THE ODYSSEY
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE
BOOKS I-VIII

J. W. MACKAIL
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THE ODYSSEY

TRANSLATED BY

J. W. MACKAIL

BOOKS I–VIII

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1903
TO THE MEMORY OF
EVELYN ABBOTT
FELLOW OF BALLIOL
A MAN BRAVE, WISE, MUCH-ENDURING

Ἥ τίς ποιν καὶ ἑταῖρος ἄνὴρ κεχαρισμένα εἰδώς,
ἔσθλός· ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν τι κασιγνήτω ξερείων
γίγνεται ὁς κεν ἑταῖρος ἐὼν πεπνυμένα εἰδῆ.
CONTENTS

BOOK I
THE ASSEMBLY OF THE GODS: ATHENA'S EXHORTATION TO TELEMACHUS  . . . . . . 1

BOOK II
THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ITHACANS, AND HOW TELEMACHUS WENT ABROAD . . . . . . 26

BOOK III
WHAT BEFEL IN PYLOS . . . . . . 50

BOOK IV
WHAT BEFEL IN LACEDAEMON . . . . . . 78

BOOK V
CALYPSO'S CAVE: THE RAFT OF ODYSSEUS . . . . 127

BOOK VI
HOW ODYSSEUS CAME TO PHAEACIA . . . . 155

BOOK VII
THE ENTRY OF ODYSSEUS TO ALCINOUS . . . . 173

BOOK VIII
HOW ODYSSEUS CONSORTED WITH THE PHAEACIANS 192
THE ODYSSEY

BOOK FIRST

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE GODS: ATHENA'S
EXHORTATION TO TELEMACHUS

O MUSE, instruct me of the man who drew
His changeful course through wanderings not a few
After he sacked the holy town of Troy,
And saw the cities and the counsel knew

Of many men, and many a time at sea
Within his heart he bore calamity,
While his own life he laboured to redeem
And bring his fellows back from jeopardy.

Yet not his fellows thus from death he won,
Fain as he was to save them: who undone
By their own hearts' infatuation died,
Fools, that devoured the oxen of the Sun,

Hyperion: and therefore he the day
Of their returning homeward reft away.
Goddess, God's daughter, grant that now thereof
We too may hear, such portion as we may.

I A
NOW all the rest that from the yawning grave
Escape had won, lay safe from war and wave
Each in his home; but him alone held fast
The queenly nymph within her vaulted cave,

Calypso, bright of Goddesses, who fain
Had kept him there her husband to remain;
Though for his wife and his return he pined.
But when the seasons in their circling train

Fulfilled the year wherein the Gods had planned
That he to Ithaca his native land
Should win his passage, not even yet was he
Quit of his labours nor had friends at hand.

Yet all the Gods on him compassion bore
Except Poseidon; who for evermore
Against divine Odysseus furiously
Was wroth, until he reached his native shore.

Now to the Aethiopians on a day
He took his journey, dwellers far away:
The Aethiopians, who in twofold lands
Dwell, and the uttermost of men are they:

Some where Hyperion begins to spring
At morn, and some beyond his downgoing:
Who made him sacrifice of bulls and rams,
And he sat by them at their banqueting,
BOOK FIRST

Taking his pleasure there: but meanwhile all
The other Gods in Zeus the Olympian’s hall
Were met together: and among them there
The sire of Gods and men these words let fall:

Because into his mind the prince he drew,
Aegisthus, whom renowned Orestes slew,
The son of Agamemnon; wherefore now
Among the deathless Gods he spake anew:

“Alas, how idly do these mortals blame
The Gods, as though by our devising came
The evil that in spite of ordinance
By their own folly for themselves they frame!

“As now, by no decree predestinate,
Aegisthus took to wife the wedded mate
Of Atreus’ son, and him returning home
Slew, knowing sheer destruction for his fate;

“As we foretold him ere the deed was done
By Hermes’ mouth, the keen-eyed Shining One;
Bidding him neither kill nor take to wife:
Since from Orestes’ hand for Atreus’ son

“Vengeance shall come when grown to man once more
His realm he claims: that message Hermes bore,
But his good counsel on Aegisthus fell
Fruitless: and now he has paid out the score.”
Then spoke the grey-eyed Goddess answering, Athena: "Cronus' son, Almighty King, Our Father, surely by fit doom he fell. So may all perish who do such a thing!

"But for Odysseus wise I am ill at ease, That man unhappy, who amid the seas Far from his friends affliction bears for long Within the sea-girt island set with trees;

"The island in whose bounds a Goddess dwells, Daughter of Atlas of the guileful spells, Who holds the lofty pillars of the earth And heaven apart, and knows the deep sea-wells.

"His daughter holds that woeful wretch in thrall, And with soft flattering speeches therewithal Lulls his distress, that so of Ithaca Forgetfulness upon his heart may fall.

"But for his land Odysseus longs so sore That even the smoke upcurling from its shore Fain would he see and die: yet is your heart, Lord of Olympus, softened none the more.

"Did not Odysseus on the Gods bestow Guerdon of sacrifices long ago, Down in wide Troy beside the Argive ships? Why does your wrath, O Zeus, afflicthim so?"
BOOK FIRST

But answering spake to her cloud-gathering Zeus:
"My child, what word is this your lips let loose?
How should I then forget that godlike man Odysseus, who beyond all mortal use

"Is wise of soul, and ever worshipped well
The Gods with offerings, in wide heaven who dwell?
But him Poseidon, Circler of the Earth,
Pursues with anger unappeasable,

"Wroth for the wrong on Polyphemus done,
That Cyclops equal to a God, his son,
Whom of his eye he blinded, being of all
The Cyclopean race the mightiest one.

"For him, in caverns vaulted overhead,
A sea-nymph mingling with Poseidon bred,
Thoösa, Phorcys' daughter, who bears rule
Over the gulfs of sea unharvested.

"And earth-shaking Poseidon from that day
As yet Odysseus utterly to slay
Prevails not, but from off his native land
Keeps wandering far. Now therefore on his way

"Let us devise Odysseus home to send,
That so Poseidon's wrath may have an end.
Since hardly then against the will of all
The deathless Gods may he alone contend."
THE ODYSSEY

Then spoke the grey-eyed Goddess answering, Athena: “Cronus’ son, Almighty King, Our Father, if it please the blessed Gods Wise-souled Odysseus to his home to bring,

“Send we to that far isle amid the sea Hermes, the fleetfoot Shining One, that he May to the fair-tressed nymph without delay Pronounce our predetermine decree

“Concerning sore-distressed Odysseus’ way And homeward journey, that return he may. But I will go to Ithaca, his son To rouse, and courage in his heart will lay,

“The unshorn Achaeans to a moot to call And bid defiance to the suitors all, Beneath whose hands he daily sees his flocks Of sheep and hoofed and horned cattle fall.

“And him to Sparta I will cause to go And to the sands of Pylos, there to know If tidings of his father he may learn: Whereof his glory among men shall grow.”

So saying, she laced upon her feet the fair Immortal golden sandals that through air Over the wet sea and the boundless land Swift as the breath of winds the Goddess bare.
BOOK FIRST

And in her hand she took the spear of might, 
Huge, powerful, heavy, brazen-shod to smite, 
Wherewith that daughter of the awful sire 
Quells ranks of heroes in the wrath of fight.

Then darting from Olympus’ crested crown 
She passed to Ithaca, and in the town 
Beside the gateway of Odysseus’ house 
Lit on the threshold of the courtyard down.

Thither in likeness of a guest she came, 
A Taphian captain, Mentes called by name, 
A bronze spear in her hand: and there she found 
The haughty wooers seated at the game,

Playing at draughts to fleet the time away, 
On hides of oxen they had slain, that lay 
Before the doorway; while their trusty squires 
And heralds, setting dinner in array,

Some in the cups mixed water with the wine, 
And some the tables wiped with sponges fine 
And set them in their place; and others carved 
Meat in abundance for their lords to dine.

First where he sat among the suitor men 
Princely Telemachus beheld her then, 
While brooding deep with inward eye he saw 
Out of strange lands his father come again,
THE ODYSSEY

To scatter headlong from his halls the band
Of wooers, and have honour in the land,
And rule his house: thus brooding as he sat
Among them, there he saw Athena stand.

Then straight into the outer porch went he,
Wroth that a guest so long without should be;
And coming up, caught her right hand in his,
And took the bronze spear from her courteously:

And from his lips a winged word there fell:
"Welcome, O guest, since in our household well
Shall you be entertained, and having dined,
All your desire thereafter you shall tell."

So saying, his footsteps to the house he bent,
And after him Pallas Athena went.
And when they passed into the lofty hall
The spear against a pillar tall he leant,

Within the polished rack where stood arow
Spears that Odysseus fought with long ago:
And her he led to a fair carven chair
And seated in it, spreading out below

A linen cloth, and underneath her feet
A stool, and for himself a painted seat
Drew up beside it, out of all the din
Made by the suitors as they sat at meat:
Lest at their noise the stranger in dismay
Might loathe his meal; for overbold were they:
And that he might inquire of him apart
News of his father that was far away.

Then brought a serving-woman to her lord
Water for washing of their hands, and poured
Over a silver basin from the fair
Gold ewer, and by them spread a polished board.

And the grave housekeeper, that they might eat,
Dainties of many sorts, and bread of wheat
Fetched from her storeroom; and the carver brought
Platters piled up with divers flesh for meat;

And set by each of them a golden cup:
While oft a herald through the hall went up
Filling the wine: and now the wooers proud
Entered and sat them down arow to sup

On chairs and benches; and the heralds then
Poured water on their hands, and bondwomen
In piled-up baskets brought them bread, and lads
Filled up their bowls until they brimmed again.

So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands: and after they had fed
To quench their thirst and hunger, afterward
With other cheer the feast was furnished,
THE ODYSSEY

Song and the dance; for these a feast fulfil.
So then a viol wrought with goodly skill
A herald took and laid in Phemius' hand,
Who for the suitors sang against his will.

Now while the minstrel sweetly preluding
Fingered his viol and began to sing,
Close to grey-eyed Athena leant his head
Telemachus, and said a secret thing:

"Fair guest, will you be wroth at this I say?
Look how these men think but of viol-play
And song, light-hearted, who another man's
Substance devour and reck not to repay!

"Even his, whose white bones haply in the rain
Moulder away upon some desert plain,
Or the salt sea-wave tosses up and down.
Yet surely did they see him come again

"To Ithaca, they would not then desire
Increase of gold so much, or rich attire,
As swiftness added to their feet; but now
In misery he was fated to expire:

"Nor may we yet take comfort, whosoe'er
Of men shall tidings of his coming bear;
For perished is the day of his return.
But tell me now, and in plain words declare,
BOOK  FIRST

"Who of men are you and from whence you come,  
Where are your parents and what town their home?  
And what the ship and who the mariners  
That carried you to Ithaca therefrom?

"What people did they call themselves by name?  
Since nowise, as I think, afoot you came.  
And herein also tell the truth to me  
That I of certainty may know the same:

"Is this the first time that you visit me,  
Or do you chance my father's friend to be?  
For many a man has visited our house,  
And travelled likewise among men was he."

Thereat the Goddess with the eyes of grey,  
Athena, answered: "Now without delay  
This will I tell you: Mentes is my name,  
The son of wise Anchialus; I bear sway

"Among the Taphian masters of the oar.  
And as you see me am I come ashore,  
With ship and crew to men of alien speech  
Sailing across the wine-bright ocean-floor

"To Temesa for bronze, and iron bright  
I carry for my cargo: out of sight  
My ship lies anchored, in the lonely creek  
Of Rheithron, under Neion's wooded height."
"Friends we may call ourselves of old descent,
As one would tell you, if to ask you went,
The hero old, Laertes: for they say
His steps no more are to the city bent;

"But on an upland farm his grievous lot
He bears, and one old serving-maid has got
With meat and drink to serve him, when he creeps
Aweary round his terraced vineyard-plot.

"And now I came, because your sire, they said,
Was in the country: but by likelihead
The Gods his passage hinder: for on earth
Surely not yet is bright Odysseus dead;

"But in the wide deep, if I guess not ill,
Upon some sea-girt island living still
Is held imprisoned among savage men
And fierce, who keep him there against his will.

"Now will I utter a forecasting word
That in my mind the deathless Gods have stirred;
And will fulfil, I deem, though prophet none
Am I, nor skilled in omens of the bird.

"Not long shall he from this his native ground
Be absent, though in iron fetters bound:
But yet by his own subtle-mindedness
Shall some device for his return be found.
BOOK FIRST

"But tell me now, and let your words be clear,
Is this Odysseus' son before me here,
Of his own body gotten? Wondrously
Your head and your bright eyes like his appear:

"For oft enough we used to meet ere he
For Troy with the Argive princes put to sea
Upon the hollow ships; but since that time
Have I not seen him, nor has he seen me."

Then answered wise Telemachus thereto:
"Yea, guest, this surely I will tell you true.
My mother says I am his son: but I
Know not; who ever his begetting knew?

"Would I were son to one of them that grow
Old on their own possessions, free from woe!
But now the wretchedest of mortal men
They call my father, if you needs must know."

Answered the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena: "Not without renown to-day,
Since such a son Penelope has borne,
Have the Gods doomed his lineage to decay.

"But tell me now, and let your words be clear,
What concourse, what carousal have we here?
Banquet or bridal? what your part therein?
For not at common cost is this good cheer.
THE ODYSSEY

"So insolent and masterful the throng
Meseems that feasting sit your hall along.
Yea, if a wise man entered well might he
Be wroth, beholding all this shame and wrong."

And answering, wise Telemachus replied:
"Guest, since you ask and will not be denied,
This household full of wealth and free from fault
Was once, and so was destined to abide,

"While here he lived among his people still,
That man whom now the Gods, devising ill,
Clean out of sight beyond all other men
Have cast by alteration of their will.

"Since to my grief were set a straiter bound
Even for his death, if he on Trojan ground
Among his fellows, or in friendly arms
Had fallen when the skein of war was wound.

"For then his tomb the whole Achaean host
Had reared, and he a mighty name to boast
Behind him to his son had left: but now
Caught by the whirlwinds on a nameless coast

"Clean out of sight and hearing he is gone,
Leaving me pain and grief; nor yet alone
Him do I wail and mourn for, but the ills
For me too added by the Gods thereon.
BOOK FIRST

"Because the island lords from Same come
And shrubbed Zacynthus and Dulichium,
And all the chiefs in rocky Ithaca,
Wooing my mother, and consume my home.

"And she that hateful wedding utterly
Renounces not, nor make an end can she:
While they devour and waste away my house,
And soon will make a broken man of me."

Thereat in indignation answering back
Pallas Athena spake: "Ay me! you lack
Sorely the lost Odysseus to return
And lay his hand upon this shameless pack.

"If now before the gate he took his stand
Shielded and helmed, two spearshafts in his hand,
Such as I saw him first within our house
Drinking and making merry, when the land

"Of Ephyra he left and came to us
From Ilus' court, the son of Mermerus—
For thither on a swift ship had he gone
Seeking a mortal drug and venomous

"Wherewith his brazen arrow-heads to smear:
Howbeit he would not give it, having fear
Of vengeance from the everlasting Gods,
But from my father got he it: for dear

15
THE ODYSSEY

"In wondrous wise he held him—in such might
As then if now Odysseus fell outright
Among the suitors, brief would be the fate
Of all, and bitter be their wedding-night.

"Now on the Gods’ knees lies what shall befall,
Whether he shall indeed return at all
Vengeance to take in this his house or no.
But you I bid take counsel, from your hall

"How you may thrust these wooers out of hand.
Now then take heed and mark and understand
The words I utter. With to-morrow’s light
Summon to moot the princes of the land;

"And in plain words, whereto the Gods shall bear
Witness, command the suitors forth to fare
Each to his own: and if your mother’s heart
Move her to marriage, let her then repair

"Back to her mighty father’s hall straightway;
And let them there the wedding-feast array,
And make the bride-gifts ready; but for you,
This counsel wise to heart I bid you lay.

"Fit your best ship with twenty rowers, and then
Sail forth to gather tidings yet again
Of your long-vanished father, if perchance
Some word may reach you from the mouth of men,
BOOK FIRST

"Or any voice God-uttered, whence there flow Rumours to mortals. First to Pylos go And ask bright Nestor: and to Sparta thence, If fair-haired Menelaus aught may know.

"Since of the mailed Achaean host was he Last to return; and if the tidings be That yet your father lives and journeys on, Yet for a year endure their injury.

"But if the word be that his life is gone, Returning to your native land, thereon Heap him a mound, and do the funeral rites Above him that above the dead are done.

"Then let your mother a new husband wed. But when these things are all accomplished, Consider afterwards within your mind How in your hall the suitors to lay dead,

By guile or open fighting: for the days Are gone when you might follow childish ways. Have you not heard how over all the world High-born Orestes got him fame and praise

"When he the slayer of his father slew, Guileful Aegisthus? so, my friend, do you (For tall and goodly enough I see you now) Put forth your might, that generations new
"Your praise may utter. Now without delay
To my swift ship and crew I must away;
For they belike are weary waiting me.
Look to yourself, and heed the words I say."

Then answering spake Telemachus the wise:
"O guest, since thus in kindness you advise
Even as a father counselling his son,
Still shall your words be fixed before mine eyes.

"Yet tarry now a while, though journey-fain,
To bathe and comfort your own heart again.
Then to your ship go gladdened with a gift
Right fair and precious, with you to remain,

"From me, since friend to friend such due should pay."
But him the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, answered: "Further keep me not
Now, being very eager for the way.

"But what your own heart moves you to bestow,
Give me when I return again, that so
Home I may take it; choose a goodly gift,
And I to you the worth of it will owe."

So saying, grey-eyed Athena on the word
Out at the louvre darted like a bird.
But strength and courage in his heart she set,
And in his mind his father's image stirred
BOOK FIRST

More than aforetime: so with mind intent
He marked her well, and full of wonderment
Deemed her a God to be; and straightway then
Among the suitors like a God he went.

