

ГОМЕР

THE ODYSSEY OF
HOMER, DONE INTO
ENGLISH PROSE

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Done into English Prose**

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Homer

The Odyssey of Homer, Done into English Prose

PREFACE

There would have been less controversy about the proper method of Homeric translation, if critics had recognised that the question is a purely relative one, that of Homer there can be no final translation. The taste and the literary habits of each age demand different qualities in poetry, and therefore a different sort of rendering of Homer. To the men of the time of Elizabeth, Homer would have appeared bald, it seems, and lacking in ingenuity, if he had been presented in his antique simplicity. For the Elizabethan age, Chapman supplied what was then necessary, and the mannerisms that were then deemed of the essence of poetry, namely, daring and luxurious conceits. Thus in Chapman's verse Troy must 'shed her towers for tears of overthrow,' and when the winds toss Odysseus about, their sport must be called 'the horrid tennis.'

In the age of Anne, 'dignity' and 'correctness' had to be given to Homer, and Pope gave them by aid of his dazzling rhetoric, his antitheses, his *netteté*, his command of every conventional and favourite artifice. Without Chapman's conceits, Homer's poems would hardly have been what the Elizabethans took for poetry; without Pope's smoothness, and Pope's points, the Iliad and Odyssey would have seemed rude, and harsh in the age of Anne. These great translations must always live as English poems. As transcripts of Homer they are like pictures drawn from a lost point of view. Chaque siècle depuis le xvi a ue de ce cote son belveder different. Again, when Europe woke to a sense, an almost exaggerated and certainly uncritical sense, of the value of her songs of the people, of all the ballads that Herder, Scott, Lonrot, and the rest collected, it was commonly said that Homer was a ballad-minstrel, that the translator must imitate the simplicity, and even adopt the formulae of the ballad. Hence came the renderings of Maginn, the experiments of Mr. Gladstone, and others. There was some excuse for the error of critics who asked for a Homer in ballad rhyme. The Epic poet, the poet of gods and heroes, did indeed inherit some of the formulae of the earlier Volks-lied. Homer, like the author of The Song of Roland, like the singers of the Kalevala, uses constantly recurring epithets, and repeats, word for word, certain emphatic passages, messages, and so on. That custom is essential in the ballad, it is an accident not the essence of the epic. The epic is a poem of complete and elaborate art, but it still bears some birthmarks, some signs of the early popular chant, out of which it sprung, as the garden-rose springs from the wild stock, When this is recognised the demand for ballad-like simplicity and 'ballad-slang' ceases to exist, and then all Homeric translations in the ballad manner cease to represent our conception of Homer. After the belief in the ballad manner follows the recognition of the romantic vein in Homer, and, as a result, came Mr. Worsley's admirable Odyssey. This masterly translation does all that can be done for the Odyssey in the romantic style. The smoothness of the verse, the wonderful closeness to the original, reproduce all of Homer, in music and in meaning, that can be rendered in English verse. There still, however, seems an aspect Homeric poems, and a demand in connection with Homer to be recognised, and to be satisfied.

Sainte-Beuve says, with reference probably to M. Leconte de Lisle's prose version of the epics, that some people treat the epics too much as if the were sagas. Now the Homeric epics are sagas, but then they are the sagas of the divine heroic age of Greece, and thus are told with an art which is not the art of the Northern poets. The epics are stories about the adventures of men living in most respects like the men of our own race who dwelt in Iceland, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. The epics are, in a way, and as far as manners and institutions are concerned, historical documents. Whoever regards them in this way, must wish to read them exactly as they have reached us, without modern ornament, with nothing added or omitted. He must recognise, with Mr. Matthew Arnold,

that what he now wants, namely, the simple truth about the matter of the poem, can only be given in prose, 'for in a verse translation no original work is any longer recognisable.' It is for this reason that we have attempted to tell once more, in simple prose, the story of Odysseus. We have tried to transfer, not all the truth about the poem, but the historical truth, into English. In this process Homer must lose at least half his charm, his bright and equable speed, the musical current of that narrative, which, like the river of Egypt, flows from an undiscoverable source, and mirrors the temples and the palaces of unforgotten gods and kings. Without this music of verse, only a half truth about Homer can be told, but then it is that half of the truth which, at this moment, it seems most necessary to tell. This is the half of the truth that the translators who use verse cannot easily tell. They MUST be adding to Homer, talking with Pope about 'tracing the mazy lev'ret o'er the lawn,' or with Mr. Worsley about the islands that are 'stars of the blue Aegaeon,' or with Dr. Hawtrey about 'the earth's soft arms,' when Homer says nothing at all about the 'mazy lev'ret,' or the 'stars of the blue Aegaeon,' or the 'soft arms' of earth. It would be impertinent indeed to blame any of these translations in their place. They give that which the romantic reader of poetry, or the student of the age of Anne, looks for in verse; and without tags of this sort, a translation of Homer in verse cannot well be made to hold together.

There can be then, it appears, no final English translation of Homer. In each there must be, in addition to what is Greek and eternal, the element of what is modern, personal, and fleeting. Thus we trust that there may be room for 'the pale and far-off shadow of a prose translation,' of which the aim is limited and humble. A prose translation cannot give the movement and the fire of a successful translation in verse; it only gathers, as it were, the crumbs which fall from the richer table, only tells the story, without the song. Yet to a prose translation is permitted, perhaps, that close adherence to the archaisms of the epic, which in verse become mere oddities. The double epithets, the recurring epithets of Homer, if rendered into verse, delay and puzzle the reader, as the Greek does not delay or puzzle him. In prose he may endure them, or even care to study them as the survivals of a stage of taste, which is to be found in its prime in the sagas. These double and recurring epithets of Homer are a softer form of the quaint Northern periphrases, which make the sea the 'swan's bath,' gold, the 'dragon's hoard,' men, the 'ring-givers,' and so on. We do not know whether it is necessary to defend our choice of a somewhat antiquated prose. Homer has no ideas which cannot be expressed in words that are 'old and plain,' and to words that are old and plain, and, as a rule, to such terms as, being used by the Translators of the Bible, are still not unfamiliar, we have tried to restrict ourselves. It may be objected, that the employment of language which does not come spontaneously to the lips, is an affectation out of place in a version of the Odyssey. To this we may answer that the Greek Epic dialect, like the English of our Bible, was a thing of slow growth and composite nature, that it was never a spoken language, nor, except for certain poetical purposes, a written language. Thus the Biblical English seems as nearly analogous to the Epic Greek, as anything that our tongue has to offer.

The few foot-notes in this book are chiefly intended to make clear some passages where there is a choice of reading. The notes at the end, which we would like to have written in the form of essays, and in company with more complete philological and archaeological studies, are chiefly meant to elucidate the life of Homer's men. We have received much help from many friends, and especially from Mr. R. W. Raper, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford and Mr. Gerald Balfour, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who has aided us with many suggestions while the book was passing through the press.

In the interpretation of B. i.411, ii.191, v.90, and 471, we have departed from the received view, and followed Mr. Raper, who, however, has not been able to read through the proof-sheets further than Book xii.

We have adopted La Roche's text (*Homeri Odyssea*, J. La Roche, Leipzig, 1867), except in a few cases where we mention our reading in a foot-note.

The Arguments prefixed to the Books are taken, with very slight alterations, from Hobbes' Translation of the Odyssey.

It is hoped that the Introduction added to the second edition may illustrate the growth of those national legends on which Homer worked, and may elucidate the plot of the Odyssey.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

We owe our thanks to the Rev. E. Warre, of Eton College, for certain corrections on nautical points. In particular, he has convinced us that the raft of Odysseus in B. v. is a raft strictly so called, and that it is not, under the poet's description, elaborated into a ship, as has been commonly supposed. The translation of the passage (B. v.246-261) is accordingly altered.

INTRODUCTION

COMPOSITION AND PLOT OF THE ODYSSEY

The Odyssey is generally supposed to be somewhat the later in date of the two most ancient Greek poems which are concerned with the events and consequences of the Trojan war. As to the actual history of that war, it may be said that nothing is known. We may conjecture that some contest between peoples of more or less kindred stocks, who occupied the isles and the eastern and western shores of the Aegean, left a strong impression on the popular fancy. Round the memories of this contest would gather many older legends, myths, and stories, not peculiarly Greek or even 'Aryan,' which previously floated unattached, or were connected with heroes whose fame was swallowed up by that of a newer generation. It would be the work of minstrels, priests, and poets, as the national spirit grew conscious of itself, to shape all these materials into a definite body of tradition. This is the rule of development – first scattered stories, then the union of these into a NATIONAL legend. The growth of later national legends, which we are able to trace, historically, has generally come about in this fashion. To take the best known example, we are able to compare the real history of Charlemagne with the old epic poems on his life and exploits. In these poems we find that facts are strangely exaggerated, and distorted; that purely fanciful additions are made to the true records, that the more striking events of earlier history are crowded into the legend of Charles, that mere fairy tales, current among African as well as European peoples, are transmuted into false history, and that the anonymous characters of fairy tales are converted into historical personages. We can also watch the process by which feigned genealogies were constructed, which connected the princely houses of France with the imaginary heroes of the epics. The conclusion is that the poetical history of Charlemagne has only the faintest relations to the true history. And we are justified in supposing that, quite as little of the real history of events can be extracted from the tale of Troy, as from the Chansons de Geste.

By the time the Odyssey was composed, it is certain that a poet had before him a well-arranged mass of legends and traditions from which he might select his materials. The author of the Iliad has an extremely full and curiously consistent knowledge of the local traditions of Greece, the memories which were cherished by Thebans, Pylions, people of Mycenae, of Argos, and so on. The Iliad and the Odyssey assume this knowledge in the hearers of the poems, and take for granted some acquaintance with other legends, as with the story of the Argonautic Expedition. Now that story itself is a tissue of popular tales, – still current in many distant lands, – but all woven by the Greek genius into the history of Iason.

The history of the return of Odysseus as told in the Odyssey, is in the same way, a tissue of old marchen.

These must have existed for an unknown length of time before they gravitated into the cycle of the tale of Troy.

The extraordinary artistic skill with which legends and myths, originally unconnected with each other, are woven into the plot of the Odyssey, so that the marvels of savage and barbaric fancy become indispensable parts of an artistic whole, is one of the chief proofs of the unity of authorship of that poem. We now go on to sketch the plot, which is a marvel of construction.

Odysseus was the King of Ithaca, a small and rugged island on the western coast of Greece. When he was but lately married to Penelope, and while his only son Telemachus was still an infant, the Trojan war began. It is scarcely necessary to say that the object of this war, as conceived of by the poets, was to win back Helen, the wife of Menelaus, from Paris, the son of Priam, King of Troy. As Menelaus was the brother of Agamemnon, the Emperor, so to speak, or recognised chief of the

petty kingdoms of 'Greece, the whole force of these kingdoms was at his disposal. No prince came to the leaguer of Troy from a home more remote than that of Odysseus. When Troy was taken, in the tenth year of the war, his homeward voyage was the longest and most perilous.

The action of the *Odyssey* occupies but the last six weeks of the ten years during which Odysseus was wandering. Two nights in these six weeks are taken up, however, by his own narrative of his adventures (to the Phaeacians, p. xx) in the previous ten years. With this explanatory narrative we must begin, before coming to the regular action of the poem.

After the fall of Troy, Odysseus touched at Ismarus, the city of a Thracian people, whom he attacked and plundered, but by whom he was at last repulsed. The north wind then carried his ships to Malea, the extreme southern point of Greece. Had he doubled Malea safely, he would probably have reached Ithaca in a few days, would have found Penelope unvexed by wooers, and Telemachus a boy of ten years old. But this was not to be.

The 'ruinous winds' drove Odysseus and his ships for ten days, and on the tenth they touched the land of the Lotus-Eaters, whose flowery food causes sweet forgetfulness. Lotus-land was possibly in Western Libya, but it is more probable that ten days' voyage from the southern point of Greece, brought Odysseus into an unexplored region of fairy-land. Egypt, of which Homer had some knowledge, was but five days' sail from Crete.

Lotus-land, therefore, being ten days' sail from Malea, was well over the limit of the discovered world. From this country Odysseus went on till he reached the land of the lawless Cyclopes, a pastoral people of giants. Later Greece feigned that the Cyclopes dwelt near Mount Etna, in Sicily. Homer leaves their place of abode in the vague. Among the Cyclopes, Odysseus had the adventure on which his whole fortunes hinged. He destroyed the eye of the cannibal giant, Polyphemus, a son of Poseidon, the God of the Sea. To avenge this act, Poseidon drove Odysseus wandering for ten long years, and only suffered him to land in Ithaca, 'alone, in evil case, to find troubles in his house.' This is a very remarkable point in the plot. The story of the crafty adventurer and the blinding of the giant, with the punning device by which the hero escaped, exists in the shape of a detached marchen or fairy-tale among races who never heard of Homer. And when we find the story among Oghuzians, Esthonian, Basques, and Celts, it seems natural to suppose that these people did not break a fragment out of the *Odyssey*, but that the author of the *Odyssey* took possession of a legend out of the great traditional store of fiction. From the wide distribution of the tale, there is reason to suppose that it is older than Homer, and that it was not originally told of Odysseus, but was attached to his legend, as floating jests of unknown authorship are attributed to eminent wits. It has been remarked with truth that in this episode Odysseus acts out of character, that he is foolhardy as well as cunning. Yet the author of the *Odyssey*, so far from merely dove-tailing this story at random into his narrative, has made his whole plot turn on the injury to the Cyclops. Had he not foolishly exposed himself and his companions, by his visit to the Cyclops, Odysseus would never have been driven wandering for ten weary years. The prayers of the blinded Cyclops were heard and fulfilled by Poseidon.

From the land of the Cyclops, Odysseus and his company sailed to the Isle of Aeolus, the king of the winds. This place too is undefined; we only learn that, even with the most favourable gale, it was ten days' sail from Ithaca. In the Isle of Aeolus Odysseus abode for a month, and then received from the king a bag in which all the winds were bound, except that which was to waft the hero to his home. This sort of bag was probably not unfamiliar to superstitious Greek sailors who had dealings with witches, like the modern wise women of the Lapps. The companions of the hero opened the bag when Ithaca was in sight, the winds rushed out, the ships were borne back to the Aeolian Isle, and thence the hero was roughly dismissed by Aeolus. Seven days' sail brought him to Lamos, a city of the cannibal Laestrygonians. Their country, too, is in No-man's-land, and nothing can be inferred from the fact that their fountain was called Artacia, and that there was an Artacia in Cyzicus. In Lamos a very important adventure befel Odysseus. The cannibals destroyed all his fleet, save one ship, with which he made his escape to the Isle of Circe. Here the enchantress turned part of the

crew into swine, but Odysseus, by aid of the god Hermes, redeemed them, and became the lover of Circe. This adventure, like the story of the Cyclops, is a fairy tale of great antiquity. Dr. Gerland, in his *Alt Griechische Marchen in der Odyssee*, has shown that the story makes part of the collection of Somadeva, a store of Indian tales, of which 1200 A.D. is the approximate date. Circe appears as a Yackshini, and is conquered when an adventurer seizes her flute whose magic music turns men into beasts. The Indian Circe had the habit of eating the animals into which she transformed men.

We must suppose that the affairs with the Cicones, the Lotus-eaters, the Cyclops, Aeolus, and the Laestrygonians, occupied most of the first year after the fall of Troy. A year was then spent in the Isle of Circe, after which the sailors were eager to make for home. Circe commanded them to go down to Hades, to learn the homeward way from the ghost of the Theban prophet Teiresias. The descent into hell, for some similar purpose, is common in the epics of other races, such as the Finns, and the South-Sea Islanders. The narrative of Odysseus's visit to the dead (book xi) is one of the most moving passages in the whole poem.

From Teiresias Odysseus learned that, if he would bring his companions home, he must avoid injuring the sacred cattle of the Sun, which pastured in the Isle of Thrinacia. If these were harmed, he would arrive in Ithaca alone, or in the words of the Cyclops's prayer, 'I in evil plight, with loss of all his company, on board the ship of strangers, to find sorrow in his house.' On returning to the Isle Aeaeon, Odysseus was warned by Circe of the dangers he would encounter. He and his friends set forth, escaped the Sirens (a sort of mermaidens), evaded the Clashing Rocks, which close on ships (a fable known to the Aztecs), passed Scylla (the pieuvre of antiquity) with loss of some of the company, and reached Thrinacia, the Isle of the Sun. Here the company of Odysseus, constrained by hunger, devoured the sacred kine of the Sun, for which offence they were punished by a shipwreck, when all were lost save Odysseus. He floated ten days on a raft, and then reached the isle of the goddess Calypso, who kept him as her lover for eight years.

The first two years after the fall of Troy are now accounted for. They were occupied, as we have seen, by adventures with the Cicones, the Lotus-eaters, the Cyclops, Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, by a year's residence with Circe, by the descent into Hades, the encounters with the Sirens, and Scylla, and the fatal sojourn in the isle of Thrinacia. We leave Odysseus alone, for eight years, consuming his own heart, in the island paradise of Calypso.

In Ithaca, the hero's home, things seem to have passed smoothly till about the sixth year after the fall of Troy. Then the men of the younger generation, the island chiefs, began to woo Penelope, and to vex her son Telemachus. Laertes, the father of Odysseus, was too old to help, and Penelope only gained time by her famous device of weaving and unweaving the web. The wooers began to put compulsion on the Queen, quartering themselves upon her, devouring her substance, and insulting her by their relations with her handmaids. Thus Penelope pined at home, amidst her wasting possessions. Telemachus fretted in vain, and Odysseus was devoured by grief and home-sickness in the isle of Calypso. When he had lain there for nigh eight years, the action of the Odyssey begins, and occupies about six weeks.

DAY 1 (Book i).

The ordained time has now arrived, when by the counsels of the Gods, Odysseus is to be brought home to free his house, to avenge himself on the wooers, and recover his kingdom. The chief agent in his restoration is Pallas Athene; the first book opens with her prayer to Zeus that Odysseus may be delivered. For this purpose Hermes is to be sent to Calypso to bid her release Odysseus, while Pallas Athene in the shape of Mentor, a friend of Odysseus, visits Telemachus in Ithaca. She bids him call an assembly of the people, dismiss the wooers to their homes, and his mother to her father's house, and go in quest of his own father, in Pylos, the city of Nestor, and Sparta, the home of Menelaus. Telemachus recognises the Goddess, and the first day closes.

DAY 2 (Book ii).

