogs and rav'ning fowls
 Had torn him lying in the open field
 Far from the town, nor him had woman wept
 Of all in Greece, for he had foul transgress'd.
 But we, in many an arduous task engaged,
 Lay before Ilium; he, the while, secure 340
 Within the green retreats of Argos, found
 Occasion apt by flatt'ry to delude
 The spouse of Agamemnon; she, at first,
 (The royal Clytemnestra) firm refused
 The deed dishonourable (for she bore
 A virtuous mind, and at her side a bard
 Attended ever, whom the King, to Troy
 Departing, had appointed to the charge.)
 But when the Gods had purposed to ensnare
 Ægisthus, then dismissing far remote 350
 The bard into a desert isle, he there
 Abandon'd him to rav'ning fowls a prey,
 And to his own home, willing as himself,
 Led Clytemnestra. Num'rous thighs he burn'd
 On all their hallow'd altars to the Gods,

And hung with tap'stry, images, and gold
 Their shrines, his great exploit past hope atchiev'd.
 We (Menelaus and myself) had sailed
 From Troy together, but when we approach'd
 Sunium, headland of th' Athenian shore, 360
 There Phœbus, sudden, with his gentle shafts
 Slew Menelaus' pilot while he steer'd
 The volant bark, Phrontis, Onetor's son,
 A mariner past all expert, whom none
 In steerage match'd, what time the tempest roar'd.
 Here, therefore, Menelaus was detained,
 Giving his friend due burial, and his rites
 Funereal celebrating, though in haste
 Still to proceed. But when, with all his fleet
 The wide sea traversing, he reach'd at length 370
 Malea's lofty foreland in his course,
 Rough passage, then, and perilous he found.
 Shrill blasts the Thund'rer pour'd into his sails,
 And wild waves sent him mountainous. His ships
 There scatter'd, some to the Cydonian coast
 Of Crete he push'd, near where the Jardan flows.
 Beside the confines of Gortyna stands,
 Amid the gloomy flood, a smooth rock, steep
 Toward the sea, against whose leftward point
 Phæstus by name, the South wind rolls the surge 380
 Amain, which yet the rock, though small, repells.
 Hither with part he came, and scarce the crews
 Themselves escaped, while the huge billows broke
 Their ships against the rocks; yet five he saved,
 Which winds and waves drove to the Ægyptian shore.
 Thus he, provision gath'ring as he went
 And gold abundant, roam'd to distant lands
 And nations of another tongue. Meantime,
 Ægisthus these enormities at home
 Devising, slew Atrides, and supreme 390
 Rul'd the subjected land; sev'n years he reign'd
 In opulent Mycenæ, but the eighth
 From Athens brought renown'd Orestes home
 For his destruction, who of life bereaved
 Ægisthus base assassin of his Sire.
 Orestes, therefore, the funereal rites
 Performing to his shameless mother's shade
 And to her lustful paramour, a feast
 Gave to the Argives; on which self-same day
 The warlike Menelaus, with his ships 400
 All treasure-laden to the brink, arrived.

And thou, young friend! from thy forsaken home
 Rove not long time remote, thy treasures left
 At mercy of those proud, lest they divide
 And waste the whole, rend'ring thy voyage vain.
 But hence to Menelaus is the course
 To which I counsel thee; for he hath come
 Of late from distant lands, whence to escape
 No man could hope, whom tempests first had driv'n
 Devious into so wide a sea, from which 410
 Themselves the birds of heaven could not arrive
 In a whole year, so vast is the expanse.
 Go, then, with ship and shipmates, or if more
 The land delight thee, steeds thou shalt not want
 Nor chariot, and my sons shall be thy guides
 To noble Lacedemon, the abode
 Of Menelaus; ask from him the truth,
 Who will not lye, for he is passing wise.
 While thus he spake, the sun declined, and night
 Approaching, blue-eyed Pallas interposed. 420
 O antient King! well hast thou spoken all.
 But now delay not. Cut ye forth the tongues,⁸
 And mingle wine, that (Neptune first invoked
 With due libation, and the other Gods)
 We may repair to rest; for even now
 The sun is sunk, and it becomes us not
 Long to protract a banquet to the Gods
 Devote, but in fit season to depart.
 So spake Jove's daughter; they obedient heard.
 The heralds, then, pour'd water on their hands, 430
 And the attendant youths, filling the cups,
 Served them from left to right. Next all the tongues
 They cast into the fire, and ev'ry guest
 Arising, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 Libation made, and all with wine sufficed,
 Godlike Telemachus and Pallas both
 Would have return'd, incontinent, on board,
 But Nestor urged them still to be his guests.
 Forbid it, Jove, and all the Pow'rs of heav'n!
 That ye should leave me to repair on board 440
 Your vessel, as I were some needy wretch
 Cloakless and destitute of fleecy stores
 Wherewith to spread the couch soft for myself,
 Or for my guests. No. I have garments warm
 An ample store, and rugs of richest dye;
 And never shall Ulysses' son belov'd,
 My friend's own son, sleep on a galley's plank

While I draw vital air; grant also, heav'n,
That, dying, I may leave behind me sons
Glad to accommodate whatever guest! 450

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
Old Chief! thou hast well said, and reason bids
Telemachus thy kind commands obey.
Let *him* attend thee hence, that he may sleep
Beneath thy roof, but I return on board
Myself, to instruct my people, and to give
All needful orders; for among them none
Is old as I, but they are youths alike,
Coevals of Telemachus, with whom
They have embark'd for friendship's sake alone. 460
I therefore will repose myself on board
This night, and to the Caucons bold in arms
Will sail to-morrow, to demand arrears
Long time unpaid, and of no small amount.
But, since he is become thy guest, afford
My friend a chariot, and a son of thine
Who shall direct his way, nor let him want
Of all thy steeds the swiftest and the best.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He said, whom instant all obey'd. The ox 540
 Came from the field, and from the gallant ship
 The ship-mates of the brave Telemachus;
 Next, charged with all his implements of art,
 His mallet, anvil, pincers, came the smith
 To give the horns their gilding; also came
 Pallas herself to her own sacred rites.
 Then Nestor, hoary warrior, furnish'd gold,
 Which, hammer'd thin, the artist wrapp'd around
 The victim's horns, that seeing him attired
 So costly, Pallas might the more be pleased. 550
 Stratius and brave Echephron introduced
 The victim by his horns; Aretus brought
 A laver in one hand, with flow'rs emboss'd,
 And in his other hand a basket stored
 With cakes, while warlike Thrasymedes, arm'd
 With his long-hafted ax, prepared to smite
 The ox, and Perseus to receive the blood.
 The hoary Nestor consecrated first
 Both cakes and water, and with earnest pray'r
 To Pallas, gave the forelock to the flames. 560
 When all had worshipp'd, and the broken cakes
 Sprinkled, then godlike Thrasymedes drew
 Close to the ox, and smote him. Deep the edge
 Enter'd, and senseless on the floor he fell.
 Then Nestor's daughters, and the consorts all
 Of Nestor's sons, with his own consort, chaste
 Eurydice, the daughter eldest-born
 Of Clymenus, in one shrill orison
 Vociferous join'd, while they, lifting the ox,
 Held him supported firmly, and the prince 570
 Of men, Pisistratus, his gullet pierced.
 Soon as the sable blood had ceased, and life
 Had left the victim, spreading him abroad,
 With nice address they parted at the joint
 His thighs, and wrapp'd them in the double cawl,
 Which with crude slices thin they overspread.
 Nestor burn'd incense, and libation pour'd
 Large on the hissing brands, while him beside,
 Busy with spit and prong, stood many a youth
 Train'd to the task. The thighs consumed, each took
 His portion of the maw, then, slashing well 581
 The remnant, they transpierced it with the spits
 Neatly, and held it reeking at the fire.
 Meantime the youngest of the daughters fair
 Of Nestor, beauteous Polycaste, laved,

Anointed, and in vest and tunic cloathed
 Telemachus, who, so refresh'd, stepp'd forth
 From the bright laver graceful as a God,
 And took his seat at antient Nestor's side.
 The viands dress'd, and from the spits withdrawn, 590
 They sat to share the feast, and princely youths
 Arising, gave them wine in cups of gold.
 When neither hunger now nor thirst remain'd
 Unsated, thus Gerenian Nestor spake.
 My sons, arise, lead forth the sprightly steeds,
 And yoke them, that Telemachus may go.
 So spake the Chief, to whose commands his sons,
 Obedient, yoked in haste the rapid steeds,
 And the intendant matron of the stores
 Disposed meantime within the chariot, bread 600
 And wine, and dainties, such as princes eat.
 Telemachus into the chariot first
 Ascended, and beside him, next, his place
 Pisistratus the son of Nestor took,
 Then seiz'd the reins, and lash'd the coursers on.
 They, nothing loth, into the open plain
 Flew, leaving lofty Pylus soon afar.
 Thus, journeying, they shook on either side
 The yoke all day, and now the setting sun
 To dusky evening had resign'd the roads, 610
 When they to Pheræ came, and the abode
 Reach'd of Diocles, whose illustrious Sire
 Orsilochus from Alpheus drew his birth,
 And there, with kindness entertain'd, they slept.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy from the East, yoking the steeds,
 They in their sumptuous chariot sat again.
 The son of Nestor plied the lash, and forth
 Through vestibule and sounding portico
 The royal coursers, not unwilling, flew. 620
 A corn-invested land receiv'd them next,
 And there they brought their journey to a close,
 So rapidly they moved; and now the sun
 Went down, and even-tide dimm'd all the ways.

⁷ [Ερκος οδοντων](#). Prior, alluding to this expression, ludicrously renders it—

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

⁸ It is said to have been customary in the days of Homer, when the Greeks retired from a banquet to their beds, to cut out the tongues of the victims, and offer them to the Gods in particular who presided over conversation.

BOOK IV

ARGUMENT

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

In hollow Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Arriving, to the house they drove direct
Of royal Menelaus; him they found
In his own palace, all his num'rous friends
Regaling at a nuptial banquet giv'n
Both for his daughter and the prince his son.
His daughter to renown'd Achilles' heir
He sent, to whom he had at Troy engaged
To give her, and the Gods now made her his.
With chariots and with steeds he sent her forth 10
To the illustrious city where the prince,
Achilles' offspring, ruled the Myrmidons.
But to his son he gave a Spartan fair,
Alector's daughter; from an handmaid sprang
That son to Menelaus in his age,
Brave Megapenthes; for the Gods no child
To Helen gave, made mother, once, of her
Who vied in perfect loveliness of form
With golden Venus' self, Hermione.
Thus all the neighbour princes and the friends 20
Of noble Menelaus, feasting sat
Within his spacious palace, among whom
A sacred bard sang sweetly to his harp,
While, in the midst, two dancers smote the ground
With measur'd steps responsive to his song.
And now the Heroes, Nestor's noble son
And young Telemachus arrived within
The vestibule, whom, issuing from the hall,
The noble Eteoneus of the train
Of Menelaus, saw; at once he ran 30
Across the palace to report the news
To his Lord's ear, and, standing at his side,
In accents wing'd with haste thus greeted him.

Oh Menelaus! Heav'n descended Chief!

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

But Menelaus, Hero golden-hair'd,
Indignant answer'd him. Boethe's son! 40

Thou wast not, Eteoneus, heretofore,
A babbler, who now pratest as a child.
We have ourselves arrived indebted much
To hospitality of other men,
If Jove shall, even here, some pause at last
Of woe afford us. Therefore loose, at once,
Their steeds, and introduce them to the feast.

He said, and, issuing, Eteoneus call'd
The brisk attendants to his aid, with whom
He loos'd their foaming coursers from the yoke. 50

Them first they bound to mangers, which with oats
And mingled barley they supplied, then thrust
The chariot sidelong to the splendid wall.⁹

Themselves he, next, into the royal house
Conducted, who survey'd, wond'ring, the abode
Of the heav'n-favour'd King; for on all sides
As with the splendour of the sun or moon
The lofty dome of Menelaus blazed.

Satiate, at length, with wonder at that sight,
They enter'd each a bath, and by the hands 60
Of maidens laved, and oil'd, and cloath'd again
With shaggy mantles and resplendent vests,
Sat both enthroned at Menelaus' side.

And now a maiden charged with golden ew'r,
And with an argent laver, pouring first
Pure water on their hands, supplied them next
With a bright table, which the maiden, chief
In office, furnish'd plenteously with bread
And dainties, remnants of the last regale.

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

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

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

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

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

My children! let no mortal man pretend
Comparison with Jove; for Jove's abode
And all his stores are incorruptible.
But whether mortal man with me may vie 100
In the display of wealth, or whether not,
This know, that after many toils endured,
And perilous wand'rings wide, in the eighth year
I brought my treasures home. Remote I roved
To Cyprus, to Phœnice, to the shores
Of Ægypt; Æthiopia's land I reach'd,
Th' Erembi, the Sidonians, and the coasts
Of Lybia, where the lambs their foreheads shew
At once with horns defended, soon as yeav'd.

There, thrice within the year the flocks produce, 110
Nor master, there, nor shepherd ever feels
A dearth of cheese, of flesh, or of sweet milk
Delicious, drawn from udders never dry.
While, thus, commodities on various coasts
Gath'ring I roam'd, another, by the arts
Of his pernicious spouse aided, of life
Bereav'd my brother privily, and when least
He fear'd to lose it. Therefore little joy
To me results from all that I possess.

Your fathers (be those fathers who they may) 120
These things have doubtless told you; for immense
Have been my suff'rings, and I have destroy'd
A palace well inhabited and stored
With precious furniture in ev'ry kind;
Such, that I would to heav'n! I own'd at home

Though but the third of it, and that the Greeks
 Who perish'd then, beneath the walls of Troy
 Far from steed-pastured Argos, still survived.
 Yet while, sequester'd here, I frequent mourn
 My slaughter'd friends, by turns I sooth my soul 130
 With tears shed for them, and by turns again
 I cease; for grief soon satiates free indulged.
 But of them all, although I all bewail,
 None mourn I so as one, whom calling back
 To memory, I both sleep and food abhor.
 For, of Achaia's sons none ever toiled
 Strenuous as Ulysses; but his lot
 Was woe, and unremitting sorrow mine
 For his long absence, who, if still he live,
 We know not aught, or be already dead. 140
 Him doubtless, old Laertes mourns, and him
 Discrete Penelope, nor less his son
 Telemachus, born newly when he sail'd.
 So saying, he kindled in him strong desire
 To mourn his father; at his father's name
 Fast fell his tears to ground, and with both hands
 He spread his purple cloak before his eyes;
 Which Menelaus marking, doubtful sat
 If he should leave him leisure for his tears,
 Or question him, and tell him all at large. 150
 While thus he doubted, Helen (as it chanced)
 Leaving her fragrant chamber, came, august
 As Dian, goddess of the golden bow.
 Adrasta, for her use, set forth a throne,
 Alcippe with soft arras cover'd it,
 And Philo brought her silver basket, gift
 Of fair Alcandra, wife of Polybus,
 Whose mansion in Ægyptian Thebes is rich
 In untold treasure, and who gave, himself,
 Ten golden talents, and two silver baths 160
 To Menelaus, with two splendid tripods
 Beside the noble gifts which, at the hand
 Of his illustrious spouse, Helen receiv'd;
 A golden spindle, and a basket wheel'd,
 Itself of silver, and its lip of gold.
 That basket Philo, her own handmaid, placed
 At beauteous Helen's side, charged to the brim
 With slender threads, on which the spindle lay
 With wool of purple lustre wrapp'd around.
 Approaching, on her foot-stool'd throne she sat, 170
 And, instant, of her royal spouse enquired.