But now among them had begun to sing
The famous minstrel, while they listening
Sat round in silence; and the lay he sang
Was of the Achaeans’ woeful home-coming,

That Pallas laid on them their doom to be
After Troy fell: that song divine sang he;
And from her bower aloft took note thereof
Icarius’ daughter, wise Penelope.

Then came she down the lofty palace-stair
Not unescorted; for behind, a pair
Of handmaids with that bright of women went.
And she among the suitors entering there,

Stood in the doorway of the hall well-planned,
Holding her glittering kerchief in her hand
Before her cheeks, while upon either side
A prudent waiting-woman took her stand.

And to the minstrel good she weeping spake:
“Phemius, full many songs you know to slake
The grief of mortals, deeds of men and Gods
Whereof immortal stories minstrels make.
"Some one whereof to be sung here were fit
While silent drinking wine the hearers sit.
But cease this song of bale; for evermore
The heart within my bosom breaks at it.

"Since deep I bear beyond all women wed
Grief not to be forgotten: such a head
I long for and remember, him whose fame
Through Hellas and mid-Argos wide is spread."

Then answered her Telemachus the wise:
"My mother, is it evil in your eyes
If the good minstrel sings for our delight
What song soever in his heart may rise?

"Neither are minstrel-folk to blame herein,
But Zeus belike, who gives to men that win
Wealth by their labour, as he will to each.
Nor yet to this man may it count for sin

"If of the Danaan woe he frame his song;
Seeing that men hearken to the lay most long
That is the newest in the listeners' ears.
Therefore to listen let your heart be strong.

"For not Odysseus only from the day
Of home-coming from Troy was cast away,
But many other heroes perished there.
Go now within and your own work array,
BOOK FIRST

"The loom and distaff, and your maids command
To ply their housewiferies: but speech shall stand
For men to handle, and for me the most
Who hold this household underneath my hand."

Then back into the house amazed she crept,
For in her heart her son's wise word she kept;
And mounting to the upper chamber, there
Among her waiting-women sat and wept

Her own dear lord Odysseus, till the shade
Of slumber sweet grey-eyed Athena laid
Upon her lids. But in the shadowy hall
Rose clamour of the suitors as they prayed

Each one that he might couch him by her side;
Till wise Telemachus brake forth and cried:
"O wooers of my mother insolent
And over-masterful! this eventide

"Feast we and make we merry, nor let brawl
Be raised among us. Good it is in hall
To hearken to a minstrel such as this,
Whose voice is godlike; but at morn I call

"The people, where in public session met
My summons plain I may before you set
To quit these halls, that henceforth other feasts
From house to house among yourselves you get,
"And feed on your own substance as is fit.
But if you deem it worthier still to sit
As now, devouring one man's livelihood
And rendering no recompense for it,

"Waste on: but to the deathless Gods will I
Make my appeal, if haply Zeus on high
Repayment of your deeds exact from you:
So in this house you unavenged shall die."

So spake Telemachus, and every one
Biting their lips they marvelled, seeing that none
Had heard him speak so boldly yet: and then
Antinous answered him, Eupeithes' son:

"Telemachus, none less than Gods can teach
This height of tongue and confidence of speech.
The son of Cronus never make you king
As were your fathers, on this island beach!"

Answered Telemachus the wise straightway:
"Antinous, will you grudge me what I say?
Even this I would not shrink to take on me,
If Zeus the charge into my hand should lay.

"Is this the worst that fate to men can bring,
Think you? a king's lot is no evil thing.
High springs his honour, and wealth fills his house;
Yet in the sea-girt isle is many a king,
BOOK FIRST

"One among whom, or old or young, shall sway
The sceptre from Odysseus passed away.
But I will rule this household, and the serfs
That bright Odysseus got me for a prey."

To him spoke yet again and answered thus
Eurymachus the son of Polybus:
"On the Gods’ knees, Telemachus, it lies
To order what Achaean over us

"Shall reign upon this isle amid the sea.
But you shall keep your substance certainly,
And rule your household; never let man come
To wrest away, while Ithaca shall be,

"Your goods in your despite by violent hand.
But yet, fair sir, I fain would understand
Of this same guest of yours: whence comes the man?
What country names he for his native land?

"Where is the habitation of his kin
And fields his fathers tilled? and brings he in
Some tidings of your father’s home-coming,
Or hoping something for himself to win

"comes he this way? in such wise suddenly
Upstarting he was gone, nor tarried he
That one should know him; howbeit by his cheer
No baseborn one I deemed the man to be."
THE ODYSSEY

But wise Telemachus returned reply:
"Eurymachus, too surely is gone by
Hope of my sire's returning: now no more
Even if they came, in tidings trust have I.

"Neither to omens does my heart incline,
If ever a diviner to divine
My mother summons to the palace hall
Seeking for counsel: but this guest of mine

"A Taphian is, my father's friend of yore:
And Mentes is the name he said he bore,
The son of wise Anchialus, and he rules
Among the Taphian masters of the oar."

So spake Telemachus, but knew withal
The deathless Goddess: and they turned in hall
To dancing and delightful song, and so
Their pleasure took, awaiting evenfall.

And now fell evening dusk on them at play.
Then to their beds they took their several way
Each in his dwelling. But Telemachus
Passed to the chamber where by night he lay;

High with large prospect by the builder wrought
In the fair courtyard: thither, many a thought
Inly revolving in his mind, he went;
And him escorting Euryclea brought

24
BOOK FIRST

With flaring torches, the wise housekeeper,
Daughter of Ops Pisenor's son: for her
Long since Laertes in her prime of youth
Bought, and her price a score of oxen were

From his own herds: and no less honour he
Than to a prudent wife in hall should be
Bestowed on her, but came not nigh her bed,
Fearing his own wife's wrath and jealousy.

And she the flaring torches out of hall
Went carrying now before him; for of all
The serving-women in the house she most
Loved him, and nursed him when he was but small.

So to the inner chamber builded fair,
Opening the door he entered in: and there
Sat down upon the bedside and drew off
And handed to her the soft shirt he ware.

But folding it, that woman wise and hoar
Brushed it, and on a pin hung off the floor
Beside the mortised bedstead; then she left,
And by the silver latch drew to the door,

And pulled the boltstrap home, the bolt to throw:
So there all night he, lying warm below
A fleece of wool, kept pondering in his mind
The journey that Athena bade him go.
BOOK SECOND

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ITHACANS, AND HOW
TELEMACHUS WENT ABROAD

BUT when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Rising from bed Odysseus' son anon
Clad him, and round his shoulders slung the sword,
And on his shining feet below laced on

The sandals fair: and from his chamber he
Went forth in likeness of a God to see;
And to the clear-voiced heralds gave command
To summon to assembly speedily

The unshorn Achaeans. Summons then made they,
And forth the townsfolk came without delay,
Gathering; and now when they assembled were
And met together, he led on the way

Into the market-place, a brazen-shod
Spear in his hand, while by him as he trod
Followed two fleetfoot hounds: and with such grace
Athena filled him, even as a God,
BOOK SECOND

That all the people marvelling stood astare
As he strode up and took his father's chair,
The elders making way before his feet.
First then outspoke the prince Aegyptius there.

Bowed down with age was he, and deep of lore:
For with divine Odysseus long of yore
His son, the spearman Antiphus, had gone
In hollow ships to Troy's horse-pasturing shore.

Him the fierce Cyclops in his vaulted den
Slew, that last night he made his meal of men.
But three more sons he had; and one thereof,
Eurynomus, was of the suitors then:

And two still kept the farm where they were bred.
But none the more could he forget the dead,
For whom he grieved and mourned: and even now
Weeping for him he uttered speech and said:

"Hearken I pray you now to what I say,
O men of Ithaca! until to-day
Nor moot nor session has been held since bright
Odysseus sailed in hollow ships away.

"And now who calls us hither? young is he
Or aged, that he makes this urgency?
Has he heard tidings of a coming host
Far off, whereof we too informed shall be,
THE ODYSSEY

“Or other matter for the public good
Comes he to speak and utter? in my mood,
I praise and bless him: God vouchsafe to him
A fair fulfilment of whate’er he would.”

So spake Aegyptius: and Odysseus’ son,
Rejoicing that such omen he had won,
Delayed not, but amid the market-place
Stood forth and eagerly his speech begun:

While in his hand the speaker’s staff to hold
Laid a wise herald, in the use of old
Well-skilled, Pisenor. First to the ancient man
Began he then his utterance to unfold:

“Look not afar, O aged man, to see
Who called the people hither: I am he.
And my own grief constrained me thereunto,
Since in no wise are tidings borne to me

“Of a host coming, news to me alone
First borne, that I to you should make it known;
Nor other matter for the public good
My speech declares: but business of my own

“And twofold evil that my house has crossed:
Both that a noble father I have lost,
Who reigned among you here, and kind he was
Even as a father: but by far the most
"This other evil, whereby soon outworn
Will be my substance, and my house forlorn—
The wooers, who against my mother's will
Throng round her, sons of men our noblest-born.

"For to our father's house to go they dread,
Icarius, who his daughter then might wed,
And set a bride-price on her, giving her
To whom she chose and as her fancy led.

"But to our house resorting day by day
Oxen and sheep and fatted goats they slay,
And hold high feast and drink the glittering wine
Recklessly, while my substance wastes away.

"For now is no man living in the land
Such as Odysseus was, with mighty hand
The spoilers from our house to thrust away.
Too young are we their inroads to withstand.

"Yea, and hereafter pitiful shall we
Remain and powerless; yet assuredly
Would I take vengeance, were the power but mine:
For now your deeds no longer borne may be.

"And now my house is wasted through and through
Foully. Take shame at last of this you do,
And reverence the good report of men
Your neighbours, who about encompass you."
"And fear the anger of the Gods, lest they, Wroth at ill deeds, their favour turn away. By Zeus Olympian, by the Law whose voice Dissolves and summons moots of men I pray,

"Forbear in pity; leave me here alone In grief to waste away and make my moan; If by my father, good Odysseus, wrong Was never to the mailed Achaeans done

"In recompense whereof this wrong you do To me, and urge these others thereunto— Since more it would advantage me that now My flocks and garners were consumed by you:

"For if yourselves you did it, there might be Repayment: with such importunity All through the city I would beg and pray, Until full recompense were made to me.

"But now amidst of many miseries Helpless you set me." Thus in wrathful wise He spoke, and down upon the ground the staff Cast, and the tears brimmed over in his eyes.

But pity took the people, and all men Kept silence, nor had one the heart again Telemachus to answer with hard words. Only Antinous spake and answered then:
BOOK SECOND

"Telemachus, what speech is this you frame,  
High-mouthed, unbridled, purposing our shame  
By evil imputations? for your case  
Nowise the Achaean wooers are to blame;  

"But your own mother, by whose cunning sleight  
Three years are fled and now the fourth takes flight,  
Wherein the hearts of the Achaean lords  
She vexes, holding hope out to their sight:  

"And flattering messages to each and all  
Sends, with intent that they may fruitless fall.  
And this guile likewise in her heart she planned,  
When a great loom she built within her hall,  

"And wrought thereon a broad web woven fine,  
Saying to us: O youthful wooers mine,  
Since dead is bright Odysseus, cease awhile  
My heart to hasty marriage to incline,  

"Until this web be finished, lest I leave  
A labour spoiled the weaving that I weave,  
A shroud for burial of the aged prince  
Laertes: since it verily would grieve  

"Full many Achaean women in the town,  
If shroudless he should lie, who had renown  
For wealth of his own gathering, when the doom  
Of Death the Leveller shall strike him down.
“So spake she: and, as is the way of men, We were persuaded. All the daytime then At the great loom she wove, and every night With torches set unwove her work again.

“Thus for the space of full three years did she Deceive the Achaeans by her subtlety; But when the fourth year brought the seasons round, One of her maids revealed the mystery.

“And we the bright web on the loom that lay Found her unravelling: wherefore from that day Perforce she needs must bring it to an end. Now make the wooers answer thus and say,

“That both yourself in your own mind may know, And all the Achaeans: bid your mother go, And let her marry him among us all Whom her sire bids, and her it pleases so.

“But if the sons of the Achaeans still By counsel of her heart annoy she will— Seeing that Athena has bestowed on her Wisdom of mind and excellence of skill

“In beautiful devices manifold Beyond all others, such as is not told Even of those famous in the former time, Achaean women lovely-tressed of old,
BOOK SECOND

"Tyro, Alcmena, and Mycene crowned—
Even among these the equal was not found
In wise devices of Penelope:
Yet now her wit has overleapt the bound.

"And therefore these men will not cease to slay
Your cattle, and your substance waste away,
So long as she the self-same purpose keeps
That in her heart the Gods have set to-day;

"To win vainglory for herself, but ill
For you and damage: to the lands we till
Return we will not, nor depart at all,
Ere she wed one among us, whom she will."

But wise Telemachus made answer thus:
"Ill were it done of me, Antinous,
To thrust her from my doors against her will
Who bore and nursed me, while afar from us

"Alive or dead, my father to this day
Is gone: and heavy were the price to pay
Back to Icarius, even might I brook
My mother from my house to send away.

"Ill hap from him and worse from heaven would bring
Such outrage, for a mother's curse would cling,
Uttered against me as she left the house,
And all men deem my deed a wicked thing."
"Such word I will not utter. But for you, 
If you take shame at all this wrong you do, 
Quit these my halls; henceforward turn by turn 
Array the banquet your own houses through,

"And feed on your own substance as is fit. 
But if you deem it worthier still to sit, 
As now, devouring one man's livelihood 
And rendering no recompense for it,

"Waste on: but to the deathless Gods will I 
Make my appeal, if haply Zeus on high 
Repayment of your deeds exact from you. 
So in this house you unavenged shall die."

So spake Telemachus: and full in sight 
Zeus the Far-sounder from the mountain height 
Sent for a sign two eagles: they awhile 
Came gliding down the wind in steady flight,

Side close by side with poise of outspread wing. 
But when they reached the market's midmost ring, 
The place of many voices, there they wheeled 
With all their thickset plumage clattering,

Right overhead, and glared destruction down 
On all, and each at the other's throat and crown 
Tore with their talons: then away they shot 
Eastward among the houses and the town.
BOOK SECOND

But on the people wonder fell to see,
And in their minds they pondered what should be.
Whereat among them Halitherses spoke,
The son of Mastor, an old lord: for he

To all men of his time was far preferred
For knowledge of all omens of the bird
And exposition of the signs of fate.
He uttered now and spake a well-meant word:

"Hearken to me, O Ithacans, I pray:
And chiefly to the wooers this I say
On whom their doom rolls downward, nor shall now
Odysseus from his own be long away;

"But even now belike is near at hand,
And on these men a bloody death is planned;
Yea, and ill hap to many an one of us
Who dwell in Ithaca the far-seen land.

"Now ere that come, devise we these to quell:
Though for their own advantage it were well
To cease unsummoned: not in ignorance
But with full knowledge this for sooth I tell.

"For now I say the times are fully spent
That I foretold him, when the Argives bent
Their sails for Ilium, and among them then
Odysseus of the many counsels went
THE ODYSSEY

"I said that he should suffer many a woe,
And all his fellows lose, and homeward so
Come, known of no man, in the twentieth year:
Which things now all to their fulfilment grow."

To him spake yet again and answered thus
Eurymachus, the son of Polybus:
"Old man, go home, I counsel you, and there
Soothsay to your own children, not to us,

"Lest evil come upon them ere they die.
But herein greater skill than yours have I
To soothsay: many a bird beneath the sun
Wanders, nor all fate's message signify.

"But in some far land has Odysseus died:
And well if you had perished at his side!
Less talk of auguries then! nor had you fed
Telemachus so full of wrath and pride,

"Looking that gifts of his your house may reach.
I tell you this, nor idly do I preach,
If you, being very wise in ancient lore,
Stir up this boy to wrath with flattering speech,

"First it shall bring him but the bitterer smart,
Nor shall he profit thereby for his part;
And we will lay on you a grievous fine,
Payment whereof shall sorely wring your heart."
"But to Telemachus before you all
I give this counsel, to her father’s hall
To bid his mother go her way, that there
They may prepare the wedding festival,

"And fitting store of bridal gifts may send,
Such as her father on a bride should spend.
For not till then shall the Achaean lords
Methinks of this grim wooing make an end.

"Since of no man alive afraid are we:
Not of Telemachus, for all that he
Of many words is master; nor at all
Heed we your prophecy of ill to be,

"That unfulfilled shall perish from your tongue,
And worse shall you be hated old than young.
More of his riches shall be swallowed yet,
Nor from our hands shall recompense be wrung,

"While she defers her marriage, and our life
For that fair excellence in idle strife
We waste, nor after other women go
Whom fitly we might woo and take to wife."

Then answered wise Telemachus anew:
"Eurymachus and all the rest of you
Proud-hearted wooers, now no more herein
I plead, no longer for your mercy sue;
THE ODYSSEY

"My case the Gods and all the Achaeans know. 
Now therefore on me a swift ship bestow 
And twenty men therein, with whom for crew
Hither and thither sailing I may go.

"For I to Sparta and to Pylos' sands
Will take my way, if in those far-off lands
Of my long-vanished father's home-coming
Some tidings I may learn at mortal hands,

"Or hear some voice God-uttered, whence to men
Rumour is chiefly borne; and hearing then
Word of his life and coming, then might I
Endure your trespass yet a year again:

"But if the word be that his life is gone,
Returning to my land would I thereon
Heap him a grave-mound, and perform the rites
Funereal that above the dead are done,

"And on a lord my mother's hand bestow."
Down then he sat him, having spoken so,
And Mentor rose, an old man who had been
Princely Odysseus' comrade long ago,

And in whose wardship when he put to sea
The house he set, that he obeyed should be,
And all be holden fast beneath his care:
A well-meant word now spake and uttered he:
BOOK SECOND

"Hear now my speech, O Ithacans each one! Henceforth of sceptre-bearing kings let none Of his own will be kind or merciful, Nor by his counsel let the law be done;

"But ever harsh and lawless in his deed, Since of divine Odysseus none takes heed Among the people over whom he ruled, And like a father was their help at need.