Telemachus assembles the people, but he has not the heart to carry out Athene's advice. He cannot send the wooers away, nor turn his mother out of her house. He rather weakly appeals to the wooers' consciences, and announces his intention of going to seek his father. They answer with scorn, but are warned of their fate, which is even at the doors, by Halitherses. His prophecy (first made when Odysseus set out for Troy) tallies with the prophecy of Teiresias, and the prayer of the Cyclops. The reader will observe a series of portents, prophecies, and omens, which grow more numerous and admonishing as their doom draws nearer to the wooers. Their hearts, however, are hardened, and they mock at Telemachus, who, after an interview with Athene, borrows a ship and secretly sets out for Pylos. Athene accompanies him, and his friends man his galley.

DAY 3 (Book iii).

They reach Pylos, and are kindly received by the aged Nestor, who has no news about Odysseus. After sacrifice, Athene disappears.

DAY 4 (Book iii).

The fourth day is occupied with sacrifice, and the talk of Nestor. In the evening Telemachus (leaving his ship and friends at Pylos) drives his chariot into Pherae, half way to Sparta; Peisistratus, the son of Nestor, accompanies him.

DAY 5 (Book iv).

Telemachus and Peisistratus arrive at Sparta, where Menelaus and Helen receive them kindly.

DAY 6 (Book iv).

Menelaus tells how he himself came home in the eighth year after the fall of Troy. He had heard from Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, that Odysseus was alive, and a captive on an island of the deep. Menelaus invites Telemachus to stay with him for eleven days or twelve, which Telemachus declines to do. It will later appear that he made an even longer stay at Sparta, though whether he changed his mind, or whether we have here an inadvertence of the poet's it is hard to determine. This blemish has been used as an argument against the unity of authorship, but writers of all ages have made graver mistakes.

On this same day (the sixth) the wooers in Ithaca learned that Telemachus had really set out to 'cruise after his father.' They sent some of their number to lie in ambush for him, in a certain strait which he was likely to pass on his return to Ithaca. Penelope also heard of her son's departure, but was consoled by a dream.

DAY 7 (Book v).

The seventh day finds us again in Olympus. Athene again urges the release of Odysseus; and Hermes is sent to bid Calypso let the hero go. Zeus prophesies that after twenty days sailing, Odysseus will reach Scheria, and the hospitable Phaeacians, a people akin to the Gods, who will convey him to Ithaca. Hermes accomplishes the message to Calypso.

DAYS 8-12-32 (Book v).

These days are occupied by Odysseus in making and launching a raft; on the twelfth day from the beginning of the action he leaves Calypso's isle. He sails for eighteen days, and on the eighteenth day of his voyage (the twenty-ninth from the beginning of the action), he sees Scheria. Poseidon raises a storm against him, and it is not till the thirty-second day from that in which Athene visited Telemachus, that he lands in Scheria, the country of the Phaeacians. Here he is again in fairy land. A rough, but perfectly recognisable form of the Phaeacian myth, is found in an Indian collection of marches (already referred to) of the twelfth century A.D. Here the Phaeacians are the Vidyidhiris, and their old enemies the Cyclopes, are the Rakshashas, a sort of giants. The Indian Odysseus, who seeks the city of gold, passes by the home of an Indian Aeolus, Satyavrata. His later adventures are confused, and the Greek version retains only the more graceful fancies of the marches.

DAY 33 (Book vi).

Odysseus meets Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinous, the Phaeacian King, and by her aid, and that of Athene, is favourably received at the palace, and tells how he came from Calypso's island. His name is still unknown to his hosts.

DAY 34 (Books vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii).

The Phaeacians and Odysseus display their skill in sports. Nausicaa bids Odysseus farewell. Odysseus recounts to Alcinous, and Arete, the Queen, those adventures in the two years between the fall of Troy and his captivity in the island of Calypso, which we have already described (pp. xiii-xvii).

DAY 35 (Book xiii).

Odysseus is conveyed to Ithaca, in the evening, on one of the magical barques of the Phaeacians.

DAY 36 (Books xiii, xiv, xv).

He awakens in Ithaca, which he does not at first recognise. He learns from Athene, for the first time, that the wooers beset his house. She disguises him as an old man, and bids him go to the hut of the swineherd Eumaeus, who is loyal to his absent lord. Athene then goes to Lacedaemon, to bring back Telemachus, who has now resided there for a month. Odysseus won the heart of Eumaeus, who of course did not recognise him, and slept in the swineherd's hut, while Athene was waking Telemachus, in Lacedaemon, and bidding him 'be mindful of his return.'

DAY 37 (Book xv).

Is spent by Odysseus in the swineherd's hut. Telemachus reaches Pherae, half-way to Pylos.

DAY 38 (Book xv).

Telemachus reaches Pylos, but does not visit Nestor. To save time he goes at once on board ship, taking with him an unfortunate outlaw, Theoclymenus, a second-sighted man, or the family of Melampus, in which the gift of prophecy was hereditary. The ship passed the Elian coast at night, and evaded the ambush of the wooers. Meanwhile Odysseus was sitting up almost till dawn, listening to the history of Eumaeus, the swineherd.

DAY 39 (Books xv, xvi).

Telemachus reaches the Isle of Ithaca, sends his ship to the city, but himself, by advice of Athene, makes for the hut of Eumaeus, where he meets, but naturally does not recognise, his disguised father. He sends Eumaeus to Penelope with news of his arrival, and then Athene reveals Odysseus to Telemachus. The two plot the death of the wooers. Odysseus bids Telemachus remove, on a favourable opportunity, the arms which were disposed as trophies on the walls of the hall at home. (There is a slight discrepancy between the words of this advice and the manner in which it is afterwards executed.) During this interview, the ship of Telemachus, the wooers who had been in ambush, and Eumaeus, all reached the town of Ithaca. In the evening Eumaeus returned to his hut, where Athene had again disguised Odysseus.

DAY 40 (Books xvii, xviii, xix, xx).

The story is now hastening to its close, and many events are crowded into the fortieth day. Telemachus goes from the swineherd's hut to the city, and calls his guest, Theoclymenus, to the palace. The second-sighted man prophesies of the near revenge of Odysseus. In the afternoon, Odysseus (still disguised) and Eumaeus reach the city, the dog Argos recognises the hero, and dies. Odysseus goes begging through his own hall, and is struck by Antinous, the proudest of the wooers. Late in the day Eumaeus goes home, and Odysseus fights with the braggart beggar Irus. Still later, Penelope appears among the wooers, and receives presents from them. When the wooers have withdrawn, Odysseus and Telemachus remove the weapons from the hall to the armoury. Afterwards Odysseus has an interview with Penelope (who does not recognise him), but he is recognised by his old nurse Eurycleia. Penelope mentions her purpose to wed the man who on the following day, the feast of the Archer-god Apollo, shall draw the bow of Odysseus, and send an arrow through the holes in twelve axe-blades, set up in a row. Thus the poet shows that Odysseus has arrived in Ithaca not a day too soon. Odysseus is comforted by a vision of Athene, and

DAY 41 (Books xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii).

by the ominous prayer uttered by a weary woman grinding at the mill. The swineherd and the disloyal Melanthius arrive at the palace. The wooers defer the plot to kill Telemachus, as the day is holy to Apollo. Odysseus is led up from his seat near the door to a place beside Telemachus at the chief's table. The wooers mock Telemachus, and the second-sighted Theoclymenus sees the ominous shroud of death covering their bodies, and the walls dripping with blood. He leaves the doomed company. In the trial of the bow, none of the wooers can draw it; meanwhile Odysseus has declared himself to the neatherd and the swineherd. The former bars and fastens the outer gates of the court, the latter bids Eurycleia bar the doors of the womens' chambers which lead out of the hall. Odysseus now gets the bow into his hands, strings it, sends the arrow through the axe-blades, and then leaping on the threshold of stone, deals his shafts among the wooers. Telemachus, the neatherd, and Eumaeus, aiding him, he slaughters all the crew, despite the treachery of Melanthius. The paramours of the wooers are hanged, and Odysseus, after some delay, is recognised by Penelope.

DAY 42 (Books xxiii, xxiv).

This day is occupied with the recognition of Odysseus by his aged father Laertes, and with the futile attempt of the kinsfolk of the wooers to avenge them on Odysseus. Athene reconciles the feud, and the toils of Odysseus are accomplished.

The reader has now before him a chronologically arranged sketch of the action of the Odyssey. It is, perhaps, apparent, even from this bare outline, that the composition is elaborate and artistic, that the threads of the plot are skilfully separated and combined. The germ of the whole epic is probably the popular tale, known all over the world, of the warrior who, on his return from a long expedition, has great difficulty in making his prudent wife recognise him. The incident occurs as a detached story in China, and in most European countries it is told of a crusader. 'We may suppose it to be older than the legend of Troy, and to have gravitated into the cycle of that legend. The years of the hero's absence are then filled up with adventures (the Cyclops, Circe, the Phaeacians, the Sirens, the descent into hell) which exist as scattered tales, or are woven into the more elaborate epics of Gaels, Aztecs, Hindoos, Tartars, South-Sea Islanders, Finns, Russians, Scandinavians, and Eskimo. The whole is surrounded with the atmosphere of the kingly age of Greece, and the result is the Odyssey, with that unity of plot and variety of character which must have been given by one masterly constructive genius. The date at which the poet of the Odyssey lived may be approximately determined by his consistent descriptions of a peculiar and definite condition of society, which had ceased to exist in the ninth century B.C., and of a stage of art in which Phoenician and Assyrian influences predominated. (Die Kunst bei Homer. Brunn.) As to the mode of composition, it would not be difficult to show that at least the a priori Wolfian arguments against the early use of writing for literary purposes have no longer the cogency which they were once thought to possess. But this is matter for a separate investigation.

Book I

In a Council of the Gods, Poseidon absent, Pallas procureth an order for the restitution of Odysseus; and appearing to his son Telemachus, in human shape, adviseth him to complain of the Wooers before the Council of the people, and then go to Pylos and Sparta to inquire about his father.

Tell me, Muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy, and many were the men whose towns he saw and whose mind he learnt, yea, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the deep, striving to win his own life and the return of his company. Nay, but even so he saved not his company, though he desired it sore. For through the blindness of their own hearts they perished, fools, who devoured the oxen of Helios Hyperion: but the god took from them their day of returning. Of these things, goddess, daughter of Zeus, whencesoever thou hast heard thereof, declare thou even unto us.

Now all the rest, as many as fled from sheer destruction, were at home, and had escaped both war and sea, but Odysseus only, craving for his wife and for his homeward path, the lady nymph Calypso held, that fair goddess, in her hollow caves, longing to have him for her lord. But when now the year had come in the courses of the seasons, wherein the gods had ordained that he should return home to Ithaca, not even there was he quit of labours, not even among his own; but all the gods had pity on him save Poseidon, who raged continually against godlike Odysseus, till he came to his own country. Howbeit Poseidon had now departed for the distant Ethiopians, the Ethiopians that are sundered in twain, the uttermost of men, abiding some where Hyperion sinks and some where he rises. There he looked to receive his hecatomb of bulls and rams, there he made merry sitting at the feast, but the other gods were gathered in the halls of Olympian Zeus. Then among them the father of gods and men began to speak, for he bethought him in his heart of noble Aegisthus, whom the son of Agamemnon, far-famed Orestes, slew. Thinking upon him he spake out among the Immortals:

'Lo you now, how vainly mortal men do blame the gods! For of us they say comes evil, whereas they even of themselves, through the blindness of their own hearts, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained. Even as of late Aegisthus, beyond that which was ordained, took to him the wedded wife of the son of Atreus, and killed her lord on his return, and that with sheer doom before his eyes, since we had warned him by the embassy of Hermes the keen-sighted, the slayer of Argos, that he should neither kill the man, nor woo his wife. For the son of Atreus shall be avenged at the hand of Orestes, so soon as he shall come to man's estate and long for his own country. So spake Hermes, yet he prevailed not on the heart of Aegisthus, for all his good will; but now hath he paid one price for all.'

And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him, saying: 'O father, our father Cronides, throned in the highest; that man assuredly lies in a death that is his due; so perish likewise all who work such deeds! But my heart is rent for wise Odysseus, that hapless one, who far from his friends this long while suffereth affliction in a seagirt isle, where is the navel of the sea, a woodland isle, and therein a goddess hath her habitation, the daughter of the wizard Atlas, who knows the depths of every sea, and himself upholds the tall pillars which keep earth and sky asunder. His daughter it is that holds the hapless man in sorrow: and ever with soft and guileful tales she is wooing him to forgetfulness of Ithaca. But Odysseus yearning to see if it were but the smoke leap upwards from his own land, hath a desire to die. As for thee, thine heart regardeth it not at all, Olympian! What! did not Odysseus by the ships of the Argives make thee free offering of sacrifice in the wide Trojan land? Wherefore wast thou then so wroth with him, O Zeus?'

And Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her, and said, 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Yea, how should I forget divine Odysseus, who in understanding is beyond mortals and beyond all men hath done sacrifice to the deathless gods, who keep the wide heaven? Nay, but

it is Poseidon, the girdler of the earth, that hath been wroth continually with quenchless anger for the Cyclops' sake whom he blinded of his eye, even godlike Polyphemus whose power is mightiest amongst all the Cyclopes. His mother was the nymph Thoosa, daughter of Phorcys, lord of the unharvested sea, and in the hollow caves she lay with Poseidon. From that day forth Poseidon the earth-shaker doth not indeed slay Odysseus, but driveth him wandering from his own country. But come, let us here one and all take good counsel as touching his returning, that he may be got home; so shall Poseidon let go his displeasure, for he will in no wise be able to strive alone against all, in despite of all the deathless gods.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him, and said: 'O father, our father Cronides, throned in the highest, if indeed this thing is now well pleasing to the blessed gods, that wise Odysseus should return to his own home, let us then speed Hermes the Messenger, the slayer of Argos, to the island of Ogygia. There with all speed let him declare to the lady of the braided tresses our unerring counsel, even the return of the patient Odysseus, that so he may come to his home. But as for me I will go to Ithaca that I may rouse his son yet the more, planting might in his heart, to call an assembly of the long-haired Achaeans and speak out to all the wooers who slaughter continually the sheep of his thronging flocks, and his kine with trailing feet and shambling gait. And I will guide him to Sparta and to sandy Pylos to seek tidings of his dear father's return, if peradventure he may hear thereof and that so he may be had in good report among men.'

She spake and bound beneath her feet her lovely golden sandals that wax not old, and bare her alike over the wet sea and over the limitless land, swift as the breath of the wind. And she seized her doughty spear, shod with sharp bronze, weighty and huge and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes with whomsoever she is wroth, the daughter of the mighty sire. Then from the heights of Olympus she came glancing down, and she stood in the land of Ithaca, at the entry of the gate of Odysseus, on the threshold of the courtyard, holding in her hand the spear of bronze, in the semblance of a stranger, Mentos the captain of the Taphians. And there she found the lordly wooers: now they were taking their pleasure at draughts in front of the doors, sitting on hides of oxen, which themselves had slain. And of the henchmen and the ready squires, some were mixing for them wine and water in bowls, and some again were washing the tables with porous sponges and were setting them forth, and others were carving flesh in plenty.

And godlike Telemachus was far the first to descry her, for he was sitting with a heavy heart among the wooers dreaming on his good father, if haply he might come somewhence, and make a scattering of the wooers there throughout the palace, and himself get honour and bear rule among his own possessions. Thinking thereupon, as he sat among wooers, he saw Athene – and he went straight to the outer porch, for he thought it blame in his heart that a stranger should stand long at the gates: and halting nigh her he clasped her right hand and took from her the spear of bronze, and uttered his voice and spake unto her winged words:

'Hail, stranger, with us thou shalt be kindly entreated, and thereafter, when thou hast tasted meat, thou shalt tell us that whereof thou hast need.'

Therewith he led the way, and Pallas Athene followed. And when they were now within the lofty house, he set her spear that he bore against a tall pillar, within the polished spear-stand, where stood many spears besides, even those of Odysseus of the hardy heart; and he led the goddess and seated her on a goodly carven chair, and spread a linen cloth thereunder, and beneath was a footstool for the feet. For himself he placed an inlaid seat hard by, apart from the company of the wooers, lest the stranger should be disquieted by the noise and should have a loathing for the meal, being come among overweening men, and also that he might ask him about his father that was gone from his home.

Then a handmaid bare water for the washing of hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal, and drew to their side a polished table. And a grave dame bare wheaten bread and set it by them, and laid on the board many dainties, giving freely of such

things as she had by her. And a carver lifted and placed by them platters of divers kinds of flesh, and nigh them he set golden bowls, and a henchman walked to and fro pouring out to them the wine.

Then in came the lordly wooers; and they sat them down in rows on chairs, and on high seats, and henchmen poured water on their hands, and maidservants piled wheaten bread by them in baskets, and pages crowned the bowls with drink; and they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them. Now when the wooers had put from them the desire of meat and drink, they minded them of other things, even of the song and dance: for these are the crown of the feast. And a henchman placed a beauteous lyre in the hands of Phemius, who was minstrel to the wooers despite his will. Yea and as he touched the lyre he lifted up his voice in sweet songs.¹

But Telemachus spake unto grey-eyed Athene, holding his head close to her that those others might not hear: 'Dear stranger, wilt thou of a truth be wroth at the word that I shall say? Yonder men verily care for such things as these, the lyre and song, lightly, as they that devour the livelihood of another without atonement, of that man whose white bones, it may be, lie wasting in the rain upon the mainland, or the billow rolls them in the brine. Were but these men to see him returned to Ithaca, they all would pray rather for greater speed of foot than for gain of gold and raiment. But now he hath perished, even so, an evil doom, and for us is no comfort, no, not though any of earthly men should say that he will come again. Gone is the day of his returning! But come declare me this, and tell me all plainly: Who art thou of the sons of men, and whence? Where is thy city, where are they that begat thee? Say, on what manner of ship didst thou come, and how did sailors bring thee to Ithaca, and who did they avow themselves to be, for in nowise do I deem that thou camest hither by land. And herein tell me true, that I may know for a surety whether thou art a newcomer, or whether thou art a guest of the house, seeing that many were the strangers that came to our home, for that HE too had voyaged much among men.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Yea now, I will plainly tell thee all. I avow me to be Mentès, son of wise Anchialus, and I bear rule among the Taphians, lovers of the oar. And now am I come to shore, as thou seest, with ship and crew, sailing over the wine-dark sea, unto men of strange speech, even to Temesa,² in quest of copper, and my cargo is shining iron. And there my ship is lying toward the upland, away from the city, in the harbour of Rheithron beneath wooded Neion: and we declare ourselves to be friends one of the other, and of houses friendly, from of old. Nay, if thou wouldest be assured, go ask the old man, the hero Laertes, who they say no more comes to the city, but far away toward the upland suffers affliction, with an ancient woman for his handmaid, who sets by him meat and drink, whensoever weariness takes hold of his limbs, as he creeps along the knoll of his vineyard plot. And now am I come; for verily they said that HE, thy father, was among his people; but lo, the gods withhold him from his way. For goodly Odysseus hath not yet perished on the earth; but still, methinks, he lives and is kept on the wide deep in a seagirt isle, and hard men constrain him, wild folk that hold him, it may be, sore against his will. But now of a truth will I utter my word of prophecy, as the Immortals bring it into my heart and as I deem it will be accomplished, though no soothsayer am I, nor skilled in the signs of birds. Henceforth indeed for no long while shall he be far from his own dear country, not though bonds of iron bind him; he will advise him of a way to return, for he is a man of many devices. But come, declare me this, and tell me all plainly, whether indeed, so tall as thou art, thou art sprung from the loins of Odysseus. Thy head surely and they beauteous eyes are wondrous like to his, since full many a time have we held converse together ere he embarked for Troy, whither the others, aye the bravest of the Argives, went in hollow ships. From that day forth neither have I seen Odysseus, nor he me.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: 'Yea, sir, now will I plainly tell thee all. My mother verily saith that I am his; for myself I know not, for never man yet knew of himself his own

¹ Or, according to the ordinary interpretation of [Greek]: So he touched the chords in prelude to his sweet singing.