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

Then Menelaus, thus, the golden-hair'd.
I also such resemblance find in him
As thou; such feet, such hands, the cast of eye¹⁰
Similar, and the head and flowing locks.
And even now, when I Ulysses named,
And his great sufferings mention'd, in my cause,
The bitter tear dropp'd from his lids, while broad
Before his eyes his purple cloak he spread.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied. 190
Atrides! Menelaus! Chief renown'd!
He is in truth his son, as thou hast said,
But he is modest, and would much himself
Condemn, if, at his first arrival here,
He should loquacious seem and bold to thee,
To whom we listen, captived by thy voice,
As if some God had spoken. As for me,
Nestor, my father, the Gerenian Chief
Bade me conduct him hither, for he wish'd
To see thee, promising himself from thee 200
The benefit of some kind word or deed.
For, destitute of other aid, he much
His father's tedious absence mourns at home.
So fares Telemachus; his father strays
Remote, and, in his stead, no friend hath he
Who might avert the mischiefs that he feels.

To whom the Hero amber-hair'd replied.
Ye Gods! the offspring of indeed a friend
Hath reach'd my house, of one who hath endured
Arduous conflicts num'rous for my sake; 210
And much I purpos'd, had Olympian Jove
Vouchsaf'd us prosp'rous passage o'er the Deep,
To have receiv'd him with such friendship here
As none beside. In Argos I had then
Founded a city for him, and had rais'd
A palace for himself; I would have brought
The Hero hither, and his son, with all

His people, and with all his wealth, some town
Evacuating for his sake, of those
Ruled by myself, and neighb'ring close my own. 220
Thus situate, we had often interchanged
Sweet converse, nor had other cause at last
Our friendship terminated or our joys,
Than death's black cloud o'ershadowing him or me.
But such delights could only envy move
Ev'n in the Gods, who have, of all the Greeks,
Amere'd *him* only of his wish'd return.

So saying, he kindled the desire to weep
In ev'ry bosom. Argive Helen wept
Abundant, Jove's own daughter; wept as fast 230
Telemachus and Menelaus both;
Nor Nestor's son with tearless eyes remain'd,
Calling to mind Antilochus¹¹ by the son¹²
Illustrious of the bright Aurora slain,
Rememb'ring whom, in accents wing'd he said.

Atrides! antient Nestor, when of late
Conversing with him, we remember'd thee,
Pronounced thee wise beyond all human-kind.
Now therefore, let not even my advice
Displease thee. It affords me no delight 240
To intermingle tears with my repast,
And soon, Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Will tinge the orient. Not that I account
Due lamentation of a friend deceased
Blameworthy, since, to sheer the locks and weep,
Is all we can for the unhappy dead.
I also have my grief, call'd to lament
One, not the meanest of Achaia's sons,
My brother; him I cannot but suppose
To thee well-known, although unknown to me 250
Who saw him never;¹³ but report proclaims
Antilochus superior to the most,
In speed superior, and in feats of arms.

To whom, the Hero of the yellow locks.
O friend belov'd! since nought which thou hast said
Or recommended now, would have disgraced
A man of years maturer far than thine,
(For wise thy father is, and such art thou,
And easy is it to discern the son
Of such a father, whom Saturnian Jove 260
In marriage both and at his birth ordain'd
To great felicity; for he hath giv'n
To Nestor gradually to sink at home

Into old age, and, while he lives, to see
His sons past others wise, and skill'd in arms)
The sorrow into which we sudden fell
Shall pause. Come—now remember we the feast;
Pour water on our hands, for we shall find,
(Telemachus and I) no dearth of themes
For mutual converse when the day shall dawn. 270

He ended; then, Asphalion, at his word,
Servant of glorious Menelaus, poured
Pure water on their hands, and they the feast
Before them with keen appetite assail'd.
But Jove-born Helen otherwise, meantime,
Employ'd, into the wine of which they drank
A drug infused, antidote to the pains
Of grief and anger, a most potent charm
For ills of ev'ry name. Whoe'er his wine
So medicated drinks, he shall not pour 280
All day the tears down his wan cheek, although
His father and his mother both were dead,
Nor even though his brother or his son
Had fall'n in battle, and before his eyes.
Such drugs Jove's daughter own'd, with skill prepar'd,
And of prime virtue, by the wife of Thone,
Ægyptian Polydamna, giv'n her.
For Ægypt teems with drugs, yielding no few
Which, mingled with the drink, are good, and many
Of baneful juice, and enemies to life. 290

There ev'ry man in skill medicinal
Excels, for they are sons of Pæon all.
That drug infused, she bade her servant pour
The bev'rage forth, and thus her speech resumed.
Atrides! Menelaus! dear to Jove!
These also are the sons of Chiefs renown'd,
(For Jove, as pleases him, to each assigns
Or good or evil, whom all things obey)
Now therefore, feasting at your ease reclin'd,
Listen with pleasure, for myself, the while, 300
Will matter seasonable interpose.

I cannot all rehearse, nor even name,
(Omitting none) the conflicts and exploits
Of brave Ulysses; but with what address
Successful, one atchievement he perform'd
At Ilium, where Achaia's sons endured
Such hardship, will I speak. Inflicting wounds
Dishonourable on himself, he took
A tatter'd garb, and like a serving-man

Enter'd the spacious city of your foes. 310
 So veil'd, some mendicant he seem'd, although
 No Grecian less deserved that name than he.
 In such disguise he enter'd; all alike
 Misdeem'd him; me alone he not deceived
 Who challeng'd him, but, shrewd, he turn'd away.
 At length, however, when I had myself
 Bathed him, anointed, cloath'd him, and had sworn
 Not to declare him openly in Troy
 Till he should reach again the camp and fleet,
 He told me the whole purpose of the Greeks. 320
 Then, (many a Trojan slaughter'd,) he regain'd
 The camp, and much intelligence he bore
 To the Achaians. Oh what wailing then
 Was heard of Trojan women! but my heart
 Exulted, alter'd now, and wishing home;
 For now my crime committed under force
 Of Venus' influence I deplored, what time
 She led me to a country far remote,
 A wand'rer from the matrimonial bed,
 From my own child, and from my rightful Lord 330
 Alike unblemish'd both in form and mind.
 Her answer'd then the Hero golden-hair'd.
 Helen! thou hast well spoken. All is true.
 I have the talents fathom'd and the minds
 Of num'rous Heroes, and have travell'd far
 Yet never saw I with these eyes in man
 Such firmness as the calm Ulysses own'd;
 None such as in the wooden horse he proved,
 Where all our bravest sat, designing woe
 And bloody havoc for the sons of Troy. 340
 Thou thither cam'st, impell'd, as it should seem,
 By some divinity inclin'd to give
 Victory to our foes, and with thee came
 Godlike Deiphobus. Thrice round about
 The hollow ambush, striking with thy hand
 Its sides thou went'st, and by his name didst call
 Each prince of Greece feigning his consort's voice.
 Myself with Diomedes, and with divine
 Ulysses, seated in the midst, the call
 Heard plain and loud; we (Diomedes and I) 350
 With ardour burn'd either to quit the horse
 So summon'd, or to answer from within.
 But, all impatient as we were, Ulysses
 Controul'd the rash design; so there the sons
 Of the Achaians silent sat and mute,

And of us all Anticlus would alone
Have answer'd; but Ulysses with both hands
Compressing close his lips, saved us, nor ceased
Till Pallas thence conducted thee again.

Then thus, discrete, Telemachus replied. 360

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

He ceas'd; then Argive Helen gave command
To her attendant maidens to prepare
Beds in the portico with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras, overspread, 370

And cover'd warm with cloaks of shaggy pile.
Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And spread the couches; next, the herald them
Led forth, and in the vestibule the son
Of Nestor and the youthful Hero slept,
Telemachus; but in the interior house
Atrides, with the loveliest of her sex
Beside him, Helen of the sweeping stole.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Glow'd in the East, then from his couch arose 380

The warlike Menelaus, fresh attir'd;
His faulchion o'er his shoulders slung, he bound
His sandals fair to his unsullied feet,
And like a God issuing, at the side
Sat of Telemachus, to whom he spake.

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

To whom Telemachus discrete replied. 390

Atrides! Menelaus! prince renown'd!
News seeking of my Sire, I have arrived.
My household is devour'd, my fruitful fields
Are desolated, and my palace fill'd
With enemies, who while they mutual wage
Proud competition for my mother's love,
My flocks continual slaughter, and my beeves.
For this cause, at thy knees suppliant, I beg
That thou wouldst tell me his disastrous end,
If either thou beheld'st with thine own eyes 400
His death, or from some wand'rer of the Greeks

Hast heard it; for no common woes, alas!
Was he ordain'd to share ev'n from the womb.
Neither through pity or o'erstrain'd respect
Flatter me, but explicit all relate
Which thou hast witness'd. If my noble Sire
E'er gratified thee by performance just
Of word or deed at Ilium, where ye fell
So num'rous slain in fight, oh recollect
Now his fidelity, and tell me true! 410

Then Menelaus, sighing deep, replied.
Gods! their ambition is to reach the bed
Of a brave man, however base themselves.
But as it chances, when the hart hath lay'd
Her fawns new-yeen'd and sucklings yet, to rest
Within some dreadful lion's gloomy den,
She roams the hills, and in the grassy vales
Feeds heedless, till the lion, to his lair
Return'd, destroys her and her little-ones,
So them thy Sire shall terribly destroy. 420
Jove, Pallas and Apollo! oh that such
As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
With Philomelides, and threw him flat,
A sight at which Achaia's sons rejoic'd,
Such, now, Ulysses might assail them all!
Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
But thy enquiries neither indirect
Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
But all that from the Antient of the Deep¹⁴
I have receiv'd will utter, hiding nought. 430

As yet the Gods on Ægypt's shore detained
Me wishing home, angry at my neglect
To heap their altars with slain hecatombs.
For they exacted from us evermore
Strict rev'ence of their laws. There is an isle
Amid the billowy flood, Pharos by name,
In front of Ægypt, distant from her shore
Far as a vessel by a sprightly gale
Impell'd, may push her voyage in a day.
The haven there is good, and many a ship 440
Finds wat'ring there from riv'lets on the coast.
There me the Gods kept twenty days, no breeze
Propitious granting, that might sweep the waves,
And usher to her home the flying bark.
And now had our provision, all consumed,
Left us exhausted, but a certain nymph
Pitying saved me. Daughter fair was she

Of mighty Proteus, Antient of the Deep,
Idothea named; her most my sorrows moved;
She found me from my followers all apart 450
Wand'ring (for they around the isle, with hooks
The fishes snaring roamed, by famine urged)
And standing at my side, me thus bespake.

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

So spake the Goddess, and I thus replied.
I tell thee, whosoever of the Pow'rs 460
Divine thou art, that I am prison'd here
Not willingly, but must have, doubtless, sinn'd
Against the deathless tenants of the skies.
Yet say (for the Immortals all things know)
What God detains me, and my course forbids
Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?

So I; to whom the Goddess all-divine.
Stranger! I will inform thee true. A seer
Oracular, the Antient of the Deep,
Immortal Proteus, the Ægyptian, haunts 470
These shores, familiar with all Ocean's gulphs,
And Neptune's subject. He is by report
My father; him if thou art able once
To seize and bind, he will prescribe the course
With all its measured distances, by which
Thou shalt regain secure thy native shores.
He will, moreover, at thy suit declare,
Thou favour'd of the skies! what good, what ill
Hath in thine house befall'n, while absent thou
Thy voyage difficult perform'st and long. 480

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

Then thus Idothea answer'd all-divine.
I will inform thee true. Soon as the sun
Hath climb'd the middle heav'ns, the prophet old,
Emerging while the breezy zephyr blows,
And cover'd with the scum of ocean, seeks 490
His spacious cove, in which outstretch'd he lies.
The phocæ¹⁵ also, rising from the waves,
Offspring of beauteous Halosydna, sleep

Around him, num'rous, and the fishy scent
 Exhaling rank of the unfathom'd flood.
 Thither conducting thee at peep of day
 I will dispose thee in some safe recess,
 But from among thy followers thou shalt chuse
 The bravest three in all thy gallant fleet.
 And now the artifices understand 500
 Of the old prophet of the sea. The sum
 Of all his phocæ numb'ring duly first,
 He will pass through them, and when all by fives
 He counted hath, will in the midst repose
 Content, as sleeps the shepherd with his flock.
 When ye shall see him stretch'd, then call to mind
 That moment all your prowess, and prevent,
 Howe'er he strive impatient, his escape.
 All changes trying, he will take the form
 Of ev'ry reptile on the earth, will seem 510
 A river now, and now devouring fire;
 But hold him ye, and grasp him still the more.
 And when himself shall question you, restored
 To his own form in which ye found him first
 Reposing, then from farther force abstain;
 Then, Hero! loose the Antient of the Deep,
 And ask him, of the Gods who checks thy course
 Hence to thy country o'er the fishy flood.
 So saying, she plunged into the billowy waste.
 I then, in various musings lost, my ships 520
 Along the sea-beach station'd sought again,
 And when I reach'd my galley on the shore
 We supp'd, and sacred night falling from heav'n,
 Slept all extended on the ocean-side.
 But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Look'd rosy forth, pensive beside the shore
 I walk'd of Ocean, frequent to the Gods
 Praying devout, then chose the fittest three
 For bold assault, and worthiest of my trust.
 Meantime the Goddess from the bosom wide 530
 Of Ocean rising, brought us thence four skins
 Of phocæ, and all newly stript, a snare
 Contriving subtle to deceive her Sire.
 Four cradles in the sand she scoop'd, then sat
 Expecting us, who in due time approach'd;
 She lodg'd us side by side, and over each
 A raw skin cast. Horrible to ourselves
 Proved that disguise whom the pernicious scent
 Of the sea-nourish'd phocæ sore annoy'd;

For who would lay him down at a whale's side? 540
 But she a potent remedy devised
 Herself to save us, who the nostrils sooth'd
 Of each with pure ambrosia thither brought
 Odorous, which the fishy scent subdued.
 All morning, patient watchers, there we lay;
 And now the num'rous phocæ from the Deep
 Emerging, slept along the shore, and he
 At noon came also, and perceiving there
 His fatted monsters, through the flock his course
 Took regular, and summ'd them; with the first 550
 He number'd us, suspicion none of fraud
 Conceiving, then couch'd also. We, at once,
 Loud-shouting flew on him, and in our arms
 Constrain'd him fast; nor the sea-prophet old
 Call'd not incontinent his shifts to mind.
 First he became a long-maned lion grim,
 Then dragon, panther then, a savage boar,
 A limpid stream, and an o'ershadowing tree.
 We persevering held him, till at length
 The Antient of the Deep, skill'd as he is 560
 In wiles, yet weary, question'd me, and said.
 Oh Atreus' son, by what confed'rate God
 Instructed liest thou in wait for me,
 To seize and hold me? what is thy desire?
 So He; to whom thus answer I return'd.
 Old Seer! thou know'st; why, fraudulent, should'st thou ask?
 It is because I have been prison'd long
 Within this isle, whence I have sought in vain
 Deliv'rance, till my wonted courage fails.
 Yet say (for the Immortals all things know) 570
 What God detains me, and my course forbids
 Hence to my country o'er the fishy Deep?
 So I; when thus the old one of the waves.
 But thy plain duty¹⁶ was to have adored
 Jove, first, in sacrifice, and all the Gods,
 That then embarking, by propitious gales
 Impell'd, thou might'st have reach'd thy country soon.
 For thou art doom'd ne'er to behold again
 Thy friends, thy palace, or thy native shores,
 Till thou have seen once more the hallow'd flood 580
 Of Ægypt, and with hecatombs adored
 Devout, the deathless tenants of the skies.
 Then will they speed thee whither thou desir'st.
 He ended, and my heart broke at his words,
 Which bade me pass again the gloomy gulph

To Ægypt; tedious course, and hard to atchieve!