"Yet not the lordly suitors now I blame For all the coil of violent deeds they frame In their own evil minds: for surely they Set their own lives on hazard of the game,

"While they devour his substance who they say Returns not: you I am angered with to-day, O people, who sit dumb nor say a word To check them, being many, and few are they."

But him Leocritus, Euenor's son, Spake out and answered: "O infatuate one, O wandering-witted Mentor, what is this You tell them, that they bid us to have done?

"No easy thing it is on men to fall Outnumbering you, amid a festival. Yea, even if Ithacan Odysseus found The lordly wooers feasting in his hall,
"And in his heart to drive them forth were fain,  
Small joy of his return his wife would gain  
In spite of all her longing after him,  
Since there in wretched wise would he be slain,

"Fighting outnumbered. You have spoken ill.  
But now, O people, to the lands you till  
Get you away, and this man's sending forth  
Mentor and Halitherses shall fulfil,

"Being his father's friends by old descent.  
Though long methinks he must abide content  
In Ithaca to sit and wait for news;  
Nor shall this journey find accomplishment."

So spake he, and broke up the moot anon:  
And all the folk dispersing soon were gone  
Homeward, and to divine Odysseus' house  
The wooers: but Telemachus passed on

Down to the sea-beach by a lonely way,  
And, his hands dipping in the water grey,  
Prayed to Athena: "Hearken now to me,  
God to our house who camest yesterday,

"Bidding me seek across the misty sea  
News of my long-lost father; but for me  
The Achaeans baulk my quest, and most of all  
The suitors in their evil surquedry."
BOOK SECOND

So spoke he praying by the ocean brim.
But taking on herself in voice and limb
Likeness of Mentor, came Athena nigh,
And spake and uttered winged words to him:

"Telemachus, no longer wit nor will
Shall fail you, if your father’s virtue still
Lives in your blood untainted; such was he
In word and deed his purpose to fulfil.

"Not vain nor fruitless shall your journey be;
Though hardly might you the fulfilment see
Of your endeavour, were you not indeed
Son of Odysseus and Penelope.

"For seldom like the father is the son;
Degenerate most, though here and there may one
Excel his father: but you will not fail
In wit or will until your task be done.

"Then what the suitors’ foolish mind has planned
Cease to consider: for they understand
No wisdom and no justice, nor perceive
Death and the black-veiled phantom close at hand:

"When all shall perish in a single day.
But now your purposed journey shall delay
No longer: such am I, your father’s friend,
Who will for you a racing ship array,
"And fellow of your quest myself will be. Go home now, in the suitors’ company Mingle, and there make ready victual good In vessels all packed up to put to sea.

"Wine in two-handled jars, and meal provide, Marrow of men, in bags of well-sewn hide. And I throughout the city speedily Will gather willing comrades to your side.

"Likewise in Ithaca the seagirt land Are many ships both old and new at hand. I will choose out the best, and quickly we On the broad seas will launch it, armed and manned."

So spake the maid of Zeus, and at the sound Of the God’s voice he quickly turned him round; And homeward, heavy-laden at his heart, He went, and in the palace courtyard found

The suitors singeing swine across the flame And flaying goats. Thereat Antinous came, Laughing, right up beside Telemachus, And clasped his hand and spoke to him by name:

"Telemachus, invincible of might, Lordly of tongue, no more for our despite Let word or deed within your breast be planned, But eat and drink with us as yesternight."
BOOK SECOND

"The Achaeans to accomplish your desire
The ship and chosen oarsmen you require
Shall give, that soon to goodly Pylos you
May pass for tidings of your lordly sire."

But wise Telemachus to him replied:
"Antinous, how among you in your pride
Can I sit dumb at feast, and take my ease
Light-hearted? Lo! you were not satisfied,

"O suitors, my estate to waste away,
Being both great and goodly, in the day
When I was yet a child; but now that I
Am grown and understand the words men say,

"And feel my courage in my heart expand,
I will essay if haply from my hand
Ill fate may reach you, whether I go forth
To Pylos, or abide within this land.

"But go I will, nor shall the quest be vain,
Hiring my passage, since I may attain
Neither a ship nor oarsmen at your hands:
For so belike you thought to find your gain."

So saying, from his hand he snatched away
His own: but as they sought the banquet they
With jeering words upbraided him, and thus
One of the young men in their pride would say:
THE ODYSSEY

Ah, surely violent death Telemachus
Contrives against us, and will bring on us
From sandy Pylos or from Sparta men
Armed to avenge him, being so furious:

"Or even to Ephyra the rich in corn
He means to go, and therefrom having borne
Venomous drugs, he will into our cup
Pour them, and make us all of life forlorn."

Another of the young men in their pride
Thereto would answer: "Yea, who knows beside
If he too in his hollow ship may die
A friendless wanderer, as Odysseus died?

"So would he cause us labour yet more great,
Since we must needs divide his whole estate.
But to his mother we would give this house
To hold with him who took her for his mate."

So spake they, but to his father’s treasury
He went, a chamber wide and vaulted high;
Where gold and bronze lay piled, and raiment packed
In chests, and store of odorous oil thereby;

And leaning up against the wall in line
Stood casks of ancient and delicious wine,
That for Odysseus at his home-coming
Held store within of potent drink divine,
BOOK SECOND

For solace after all his labours hard.
And double-leaved close-fitting doors were barred
Thereon, and Euryclea over it,
The housekeeper, both night and day kept guard,

Daughter of Ops Pisenor’s son; for she
Was mistress of exceeding subtlety.
Now to the treasury Telemachus
Called her apart, and thus to her said he:

"Nurse, come and into jars two-handled pour
Sweet wine, the choicest that you have in store
Next after that you keep awaiting him,
That man unfortunate, if ever more

"Past death and doom Odysseus bright may steal
His home to gain. Twelve jars fill up and seal
Each one, and into leathern bags well sewn
Pour twenty measures out of barley meal,

"Fine flour of barley in the mill ground small.
None but yourself of this must know at all.
And see that all this provender be packed
Together, that myself at evenfall

"May fetch it, when my mother from below
Betakes her bedward; for I mean to go
To Sparta and to Pylos’ sands, if there
News of my father’s coming I may know."
THE ODYSSEY

He spake: but from the nurse a cry outbroke,
And, grieving sore, a winged word she spoke:
"Dear child, and why into your mind has come
This thought? and whither among alien folk

"Over the breadth of earth will you be gone,
My best-beloved and my only one?
Now that high-born Odysseus far from home
Is dead among a people known of none;

"And these behind your back foul plots will lay
To share your heritage, and you to slay
By treason: ah, bide here among your own,
Nor on the barren sea in misery stray!"

To her replied Telemachus the wise:
"Take courage, nurse: for I on this emprise
Not without God set forth: now swear to me
Hereof my mother not to advertise

"Till the eleventh day and twelfth have shone,
Or she be told of others I am gone:
So that she may not, longing after me,
Mar her fair face with stain of tears thereon."

So said he, and obedient to his law
The aged woman sware an oath of awe
In the Gods’ name; and having sworn the oath,
Into two-handled jars began to draw
BOOK SECOND

Wine, and the barley-flour from out her store
Into the well-sewn leathern bags to pour.
But to the house returned Telemachus,
And sat amid the suitors as before.

But now the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, through the city every way,
Taking the semblance of Telemachus,
Went, and devised anew a word to say

Into the private ear of every one,
Bidding them gather when the day was done
By the swift ship; and a swift ship she next
Begged from Noëmon, Phronius' princely son.

And with good will she got a ship from him.
Now the sun dipped and all the ways grew dim;
And down to the sea-water the swift ship
She hauled and moored it by the harbour's brim:

And in it laid the tackling great and small
That benched ships are furnished forth withal.
Then round it gathered the good company
Together, coming at the Goddess' call.

But now the Goddess with the eyes of grey,
Athena, took fresh counsel for his way,
And going to divine Odysseus' house,
Shed sleep upon the suitors, so that they
Were troubled in their drinking, and anon
Dropped from their hands the cups as night drew on.
Nor sat they late that night, but to their beds
Throughout the city hasted to be gone;

Such weight of slumber on their eyelids fell:
Thereat from out the palace builded well
Grey-eyed Athena called Telemachus;
And no man might her voice or body tell

From Mentor’s own. “Telemachus,” said she, “lo,
Your mail-clad comrades even now arow
Sit at the oars, awaiting your command.
Let us set forth, nor tarry yet to go.”

So spake Athena, and with footsteps fleet
Led onward, and behind the Goddess’ feet
He followed; and to the sea’s edge they came,
Where the ship lay, their long-haired crew to meet.

Whom finding on the shore, among them thus
Spake then the mighty prince Telemachus:
“Come, fellows, let us bring our victual down,
For all is ready packed indoors for us.

“But to my mother not a word is come
Of this, nor have the women heard at home
Saving one only.” Thus he spoke, and led,
They following, to the house, and fetched therefrom
All the provisions down; and these they stored
At bidding of Odysseus' son their lord
In the benched ship; then passing on behind
Athena, came Telemachus aboard,

And sat astern beside her; and the crew
Cast loose the hawsers, and aboard they drew
And at the benches sat: and on their course
At bidding of grey-eyed Athena blew

A following wind that from the West ran free,
Singing aloud across the wine-bright sea.
Then cheerly bade Telemachus his crew
Handle the tackling; nor unheard spoke he:

But in the socket-hole the pinewood mast
They reared, and with the forestays made it fast,
And by the twisted halyards the white sails
They hoisted: the mid-sail before the blast

Swelled out, and loud the dark wave round the prow
Roared, as the ship began her way to plough.
But in the black ship having made all fast
They set forth bowls brimmed up with wine, and now

To the immortal Gods drink-offering they
Poured forth, the lords of everlasting day,
And chiefly to the grey-eyed maid of Zeus.
All night and into dawn she cleft her way.
BOOK THIRD

WHAT BEFEL IN PYLOS

AND the sun left the lovely lake and clomb
Upward across the sky's brass-paven dome,
To light the deathless Gods, and mortal men
That have the acres of the corn for home.

And they to Pylos, Neleus' city trim,
Came: where the people, down by the sea's brim,
Made to the blue-haired Shaker of the Earth
Oblation, slaying coal-black bulls to him.

Nine messes were there, and in each of these
Five hundred men, set after their degrees,
Offered nine bulls: and while on the inward meat
They fed, and burned to God the thigh-pieces,

These in their balanced ship drew straight to land,
And furled the sails and moored her by the strand.
Then out they got; and out Telemachus
Came at the leading of Athena's hand.
BOOK THIRD

To him the Goddess with the eyes of grey, Athena, spake: "Telemachus, this day
No shamefastness beseems you, not one whit:
For therefore have you sailed the ocean-way,

"That of your father you may hear men tell
Where the earth hides him, by what fate he fell.
Go therefore straight to Nestor the good knight,
To know what counsel in his breast may dwell.

"Pray him yourself to speak the truth; yet lies
Repeat he will not, being exceeding wise."
Then answered sage Telemachus and said:
"How shall I go, O Mentor? in what guise

"Shall I accost him? for in subtlety
Of speech no skill has yet been learned by me.
Also a young man well may be abashed
To question one that older is than he."

Answered the grey-eyed Goddess then and said:
"Somewhat you shall devise in your own head,
And somewhat God shall prompt you: not, I deem,
Without God's favour were you born and bred."

So spake Athena, and with footsteps fleet
Led, and he followed her immortal feet,
To the assembly of the Pylian folk,
Where with his sons sat Nestor in the seat.
Round whom his fellows, as at feasts is fit,
Made ready meat to roast upon the spit.
Now spying strangers, flocking forth they came
With welcoming hands held out, and bade them sit.

But first of all the people of the land
Pisistratus came nigh and took their hand,
The son of Nestor; and on fleeces soft
Took them to sit, that on the salt sea-sand

Were by his brother Thrasymedes spread
And by his father: thither both he led,
And gave them portions of the roasted flesh
And wine into a golden chalice shed.

Then to Athenian Pallas courteously,
The maid of thunder-bearing Zeus, spake he:
"Pray to Poseidon the Protector now,
O guest, I bid you: for his feast you see,

"This day arriving hither with your crew.
But having made libation as is due,
And prayed, hand also to your friend the cup
Of honeyed wine to pour from after you.

"Since to the Deathless Ones he too will pray
Belike: for all men need the Gods alway.
But young he is, of my own age, and so
First in your hand the golden cup I lay."
BOOK THIRD

So saying, the cup of sweet wine to her hold
He gave; thereat Athena joyful-souled
Deemed him both wise and righteous, because first
Into her hand he laid the cup of gold;

And to Poseidon the Protector now
Made supplication, saying: "Hearken thou, Poseidon, Girdler of the Earth, nor grudge Our work to end according to our vow.

"First now let glory go before the face Of Nestor and the children of his race; And to the Pylian people, one and all, Thereafter grant full largess of thy grace

"In payment of their glorious hecatomb: But to Telemachus and me, that home We may return with all the quest fulfilled, Whereon we with our swift black ship have come."

So prayed she, and herself fulfilled the prayer: And passed the chalice double-rimmed and fair On to Telemachus, and he in turn Prayed likewise. Then, for every man a share,

The roast flesh off the spits they drew, and spread A goodly feast: and after they had fed To quench their thirst and hunger, Nestor then, The knight Gerenian, opened speech and said:
"Now that our guests are satisfied with food, 
To ask this question of them it were good, 
What men they be. O guests, who are you? whence 
Sail you across the pathways of the flood?

"Over the seas on traffic do you sail, 
Or cruising idly on a random trail, 
Like pirates, who at hazard of their lives 
Wander, to outland people carrying bale?"

Him answered wise Telemachus again, 
Plucking up courage: for Athena then 
Put courage in him, tidings to inquire 
Of his lost father, and win fame of men:

"O glory of the Achaeans, Neleus' son, 
Nestor, you ask me whence our course begun: 
And I will tell you. Out of Ithaca 
From under Neion hither have we won.

"Nor is my speech of any public care, 
But my own private quest whereon I fare, 
If tidings I may gather of my sire, 
Ill-fated bright Odysseus, anywhere:

"Who by your side of old, as men's renown 
Bears witness, fought and overthrew Troy town. 
For of all else who with the Trojans warred 
Tidings are come how each to death went down;
BOOK  THIRD

"But even of the end that came to him
The son of Cronus makes the rumour dim;
For no man can say clearly where he fell,
Whether on land in some great fight and grim

"At hostile hands, or haply found a grave
In Amphitrite's realm amid the wave.
Therefore I now before your knees bow down
Some tidings of your courtesy to crave,

"Whether with your own eyes you chanced to see
The doom whereby he perished wretchedly,
Or from some other wanderer heard the tale:
For from his mother's womb ill-starred was he.

"Then let not pity or ruth your tongue withhold
Or soften for me aught that must be told
Of what your eyes have seen: if ever he,
My sire, Odysseus good, in days of old

"By word or deed fulfilled his promise well
Before Troy town, where many woes befel
You and the host Achaean, for his sake
Now I beseech you all the truth to tell."

And Nestor, the Gerenian knight, replied:
"O friend, to memory you recall the tide
Of miseries that encompassed in that land
The Achaean host in all their strength and pride.

55
"The woes we suffered on the misty sea
Ranging for plunder, our long ships and we,
Where so Achilles led us, and the strife
That round King Priam's city mightily

"We waged in battle: there our bravest shed
Their life-blood, there lies valiant Aias dead,
There fell Achilles, there Patroclus fell,
Who with Gods' wisdom all our counsels led.

"And there among them lies mine own dear son,
A warrior brave and fleet of foot to run,
Antilochus, the fighter without fault;
And other ills we suffered many an one;

"What man of mortals all of them might tell?
Not if five years or six you here should dwell
Might you by asking all the sorrows learn,
That there the bright Achaean host befel:

"But sooner would you go in woeful mood
Back to your home. For nine years' space we stood
Devising many sleights against the foe,
That hardly Cronus' son at last made good.

"And in those days to bright Odysseus none
Might be compared in counsel, for he won
Far the first place by manifold device;
Your father, if indeed you are his son.
BOOK THIRD

"While I behold you, wonder is on me.
For such you are in speechcraft as was he;
Nor would one say that of well-ordered words
So young a man might have such mastery.

"Nor once in all that time Odysseus brave
And I myself divided counsel gave
Before the assembly or the council-board;
But, single-hearted, each to the other clave,

"Heedful and wise by good advice to show
Whence for the Argives victory might grow:
Till we had wholly sacked the lofty town
Of Priam, and aboard our ships would go.

"Now when God bade the Achaean host disband,
The heart of Zeus upon the Argives planned
A woeful home-coming, because they all
Unrighteous were and slow to understand.

"Wherefore among them many were undone
By the fierce anger of the Grey-eyed One,
The daughter of the awful sire, who set
Within the heart of Atreus' either son

"Discord against his brother: wherefore they
Summoned to moot the Achaeans' whole array
(Sodden with wine and all disorderly
They came), and until sunset all the day
"In fierce debate of argument they stood,
Their counsel to the people to make good:
Now Menelaus bade the Achaeans haste
To seek their homes across the wide-ridged flood:

"But Agamemnon held his counsel cheap,
Desiring still the people there to keep
And offer sacrifice, if so the fierce
Wrath of Athena might be lulled asleep.

"Fool, for he knew not that from her intent
For no persuasion might her mind relent.
Since not thus lightly may the purposes
Of the everlasting Gods aside be bent.

"Thus to and fro hard words between them ran,
And the debate stood yet where it began,
Till with huge uproar all the mail-clad host
Broke up, divided between plan and plan.

"Full of hard thoughts against each other we
Rested that night: for bale and misery
Zeus wrought to overcome us; but at morn
Certain among us to the shining sea

"Drew down our ships, and in them fell to stow
The plunder and the women girdled low.
So there with Agamemnon, king of men
The shepherd of the people, loth to go,
BOOK  THIRD

“Stayed half the people; but the half we led
Boarded the ships and seaward drove ahead:
And swiftly sailed the ships, and under them
God smoothed the sea above its gulfy bed.

“Thus we to Tenedos, of home full fain,
Came; but for all our sacrifices slain
Stern Zeus ordained not our return, but there
Stirred evil discord up yet once again.