² Tamasia, in the mountainous centre of Cyprus.

descent. O that I had been the son of some blessed man, whom old age overtook among his own possessions! But now of him that is the most hapless of mortal men, his son they say that I am, since thou dost question me hereof.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake unto him, and said: 'Surely no nameless lineage have the gods ordained for thee in days to come, since Penelope bore thee so goodly a man. But come, declare me this, and tell it all plainly. What feast, nay, what rout is this? What hast thou to do therewith? Is it a clan drinking, or a wedding feast, for here we have no banquet where each man brings his share? In such wise, flown with insolence, do they seem to me to revel wantonly through the house: and well might any man be wroth to see so many deeds of shame, whatso wise man came among them.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: 'Sir, forasmuch as thou questionest me of these things and inquirest thereof, our house was once like to have been rich and honourable, while yet that man was among his people. But now the gods willed it otherwise, in evil purpose, who have made him pass utterly out of sight as no man ever before. Truly I would not even for his death make so great sorrow, had he fallen among his fellows in the land of the Trojans, or in the arms of his friends when he had wound up the clew of war. Then would the whole Achaean host have builded him a barrow, and even for his son would he have won great glory in the after days. But now the spirits of the storm have swept him away inglorious. He is gone, lost to sight and hearsay, but for me hath he left anguish and lamentation; nor henceforth is it for him alone that I mourn and weep, since the gods have wrought for me other sore distress. For all the noblest that are princes in the isles, in Dulichium and Same and wooded Zacynthus, and as many as lord it in rocky Ithaca, all these woo my mother and waste my house. But as for her she neither refuseth the hated bridal, nor hath the heart to make an end: so they devour and minish my house, and ere long will they make havoc likewise of myself.'

Then in heavy displeasure spake unto him Pallas Athene: 'God help thee! thou art surely sore in need of Odysseus that is afar, to stretch forth his hands upon the shameless wooers. If he could but come now and stand at the entering in of the gate, with helmet and shield and lances twain, as mighty a man as when first I marked him in our house drinking and making merry what time he came up out of Ephyra from Ilus son of Mermerus! For even thither had Odysseus gone on his swift ship to seek a deadly drug, that he might have wherewithal to smear his bronze-shod arrows: but Ilus would in nowise give it to him, for he had in awe the everliving gods. But my father gave it him, for he bare him wondrous love. O that Odysseus might in such strength consort with the wooers: so should they all have swift fate and bitter wedlock! Howbeit these things surely lie on the knees of the gods, whether he shall return or not, and take vengeance in his halls. But I charge thee to take counsel how thou mayest thrust forth the wooers from the hall. Come now, mark and take heed unto my words. On the morrow call the Achaean lords to the assembly, and declare thy saying to all, and take the gods to witness. As for the wooers bid them scatter them each one to his own, and for thy mother, if her heart is moved to marriage, let her go back to the hall of that mighty man her father, and her kinsfolk will furnish a wedding feast, and array the gifts of wooing exceeding many, all that should go back with a daughter dearly beloved. And to thyself I will give a word of wise counsel, if perchance thou wilt hearken. Fit out a ship, the best thou hast, with twenty oarsmen, and go to inquire concerning thy father that is long afar, if perchance any man shall tell thee aught, or if thou mayest hear the voice from Zeus, which chiefly brings tidings to men. Get thee first to Pylos and inquire of goodly Nestor, and from thence to Sparta to Menelaus of the fair hair, for he came home the last of the mail-coated Achaeans. If thou shalt hear news of the life and the returning of thy father, then verily thou mayest endure the wasting for yet a year. But if thou shalt hear that he is dead and gone, return then to thine own dear country and pile his mound, and over it pay burial rites, full many as is due, and give thy mother to a husband. But when thou hast done this and made an end, thereafter take counsel in thy mind and heart, how thou mayest slay the wooers in thy halls, whether by guile or openly; for thou shouldest not carry childish thoughts, being no longer of years thereto. Or hast thou

not heard what renown the goodly Orestes gat him among all men in that he slew the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who killed his famous sire? And thou, too, my friend, for I see that thou art very comely and tall, be valiant, that even men unborn may praise thee. But I will now go down to the swift ship and to my men, who methinks chafe much at tarrying for me; and do thou thyself take heed and give ear unto my words.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Sir, verily thou speakest these things out of a friendly heart, as a father to his son, and never will I forget them. But now I pray thee abide here, though eager to be gone, to the end that after thou hast bathed and had all thy heart's desire, thou mayest wend to the ship joyful in spirit, with a costly gift and very goodly, to be an heirloom of my giving, such as dear friends give to friends.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him: 'Hold me now no longer, that am eager for the way. But whatsoever gift thine heart shall bid thee give me, when I am on my way back let it be mine to carry home: bear from thy stores a gift right goodly, and it shall bring thee the worth thereof in return.'

So spake she and departed, the grey-eyed Athene, and like an eagle of the sea she flew away, but in his spirit she planted might and courage, and put him in mind of his father yet more than heretofore. And he marked the thing and was amazed, for he deemed that it was a god; and anon he went among the wooers, a godlike man.

Now the renowned minstrel was singing to the wooers, and they sat listening in silence; and his song was of the pitiful return of the Achaeans, that Pallas Athene laid on them as they came forth from Troy. And from her upper chamber the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, caught the glorious strain, and she went down the high stairs from her chamber, not alone, for two of her handmaids bare her company. Now when the fair lady had come unto the wooers, she stood by the pillar of the well-built roof holding up her glistening tire before her face; and a faithful maiden stood on either side her. Then she fell a weeping, and spake unto the divine minstrel:

'Phemius, since thou knowest many other charms for mortals, deeds of men and gods, which bards rehearse, some one of these do thou sing as thou sittest by them, and let them drink their wine in silence; but cease from this pitiful strain, that ever wastes my heart within my breast, since to me above all women hath come a sorrow comfortless. So dear a head do I long for in constant memory, namely, that man whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, and said: 'O my mother, why then dost thou grudge the sweet minstrel to gladden us as his spirit moves him? It is not minstrels who are in fault, but Zeus, methinks, is in fault, who gives to men, that live by bread, to each one as he will. As for him it is no blame if he sings the ill-faring of the Danaans; for men always prize that song the most, which rings newest in their ears. But let thy heart and mind endure to listen, for not Odysseus only lost in Troy the day of his returning, but many another likewise perished. Howbeit go to thy chamber and mind thine own housewiferies, the loom and distaff, and bid thy handmaids ply their tasks. But speech shall be for men, for all, but for me in chief; for mine is the lordship in the house.'

Then in amaze she went back to her chamber, for she laid up the wise saying of her son in her heart. She ascended to her upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and then was bewailing Odysseus, her dear lord, till grey-eyed Athene cast sweet sleep upon her eyelids.

Now the wooers clamoured throughout the shadowy halls, and each one uttered a prayer to be her bedfellow. And wise Telemachus first spake among them:

'Wooers of my mother, men despiteful out of measure, let us feast now and make merry and let there be no brawling; for, lo, it is a good thing to list to a minstrel such as him, like to the gods in voice. But in the morning let us all go to the assembly and sit us down, that I may declare my saying outright, to wit that ye leave these halls: and busy yourselves with other feasts, eating your own substance, going in turn from house to house. But if ye deem this a likelier and a better thing, that one man's goods should perish without atonement, then waste ye as ye will; and I will call upon the

everlasting gods, if haply Zeus may grant that acts of recompense be made: so should ye hereafter perish within the halls without atonement.'

So spake he, and all that heard him bit their lips and marvelled at Telemachus, in that he spake boldly.

Then Antinous, son of Eupheithes, answered him: 'Telemachus, in very truth the gods themselves instruct thee to be proud of speech and boldly to harangue. Never may Cronion make thee king in seagirt Ithaca, which thing is of inheritance thy right!'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Antinous, wilt thou indeed be wroth at the word that I shall say? Yea, at the hand of Zeus would I be fain to take even this thing upon me. Sayest thou that this is the worst hap that can befall a man? Nay, verily, it is no ill thing to be a king: the house of such an one quickly waxeth rich and himself is held in greater honour. Howsoever there are many other kings of the Achaeans in seagirt Ithaca, kings young and old; someone of them shall surely have this kingship since goodly Odysseus is dead. But as for me, I will be lord of our own house and thralls, that goodly Odysseus gat me with his spear.'

Then Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered him, saying: 'Telemachus, on the knees of the gods it surely lies, what man is to be king over the Achaeans in seagirt Ithaca. But mayest thou keep thine own possessions and be lord in thine own house! Never may that man come, who shall wrest from thee thy substance violently in thine own despite while Ithaca yet stands. But I would ask thee, friend, concerning the stranger – whence he is, and of what land he avows him to be? Where are his kin and his native fields? Doth he bear some tidings of thy father on his road, or cometh he thus to speed some matter of his own? In such wise did he start up, and lo, he was gone, nor tarried he that we should know him; – and yet he seemed no mean man to look upon.'³

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Eurymachus, surely the day of my father's returning hath gone by. Therefore no more do I put faith in tidings, whencesoever they may come, neither have I regard unto any divination, whereof my mother may inquire at the lips of a diviner, when she hath bidden him to the hall. But as for that man, he is a friend of my house from Taphos, and he avows him to be Mentès, son of wise Anchialus, and he hath lordship among the Taphians, lovers of the oar.'

So spake Telemachus, but in his heart he knew the deathless goddess. Now the wooers turned them to the dance and the delightsome song, and made merry, and waited till evening should come on. And as they made merry, dusk evening came upon them. Then they went each one to his own house to lie down to rest.

But Telemachus, where his chamber was builded high up in the fair court, in a place with wide prospect, thither betook him to his bed, pondering many thoughts in his mind; and with him went trusty Eurycleia, and bare for him torches burning. She was the daughter of Ops, son of Peisenor, and Laertes bought her on a time with his wealth, while as yet she was in her first youth, and gave for her the worth of twenty oxen. And he honoured her even as he honoured his dear wife in the halls, but he never lay with her, for he shunned the wrath of his lady. She went with Telemachus and bare for him the burning torches: and of all the women of the household she loved him most, and she had nursed him when a little one. Then he opened the doors of the well-builded chamber and sat him on the bed and took off his soft doublet, and put it in the wise old woman's hands. So she folded the doublet and smoothed it, and hung it on a pin by the jointed bedstead, and went forth on her way from the room, and pulled to the door with the silver handle, and drew home the bar with the thong. There, all night through, wrapped in a fleece of wool, he meditated in his heart upon the journey that Athene had showed him.

³ The [Greek] explains the expression of surprise at the sudden departure of the stranger.

Book II

Telemachus complains in vain, and borrowing a ship, goes secretly to Pylos by night. And how he was there received.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, the dear son of Odysseus gat him up from his bed, and put on his raiment and cast his sharp sword about his shoulder, and beneath his smooth feet he bound his goodly sandals, and stept forth from his chamber in presence like a god. And straightway he bade the clear-voiced heralds to call the long-haired Achaeans to the assembly. And the heralds called the gathering, and the Achaeans were assembled quickly. Now when they were gathered and come together, he went on his way to the assembly holding in his hand a spear of bronze, – not alone he went, for two swift hounds bare him company. Then Athene shed on him a wondrous grace, and all the people marvelled at him as he came. And he sat him in his father's seat and the elders gave place to him.

Then the lord Aegyptus spake among them first; bowed was he with age, and skilled in things past number. Now for this reason he spake that his dear son, the warrior Antiphus, had gone in the hollow ships to Ilios of the goodly steeds; but the savage Cyclops slew him in his hollow cave, and made of him then his latest meal. Three other sons Aegyptus had, and one consorted with the wooers, namely Eurynomus, but two continued in their father's fields; yet even so forgot he not that son, still mourning and sorrowing. So weeping for his sake he made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken now to me, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say. Never hath our assembly or session been since the day that goodly Odysseus departed in the hollow ships. And now who was minded thus to assemble us? On what man hath such sore need come, of the young men or of the elder born? Hath he heard some tidings of the host now returning, which he might plainly declare to us, for that he first learned thereof, or doth he show forth and tell some other matter of the common weal? Methinks he is a true man – good luck be with him! Zeus vouchsafe him some good thing in his turn, even all his heart's desire!'

So spake he, and the dear son of Odysseus was glad at the omen of the word; nor sat he now much longer, but he burned to speak, and he stood in mid assembly; and the herald Peisenor, skilled in sage counsels, placed the staff in his hands. Then he spake, accosting the old man first:

'Old man, he is not far off, and soon shalt thou know it for thyself, he who called the folk together, even I: for sorrow hath come to me in chief. Neither have I heard any tidings of the host now returning, which I may plainly declare to you, for that I first learned thereof; neither do I show forth or tell any other matter of the common weal, but mine own need, for that evil hath befallen my house, a double woe. First, I have lost my noble sire, who sometime was king among you here, and was gentle as a father; and now is there an evil yet greater far, which surely shall soon make grievous havoc of my whole house and ruin all my livelihood. My mother did certain wooers beset sore against her will, even the sons of those men that here are the noblest. They are too craven to go to the house of her father Icarius, that he may himself set the bride-price for his daughter, and bestow her on whom he will, even on him who finds favour in his sight. But they resorting to our house day by day sacrifice oxen and sheep and fat goats, and keep revel, and drink the dark wine recklessly, and lo, our great wealth is wasted, for there is no man now alive such as Odysseus was, to keep ruin from the house. As for me I am nowise strong like him to ward mine own; verily to the end of my days⁴ shall I be a weakling and all unskilled in prowess. Truly I would defend me if but strength were mine; for deeds past sufferance have now been wrought, and now my house is wasted utterly beyond pretence of right. Resent it in your own hearts, and have regard to your neighbours

⁴ Cf. B. xxi. 131. For the use of the 1st pers. pl. like our ROYAL plural, cf. B. xvi.44, Il. vii. 190.

who dwell around, and tremble ye at the anger of the gods, lest haply they turn upon you in wrath at your evil deeds. {Or, lest they bring your evil deeds in wrath on your own heads.} I pray you by Olympian Zeus and by Themis, who looseth and gathereth the meetings of men, let be, my friends, and leave me alone to waste in bitter grief; – unless it so be that my father, the good Odysseus, out of evil heart wrought harm to the goodly-greaved Achaeans, in quittance whereof ye now work me harm out of evil hearts, and spur on these men. Better for me that ye yourselves should eat up my treasures and my flocks. Were YE so to devour them, ere long would some recompense be made, for we would urge our plea throughout the town, begging back our substance, until all should be restored. But now without remedy are the pains that ye lay up in my heart.'

So spake he in wrath, and dashed the staff to the ground, and brake forth in tears; and pity fell on all the people. Then all the others held their peace, and none had the heart to answer Telemachus with hard words, but Antinous alone made answer, saying:

'Telemachus, proud of speech and unrestrained in fury, what is this thou hast said to put us to shame, and wouldest fasten on us reproach? Behold the fault is not in the Achaean wooers, but in thine own mother, for she is the craftiest of women. For it is now the third year, and the fourth is fast going by, since she began to deceive the minds of the Achaeans in their breasts. She gives hope to all, and makes promises to every man, and sends them messages, but her mind is set on other things. And she hath devised in her heart this wile besides; she set up in her halls a mighty web, fine of woof and very wide, whereat she would weave, and anon she spake among us:

''Ye princely youths, my wooers, now that the goodly Odysseus is dead, do ye abide patiently, how eager soever to speed on this marriage of mine, till I finish the robe. I would not that the threads perish to no avail, even this shroud for the hero Laertes, against the day when the ruinous doom shall bring him low, of death that lays men at their length. So shall none of the Achaean women in the land count it blame in me, as well might be, were he to lie without a winding-sheet, a man that had gotten great possessions."

'So spake she, and our high hearts consented thereto. So then in the day time she would weave the mighty web, and in the night unravel the same, when she had let place the torches by her. Thus for the space of three years she hid the thing by craft and beguiled the minds of the Achaeans; but when the fourth year arrived and the seasons came round, then at the last one of her women who knew all declared it, and we found her unravelling the splendid web. Thus she finished it perforce and sore against her will. But as for thee, the wooers make thee answer thus, that thou mayest know it in thine own heart, thou and all the Achaeans! Send away thy mother, and bid her be married to whomsoever her father commands, and whoso is well pleasing unto her. But if she will continue for long to vex the sons of the Achaeans, pondering in her heart those things that Athene hath given her beyond women, knowledge of all fair handiwork, yea, and cunning wit, and wiles – so be it! Such wiles as hers we have never yet heard that any even of the women of old did know, of those that aforetime were fair-tressed Achaean ladies, Tyro, and Alcmene, and Mycene with the bright crown. Not one of these in the imaginations of their hearts was like unto Penelope, yet herein at least her imagining was not good. For in despite of her the wooers will devour thy living and thy substance, so long as she is steadfast in such purpose as the gods now put within her breast: great renown for herself she winneth, but for thee regret for thy much livelihood. But we will neither go to our own lands, nor elsewhere, till she marry that man whom she will of the Achaeans.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Antinous, I may in no wise thrust forth from the house, against her will, the woman that bare me, that reared me: while as for my father he is abroad on the earth, whether he be alive or dead. Moreover it is hard for me to make heavy restitution to Icarius, as needs I must, if of mine own will I send my mother away. For I shall have evil at his hand, at the hand of her father, and some god will give me more besides, for my mother will call down the dire Avengers as she departs from the house, and I shall have blame of men; surely then I will never speak this word. Nay, if your own heart, even yours, is indignant, quit ye my halls, and busy

yourselves with other feasts, eating your own substance, and going in turn from house to house. But if ye deem this a likelier and a better thing, that one man's goods should perish without atonement, then waste ye as ye will: and I will call upon the everlasting gods, if haply Zeus may grant that acts of recompense be made: so should ye hereafter perish in the halls without atonement.'