Yet, though in sorrow whelm'd, I thus replied.

Old prophet! I will all thy will perform.

But tell me, and the truth simply reveal;

Have the Achaïans with their ships arrived 590

All safe, whom Nestor left and I, at Troy?

Or of the Chiefs have any in their barks,

Or in their followers' arms found a dire death

Unlook'd for, since that city's siege we closed?

I spake, when answer thus the God return'd.

Atrides, why these questions? Need is none

That thou should'st all my secrets learn, which once

Reveal'd, thou would'st not long dry-eyed remain.

Of those no few have died, and many live;

But leaders, two alone, in their return 600

Have died (thou also hast had war to wage)

And one, still living, roams the boundless sea.

Ajax,¹⁷ surrounded by his galleys, died.

Him Neptune, first, against the bulky rocks

The Gyræ drove, but saved him from the Deep;

Nor had he perish'd, hated as he was

By Pallas, but for his own impious boast

In frenzy utter'd that he would escape

The billows, even in the Gods' despight.

Neptune that speech vain-glorious hearing, grasp'd 610

His trident, and the huge Gyræan rock

Smiting indignant, dash'd it half away;

Part stood, and part, on which the boaster sat

When, first, the brainsick fury seiz'd him, fell,

Bearing him with it down into the gulphs

Of Ocean, where he drank the brine, and died.

But thy own brother in his barks escaped

That fate, by Juno saved; yet when, at length,

He should have gain'd Malea's craggy shore,

Then, by a sudden tempest caught, he flew 620

With many a groan far o'er the fishy Deep

To the land's utmost point, where once his home

Thyestes had, but where Thyestes' son

Dwelt then, Ægisthus. Easy lay his course

And open thence, and, as it pleased the Gods,

The shifted wind soon bore them to their home.

He, high in exultation, trod the shore

That gave him birth, kiss'd it, and, at the sight,

The welcome sight of Greece, shed many a tear.

Yet not unseen he landed; for a spy, 630

One whom the shrewd Ægisthus had seduced

By promise of two golden talents, mark'd
His coming from a rock where he had watch'd
The year complete, lest, passing unperceived,
The King should reassert his right in arms.
Swift flew the spy with tidings to this Lord,
And He, incontinent, this project framed
Insidious. Twenty men, the boldest hearts
Of all the people, from the rest he chose,
Whom he in ambush placed, and others charged 640
Diligent to prepare the festal board.

With horses, then, and chariots forth he drove
Full-fraught with mischief, and conducting home
The unsuspecting King, amid the feast
Slew him, as at his crib men slay an ox.
Nor of thy brother's train, nor of his train
Who slew thy brother, one survived, but all,
Welt'ring in blood together, there expired.

He ended, and his words beat on my heart
As they would break it. On the sands I sat 650
Weeping, nor life nor light desiring more.
But when I had in dust roll'd me, and wept
To full satiety, mine ear again
The oracle of Ocean thus address'd.

Sit not, O son of Atreus! weeping here
Longer, for remedy can none be found;
But quick arising, trial make, how best
Thou shalt, and soonest, reach thy home again.
For either him still living thou shalt find,
Or ere thou come, Orestes shall have slain 660
The traitor, and thine eyes shall see his tomb.

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

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

So I; to whom thus Proteus in return.
Laertes' son, the Lord of Ithaca—
Him in an island weeping I beheld, 670
Guest of the nymph Calypso, by constraint
Her guest, and from his native land withheld
By sad necessity; for ships well-oar'd,
Or faithful followers hath he none, whose aid
Might speed him safely o'er the spacious flood.
But, Menelaus dear to Jove! thy fate
Ordains not thee the stroke of death to meet

In steed-fam'd Argos, but far hence the Gods
Will send thee to Elysium, and the earth's
Extremest bounds; (there Rhadamanthus dwells, 680
The golden-hair'd, and there the human kind
Enjoy the easiest life; no snow is there,
No biting winter, and no drenching show'r,
But zephyr always gently from the sea
Breathes on them to refresh the happy race)
For that fair Helen is by nuptial bands
Thy own, and thou art son-in-law of Jove.

So saying, he plunged into the billowy waste,
I then, with my brave comrades to the fleet
Return'd, deep-musing as I went, and sad. 690
No sooner had I reach'd my ship beside
The ocean, and we all had supp'd, than night
From heav'n fell on us, and, at ease reposed
Along the margin of the sea, we slept.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, drawing our galleys down
Into the sacred Deep, we rear'd again
The mast, unfurl'd the sail, and to our seats
On board returning, thresh'd the foamy flood.
Once more, at length, within the hallow'd stream 700
Of Ægypt mooring, on the shore I slew
Whole hecatombs, and (the displeasure thus
Of the immortal Gods appeased) I reared
To Agamemnon's never-dying fame
A tomb, and finishing it, sail'd again
With such a gale from heaven vouchsafed, as sent
My ships swift-scudding to the shores of Greece.
But come—eleven days wait here, or twelve
A guest with me, when I will send thee hence
Nobly, and honour'd with illustrious gifts, 710
With polish'd chariot, with three princely steeds,
And with a gorgeous cup, that to the Gods
Libation pouring ever while thou liv'st
From that same cup, thou may'st remember me.

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.
Atrides, seek not to detain me here
Long time; for though contented I could sit
The year beside thee, nor regret my home
Or parents, (so delightful thy discourse
Sounds in my ear) yet, even now, I know, 720
That my attendants to the Pylian shore
Wish my return, whom thou thus long detain'st.
What boon soe'er thou giv'st me, be it such

As I may treasur'd keep; but horses none
Take I to Ithaca; them rather far
Keep thou, for thy own glory. Thou art Lord
Of an extended plain, where copious springs
The lotus, herbage of all savours, wheat,
Pulse, and white barley of luxuriant growth.
But Ithaca no level champaign owns, 730
A nursery of goats, and yet a land
Fairer than even pastures to the eye.
No sea-encircled isle of ours affords
Smooth course commodious and expanse of meads,
But my own Ithaca transcends them all!

He said; the Hero Menelaus smiled,
And stroaking tenderly his cheek, replied.
Dear youth! thy speech proclaims thy noble blood.
I can with ease supply thee from within
With what shall suit thee better, and the gift 740
Of all that I possess which most excels
In beauty, and the noblest shall be thine.
I give thee, wrought elaborate, a cup
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when on my return
His house received me. That shall be thy own.

Thus they conferr'd; and now the busy train
Of menials culinary,¹⁸ at the gate 750
Enter'd of Menelaus, Chief renown'd;
They brought him sheep, with heart-ennobling wine,
While all their wives, their brows with frontlets bound,
Came charg'd with bread. Thus busy they prepared
A banquet in the mansion of the King.

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

Know we, Antinoüs! or know we not,
When to expect Telemachus at home
Again from Pylus? in my ship he went,
Which now I need, that I may cross the sea
To Elis, on whose spacious plain I feed

Twelve mares, each suckling a mule-colt as yet 770
 Unbroken, but of which I purpose one
 To ferry thence, and break him into use.
 He spake, whom they astonish'd heard; for him
 They deem'd not to Nelëian Pylus gone,
 But haply into his own fields, his flocks
 To visit, or the steward of his swine.
 Then thus, Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, spake.
 Say true. When sail'd he forth? of all our youth,
 Whom chose he for his followers? his own train
 Of slaves and hirelings? hath he pow'r to effect 780
 This also? Tell me too, for I would learn—
 Took he perforce thy sable bark away,
 Or gav'st it to him at his first demand?
 To whom Noëmon, Phronius' son, replied.
 I gave it voluntary; what could'st thou,
 Should such a prince petition for thy bark
 In such distress? Hard were it to refuse.
 Brave youths (our bravest youths except yourselves)
 Attend him forth; and with them I observed
 Mentor embarking, ruler o'er them all, 790
 Or, if not him, a God; for such he seem'd.
 But this much moves my wonder. Yester-morn
 I saw, at day-break, noble Mentor here,
 Whom shipp'd for Pylus I had seen before.
 He ceas'd; and to his father's house return'd;
 They, hearing, sat aghast. Their games meantime
 Finish'd, the suitors on their seats reposed,
 To whom Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, next,
 Much troubled spake; a black storm overcharged
 His bosom, and his vivid eyes flash'd fire. 800
 Ye Gods, a proud exploit is here atchieved,
 This voyage of Telemachus, by us
 Pronounced impracticable; yet the boy
 In downright opposition to us all,
 Hath headlong launched a ship, and, with a band
 Selected from our bravest youth, is gone.
 He soon will prove more mischievous, whose pow'r
 Jove wither, ere we suffer its effects!
 But give me a swift bark with twenty rowers,
 That, watching his return within the streights 810
 Of rocky Samos and of Ithaca,
 I may surprise him; so shall he have sail'd
 To seek his Sire, fatally for himself.
 He ceased and loud applause heard in reply,
 With warm encouragement. Then, rising all,

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

For what cause, herald! have the suitors sent
Thee foremost? Wou'd they that my maidens lay
Their tasks aside, and dress the board for them?
Here end their wooing! may they hence depart
Never, and may the banquet now prepared,
This banquet prove your last!¹⁹ who in such throngs
Here meeting, waste the patrimony fair 830
Of brave Telemachus; ye never, sure,
When children, heard how gracious and how good
Ulysses dwelt among your parents, none
Of all his people, or in word or deed
Injuring, as great princes oft are wont,
By favour influenc'd now, now by disgust.
He no man wrong'd at any time; but plain
Your wicked purpose in your deeds appears,
Who sense have none of benefits conferr'd.

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

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

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

Then answer, thus, Medon the wise return'd.
I know not whether him some God impell'd
Or his own heart to Pylus, there to hear 860
News of his Sire's return, or by what fate

At least he died, if he return no more.

He said, and traversing Ulysses' courts,
Departed; she with heart consuming woe
O'erwhelm'd, no longer could endure to take
Repose on any of her num'rous seats,
But on the threshold of her chamber-door
Lamenting sat, while all her female train
Around her moan'd, the antient and the young,
Whom, sobbing, thus Penelope bespake. 870

Hear me, ye maidens! for of women born
Coeval with me, none hath e'er received
Such plenteous sorrow from the Gods as I,
Who first my noble husband lost, endued
With courage lion-like, of all the Greeks
The Chief with ev'ry virtue most adorn'd,
A prince all-excellent, whose glorious praise
Through Hellas and all Argos flew diffused.
And now, my darling son,—him storms have snatch'd
Far hence inglorious, and I knew it not. 880

Ah treach'rous servants! conscious as ye were
Of his design, not one of you the thought
Conceived to wake me when he went on board.
For had but the report once reach'd my ear,
He either had not gone (how much soe'er
He wish'd to leave me) or had left me dead.
But haste ye,—bid my antient servant come,
Dolion, whom (when I left my father's house
He gave me, and whose office is to attend
My num'rous garden-plants) that he may seek 890
At once Laertes, and may tell him all,
Who may contrive some remedy, perchance,
Or fit expedient, and shall come abroad
To weep before the men who wish to slay
Even the prince, godlike Ulysses' son.

Then thus the gentle Euryclea spake,
Nurse of Telemachus. Alas! my Queen!
Slay me, or spare, deal with me as thou wilt,
I will confess the truth. I knew it all.
I gave him all that he required from me. 900
Both wine and bread, and, at his bidding, swore
To tell thee nought in twelve whole days to come,
Or till, enquiry made, thou should'st thyself
Learn his departure, lest thou should'st impair
Thy lovely features with excess of grief.
But lave thyself, and, fresh attired, ascend
To thy own chamber, there, with all thy train,

To worship Pallas, who shall save, thenceforth,
 Thy son from death, what ills soe'er he meet.
 Add not fresh sorrows to the present woes 910
 Of the old King, for I believe not yet
 Arcesias' race entirely by the Gods
 Renounced, but trust that there shall still be found
 Among them, who shall dwell in royal state,
 And reap the fruits of fertile fields remote.
 So saying, she hush'd her sorrow, and her eyes
 No longer stream'd. Then, bathed and fresh attired,
 Penelope ascended with her train
 The upper palace, and a basket stored
 With hallow'd cakes off'ring, to Pallas pray'd. 920
 Hear matchless daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd!
 If ever wise Ulysses offer'd here
 The thighs of fatted kine or sheep to thee,
 Now mindful of his piety, preserve
 His darling son, and frustrate with a frown
 The cruelty of these imperious guests!
 She said, and wept aloud, whose earnest suit
 Pallas received. And now the spacious hall
 And gloomy passages with tumult rang
 And clamour of that throng, when thus, a youth, 930
 Insolent as his fellows, dared to speak.
 Much woo'd and long, the Queen at length prepares
 To chuse another mate,²⁰ and nought suspects
 The bloody death to which her son is doom'd.
 So he; but they, meantime, themselves remain'd
 Untaught, what course the dread concern elsewhere
 Had taken, whom Antinoüs thus address'd.
 Sirs! one and all, I counsel you, beware
 Of such bold boasting unadvised; lest one
 O'erhearing you, report your words within. 940
 No—rather thus, in silence, let us move
 To an exploit so pleasant to us all.
 He said, and twenty chose, the bravest there,
 With whom he sought the galley on the shore,
 Which drawing down into the deep, they placed
 The mast and sails on board, and, sitting, next,
 Each oar in order to its proper groove,
 Unfurl'd and spread their canvas to the gale.
 Their bold attendants, then, brought them their arms,
 And soon as in deep water they had moor'd 950
 The ship, themselves embarking, supp'd on board,
 And watch'd impatient for the dusk of eve.
 But when Penelope, the palace stairs

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

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

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

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

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

Then answer thus the shadowy form return'd.

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

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

Whom answer'd thus the fleeting shadow vain.
I will not now inform thee if thy Lord
Live, or live not. Vain words are best unspoken.

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

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

⁹ Hesychius tells us, that the Grecians ornamented with much attention the front wall of their courts for the admiration of passengers.

¹⁰ [Οφθαλμῶν τε βολαί.](#)

¹¹ Antilochus was his brother.

¹² The son of Aurora, who slew Antilochus, was Memnon.

¹³ Because Pisistratus was born after Antilochus had sailed to Troy.

¹⁴ Proteus

¹⁵ Seals, or sea-calves.

¹⁶ From the abruptness of this beginning, Virgil, probably, who has copied the story, took the hint of his admired exordium.

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

¹⁷ Son of Oileus.

¹⁸ [Δαίτυμων](#)—generally signifies the founder of a feast; but we are taught by Eustathius to understand by it, in this place, the persons employed in preparing it.

¹⁹ This transition from the third to the second person belongs to the original, and is considered as a fine stroke of art in the poet, who represents Penelope in the warmth of her resentment, forgetting where she is, and addressing the suitors as if present.

²⁰ Mistaking, perhaps, the sound of her voice, and imagining that she sang.—Vide Barnes in loco.

BOOK V

ARGUMENT

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

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

Jove, Father, hear me, and ye other Pow'rs
Who live for ever, hear! Be never King 10
Henceforth to gracious acts inclined, humane,
Or righteous, but let ev'ry sceptred hand
Rule merciless, and deal in wrong alone,
Since none of all his people whom he sway'd
With such paternal gentleness and love
Remembers, now, divine Ulysses more.
He, in yon distant isle a suff'rer lies
Of hopeless sorrow, through constraint the guest
Still of the nymph Calypso, without means
Or pow'r to reach his native shores again, 20
Alike of gallant barks and friends depriv'd,
Who might conduct him o'er the spacious Deep.
Nor is this all, but enemies combine
To slay his son ere yet he can return
From Pylus, whither he hath gone to learn
There, or in Sparta, tidings of his Sire.