“Then they that had with lord Odysseus gone,
The wise of heart, the subtle-minded one,
Swung round their ships and hastened back to make
Their peace with Agamemnon, Atreus’ son.

“But I with all the ships that round me drew
Fled in close order: for full well I knew
That God was wroth at us; and with me fled
The valiant son of Tydeus and his crew.

“And fair-haired Menelaus late that day
Followed and caught us up in Lesbos bay
Pondering the long sea passage, whether we
Straight for the Psyrian isle our course should lay,

“With craggy Chios low on our left hand,
Or coasting Mimas by the windy land
Keep Chios on our starboard; then we prayed
God for a sign that we might understand.
"And sign he showed, that bade us cut the sea
Straight forward toward Euboea, so to flee
Quick from destruction; and a wind arose
Shrill-blowing, and before the wind went we.

"Swift through the fishes' tracks our ships ran on,
And made Geraestus ere the morning shone:
Where to Poseidon many bulls we slew,
Because we safe through the great deep had gone.

"So the fourth day the crew of Diomede
The son of Tydeus, master of the steed,
In Argos brought their balanced ships ashore.
But I held on for Pylos: nor indeed

"Failed the good wind God first sent forth to blow
Behind me: without tidings came I so,
Dear child; but all that sitting in our halls
I learn, as reason is, you now shall know.

"Who of the Achaeans are alive or dead,
I will not cover from you: safe, they said,
Came home the Myrmidons, the spearmen fierce
Whom the bright son of brave Achilles led.

"And Philoctetes, Poeas' splendid son,
Safe: and to Crete with all those comrades won
Idomeneus, that from the war alive
Escaped, and in the sea-gulf lost he none.
"But of the son of Atreus, in a land
Far off you have not failed to understand
By rumour, how he came, and how on him
Direful destruction there Aegisthus planned.

"But vengeance followed him and shame for shame.
So good a thing it is that of his name
A dead man leave a child: since verily
Repayment from the slain man’s son there came,

"When he the slayer of his father slew,
Guileful Aegisthus: so, my friend, do you,
Being thus tall and goodly, now be brave
To win a good report from ages new."

Then answering wise Telemachus begun:
"O glory of the Achaeans, Neleus’ son,
Nestor, a terrible revenge he wrought:
Wherefore his glory all abroad shall run

"Among the Achaeans even in days to be.
Would that the Gods would put such might in me!
That on the suitors vengeance I might take
For all their wrong and bitter injury.

"Since through their pride and folly ill I fare:
But for my own and for my father’s share
The Gods have no such happiness ordained;
Wherefore this now I must endure to bear.”
Thereat the knight Gerenian, Nestor, spake:
“O friend, concerning this whereof you make
Mention and utterance, rumour reaches us
That many suitors for your mother’s sake

“Sit in your house by force, devising ill.
Tell me, have those men overborne your will,
Or do the people hate you in the land,
Moved by some God his purpose to fulfil?

“Who knows but he shall make them yet atone
Their wrong, returning, either he alone
Or all the Achaean army? If indeed
Grey-eyed Athena chose you for her own,

“As in old days renowned Odysseus she
Kept in her care before Troy town, where we
The Achaeans bare distress—for never yet
Saw I the Gods show love so openly

“As by his side stood plain for all to know
Pallas Athena—if she loved you so,
And cared so for you in her heart, full soon
Their marriage out of these men’s mind would go.”

Then spake in answer wise Telemachus:
“O ancient man, I deem not that for us
Shall come to pass; too high is this your word,
And awes me; even if God willed it thus,
BOOK THIRD

"No hope have I that so befall it may."
But him the grey-eyed Goddess answered: "Nay, What word has passed your lips, Telemachus? Easily can a God from far away

"Save whom he will. I sorrows not a few Would suffer ere the day I homeward drew, Rather than, coming, by my hearth be slain Like Agamemnon, whom his own wife slew,

"Leagued with Aegisthus: yet must each man go To death, nor may the Gods avert the blow, How much soe'er they love him, when the doom Of Death the Leveller shall lay him low."

But wise Telemachus returned reply: "Mentor, of this our grief discourse would I No longer: a false tale is his return. Surely on him the Gods that do not die

"Death and the phantom black ere this have sent. But now another question am I bent To ask of Nestor, since beyond all men Righteous is he, and full of wise intent:

"And reigning here has witnessed, so say men, Three generations rise and fall again; And like a deathless God methinks is he. O Nestor, son of Neleus, tell me then,
"How Atreus' son, the lord of many a land,
Great Agamemnon, fell by violent hand.
Where then was Menelaus? in what wise
Was wrought the treason that Aegisthus planned,

"One mightier than himself in death to lay?
Out of Achaean Argos far away
Belike he wandered among unknown men,
So that the slayer plucked up heart to slay."

And Nestor, the Gerenian knight, replied:
"Look you, my son, the truth I will not hide.
Even as you deem, so was it: for if he
Had found Aegisthus living at that tide

"Within his halls, when home from Troy he won,
The fair-haired Menelaus, Atreus' son,
Not even on his dead body had men cast
The mound of earth, as for the dead is done,

"But dogs and birds had torn him for their prey
Cast out beyond the city where he lay,
And no Achaean woman wept for him;
So dreadful was the deed he did that day.

"For we sat down in leaguer overseas
Doing great feats of arms, while he at ease
Deep in horse-pasturing Argos won the soul
Of Agamemnon's wife with flatteries.
BOOK THIRD

"And glorious Clytemnestra first for long
Rejected utterly the deed of wrong:
For her own mind was right; and by her side
She had for guardian a man skilled in song,

"Into whose keeping Atreus' son had lent
His wife, when to the Trojan land he went,
Charging him well to guard her: but when fate
Ordained her fall and her entanglement,

"He to an island not inhabited
Bore off the minstrel, and there left him dead,
A prey to birds, and to his house the Queen,
Her will consenting to his will, he led.

"And many beasts he burned on the divine
Altars, and offerings hung on many a shrine
Of woven cloths and gold; for he had done
A mighty deed, exceeding his design.

"Now Atreus' son and I with one consent
Sailing together, when from Troy we went,
Passed on until to holy Sunium,
The cape Athenian, our course we bent.

"And Menelaus' steersman on that day
Phoebus Apollo, with his shafts that slay
Softly, struck down and slew while yet his hand
Held the ship's tiller as she kept her way:
THE ODYSSEY

"Phrontis, Onetor's son, with whom made none
Among the tribes of men comparison
To guide a ship through winds tempestuous.
So there he stayed, though eager to be gone,

"To bury him, and do above his grave
The rites that dead men of their fellow crave.
But when his hulls across the wine-bright sea
Under the steep Maleian mountain drave,

"Far-sounding Zeus, on him ordaining bale,
Let loose upon his path the whistling gale,
And mountain-like the monstrous waves upswelled,
So that he ran for Crete with shortened sail;

"Where round Iardanus Cydonians keep,
And there a cliff precipitous and steep
Sheer to the sea goes down at the utmost edge
Of Gortyn, all amid the misty deep:

"Where the wave presses by the South wind blown
Towards Phaestus, and a little ridge of stone
Checks the great breaker by the left; on that
They drove, and hardly then the crews alone

"Escaped alive, but on the reefs the sea
Shattered the ships, save only five that he,
Their blue prows plunging through the stormy deep,
Bore to the coast of Egypt on his lee.
BOOK THIRD

"There with his ships he wandered in a land
Of a strange language, seeking to his hand
Gold and great store of victual; and the while
At home these baleful deeds Aegisthus planned.

"And for seven years he held beneath his reign
Golden Mycenae, after he had slain
The son of Atreus, and the people bore
His yoke: but in the eighth year came his bane,

"When bright Orestes from the Athenian town
Returning struck his father's murderer down,
Aegisthus guileful-hearted, at whose hand
His sire had perished, dead in his renown.

"And while the funeral feast the slayer spread
Among the Argives for the twain laid dead,
The cursed woman and the faint-hearted man,
That same day thither Menelaus led

"His ships freight-laden full as they could hold.
Now you, my friend, in wanderings manifold
Linger not, leaving house and household goods
Within the hands of men so overbold;

"Lest they part all among them for their prey,
And fruitless be the road you take to-day.
Yet I to Menelaus bid you go,
Being lately come from peoples far away;
"Whence to return all hope to him would lack
Whom once the tempest drove from off his track
Into so vast a sea that even birds
(So great it is and dreadful) there and back

"Upon their yearly passage may not wing.
Go thither, with the ship and crew you bring;
Or if by land, a chariot I will lend
And horses, and my sons your wayfaring

"To Lacedaemon's goodly land shall lead
And fair-haired Menelaus, there to plead
Yourself with him for tidings; and false tales
He will not tell you, being wise indeed."

So spake he, and thereat with set of sun
Darkness drew down; and now the Grey-eyed One,
Divine Athena, spake: "O ancient man,
Thus counselling full wisely have you done.

"Now carve the tongues and mix the wine, that we
May pour drink-offering to the God of the Sea
And all the Deathless people, and thereon
Get us to bed, where the hour bids us be.

"For even as I speak the sunken day
Is faded in the west, nor yet to stay
Here seated at the banquet of the Gods
Befits us, but to rise and go our way."
BOOK THIRD

So spake God's daughter, and they gave accord
To what she uttered: then the heralds poured
Water upon their hands, and boys brimmed up
The bowls with drink, and passing down the board,

From the left hand as each man might require
Into the cups poured out; and in the fire
They cast the tongues; and standing up they made
Drink-offering, and then drank to their desire.

Now the twain set their faces to the beach,
That they the covert of the ship might reach,
Athena and divine Telemachus:
But Nestor held them back with chiding speech:

"Now Zeus and all the deathless Gods forfend
That you from me to your swift ship should wend,
As from some poor man's house and raimentless
Who from his halls the stranger forth must send,

"Because few cloaks or blankets they supply
For him and for his guest soft-wrapped to lie.
Of cloaks and blankets fair good store is mine,
Nor my friend's son of such account have I

"That on a ship's deck-spars his bed should be,
While yet I live, or children after me,
Who to whatever guest draws nigh our house
Therein may offer hospitality."
Thereat the Goddess with the eyes of grey, Athena, answered: "Good is what you say, Old friend, and thereto, as is meet and right, Obedience due Telemachus shall pay.

"Now therefore by your side return shall he, To sleep within your palace; but for me, To the black ship I go to hearten up My fellows and instruct them perfectly.

"Because I only all the crew among Am ripe in years, and all the rest are young, Even as he is, and for the love they bear Telemachus about his side have clung.

"There will I sleep beside the black ship's hold Now: but with morning to a nation bold I travel, the Cauconians, where a debt No little one, is due to me of old.

"But him to speed upon his way, as one Who to your house has sought, send forth your son For convoy, with a chariot, and the steeds That are the strongest and most light to run."

So saying, thence grey-eyed Athena flew Like a sea-eagle; and amazement grew In all who saw her, and the ancient king Marvelled the wonder with his eyes to view.
Then by the hand he caught Telemachus, 
And a word uttered: “Sure you promise us, 
O friend, no weakling nor mean man to be, 
When even in youth the Gods escort you thus.

“For verily none else beside you stood 
Now of the whole Olympian multitude 
But God’s own daughter, the Most Glorious One, 
Tritogeneia, who your father good

“Exalted when in the Argive camp was he. 
Be gracious, O Protectress, now to me! 
And grant that good report upon myself 
And on my children and grave wife may be.

“And I to thee a heifer one year old 
Will slay, wide-browed, unyoked and uncontrolled 
Of any man; her will I sacrifice 
To thee, and overlay her horns with gold.”

So called he on her, praying: and his call 
Pallas Athena heard; and therewithal 
Nestor, the knight Gerenian, led his sons 
And daughters’ husbands to his goodly hall.

But when they reached the royal house most fair, 
They sat them down arow on bench and chair. 
Then for his guests the old king mixed a bowl 
Of sweet wine, that eleven years had there
THE ODYSSEY

Lain stored, when now the housekeeper undid
The seal, and loosed the covering from its lid.
Thence to the maid of Zeus the Thunderer he
Mixed and poured offering many a prayer amid.

Now when the offering and the draught was done,
To bed they got them homeward every one.
But Nestor, the Gerenian knight, himself
Took order for divine Odysseus’ son;

Upon a bedstead framed of mortised wood
Laying Telemachus to sleep, that stood
Beneath the echoing porch, and by his side
The prince Pisistratus, the spearman good;

Who still among his sons a youth unwed
Lived in the palace. But in the inner stead
Of the high-builded house himself he slept,
And the house-mistress by him lay abed.

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Nestor, the knight Gerenian, rose anon
Out of his bed, and issuing from the house
He took his seat the smooth white stones upon

That glistening lay before the lofty door,
Whereon his father Neleus sat before,
The godlike counsellor; but he ere now
Struck down by fate was gone to death’s dark shore:
And now as warden of the Achaean land
Sat there and held the sceptre in his hand
Gerenian Nestor; round him from the house
Gathered his six tall sons, a goodly band,

Echephron, Stratius, Perseus good at need,
Aretus next and godlike Thrasymede,
And for the sixth the prince Pisistratus:
And in their midst Odysseus' princely seed,

Telemachus, they brought his seat to take.
Then first the knight Gerenian Nestor spake:
"Quickly, dear children, do as I desire:
I to Athena would obeisance make

"First among all the Gods, since hither she
Came to the God's rich banquet visibly.
Go some one for a heifer to the plain
And send her up as quickly as may be.

"The cattle-herdsman thence shall drive her back;
And one of you go shoreward to the black
Ship of Telemachus, and fetch her crew,
Leaving two only there, that none may lack.

"And let one bid Laerces come this way,
The goldsmith, that with gold he overlay
The heifer's horns: but here the rest of you
Abide together where you are; and say
"To the thrall-women indoors to prepare
A goodly feast, and fetch in water fair
And seats and wood for firing.” Thus he spake,
And they to do his bidding sped with care.

Then came the heifer from the grazing-land,
And from the swift ship poised upon the strand
Came up the crew of brave Telemachus,
And the smith came, his smith’s tools in his hand,

Anvil and hammer, and his tongs to hold
Well-fitting, wherewithal he wrought in gold,
His craft’s appliance: and Athena came
To take her sacrifice; and Nestor old,

Driver of chariots, gave the gold, which he
Around the heifer’s horns with subtlety
Laid over, that her votive offering
The Goddess seeing might rejoice to see.

Then Stratius and divine Echephron caught
By either horn and forth the heifer brought: And sprinkling-water from the palace bare
Aretus in a basin flower-enwrought,

And ground meal in a basket: and the good
War-stayer Thrasymedes by him stood,
With a sharp axe to smite the heifer down; And Perseus held a vessel for the blood.
And Nestor the old knight began anew
To sprinkle meal and water as is due,
Prayer to Athena making, while a lock
From the beast’s head upon the fire he threw.

But when the prayer was made and the meal strown,
Most valiant Thrasymedes, Nestor’s son,
Drew nigh and smote; the sinews of the neck
The axe shore through, and down the beast fell prone:

While all the women, daughters of the house
And sons’ wives, raised a crying clamorous,
With Nestor’s own grave wife, Eurydice,
The eldest daughter born to Clymenus.

And men where on the wide-wayed earth she lay
Lifted the heifer: and the knife to slay
Pisistratus the prince plunged in, and forth
Gushed the dark blood, and fled the life away.

Then quickly they the carcase for the spit
Broke up, but either thigh-piece, as is fit,
Cut out and covered up in double folds
Of fat, and stuck raw lumps of meat in it.

And the old King a heap of cloven wands
Kindled, and gleaming wine upon the brands
Poured, while the young men standing by his side
Held the five-pointed flesh-forks in their hands.
But when the thigh-joints were to cinders gone
And the entrails eaten, all the rest anon
They cut up small and spitted through and through
On the sharp spits, and roasted it thereon.

But for Telemachus a bath, that he
Might bathe him, Polycasta fair to see
Prepared, the youngest daughter of the house
Of Nestor son of Neleus; and when she

Had bathed him and with oil anointed him,
About his body a shirt and mantle trim
She cast, and from the bath he issued forth
Like an immortal God in mould and limb;

And passing to where Nestor sat at meat,
The shepherd of the people, took his seat
Beside him; and men drew the roasted flesh
From off the spits and sat them down to eat.

Then chosen men uprose the wine to shed
In the gold cups; and after they had fed
To quench their thirst and hunger, from their midst
Nestor, the knight Gerenian, spake and said:

"Now up, my sons, and for the prince our guest
Harness the chariot-horses goodly-tressed,
That he may take his journey." Thus he spake,
And they gave ear and did at his behest.
Beneath the chariot-pole the horses fleet
They harnessed up; and wine and bread of wheat
The woman housekeeper within it laid,
With victual such as high-born princes eat.

Up to the painted chariot-seat he then
Mounted, and Nestor’s son, the prince of men,
Got up beside him on the seat, and took
The reins, and lashed the steeds; and they again

Dashed eager to the plain, and passed away
From the high town of Pylos. All the day
Across their necks the rattling yoke they swung,
Till the sun dipped and all the paths were grey.

To Diocles at Pherae came they thus,
The prince, whose father was Ortilochus
Son of Alpheus: there the twain that night
Slept, and he gave them welcome courteous.

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
They yoked, and clomb the painted car upon;
And from the forecourt and the echoing porch
Beneath the lash the willing steeds flew on.

Thus came they to the level land of wheat,
And all across it then the horses fleet
Fulfilled their journey lightly; and the sun
Dipped, and the darkness covered path and street.
BOOK FOURTH

WHAT BEFEL IN LACEDAEMON

AND they to Lacedaemon sunken low
Came, and drove onward to the house to go
Of glorious Menelaus: him they found
On all his clan preparing to bestow

The bridal banquet where his palace stood,
For twain, a son and daughter of the blood.
Her he bestowed upon Achilles’ son,
The cleaver of the battle, making good

The plighted promise that was first laid down
In Troy, and now the Gods vouchsafed to crown
With wedding: and he sent her forth to reign
Queen in the Myrmidons’ illustrious town

With steeds and chariots; but from Sparta led
Alector’s daughter home his son to wed,
The stripling Megapenthes strong of limb,
Begotten on a thrall who shared his bed;
BOOK FOURTH

Because the Gods ordained no child to be
To Helen, since one first-born daughter she,
As golden Aphrodite beautiful,
Brought forth, the lovely maid Hermione.