So spake Telemachus, and in answer to his prayer did Zeus, of the far borne voice, send forth two eagles in flight, from on high, from the mountain-crest. Awhile they flew as fleet as the blasts of the wind, side by side, with straining of their pinions. But when they had now reached the mid assembly, the place of many voices, there they wheeled about and flapped their strong wings, and looked down upon the heads of all, and destruction was in their gaze. Then tore they with their talons each the other's cheeks and neck on every side, and so sped to the right across the dwellings and the city of the people. And the men marvelled at the birds when they had sight of them, and pondered in their hearts the things that should come to pass. Yea and the old man, the lord Halitherses son of Mastor spake among them, for he excelled his peers in knowledge of birds, and in uttering words of fate. With good will he made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say: and mainly to the wooers do I show forth and tell these things, seeing that a mighty woe is rolling upon them. For Odysseus shall not long be away from his friends, nay, even now, it may be, he is near, and sowing the seeds of death and fate for these men, every one; and he will be a bane to many another likewise of us who dwell in clear-seen Ithaca. But long ere that falls out let us advise us how we may make an end of their mischief; yea, let them of their own selves make an end, for this is the better way for them, as will soon be seen. For I prophesy not as one unproved, but with sure knowledge; verily, I say, that for him all things now are come to pass, even as I told him, what time the Argives embarked for Ilios, and with them went the wise Odysseus. I said that after sore affliction, with the loss of all his company, unknown to all, in the twentieth year he should come home. And behold, all these things now have an end.'

And Eurymachus, son of Polybus, answered him, saying: 'Go now, old man, get thee home and prophesy to thine own children, lest haply they suffer harm hereafter: but herein am I a far better prophet than thou. Howbeit there be many birds that fly to and fro under the sun's rays, but all are not birds of fate. Now as for Odysseus, he hath perished far away, as would that thou too with him hadst been cut off: so wouldst thou not have babbled thus much prophecy, nor wouldst thou hound on Telemachus that is already angered, expecting a gift for thy house, if perchance he may vouchsafe thee aught. But now will I speak out, and my word shall surely be accomplished. If thou that knowest much lore from of old, shalt beguile with words a younger man, and rouse him to indignation, first it shall be a great grief to him: – and yet he can count on no aid from these who hear him; – while upon thee, old man, we will lay a fine, that thou mayest pay it and chafe at heart, and sore pain shall be thine. And I myself will give a word of counsel to Telemachus in presence of you all. Let him command his mother to return to her father's house; and her kinsfolk will furnish a wedding feast, and array the gifts of wooing, exceeding many, all that should go back with a daughter dearly beloved. For ere that, I trow, we sons of the Achaeans will not cease from our rough wooing, since, come what may, we fear not any man, no, not Telemachus, full of words though he be, nor soothsaying do we heed, whereof thou, old man, pratest idly, and art hated yet the more. His substance too shall be woefully devoured, nor shall recompense ever be made, so long as she shall put off the Achaeans in the matter of her marriage; while we in expectation, from day to day, vie one with another for the prize of her perfection, nor go we after other women whom it were meet that we should each one wed.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him saying: 'Eurymachus, and ye others, that are lordly wooers, I entreat you no more concerning this nor speak thereof, for the gods have knowledge of it now and all the Achaeans. But come, give me a swift ship and twenty men, who shall accomplish for me my voyage to and fro. For I will go to Sparta and to sandy Pylos to inquire concerning the return of my father that is long afar, if perchance any man shall tell me aught, or if I may hear the voice from Zeus, that chiefly brings tidings to men. If I shall hear news of the life and the returning of my

father, then verily I may endure the wasting for yet a year; but if I shall hear that he is dead and gone, let me then return to my own dear country, and pile his mound, and over it pay burial rites full many as is due, and I will give my mother to a husband.'

So with that word he sat him down; then in the midst uprose Mentor, the companion of noble Odysseus. He it was to whom Odysseus, as he departed in the fleet, had given the charge over all his house, that it should obey the old man, and that he should keep all things safe. With good will he now made harangue and spake among them:

'Hearken to me now, ye men of Ithaca, to the word that I shall say. Henceforth let not any sceptred king be kind and gentle with all his heart, nor minded to do righteously, but let him always be a hard man and work unrighteousness: for behold, there is none that remembereth divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was, and was gentle as a father. Howsoever, it is not that I grudge the lordly wooers their deeds of violence in the evil devices of their heart. For at the hazard of their own heads they violently devour the household of Odysseus, and say of him that he will come no more again. But I am indeed wroth with the rest of the people, to see how ye all sit thus speechless, and do not cry shame upon the wooers, and put them down, ye that are so many and they so few.'

And Leocritus, son of Euenor, answered him, saying: 'Mentor infatuate, with thy wandering wits, what word hast thou spoken, that callest upon them to put us down? Nay, it is a hard thing to fight about a feast, and that with men who are even more in number than you. Though Odysseus of Ithaca himself should come and were eager of heart to drive forth from the hall the lordly wooers that feast throughout his house, yet should his wife have no joy of his coming, though she yearns for him; – but even there should he meet foul doom, if he fought with those that outnumbered him; so thou hast not spoken aright. But as for the people, come now, scatter yourselves each one to his own lands, but Mentor and Halitherses will speed this man's voyage, for they are friends of his house from of old. Yet after all, methinks, that long time he will abide and seek tidings in Ithaca, and never accomplish this voyage.'

Thus he spake, and in haste they broke up the assembly. So they were scattered each one to his own dwelling, while the wooers departed to the house of divine Odysseus.

Then Telemachus, going far apart to the shore of the sea, laved his hands in the grey sea water, and prayed unto Athene, saying: 'Hear me, thou who yesterday didst come in thy godhead to our house, and badest me go in a ship across the misty seas, to seek tidings of the return of my father that is long gone: but all this my purpose do the Achaeans delay, and mainly the wooers in the naughtiness of their pride.'

So spake he in prayer, and Athene drew nigh him in the likeness of Mentor, in fashion and in voice, and she spake and hailed him in winged words:

'Telemachus, even hereafter thou shalt not be craven or witless, if indeed thou hast a drop of thy father's blood and a portion of his spirit; such an one was he to fulfil both word and work. Nor, if this be so, shall thy voyage be vain or unfulfilled. But if thou art not the very seed of him and of Penelope, then have I no hope that thou wilt accomplish thy desire. For few children, truly, are like their father; lo, the more part are worse, yet a few are better than the sire. But since thou shalt not even hereafter be craven or witless, nor hath the wisdom of Odysseus failed thee quite, so is there good hope of thine accomplishing this work. Wherefore now take no heed of the counsel or the purpose of the senseless wooers, for they are in no way wise or just: neither know they aught of death and of black fate, which already is close upon them, that they are all to perish in one day. But the voyage on which thy heart is set shall not long be lacking to thee – so faithful a friend of thy father am I, who will furnish thee a swift ship and myself be thy companion. But go thou to the house, and consort with the wooers, and make ready corn, and bestow all in vessels, the wine in jars and barley-flour, the marrow of men, in well-sewn skins; and I will lightly gather in the township a crew that offer themselves willingly. There are many ships, new and old, in seagirt Ithaca; of these I will choose out the best for thee, and we will quickly rig her and launch her on the broad deep.'

So spake Athene, daughter of Zeus, and Telemachus made no long tarrying, when he had heard the voice of the goddess. He went on his way towards the house, heavy at heart, and there he found the noble wooers in the halls, flaying goats and singeing swine in the court. And Antinous laughed out and went straight to Telemachus, and clasped his hand and spake and hailed him:

'Telemachus, proud of speech and unrestrained in fury, let no evil word any more be in thy heart, nor evil work, but let me see thee eat and drink as of old. And the Achaeans will make thee ready all things without fail, a ship and chosen oarsmen, that thou mayest come the quicker to fair Pylos, to seek tidings of thy noble father.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying, 'Antinous, in no wise in your proud company can I sup in peace, and make merry with a quiet mind. Is it a little thing, ye wooers, that in time past ye wasted many good things of my getting, while as yet I was a child? But now that I am a man grown, and learn the story from the lips of others, and my spirit waxeth within me, I will seek to let loose upon you evil fates, as I may, going either to Pylos for help, or abiding here in this township. Yea, I will go, nor vain shall the voyage be whereof I speak; a passenger on another's ship go I, for I am not to have a ship nor oarsmen of mine own; so in your wisdom ye have thought it for the better.'

He spake and snatched his hand from out the hand of Antinous, lightly, and all the while the wooers were busy feasting through the house; and they mocked him and sharply taunted him, and thus would some proud youth speak:

'In very truth Telemachus planneth our destruction. He will bring a rescue either from sandy Pylos, or even it may be from Sparta, so terribly is he set on slaying us. Or else he will go to Ephyra, a fruitful land, to fetch a poisonous drug that he may cast it into the bowl and make an end of all of us.'

And again another proud youth would say: 'Who knows but that he himself if he goes hence on the hollow ship, may perish wandering far from his friends, even as Odysseus? So should we have yet more ado, for then must we divide among us all his substance, and moreover give the house to his mother to possess it, and to him whosoever should wed her.'

So spake they; but he stepped down into the vaulted treasure-chamber of his father, a spacious room, where gold and bronze lay piled, and raiment in coffer, and fragrant olive oil in plenty. And there stood casks of sweet wine and old, full of the unmixed drink divine, all orderly ranged by the wall, ready if ever Odysseus should come home, albeit after travail and much pain. And the close-fitted doors, the folding doors, were shut, and night and day there abode within a dame in charge, who guarded all in the fulness of her wisdom, Eurycleia, daughter of Ops son of Peisenor. Telemachus now called her into the chamber and spake unto her, saying:

'Mother, come draw off for me sweet wine in jars, the choicest next to that thou keepest mindful ever of that ill-fated one, Odysseus, of the seed of Zeus, if perchance he may come I know not whence, having avoided death and the fates. So fill twelve jars, and close each with his lid, and pour me barley-meal into well-sewn skins, and let there be twenty measures of the grain of bruised barley-meal. Let none know this but thyself! As for these things let them all be got together; for in the evening I will take them with me, at the time that my mother hath gone to her upper chamber and turned her thoughts to sleep. Lo, to Sparta I go and to sandy Pylos to seek tidings of my dear father's return, if haply I may hear thereof.'

So spake he, and the good nurse Eurycleia wailed aloud, and making lament spake to him winged words: 'Ah, wherefore, dear child, hath such a thought arisen in thine heart? How shouldst thou fare over wide lands, thou that art an only child and well-beloved? As for him he hath perished, Odysseus of the seed of Zeus, far from his own country in the land of strangers. And yonder men, so soon as thou art gone, will devise mischief against thee thereafter, that thou mayest perish by guile, and they will share among them all this wealth of thine. Nay, abide here, settled on thine own lands: thou hast no need upon the deep unharvested to suffer evil and go wandering.'

Then wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Take heart, nurse, for lo, this my purpose came not but of a god. But swear to tell no word thereof to my dear mother, till at least it shall be the

eleventh or twelfth day from hence, or till she miss me of herself, and hear of my departure, that so she may not mar her fair face with her tears.'

Thus he spake, and the old woman sware a great oath by the gods not to reveal it. But when she had sworn and done that oath, straightway she drew off the wine for him in jars, and poured barley-meal into well-sewn skins, and Telemachus departed to the house and consorted with the wooers.

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. In the likeness of Telemachus she went all through the city, and stood by each one of the men and spake her saying, and bade them gather at even by the swift ship. Furthermore, she craved a swift ship of Noemon, famous son of Phronius, and right gladly he promised it.

Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened. Then at length she let drag the swift ship to the sea and stored within it all such tackling as decked ships carry. And she moored it at the far end of the harbour and the good company was gathered together, and the goddess cheered on all.

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. She went on her way to the house of divine Odysseus; and there she shed sweet sleep upon the wooers and made them distraught in their drinking, and cast the cups from their hands. And they arose up to go to rest throughout the city, nor sat they yet a long while, for slumber was falling on their eyelids. Now grey-eyed Athene spake unto Telemachus, and called him from out the fair-lying halls, taking the likeness of Mentor, both in fashion and in voice:

'Telemachus, thy goodly-greaved companions are sitting already at their oars, it is thy despatch they are awaiting. Nay then, let us go, that we delay them not long from the way.'

Therewith Pallas Athene led the way quickly, and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. Now when they had come down to the ship and to the sea, they found the long-haired youths of the company on the shore; and the mighty prince Telemachus spake among them:

'Come hither, friends, let us carry the corn on board, for all is now together in the room, and my mother knows nought thereof, nor any of the maidens of the house: one woman only heard my saying.'

Thus he spake and led the way, and they went with him. So they brought all and stowed it in the decked ship, according to the word of the dear son of Odysseus. Then Telemachus climbed the ship, and Athene went before him, and behold, she sat her down in the stern, and near her sat Telemachus. And the men loosed the hawsers and climbed on board themselves and sat down upon the benches. And grey-eyed Athene sent them a favourable gale, a fresh West Wind, singing over the wine-dark sea.

And Telemachus called unto his company and bade them lay hands on the tackling, and they hearkened to his call. So they raised the mast of pine tree and set it in the hole of the cross plank, and made it fast with forestays, and hauled up the white sails with twisted ropes of oxhide. And the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave seethed loudly round the stem of the running ship, and she fled over the wave, accomplishing her path. Then they made all fast in the swift black ship, and set mixing bowls brimmed with wine, and poured drink offering to the deathless gods that are from everlasting, and in chief to the grey-eyed daughter of Zeus. So all night long and through the dawn the ship cleft her way.

Book III

Nestor entertains Telemachus at Pylos and tells him how the Greeks departed from Troy; and sends him for further information to Sparta.

Now the sun arose and left the lovely mere, speeding to the brazen heaven, to give light to the immortals and to mortal men on the earth, the graingiver, and they reached Pylos, the stablished castle of Neleus. There the people were doing sacrifice on the sea shore, slaying black bulls without spot to the dark-haired god, the shaker of the earth. Nine companies there were, and five hundred men sat in each, and in every company they held nine bulls ready to hand. Just as they had tasted the inner parts, and were burning the slices of the thighs on the altar to the god, the others were bearing straight to land, and brailed up the sails of the gallant ship, and moored her, and themselves came forth. And Telemachus too stepped forth from the ship, and Athene led the way. And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake first to him, saying:

'Telemachus, thou needst not now be abashed, no, not one whit. For to this very end didst thou sail over the deep, that thou mightest hear tidings of thy father, even where the earth closed over him, and what manner of death he met. But come now, go straight to Nestor, tamer of horses: let us learn what counsel he hath in the secret of his heart. And beseech him thyself that he may give unerring answer; and he will not lie to thee, for he is very wise.'

The wise Telemachus answered, saying: 'Mentor, and how shall I go, how shall I greet him, I, who am untried in words of wisdom? Moreover a young man may well be abashed to question an elder.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Telemachus, thou shalt bethink thee of somewhat in thine own breast, and somewhat the god will give thee to say. For thou, methinks, of all men wert not born and bred without the will of the gods.'

So spake Pallas Athene and led the way quickly; and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. And they came to the gathering and the session of the men of Pylos. There was Nestor seated with his sons, and round him his company making ready the feast, and roasting some of the flesh and spitting other. Now when they saw the strangers, they went all together, and clasped their hands in welcome, and would have them sit down. First Peisistratus, son of Nestor, drew nigh, and took the hands of each, and made them to sit down at the feast on soft fleeces upon the sea sand, beside his brother Thrasymedes and his father. And he gave them messes of the inner meat, and poured wine into a golden cup, and pledging her, he spake unto Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis:

'Pray now, my guest, to the lord Poseidon, even as it is his feast whereon ye have chanced in coming hither. And when thou hast made drink offering and prayed, as is due, give thy friend also the cup of honeyed wine to make offering thereof, inasmuch as he too, methinks, prayeth to the deathless gods, for all men stand in need of the gods. Howbeit he is younger and mine own equal in years, therefore to thee first will I give the golden chalice.'

Therewith he placed in her hand the cup of sweet wine. And Athene rejoiced in the wisdom and judgment of the man, in that he had given to her first the chalice of gold. And straightway she prayed, and that instantly, to the lord Poseidon:

'Hear me, Poseidon, girdler of the earth, and grudge not the fulfilment of this labour in answer to our prayer. To Nestor first and to his sons vouchsafe renown, and thereafter grant to all the people of Pylos a gracious recompense for this splendid hecatomb. Grant moreover that Telemachus and I may return, when we have accomplished that for which we came hither with our swift black ship.'

Now as she prayed on this wise, herself the while was fulfilling the prayer. And she gave Telemachus the fair two-handled cup; and in like manner prayed the dear son of Odysseus. Then, when the others had roasted the outer parts and drawn them off the spits, they divided the messes

and shared the glorious feast. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, first spake among them:

'Now is the better time to enquire and ask of the strangers who they are, now that they have had their delight of food. Strangers, who are ye? Whence sail ye over the wet ways? On some trading enterprise, or at adventure do ye rove, even as sea-robbers, over the brine, for they wander at hazard of their own lives bringing bale to alien men?'