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
What word hath pass'd thy lips, daughter belov'd?
Hast thou not purpos'd that arriving soon
At home, Ulysses shall destroy his foes? 30
Guide thou, Telemachus, (for well thou canst)
That he may reach secure his native coast,
And that the suitors baffled may return.

He ceas'd, and thus to Hermes spake, his son.
Hermes! (for thou art herald of our will
At all times) to yon bright-hair'd nymph convey
Our fix'd resolve, that brave Ulysses thence
Depart, unaccompanied by God or man.

Borne on a corded raft, and suff'ring woe
Extreme, he on the twentieth day shall reach, 40
Not sooner, Scherie the deep-soil'd, possess'd
By the Phæacians, kinsmen of the Gods.

They, as a God shall reverence the Chief,
And in a bark of theirs shall send him thence
To his own home, much treasure, brass and gold
And raiment giving him, to an amount
Surpassing all that, had he safe return'd,
He should by lot have shared of Ilium's spoil.
Thus Fate appoints Ulysses to regain
His country, his own palace, and his friends. 50

He ended, nor the Argicide refused,
Messenger of the skies; his sandals fair,
Ambrosial, golden, to his feet he bound,
Which o'er the moist wave, rapid as the wind,
Bear him, and o'er th' illimitable earth,
Then took his rod with which, at will, all eyes
He closes soft, or opes them wide again.
So arm'd, forth flew the valiant Argicide.
Alighting on Pieria, down he stoop'd
To Ocean, and the billows lightly skimm'd 60

In form a sew-mew, such as in the bays
Tremendous of the barren Deep her food
Seeking, dips oft in brine her ample wing.
In such disguise o'er many a wave he rode,
But reaching, now, that isle remote, forsook
The azure Deep, and at the spacious grot,
Where dwelt the amber-tressed nymph arrived,
Found her within. A fire on all the hearth
Blazed sprightly, and, afar-diffused, the scent
Of smooth-split cedar and of cypress-wood 70
Odorous, burning, cheer'd the happy isle.

She, busied at the loom, and plying fast
Her golden shuttle, with melodious voice
Sat chaunting there; a grove on either side,
Alder and poplar, and the redolent branch
Wide-spread of Cypress, skirted dark the cave.
There many a bird of broadest pinion built
Secure her nest, the owl, the kite, and daw
Long-tongued, frequenter of the sandy shores.

A garden-vine luxuriant on all sides 80
 Mantled the spacious cavern, cluster-hung
 Profuse; four fountains of serenest lymph
 Their sinuous course pursuing side by side,
 Stray'd all around, and ev'ry where appear'd
 Meadows of softest verdure, purpled o'er
 With violets; it was a scene to fill
 A God from heav'n with wonder and delight.
 Hermes, Heav'n's messenger, admiring stood
 That sight, and having all survey'd, at length
 Enter'd the grotto; nor the lovely nymph 90
 Him knew not soon as seen, for not unknown
 Each to the other the Immortals are,
 How far soever sep'rate their abodes.
 Yet found he not within the mighty Chief
 Ulysses; he sat weeping on the shore,
 Forlorn, for there his custom was with groans
 Of sad regret t' afflict his breaking heart.
 Looking continual o'er the barren Deep.
 Then thus Calypso, nymph divine, the God
 Question'd, from her resplendent throne august. 100
 Hermes! possessor of the potent rod!
 Who, though by me much reverenc'd and belov'd,
 So seldom com'st, say, wherefore comest now?
 Speak thy desire; I grant it, if thou ask
 Things possible, and possible to me.
 Stay not, but ent'ring farther, at my board
 Due rites of hospitality receive.
 So saying, the Goddess with ambrosial food
 Her table cover'd, and with rosy juice
 Nectareous charged the cup. Then ate and drank 110
 The argicide and herald of the skies,
 And in his soul with that repast divine
 Refresh'd, his message to the nymph declared.
 Questionest thou, O Goddess, me a God?
 I tell thee truth, since such is thy demand.
 Not willing, but by Jove constrain'd, I come.
 For who would, voluntary, such a breadth
 Enormous measure of the salt expanse,
 Where city none is seen in which the Gods
 Are served with chosen hecatombs and pray'r? 120
 But no divinity may the designs
 Elude, or controvert, of Jove supreme.
 He saith, that here thou hold'st the most distress
 Of all those warriors who nine years assail'd
 The city of Priam, and, (that city sack'd)

Departed in the tenth; but, going thence,
Offended Pallas, who with adverse winds
Opposed their voyage, and with boist'rous waves.
Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
Billows and storms drove hither; Jove commands 130
That thou dismiss him hence without delay,
For fate ordains him not to perish here
From all his friends remote, but he is doom'd
To see them yet again, and to arrive
At his own palace in his native land.

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

Ye are unjust, ye Gods, and envious past
All others, grudging if a Goddess take
A mortal man openly to her arms! 140
So, when the rosy-finger'd Morning chose
Orion, though ye live yourselves at ease,
Yet ye all envied her, until the chaste
Diana from her golden throne dispatch'd
A silent shaft, which slew him in Ortygia.
So, when the golden-tressed Ceres, urged
By passion, took Iasion to her arms
In a thrice-labour'd fallow, not untaught
Was Jove that secret long, and, hearing it,
Indignant, slew him with his candent bolt. 150

So also, O ye Gods, ye envy me
The mortal man, my comfort. Him I saved
Myself, while solitary on his keel
He rode, for with his sulph'rous arrow Jove
Had cleft his bark amid the sable Deep.
Then perish'd all his gallant friends, but him
Billows and storms drove hither, whom I lov'd
Sincere, and fondly destin'd to a life
Immortal, unobnoxious to decay.
But since no Deity may the designs 160
Elude or controvert of Jove supreme,
Hence with him o'er the barren Deep, if such
The Sov'reign's will, and such his stern command.
But undimiss'd he goes by me, who ships
Myself well-oar'd and mariners have none
To send with him athwart the spacious flood;
Yet freely, readily, my best advice
I will afford him, that, escaping all
Danger, he may regain his native shore.

Then Hermes thus, the messenger of heav'n. 170
Act as thou say'st, fearing the frown of Jove,

Lest, if provoked, he spare not even thee.

So saying, the dauntless Argicide withdrew,
And she (Jove's mandate heard) all-graceful went,
Seeking the brave Ulysses; on the shore
She found him seated; tears succeeding tears
Delug'd his eyes, while, hopeless of return,
Life's precious hours to eating cares he gave
Continual, with the nymph now charm'd no more.
Yet, cold as she was am'rous, still he pass'd
His nights beside her in the hollow grot,
Constrain'd, and day by day the rocks among
Which lined the shore heart-broken sat, and oft
While wistfully he eyed the barren Deep,
Wept, groaned, desponded, sigh'd, and wept again.
Then, drawing near, thus spake the nymph divine.

180

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

190

200

She ceas'd; but horror at that sound the heart
Chill'd of Ulysses, and in accents wing'd
With wonder, thus the noble Chief replied.

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

210

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

Thou dost asperse me rudely, and excuse
Of ignorance hast none, far better taught;

What words were these? How could'st thou thus reply?

Now hear me Earth, and the wide Heav'n above!

Hear, too, ye waters of the Stygian stream 220

Under the earth (by which the blessed Gods

Swear trembling, and revere the awful oath!)

That future mischief I intend thee none.

No, my designs concerning thee are such

As, in an exigence resembling thine,

Myself, most sure, should for myself conceive.

I have a mind more equal, not of steel

My heart is form'd, but much to pity inclined.

So saying, the lovely Goddess with swift pace

Led on, whose footsteps he as swift pursued. 230

Within the vaulted cavern they arrived,

The Goddess and the man; on the same throne

Ulysses sat, whence Hermes had aris'n,

And viands of all kinds, such as sustain

The life of mortal man, Calypso placed

Before him, both for bev'rage and for food.

She opposite to the illustrious Chief

Reposed, by her attendant maidens served

With nectar and ambrosia. They their hands

Stretch'd forth together to the ready feast, 240

And when nor hunger more nor thirst remain'd

Unsated, thus the beauteous nymph began.

Laertes' noble son, for wisdom famed

And artifice! oh canst thou thus resolve

To seek, incontinent, thy native shores?

I pardon thee. Farewell! but could'st thou guess

The woes which fate ordains thee to endure

Ere yet thou reach thy country, well-content

Here to inhabit, thou would'st keep my grot

And be immortal, howsoe'er thy wife 250

Engage thy ev'ry wish day after day.

Yet can I not in stature or in form

Myself suspect inferior aught to her,

Since competition cannot be between

Mere mortal beauties, and a form divine.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Awful Divinity! be not incensed.

I know that my Penelope in form

And stature altogether yields to thee,

For she is mortal, and immortal thou, 260

From age exempt; yet not the less I wish

My home, and languish daily to return.

But should some God amid the sable Deep

Dash me again into a wreck, my soul
Shall bear *that* also; for, by practice taught,
I have learned patience, having much endured
By tempest and in battle both. Come then
This evil also! I am well prepared.

He ended, and the sun sinking, resign'd
The earth to darkness. Then in a recess 270

Interior of the cavern, side by side
Reposed, they took their amorous delight.
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Look'd rosy forth, Ulysses then in haste
Put on his vest and mantle, and, the nymph
Her snowy vesture of transparent woof,
Graceful, redundant; to her waist she bound
Her golden zone, and veil'd her beauteous head,
Then, musing, plann'd the noble Chief's return.

She gave him, fitted to the grasp, an ax 280
Of iron, pond'rous, double-edg'd, with haft
Of olive-wood, inserted firm, and wrought
With curious art. Then, placing in his hand
A polish'd adze, she led, herself, the way
To her isles' utmost verge, where tallest trees
But dry long since and sapless stood, which best
Might serve his purposes, as buoyant most,
The alder, poplar, and cloud-piercing fir.

To that tall grove she led and left him there,
Seeking her grot again. Then slept not He, 290
But, swinging with both hands the ax, his task
Soon finish'd; trees full twenty to the ground
He cast, which, dext'rous, with his adze he smooth'd,
The knotted surface chipping by a line.

Meantime the lovely Goddess to his aid
Sharp augres brought, with which he bored the beams,
Then, side by side placing them, fitted each
To other, and with long cramps join'd them all.

Broad as an artist, skill'd in naval works,
The bottom of a ship of burthen spreads, 300
Such breadth Ulysses to his raft assign'd.

He deck'd her over with long planks, upborne
On massy beams; He made the mast, to which
He added suitable the yard;—he framed
Rudder and helm to regulate her course,
With wicker-work he border'd all her length
For safety, and much ballast stow'd within.
Meantime, Calypso brought him for a sail
Fittest materials, which he also shaped,

And to his sail due furniture annex'd 310
 Of cordage strong, foot-ropes, and ropes aloft,
 Then heav'd her down with levers to the Deep.
 He finish'd all his work on the fourth day,
 And on the fifth, Calypso, nymph divine,
 Dismiss'd him from her isle, but laved him first,
 And cloath'd him in sweet-scented garments new.
 Two skins the Goddess also placed on board,
 One charg'd with crimson wine, and ampler one
 With water, nor a bag with food replete
 Forgot, nutritious, grateful to the taste, 320
 Nor yet, her latest gift, a gentle gale
 And manageable, which Ulysses spread,
 Exulting, all his canvas to receive.
 Beside the helm he sat, steering expert,
 Nor sleep fell ever on his eyes that watch'd
 Intent the Pleiads, tardy in decline
 Bootes, and the Bear, call'd else the Wain,
 Which, in his polar prison circling, looks
 Direct toward Orion, and alone
 Of these sinks never to the briny Deep. 330
 That star the lovely Goddess bade him hold
 Continual on his left through all his course.
 Ten days and sev'n, he, navigating, cleav'd
 The brine, and on the eighteenth day, at length,
 The shadowy mountains of Phæacia's land
 Descried, where nearest to his course it lay
 Like a broad buckler on the waves afloat.
 But Neptune, now returning from the land
 Of Ethiopia, mark'd him on his raft
 Skimming the billows, from the mountain-tops 340
 Of distant Solyma.²¹ With tenfold wrath
 Inflamed that sight he view'd, his brows he shook,
 And thus within himself, indignant, spake.
 So then—new counsels in the skies, it seems,
 Propitious to Ulysses, have prevail'd
 Since Æthiopia hath been my abode.
 He sees Phæacia nigh, where he must leap
 The bound'ry of his woes; but ere that hour
 Arrive, I will ensure him many a groan.
 So saying, he grasp'd his trident, gather'd dense 350
 The clouds and troubled ocean; ev'ry storm
 From ev'ry point he summon'd, earth and sea
 Darkening, and the night fell black from heav'n.
 The East, the South, the heavy-blowing West,
 And the cold North-wind clear, assail'd at once

His raft, and heaved on high the billowy flood.
All hope, all courage, in that moment, lost,
The Hero thus within himself complain'd.

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

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

Was she, and trod the earth,²² but nymph become
Of Ocean since, in honours shares divine.
She mark'd his anguish, and, while toss'd he roam'd,
Pitied Ulysses; from the flood, in form
A cormorant, she flew, and on the raft
Close-corded perching, thus the Chief address'd.

Alas! unhappy! how hast thou incensed
So terribly the Shaker of the shores,
That he pursues thee with such num'rous ills? 410
Sink thee he cannot, wish it as he may.
Thus do (for I account thee not unwise)
Thy garments putting off, let drive thy raft
As the winds will, then, swimming, strive to reach
Phæacia, where thy doom is to escape.
Take this. This ribbon bind beneath thy breast,
Celestial texture. Thenceforth ev'ry fear
Of death dismiss, and, laying once thy hands
On the firm continent, unbind the zone,
Which thou shalt cast far distant from the shore 420
Into the Deep, turning thy face away.

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

Alas! I tremble lest some God design
T' ensnare me yet, bidding me quit the raft.
But let me well beware how I obey 430
Too soon that precept, for I saw the land
Of my foretold deliv'rance far remote.
Thus, therefore, will I do, for such appears
My wiser course. So long as yet the planks
Mutual adhere, continuing on board
My raft, I will endure whatever woes,
But when the waves shall shatter it, I will swim,
My sole resource then left. While thus he mused,
Neptune a billow of enormous bulk
Hollow'd into an overwhelming arch 440
On high up-heaving, smote him. As the wind
Tempestuous, falling on some stubble-heap,
The arid straws dissipates ev'ry way,
So flew the timbers. He, a single beam
Bestriding, oar'd it onward with his feet,
As he had urged an horse. His raiment, then,
Gift of Calypso, putting off, he bound

His girdle on, and prone into the sea
 With wide-spread palms prepar'd for swimming, fell.
 Shore-shaker Neptune noted him; he shook 450
 His awful brows, and in his heart he said,
 Thus, suff'ring many mis'ries roam the flood,
 Till thou shalt mingle with a race of men
 Heav'n's special favourites; yet even there
 Fear not that thou shalt feel thy sorrows light.
 He said, and scourging his bright steeds, arrived
 At Ægæ, where his glorious palace stands.
 But other thoughts Minerva's mind employ'd
 Jove's daughter; ev'ry wind binding beside,
 She lull'd them, and enjoin'd them all to sleep, 460
 But roused swift Boreas, and the billows broke
 Before Ulysses, that, deliver'd safe
 From a dire death, the noble Chief might mix
 With maritime Phæacia's sons renown'd.
 Two nights he wander'd, and two days, the flood
 Tempestuous, death expecting ev'ry hour;
 But when Aurora, radiant-hair'd, had brought
 The third day to a close, then ceas'd the wind,
 And breathless came a calm; he, nigh at hand
 The shore beheld, darting acute his sight 470
 Toward it, from a billow's tow'ring top.
 Precious as to his children seems the life
 Of some fond father through disease long time
 And pain stretch'd languid on his couch, the prey
 Of some vindictive Pow'r, but now, at last,
 By gracious heav'n to ease and health restored,
 So grateful to Ulysses' sight appear'd
 Forests and hills. Impatient with his feet
 To press the shore, he swam; but when within
 Such distance as a shout may fly, he came, 480
 The thunder of the sea against the rocks
 Then smote his ear; for hoarse the billows roar'd
 On the firm land, belch'd horrible abroad,
 And the salt spray dimm'd all things to his view.
 For neither port for ships nor shelt'ring cove
 Was there, but the rude coast a headland bluff
 Presented, rocks and craggy masses huge.
 Then, hope and strength exhausted both, deep-groan'd
 The Chief, and in his noble heart complain'd.
 Alas! though Jove hath given me to behold, 490
 Unhoped, the land again, and I have pass'd,
 Furrowing my way, these num'rous waves, there seems
 No egress from the hoary flood for me.