Thus then the mighty high-roofed hall within
Feasted the neighbours and the clan and kin
Of glorious Menelaus: in the midst
The godlike minstrel made a merry din.

And as with voice and viol he began,
Two jugglers up and down amid them ran.
Then in the forecourt prince Telemachus
And the bright son of Nestor, horse and man,

Drew up: and Eteoneus went to see
Who these new-comers were; a squire was he
Of glorious Menelaus, good at need.
Up through the house he went then hastily,

News to the shepherd of the folk to take;
And coming nigh, a winged word he spake:
"O high-born Menelaus, lo, there come
A pair of strangers hither, and their make

"Bears likeness to the race of mighty Zeus.
Say, shall we here their fleetfoot steeds unloose,
Or send them on, some other house to find
Where they may chance on hospitable use?"
But fair-haired Menelaus made reply
In anger: “Not a fool in days gone by,
Son of the Helper, were you wont to be;
But like a child you now talk foolishly.

“The bread of many strangers on our way
We also ate—if Zeus vouchsafe to stay
Our woes henceforward! Loose the strangers’ steeds
And bring them in, that share our feast they may.”

So spake he, and he hasted out of hall
And bade his trusty fellow-squires withal
Follow beside him. They the sweating steeds
Loosed from the yoke, and tying in the stall,

Rye and white barley mixed before them spread
For food, and leant the chariot by the head
Against the goodly-gleaming entrance walls;
And them into the royal house they led.

So through the palace marvelling they went;
For like a sun or moon one splendour blent
In God-born Menelaus’ princely halls
Filled all the high-roofed house magnificent.

Now when their eyes had over all things gone,
Into the polished baths they went anon
Sated with seeing; there the women-thralls
Washed their limbs clean and rubbed the oil thereon,
And fleecy cloaks and shirts about them did.
Thereafter they the banqueters amid
Passed into hall and sat upon the seats
By Menelaus’ side, the Atreid.

Then brought a serving-woman ere they fed
A silver basin in, and water shed
From the fair ewer of gold upon their hands,
And by their side a polished table spread.

And the grave housekeeper that they might eat
Fetched dainties manifold and bread of wheat
Out of her store-room, and the carver set
Before them golden cups, and for their meat

Platters of flesh uplifted many an one.
Then fair-haired Menelaus thus begun
In courteous wise to both: “Now break your fast,
And welcome be you; but, your dinner done,

“What men you be we fain would ask you then.
For nowise has your parents’ race again
Perished within you, but the seed you are
Of kings high-born and sceptre-bearing men:

“For parents mean such children might not bear.”
Thus saying, he took and laid before the pair
The roasted chine of a fat ox, that men
Had set before him for the prince’s share.
So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands: and after they had fed
Hunger and thirst to quench, Telemachus
Laid his head close to Nestor's son and said,

Low-voiced, that none his purport might divine:
"O son of Nestor, chosen friend of mine,
Mark you, how all adown the echoing house
The rooms with bronze and gold and silver shine,

"And gleam of amber and of ivory?
Such the Olympian hall within might be
Of Zeus himself, so boundless is the wealth
That fills it; wonder takes me as I see."

Him speaking fair-haired Menelaus heard,
And answered them and said a winged word:
"Fair children, surely to comparison
With Zeus may no man mortal be preferred:

"For deathless is his palace, and therein
Deathless the riches: but of mortal kin
Let others vie in wealth with me or no;
Much have I borne and wandered far to win

"What on the galleys I brought home with me,
When in the eighth year set from wandering free
I came from Cyprus and Phoenicia
And the Egyptian land across the sea.
BOOK FOURTH

"To the Sidonians likewise sailed I then
And to the desert tribes and swart-faced men;
And Libya, where the lambs are yeaned with horns,
For there the ewes again and yet again

"Bring forth within the year's encircling track.
Wherefore has neither prince nor peasant lack
Of cheese or flesh, or sweet milk that the ewes
All the year through give to the milkers back.

"But while I wandering thus in many a land
Gathered great store of substance to my hand,
One slew my brother secretly by stealth,
Through guile that his accursed wife had planned.

"Therefore to me this day small pleasure bring
These treasures of the house where I am king;
As by your fathers, whoso'er they be,
You may be told: for many an evil thing

"I suffered, and a house well built of old
Lost, that held treasure rich and manifold.
But I the third part of my substance now
Were well content within my halls to hold,

"If safe beside me were those warriors brave
Who in wide Troy descended to the grave,
Far from horse-pasturing Argos; all of whom
I weep and mourn for that I could not save;
"And ofttimes sitting in our halls with sighs
I ease my heart, and then anon arise
And cease; for soon a man is satiated
With the cold comfort that in weeping lies.

"Yet all the rest I mourn not for like one
Who makes me loathe my sleep and food: since none
Of all the Achaeans did the mighty deeds
That by Odysseus’ labouring hands were done.

"Whereof for him discomfiture was bred,
And for me sorrow still un comforted:
So long has he been gone, nor know we now
For certain if he be alive or dead.

"Sure in great dole at home for him must be
Laertes old, and chaste Penelope;
Yea, and Telemachus, the son he left
A new-born infant when he put to sea."

So spake he, and in him awoke anon
Desire of wailing for his father gone;
That with both hands before his eyes he held
The purple cloak, and fast the ground upon

Tears as he listened from his eyelids fell.
But Menelaus, him regarding well,
Debated inwardly within his mind
Whether to leave him his own tale to tell
BOOK FOURTH

Or first to ask him, and no question miss.
Now in his heart while he debated this,
Forth of her high-roofed odorous chamber came
Helen, like golden-shafted Artemis.

Then all her waiting-women round her met.
A goodly chair for her Adreste set,
And a soft rug of wool Alcippe brought,
And Phylo bare the silver work-basket

That in Egyptian Thebes, of all the rest
Of peopled towns which is the wealthiest,
Alcandra gave her, wife of Polybus:
For he to Menelaus when his guest

Two silver baths with tripods gave, and gold
Ten talents' weight; and largess manifold
His wife bestowed on Helen separately,
A golden distaff, and a basket rolled

On wheels, all silver, but the rims with thin
Plating of gold were finished: this brought in
Phylo the serving-woman and laid down
Beside her, filled with carded wool to spin.

From edge to edge the distaff, loaded full
With a dark swathe of violet-coloured wool,
Across it lay; and on the chair sat down
Helen, and set her feet upon a stool.
Then of her lord she straight made question so:
"O high-born Menelaus, do we know
For whom of men these vouch themselves to be,
Our house who visit as their way they go?

"Shall I my thought withhold, or let it free
As my heart moves me? for assuredly
Never in man or woman saw I yet
Such likeness as I marvel now to see

"In this man to Telemachus, the son
Born to Odysseus, that great-hearted one,
Whom in his house a new-born child he left
When the debate of that fierce war begun,

"And for the sake of me who knew not shame
Under Troy town your host Achaean came."
Then answering, fair-haired Menelaus said:
"Yea now, O wife, I also think the same

"Touching this likeness: such his feet, I vow,
Such were his hands; so glanced beneath his brow
His eyes, and such his head and hair thereon.
And when remembering Odysseus now

"Of all the travail and the toil I spoke
That by my side he bore, the purple cloak
Against his eyes he held, and from beneath
His brows amain the bitter tear outbroke."
BOOK FOURTH

And thereto Nestor's son Pisistratus
Answer returned, and spake replying thus:
"O high-born Menelaus, Atreus' son,
Prince of the people, aright you deem of us.

"His son is this assuredly; but fear
Forbids him first before you to appear
With confidence of speech, although your voice
Right gladly, even as a God's, we hear.

"But me old Nestor, the Gerenian knight,
Sent as his guide to lead him to your sight:
For he was fain to see you, and advice
To seek what he may say or do aright.

"For many griefs must by a son be borne
Whom in his halls his father leaves forlorn,
As he is left, nor has in all the land
 Helpers for succour to his state outworn."

And fair-haired Menelaus answering spake:
"Now well-a-day, within my house I take
The son of one exceeding dear to me,
Who toiled in many labours for my sake.

"Whom, if he came to visit me, I most
Promised to love of all the Argive host,
If the Far-Sounder, Zeus Olympian,
Sent back our swift ships from that far-off coast."
"For here in Argos I had cleared a space
And built a town to be his dwelling-place,
And brought him out of Ithaca with goods
And child and all the people of his race,

"Emptying one town of these that in a ring
Lie round me, and I over them am king;
Then had we met here often, nor had aught
Sundered our friendship and our joy-making,

"Till the black cloud of death were round us driven.
But this belike the jealousy of Heaven
Must needs deny us, and to him alone,
That man ill-fated, no return has given."

So spake he, and therewith desire he stirred
Of lamentation among all that heard.
Wept Argive Helen, child of Zeus, and wept
Telemachus, and with him at the word

Wept Menelaus, Atreus' son, nor yet
Kept Nestor's son his eyes with tears unwet:
For he the blameless prince Antilochus,
His brother, might not in his heart forget,

Whom the bright son of radiant Morning slew.
Wherefore in winged words he spoke anew:
"O son of Atreus, Nestor old would say
That wise beyond all mortal men were you,
"When you in our discourse we would recall,  
One questioning another in his hall.  
Now listen to my counsel; for to me  
No joy it is to mourn at evenfall.

"Morning will break with sorrow of her own.  
Yet would I grudge not mortals to bemoan  
The dead, and him whose fate on him has fallen;  
Since to the dead this due is left alone

"From mourning men, the tresses of the head  
To shear, and down the cheeks the tear to shed.  
My brother likewise perished, not the last  
Or least among the Argives, as is said

"Among us: but belike you know aright:  
For I myself had never speech nor sight  
Of prince Antilochus, than whom was none  
Fleeter of foot or more renowned in fight."

And fair-haired Menelaus spake thereto  
And answered: "Thus, O friend, might say and do  
A prudent man, as you have spoken now;  
Even were he of older years than you.

"Wisdom of speech befits your father’s son.  
Easy it is to know the seed of one  
For whom the Son of Cronus in his birth  
And marriage-choice a lucky thread has spun.

89
"As now to Nestor this his gift appears, 
A green old age descending down the years 
With peace and plenty in his halls, and sons 
Prudent and valiant in the clash of spears.

"Now let us put our former grief away 
And wash our hands and supper re-array; 
And for Telemachus and me shall come 
Discourse and converse with the break of day."

So spake he, and the trusty squire anon 
Of Menelaus famed, AsphaUon, 
Poured water forth, and to the food that lay 
Prepared they reached their hands; and fed thereon.

Now took fresh counsel Helen, child of Zeus, 
And dropped into their wine a magic juice, 
Charmer of grief and anger, that from men 
All the remembrance of their ills could loose.

Whoso that potion, through the wine-bowl spread, 
Swallowed, no tear adown his cheek would shed 
All through the day he drank it, not if there 
Father and mother fell beside him dead:

Nor even if the foe before his face 
Slew with the sword a brother of his race 
Or his own son, and that his eyes beheld. 
Such were the wizard drugs of sovereign grace
BOOK FOURTH

That to the daughter of the Gods were known;
Even those that Polydamna, wife of Thôn,
The Egyptian woman, gave her: in which land
Among the acres of the corn are grown

Innumerable herbs whence men distil
Potions together mingled, good and ill,
Sovereign and baleful both: and every man
There is in leechcraft of exceeding skill:

For of the Healer’s lineage are they bred.
Now when that juice into the wine she shed
And bade men fill the cups, she thereupon
Took up her tale and answered them and said:

"O high-born Menelaus, Atreus’ son,
And you here, brave men’s children every one—
But Zeus in his omnipotence to men
Makes good and evil interchanging run—

"Sit now in this our palace feasting well,
And take your pleasure in the tale I tell,
That shall befit the time. Now all the tasks
That to sore-tried Odysseus’ lot befel

"Recount I could not, nay, nor tell by name
The labours which that man of iron frame
Bore or achieved before the Trojan town,
Where upon you the Achaeans evil came.
"Be this one only for example told,
How with stripes foul and grievous to behold
He mangled his own body, and arrayed
His shoulders round in tattered rags and old;

"And thus in likeness of a household thrall
He stole within the wide-wayed city's wall
Amid his foemen, as a beggar man
Disguised—for no such guise was his at all

"Upon the Achaean fleet—in such disguise
To Troy he came, unseen of all men's eyes:
I only knew him then and questioned him;
But he evaded me in subtle wise,

"Till bath and raiment I had given, and bore
Raiment to clothe him, and an oath I swore
Not to reveal him till he reached again
The swift ships and the leaguer on the shore.

"Then he their whole intent to me made plain,
And so returned to the Argives, having slain
Many a Trojan with the keen-edged sword,
And full report bore back with him again.

"Then made the Trojan women shrill lament;
But glad was I: for now my heart was bent
Homeward to turn, and it repented me
Of the mad mind by Aphrodite sent,
BOOK FOURTH

"When thither from my native land my feet
She led, abandoning my daughter sweet
And my own wedding-chamber, and a lord
In wisdom as in beauty all-complete."

And fair-haired Menelaus made reply:
"O wife, so is it; no man may deny
Aught you have said: of many princely men
The counsel and the purpose known have I,

"And over many a land my way have won;
Yet have mine eyes discerned among them none
Like to Odysseus of the constant heart
In what may be by man endured and done.

"Whereof now likewise may this tale find room,
How we, within the carven horse's womb,
The Argive princes lay, intent to bear
Upon the Trojans violent death and doom;

"And how you then came thither, being sent
Belike by prompting of some god who meant
To glorify the Trojans; and withal
Godlike Deiphobus beside you went.

"Then thrice around the hollow gin you came,
And touched it with your hands, and called by name
Each of the Argive princes; and your voice
To each was as his own wife's voice the same."
"But all amid them Tydeus' son and I
And bright Odysseus sat and heard your cry.
Then both we two were fain to issue forth
Or from within at once to make reply.

"But then Odysseus checked us, fain to fall
Into the snare, and kept in silence all
The Achaean captains: only Anticlus
Yet made essay to answer to your call:

"Then rose Odysseus' mighty hands and lay
Merciless on his mouth, and saved that day
All the Achaean, and so held him down
Until Athena led your feet away."

But answering, wise Telemachus begun:
"O high-born Menelaus, Atreus' son,
Prince of the people, bitterer is it so;
Since not by all his valiance might be won

"Escape from dire destruction, though he met
Fate with a heart within as iron set.
But now direct us to our couch, that we
Abed the solace of sweet sleep may get."

He spake: and Argive Helen therewithal
Ordered the women whom she had in thrall
Two beds to lay beneath the portico,
And spread them fair with purple and with pall;
BOOK FOURTH

And over these good store of rugs to fling,
And fleecy cloaks for upper covering.
So, carrying a torch between their hands,
They issued from the palace of the king.

But after these the couches twain had spread,
A herald out of hall the strangers led;
And both of them, the prince Telemachus
And Nestor’s glorious son, he laid abed

There in the palace fore-courtyard the ground.
But in the inmost of that house high-crowned
The son of Atreus lay, and by him slept
The bright of women, Helen flowing-gowned.

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone
The war-crier Menelaus rose anon
Forth of his bed, and clad him in array,
And round his shoulder the sharp sword slung on;

And the fair shoes his shining feet below
Laced, and from out his chamber fared to go
Like to a God, and by Telemachus
Sat down, and by his name bespoke him so:

“Now, prince Telemachus, what urgency
Has brought you hither across the wide-ridged sea
To goodly Lacedaemon? public care
Or private? tell the truth hereof to me.”
Then answering, wise Telemachus begun:
"O high-born Menelaus, Atreus’ son,
Prince of the people, to inquire I came
If tidings of my father might be won.

"My substance is devoured, and wasted all
My fruitful farms, and full of men my hall
Bitter against me, at whose hands my flocks
Of sheep, and hoofed and horned cattle fall.

"Even they, who suing for my mother’s hand
With insult and with mastery fill the land.
Therefore I now before your knees bow down
If of your grace I aught may understand

"Whether with your own eyes you chanced to see
The doom whereby he perished wretchedly,
Or from some other wanderer heard the tale;
For from his mother’s womb ill-starred was he.

"Then let not pity or ruth your tongue withhold
Or soften for me aught that must be told
Of what your eyes have seen: if ever he,
My sire, Odysseus good, in days of old

"By word or deed fulfilled his promise well
Before Troy town, where all those woes befel
You and the host Achaean, for his sake
Now I beseech you all the truth to tell."
BOOK FOURTH

But fair-haired Menelaus answering said,
Indignant: "Out on them that in the bed
Of that man mighty-hearted are so fain
To lie, themselves being void of hardihead!

"As when a hind within a thicket deep,
Where a grim lion dwells, has laid to sleep
Her newborn suckling fawns, and she herself
Ranges by grassy dell and hill-spur steep

"In search of pasturage; and he again
Back to his lair returning both the twain
Wretchedly slays together, so shall they
Wretchedly by Odysseus' hand be slain.

"Lord Zeus, Athena, Apollo, hear my prayer!
If but as when in Lesbos city fair
He rose in wrath, and in the wrestling-ring
Strove with the son of Philomelus there;

"And threw him, to the Achaean host's delight—
If but, as then, Odysseus in his might
Came on the suitors! brief would be the fate
Of all, and bitter be their wedding-night.

"But whereof now you ask me and entreat,
I will not use concealment or deceit,
Nor swerve from truth, but as the soothsayer
Told me the tale, each word I will repeat,

97
"The Ancient One who dwells beneath the foam.
Long time, while still I fain would reach my home,
The Gods in Egypt held me, since to them
I offered up no perfect hecatomb.