Then wise Telemachus answered him and spake with courage, for Athene herself had put boldness in his heart, that he might ask about his father who was afar, and that he might be had in good report among men:

'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, thou askest whence we are, and I will surely tell thee all. We have come forth out of Ithaca that is below Neion; and this our quest whereof I speak is a matter of mine own, and not of the common weal. I follow after the far-spread rumour of my father, if haply I may hear thereof, even of the goodly steadfast Odysseus, who upon a time, men say, fought by thy side and sacked the city of the Trojans. For of all the others, as many as warred with the Trojans, we hear tidings, and where each one fell by a pitiful death; but even the death of this man Cronion hath left untold. For none can surely declare the place where he hath perished, whether he was smitten by foemen on the mainland, or lost upon the deep among the waves of Amphitrite. So now am I come hither to thy knees, if perchance thou art willing to tell me of his pitiful death, as one that saw it with thine own eyes, or heard the story from some other wanderer, – for his mother bare him to exceeding sorrow. And speak me no soft words in ruth or pity, but tell me plainly what sight thou didst get of him. Ah! I pray thee, if ever at all my father, noble Odysseus, made promise to thee of word or work, and fulfilled the same in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction; these things, I pray thee, now remember and tell me truth.'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, answered him: 'My friend, since thou hast brought sorrow back to mind, behold, this is the story of the woe which we endured in that land, we sons of the Achaeans, unrestrained in fury, and of all that we bore in wanderings after spoil, sailing with our ships over the misty deep, wheresoever Achilles led; and of all our war round the mighty burg of king Priam. Yea and there the best of us were slain. There lies valiant Aias, and there Achilles, and there Patroclus, the peer of the gods in counsel, and there my own dear son, strong and noble, Antilochus, that excelled in speed of foot and in the fight. And many other ills we suffered beside these; who of mortal men could tell the tale? Nay none, though thou wert to abide here for five years, ay and for six, and ask of all the ills which the goodly Achaeans then endured. Ere all was told thou wouldst be weary and turn to thine own country. For nine whole years we were busy about them, devising their ruin with all manner of craft; and scarce did Cronion bring it to pass. There never a man durst match with him in wisdom, for goodly Odysseus very far outdid the rest in all manner of craft, Odysseus thy father, if indeed thou art his son, – amazement comes upon me as I look at thee; for verily thy speech is like unto his; none would say that a younger man would speak so like an elder. Now look you, all the while that myself and goodly Odysseus were there, we never spake diversely either in the assembly or in the council, but always were of one mind, and advised the Argives with understanding and sound counsel, how all might be for the very best. But after we had sacked the steep city of Priam, and had departed in our ships, and a god had scattered the Achaeans, even then did Zeus devise in his heart a pitiful returning for the Argives, for in no wise were they all discreet or just. Wherefore many of them met with an ill faring by reason of the deadly wrath of the grey-eyed goddess, the daughter of the mighty sire, who set debate between the two sons of Atreus. And they twain called to the gathering of the host all the Achaeans, recklessly and out of order, against the going down of the sun; and lo, the sons of the Achaeans came heavy with wine. And the Atreidae spake out and told the reason wherefore they had assembled the host. Then verily Menelaus charged all the Achaeans to bethink them of returning over the broad back of the sea, but in no sort did he please Agamemnon, whose desire was to keep back the host and to offer holy hecatombs, that so

he might appease that dread wrath of Athene. Fool! for he knew not this, that she was never to be won; for the mind of the everlasting gods is not lightly turned to repentance. So these twain stood bandying hard words; but the goodly-greaved Achaeans sprang up with a wondrous din, and twofold counsels found favour among them. So that one night we rested, thinking hard things against each other, for Zeus was fashioning for us a ruinous doom. But in the morning, we of the one part drew our ships to the fair salt sea, and put aboard our wealth, and the low-girdled Trojan women. Now one half the people abode steadfastly there with Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of the host; and half of us embarked and drave to sea and swiftly the ships sailed, for a god made smooth the sea with the depths thereof. And when we came to Tenedos, we did sacrifice to the gods, being eager for the homeward way; but Zeus did not yet purpose our returning, nay, hard was he, that roused once more an evil strife among us. Then some turned back their curved ships, and went their way, even the company of Odysseus, the wise and manifold in counsel, once again showing a favour to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. But I fled on with the squadron that followed me, for I knew how now the god imagined mischief. And the warlike son of Tydeus fled and roused his men thereto. And late in our track came Menelaus of the fair hair, who found us in Lesbos, considering about the long voyage, whether we should go sea-ward of craggy Chios, by the isle of Psyria, keeping the isle upon our left, or inside Chios past windy Mimas. So we asked the god to show us a sign, and a sign he declared to us, and bade us cleave a path across the middle sea to Euboea, that we might flee the swiftest way from sorrow. And a shrill wind arose and blew, and the ships ran most fleetly over the teeming ways, and in the night they touched at Geraestus. So there we sacrificed many thighs of bulls to Poseidon, for joy that we had measured out so great a stretch of sea. It was the fourth day when the company of Diomedes son of Tydeus, tamer of horses, moored their gallant ships at Argos; but I held on for Pylos, and the breeze was never quenched from the hour that the god sent it forth to blow. Even so I came, dear child, without tidings, nor know I aught of those others, which of the Achaeans were saved and which were lost. But all that I hear tell of as I sit in our halls, thou shalt learn as it is meet, and I will hide nothing from thee. Safely, they say, came the Myrmidons the wild spearsmen, whom the famous son of high-souled Achilles led; and safely Philoctetes, the glorious son of Poias. And Idomeneus brought all his company to Crete, all that escaped the war, and from him the sea gat none. And of the son of Atreus even yourselves have heard, far apart though ye dwell, how he came, and how Aegisthus devised his evil end; but verily he himself paid a terrible reckoning. So good a thing it is that a son of the dead should still be left, even as that son also took vengeance on the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who slew his famous sire. And thou too, my friend, for I see thee very comely and tall, be valiant, that even men unborn may praise thee.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, verily and indeed he avenged himself, and the Achaeans shall noise his fame abroad, that even those may hear who are yet for to be. Oh that the gods would clothe me with such strength as his, that I might take vengeance on the wooers for their cruel transgression, who wantonly devise against me infatuate deeds! But the gods have woven for me the web of no such weal, for me or for my sire. But now I must in any wise endure it.'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, made answer: 'Dear friend, seeing thou dost call these things to my remembrance and speak thereof, they tell me that many wooers for thy mother's hand plan mischief within the halls in thy despite. Say, dost thou willingly submit thee to oppression, or do the people through the land hate thee, obedient to the voice of a god? Who knows but that Odysseus may some day come and requite their violence, either himself alone or all the host of the Achaeans with him? Ah, if but grey-eyed Athene were inclined to love thee, as once she cared exceedingly for the renowned Odysseus in the land of the Trojans, where we Achaeans were sore afflicted, for never yet have I seen the gods show forth such manifest love, as then did Pallas Athene standing manifest by him, – if she would be pleased so to love thee and to care for thee, then might certain of them clean forget their marriage.'

And wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Old man, in no wise methinks shall this word be accomplished. This is a hard saying of thine, awe comes over me. Not for my hopes shall this thing come to pass, not even if the gods so willed it.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Telemachus, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Lightly might a god, if so he would, bring a man safe home even from afar. Rather myself would I have travail and much pain ere I came home and saw the day of my returning, than come back and straightway perish on my own hearth-stone, even as Agamemnon perished by guile at the hands of his own wife and of Aegisthus. But lo you, death, which is common to all, the very gods cannot avert even from the man they love, when the ruinous doom shall bring him low of death that lays men at their length.'

And wise Telemachus answered her, saying: 'Mentor, no longer let us tell of these things, sorrowful though we be. There is none assurance any more of his returning, but already have the deathless gods devised for him death and black fate. But now I would question Nestor, and ask him of another matter, as one who above all men knows judgments and wisdom: for thrice, men say, he hath been king through the generations of men; yea, like an immortal he seems to me to look upon. Nestor, son of Neleus, now tell me true: how died the son of Atreus, Agamemnon of the wide domain? Where was Menelaus? What death did crafty Aegisthus plan for him, in that he killed a man more valiant far than he? Or was Menelaus not in Argos of Achaia but wandering elsewhere among men, and that other took heart and slew Agamemnon?'

Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, answered him: 'Yea now, my child, I will tell thee the whole truth. Verily thou guessest aright even of thyself how things would have fallen out, if Menelaus of the fair hair, the son of Atreus, when he came back from Troy, had found Aegisthus yet alive in the halls. Then even in his death would they not have heaped the piled earth over him, but dogs and fowls of the air would have devoured him as he lay on the plain far from the town.⁵ Nor would any of the Achaean women have bewailed him; so dread was the deed he contrived. Now we sat in leaguer there, achieving many adventures; but he the while in peace in the heart of Argos, the pastureland of horses, spake oftentimes, tempting her, to the wife of Agamemnon. Verily at the first she would none of the foul deed, the fair Clytemnestra, for she had a good understanding. Moreover there was with her a minstrel, whom the son of Atreus straitly charged as he went to Troy to have a care of his wife. But when at last the doom of the gods bound her to her ruin, then did Aegisthus carry the minstrel to a lonely isle, and left him there to be the prey and spoil of birds; while as for her, he led her to his house, a willing lover with a willing lady. And he burnt many thigh slices upon the holy altars of the gods, and hung up many offerings, woven-work and gold, seeing that he had accomplished a great deed, beyond all hope. Now we, I say, were sailing together on our way from Troy, the son of Atreus and I, as loving friends. But when we had reached holy Sunium, the headland of Athens, there Phoebus Apollo slew the pilot of Menelaus with the visitation of his gentle shafts, as he held between his hands the rudder of the running ship, even Phrontis, son of Onetor, who excelled the tribes of men in piloting a ship, whenso the storm-winds were hurrying by. Thus was Menelaus holden there, though eager for the way, till he might bury his friend and pay the last rites over him. But when he in his turn, faring over the wine-dark sea in hollow ships, reached in swift course the steep mount of Malea, then it was that Zeus of the far-borne voice devised a hateful path, and shed upon them the breath of the shrill winds, and great swelling waves arose like unto mountains. There sundered he the fleet in twain, and part thereof he brought nigh to Crete, where the Cydonians dwelt about the streams of Iardanus. Now there is a certain cliff, smooth and sheer towards the sea, on the border of Gortyn, in the misty deep, where the South-West Wind drives a great wave against the left headland, towards Phaestus, and a little rock keeps back the mighty water. Thither came one part of the fleet, and the men scarce escaped destruction, but the ships were broken by the waves against the rock;

⁵ Reading [Greek]. v. 1. '[Greek], which must be wrong.

while those other five dark-prowed ships the wind and the water bare and brought nigh to Egypt. Thus Menelaus, gathering much livelihood and gold, was wandering there with his ships among men of strange speech, and even then Aegisthus planned that pitiful work at home. And for seven years he ruled over Mycenae, rich in gold, after he slew the son of Atreus, and the people were subdued unto him. But in the eighth year came upon him goodly Orestes back from Athens to be his bane, and slew the slayer of his father, guileful Aegisthus, who killed his famous sire. Now when he had slain him, he made a funeral feast to the Argives over his hateful mother, and over the craven Aegisthus. And on the selfsame day there came to him Menelaus of the loud war-cry, bringing much treasure, even all the freight of his ships. So thou, my friend, wander not long far away from home, leaving thy substance behind thee and men in thy house so wanton, lest they divide and utterly devour all thy wealth, and thou shalt have gone on a vain journey. Rather I bid and command thee to go to Menelaus, for he hath lately come from a strange country, from the land of men whence none would hope in his heart to return, whom once the storms have driven wandering into so wide a sea. Thence not even the birds can make their way in the space of one year, so great a sea it is and terrible. But go now with thy ship and with thy company, or if thou hast a mind to fare by land, I have a chariot and horses at thy service, yea and my sons to do thy will, who will be thy guides to goodly Lacedaemon, where is Menelaus of the fair hair. Do thou thyself entreat him, that he may give thee unerring answer. He will not lie to thee, for he is very wise.'

Thus he spake, and the sun went down and darkness came on. Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake among them, saying: 'Yea, old man, thou hast told all this thy tale aright. But come, cut up the tongues of the victims and mix the wine, that we may pour forth before Poseidon and the other deathless gods, and so may bethink us of sleep, for it is the hour for sleep. For already has the light gone beneath the west, and it is not seemly to sit long at a banquet of the gods, but to be going home.'

So spake the daughter of Zeus, and they hearkened to her voice. And the henchmen poured water over their hands, and pages crowned the mixing bowls with drink, and served out the wine to all, after they had first poured for libation into each cup in turn; and they cast the tongues upon the fire, and stood up and poured the drink-offering thereon. But when they had poured forth and had drunken to their heart's content, Athene and godlike Telemachus were both set on returning to the hollow ship; but Nestor would have stayed them, and accosted them, saying: 'Zeus forbend it, and all the other deathless gods, that ye should depart from my house to the swift ship, as from the dwelling of one that is utterly without raiment or a needy man, who hath not rugs or blankets many in his house whereon to sleep softly, he or his guests. Nay not so, I have rugs and fair blankets by me. Never, methinks, shall the dear son of this man, even of Odysseus, lay him down upon the ship's deck, while as yet I am alive, and my children after me are left in my hall to entertain strangers, whoso may chance to come to my house.'

Then the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, spake to him again: 'Yea, herein hast thou spoken aright, dear father: and Telemachus may well obey thee, for before all things this is meet. Behold, he shall now depart with thee, that he may sleep in thy halls; as for me I will go to the black ship, that I may cheer my company and tell them all. For I avow me to be the one elder among them; those others are but younger men, who follow for love of him, all of them of like age with the high-souled Telemachus. There will I lay me down by the black hollow ship this night; but in the morning I will go to the Cauconians high of heart, where somewhat of mine is owing to me, no small debt nor of yesterday. But do thou send this man upon his way with thy chariot and thy son, since he hath come to thy house, and give him horses the lightest of foot and chief in strength.'

Therewith grey-eyed Athene departed in the semblance of a sea-eagle; and amazement fell on all that saw it, and the old man he marvelled when his eyes beheld it. And he took the hand of Telemachus and spake and hailed him:

'My friend, methinks that thou wilt in no sort be a coward and a weakling, if indeed in thy youth the gods thus follow with thee to be thy guides. For truly this is none other of those who keep the

mansions of Olympus, save only the daughter of Zeus, the driver of the spoil, the maiden Triton-born, she that honoured thy good father too among the Argives. Nay be gracious, queen, and vouchsafe a goodly fame to me, even to me and to my sons and to my wife revered. And I in turn will sacrifice to thee a yearling heifer, broad of brow, unbroken, which man never yet hath led beneath the yoke. Such an one will I offer to thee, and gild her horns with gold.'

Even so he spake in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him. Then Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, led them, even his sons and the husbands of his daughters, to his own fair house. But when they had reached this prince's famous halls, they sat down all orderly on seats and high chairs; and when they were come, the old man mixed well for them a bowl of sweet wine, which now in the eleventh year from the vintaging the housewife opened, and unloosed the string that fastened the lid. The old man let mix a bowl thereof, and prayed instantly to Athene as he poured forth before her, even to the daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis.

But after they had poured forth and had drunken to their heart's content, these went each one to his own house to lie down to rest. But Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, would needs have Telemachus, son of divine Odysseus, to sleep there on a jointed bedstead beneath the echoing gallery, and by him Peisistratus of the good ashen spear, leader of men, who alone of his sons was yet unwed in his halls. As for him he slept within the inmost chamber of the lofty house, and the lady his wife arrayed for him bedstead and bedding.

So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, gat him up from his bed, and he went forth and sat him down upon the smooth stones, which were before his lofty doors, all polished, white and glistening, whereon Neleus sat of old, in counsel the peer of the gods. Howbeit, stricken by fate, he had ere now gone down to the house of Hades, and to-day Nestor of Gerenia in his turn sat thereon, warder of the Achaeans, with his staff in his hands. And about him his sons were gathered and come together, issuing from their chambers, Echephron and Stratius, and Perseus and Aretus and the godlike Thrasymedes. And sixth and last came the hero Peisistratus. And they led godlike Telemachus and set him by their side, and Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, spake first among them:

'Quickly, my dear children, accomplish my desire, that first of all the gods I may propitiate Athene, who came to me in visible presence to the rich feast of the god. Nay then, let one go to the plain for a heifer, that she may come as soon as may be, and that the neat-herd may drive her: and let another go to the black ship of high-souled Telemachus to bring all his company, and let him leave two men only. And let one again bid Laerces the goldsmith to come hither that he may gild the horns of the heifer. And ye others, abide ye here together and speak to the handmaids within that they make ready a banquet through our famous halls, and fetch seats and logs to set about the altar, and bring clear water.'

Thus he spake and lo, they all hastened to the work. The heifer she came from the field, and from the swift gallant ship came the company of great-hearted Telemachus; the smith came holding in his hands his tools, the instruments of his craft, anvil and hammer and well-made pincers, wherewith he wrought the gold; Athene too came to receive her sacrifice. And the old knight Nestor gave gold, and the other fashioned it skilfully, and gilded therewith the horns of the heifer, that the goddess might be glad at the sight of her fair offering. And Stratius and goodly Echephron led the heifer by the horns. And Aretus came forth from the chamber bearing water for the washing of hands in a basin of flowered work, and in the other hand he held the barley-meal in a basket; and Thrasymedes, steadfast in the battle, stood by holding in his hand a sharp axe, ready to smite the heifer. And Perseus held the dish for the blood, and the old man Nestor, driver of chariots, performed the first rite of the washing of hands and the sprinkling of the meal, and he prayed instantly to Athene as he began the rite, casting into the fire the lock from the head of the victim.

Now when they had prayed and tossed the sprinkled grain, straightway the son of Nestor, gallant Thrasymedes, stood by and struck the blow; and the axe severed the tendons of the neck and loosened

the might of the heifer; and the women raised their cry, the daughters and the sons' wives and the wife revered of Nestor, Eurydice, eldest of the daughters of Clymenus. And now they lifted the victim's head from the wide-wayed earth, and held it so, while Peisistratus, leader of men, cut the throat. And after the black blood had gushed forth and the life had left the bones, quickly they broke up the body, and anon cut slices from the thighs all duly, and wrapt the same in the fat, folding them double, and laid raw flesh thereon. So that old man burnt them on the cleft wood, and poured over them the red wine, and by his side the young men held in their hands the five-pronged forks. Now after that the thighs were quite consumed and they had tasted the inner parts, they cut the rest up small and spitted and roasted it, holding the sharp spits in their hands.

Meanwhile she bathed Telemachus, even fair Polycaste, the youngest daughter of Nestor, son of Neleus. And after she had bathed him and anointed him with olive oil, and cast about him a goodly mantle and a doublet, he came forth from the bath in fashion like the deathless gods. So he went and sat him down by Nestor, shepherd of the people.

Now when they had roasted the outer flesh, and drawn it off the spits, they sat down and fell to feasting, and honourable men waited on them, pouring wine into the golden cups. But when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink, Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, first spake among them:

'Lo now, my sons, yoke for Telemachus horses with flowing mane and lead them beneath the car, that he may get forward on his way.'