Sharp stones hem in the waters; wild the surge
Raves ev'ry where; and smooth the rocks arise;
Deep also is the shore, on which my feet
No standing gain, or chance of safe escape.
What if some billow catch me from the Deep
Emerging, and against the pointed rocks
Dash me conflicting with its force in vain? 500
But should I, swimming, trace the coast in search
Of sloping beach, haven or shelter'd creek,
I fear lest, groaning, I be snatch'd again
By stormy gusts into the fishy Deep,
Or lest some monster of the flood receive
Command to seize me, of the many such
By the illustrious Amphitrite bred;
For that the mighty Shaker of the shores
Hates me implacable, too well I know.

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

As pebbles to the hollow polypus 520
Extracted from his stony bed, adhere,
So he, the rough rocks clasping, stripp'd his hands
Raw, and the billows now whelm'd him again.

Then had the hapless Hero premature
Perish'd, but for sagacity inspired
By Pallas azure-eyed. Forth from the waves
Emerging, where the surf burst on the rocks,
He coasted (looking landward as he swam)
The shore, with hope of port or level beach.
But when, still swimming, to the mouth he came 530
Of a smooth-sliding river, there he deem'd
Safest th' ascent, for it was undeform'd
By rocks, and shelter'd close from ev'ry wind.
He felt the current, and thus, ardent, pray'd.

O hear, whate'er thy name, Sov'reign, who rul'st
This river! at whose mouth, from all the threats
Of Neptune 'scap'd, with rapture I arrive.
Even the Immortal Gods the wand'rer's pray'r
Respect, and such am I, who reach, at length,

Thy stream, and clasp thy knees, after long toil. 540

I am thy suppliant. Oh King! pity me.

He said; the river God at once repress'd
His current, and it ceas'd; smooth he prepared
The way before Ulysses, and the land
Vouchsafed him easy at his channel's mouth.
There, once again he bent for ease his limbs
Both arms and knees, in conflict with the floods
Exhausted; swoln his body was all o'er,
And from his mouth and nostrils stream'd the brine.

Breathless and speechless, and of life well nigh 550
Bereft he lay, through dreadful toil immense.

But when, revived, his dissipated pow'rs
He recollected, loosing from beneath
His breast the zone divine, he cast it far
Into the brackish stream, and a huge wave
Returning bore it downward to the sea,
Where Ino caught it. Then, the river's brink
Abandoning, among the rushes prone
He lay, kiss'd oft the soil, and sighing, said,
Ah me! what suff'rings must I now sustain, 560

What doom, at last, awaits me? If I watch
This woeful night, here, at the river's side,
What hope but that the frost and copious dews,
Weak as I am, my remnant small of life
Shall quite extinguish, and the chilly air
Breath'd from the river at the dawn of day?
But if, ascending this declivity
I gain the woods, and in some thicket sleep,
(If sleep indeed can find me overtoil'd
And cold-benumb'd) then I have cause to fear 570
Lest I be torn by wild beasts, and devour'd.

Long time he mused, but, at the last, his course
Bent to the woods, which not remote he saw
From the sea-brink, conspicuous on a hill.
Arrived, between two neighbour shrubs he crept,
Both olives, this the fruitful, that the wild;
A covert, which nor rough winds blowing moist
Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun
Smite through it, or unceasing show'rs pervade,
So thick a roof the ample branches form'd 580
Close interwoven; under these the Chief
Retiring, with industrious hands a bed
Collected broad of leaves, which there he found
Abundant strew'd, such store as had sufficed
Two travellers or three for cov'ring warm,

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

590

²¹ The Solymi were the ancient inhabitants of Pisidia in Asia-Minor.

²² The Translator finding himself free to chuse between ἀυδηέσσα and ἡδηέσσα, has preferred the latter.

BOOK VI

ARGUMENT

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

There then the noble suff'rer lay, by sleep
Oppress'd and labour; meantime, Pallas sought
The populous city of Phæacia's sons.
They, in old time, in Hypereia dwelt
The spacious, neighbours of a giant race
The haughty Cyclops, who, endued with pow'r
Superior, troubled them with frequent wrongs.
Godlike Nausithoüs then arose, who thence
To Scheria led them, from all nations versed
In arts of cultivated life, remote; 10
With bulwarks strong their city he enclosed,
Built houses for them, temples to the Gods,
And gave to each a portion of the soil.
But he, already by decree of fate
Had journey'd to the shades, and in his stead
Alcinoüs, by the Gods instructed, reign'd.
To his abode Minerva azure-eyed
Repair'd, neglecting nought which might advance
Magnanimous Ulysses' safe return.
She sought the sumptuous chamber where, in form 20
And feature perfect as the Gods, the young
Nausicaa, daughter of the King, reposed.
Fast by the pillars of the portal lay
Two damsels, one on either side, adorn'd
By all the Graces, and the doors were shut.
Soft as a breathing air, she stole toward
The royal virgin's couch, and at her head
Standing, address'd her. Daughter she appear'd
Of Dymas, famed for maritime exploits,
Her friend and her coeval; so disguised 30
Cærulean-eyed Minerva thus began.
Nausicaa! wherefore hath thy mother borne

A child so negligent? Thy garments share,
 Thy most magnificent, no thought of thine.
 Yet thou must marry soon, and must provide
 Robes for thyself, and for thy nuptial train.
 Thy fame, on these concerns, and honour stand;
 These managed well, thy parents shall rejoice.
 The dawn appearing, let us to the place
 Of washing, where thy work-mate I will be 40
 For speedier riddance of thy task, since soon
 The days of thy virginity shall end;
 For thou art woo'd already by the prime
 Of all Phæacia, country of thy birth.
 Come then—solicit at the dawn of day
 Thy royal father, that he send thee forth
 With mules and carriage for conveyance hence
 Of thy best robes, thy mantles and thy zones.
 Thus, more commodiously thou shalt perform
 The journey, for the cisterns lie remote. 50

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

Now came Aurora bright-enthroned, whose rays
 Awaken'd fair Nausicaa; she her dream 60
 Remember'd wond'ring, and her parents sought
 Anxious to tell them. Them she found within.
 Beside the hearth her royal mother sat,
 Spinning soft fleeces with sea-purple dyed
 Among her menial maidens, but she met
 Her father, whom the Nobles of the land
 Had summon'd, issuing abroad to join
 The illustrious Chiefs in council. At his side
 She stood, and thus her filial suit preferr'd.

Sir!²³ wilt thou lend me of the royal wains 70
 A sumpter-carriage? for I wish to bear
 My costly cloaths but sullied and unfit
 For use, at present, to the river side.
 It is but seemly that thou should'st repair
 Thyself to consultation with the Chiefs
 Of all Phæacia, clad in pure attire;
 And my own brothers five, who dwell at home,
 Two wedded, and the rest of age to wed,

Are all desirous, when they dance, to wear
 Raiment new bleach'd; all which is my concern. 80
 So spake Nausicaa; for she dared not name
 Her own glad nuptials to her father's ear,
 Who, conscious yet of all her drift, replied.
 I grudge thee neither mules, my child, nor aught
 That thou canst ask beside. Go, and my train
 Shall furnish thee a sumpter-carriage forth
 High-built, strong-wheel'd, and of capacious size.
 So saying, he issued his command, whom quick
 His grooms obey'd. They in the court prepared
 The sumpter-carriage, and adjoin'd the mules. 90
 And now the virgin from her chamber, charged
 With raiment, came, which on the car she placed,
 And in the carriage-chest, meantime, the Queen,
 Her mother, viands of all kinds disposed,
 And fill'd a skin with wine. Nausicaa rose
 Into her seat; but, ere she went, received
 A golden cruse of oil from the Queen's hand
 For unction of herself, and of her maids.
 Then, seizing scourge and reins, she lash'd the mules.
 They trampled loud the soil, straining to draw 100
 Herself with all her vesture; nor alone
 She went, but follow'd by her virgin train.
 At the delightful rivulet arrived
 Where those perennial cisterns were prepared
 With purest crystal of the fountain fed
 Profuse, sufficient for the deepest stains,
 Loosing the mules, they drove them forth to browse
 On the sweet herb beside the dimpled flood.
 The carriage, next, light'ning, they bore in hand
 The garments down to the unsullied wave, 110
 And thrust them heap'd into the pools, their task
 Dispatching brisk, and with an emulous haste.
 When they had all purified, and no spot
 Could now be seen, or blemish more, they spread
 The raiment orderly along the beach
 Where dashing tides had cleansed the pebbles most,
 And laving, next, and smoothing o'er with oil
 Their limbs, all seated on the river's bank,
 They took repast, leaving the garments, stretch'd
 In noon-day fervour of the sun, to dry. 120
 Their hunger satisfied, at once arose
 The mistress and her train, and putting off
 Their head-attire, play'd wanton with the ball,
 The princess singing to her maids the while.

Such as shaft-arm'd Diana roams the hills,
Täygetus sky-capt, or Erymanth,
The wild boar chasing, or fleet-footed hind,
All joy; the rural nymphs, daughters of Jove,
Sport with her, and Latona's heart exults;
She high her graceful head above the rest 130
And features lifts divine, though all be fair,
With ease distinguishable from them all;
So, all her train, she, virgin pure, surpass'd.

But when the hour of her departure thence
Approach'd (the mules now yoked again, and all
Her elegant apparel folded neat)
Minerva azure-eyed mused how to wake
Ulysses, that he might behold the fair
Virgin, his destin'd guide into the town.
The Princess, then, casting the ball toward 140
A maiden of her train, erroneous threw
And plunged it deep into the dimpling stream.
All shrieked; Ulysses at the sound awoke,
And, sitting, meditated thus the cause.

Ah me! what mortal race inhabit here?
Rude are they, contumacious and unjust?
Or hospitable, and who fear the Gods?
So shrill the cry and feminine of nymphs
Fills all the air around, such as frequent
The hills, clear fountains, and herbaceous meads. 150
Is this a neighbourhood of men endued
With voice articulate? But what avails
To ask; I will myself go forth and see.

So saying, divine Ulysses from beneath
His thicket crept, and from the leafy wood
A spreading branch pluck'd forcibly, design'd
A decent skreen effectual, held before.
So forth he went, as goes the lion forth,
The mountain-lion, conscious of his strength,
Whom winds have vex'd and rains; fire fills his eyes, 160
And whether herds or flocks, or woodland deer
He find, he rends them, and, adust for blood,
Abstains not even from the guarded fold,
Such sure to seem in virgin eyes, the Chief,
All naked as he was, left his retreat,
Reluctant, by necessity constrain'd.
Him foul with sea foam horror-struck they view'd,
And o'er the jutting shores fled all dispersed.
Nausicaa alone fled not; for her
Pallas courageous made, and from her limbs, 170

By pow'r divine, all tremour took away.
Firm she expected him; he doubtful stood,
Or to implore the lovely maid, her knees
Embracing, or aloof standing, to ask
In gentle terms discrete the gift of cloaths,
And guidance to the city where she dwelt.
Him so deliberating, most, at length,
This counsel pleas'd; in suppliant terms aloof
To sue to her, lest if he clasp'd her knees,
The virgin should that bolder course resent. 180
Then gentle, thus, and well-advised he spake.

Oh Queen! thy earnest suppliant I approach.
Art thou some Goddess, or of mortal race?
For if some Goddess, and from heaven arrived,
Diana, then, daughter of mighty Jove
I deem thee most, for such as hers appear
Thy form, thy stature, and thy air divine.
But if, of mortal race, thou dwell below,
Thrice happy then, thy parents I account,
And happy thrice thy brethren. Ah! the joy 190
Which always for thy sake, their bosoms fill,
When thee they view, all lovely as thou art,
Ent'ring majestic on the graceful dance.
But him beyond all others blest I deem,
The youth, who, wealthier than his rich compeers,
Shall win and lead thee to his honour'd home.

For never with these eyes a mortal form
Beheld I comparable aught to thine,
In man or woman. Wonder-wrapt I gaze.
Such erst, in Delos, I beheld a palm 200
Beside the altar of Apollo, tall,
And growing still; (for thither too I sail'd,
And num'rous were my followers in a voyage
Ordain'd my ruin) and as then I view'd
That palm long time amazed, for never grew
So strait a shaft, so lovely from the ground,
So, Princess! thee with wonder I behold,
Charm'd into fixt astonishment, by awe
Alone forbidden to embrace thy knees,
For I am one on whom much woe hath fall'n. 210

Yesterday I escaped (the twentieth day
Of my distress by sea) the dreary Deep;
For, all those days, the waves and rapid storms
Bore me along, impetuous from the isle
Ogygia; till at length the will of heav'n
Cast me, that I might also here sustain

Affliction on your shore; for rest, I think,
 Is not for me. No. The Immortal Gods
 Have much to accomplish ere that day arrive.
 But, oh Queen, pity me! who after long 220
 Calamities endured, of all who live
 Thee first approach, nor mortal know beside
 Of the inhabitants of all the land.
 Shew me your city; give me, although coarse,
 Some cov'ring (if coarse cov'ring *thou* canst give)
 And may the Gods thy largest wishes grant,
 House, husband, concord! for of all the gifts
 Of heav'n, more precious none I deem, than peace
 'Twixt wedded pair, and union undissolved;
 Envy torments their enemies, but joy 230
 Fills ev'ry virtuous breast, and most their own.
 To whom Nausicaa the fair replied.
 Since, stranger! neither base by birth thou seem'st,
 Nor unintelligent, (but Jove, the King
 Olympian, gives to good and bad alike
 Prosperity according to his will,
 And grief to thee, which thou must patient bear,)
 Now, therefore, at our land and city arrived,
 Nor garment thou shalt want, nor aught beside
 Due to a suppliant guest like thee forlorn. 240
 I will both show thee where our city stands,
 And who dwell here. Phæacia's sons possess
 This land; but I am daughter of their King
 The brave Alcinoüs, on whose sway depends
 For strength and wealth the whole Phæacian race.
 She said, and to her beauteous maidens gave
 Instant commandment—My attendants, stay!
 Why flee ye thus, and whither, from the sight
 Of a mere mortal? Seems he in your eyes
 Some enemy of ours? The heart beats not, 250
 Nor shall it beat hereafter, which shall come
 An enemy to the Phæacian shores,
 So dear to the immortal Gods are we.
 Remote, amid the billowy Deep, we hold
 Our dwelling, utmost of all human-kind,
 And free from mixture with a foreign race.
 This man, a miserable wand'rer comes,
 Whom we are bound to cherish, for the poor
 And stranger are from Jove, and trivial gifts
 To such are welcome. Bring ye therefore food 260
 And wine, my maidens, for the guest's regale,
 And lave him where the stream is shelter'd most.