"And, as they ever are, the Gods were fain
Men should remember what their laws ordain.
Amid the wave-swept sea a certain isle
There is, set forward off the Egyptian main:

"Pharos the name thereof—so far away
It lies from land as sailing all the day
With a fresh wind abaft a hollow ship
Might work her passage: therein is a bay

"Giving good anchorage; from it sailor men
Their balanced ships warp out to sea again,
Their casks filled up with dark spring-water: there
For twenty days the Gods detained me then;

"Nor ever did a breeze arise and blow
To seaward, such as makes the ships to go
Across the broad sea-ridges; there had all
My stores been wasted and my crews brought low,

"But that a Goddess pity had on me
For my salvation of her clemency:
Eidothea, daughter of that mighty one,
Proteus, the ancient wizard of the sea."
BOOK FOURTH

"Walking alone she met me on the shore
While round the isle my men the time outwore
Wandering, and angled after fish with hooks,
The hunger to allay that pinched them sore.

"Nigh me she came and spake a word and said:
Are you an infant void of hardihead,
O stranger, or of idleness so fain
And pleased the path of misery to tread?

"So long within the island here you stay,
Held fast, and no deliverance find you may,
While your crews pine and sicken. Thus she spoke;
And I made answer and began to say:

"Goddess whose name I know not, plain to tell
Shall be my answer; for I think not well
Here to be held: but I belike have sinned
Against the immortals in wide heaven that dwell.

"Now tell me truly—the Gods all things know—
Which of the immortals holds me prisoner so,
Barring my road, and what shall be my way
Across the sea wherein the fishes go?

"Thereat the bright of Goddesses to me
Made answer: Yea now, stranger, verily
That will I tell you. Hither oftentimes comes
The soothsayer, the Ancient of the sea,
THE ODYSSEY

"Egyptian Proteus deathless and divine,
Who knows the nether gulfs of all the brine,
Being vassal of Poseidon; and they say
He is my father, and his blood is mine.

"On him, if in some ambush lying low
You could lay hold, you then the way might know
From point to point whereby you shall return
Across the sea wherein the fishes go.

"Moreover he will tell you if you will,
O high-born one, of all, both good and ill,
That has befallen your household while you went
That tedious way and toilsome to fulfil.

"So spake she, and I answering thus begun:
Now tell me how I for that Ancient One
Shall lie in wait, lest haply fore-informed
Or fore-espying he make shift to shun

"The ambush that I set: for hardly he,
Being God, by mortal man subdued may be.
So spake I, and the bright of Goddesses
Straightway made answer: Yea now verily,

"That I will tell you by most certain sign,
O stranger: when the sun to heaven's mid-line
Has risen aloft, that ancient soothsayer
The sea-born one, comes up out of the brine,
"Hid in the ripple that across the breast
Of ocean the wind blowing from the west
Blackens around him; and ascending thence,
In a cave's hollow lays himself to rest.

"While round him rising from the water grey
The children of the lovely water-fay,
The footless seals, lie herded; smelling strong
Of the sharp odour of the brine are they.

"Thither will I, as soon as morning break,
Lead you and lay your ambush there to make.
But you from out your benched galleys' crew
Choose the three best and for companions take.

"Now will I tell you all the sorcery
Of the ancient wizard. First of all will he
Count and review his herd; but when they all
Are reckoned up and passed for him to see,

"Amid them he will lay himself to sleep,
Even as a shepherd with his flock of sheep.
But when you see him sleeping, summon up
Your strength and courage, out on him to leap

"And hold him fast, though struggling to get free:
Then will he change himself and turn to be
All kinds of monsters upon earth that go,
Water, and fire that burns unquenchably.
But you with grasp unslackened evermore
Press hard and hold him closer than before,
Until at last he speaks and questions you
Returning to the shape that first he wore.

Then let your force be stayed, and let him go,
O prince, and ask him what God plagues you so,
And how you may return across the sea
Wherein the fishes travel to and fro.

So saying, she plunged beneath the water grey:
But to my ships where on the beach they lay
I went, and going, many a thing my heart
Pondered within me. Thus I made my way

To where my ship stood by the ocean brim:
And there our supper we prepared, and dim
Came down the deathless night, and afterward
We slept where broke the surf on the sea-rim.

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Along the wide sea-marge I went anon,
Praying the Gods, and took for fellows three
Whom in hard fight I put most trust upon.

And she the meanwhile plunged from off the strand
Into the sea's wide breast, and in her hand
Four seal-skins thence brought back, all newly flayed:
Such was the trick that for her sire she planned.
BOOK FOURTH

“Then scooping lairs upon the sandy beach
She sat awaiting us, till nigh in reach
We came; and in our hiding places then
Set us arow, and cast a skin on each.

“Most grievous there that watch had been to keep,
Since of these seals whose home is in the deep
The smell was most abominable and foul—
For who by a sea-monster’s side would sleep?

“But for our comfort she devised that day
Great solace: for she fetched ambrosia
Right fragrant, and beneath the nose of each
Laid it to keep the sea-calf’s smell away.

“There patiently the morning we outwore.
Then came the seal-pack up, and on the shore
Laid them in rows to sleep; but at high noon
The wizard, rising out of the sea-floor,

“His monster herd surveyed and counted out,
Us first, nor was his mind of guile in doubt;
And laid him down among them; we thereat
Leapt up and ran upon him with a shout,

“And grasped him: nor his cunning at the game
The Ancient One forgot, but first became
A deep-maned lion, then a serpent, then
A panther, and a boar of mighty frame,
THE ODYSSEY

"And water wet and a high-foliaged tree
Yet fast we held him down immovably,
Until the ancient wizard, wearied out,
Brake into speech, and thus he questioned me:

"What God has joined with you this plot to make,
That me perforce you should in ambush take,
O son of Atreus? What is your desire?
So said he, but I answered him and spake:

"You know, O Ancient; wherefore put me by
With idle questions? Here in the island I
Long time am pent, nor any way thereout
Can find, and feel the heart within me die.

"Now tell me truly—the Gods all things know—
Which of the immortals holds me prisoner so,
Barring my road, and how may I avail
Across the fish-abounding sea to go?

"So spake I, and he answer made straightway:
Surely to Zeus and all the Gods that day
You ought not to have failed of offerings fair
Ere you embarked: for so without delay

"Your native country you had reached once more,
Sailing across the wine-bright ocean floor.
But now your goodly house you shall not see,
Nor folk that love you or the land that bore,
“Ere to the Egyptian river’s full-fed flood
Once more you come, and to the deathless brood,
Who hold wide heaven, do hallowed sacrifice:
Then shall they make your wished journey good.

“So spake he, and my heart was rent in me,
For that he bade me cross the misty sea
Again, a tedious and a toilsome way,
To Egypt: yet I answered cheerily:

“These things as you ordain perform I will,
O Ancient One: but now your tale fulfil,
And tell me whether all the Achaean host
Home with their ships have come unhurt of ill,

“Whom I and Nestor left, from Trojan ground
Sailing, or has unglad destruction found
Certain on shipboard, or amid the hands
Of comrades when the skein of war was wound?

“So said I, and he straightway answering spake:
Nay, son of Atreus, why such question make?
This knowledge nought befits you, nor to be
Wise with my wisdom: yea, I undertake

“That shortly it would cost you many a groan,
If all the story were to you made known.
Many among the mailed Achaean fell,
Many were saved alive; yet two alone
"Among the princes on their homeward way
Perished—but in the fighting even as they
Yourself bore part—and yet one man alive
In the mid sea is captive held to-day.

"Aias with all his long-oared ships was lost,
Whom first Poseidon on a rock-bound coast
At Gyrae drove, but saved him from the sea:
And there, but for the overweening boast

"He uttered from a heart infatuate,
He had not perished, though Athena's hate
Pursued him: for he vaunted to have won
Through the great sea-gulf in despite of fate.

"But that high speech Poseidon heard, and he
Took in his mighty hands immediately
His trident, and the rock of Gyrae smote
In sunder where it overhung the sea:

"And half remained in place, but half he flung
Into the deep, the crag where Aias clung
When he into that great transgression fell;
And him it bore the waste of waves among.

"Thus the salt water there he drank and died.
Howbeit belike your brother turned aside
The doom that threatened, with his carven ships
Escaping: for Queen Hera was his guide.
BOOK FOURTH

"But when to the Maleian mountain steep
He bore anigh, the whirlwinds in their sweep
Caught him and drive him on to the land's end
Sick-hearted, through the fish-abounding deep:

"Where of old time his house Thyestes had,
But then Aegisthus the Thyestiad.
And thence his course was clear, since now in turn
The gods gave favouring winds and made him glad.

"Thus won he homeward, and the soil that bore
Again received him, and his native shore
He kissed, and shed abundance of hot tears
For his delight to see that land once more.

"But from his watch-tower looking out to sea
The watchman him espied, whom treacherously
Aegisthus there had set, and promised him
Two talents' weight of gold for hire; and he

"Watched a whole year long, lest he should go by
Unseen, and raise his ancient battle-cry:
And seeing him, to the palace went in haste
The shepherd of the folk to certify.

"Whereat Aegisthus in his guile straightway
 Planned this device, in ambush there to lay
 A score of champions chosen from the town,
 And opposite a banquet to array;
"While he with chariots and with horses drew
To greet him; and by treachery ere he knew
Lured Agamemnon shepherd of the folk
Down to his doom, and at the banquet slew,

"Even as an ox is slaughtered at the stall:
Nor was there left one man alive of all
Who with Aegisthus or with Atreus’ son
Went forth, but dead they lay within the hall.

"So spake he; but my heart was rent in me,
And on the sea-beach weeping bitterly
I sat, nor longer did my heart desire
To live and yet the light of day to see.

"But when with tears and tossing to and fro
I was aweary, then bespoke me so
The Soothsayer, the Ancient of the Sea:
No longer thus make all the day to go,

"O son of Atreus, in unceasing fret,
Since tears for us will no deliverance get.
But now prepare as quickly as you may
For your own native land your face to set.

"And there you haply him shall light upon
Yet living, or before you may have gone
Orestes, and have slain him, and his grave
Be all you find when you return thereon.
BOOK FOURTH

"So spake he, and renewed within my breast
Courage of manhood, and my deep-distressed
Spirit again took cheer, and afterward
I spoke and winged words to him addressed:

"These then I know: but name the third to me
Who yet amid the spaces of the sea
Dead or alive is prisoned: for of him,
Though to my grief, I fain informed would be.

"But answering straightway spake that ancient man:
Laertes’ son it is, the Ithacan.
Him have I seen amidmost of the isle,
Where from his eyes the heavy teardrops ran,

"Within the nymph Calypso’s palace hall,
Who holds him there against his will in thrall:
Nor may he reach his native land, since he
No oared ship nor comrades has at call,

"To carry him across the wide-ridged sea.
Howbeit not for you does Heaven decree,
Prince Menelaus, in the Argive land
Pasturer of steeds, the doom of death to be:

"But you the everlasting Gods shall send
To the Elysian plain at the world’s end,
Where fair-haired Rhadamanthys dwells, and where
Life is for men most pleasant: there descend
"No violent tempests, neither rain nor snow,
But shrill from ocean Western breezes blow
Ever to cool men’s drought; since you for wife
Have Helen, and are kin to Godhead so.

"Thus saying, he plunged beneath the billowing sea.
But to the ships with that fair company
Of godlike men I passed: and as I went
Many a thing my heart revolved in me.

"So came we to the ship by ocean’s brim,
And there our supper we prepared, and dim
Came down the deathless night, and afterward
We slept where broke the surf on the sea-rim.

"But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
To the bright sea we drew our ships anon,
And in the balanced ships the masts and sails
We hoisted, and ourselves embarked thereon;

"And sitting at the benches in array
Smote with our falling oars the water grey;
Till back to the Egyptian river’s flood,
Full-fed from heaven, our ships retraced their way.

"And there a perfect sacrifice did I,
The everlasting Gods to pacify,
And raised to Agamemnon on the shore
A grave-mound, that his glory should not die.
BOOK FOURTH

"Which things being finished, on my way I went, And the immortal Gods behind me sent A favouring wind, and swiftly brought me home To my own native country, well content.

"Now in these halls abide awhile with me Till the eleventh day or twelfth shall be. Then will I send you forth, and goodly gifts Give you, a chariot polished skilfully,

"Drawn by three horses; and a chalice fair Moreover I will give, that whensoe'er You pour to the Immortals, you may keep Me too alive in your remembrance there."

And wise Telemachus returned reply: "Stay me not longer now: though surely I Right willingly would sit beside you here, O son of Atreus, while the year went by,

"Nor miss my parents or my home, so dear Is my delight your words and tales to hear. But while you thus detain me, all my crew In goodly Pylos fret till I appear.

"And for the gift that you would give to me, Kept as a household treasure it shall be. Yet steeds I will not take to Ithaca, But leave them here with you, where all that see
"Shall wonder: for a land is your domain
Fertile and broad, where grow both grass and grain,
Spear-reed and lotus, fields of wheat and rye,
And the white barley covers all the plain.

"But in the land of Ithaca indeed
Is no wide racing-lawn nor open mead:
A pasturage of goats, and yet more dear
To me than any pasture of the steed.

"For of the scattered islands great and small
That the sea girdles with her watery wall
None is for driving horses fit, nor rich
In meadow-land, and it the least of all."

He spake, and Menelaus smiled, the good
War-crier, when his speech he understood;
And stroked him with his hand, and spake a word,
And said: "Dear child, you come of noble blood,

"As your words vouch: and change your gift will I,
As well I can, for in my house there lie
Treasures in store full many: and of these
The goodliest and the costliest to buy

"Now will I give you, for my gift to hold;
A wine-bowl hammered out upon a mould,
The handcraft of Hephaestus, wholly made
Of silver, and the lips are rimmed with gold."
BOOK FOURTH

"Which princely Phaedimus, who wore the crown
Of the Sidonian people, when his town
And palace on my wanderings sheltered me,
Gave me, and I to you will hand it down."

So spake they one to the other answering,
While to the palace of the godlike king
The banqueters assembled, driving sheep
And carrying wine that makes men's hearts to sing:

And wheaten bread their wives with kerchiefs fair
Sent up for them: but in the palace there
While thus they set the banquet in array,
The wooers, on a level plot and bare

In forefront of Odysseus' hall that lay,
Took their disport with quoit and javelin-play
As was their wont: but by them sat apart
Antinous and Eurymachus; and they

Were chief among the wooers and most high
In name of valour: now to them came nigh
Noémon son of Phronius, questioning,
And spake and of Antinous sought reply:

"Antinous, know we yet or know not we
How soon from sandy Pylos back shall be
Telemachus? who took my ship away,
And I have need of it to cross the sea
"To wide-lawned Elis, where upon the leas
Are twelve brood-mares of mine, and at their knees
Strong mule-colts yet unbroken: and I now
Would catch and break to harness one of these."

So spake he, and within their hearts begot
Amazement, for in truth they deemed him not
Gone to Neleian Pylos, but afield
Among the sheep or at the swineherd’s cot.

Outspake Eupeithes’ son Antinous then
And answered: "Tell me this now truly: when
Went he? and saving his own serfs and thralls,
Who followed him of the isle’s chosen men?

"These he might compass—yea, and tell me true
For more assurance, did he take from you
The black ship forcefully against your will,
Or as a gift that his soft speeches drew?"

And answer made Noémon, Phronius’ son:
"Freely I gave it: could aught else be done
By me or by another, when a man
With care so laden asks a boon of one?

"Hard were it to refuse him his request.
But with him went the youths who lordliest
Are in the land: and as they went aboard,
Mentor I noted marshalling the rest;"
BOOK FOURTH

"Or a God haply who in all points bore
His likeness; but I wonder; for on shore
I saw bright Mentor yesterday at dawn,
And the ship sailed for Pylos long before."

So saying, to his father's house he went.
But they in anger and astonishment
Called on the suitors to break off their games
And sit together; then in discontent

Spake thus Antinous, Eupeithes' son;
While with great choler all his veins begun
To darken, and his eyes to shine like fire:
"Woe on us! for a mighty deed is done

"And over-masterfully done withal.
For now Telemachus beyond recall
Has compassed this his journey, that we said
He could not compass, from among us all;

"So many as we are, and lo! anon
In our despite this child is lightly gone,
Launching a ship and choosing out the best
Among the people for his crew thereon.

"This thing shall grow to evil by-and-by.
The curse of God upon his prowess lie
Ere he reach manhood! But provide me now
A swift ship and a score of men, that I,
"When through the channel he his way shall take
That Ithaca and craggy Same make,
May lie at watch in ambush: so his bale
Shall be this cruising for his father's sake."

So spake he, and they all with one consent
Accorded thereto, and arose and went
Into the palace. But Penelope
No long time of the wooers' dark intent

And murderous talk was unaware: for word
Medon the herald brought her, who had heard
Their counsel as he stood without the court,
While they within of this device conferred.

So he went in to tell Penelope:
And as across the doorway-sill came he,
Penelope espied him there and said:
"O herald, wherefore are you sent to me

"By the proud suitors now? perchance to tell
The women-thralls that in the palace dwell,
Where once Odysseus ruled, to cease their tasks
And spread the board for them to banquet well?

"Nay, after all their wooing it were good
That never here they met again nor wooed;
But this day's dinner were their uttermost
And the last time that here they tasted food.
BOOK FOURTH

"O you who here assembling day by day
Devour much substance, and consume away
The heritage of wise Telemachus,
Heard you not from your fathers? have not they

"Told how Odysseus dealt with them? for he
In word or deed to none did injury;
As is the way of princes, that they show
To one among their people enmity,

"And to another love: but he was one
Who all his life long folly wrought to none.
Now are your unjust dealings manifest
And thanklessness of heart for kindness done."

And Medon answer made, the man of skill:
"Yea, Queen, if this now were the worst of ill!
But greater and more grievous far they plan,
Which may the son of Cronus not fulfil!

"With the sword's edge they plot your son to slay
Returning homeward, who is gone his way
To Pylos good and Lacedaemon bright,
If tidings of his father learn he may."

So spake he, and her heart with grief he stirred,
And shook her knees beneath her as she heard.
Long she sat speechless, and her eyes with tears
Brimmed over, and she said not any word.
Yet utterance at the last she found, and slow
She spake: "O herald, wherefore is it so
My child is gone from me? no need there was
For him upon swift-sailing ships to go!