Even so he spake, and they gave good heed and hearkened; and quickly they yoked the swift horses beneath the chariot. And the dame that kept the stores placed therein corn and wine and dainties, such as princes eat, the fosterlings of Zeus. So Telemachus stept up into the goodly car, and with him Peisistratus son of Nestor, leader of men, likewise climbed the car and grasped the reins in his hands, and he touched the horses with the whip to start them, and nothing loth the pair flew towards the plain, and left the steep citadel of Pylos. So all day long they swayed the yoke they bore upon their necks.

Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened. And they came to Pherae, to the house of Diocles, son of Orsilochus, the child begotten of Alpheus. There they rested for the night, and by them he set the entertainment of strangers.

Now so soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, they yoked the horses and mounted the inlaid car. And forth they drave from the gateway and the echoing gallery, and Peisistratus touched the horses with the whip to start them, and the pair flew onward nothing loth. So they came to the wheat-bearing plain, and thenceforth they pressed toward the end: in such wise did the swift horses speed forward. Now the sun sank and all the ways were darkened.

Book IV

Telemachus' entertainment at Sparta, where Menelaus tells him what befell many of the Greeks on their return; that Odysseus was with Calypso in the isle Ogygia, as he was told by Proteus.

And they came to Lacedaemon lying low among the caverned hills, and drave to the dwelling of renowned Menelaus. Him they found giving a feast in his house to many friends of his kin, a feast for the wedding of his noble son and daughter. His daughter he was sending to the son of Achilles, cleaver of the ranks of men, for in Troy he first had promised and covenanted to give her, and now the gods were bringing about their marriage. So now he was speeding her on her way with chariot and horses, to the famous city of the Myrmidons, among whom her lord bare rule. And for his son he was bringing to his home the daughter of Alector out of Sparta, for his well-beloved son, strong Megapenthes,⁶ born of a slave woman, for the gods no more showed promise of seed to Helen, from the day that she bare a lovely child, Hermione, as fair as golden Aphrodite. So they were feasting through the great vaulted hall, the neighbours and the kinsmen of renowned Menelaus, making merry; and among them a divine minstrel was singing to the lyre, and as he began the song two tumblers in the company whirled through the midst of them.

Meanwhile those twain, the hero Telemachus and the splendid son of Nestor, made halt at the entry of the gate, they and their horses. And the lord Eteoneus came forth and saw them, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus; and he went through the palace to bear the tidings to the shepherd of the people, and standing near spake to him winged words:

'Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, here are two strangers, whosoever they be, two men like to the lineage of great Zeus. Say, shall we loose their swift horses from under the yoke, or send them onward to some other host who shall receive them kindly?'

Then in sore displeasure spake to him Menelaus of the fair hair: 'Eteoneus son of Boethous, truly thou wert not a fool aforesaid, but now for this once, like a child thou talkest folly. Surely ourselves ate much hospitable cheer of other men, ere we twain came hither, even if in time to come Zeus haply give us rest from affliction. Nay go, unyoke the horses of the strangers, and as for the men, lead them forward to the house to feast with us.'

So spake he, and Eteoneus hastened from the hall, and called the other ready squires to follow with him. So they loosed the sweating horses from beneath the yoke, and fastened them at the stalls of the horses, and threw beside them spelt, and therewith mixed white barley, and tilted the chariot against the shining faces of the gateway, and led the men into the hall divine. And they beheld and marvelled as they gazed throughout the palace of the king, the fosterling of Zeus; for there was a gleam as it were of sun or moon through the lofty palace of renowned Menelaus. But after they had gazed their fill, they went to the polished baths and bathed them. Now when the maidens had bathed them and anointed them with olive oil, and cast about them thick cloaks and doublets, they sat on chairs by Menelaus, son of Atreus. And a handmaid bare water for the hands in a goodly golden ewer, and poured it forth over a silver basin to wash withal; and to their side she drew a polished table, and a grave dame bare food and set it by them, and laid upon the board many dainties, giving freely of such things as she had by her, and a carver lifted and placed by them platters of divers kinds of flesh, and nigh them he set golden bowls. So Menelaus of the fair hair greeted the twain and spake:

'Taste ye food and be glad, and thereafter when ye have supped, we will ask what men ye are; for the blood of your parents is not lost in you, but ye are of the line of men that are sceptred kings, the fosterlings of Zeus; for no churls could beget sons like you.'

⁶ A son of sorrow: Tristram.

So spake he, and took and set before them the fat ox-chine roasted, which they had given him as his own mess by way of honour. And they stretched forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. Now when they had put from them the desire of meat and drink Telemachus spake to the son of Nestor, holding his head close to him, that those others might not hear:

'Son of Nestor, delight of my heart, mark the flashing of bronze through the echoing halls, and the flashing of gold and of amber and of silver and of ivory. Such like, methinks, is the court of Olympian Zeus within, for the world of things that are here; wonder comes over me as I look thereon.'

And as he spake Menelaus of the fair hair was ware of him, and uttering his voice spake to them winged words:

'Children dear, of a truth no one of mortal men may contend with Zeus, for his mansions and his treasures are everlasting: but of men there may be who will vie with me in treasure, or there may be none. Yea, for after many a woe and wanderings manifold, I brought my wealth home in ships, and in the eighth year came hither. I roamed over Cyprus and Phoenicia and Egypt, and reached the Aethiopians and Sidonians and Erembi and Libya, where lambs are horned from the birth. For there the ewes yeap thrice within the full circle of a year; there neither lord nor shepherd lacketh aught of cheese or flesh or of sweet milk, but ever the flocks yield store of milk continual. While I was yet roaming in those lands, gathering much livelihood, meantime another slew my brother privily, at unawares, by the guile of his accursed wife. Thus, look you, I have no joy of my lordship among these my possessions: and ye are like to have heard hereof from your fathers, whosoever they be, for I have suffered much and let a house go to ruin that was stablished fair, and had in it much choice substance. I would that I had but a third part of those my riches, and dwelt in my halls, and that those men were yet safe, who perished of old in the wide land of Troy, far from Argos, the pastureland of horses. Howbeit, though I bewail them all and sorrow oftentimes as I sit in our halls, – awhile indeed I satisfy my soul with lamentation, and then again I cease; for soon hath man enough of chill lamentation – yet for them all I make no such dole, despite my grief, as for one only, who causes me to loathe both sleep and meat, when I think upon him. For no one of the Achaeans toiled so greatly as Odysseus toiled and adventured himself: but to him it was to be but labour and trouble, and to me grief ever comfortless for his sake, so long he is afar, nor know we aught, whether he be alive or dead. Yea methinks they lament him, even that old Laertes and the constant Penelope and Telemachus, whom he left a child new-born in his house.'

So spake he, and in the heart of Telemachus he stirred a yearning to lament his father; and at his father's name he let a tear fall from his eyelids to the ground, and held up his purple mantle with both his hands before his eyes. And Menelaus marked him and mused in his mind and his heart whether he should leave him to speak of his father, or first question him and prove him in every word.

While yet he pondered these things in his mind and in his heart, Helen came forth from her fragrant vaulted chamber, like Artemis of the golden arrows; and with her came Adraste and set for her the well-wrought chair, and Alcippe bare a rug of soft wool, and Phylo bare a silver basket which Alcandre gave her, the wife of Polybus, who dwelt in Thebes of Egypt, where is the chiefest store of wealth in the houses. He gave two silver baths to Menelaus, and tripods twain, ad ten talents of gold. And besides all this, his wife bestowed on Helen lovely gifts; a golden distaff did she give, and a silver basket with wheels beneath, and the rims thereof were finished with gold. This it was that the handmaid Phylo bare and set beside her, filled with dressed yarn, and across it was laid a distaff charged with wool of violet blue. So Helen sat her down in the chair, and beneath was a footstool for the feet. And anon she spake to her lord and questioned him of each thing:

'Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, know we now who these men avow themselves to be that have come under our roof? Shall I dissemble or shall I speak the truth? Nay, I am minded to tell it. None, I say, have I ever yet seen so like another, man or woman – wonder comes over me as I look on him – as this man is like the son of great-hearted Odysseus, Telemachus, whom he left a new born child in

his house, when for the sake of me, shameless woman that I was, ye Achaeans came up under Troy with bold war in your hearts.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered her, saying: 'Now I too, lady, mark the likeness even as thou tracest it. For such as these were his feet, such his hands, and the glances of his eyes, and his head, and his hair withal. Yea, and even now I was speaking of Odysseus, as I remembered him, of all his woeful travail for my sake; when, lo, he let fall a bitter tear beneath his brows, and held his purple cloak up before his eyes.'

And Peisistratus, son of Nestor, answered him, saying: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the host, assuredly this is the son of that very man, even as thou sayest. But he is of a sober wit, and thinketh it shame in his heart as on this his first coming to make show of presumptuous words in the presence of thee, in whose voice we twain delight as in the voice of a god. Now Nestor of Gerenia, lord of chariots, sent me forth to be his guide on the way: for he desired to see thee that thou mightest put into his heart some word or work. For a son hath many griefs in his halls when his father is away, if perchance he hath none to stand by him. Even so it is now with Telemachus; his father is away, nor hath he others in the township to defend him from distress.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered him, and said: 'Lo now, in good truth there has come unto my house the son of a friend indeed, who for my sake endured many adventures. And I thought to welcome him on his coming more nobly than all the other Argives, if but Olympian Zeus, of the far-borne voice, had vouchsafed us a return over the sea in our swift ships, – that such a thing should be. And in Argos I would have given him a city to dwell in, and stablished for him a house, and brought him forth from Ithaca with his substance and his son and all his people, making one city desolate of those that lie around, and are in mine own domain. Then oftentimes would we have held converse here, and nought would have parted us, the welcoming and the welcomed,⁷ ere the black cloud of death overshadowed us. Howsoever, the god himself, methinks, must have been jealous hereof, who from that hapless man alone cut off his returning.'

So spake he, and in the hearts of all he stirred the desire of lamentation. She wept, even Argive Helen the daughter of Zeus, and Telemachus wept, and Menelaus the son of Atreus; nay, nor did the son of Nestor keep tearless eyes. For he bethought him in his heart of noble Antilochus, whom the glorious son of the bright Dawn had slain. Thinking upon him he spake winged words:

'Son of Atreus, the ancient Nestor in his own halls was ever wont to say that thou wert wise beyond man's wisdom, whensoever we made mention of thee and asked one another concerning thee. And now, if it be possible, be persuaded by me, who for one have no pleasure in weeping at supper time – the new-born day will right soon be upon us.⁸ Not indeed that I deem it blame at all to weep for any mortal who hath died and met his fate. Lo, this is now the only due we pay to miserable men, to cut the hair and let the tear fall from the cheek. For I too have a brother dead, nowise the meanest of the Argives, and thou art like to have known him, for as for me I never encountered him, never beheld him. But men say that Antilochus outdid all, being excellent in speed of foot and in the fight.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered him, and said: 'My friend, lo, thou hast said all that a wise man might say or do, yea, and an elder than thou; – for from such a sire too thou art sprung, wherefore thou dost even speak wisely. Right easily known is that man's seed, for whom Cronion weaves the skein of luck at bridal and at birth: even as now hath he granted prosperity to Nestor for ever for all his days, that he himself should grow into a smooth old age in his halls, and his sons moreover should be wise and the best of spearsmen. But we will cease now the weeping which was erewhile made, and let us once more bethink us of our supper, and let them pour water over our

⁷ Mr. Evelyn Abbott of Balliol College has suggested to us that [Greek] and [Greek] are here correlatives, and denote respectively the parts of host and of guest. This is sufficiently borne out by the usage of the words elsewhere.

⁸ Cf. B. xv.50

hands. And again in the morning there will be tales for Telemachus and me to tell one to the other, even to the end.'

So spake he, and Asphalion poured water over their hands, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus. And they put forth their hands upon the good cheer spread before them.

Then Helen, daughter of Zeus, turned to new thoughts. Presently she cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. Whoso should drink a draught thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his mother and his father died, not though men slew his brother or dear son with the sword before his face, and his own eyes beheld it. Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt, where earth the grain-giver yields herbs in greatest plenty, many that are healing in the cup, and many baneful. There each man is a leech skilled beyond all human kind; yea, for they are of the race of Paeon. Now after she had cast in the drug and bidden pour forth of the wine, she made answer once again, and spake unto her lord:

'Son of Atreus, Menelaus, fosterling of Zeus, and lo, ye sons of noble men, forasmuch as now to one and now to another Zeus gives good and evil, for to him all things are possible, – now, verily, sit ye down and feast in the halls, and take ye joy in the telling of tales, and I will tell you one that fits the time. Now all of them I could not tell or number, so many as were the adventures of Odysseus of the hardy heart; but, ah, what a deed was this he wrought and dared in his hardiness in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction. He subdued his body with unseemly stripes, and a sorry covering he cast about his shoulders, and in the fashion of a servant he went down into the wide-wayed city of the foemen, and he hid himself in the guise of another, a beggar, though in no wise such an one was he at the ships of the Achaeans. In this semblance he passed into the city of the Trojans, and they wist not who he was, and I alone knew him in that guise, and I kept questioning him, but in his subtlety he avoided me. But when at last I was about washing him and anointing him with olive oil, and had put on him raiment, and sworn a great oath not to reveal Odysseus amid the Trojans, ere he reached the swift ships and the huts, even then he told me all the purpose of the Achaeans. And after slaying many of the Trojans with the long sword, he returned to the Argives and brought back word again of all. Then the other Trojan women wept aloud, but my soul was glad, for already my heart was turned to go back again even to my home: and now at the last I groaned for the blindness that Aphrodite gave me, when she led me thither away from mine own country, forsaking my child and my bridal chamber and my lord, that lacked not aught whether for wisdom or yet for beauty.'

And Menelaus of the fair hair answered her, saying: 'Verily all this tale, lady, thou hast duly told. Ere now have I learned the counsel and the thought of many heroes, and travelled over many a land, but never yet have mine eyes beheld any such man of heart as was Odysseus; such another deed as he wrought and dared in his hardiness even in the shapen horse, wherein sat all we chiefs of the Argives, bearing to the Trojans death and doom. Anon thou camest thither, and sure some god must have bidden thee, who wished to bring glory to the Trojans. Yea and godlike Deiphobus went with thee on thy way. Thrice thou didst go round about the hollow ambush and handle it, calling aloud on the chiefs of the Argives by name, and making thy voice like the voices of the wives of all the Argives. Now I and the son of Tydeus and goodly Odysseus sat in the midst and heard thy call; and verily we twain had a desire to start up and come forth or presently to answer from within; but Odysseus stayed and held us there, despite our eagerness. Then all the other sons of the Achaeans held their peace, but Anticlus alone was still minded to answer thee. Howbeit Odysseus firmly closed his mouth with strong hands, and so saved all the Achaeans, and held him until such time as Pallas Athene led thee back.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the host, all the more grievous it is! for in no way did this courage ward from him pitiful

destruction, not though his heart within him had been very iron. But come, bid us to bed, that forthwith we may take our joy of rest beneath the spell of sleep.'

So spake he, and Argive Helen bade her handmaids set out bedsteads beneath the gallery, and fling on them fair purple blankets and spread coverlets above, and thereon lay thick mantles to be a clothing over all. So they went from the hall with torch in hand, and spread the beds, and the henchman led forth the guests. Thus they slept there in the vestibule of the house, the hero Telemachus and the splendid son of Nestor. But the son of Atreus slept, as his custom was, in the inmost chamber of the lofty house, and by him lay long-robed Helen, that fair lady.

Soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, Menelaus of the loud war-shout gat him up from his bed and put on his raiment, and cast his sharp sword about his shoulder, and beneath his smooth feet bound his goodly sandals, and stept forth from his chamber, in presence like a god, and sat by Telemachus, and spake and hailed him:

'To what end hath thy need brought thee hither, hero Telemachus, unto fair Lacedaemon, over the broad back of the sea? Is it a matter of the common weal or of thine own?

Herein tell me the plain truth.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, and said: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, fosterling of Zeus, leader of the host, I have come if perchance thou mayest tell me some tidings of my father. My dwelling is being devoured and my fat lands are ruined, and of unfriendly men my house is full, – who slaughter continually my thronging flocks, and my kine with trailing feet and shambling gait, – none other than the wooers of my mother, despiteful out of measure. So now am I come hither to thy knees, if haply thou art willing to tell me of his pitiful death, as one that saw it perchance with thine own eyes, or heard the story from some other wanderer; for his mother bare him to exceeding sorrow. And speak me no soft words in ruth or pity, but tell me plainly how thou didst get sight of him. Ah, I pray thee, if ever at all my father, good Odysseus, made promise to thee of word or work and fulfilled the same in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achaeans suffered affliction, these things, I pray thee, now remember and tell me truth.'

Then in heavy displeasure spake to him Menelaus of the fair hair: 'Out upon them, for truly in the bed of a brave-hearted man were they minded to lie, very cravens as they are! Even as when a hind hath couched her newborn fawns unweaned in a strong lion's lair, and searcheth out the mountain knees and grassy hollows, seeking pasture, and afterward the lion cometh back to his bed, and sendeth forth unsightly death upon that pair, even so shall Odysseus send forth unsightly death upon the wooers. Would to our father Zeus and Athene and Apollo, would that in such might as when of old in stablished Lesbos he rose up and wrestled a match with Philomeleides and threw him mightily, and all the Achaeans rejoiced; would that in such strength Odysseus might consort with the wooers: then should they all have swift fate, and bitter wedlock! But for that whereof thou askest and entrest me, be sure I will not swerve from the truth in aught that I say, nor deceive thee; but of all that the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, declared to me, not a word will I hide or keep from thee.

'In the river Aegyptus,⁹ though eager I was to press onward home, the gods they stayed me, for that I had not offered them the acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs, and the gods ever desired that men should be mindful of their commandments. Now there is an island in the wash of the waves over against Aegyptus, and men call it Pharos, within one day's voyage of a hollow ship, when shrill winds blow fair in her wake. And therein is a good haven, whence men launch the gallant ships into the deep when they have drawn a store of deep black water. There the gods held me twenty days, nor did the sea-winds ever show their breath, they that serve to waft ships over the broad back of the sea. And now would all our corn have been spent, and likewise the strength of the men, except some goddess had taken pity on me and saved me, Eidothee, daughter of mighty Proteus, the ancient one of the sea. For most of all I moved her heart, when she met me wandering alone apart from my company, who

⁹ The only name for the Nile in Homer. Cf. Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians* (1878), vol. i. p. 7.

were ever roaming round the isle, fishing with bent hooks, for hunger was gnawing at their belly. So she stood by, and spake and uttered her voice saying:

"Art thou so very foolish, stranger, and feeble-witted, or art thou wilfully remiss, and hast pleasure in suffering? So long time art thou holden in the isle and canst find no issue therefrom, while the heart of thy company faileth within them?"