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

270

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

He said; they went, and to Nausicaa told
His answer; then the Hero in the stream
His shoulders laved, and loins incrustured rough
With the salt spray, and with his hands the scum
Of the wild ocean from his locks express'd.
Thus wash'd all over, and refresh'd with oil,
He put the garments on, Nausicaa's gift.

280

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

290

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

300

She ended; they obedient to her will,
Both wine and food, dispatchful, placed, and glad,

Before Ulysses; he rapacious ate,
 Toil-suff'ring Chief, and drank, for he had lived 310
 From taste of aliment long time estranged.
 On other thoughts meantime intent, her charge
 Of folded vestments neat the Princess placed
 Within the royal wain, then yoked the mules,
 And to her seat herself ascending, call'd
 Ulysses to depart, and thus she spake.
 Up, stranger! seek the city. I will lead
 Thy steps toward my royal Father's house,
 Where all Phæacia's Nobles thou shalt see.
 But thou (for I account thee not unwise) 320
 This course pursue. While through the fields we pass,
 And labours of the rural hind, so long
 With my attendants follow fast the mules
 And sumpter-carriage. I will be thy guide.
 But, once the summit gain'd, on which is built
 Our city with proud bulwarks fenced around,
 And laved on both sides by its pleasant port
 Of narrow entrance, where our gallant barks
 Line all the road, each station'd in her place,
 And where, adjoining close the splendid fane 330
 Of Neptune, stands the forum with huge stones
 From quarries thither drawn, constructed strong,
 In which the rigging of their barks they keep,
 Sail-cloth and cordage, and make smooth their oars;
 (For bow and quiver the Phæacian race
 Heed not, but masts and oars, and ships well-poised,
 With which exulting they divide the flood)
 Then, cautious, I would shun their bitter taunts
 Disgustful, lest they mock me as I pass;
 For of the meaner people some are coarse 340
 In the extreme, and it may chance that one,
 The basest there seeing us shall exclaim—
 What handsome stranger of athletic form
 Attends the Princess? Where had she the chance
 To find him? We shall see them wedded soon.
 Either she hath received some vagrant guest
 From distant lands, (for no land neighbours ours)
 Or by her pray'rs incessant won, some God
 Hath left the heav'ns to be for ever hers.
 'Tis well if she have found, by her own search, 350
 An husband for herself, since she accounts
 The Nobles of Phæacia, who her hand
 Solicit num'rous, worthy to be scorn'd—
 Thus will they speak, injurious. I should blame

A virgin guilty of such conduct much,
 Myself, who reckless of her parents' will,
 Should so familiar with a man consort,
 Ere celebration of her spousal rites.
 But mark me, stranger! following my advice,
 Thou shalt the sooner at my father's hands 360
 Obtain safe conduct and conveyance home.
 Sacred to Pallas a delightful grove
 Of poplars skirts the road, which we shall reach
 Ere long; within that grove a fountain flows,
 And meads encircle it; my father's farm
 Is there, and his luxuriant garden plot;
 A shout might reach it from the city-walls.
 There wait, till in the town arrived, we gain
 My father's palace, and when reason bids
 Suppose us there, then ent'ring thou the town, 370
 Ask where Alcinoüs dwells, my valiant Sire.
 Well known is his abode, so that with ease
 A child might lead thee to it, for in nought
 The other houses of our land the house
 Resemble, in which dwells the Hero, King
 Alcinoüs. Once within the court received
 Pause not, but, with swift pace advancing, seek
 My mother; she beside a column sits
 In the hearth's blaze, twirling her fleecy threads
 Tinged with sea-purple, bright, magnificent! 380
 With all her maidens orderly behind.
 There also stands my father's throne, on which
 Seated, he drinks and banquets like a God.
 Pass that; then suppliant clasp my mother's knees,
 So shalt thou quickly win a glad return
 To thy own home, however far remote.
 Her favour, once, and her kind aid secured,
 Thenceforth thou may'st expect thy friends to see,
 Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.
 So saying, she with her splendid scourge the mules 390
 Lash'd onward. They (the stream soon left behind)
 With even footsteps graceful smote the ground;
 But so she ruled them, managing with art
 The scourge, as not to leave afar, although
 Following on foot, Ulysses and her train.
 The sun had now declined, when in that grove
 Renown'd, to Pallas sacred, they arrived,
 In which Ulysses sat, and fervent thus
 Sued to the daughter of Jove Ægis-arm'd.
 Daughter invincible of Jove supreme! 400

Oh, hear me! Hear me now, because when erst
The mighty Shaker of the shores incensed
Toss'd me from wave to wave, thou heard'st me not.
Grant me, among Phæacia's sons, to find
Benevolence and pity of my woes!

He spake, whose pray'r well-pleas'd the Goddess heard,
But, rev'rencing the brother of her sire,²⁴
Appear'd not to Ulysses yet, whom he
Pursued with fury to his native shores.

²³ In the Original, she calls him, pappa! a more natural stile of address and more endearing. But ancient as this appellative is, it is also so familiar in modern use, that the Translator feared to hazard it.

²⁴ Neptune.

BOOK VII

ARGUMENT

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

Such pray'r Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd,
To Pallas made, meantime the virgin, drawn
By her stout mules, Phæacia's city reach'd,
And, at her father's house arrived, the car
Stay'd in the vestibule; her brothers five,
All godlike youths, assembling quick around,
Released the mules, and bore the raiment in.
Meantime, to her own chamber she return'd,
Where, soon as she arrived, an antient dame
Eurymedusa, by peculiar charge 10
Attendant on that service, kindled fire.
Sea-rovers her had from Epirus brought
Long since, and to Alcinoüs she had fall'n
By public gift, for that he ruled, supreme,
Phæacia, and as oft as he harangued
The multitude, was rev'renced as a God.
She waited on the fair Nausicaa, she
Her fuel kindled, and her food prepared.
And now Ulysses from his seat arose
To seek the city, around whom, his guard 20
Benevolent, Minerva, cast a cloud,
Lest, haply, some Phæacian should presume
T' insult the Chief, and question whence he came.
But ere he enter'd yet the pleasant town,
Minerva azure-eyed met him, in form
A blooming maid, bearing her pitcher forth.
She stood before him, and the noble Chief
Ulysses, of the Goddess thus enquired.
Daughter! wilt thou direct me to the house
Of brave Alcinoüs, whom this land obeys? 30
For I have here arrived, after long toil,
And from a country far remote, a guest
To all who in Phæacia dwell, unknown.

To whom the Goddess of the azure-eyes.
 The mansion of thy search, stranger revered!
 Myself will shew thee; for not distant dwells
 Alcinoüs from my father's own abode:
 But hush! be silent—I will lead the way;
 Mark no man; question no man; for the sight
 Of strangers is unusual here, and cold 40
 The welcome by this people shown to such.
 They, trusting in swift ships, by the free grant
 Of Neptune traverse his wide waters, borne
 As if on wings, or with the speed of thought.
 So spake the Goddess, and with nimble pace
 Led on, whose footsteps he, as quick, pursued.
 But still the seaman-throng through whom he pass'd
 Perceiv'd him not; Minerva, Goddess dread,
 That sight forbidding them, whose eyes she dimm'd
 With darkness shed miraculous around 50
 Her fav'rite Chief. Ulysses, wond'ring, mark'd
 Their port, their ships, their forum, the resort
 Of Heroes, and their battlements sublime
 Fenced with sharp stakes around, a glorious show!
 But when the King's august abode he reach'd,
 Minerva azure-eyed, then, thus began.
 My father! thou behold'st the house to which
 Thou bad'st me lead thee. Thou shalt find our Chiefs
 And high-born Princes banqueting within.
 But enter fearing nought, for boldest men 60
 Speed ever best, come whencesoe'er they may.
 First thou shalt find the Queen, known by her name
 Areta; lineal in descent from those
 Who gave Alcinoüs birth, her royal spouse.
 Neptune begat Nausithoüs, at the first,
 On Peribæa, loveliest of her sex,
 Latest-born daughter of Eurymedon,
 Heroic King of the proud giant race,
 Who, losing all his impious people, shared
 The same dread fate himself. Her Neptune lov'd, 70
 To whom she bore a son, the mighty prince
 Nausithoüs, in his day King of the land.
 Nausithoüs himself two sons begat,
 Rhexenor and Alcinoüs. Phoebus slew
 Rhexenor at his home, a bridegroom yet,
 Who, father of no son, one daughter left,
 Areta, wedded to Alcinoüs now,
 And whom the Sov'reign in such honour holds,
 As woman none enjoys of all on earth

Existing, subjects of an husband's pow'r. 80
Like veneration she from all receives
Unfeign'd, from her own children, from himself
Alcinoüs, and from all Phæacia's race,
Who, gazing on her as she were divine,
Shout when she moves in progress through the town.
For she no wisdom wants, but sits, herself,
Arbitress of such contests as arise
Between her fav'rites, and decides aright.
Her count'nance once and her kind aid secured,
Thou may'st thenceforth expect thy friends to see, 90
Thy dwelling, and thy native soil again.

So Pallas spake, Goddess cærulean-eyed,
And o'er the untillable and barren Deep
Departing, Scheria left, land of delight,
Whence reaching Marathon, and Athens next,
She pass'd into Erectheus' fair abode.
Ulysses, then, toward the palace moved
Of King Alcinoüs, but immers'd in thought
Stood, first, and paused, ere with his foot he press'd
The brazen threshold; for a light he saw 100
As of the sun or moon illuming clear
The palace of Phæacia's mighty King.
Walls plated bright with brass, on either side
Stretch'd from the portal to th' interior house,
With azure cornice crown'd; the doors were gold
Which shut the palace fast; silver the posts
Rear'd on a brazen threshold, and above,
The lintels, silver, architraved with gold.
Mastiffs, in gold and silver, lined the approach
On either side, by art celestial framed 110
Of Vulcan, guardians of Alcinoüs' gate
For ever, unobnoxious to decay.
Sheer from the threshold to the inner house
Fixt thrones the walls, through all their length, adorn'd,
With mantles overspread of subtlest warp
Transparent, work of many a female hand.
On these the princes of Phæacia sat,
Holding perpetual feasts, while golden youths
On all the sumptuous altars stood, their hands
With burning torches charged, which, night by night, 120
Shed radiance over all the festive throng.
Full fifty female menials serv'd the King
In household offices; the rapid mills
These turning, pulverize the mellow'd grain,
Those, seated orderly, the purple fleece

Wind off, or ply the loom, restless as leaves
 Of lofty poplars fluttering in the breeze;
 Bright as with oil the new-wrought texture shone.²⁵
 Far as Phæacian mariners all else
 Surpass, the swift ship urging through the floods, 130
 So far in tissue-work the women pass
 All others, by Minerva's self endow'd
 With richest fancy and superior skill.
 Without the court, and to the gates adjoin'd
 A spacious garden lay, fenced all around
 Secure, four acres measuring complete.
 There grew luxuriant many a lofty tree,
 Pomegranate, pear, the apple blushing bright,
 The honied fig, and unctuous olive smooth.
 Those fruits, nor winter's cold nor summer's heat 140
 Fear ever, fail not, wither not, but hang
 Perennial, whose unceasing zephyr breathes
 Gently on all, enlarging these, and those
 Maturing genial; in an endless course
 Pears after pears to full dimensions swell,
 Figs follow figs, grapes clust'ring grow again
 Where clusters grew, and (ev'ry apple stript)
 The boughs soon tempt the gath'rer as before.
 There too, well-rooted, and of fruit profuse,
 His vineyard grows; part, wide-extended, basks, 150
 In the sun's beams; the arid level glows;
 In part they gather, and in part they tread
 The wine-press, while, before the eye, the grapes
 Here put their blossom forth, there, gather fast
 Their blackness. On the garden's verge extreme
 Flow'rs of all hues smile all the year, arranged
 With neatest art judicious, and amid
 The lovely scene two fountains welling forth,
 One visits, into ev'ry part diffus'd,
 The garden-ground, the other soft beneath 160
 The threshold steals into the palace-court,
 Whence ev'ry citizen his vase supplies.
 Such were the ample blessings on the house
 Of King Alcinoüs by the Gods bestow'd.
 Ulysses wond'ring stood, and when, at length,
 Silent he had the whole fair scene admired,
 With rapid step enter'd the royal gate.
 The Chiefs he found and Senators within
 Libation pouring to the vigilant spy
 Mercurius, whom with wine they worshipp'd last 170
 Of all the Gods, and at the hour of rest.

Ulysses, toil-worn Hero, through the house
Pass'd undelaying, by Minerva thick
With darkness circumfus'd, till he arrived
Where King Alcinoüs and Areta sat.
Around Areta's knees his arms he cast,
And, in that moment, broken clear away
The cloud all went, shed on him from above.
Dumb sat the guests, seeing the unknown Chief,
And wond'ring gazed. He thus his suit preferr'd. 180

Areta, daughter of the Godlike Prince
Rhexenor! suppliant at thy knees I fall,
Thy royal spouse imploring, and thyself,
(After ten thousand toils) and these your guests,
To whom heav'n grant felicity, and to leave
Their treasures to their babes, with all the rights
And honours, by the people's suffrage, theirs!
But oh vouchsafe me, who have wanted long
And ardent wish'd my home, without delay
Safe conduct to my native shores again! 190

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

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

Soon as those words Alcinoüs heard, the King,
Upraising by his hand the prudent Chief
Ulysses from the hearth, he made him sit, 210
On a bright throne, displacing for his sake
Laodamas his son, the virtuous youth
Who sat beside him, and whom most he lov'd.
And now, a maiden charg'd with golden ew'r
And with an argent laver, pouring, first,
Pure water on his hands, supply'd him, next,
With a resplendent table, which the chaste

Directress of the stores furnish'd with bread
And dainties, remnants of the last regale.
Then ate the Hero toil-inured, and drank, 220
And to his herald thus Alcinoüs spake.

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

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

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

He may revisit, joyful and with speed, 240
His native shore, however far remote.

No inconvenience let him feel or harm,
Ere his arrival; but, arrived, thenceforth
He must endure whatever lot the Fates
Spun for him in the moment of his birth.
But should he prove some Deity from heav'n
Descended, then the Immortals have in view
Designs not yet apparent; for the Gods
Have ever from of old reveal'd themselves
At our solemnities, have on our seats 250
Sat with us evident, and shared the feast;
And even if a single traveller

Of the Phæacians meet them, all reserve
They lay aside; for with the Gods we boast
As near affinity as do themselves
The Cyclops, or the Giant race profane.²⁶

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Alcinoüs! think not so. Resemblance none
In figure or in lineaments I bear
To the immortal tenants of the skies, 260
But to the sons of earth; if ye have known
A man afflicted with a weight of woe
Peculiar, let me be with him compared;

Woes even passing his could I relate,
And all inflicted on me by the Gods.
But let me eat, comfortless as I am,
Uninterrupted; for no call is loud
As that of hunger in the ears of man;
Importunate, unreas'nable, it constrains
His notice, more than all his woes beside. 270

So, I much sorrow feel, yet not the less
Hear I the blatant appetite demand
Due sustenance, and with a voice that drowns
E'en all my suff'rings, till itself be fill'd.
But expedite ye at the dawn of day
My safe return into my native land,
After much mis'ry; and let life itself
Forsake me, may I but once more behold
All that is mine, in my own lofty abode.