"Which are the horses that men yoke to swim
Over the sea, and cross from brim to brim
The fields of water: yea, among mankind
Shall there not even a name be left of him?"

And Medon answered her, the man of skill:
"I know not whether by some God his will
Was roused within him, or his own heart planned
This voyage forth to Pylos to fulfil,

"If tidings of his father he may know,
Whether he comes, or by what fate laid low
He even now has perished." Thus he said,
And turned him from Odysseus' house to go.

But bitter anguish at her heartstrings tore,
And on a seat she brooked to sit no more,
Although with many furnished was the house.
But on the richly fashioned chamber's floor

Moaning in lamentable wise she clung,
While round her wailed the women, old and young,
All of her household: and Penelope
Bitterly sighing spake her maids among:
BOOK FOURTH

"Hearken, my women! for upon my head
Surely the Lord Olympian grief has shed
Exceeding great, beyond the lot of all
The women whom this age has born and bred.

"For I long since my noble husband lost,
The lion-hearted, in the Danaan host
Renowned for all achievement, and his fame
All over Hellas and mid-Argos crossed.

"And now again my own beloved son
The winds have snatched from home, and tidings none
Had I, nor knew I of his setting forth.
Ah cruel! among whom there was not one

"Cared from the bed to wake me where I lay,
Though well you knew it in your heart that day
When on the hollow black ship he went forth.
For had I known him purposing this way,

"Then surely had he never gone at all.
How fain soever, or within our hall
Had left me dead. Now whoso loves me, go
Call hither Dolius, my aged thrall,

"Whom my sire gave me when it first befel
To leave my home and in this land to dwell,
And now he keeps my orchard full of trees:
Who to Laertes all this tale shall tell;
THE ODYSSEY

"If haply he some counsel in our need
May frame, or going forth for ruth may plead
Before the people, who would fain destroy
Wholly his own and bright Odysseus' seed."

And Euryclea the good nurse replied,
And spake: "O mistress, O beloved bride,
Slay me, so please you, with the unpitying sword,
Or let me still within your house abide;

"Yet in my speech truth shall not hidden be.
Of all these things I knew, and even as he
Bade me, sweet wine and bread I furnished him:
Howbeit a mighty oath he took of me,

"No word to say until the twelfth day shone,
Or of yourself you heard that he was gone,
Missing his presence, that you might not so
Mar your fair face with stain of tears thereon.

"Now wash and do upon you clean array,
And to the upper chambers take your way
With all your women; to Athena there,
The Maid of Zeus the Thunder-bearer, pray,

"By whom his life may even from death be won.
But for the old man, undo not the undone
With troublous tidings: for the blessed Gods
The generation of Arceisias' son
BOOK FOURTH

"Have not, I deem, yet wholly left forlorn
In their displeasure, but to days unborn
Shall one be left, the high-roofed house to keep
And the far-stretching fruitful fields of corn."

So saying, she made still her loud lament
And stayed her eyes from weeping, and she went
And washed and put clean raiment on, and then
Amid her waiting women made ascent

Into the upper chambers to her bower;
And in a basket laying barley-flour,
She to Athena supplication made,
Thus saying: "Hearken to my prayer this hour,

"Thou who hast thunder-bearing Zeus for sire,
Maiden whose might no labour can out-tire!
If ever subtle-souled Odysseus here
Within these halls consumed upon the fire

"Fat thigh-pieces of ox or sheep to thee,
Remember it this day for good to me,
And save my son, and from us thrust away
The suitors in their evil surquedry."

Calling aloud so spake she, and her call
The Goddess heard; but in the shadowy hall
Clamoured the suitors; and such words as these
One of the young men in their pride let fall:
THE ODYSSEY

"Surely the Queen long-wooed bestows her hand
On one among us, and the murder planned
Upon her son she knows not." So he spake;
For it was they who did not understand.

Then spake Antinous to his fellows thus:
"Lo, over-haughty speech is perilous:
Avoid it alway, reckless as you are,
Lest one within the house inform of us.

"Up now in silence, that of our intent
Agreed on we may make accomplishment."
So spake he, and took twenty chosen men,
And to the swift ship on the beach they went.

First the black ship down to the deep sea-bed
They drew, with mast and sails appareled,
And slipped the oars into their leathern loops
All orderly, and the white sails outspread.

Then brought the haughty squires their war-array;
And her they moored far out upon the bay,
And disembarked, and supped upon the beach,
Waiting till dusk should fall upon the day.

But in the upper chamber wretchedly
Fasting from food lay wise Penelope,
And meat and drink she touched not, musing deep
Whether the prince her son from death might flee,
Or be laid low and not return again
From the proud suitors' hands: and even as when
A lion full of fear uneasily
Broods in his heart amid the throng of men,

When round his lair the circling toils have swept;
Such deep debate within her heart she kept:
Till slumber overcame her, and her limbs
Were loosened, and she sank adown and slept.

But now the grey-eyed Goddess taking thought
Another counsel yet devised and sought:
And fashioned forth a phantom, in the shape
And bodily semblance of Iphthime wrought,

Icarius' child, that prince of high renown,
Wife of Eumelus, who in Pherae town
Abode; and to divine Odysseus' house
Upon Penelope she sent it down,

To stay her from her sighs and tears she shed
Weeping and wailing and uncomforted;
And through the keyhole of the door it passed
Into her bower and stood above her head;

And in these words its voice to her was borne:
"You sleep, Penelope, your heart forlorn
Within you: yet the Gods who live in bliss
Forbid you longer to lament and mourn."
THE ODYSSEY

"For yet your child returning you shall see,
Since not a sinner in God's sight is he."
Then, slumbering softly in the gates of dreams,
Spake and made answer wise Penelope:

"Wherefore, O sister, are you come this day
Hither, a strange and unfamiliar way?
For far and far apart from us you dwell.
And now you bid me my distress allay

"And all the many pangs wherein are tossed
My heart and soul, who first of all have lost
My husband lion-hearted, who of old
Was excellent among the Danaan host

"In all achievement, and like him was none
Through Hellas and mid-Argos fame that won.
And now once more upon a hollow ship
Is gone from me my own beloved son;

"A child, that of men's words and deeds may know
But little: wherefore greater is my woe
For him than for that other, and for him
I fear and tremble lest to harm he go,

"At sea, or at a stranger people's hand,
Where he has journeyed: for against him stand,
Devising evil, many men who long
To slay him, ere he reach his native land."

124
BOOK FOURTH

But answering spake to her the phantom dim:
"Take courage, nor be much afraid for him:
So great the guide is that beside him goes,
Whom men in peril of their life and limb

"Have prayed full often by their side to stand,
Pallas Athena of the mighty hand.
And you she pitied mourning: wherefore now
To tell you this I come at her command."

Then spake and answered wise Penelope:
"Now tell me, if a God indeed you be,
Or a God's voice have heard, concerning him,
That man ill-fated, whether haply he

"Yet lives and looks upon the light of day
Or down to the Dark House has gone his way."
But answering spake to her the phantom dim:
"Hereof no answer plain return I may,

"Whether in truth he be alive or dead.
Words are but wind, and often best unsaid."
So saying, through the keyhole of the door
Into a breath of wind it vanished.

Then woke Icarius' daughter, and upright
Started from sleep, and all her heart was light
Within, because a dream so clear had come
Upon her in the darkness of the night.
THE ODYSSEY

And now the wooers on the wet sea-floor
Sailed out, and in their heart grim murder bore
Against Telemachus. An isle at sea
Lies midway between shore and craggy shore

Of Ithaca and Samos, less than they,
Called Asteris, and in it is a bay
Where ships can anchor, with two entrances.
And there in wait for him the Achaeans lay.
BOOK FIFTH

CALYPSO’S CAVE: THE RAFT OF ODYSSEUS

NOW Morning from august Tithonus’ bed
Arose upon the immortals light to shed
And upon mortal men: and all the Gods
Took up their seats in session; at their head

High-thundering Zeus, whose might is most of all:
Among whom spoke Athena to recall
Odysseus’ many sorrows; for her care
Ceased not for him within Calypso’s hall:

"Lord Zeus, and blessed deathless Gods each one,
Henceforth of sceptre-bearing kings let none
Of his own will be kind or merciful,
Nor by his counsel let the law be done;

"But lawless evermore and harsh of deed,
Since for divine Odysseus none takes heed,
Of all the people over whom he ruled
And like a father was their help at need."
"But now he lies in the island, ill content, 
Within the nymph Calypso’s chambers pent, 
Who holds him there in durance: nor may he 
Return to his own country whence he went.

“For oared ships and comrades none there be 
Who over the broad ridges of the sea 
Might give him convoy: and now yet again 
Men are intent to slay by treachery

“His son beloved, on his homeward way 
Returning; for gone forth is he this day 
To Pylos good and Lacedaemon bright, 
If tidings of his father learn he may.”

But answering spake to her cloud-gathering Zeus: 
“My child, what word is this your lips let loose? 
Was this not your own counsel, so that yet 
Odysseus coming may for all the abuse

“Take vengeance that those evil men have planned? 
Now by your wisdom and your mighty hand 
Contrive Telemachus’ return, that he 
Free from all scathe may reach his native land:

“While quickly, foiled of the intent they frame, 
The suitors shall go back the way they came 
On shipboard.” Thus he said, and to his son 
Hermes he turned and spoke to him by name:
BOOK FIFTH

"Hermes, our wonted messenger alway,
Now to the fair-tressed nymph I bid you say,
Touching sore-tried Odysseus' home-going
Fixed is our ordinance, that go he may:

"Sped by no God nor yet by mortal hand,
But on a raft made fast with bolt and band
Through perils great shall he the twentieth day
Reach fruitful Scheria, the Phaeacians' land:

"Who by descent are nigh the Gods of kin;
And as a God he honour there shall win,
And they on shipboard shall convey him home
With bronze and gold and rich array therein,

"Such as from Troy not all Odysseus' toil
Had borne, though scatheless with full share of spoil
Home he returned: so surely must he reach
His friends, and high-roofed house and native soil."

He spake: nor did the fleetfoot Shining One
Fail of obedience, but at once laced on
Beneath his feet the imperishable fair
Sandals of gold, that when he would be gone

Over the wet sea or the boundless land
Bore him like blowing wind, and took in hand
The rod wherewith he charms men's eyes to sleep
Or makes the sleeper to awake and stand;
Holding it now, the Shining One with might
Took wing, and mounting the Pierian height,
Out of the sky on ocean darted down,
And swift across the billows urged his flight.

As a sea-eagle that his finny prey
Chases, his thickset plumage wet with spray,
Through the dread gulfs of sea unharvested,
Over the thronging waves he sped his way.

And now that island far amid the foam
Reaching, from out the violet sea he clomb
Over the mainland, to the cavern great
Wherein the fair-tressed nymph had made her home.

Within he found her in the cavern-cell;
Where from a brazier by her, burning well,
A fire of cloven cedar-wood and pine
Far through the island sent a goodly smell.

And in it she with voice melodious sang,
While through the warp her golden shuttle rang
As to and fro before the loom she went.
But round the cave a verdurous forest sprang

Of poplars, and sweet-scented cypresses,
And alders; and long-pinioned birds in these
Nested, owls, falcons, chattering cormorants,
And all that ply their business in the seas.
BOOK FIFTH

But round the hollow cavern trailing went
A garden-vine with heavy clusters bent;
And rising all arow, four springs abroad
This way and that their shining water sent.

And on both sides fair-flowering meads were set,
Soft-clad with parsley and with violet.
Even an immortal, if he came, that sight
Marvelling might view and joy thereof might get.

There stood the fleetfoot Shining One, that sight
Marvelling to view; and when to his delight
All he had viewed, into the cavern wide
He entered; but Calypso, Goddess bright,

Failed not to know him, seeing him face to face;
For never do the Gods’ immortal race
Fail one to know another when they meet,
How far soe’er apart their dwelling-place.

But therewithin Odysseus high of heart
He found not then; who, sitting far apart
On the sea-beach, as oftentimes before,
Fretted with tears and sighs and bitter smart,

Out seaward to the barren ocean-rim
Kept gazing, and his eyes with tears were dim.
But, seating Hermes on a glittering chair,
Calypso the bright Goddess asked of him:
"Why come you, Hermes of the Rod of Gold, Gracious and dear? You come not oft of old. Speak, and most gladly to my power will I Do your desire, if fate have so controlled."

Uttering these words, the Goddess at his feet Set down a table, and immortal meat Piled high thereon, and the red deathless drink Mingled; and he began to drink and eat.

But when the fleetfoot Shining One had fed, And with the meat his soul was comforted, He answered her: "A Goddess of a God, You ask of me why hither I am sped.

"And at your bidding I will tell you true Why I am come. Against my will to you Zeus sent me hither; who of his own will The great salt waterfloods would travel through,

"Immeasurably spread? and far away Are all the towns of mortal men, who pay Their meed of offerings, and to us the Gods With supplication sacrifices slay.

"Yet nowise may another God withstand What Zeus the Lord of Thunder-clouds has planned, Nor may evade his counsel or annul. Thus says he: Here you hold within your land
BOOK FIFTH

"A man most sore-distressed of all the men
Who warred around King Priam's city then,
When for nine years they fought, and in the tenth
They sacked the town and took their way again,

"But, as their homes across the seas they sought,
Against Athena grievous trespass wrought:
And she against them winds tempestuous
Aroused, and long sea-rollers on them brought.

"There his good comrades perished: he alone,
Hither by flood and driving tempest blown,
Was cast upon the island; now with speed
I bid you send him forth on ways unknown.

"Since not for him does fate's high counsel stand
To perish far from any friendly hand,
But yet once more to see his friends, and reach
His high-roofed house, and his own native land."

So spake he; but aghast thereat his word
The bright of Goddesses Calypso heard,
And answering, spake a winged word to him:
"Jealous you are, O Gods, to envy stirred

"Beyond all others, and can never brook
On loves of Goddesses and men to look,
Whoso among us takes a bedfellow
Openly: thus when Dawn rose-fingered took
THE ODYSSEY

"Orion, then you Gods who live in bliss
Ceased not to grudge, till holy Artemis,
Gold-throned, her lover in Ortygia
With slumberous arrows pierced and slew for this.

"And with fair-tressed Demeter was it thus,
When she upon the son of Iasus
Let loose her heart, and on the furrowed tilth
Mixed with him in embraces amorous.

"For Zeus thereof not long being unaware
Smote with his fiery bolt and slew him there.
And likewise now again you grudge it me,
O Gods, that mortal man my bed should share.

"Yet I it was who rescued him, while he
Clung round the keel, alone, when mightily
Zeus shattered with a fiery thunderbolt
His racing ship amid the purple sea.

"There his good comrades perished; him alone
Hither by flood and driving tempest blown,
I loved and nourished, and had thought to keep
Deathless and ageless always for my own.

"Yet nowise may another God withstand
What Zeus the Lord of Thunder-clouds has planned,
Nor may evade his counsel or annul.
If then our lord thus order and command,
BOOK FIFTH

"Let him go hence across the barren sea;
Howbeit his convoy cannot come from me,
Since oared ships I have not to my hand,
Nor any mariners his crew to be

"Over the ridges of the broad sea-floor:
Yet will I gladly teach him all my lore,
And nought will hide of counsel, so that he
Free from all harm may reach his native shore."

Thereat the fleetfoot Shining One in turn
Answered: "So do now: send him forth, and learn
To fear the wrath of Zeus, lest afterward
His anger haply may against you burn."

So saying, the mighty Shining One therefrom
Passed, and the queenly nymph from out her home
Went forth to find Odysseus high of heart,
Heeding the message that from Zeus had come.

And him she found upon the ocean-brim,
Where evermore his eyes with tears were dim,
And with home-sickness all the joy of life
In lamentation wore away from him.

For now no more the nymph was his delight,
Though in the hollow caverns night by night
Perforce he needs must sleep beside her, yet
With no desire could her desire requite:
And day by day on cliff or beach apart,
Fretted with tears and sighs and bitter smart
He sat, and on the sea unharvested
Gazed with the tears down-dropping, sick at heart.

Then standing by him spoke the Goddess fair:
"No more, unhappy man, sit mourning there,
Nor let your life be wasted; for to-day
Myself unasked your journey will prepare.

"Up therefore, hew long beams, and skilfully
Fit them with tools a broad-floored raft to be;
And build aloft a spar-deck thereupon
To carry you across the misty sea.

"But water I will store on it and bread,
And the red wine wherewith is comforted
Man’s heart, that you be stayed from famishing;
And lend you raiment; and your sail to spread

"Will send a following wind, that free from ill
Home you may win, if such indeed the will
Be of the Gods, who hold wide heaven, and are
Greater than I to purpose and fulfil."

She spoke: but toilworn bright Odysseus heard
Aghast, and answering said a winged word:
"Ah, Goddess, surely not my home-going,
But some strange purpose in your heart is stirred;
BOOK FIFTH

"On a frail raft the mighty gulfs of sea
Bidding me cross, that fierce and dreadful be,
So that not even a swift well-balanced ship
Before God's wind may cross them running free.

"And on a raft my foot I will not set,
Goddess, unless your full consent I get,
And you take oath and swear, against my life
Not to devise some other practice yet."

So spake he: but the Goddess bright and bland
Calypso, smiling, stroked him with her hand,
And spoke a word and answered: "Verily
A rogue you are, and quick to understand,

"Such words are these you have devised to say!
Now Earth I take to record here to-day,
And the wide Heaven above us, and the dread
Water Abhorred that trickles down alway,

"(Which is the mightiest and most dread to break
Of all the oaths the blessed Gods may take),
No practice for your hurt will I devise,
But take such thought and counsel for your sake

"As for mine own self I would reckon good,
If in the like extremity I stood.
For my own mind is righteous, nor my heart
Iron within me, but of piteous mood."

137
THE ODYSSEY

Uttering these words, the shining Goddess fair
Led swiftly on, and he behind her there
Followed her footsteps; to the hollow cave,
A man beside a Goddess, came the pair;

And to the seat whence Hermes forth was gone
Divine Odysseus went, and sat thereon.
Beside him then, that he might eat and drink,
All kinds of food that mortals feed upon

The nymph began to lay, and took her seat
Over against him; while, that she might eat,
The thralls her handmaidens set forth for her
The deathless drink and the immortal meat.