'Even so she spake, and I answered her saying: "I will speak forth, what goddess soever thou art, and tell thee that in no wise am I holden here by mine own will, but it needs must be that I have sinned against the deathless gods, who keep the wide heaven. Howbeit, do thou tell me – for the gods know all things – which of the immortals it is that binds me here and hath hindered me from my way, and declare as touching my returning how I may go over the teeming deep."

'So I spake, and straightway the fair goddess made answer: "Yea now, sir, I will plainly tell thee all. Hither resorteth that ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, the deathless Egyptian Proteus, who knows the depths of every sea, and is the thrall of Poseidon, and who, they say, is my father that begat me. If thou couldst but lay an ambush and catch him, he will surely declare to thee the way and the measure of thy path, and will tell thee of thy returning, how thou mayest go over the teeming deep. Yea, and he will show thee, O fosterling of Zeus, if thou wilt, what good thing and what evil hath been wrought in thy halls, whilst thou has been faring this long and grievous way."

'So she spake, but I answered and said unto her: "Devise now thyself the ambush to take this ancient one divine, lest by any chance he see me first, or know of my coming, and avoid me. For a god is hard for mortal man to quell."

'So spake I, and straightway the fair goddess made answer: "Yea now, sir, I will plainly tell thee all. So often as the sun in his course stands high in mid heaven, then forth from the brine comes the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth, before the breath of the West Wind he comes, and the sea's dark ripple covers him. And when he is got forth, he lies down to sleep in the hollow of the caves. And around him the seals, the brood of the fair daughter of the brine, sleep all in a flock, stolen forth from the grey sea water, and bitter is the scent they breathe of the deeps of the salt sea. There will I lead thee at the breaking of the day, and couch you all orderly; so do thou choose diligently three of thy company, the best thou hast in thy decked ships. And I will tell thee all the magic arts of that old man. First, he will number the seals and go over them; but when he has told their tale and beheld them, he will lay him down in the midst, as a shepherd mid the sheep of his flock. So soon as ever ye shall see him couched, even then mind you of your might and strength, and hold him there, despite his eagerness and striving to be free. And he will make assay, and take all manner of shapes of things that creep upon the earth, of water likewise, and of fierce fire burning. But do ye grasp him steadfastly and press him yet the more, and at length when he questions thee in his proper shape, as he was when first ye saw him laid to rest, then, hero, hold thy strong hands, and let the ancient one go free, and ask him which of the gods is hard upon thee, and as touching thy returning, how thou mayest go over the teeming deep."

'Therewith she dived beneath the heaving sea, but I betook me to the ships where they stood in the sand, and my heart was darkly troubled as I went. But after I had come down to the ship and to the sea, and we had made ready our supper and immortal night had come on, then did we lay us to rest upon the sea-beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy fingered, in that hour I walked by the shore of the wide-wayed sea, praying instantly to the gods; and I took with me three of my company, in whom I trusted most for every enterprise.

'Meanwhile, so it was that she had plunged into the broad bosom of the sea, and had brought from the deep the skins of four sea-calves, and all were newly flayed, for she was minded to lay a snare for her father. She scooped lairs on the sea-sand, and sat awaiting us, and we drew very nigh her, and she made us all lie down in order, and cast a skin over each. There would our ambush have been most terrible, for the deadly stench of the sea bred seals distressed us sore: nay, who would lay him down by a beast of the sea? But herself she wrought deliverance, and devised a great comfort. She took

ambrosia of a very sweet savour, and set it beneath each man's nostril, and did away with the stench of the beast. So all the morning we waited with steadfast heart, and the seals came forth in troops from the brine, and then they couched them all orderly by the sea-beach. And at high day the ancient one came forth from out of the brine, and found his fatted seals, yea and he went along their line and told their tale; and first among the sea-beasts he reckoned us, and guessed not that there was guile, and afterward he too laid him down. Then we rushed upon him with a cry, and cast our hands about him, nor did that ancient one forget his cunning. Now behold, at the first he turned into a bearded lion, and thereafter into a snake, and a pard, and a huge boar; then he took the shape of running water, and of a tall and flowering tree. We the while held him close with steadfast heart. But when now that ancient one of the magic arts was aware, then at last he questioned me and spake unto me, saying:

"Which of the gods was it, son of Atreus, that aided thee with his counsel, that thou mightest waylay and take me perforce? What wouldest thou thereby?"

'Even so he spake, but I answered him saying; "Old man, thou knowest all, wherefore dost thou question me thereof with crooked words? For lo, I am holden long time in this isle, neither can I find any issue therefrom, and my heart faileth within me. Howbeit do thou tell me – for the gods know all things – which of the immortals it is that bindeth me here, and hath hindered me from my way; and declare as touching my returning, how I may go over the teeming deep."

'Even so I spake, and he straightway answered me, saying: "Nay, surely thou shouldest have done goodly sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods ere thine embarking, that with most speed thou mightst reach thy country, sailing over the wine-dark deep. For it is not thy fate to see thy friends, and come to thy stablished house and thine own country, till thou hast passed yet again within the waters of Aegyptus, the heaven-fed stream, and offered holy hecatombs to the deathless gods who keep the wide heaven. So shall the gods grant thee the path which thou desirest."

'So spake he, but my spirit within me was broken, for that he bade me again to go to Aegyptus over the misty deep, a long and grievous way.

'Yet even so I answered him saying: "Old man, all this will I do, according to thy word. But come, declare me this, and tell it all plainly. Did all those Achaeans return safe with their ships, all whom Nestor and I left as we went from Troy, or perished any by a shameful death aboard his own ship, or in the arms of his friends, after he had wound up the clew of war?"

'So spake I, and anon he answered me, saying: "Son of Atreus, why dost thou straitly question me hereof? Nay, it is not for thy good to know or learn my thought; for I tell thee thou shalt not long be tearless, when thou hast heard it all aright. For many of these were taken, and many were left; but two only of the leaders of the mail-coated Achaeans perished in returning; as for the battle, thou thyself wast there. And one methinks is yet alive, and is holden on the wide deep. Aias in truth was smitten in the midst of his ships of the long oars. Poseidon at first brought him nigh to Gyrae, to the mighty rocks, and delivered him from the sea. And so he would have fled his doom, albeit hated by Athene, had he not let a proud word fall in the fatal darkening of his heart. He said that in the gods' despite he had escaped the great gulf of the sea; and Poseidon heard his loud boasting, and presently caught up his trident into his strong hands, and smote the rock Gyraean and cleft it in twain. And the one part abode in his place, but the other fell into the sea, the broken piece whereon Aias sat at the first, when his heart was darkened. And the rock bore him down into the vast and heaving deep; so there he perished when he had drunk of the salt sea water. But thy brother verily escaped the fates and avoided them in his hollow ships, for queen Hera saved him. But now when he was like soon to reach the steep mount of Malea, lo, the storm wind snatched him away and bore him over the teeming deep, making great moan, to the border of the country whereof old Thyestes dwelt, but now Aegisthus abode there, the son of Thyestes. But when thence too there showed a good prospect of safe returning, and the gods changed the wind to a fair gale, and they had reached home, then verily did Agamemnon set foot with joy upon his country's soil, and as he touched his own land he kissed it, and many were the hot tears he let fall, for he saw his land and was glad. And it was so that

the watchman spied him from his tower, the watchman whom crafty Aegisthus had led and posted there, promising him for a reward two talents of gold. Now he kept watch for the space of a year, lest Agamemnon should pass by him when he looked not, and mind him of his wild prowess. So he went to the house to bear the tidings to the shepherd of the people. And straightway Aegisthus contrived a cunning treason. He chose out twenty of the best men in the township, and set an ambush, and on the further side of the hall he commanded to prepare a feast. Then with chariot and horses he went to bid to the feast Agamemnon, shepherd of the people; but caitiff thoughts were in his heart. He brought him up to his house, all unwitting of his doom, and when he had feasted him slew him, as one slayeth an ox at the stall. And none of the company of Atreides that were of his following were left, nor any of the men of Aegisthus, but they were all killed in the halls."

'So spake he, and my spirit within me was broken, and I wept as I sat upon the sand, nor was I minded any more to live and see the light of the sun. But when I had taken my fill of weeping and grovelling on the ground, then spake the ancient one of the sea, whose speech is sooth:

"No more, son of Atreus, hold this long weeping without cease, for we shall find no help therein. Rather with all haste make essay that so thou mayest come to thine own country. For either thou shalt find Aegisthus yet alive, or it may be Orestes was beforehand with thee and slew him; so mayest thou chance upon his funeral feast."

'So he spake, and my heart and lordly soul again were comforted for all my sorrow, and I uttered my voice and I spake to him winged words:

"Their fate I now know; but tell me of the third; who is it that is yet living and holden on the wide deep, or perchance is dead? and fain would I hear despite my sorrow."

'So spake I, and straightway he answered, and said: "It is the son of Laertes, whose dwelling is in Ithaca; and I saw him in an island shedding big tears in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who holds him there perforce; so he may not come to his own country, for he has by him no ships with oars, and no companions to send him on his way over the broad back of the sea. But thou, Menelaus, son of Zeus, art not ordained to die and meet thy fate in Argos, the pasture-land of horses, but the deathless gods will convey thee to the Elysian plain and the world's end, where is Rhadamanthus of the fair hair, where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor yet great storm, nor any rain; but always ocean sendeth forth the breeze of the shrill West to blow cool on men; yea, for thou hast Helen to wife, and thereby they deem thee to be son of Zeus."

'So spake he, and plunged into the heaving sea; but I betook me to the ships with my godlike company, and my heart was darkly troubled as I went. Now after I had come down to the ship and to the sea, and had made ready our supper, and immortal night had come on, then did we lay us to rest upon the sea-beach. So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, first of all we drew down our ships to the fair salt sea and placed the masts and the sails in the gallant ships, and the crew too climbed on board, and sat upon the benches and smote the grey sea water with their oars. Then back I went to the waters of Aegyptus, the heaven-fed stream, and there I moored the ships and offered the acceptable sacrifice of hecatombs. So when I had appeased the anger of the everlasting gods, I piled a barrow to Agamemnon, that his fame might never be quenched. So having fulfilled all, I set out for home, and the deathless gods gave me a fair wind, and brought me swiftly to mine own dear country. But lo, now tarry in my halls till it shall be the eleventh day hence or the twelfth. Then will I send thee with all honour on thy way, and give thee splendid gifts, three horses and a polished car; and moreover I will give thee a goodly chalice, that thou mayest pour forth before the deathless gods, and be mindful of me all the days of thy life.'

Then wise Telemachus answered him, saying: 'Son of Atreus, nay, hold me not long time here. Yea even for a year would I be content to sit by thee, and no desire for home or parents would come upon me; for I take wondrous pleasure in thy tales and talk. But already my company wearieth in fair Pylos, and yet thou art keeping me long time here. And whatsoever gift thou wouldest give me, let it be a thing to treasure; but horses I will take none to Ithaca, but leave them here to grace thine own

house, for thou art lord of a wide plain wherein is lotus great plenty, and therein is spear-reed and wheat and rye, and white and spreading barley. In Ithaca there are no wide courses, nor meadow land at all. It is a pasture-land of goats, and more pleasant in my sight than one that pastureth horses; for of the isles that lie and lean upon the sea, none are fit for the driving of horses, or rich in meadow land, and least of all is Ithaca.'

So spake he, and Menelaus, of the loud war cry, smiled, and caressed him with his hand, and spake and hailed him:

'Thou art of gentle blood, dear child, so gentle the words thou speakest. Therefore I will make exchange of the presents, as I may. Of the gifts, such as are treasures stored in my house, I will give thee the goodliest and greatest of price. I will give thee a mixing bowl beautifully wrought; it is all of silver, and the lips thereof are finished with gold, the work of Hephaestus; and the hero Phaedimus, the king of the Sidonians, gave it me, when his house sheltered me on my coming thither, and to thee now would I give it.'

Even so they spake one to another, while the guests came to the palace of the divine king. They drave their sheep, and brought wine that maketh glad the heart of man: and their wives with fair tire sent them wheaten bread. Thus were these men preparing the feast in the halls.

But the wooers meantime were before the palace of Odysseus, taking their pleasure in casting of weights and spears, on a levelled place, as heretofore, in their insolence. And Antinous and god-like Eurymachus were seated there, the chief men of the wooers, who were far the most excellent of all. And Noemon, son of Phromius, drew nigh to them and spake unto Antinous and questioned him, saying:

'Antinous, know we at all, or know we not, when Telemachus will return from sandy Pylos? He hath departed with a ship of mine, and I have need thereof, to cross over into spacious Elis, where I have twelve brood mares with hardy mules unbroken at the teat; I would drive off one of these and break him in.'

So spake he, and they were amazed, for they deemed not that Telemachus had gone to Neleian Pylos, but that he was at home somewhere in the fields, whether among the flocks, or with the swineherd.

Then Antinous, son of Eupheithes, spake to him in turn: 'Tell me the plain truth; when did he go, and what noble youths went with him? Were they chosen men of Ithaca or hirelings and thralls of his own? He was in case to bring even that about. And tell me this in good sooth, that I may know for a surety: did he take thy black ship from thee perforce against thy will? or didst thou give it him of free will at his entreaty?'

Then Noemon, son of Phromius, answered him saying: 'I gave it him myself of free will. What can any man do, when such an one, so bestead with care, begs a favour? it were hard to deny the gift. The youths who next to us are noblest in the land, even these have gone with him; and I marked their leader on board ship, Mentor, or a god who in all things resembled Mentor. But one matter I marvel at: I saw the goodly Mentor here yesterday toward dawn, though already he had embarked for Pylos.'

He spake and withal departed to his father's house. And the proud spirits of these twain were angered, and they made the wooers sit down together and cease from their games. And among them spake Antinous, son of Eupheithes, in displeasure; and his black heart was wholly filled with rage, and his eyes were like flaming fire:

'Out on him, a proud deed hath Telemachus accomplished with a high hand, even this journey, and we thought that he would never bring it to pass! This lad hath clean gone without more ado, in spite of us all; his ship he hath let haul to the sea, and chosen the noblest in the township. He will begin to be our bane even more than heretofore; but may Zeus destroy his might, not ours, ere he reach the measure of manhood! But come, give me a swift ship and twenty men, that I may lie in watch and wait even for him on his way home, in the strait between Ithaca and rugged Samos, that so he may have a woeful end of his cruising in quest of his father.'

So spake he, and they all assented thereto, and bade him to the work. And thereupon they arose and went to the house of Odysseus.

Now it was no long time before Penelope heard of the counsel that the wooers had devised in the deep of their heart. For the henchman Medon told her thereof, who stood without the court and heard their purposes, while they were weaving their plot within. So he went on his way through the halls to bring the news to Penelope; and as he stepped down over the threshold, Penelope spake unto him:

'Henchman, wherefore have the noble wooers sent thee forth? Was it to tell the handmaids of divine Odysseus to cease from their work, and prepare a banquet for them? Nay, after thus much wooing, never again may they come together, but here this day sup for their last and latest time; all ye who assemble so often, and waste much livelihood, the wealth of wise Telemachus! Long ago when ye were children, ye marked not your fathers' telling, what manner of man was Odysseus among them, one that wrought no iniquity toward any man, nor spake aught unrighteous in the township, as is the wont of divine kings. One man a king is like to hate, another he might chance to love. But never did he do aught at all presumptuously to any man. Nay, it is plain what spirit ye are of, and your unseemly deeds are manifest to all, nor is there any gratitude left for kindness done.'

Then Medon, wise of heart, answered her: 'Would, oh queen, that this were the crowning evil! But the wooers devise another far greater and more grievous, which I pray the son of Cronos may never fulfil! They are set on slaying Telemachus with the edge of the sword on his homeward way; for he is gone to fair Pylos and goodly Lacedaemon, to seek tidings of his father.'

So spake he, but her knees were loosened where she stood, and her heart melted within her, and long time was she speechless, and lo, her eyes were filled with tears and the voice of her utterance was stayed. And at the last she answered him and said:

'Henchman, wherefore I pray thee is my son departed? There is no need that he should go abroad on swift ships, that serve men for horses on the sea, and that cross the great wet waste. Is it that even his own name may no more be left upon earth?'

Then Medon, wise of heart, answered her: 'I know not whether some god set him on or whether his own spirit stirred him to go to Pylos to seek tidings of his father's return, or to hear what end he met.'

He spake, and departed through the house of Odysseus, and on her fell a cloud of consuming grief; so that she might no more endure to seat her on a chair, whereof there were many in the house, but there she crouched on the threshold of her well-built chamber, wailing piteously, and her handmaids round her made low moan, as many as were in the house with her, young and old. And Penelope spake among them pouring forth her lamentation:

'Hear me, my friends, for the Olympian sire hath given me pain exceedingly beyond all women who were born and bred in my day. For erewhile I lost my noble lord of the lion heart, adorned with all perfection among the Danaans, my good lord, whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos. And now again the storm-winds have snatched away my well-beloved son without tidings from our halls, nor heard I of his departure. Oh, women, hard of heart, that even ye did not each one let the thought come into your minds, to rouse me from my couch when he went to the black hollow ship, though ye knew full well thereof! For had I heard that he was purposing this journey, verily he should have stayed here still, though eager to be gone, or have left me dead in the halls. Howbeit let some one make haste to call the ancient Dolius, my thrall, whom my father gave me ere yet I had come hither, who keepeth my garden of trees. So shall he go straightway and sit by Laertes, and tell him all, if perchance Laertes may weave some counsel in his heart, and go forth and make his plaint to the people, who are purposed to destroy his seed, and the seed of god-like Odysseus.'

Then the good nurse Eurycleia answered her: 'Dear lady, aye, slay me if thou wilt with the pitiless sword or let me yet live on in the house, – yet will I not hide my saying from thee. I knew all this, and gave him whatsoever he commanded, bread and sweet wine. And he took a great oath of me not to tell thee till at least the twelfth day should come, or thou thyself shouldst miss him

and hear of his departure, that thou mightest not mar thy fair flesh with thy tears. But now, wash thee in water, and take to thee clean raiment and ascend to thy upper chamber with the women thy handmaids, and pray to Athene, daughter of Zeus, lord of the aegis. For so may she save him even from death. And heap not troubles on an old man's trouble; for the seed of the son of Arceisus, is not, methinks, utterly hated by the blessed gods, but someone will haply yet remain to possess these lofty halls, and the fat fields far away.'