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

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

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Oh Queen! the task were difficult to unfold
In all its length the story of my woes,
For I have num'rous from the Gods receiv'd;
But I will answer thee as best I may.
There is a certain isle, Ogygia, placed 300
Far distant in the Deep; there dwells, by man
Alike unvisited, and by the Gods,
Calypso, beauteous nymph, but deeply skill'd
In artifice, and terrible in pow'r,
Daughter of Atlas. Me alone my fate
Her miserable inmate made, when Jove
Had riv'n asunder with his candent bolt
My bark in the mid-sea. There perish'd all
The valiant partners of my toils, and I

My vessel's keel embracing day and night 310
 With folded arms, nine days was borne along.
 But on the tenth dark night, as pleas'd the Gods,
 They drove me to Ogygia, where resides
 Calypso, beauteous nymph, dreadful in pow'r;
 She rescued, cherish'd, fed me, and her wish
 Was to confer on me immortal life,
 Exempt for ever from the sap of age.
 But me her offer'd boon sway'd not. Sev'n years
 I there abode continual, with my tears
 Bedewing ceaseless my ambrosial robes, 320
 Calypso's gift divine; but when, at length,
 (Sev'n years elaps'd) the circling eighth arrived,
 She then, herself, my quick departure thence
 Advised, by Jove's own mandate overaw'd,
 Which even her had influenced to a change.
 On a well-corded raft she sent me forth
 With num'rous presents; bread she put and wine
 On board, and cloath'd me in immortal robes;
 She sent before me also a fair wind
 Fresh-blowing, but not dang'rous. Sev'nteen days 330
 I sail'd the flood continual, and descried,
 On the eighteenth, your shadowy mountains tall
 When my exulting heart sprang at the sight,
 All wretched as I was, and still ordain'd
 To strive with difficulties many and hard
 From adverse Neptune; he the stormy winds
 Exciting opposite, my wat'ry way
 Impeded, and the waves heav'd to a bulk
 Immeasurable, such as robb'd me soon
 Deep-groaning, of the raft, my only hope; 340
 For her the tempest scatter'd, and myself
 This ocean measur'd swimming, till the winds
 And mighty waters cast me on your shore.
 Me there emerging, the huge waves had dash'd
 Full on the land, where, incommodious most,
 The shore presented only roughest rocks,
 But, leaving it, I swam the Deep again,
 Till now, at last, a river's gentle stream
 Receiv'd me, by no rocks deform'd, and where
 No violent winds the shelter'd bank annoy'd. 350
 I flung myself on shore, exhausted, weak,
 Needing repose; ambrosial night came on,
 When from the Jove-descended stream withdrawn,
 I in a thicket lay'd me down on leaves
 Which I had heap'd together, and the Gods

O'erwhelm'd my eye-lids with a flood of sleep.
 There under wither'd leaves, forlorn, I slept
 All the long night, the morning and the noon,
 But balmy sleep, at the decline of day,
 Broke from me; then, your daughter's train I heard 360
 Sporting, with whom she also sported, fair
 And graceful as the Gods. To her I kneel'd.
 She, following the dictates of a mind
 Ingenuous, pass'd in her behaviour all
 Which even ye could from an age like hers
 Have hoped; for youth is ever indiscrete.
 She gave me plenteous food, with richest wine
 Refresh'd my spirit, taught me where to bathe,
 And cloath'd me as thou seest; thus, though a prey
 To many sorrows, I have told thee truth. 370

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

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

So spake Ulysses, to whom thus the King.
 I bear not, stranger! in my breast an heart
 Causeless irascible; for at all times
 A temp'rate equanimity is best.
 And oh, I would to heav'n, that, being such
 As now thou art, and of one mind with me,
 Thou would'st accept my daughter, would'st become
 My son-in-law, and dwell contented here! 390
 House would I give thee, and possessions too,
 Were such thy choice; else, if thou chuse it not,
 No man in all Phæacia shall by force
 Detain thee. Jupiter himself forbid!
 For proof, I will appoint thee convoy hence
 To-morrow; and while thou by sleep subdued
 Shalt on thy bed repose, they with their oars
 Shall brush the placid flood, till thou arrive
 At home, or at what place soe'er thou would'st,
 Though far more distant than Eubœa lies, 400
 Remotest isle from us, by the report

Of ours, who saw it when they thither bore
Golden-hair'd Rhadamanthus o'er the Deep,
To visit earth-born Tityus. To that isle
They went; they reach'd it, and they brought him thence
Back to Phæacia, in one day, with ease.
Thou also shalt be taught what ships I boast
Unmatch'd in swiftness, and how far my crews
Excel, upturning with their oars the brine.

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

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

Thus they conferr'd; and now Areta bade
Her fair attendants dress a fleecy couch
Under the portico, with purple rugs
Resplendent, and with arras spread beneath,
And over all with cloaks of shaggy pile.
Forth went the maidens, bearing each a torch,
And, as she bade, prepared in haste a couch
Of depth commodious, then, returning, gave
Ulysses welcome summons to repose.

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

²⁵ [Καιροσέων δ' οθονεων ἀπολείβεται ὕγρον ἔλαιον.](#)

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

²⁶ The Scholiast explains the passage thus—We resemble the Gods in righteousness as much as the Cyclops and Giants resembled each other in impiety. But in this sense of it there is something intricate and contrary to Homer's manner. We have seen that they derived themselves from Neptune, which sufficiently justifies the above interpretation.

BOOK VIII

ARGUMENT

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

But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Blush'd in the East, then from his bed arose
The sacred might of the Phæacian King.
Then uprose also, city-waster Chief,
Ulysses, whom the King Alcinoüs
Led forth to council at the ships convened.
There, side by side, on polish'd stones they sat
Frequent; meantime, Minerva in the form
Of King Alcinoüs' herald ranged the town,
With purpose to accelerate the return 10
Of brave Ulysses to his native home,
And thus to ev'ry Chief the Goddess spake.

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

So saying, she roused the people, and at once
The seats of all the senate-court were fill'd
With fast-assembling throngs, no few of whom 20
Had mark'd Ulysses with admiring eyes.
Then, Pallas o'er his head and shoulders broad
Diffusing grace celestial, his whole form
Dilated, and to the statelier height advanced,
That worthier of all rev'rence he might seem
To the Phæacians, and might many a feat
Atchieve, with which they should assay his force.

When, therefore, the assembly now was full,
Alcinoüs, them addressing, thus began.
Phæacian Chiefs and Senators! I speak 30
The dictates of my mind, therefore attend.
This guest, unknown to me, hath, wand'ring, found
My palace, either from the East arrived,

Or from some nation on our western side.
 Safe conduct home he asks, and our consent
 Here wishes ratified, whose quick return
 Be it our part, as usual, to promote;
 For at no time the stranger, from what coast
 Soe'er, who hath resorted to our doors,
 Hath long complain'd of his detention here. 40
 Haste—draw ye down into the sacred Deep
 A vessel of prime speed, and, from among
 The people, fifty and two youths select,
 Approved the best; then, lashing fast the oars,
 Leave her, that at my palace ye may make
 Short feast, for which myself will all provide.
 Thus I enjoin the crew; but as for those
 Of sceptred rank, I bid them all alike
 To my own board, that here we may regale
 The stranger nobly, and let none refuse. 50
 Call, too, Demodocus, the bard divine,
 To share my banquet, whom the Gods have blest
 With pow'rs of song delectable, unmatch'd
 By any, when his genius once is fired.
 He ceas'd, and led the way, whom follow'd all
 The sceptred senators, while to the house
 An herald hasted of the bard divine.
 Then, fifty mariners and two, from all
 The rest selected, to the coast repair'd,
 And, from her station on the sea-bank, launched 60
 The galley down into the sacred Deep.
 They placed the canvas and the mast on board,
 Arranged the oars, unfurl'd the shining sail,
 And, leaving her in depth of water moor'd,
 All sought the palace of Alcinoüs.
 There, soon, the portico, the court, the hall
 Were fill'd with multitudes of young and old,
 For whose regale the mighty monarch slew
 Two beeves, twelve sheep, and twice four fatted brawns.
 They slay'd them first, then busily their task 70
 Administ'ring, prepared the joyous feast.
 And now the herald came, leading with care
 The tuneful bard; dear to the muse was he,
 Who yet appointed him both good and ill;
 Took from him sight, but gave him strains divine.
 For him, Pontonoüs in the midst disposed
 An argent-studded throne, thrusting it close
 To a tall column, where he hung his lyre
 Above his head, and taught him where it hung.

He set before him, next, a polish'd board 80
 And basket, and a goblet fill'd with wine
 For his own use, and at his own command.
 Then, all assail'd at once the ready feast,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst they felt,
 Then came the muse, and roused the bard to sing
 Exploits of men renown'd; it was a song,
 In that day, to the highest heav'n extoll'd.
 He sang of a dispute kindled between
 The son of Peleus, and Laertes²⁷ son,
 Both seated at a feast held to the Gods. 90
 That contest Agamemnon, King of men,
 Between the noblest of Achaia's host
 Hearing, rejoiced; for when in Pytho erst
 He pass'd the marble threshold to consult
 The oracle of Apollo, such dispute
 The voice divine had to his ear announced;
 For then it was that, first, the storm of war
 Came rolling on, ordain'd long time to afflict
 Troy and the Grecians, by the will of Jove.
 So sang the bard illustrious; then his robe 100
 Of purple dye with both hands o'er his head
 Ulysses drew, behind its ample folds
 Veiling his face, through fear to be observed
 By the Phæacians weeping at the song;
 And ever as the bard harmonious ceased,
 He wiped his tears, and, drawing from his brows
 The mantle, pour'd libation to the Gods.
 But when the Chiefs (for they delighted heard
 Those sounds) solicited again the bard,
 And he renew'd the strain, then cov'ring close 110
 His count'nance, as before, Ulysses wept.
 Thus, unperceiv'd by all, the Hero mourn'd,
 Save by Alcinoüs; he alone his tears,
 (Beside him seated) mark'd, and his deep sighs
 O'erhearing, the Phæacians thus bespake.
 Phæacia's Chiefs and Senators, attend!
 We have regaled sufficient, and the harp
 Heard to satiety, companion sweet
 And seasonable of the festive hour.
 Now go we forth for honourable proof 120
 Of our address in games of ev'ry kind,
 That this our guest may to his friends report,
 At home arriv'd, that none like us have learn'd
 To leap, to box, to wrestle, and to run.
 So saying, he led them forth, whose steps the guests

All follow'd, and the herald hanging high
 The sprightly lyre, took by his hand the bard
 Demodocus, whom he the self-same way
 Conducted forth, by which the Chiefs had gone
 Themselves, for that great spectacle prepared. 130
 They sought the forum; countless swarm'd the throng
 Behind them as they went, and many a youth
 Strong and courageous to the strife arose.
 Upstood Acroneus and Ocyalus,
 Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, after whom
 Anchialus with Anabeesineus
 Arose, Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus bold,
 Amphialus and Thöon. Then arose,
 In aspect dread as homicidal Mars,
 Euryalus, and for his graceful form 140
 (After Laodamas) distinguish'd most
 Of all Phæacia's sons, Naubolides.
 Three also from Alcinoüs sprung, arose,
 Laodamas, his eldest; Halius, next,
 His second-born; and godlike Clytoneus.
 Of these, some started for the runner's prize.
 They gave the race its limits.²⁸ All at once
 Along the dusty champaign swift they flew.
 But Clytoneus, illustrious youth, outstripp'd
 All competition; far as mules surpass 150
 Slow oxen furrowing the fallow ground,
 So far before all others he arrived
 Victorious, where the throng'd spectators stood.
 Some tried the wrestler's toil severe, in which
 Euryalus superior proved to all.
 In the long leap Amphialus prevail'd;
 Elatreus most successful hurled the quoit,
 And at the cestus,²⁹ last, the noble son
 Of Scheria's King, Laodamas excell'd.
 When thus with contemplation of the games 160
 All had been gratified, Alcinoüs' son
 Laodamas, arising, then address'd.
 Friends! ask we now the stranger, if he boast
 Proficiency in aught. His figure seems
 Not ill; in thighs, and legs, and arms he shews
 Much strength, and in his brawny neck; nor youth
 Hath left him yet, though batter'd he appears
 With num'rous troubles, and misfortune-flaw'd.
 Nor know I hardships in the world so sure
 To break the strongest down, as those by sea. 170
 Then answer thus Euryalus return'd.

Thou hast well said, Laodamas; thyself
Approaching, speak to him, and call him forth.

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

Stand forth, oh guest, thou also; prove thy skill
(If any such thou hast) in games like ours,
Which, likeliest, thou hast learn'd; for greater praise
Hath no man, while he lives, than that he know 180
His feet to exercise and hands aright.
Come then; make trial; scatter wide thy cares,
We will not hold thee long; the ship is launch'd
Already, and the crew stand all prepared.

To whom replied the wily Chief renown'd
Wherefore, as in derision, have ye call'd
Me forth, Laodamas, to these exploits?
No games have I, but many a grief, at heart,
And with far other struggles worn, here sit
Desirous only of conveyance home, 190
For which both King and people I implore.

Then him Euryalus aloud reproach'd.
I well believ'd it, friend! in thee the guise
I see not of a man expert in feats
Athletic, of which various are perform'd
In ev'ry land; thou rather seem'st with ships
Familiar; one, accustom'd to controul
Some crew of trading mariners; well-learn'd
In stowage, pilotage, and wealth acquired
By rapine, but of no gymnastic pow'rs. 200

To whom Ulysses, frowning dark, replied.
Thou hast ill spoken, sir, and like a man
Regardless whom he wrongs. Therefore the Gods
Give not endowments graceful in each kind,
Of body, mind, and utt'rance, all to one.
This man in figure less excels, yet Jove
Crowns him with eloquence; his hearers charm'd
Behold him, while with modest confidence
He bears the prize of fluent speech from all,
And in the streets is gazed on as a God! 210
Another, in his form the Pow'rs above
Resembles, but no grace around his words
Twines itself elegant. So, thou in form
Hast excellence to boast; a God, employ'd
To make a master-piece in human shape,
Could but produce proportions such as thine;
Yet hast thou an untutor'd intellect.

Thou much hast moved me; thy unhandsome phrase
 Hath roused my wrath; I am not, as thou say'st,
 A novice in these sports, but took the lead 220
 In all, while youth and strength were on my side.
 But I am now in bands of sorrow held,
 And of misfortune, having much endured
 In war, and buffeting the boist'rous waves.
 Yet, though with mis'ry worn, I will essay
 My strength among you; for thy words had teeth
 Whose bite hath pinch'd and pain'd me to the proof.

He said; and mantled as he was, a quoit
 Upstarting, seized, in bulk and weight all those
 Transcending far, by the Phæacians used. 230
 Swiftly he swung, and from his vig'rous hand
 Sent it. Loud sang the stone, and as it flew
 The maritime Phæacians low inclined
 Their heads beneath it; over all the marks,
 And far beyond them, sped the flying rock.
 Minerva, in a human form, the cast
 Prodigious measur'd, and aloud exclaim'd.

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

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

Young men, reach this, and I will quickly heave
 Another such, or yet a heavier quoit.
 Then, come the man whose courage prompts him forth
 To box, to wrestle with me, or to run; 250
 For ye have chafed me much, and I decline
 No strife with any here, but challenge all
 Phæacia, save Laodamas alone.
 He is mine host. Who combats with his friend?
 To call to proof of hardiment the man
 Who entertains him in a foreign land,
 Would but evince the challenger a fool,
 Who, so, would cripple his own interest there.
 As for the rest, I none refuse, scorn none,
 But wish for trial of you, and to match 260
 In opposition fair my force with yours.
 There is no game athletic in the use
 Of all mankind, too difficult for me;

I handle well the polish'd bow, and first
 Amid a thousand foes strike whom I mark,
 Although a throng of warriors at my side
 Imbattled, speed their shafts at the same time.
 Of all Achaia's sons who erst at Troy
 Drew bow, the sole who bore the prize from me
 Was Philoctetes; I resign it else 270
 To none now nourish'd with the fruits of earth.
 Yet mean I no comparison of myself
 With men of antient times, with Hercules,
 Or with Oechalian Eurytus, who, both,
 The Gods themselves in archery defied.
 Soon, therefore, died huge Eurytus, ere yet
 Old age he reach'd; him, angry to be call'd
 To proof of archership, Apollo slew.
 But if ye name the spear, mine flies a length
 By no man's arrow reach'd; I fear no foil 280
 From the Phæacians, save in speed alone;
 For I have suffer'd hardships, dash'd and drench'd
 By many a wave, nor had I food on board
 At all times, therefore I am much unstrung.
 He spake; and silent the Phæacians sat,
 Of whom alone Alcinoüs thus replied.
 Since, stranger, not ungraceful is thy speech,
 Who hast but vindicated in our ears
 Thy question'd prowess, angry that this youth
 Reproach'd thee in the presence of us all, 290
 That no man qualified to give his voice
 In public, might affront thy courage more;
 Now mark me, therefore, that in time to come,
 While feasting with thy children and thy spouse,
 Thou may'st inform the Heroes of thy land
 Even of our proficiency in arts
 By Jove enjoin'd us in our father's days.
 We boast not much the boxer's skill, nor yet
 The wrestler's; but light-footed in the race
 Are we, and navigators well-inform'd. 300
 Our pleasures are the feast, the harp, the dance,
 Garments for change; the tepid bath; the bed.
 Come, ye Phæacians, beyond others skill'd
 To tread the circus with harmonious steps,
 Come, play before us; that our guest, arrived
 In his own country, may inform his friends
 How far in seamanship we all excel,
 In running, in the dance, and in the song.
 Haste! bring ye to Demodocus his lyre

Clear-toned, left somewhere in our hall at home. 310

So spake the godlike King, at whose command
The herald to the palace quick return'd
To seek the charming lyre. Meantime arose
Nine arbiters, appointed to intend
The whole arrangement of the public games,
To smooth the circus floor, and give the ring
Its compass, widening the attentive throng.
Ere long the herald came, bearing the harp,
With which Demodocus supplied, advanced
Into the middle area, around whom 320
Stood blooming youths, all skilful in the dance.
With footsteps justly timed all smote at once
The sacred floor; Ulysses wonder-fixt,
The ceaseless play of twinkling³⁰ feet admired.

Then, tuning his sweet chords, Demodocus
A jocund strain began, his theme, the loves
Of Mars and Cytherea chaplet-crown'd;
How first, clandestine, they embraced beneath
The roof of Vulcan, her, by many a gift
Seduced, Mars won, and with adult'rous lust 330
The bed dishonour'd of the King of fire.

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

The net prepared, he bore it, fiery-wroth, 340
To his own chamber and his nuptial couch,
Where, stretching them from post to post, he wrapp'd
With those fine meshes all his bed around,
And hung them num'rous from the roof, diffused
Like spiders' filaments, which not the Gods
Themselves could see, so subtle were the toils.

When thus he had encircled all his bed
On ev'ry side, he feign'd a journey thence
To Lemnos, of all cities that adorn
The earth, the city that he favours most. 350
Nor kept the God of the resplendent reins
Mars, drowsy watch, but seeing that the famed
Artificer of heav'n had left his home,
Flew to the house of Vulcan, hot to enjoy
The Goddess with the wreath-encircled brows.

She, newly from her potent Sire return'd
The son of Saturn, sat. Mars, ent'ring, seiz'd
Her hand, hung on it, and thus urg'd his suit.

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

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

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

And now the glorious artist, ere he yet 370

Had reach'd the Lemnian isle, limping, return'd
From his feign'd journey, for his spy the sun
Had told him all. With aching heart he sought
His home, and, standing in the vestibule,
Frantic with indignation roar'd to heav'n,
And roar'd again, summoning all the Gods.—

Oh Jove! and all ye Pow'rs for ever blest!
Here; hither look, that ye may view a sight
Ludicrous, yet too monstrous to be borne,
How Venus always with dishonour loads 380

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

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

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

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

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

Bad works speed ill. The slow o'ertakes the swift.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then thus the limping smith far-famed replied. 430
Earth-circler Neptune, spare me that request.
Lame suitor, lame security.³¹ What bands
Could I devise for thee among the Gods,
Should Mars, emancipated once, escape,
Leaving both debt and durance, far behind?

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

To whom the glorious artist of the skies.
Thou must not, canst not, shalt not be refused. 440

So saying, the might of Vulcan loos'd the snare,
And they, detain'd by those coercive bands
No longer, from the couch upstarting, flew,
Mars into Thrace, and to her Paphian home
The Queen of smiles, where deep in myrtle groves
Her incense-breathing altar stands embow'r'd.
Her there, the Graces laved, and oils diffused

O'er all her form, ambrosial, such as add
Fresh beauty to the Gods for ever young,
And cloath'd her in the loveliest robes of heav'n. 450

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

Alcinoüs, then, (for in the dance they pass'd
All others) call'd his sons to dance alone,
Halius and Laodamas; they gave
The purple ball into their hands, the work
Exact of Polybus; one, re-supine,
Upcast it high toward the dusky clouds,
The other, springing into air, with ease 460
Received it, ere he sank to earth again.
When thus they oft had sported with the ball
Thrown upward, next, with nimble interchange
They pass'd it to each other many a time,
Footing the plain, while ev'ry youth of all
The circus clapp'd his hands, and from beneath
The din of stamping feet fill'd all the air.

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

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

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators, attend!
Wisdom beyond the common stint I mark
In this our guest; good cause in my account,
For which we should present him with a pledge
Of hospitality and love. The Chiefs 480
Are twelve, who, highest in command, controul
The people, and the thirteenth Chief am I.
Bring each a golden talent, with a vest
Well-bleach'd, and tunic; gratified with these,
The stranger to our banquet shall repair
Exulting; bring them all without delay;
And let Euryalus by word and gift
Appease him, for his speech was unadvised.

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

Alcinoüs! o'er Phæacia's sons supreme!
I will appease our guest, as thou command'st.

This sword shall be his own, the blade all steel.
The hilt of silver, and the unsullied sheath
Of iv'ry recent from the carver's hand,
A gift like this he shall not need despise.

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

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

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

He ended, and athwart his shoulders threw
The weapon bright emboss'd. Now sank the sun,
And those rich gifts arrived, which to the house
Of King Alcinoüs the heralds bore.
Alcinoüs' sons receiv'd them, and beside
Their royal mother placed the precious charge.
The King then led the way, at whose abode
Arrived, again they press'd their lofty thrones,
And to Areta thus the monarch spake.

Haste, bring a coffer; bring thy best, and store 520
A mantle and a sumptuous vest within;
Warm for him, next, a brazen bath, by which
Refresh'd, and viewing in fair order placed
The noble gifts by the Phæacian Lords
Conferr'd on him, he may the more enjoy
Our banquet, and the bard's harmonious song.
I give him also this my golden cup
Splendid, elaborate; that, while he lives
What time he pours libation forth to Jove
And all the Gods, he may remember me. 530

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

And raiment, gifts of the Phæacian Chiefs, 540

With her own gifts, the mantle and the vest,
And in wing'd accents to Ulysses said.

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

Which when Ulysses heard, Hero renown'd,
Adjusting close the lid, he cast a cord
Around it which with many a mazy knot
He tied, by Circe taught him long before. 550

And now, the mistress of the household charge
Summon'd him to his bath; glad he beheld
The steaming vase, uncustom'd to its use
E'er since his voyage from the isle of fair
Calypso, although, while a guest with her,
Ever familiar with it, as a God.
Laved by attendant damsels, and with oil
Refresh'd, he put his sumptuous tunic on
And mantle, and proceeding from the bath
To the symposium, join'd the num'rous guests; 560
But, as he pass'd, the Princess all divine
Beside the pillars of the portal, lost
In admiration of his graceful form,
Stood, and in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

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

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

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

Then, carving forth a portion from the loins
Of a huge brawn, of which uneaten still
Large part and delicate remain'd, thus spake
Ulysses—Herald! bear it to the bard
For his regale, whom I will soon embrace

In spite of sorrow; for respect is due
And veneration to the sacred bard
From all mankind, for that the muse inspires
Herself his song, and loves the tuneful tribe.

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

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

He ended; then Apollo with full force
Rush'd on Demodocus, and he began
What time the Greeks, first firing their own camp
Steer'd all their galleys from the shore of Troy.
Already, in the horse conceal'd, his band
Around Ulysses sat; for Ilium's sons
Themselves had drawn it to the citadel.
And there the mischief stood. Then, strife arose 620
Among the Trojans compassing the horse,
And threefold was the doubt; whether to cleave
The hollow trunk asunder, or updrawn
Aloft, to cast it headlong from the rocks,
Or to permit the enormous image, kept
Entire, to stand an off'ring to the Gods,
Which was their destined course; for Fate had fix'd
Their ruin sure, when once they had received
Within their walls that engine huge, in which
Sat all the bravest Grecians with the fate 630
Of Ilium charged, and slaughter of her sons.

He sang, how, from the horse effused, the Greeks
Left their capacious ambush, and the town
Made desolate. To others, in his song,
He gave the praise of wasting all beside,
But told how, fierce as Mars, Ulysses join'd
With godlike Menelaus, to the house
Flew of Deiphobus; him there engaged
In direst fight he sang, and through the aid
Of glorious Pallas, conqu'ror over all. 640

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

Phæacian Chiefs and Senators attend!
Now let Demodocus enjoin his harp
Silence, for not alike grateful to all
His music sounds; during our feast, and since 660
The bard divine began, continual flow
The stranger's sorrows, by remembrance caused
Of some great woe which wraps his soul around.

Then, let the bard suspend his song, that all
(As most befits th' occasion) may rejoice,
Both guest and hosts together; since we make
This voyage, and these gifts confer, in proof
Of hospitality and unfeign'd love,
Judging, with all wise men, the stranger-guest
And suppliant worthy of a brother's place. 670

And thou conceal not, artfully reserv'd,
What I shall ask, far better plain declared
Than smother'd close; who art thou? speak thy name,
The name by which thy father, mother, friends
And fellow-citizens, with all who dwell
Around thy native city, in times past
Have known thee; for of all things human none

Lives altogether nameless, whether good
 Or whether bad, but ev'ry man receives
 Ev'n in the moment of his birth, a name. 680
 Thy country, people, city, tell; the mark
 At which my ships, intelligent, shall aim,
 That they may bear thee thither; for our ships
 No pilot need or helm, as ships are wont,
 But know, themselves, our purpose; know beside
 All cities, and all fruitful regions well
 Of all the earth, and with dark clouds involv'd
 Plough rapid the rough Deep, fearless of harm,
 (Whate'er betide) and of disast'rous wreck.
 Yet thus, long since, my father I have heard 690
 Nausithoüs speaking; Neptune, he would say,
 Is angry with us, for that safe we bear
 Strangers of ev'ry nation to their home;
 And he foretold a time when he would smite
 In vengeance some Phæacian gallant bark
 Returning after convoy of her charge,
 And fix her in the sable flood, transform'd
 Into a mountain, right before the town.
 So spake my hoary Sire, which let the God
 At his own pleasure do, or leave undone. 700
 But tell me truth, and plainly. Where have been
 Thy wand'rings? in what regions of the earth
 Hast thou arrived? what nations hast thou seen,
 What cities? say, how many hast thou found
 Harsh, savage and unjust? how many, kind
 To strangers, and disposed to fear the Gods?
 Say also, from what secret grief of heart
 Thy sorrows flow, oft as thou hear'st the fate
 Of the Achaians, or of Ilium sung?
 That fate the Gods prepared; they spin the thread 710
 Of man's destruction, that in after days
 The bard may make the sad event his theme.
 Perish'd thy father or thy brother there?
 Or hast thou at the siege of Ilium lost
 Father-in-law, or son-in-law? for such
 Are next and dearest to us after those
 Who share our own descent; or was the dead
 Thy bosom-friend, whose heart was as thy own?
 For worthy as a brother of our love
 The constant friend and the discrete I deem. 720

²⁷ Agamemnon having inquired at Delphos, at what time the Trojan war would end, was answered that the conclusion of it should happen at a time when a dispute should arise between two of his principal commanders. That dispute occurred at the

time here alluded to, Achilles recommending force as most likely to reduce the city, and Ulysses stratagem.

²⁸ Τοισι δ' απο νύσσης τετατο δρομος—This expression is by the commentators generally understood to be significant of the effort which they made at starting, but it is not improbable that it relates merely to the measurement of the course, otherwise, καρπαλιμως επετοντο will be tautologous.

²⁹ In boxing.

³⁰ The Translator is indebted to Mr Grey for an epithet more expressive of the original (Μαρμαρυγας) than any other, perhaps, in all our language. See the Ode on the Progress of Poetry.

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

³¹ The original line has received such a variety of interpretations, that a Translator seems free to choose. It has, however, a proverbial turn, which I have endeavoured to preserve, and have adopted the sense of the words which appears best to accord with what immediately follows. Vulcan pleads his own inability to enforce the demand, as a circumstance that made Neptune’s promise unacceptable.

BOOK IX

ARGUMENT

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

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

Magnanimous; nor shall these eyes behold,
Elsewhere, an object dear and sweet as she.
Calypso, beauteous Goddess, in her grot
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused;
Ææan Circe also, skill'd profound
In potent arts, within her palace long
Detain'd me, wishing me her own espoused; 40
But never could they warp my constant mind.

So much our parents and our native soil
Attract us most, even although our lot
Be fair and plenteous in a foreign land.
But come—my painful voyage, such as Jove
Gave me from Ilium, I will now relate.

From Troy the winds bore me to Ismarus,
City of the Ciconians; them I slew,
And laid their city waste; whence bringing forth
Much spoil with all their wives, I portion'd it 50
With equal hand, and each received a share.

Next, I exhorted to immediate flight
My people; but in vain; they madly scorn'd
My sober counsel, and much wine they drank,
And sheep and beeves slew num'rous on the shore.

Meantime, Ciconians to Ciconians call'd,
Their neighbours summoning, a mightier host
And braver, natives of the continent,
Expert, on horses mounted, to maintain
Fierce fight, or if occasion bade, on foot. 60

Num'rous they came as leaves, or vernal flow'rs
At day-spring. Then, by the decree of Jove,
Misfortune found us. At the ships we stood
Piercing each other with the brazen spear,
And till the morning brighten'd into noon,
Few as we were, we yet withstood them all;
But, when the sun verged westward, then the Greeks
Fell back, and the Ciconian host prevail'd.
Six warlike Grecians from each galley's crew
Perish'd in that dread field; the rest escaped. 70

Thus, after loss of many, we pursued
Our course, yet, difficult as was our flight,
Went not till first we had invoked by name
Our friends, whom the Ciconians had destroy'd.
But cloud-assembler Jove assail'd us soon
With a tempestuous North-wind; earth alike
And sea with storms he overhung, and night
Fell fast from heav'n. Their heads deep-plunging oft
Our gallies flew, and rent, and rent again