So spake she, and lulled her queen's lamentation, and made her eyes to cease from weeping. So she washed her in water, and took to her clean raiment, and ascended to the upper chamber with the women her handmaids, and placed the meal for sprinkling in a basket, and prayed unto Athene:

'Hear me, child of Zeus, lord of the aegis, unwearied maiden! If ever wise Odysseus in his halls burnt for thee fat slices of the thighs of heifer or of sheep, these things, I pray thee, now remember, and save my dear son, and ward from him the wooers in the naughtiness of their pride.'

Therewith she raised a cry, and the goddess heard her prayer. But the wooers clamoured through the shadowy halls, and thus would some proud youth say:

'Verily this queen of many wooers prepareth our marriage, nor knoweth at all how that for her son death hath been ordained.'

Thus would certain of them speak, but they knew not how these things were ordained. And Antinous made harangue and spake among them:

'Good sirs, my friends, shun all disdainful words alike, lest someone hear and tell it even in the house. But come let us arise, and in silence accomplish that whereof we spake, for the counsel pleased us every one.'

Therewith he chose twenty men that were the best, and they departed to the swift ship and the sea-banks. So first of all they drew the ship down to the deep water, and placed the mast and sails in the black ship, and fixed the oars in leathern loops all orderly, and spread forth the white sails. And squires, haughty of heart, bare for them their arms. And they moored her high out in the shore water, and themselves disembarked. There they supped and waited for evening to come on.

But the wise Penelope lay there in her upper chamber, fasting and tasting neither meat nor drink, musing whether her noble son should escape death, or even fall before the proud wooers. And as a lion broods all in fear among the press of men, when they draw the crafty ring around him, so deeply was she musing when deep sleep came over her. And she sank back in sleep and all her joints were loosened.

Now the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, turned to other thoughts. She made a phantom, and fashioned it after the likeness of a woman, Iphthime, daughter of great-hearted Icarius, whom Eumelus wedded, whose dwelling was in Pherae. And she sent it to the house of divine Odysseus to bid Penelope, amid her sorrow and lamenting, to cease from her weeping and tearful lamentation. So the phantom passed into the chamber by the thong of the bolt, and stood above her head and spake unto her, saying:

'Sleepest thou, Penelope, stricken at heart? Nay, even the gods who live at ease suffer thee not to wail or be afflicted, seeing that thy son is yet to return; for no sinner is he in the eyes of the gods.'

Then wise Penelope made her answer as she slumbered very softly at the gates of dreams:

'Wherefore, sister, hast thou come hither, that before wert not wont to come, for thou hast thine habitation very far away? Biddest thou me indeed to cease from the sorrows and pains, so many that disquiet my heart and soul? Erewhile I lost my noble lord of the lion heart, adorned with all perfection among the Danaans, my true lord, whose fame is noised abroad from Hellas to mid Argos. And now, again, my well-beloved son is departed on his hollow ship, poor child, not skilled in toils or in the gatherings of men. For him I sorrow yet more than for my lord, and I tremble and fear for him lest aught befall him, whether, it may be, amid that folk where he is gone, or in the deep. For many foemen devise evil against him, and go about to kill him, or ever he come to his own country.'

And the dim phantom answered her, and said: 'Take courage, and be not so sorely afraid. For lo, such a friend goes to guide him, as all men pray to stand by them, for that she hath the power, even Pallas Athene. And she pitieth thee in thy sorrow, and now hath sent me forth to speak these words to thee.'

And wise Penelope answered her, saying: 'If thou art indeed a god, and hast heard the word of a god, come, I pray thee, and tell me tidings concerning that ill-fated man, whether perchance he is yet alive and sees the light of the sun, or hath already died, and is a dweller in the house of Hades.'

And the dim phantom answered her and said: 'Concerning him I will not tell thee all the tale, whether he be alive or dead; it is ill to speak words light as wind.'

Therewith the phantom slipped away by the bolt of the door and passed into the breath of the wind. And the daughter of Icarius started up from sleep; and her heart was cheered, so clear was the vision that sped toward her in the dead of the night.

Meanwhile the wooers had taken ship and were sailing over the wet ways, pondering in their hearts sheer death for Telemachus. Now there is a rocky isle in the mid sea, midway between Ithaca and rugged Samos, Asteris, a little isle; and there is a harbour therein with a double entrance, where ships may ride. There the Achaeans abode lying in wait for Telemachus.

Book V

The Gods in council command Calypso by Hermes to send away Odysseus on a raft of trees; and Poseidon, returning from Ethiopia and seeing him on the coast of Phaeacia, scattered his raft; and how by the help of Ino he was thrown ashore, and slept on a heap of dry leaves till the next day.

Now the Dawn arose from her couch, from the side of the lordly Tithonus, to bear light to the immortals and to mortal men. And lo, the gods were gathering to session, and among them Zeus, that thunders on high, whose might is above all. And Athene told them the tale of the many woes of Odysseus, recalling them to mind; for near her heart was he that then abode in the dwelling of the nymph:

'Father Zeus, and all ye other blessed gods that live for ever, henceforth let not any sceptred king be kind and gentle with all his heart, nor minded to do righteously, but let him always be a hard man and work unrighteousness, for behold, there is none that remembereth divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was, and was gentle as a father. Howbeit, as for him he lieth in an island suffering strong pains, in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who holdeth him perforce; so he may not reach his own country, for he hath no ships by him with oars, and no companions to send him on his way over the broad back of the sea. And now, again, they are set on slaying his beloved son on his homeward way, for he is gone to fair Pylos and to goodly Lacedaemon, to seek tidings of his father.'

And Zeus, gatherer of the clouds, answered and spake unto her: 'My child, what word hath escaped the door of thy lips? Nay, didst thou not thyself plan this device, that Odysseus may assuredly take vengeance on those men at his coming? As for Telemachus, do thou guide him by thine art, as well as thou mayest, that so he may come to his own country all unharmed, and the wooers may return in their ship with their labour all in vain.'

Therewith he spake to Hermes, his dear son: 'Hermes, forasmuch as even in all else thou art our herald, tell unto the nymph of the braided tresses my unerring counsel, even the return of the patient Odysseus, how he is to come to his home, with no furtherance of gods or of mortal men. Nay, he shall sail on a well-bound raft, in sore distress, and on the twentieth day arrive at fertile Scheria, even at the land of the Phaeacians, who are near of kin to the gods. And they shall give him all worship heartily as to a god, and send him on his way in a ship to his own dear country, with gifts of bronze and gold, and raiment in plenty, much store, such as never would Odysseus have won for himself out of Troy, yea, though he had returned unhurt with the share of the spoil that fell to him. On such wise is he fated to see his friends, and come to his high-roofed home and his own country.'

So spake he, nor heedless was the messenger, the slayer of Argos. Straightway he bound beneath his feet his lovely golden sandals, that wax not old, that bare him alike over the wet sea and over the limitless land, swift as the breath of the wind. And he took the wand wherewith he lulls the eyes of whomso he will, while others again he even wakes from out of sleep. With this rod in his hand flew the strong slayer of Argos. Above Pieria he passed and leapt from the upper air into the deep. Then he sped along the wave like the cormorant, that chaseth the fishes through the perilous gulfs of the unharvested sea, and wetteth his thick plumage in the brine. Such like did Hermes ride upon the press of the waves. But when he had now reached that far-off isle, he went forth from the sea of violet blue to get him up into the land, till he came to a great cave, wherein dwelt the nymph of the braided tresses: and he found her within. And on the hearth there was a great fire burning, and from afar through the isle was smelt the fragrance of cleft cedar blazing, and of sandal wood. And the nymph within was singing with a sweet voice as she fared to and fro before the loom, and wove with a shuttle of gold. And round about the cave there was a wood blossoming, alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. And therein roosted birds long of wing, owls and falcons and chattering sea-

crows, which have their business in the waters. And lo, there about the hollow cave trailed a gadding garden vine, all rich with clusters. And fountains four set orderly were running with clear water, hard by one another, turned each to his own course. And all around soft meadows bloomed of violets and parsley, yea, even a deathless god who came thither might wonder at the sight and be glad at heart. There the messenger, the slayer of Argos, stood and wondered. Now when he had gazed at all with wonder, anon he went into the wide cave; nor did Calypso, that fair goddess, fail to know him, when she saw him face to face; for the gods use not to be strange one to another, the immortals, not though one have his habitation far away. But he found not Odysseus, the greathearted, within the cave, who sat weeping on the shore even as aforetime, straining his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and as he wept he looked wistfully over the unharvested deep. And Calypso, that fair goddess, questioned Hermes, when she had made him sit on a bright shining seat:

'Wherefore, I pray thee, Hermes, of the golden wand, hast thou come hither, worshipful and welcome, whereas as of old thou wert not wont to visit me? Tell me all thy thought; my heart is set on fulfilling it, if fulfil it I may, and if it hath been fulfilled in the counsel of fate. But now follow me further, that I may set before thee the entertainment of strangers.'

Therewith the goddess spread a table with ambrosia and set it by him, and mixed the ruddy nectar. So the messenger, the slayer of Argos, did eat and drink. Now after he had supped and comforted his soul with food, at the last he answered, and spake to her on this wise:

'Thou makest question of me on my coming, a goddess of a god, and I will tell thee this my saying truly, at thy command. 'Twas Zeus that bade me come hither, by no will of mine; nay, who of his free will would speed over such a wondrous space of brine, whereby is no city of mortals that do sacrifice to the gods, and offer choice hecatombs? But surely it is in no wise possible for another god to go beyond or to make void the purpose of Zeus, lord of the aegis. He saith that thou hast with thee a man most wretched beyond his fellows, beyond those men that round the burg of Priam for nine years fought, and in the tenth year sacked the city and departed homeward. Yet on the way they sinned against Athene, and she raised upon them an evil blast and long waves of the sea. Then all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him hither. And now Zeus biddeth thee send him hence with what speed thou mayest, for it is not ordained that he die away from his friends, but rather it is his fate to look on them even yet, and to come to his high-roofed home and his own country.'

So spake he, and Calypso, that fair goddess, shuddered and uttered her voice, and spake unto him winged words: 'Hard are ye gods and jealous exceeding, who ever grudge goddesses openly to mate with men, if any make a mortal her dear bed-fellow. Even so when rosy-fingered Dawn took Orion for her lover, ye gods that live at ease were jealous thereof, till chaste Artemis, of the golden throne, slew him in Ortygia with the visitation of her gentle shafts. So too when fair-tressed Demeter yielded to her love, and lay with Iasion in the thrice-ploughed fallow-field, Zeus was not long without tidings thereof, and cast at him with his white bolt and slew him. So again ye gods now grudge that a mortal man should dwell with me. Him I saved as he went all alone bestriding the keel of a bark, for that Zeus had crushed¹⁰ and cleft his swift ship with a white bolt in the midst of the wine-dark deep. There all the rest of his good company was lost, but it came to pass that the wind bare and the wave brought him hither. And him have I loved and cherished, and I said that I would make him to know not death and age for ever. Yet forasmuch as it is no wise possible for another god to go beyond, or make void the purpose of Zeus, lord of the aegis, let him away over the unharvested seas, if the summons and the bidding be of Zeus. But I will give him no despatch, not I, for I have no ships by me with oars, nor company to bear him on his way over the broad back of the sea. Yet will I be forward to put this in his mind, and will hide nought, that all unharmed he may come to his own country.'

¹⁰ It seems very doubtful whether [Greek] can bear this meaning. The reading [Greek], 'smote,' preserved by the Schol. is highly probable.

Then the messenger, the slayer of Argos, answered her: 'Yea, speed him now upon his path and have regard unto the wrath of Zeus, lest haply he be angered and bear hard on thee hereafter.'

Therewith the great slayer of Argos departed, but the lady nymph went on her way to the great-hearted Odysseus, when she had heard the message of Zeus. And there she found him sitting on the shore, and his eyes were never dry of tears, and his sweet life was ebbing away as he mourned for his return; for the nymph no more found favour in his sight. Howsoever by night he would sleep by her, as needs he must, in the hollow caves, unwilling lover by a willing lady. And in the day-time he would sit on the rocks and on the beach, straining his soul with tears, and groans, and griefs, and through his tears he would look wistfully over the unharvested deep. So standing near him that fair goddess spake to him:

'Hapless man, sorrow no more I pray thee in this isle, nor let thy good life waste away, for even now will I send thee hence with all my heart. Nay, arise and cut long beams, and fashion a wide raft with the axe, and lay deckings high thereupon, that it may bear thee over the misty deep. And I will place therein bread and water, and red wine to thy heart's desire, to keep hunger far away. And I will put raiment upon thee, and send a fair gale in thy wake, that so thou mayest come all unharmed to thine own country, if indeed it be the good pleasure of the gods who hold wide heaven, who are stronger than I am both to will and to do.'

So she spake, and the steadfast goodly Odysseus shuddered, and uttering his voice spake to her winged words: 'Herein, goddess, thou hast plainly some other thought, and in no wise my furtherance, for that thou biddest me to cross in a raft the great gulf of the sea so dread and difficult, which not even the swift gallant ships pass over rejoicing in the breeze of Zeus. Nor would I go aboard a raft to displeasure thee, unless thou wilt deign, O goddess, to swear a great oath not to plan any hidden guile to mine own hurt.'

So spake he, and Calypso, the fair goddess, smiled and caressed him with her hand, and spake and hailed him:

'Knavish thou art, and no weakling¹¹ in wit, thou that hast conceived and spoken such a word. Let earth be now witness hereto, and the wide heaven above, and that falling water of the Styx, the greatest oath and the most terrible to the blessed gods, that I will not plan any hidden guile to thine own hurt. Nay, but my thoughts are such, and such will be my counsel, as I would devise for myself, if ever so sore a need came over me. For I too have a righteous mind, and my heart within me is not of iron, but pitiful even as thine.'

Therewith the fair goddess led the way quickly, and he followed hard in the steps of the goddess. And they reached the hollow cave, the goddess and the man; so he sat him down upon the chair whence Hermes had arisen, and the nymph placed by him all manner of food to eat and drink, such as is meat for men. As for her she sat over against divine Odysseus, and the handmaids placed by her ambrosia and nectar. So they put forth their hands upon the good cheer set before them. But after they had taken their fill of meat and drink, Calypso, the fair goddess, spake first and said:

'Son of Laertes, of the seed of Zeus, Odysseus of many devices, so it is indeed thy wish to get thee home to thine own dear country even in this hour? Good fortune go with thee even so! Yet didst thou know in thine heart what a measure of suffering thou art ordained to fulfil, or ever thou reach thine own country, here, even here, thou wouldst abide with me and keep this house, and wouldst never taste of death, though thou longest to see thy wife, for whom thou hast ever a desire day by day. Not in sooth that I avow me to be less noble than she in form or fashion, for it is in no wise meet that mortal women should match them with immortals, in shape and comeliness.'

And Odysseus of many counsels answered, and spake unto her: 'Be not wroth with me hereat, goddess and queen. Myself I know it well, how wise Penelope is meaner to look upon than thou, in

¹¹ [Greek], from root [Greek], 'ill-grown,' i. e. a weakling, in the literal sense as B. xi.249, xiv.212, or metaphorical, as here and viii. 177.

comeliness and stature. But she is mortal and thou knowest not age nor death. Yet even so, I wish and long day by day to fare homeward and see the day of my returning. Yea, and if some god shall wreck me in the wine-dark deep, even so I will endure, with a heart within me patient of affliction. For already have I suffered full much, and much have I toiled in perils of waves and war; let this be added to the tale of those.'

So spake he, and the sun sank and darkness came on. Then they twain went into the chamber of the hollow rock, and had their delight of love, abiding each by other.

So soon as early Dawn shone forth, the rosy-fingered, anon Odysseus put on him a mantle and doublet, and the nymph clad her in a great shining robe, light of woof and gracious, and about her waist she cast a fair golden girdle, and a veil withal upon her head. Then she considered of the sending of Odysseus, the great-hearted. She gave him a great axe, fitted to his grasp, an axe of bronze double-edged, and with a goodly handle of olive wood fastened well. Next she gave him a polished adze, and she led the way to the border of the isle where tall trees grew, alder and poplar, and pine that reacheth unto heaven, seasoned long since and sere, that might lightly float for him. Now after she had shown him where the tall trees grew, Calypso, the fair goddess, departed homeward. And he set to cutting timber, and his work went busily. Twenty trees in all he felled, and then trimmed them with the axe of bronze, and deftly smoothed them, and over them made straight the line. Meanwhile Calypso, the fair goddess, brought him augers, so he bored each piece and jointed them together, and then made all fast with trenails and dowels. Wide as is the floor of a broad ship of burden, which some man well skilled in carpentry may trace him out, of such beam did Odysseus fashion his broad raft. And thereat he wrought, and set up the deckings, fitting them to the close-set uprights, and finished them off with long gunwales, and there he set a mast, and a yard-arm fitted thereto, and moreover he made him a rudder to guide the craft. And he fenced it with wattled osier withies from stem to stern, to be a bulwark against the wave, and piled up wood to back them. Meanwhile Calypso, the fair goddess, brought him web of cloth to make him sails; and these too he fashioned very skilfully. And he made fast therein braces and halyards and sheets, and at last he pushed the raft with levers down to the fair salt sea.

It was the fourth day when he had accomplished all. And, lo, on the fifth, the fair Calypso sent him on his way from the island, when she had bathed him and clad him in fragrant attire. Moreover, the goddess placed on board the ship two skins, one of dark wine, and another, a great one, of water, and corn too in a wallet, and she set therein a store of dainties to his heart's desire, and sent forth a warm and gentle wind to blow. And goodly Odysseus rejoiced as he set his sails to the breeze. So he sate and cunningly guided the craft with the helm, nor did sleep fall upon his eyelids, as he viewed the Pleiads and Bootes, that setteth late, and the Bear, which they likewise call the Wain, which turneth ever in one place, and keepeth watch upon Orion, and alone hath no part in the baths of Ocean. This star, Calypso, the fair goddess, bade him to keep ever on the left as he traversed the deep. Ten days and seven he sailed traversing the deep, and on the eighteenth day appeared the shadowy hills of the land of the Phaeacians, at the point where it lay nearest to him; and it showed like a shield in the misty deep.

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