So to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands: and after they had fed
To quench their thirst and hunger, then began
Calypso, bright of Goddesses, and said:

"Son of Laertes, high-born, subtle-souled,
Odysseus, may your longing nought withhold
To your own land so straightway to be gone?
Then fare you well; but had your heart foretold

"How many woes the fates for you decree
Before you reach your country, here with me
You had abode, and in this house had kept,
And been immortal, howso fain to see
BOOK FIFTH

"That wife for whom through all your days you pine: Yet deem I not her beauty more than mine. Since hardly mortal woman may compare In shape and beauty with my race divine."

Then in his wisdom spoke and answered he: "Goddess and mistress, be not wroth with me Herein: for very well myself I know That, set beside you, wise Penelope

"Were far less stately and less fair to view, Being but mortal woman, nor like you Ageless and deathless: but yet even so I long and yearn to see my home anew;

"And through all days I see that one day shine: But if amid the ocean bright as wine Once more some God shall break me, then once more With steadfast purpose would my heart incline

"Still to endurance, and would suffer still, As ofttimes I have suffered, many an ill And many a woe in wave or war; and now Let this too follow after, if it will."

He spoke, and the sun dipped, and darkness fell. And to the hollow cavern's inner cell They passed, and took delight of love therein, While each beside the other yet might dwell.

139
THE ODYSSEY

But when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Odysseus in his shirt and cloak anon
Arrayed him, and the nymph withal her great
White mantle, thin and beautiful, put on;

And round her loins a golden girdle fair
She bound, and cast a kerchief on her hair;
And straightway for Odysseus great of heart
She set herself the sending to prepare.

She gave him a bronze axe with double blade,
Heavy, keen-edged, for handling deftly made,
Wedged in a goodly shaft of olive-wood,
And in his hand a smoothing-adze she laid.

Then leading him to the island’s utmost rim
She showed the tallest fallen trees to him,
Alder and poplar and sky-soaring pine:
Long dry, well-seasoned, light of draught to swim.

And having shown him where the tallest lay,
Calypso the bright Goddess went her way.
Then forthwith he began to hew him logs,
And in that labour lightly sped the day.

A score of logs he cut and hewed them square
With the bronze axe, and trimmed them all with care
By line and level, and then drilled them through
With augers, that Calypso, Goddess fair,
Next brought to help him; and these fitting in,
Bolted them tight with dowel and with pin;
And as the bottom of a merchant ship
To lay a skilful shipwright would begin,

So wide abeam his raft Odysseus made:
And upon upright spars close-set he laid
A spar-deck finished with long gunwale-strips,
And to the raft a mast and yard he stayed:

And made and fixed an oar to steer aright;
And then with osier hurdles woven tight
Fenced the raft round, and laid much wood on it,
To break the waves: and next the Goddess bright,

Calypso, brought him cloth for sails to be.
Those in like manner deftly fashioned he,
With brace and sheet and halyard; and drew down
The raft on rollers to the shining sea.

Now was the fourth day, and he finished thus
His toil: and on the fifth the glorious
Goddess Calypso sent him from the isle,
Bathed and arrayed in garments odorous.

And skins she gave him, one of wine dark-red
And one of water, and a bag of bread,
With many meats to be his sustenance;
And a soft breeze and warm sent out ahead.
THE ODYSSEY

Then joyful to the breeze Odysseus bright
Shook out his sail, and steered his course aright,
Sitting with hand on rudder: nor did sleep
Fall on his eyelids as he watched all night

The Pleiads, and Arcturus’ lingering fall,
And the She-Bear, the which men likewise call
The Wain, that circling ever in her place
Watches Orion, and alone of all

The wheeling constellations does not know
The baths of Ocean; for at parting so
Glorious Calypso bade him, keeping it
On his left hand across the flood to go.

Seventeen days across the flood went he,
And on the eighteenth loomed up the shadowy
Phaeacian hills, where the isle was nearest him,
Shaped like a shield amid the misty sea.

But now on him the Earth-shaking God from high
Among the mountains of the Solymi,
As from the Swart-faced people he returned,
Far-floating upon ocean cast his eye:

And wroth at heart he shook his head and spake
Inly: “Alas! the Gods new counsel take,
While I am far in Aethiopia,
Touching Odysseus, now at point to make
BOOK FIFTH

"The land Phaeacian, where no more beset
By the huge coils of fate around him met,
He needs must find release; but farther down
The evil road I first will drive him yet."

So spoke he, and the clouds at his command
Gathered, and with the trident in his hand
He stirred the sea and roused the hurricane
Of all the winds, and blotted sea and land

With clouds: night swept across the firmament:
East wind and South, and West athwart them sent,
Clashed, and the crystal-craddled Northern blast
Rolling a mighty wave before him went.

Trembled Odysseus then in heart and knee,
And to his mighty spirit inwardly
Grieving he spoke: "O miserable man!
Is this the end? what shall become of me?

"I fear lest all was true the Goddess said,
How on the deep, ere yet my land I tread,
I must fill up the measure of my woes:
Now to the word is all accomplished.

"With such enveloping clouds the breadth of sky
Zeus covers, and the sea runs mountain high,
And all the hurricanes of all the winds
Burst round me: now as good as dead am I.
"Thrice of our host and four times happy they
Who in wide Troy of old were cast away,
Serving the sons of Atreus! Would to God
I too had died then and fulfilled my day,

"When the bronze spears of Trojans many an one
Struck nigh me round the corpse of Peleus’ son!
Then fame and funeral I had earned, nor here
Had perished by this dismal death undone."

Even as he spoke, a monstrous wave abaft
Came towering up, and crashed into the raft:
And the raft reeled, and off it far he fell,
And from his hand shot out the rudder-shaft.

And in one whirling gust the hurricane
Snapped the mast midway; far into the main
Fell yard and rigging: and beneath the surge
He sank, nor for a while his head again

Out of the overwhelming wave could lift:
For now the raiment, bright Calypso’s gift,
Weighed heavy on him: but at last he rose,
And with abundant-streaming head made shift

Out of his mouth to spit the salt sea-spray.
Yet withal marking where the wrecked raft lay,
He plunged amid the waves and caught at it,
And crouched amidships, keeping death at bay:
While the raft helpless on the tideway spun,  
As down the plain when Autumn is begun,  
Before the North wind tufts of thistledown  
Entangled close together twirling run,

So him across the sea in furious race  
Hither and thither the winds bore apace;  
And now South wind to North its plaything tossed,  
And now East wind to West gave up the chase.

But Cadmus’ daughter of the ankles fair,  
The foam-white Goddess Ino, saw him there:  
Who once was maiden mortal-voiced, but now  
In the sea-gulfs of worship has her share,

By the Gods’ favour; seeing Odysseus, she  
Had pity on him drifting helplessly,  
And from the mere upon the banded raft  
Lit like a seagull rising from the sea;

And spake to him: “O man calamitous!  
Why is Poseidon the Earth-shaker thus  
Angered against you, that in furious wise  
He wreaks on you his rage despiteous?

“Yet utterly your life he shall not slay  
For all his wrath. Do therefore as I say;  
For wise I deem you. Strip these garments off,  
And leave the raft wind-borne to drift away,
While you with hands outspread for land shall steer
Swimming, till that Phaeacian coast you near,
Where safety waits you; and beneath your breast
Tie this immortal kerchief—take it here!—

"And have no fear of death or evil case.
But when your hands have caught a landing-place,
Loose it, and far into the purple sea
Cast it from land; but turn away your face."

Uttering these words, her kerchief she undid
And gave him; then the Goddess backward slid,
And like a seagull down into the sea
Plunged, and beneath the darkling wave was hid.

But toilworn bright Odysseus was dismayed,
And, doubting, in his valiant heart he said:
"Alas and woe! should this be yet again
Another trap by some immortal laid

"Who bids me by the raft no more to stay?
Surely her bidding will I not obey.
That land to which she promised me escape
Myself discerned I, very far away.

"But rather so to do is best meseems:
So long as yet the dowels hold the beams
Fast in their place, so long will I abide
Here and endure to suffer all extremes.
BOOK FIFTH

"But when my raft beneath the thrashing sea
Is shattered, I will swim, since then for me
No better plan can I foresee therein."
Thus while his heart debated inwardly,

On him the Shaker of the Earth a dread
Billow upreared, huge, curling overhead,
And smote him: and as when a gust of wind
 Strikes down upon a heap of corn outspread,

And shakes and scatters all the whirling corn,
So the long timbers were asunder torn;
But on a single spar he got astride,
As one who on a destrier's back is borne;

And quickly slipped from off him limb by limb
The clothes that bright Calypso gave to him,
And tying the kerchief underneath his breast,
With outstretched hands, as one in act to swim,

Dropped prone into the sea across the side.
But him the great Earth-shaking God espied,
And shook his head and spake within himself:
"So now drift miserably down the tide,

"Till among men of race divine you fall;
Nor deem, I trust, your share of ill too small."
He spoke, and lashed his goodly-tressed steeds,
And passed to Aegae and his glorious hall.
Theodora, maid of Zeus, once more
Took counsel, and allayed the winds’ uproar,
Bidding them cease and all be lulled asleep;
But roused a sharp North wind to blow, that shore

The crested waves before it; so that he,
The God-born man, from fate and death set free,
Might come to haven in Phaeacia
Among those mighty oarsmen of the sea.

Two days and nights upon the long smooth swell
He drifted on, nor could his heart foretell
Aught but destruction; but when fair-tressed Morn
Brought the third day to birth, the tempest fell,

And windless grew the calm; and now anigh
He saw the land, with keen and forward eye
Gazing, as lifted on the swell he rose:
And with such joy as children may descry

Hope for a father’s life who long has lain
Wasted by sickness, bearing grievous pain
Beneath some grim God’s hand, and gladly they
See him by kinder Heaven restored again:

So joyfully Odysseus saw appear
Forest and shore, and strongly swam to near
The mainland: but when now no farther off
Than a man’s voice will carry, he could hear
BOOK FIFTH

Upon the reefs the thunder of the sea,
Where the great wave on dry land horribly
Belched roaring, and in spindrift all the coast
Was wrapped, nor any landing-place saw he,

Nor harbourage where ships might find relief,
But all was jutting fang of rock and reef.
Thereat Odysseus trembled, heart and limb,
And to his mighty soul he spoke in grief:

"Woe's me! when now beyond my hope to-day
Zeus grants me sight of land, and all this way
Throughout the sea-gulf I at last have pierced,
I see no issue from the ocean grey.

"For sharp rocks rise far out, and all around
Welters the breaker with a roaring sound,
And the cliff runs up sheer, and under it
The sea is deep, nor may I take the ground

"Or foothold find among the waves, lest one
Might catch and hurl me on a ridge of stone
As forth I clomb: poor work were that: and yet
If I swim farther up to light upon

"Some shoaling beach or haven of the main,
I fear lest yet once more the hurricane
May sweep me out on the fish-pasturing sea,
And all my heavy woe begin again:
THE ODYSSEY

"Or lest heaven loose on me some monster dread, 
Such as in Amphitrite's halls are bred 
Full many: for I know how sore the great 
Shaker of Earth with me is angered."

While he debated thus his heart within, 
A great wave lifted him and bore him in 
Upon a jagged rock, that there and then 
Had shattered all his bones and stripped his skin,

But that the Goddess with the eyes of grey, 
Athena, put it in his heart to lay 
Both hands tight-clutched upon the rock, and there 
Cling gasping till the great wave passed away.

Over his head it went, but backward whirled 
Bore down on him and struck him full and hurled 
Far out to sea: as when a cuttlefish 
Out of its hole is dragged with suckers curled

And clinging round the pebbles of its bed, 
So from his mighty hands the skin was shred 
Against the rocks; and in the whelming wave 
Quite hidden, then Odysseus had been dead

Before his day, in grievous wise and grim, 
But that grey-eyed Athena put in him 
Counsel, uprising from beneath the flood 
That burst upon the land, far out to swim,
BOOK FIFTH

Still keeping on the land a sidelong eye,
Some shoaling beach or haven to descry:
Until he, swimming onward, to the mouth
Of a fair-flowing river drew anigh.

And there he chose what seemed the likeliest place,
Being clear of rocks and sheltered for a space;
And when he felt the seaward-pouring flood,
Thus in his heart he prayed to it for grace:

"Hearken, Protector, whosoe'er thou be!
Prayed to by many men, as now by me
Who from Poseidon's wrath out of the deep
Escaping, for the succour come to thee

"That even immortal Gods to men allow
Wandering, as I from many labours now
Draw nigh thy flood and knees: have pity then,
Protector; for to thee in prayer I bow."

So spoke he: and the River held straightway
His current back, and bade his ripple stay,
Making slack tide before him, until safe
Upon the shoal at the flood's mouth he lay.

Then dropped his mighty hands, and either knee
Sank, for his heart was broken by the sea;
And all his flesh was swollen, and the brine
From mouth and nostril oozed abundantly.
THE ODYSSEY

So without breath or speech he lay there prone,
Weak as a child and weary to the bone:
But when his breath and senses came to him,
The Goddess’ kerchief, from his breast undone,

He dropped into the gurgling sea-pool dim;
And a wave rising bore it down from him
Seaward, till Ino caught it in her hands.
But he, retreating from the river’s brim,

Crouched in the reeds, and Earth the Giver of bread
Kissed, and within his mighty heart he said,
Grieving: “Alas! what shall become of me?
How may this end? if in the river bed

“I wear the comfortless night-watches through,
Surely the bitter frost and soaking dew
Together, deadly weak as now I am,
The little strength I have will quite undo.

“For from the river breathes an icy air
At daybreak: and if up the hill I fare
Into the sheltering covert of the wood,
And in the bushy thickets make my lair,

“That so the weariness and deathly chill
May pass, and sweet sleep come upon me, still
I fear lest there to the wild forest beasts
I fall a prey to pounce upon and kill.”
BOOK FIFTH

Then, as it seemed him best debating so,
Into the forest he began to go;
And in a clearing near the waterside
He found two bushes that he crept below,

Where in the selfsame plot of ground were met
An olive and an oleaster set
One by the other; through whose boughs the strength
Of the winds pierced not, blowing wild and wet,

Nor ever did the sun with burning ray
Smite in that covert, or the rain a way
Drive through the leafy roof; so thick the boughs
One with another intertwining lay.

Under their shelter then Odysseus crept,
And with his hands a broad-heaped bed upswept;
For there a carpet thick of fallen leaves
Lay, such as warm in winter time had kept

Two men or three, though bitter were the cold.
These toilworn bright Odysseus to behold
Rejoicing, all amidst them laid him down,
And over him a heap of leaves he rolled.

And as at some lone steading far inland
In the black ashes a man hides a brand,
Who has no neighbour to fetch kindling from
And needs must keep a seed of fire at hand:
Even so Odysseus in the leaves lay hid;
And on his weary eyes Athena bid
Slumber descend to ease him speedily
Of toil and anguish, closing either lid.
BOOK SIXTH

HOW ODYSSEUS CAME TO PHAEACIA

SO, slumbering there in weary disarray,
Sleep-laden, toilworn bright Odysseus lay;
The while Athena to the land and town
Of the Phaeacian people went her way:

Who in wide-lawned Hyperia dwelt of old
Beside a nation fierce and overbold,
Cyclopes, who by force outmastered them,
Till prince Nausithous took them thence in hold,

And set in Scheria, far from men who win
Wealth by their traffic, and a town walled in,
And houses built and temples of the Gods,
And ploughlands parcelled out to all the kin.

But he to the dark Mansion of the dead!
Was gone, doom-stricken: wherefore in his stead
Alcinous reigned, instructed by the Gods
In wisdom. To his house Athena sped,
The grey-eyed Goddess, inly counselling
Odysseus mighty-hearted home to bring;
And to the richly-carven chamber went
Where slept a maid, the daughter of the king,

Like any deathless Goddess fair and bright,
Nausicaa: and two handmaids lay by night,
Dowered by the Graces’ hands with comeliness,
On either side the doorway left and right.

Shut were the shining chamber doors: but she,
Like to a breath of wind, invisibly
Passed through them, and above the maiden’s head
Stood by her pillow, in the shape to see

Of Dymas’ daughter, a great lord of fame
Among that sea-folk: of their age the same
Were the two girls, and loving playfellows.
Taking her shape grey-eyed Athena came:

And uttering speech, “Nausicaa,” said she, “why
Thus idly does your mother’s daughter lie,
The garments wrought with bright embroideries
Unheeded? yet your wedding-day draws nigh;

“When clad in goodly raiment you must go,
And on your marriage train the like bestow.
For so a favourable speech goes forth
Among the people, and your father so
BOOK SIXTH

"And royal mother glad at heart you make.
Go we a-washing soon as dawn shall break,
And I myself will bear you company,
That the work shared less time and toil may take.

"Not long shall yet your maidenhood be worn.
Even now, amid the land where you were born,
Phaeacia's princes woo you. Up, and bid
My lord your father yoke at break of morn

"A mule-team and a cart whereon to lay
Girdles and gowns and broidered blankets gay.
You too had better ride than go afoot;
The washing-pools from town are far away."

So saying, Athena to Olympus passed,
The grey-eyed Goddess: where, they say, set fast
For ever is the Gods' unchanging seat,
Wet with no rain and shaken by no blast,

And by no snowflake touched; but very bright
It stretches cloudless, and a splendour white
Broods over all its borders, and therein
The blessed Gods live ever in delight.

Thither, her message given, the Grey-eyed One
Passed forth: and Morning on her shining throne
Rose, and awoke fair-gowned Nausicaa;
And at her dream she mused awhile alone.
Then set she forth to seek the palace round,
And tell her parents. Both within she found;
By the hall-hearth among her handmaidens
Her mother sat, and off her distaff wound

The threads of dim sea-purple, strand by strand:
But him, as to the council of the land
At summons of the princes forth he went,
She met, and spoke thus, coming close at hand:

"Papa dear, will you let me have to-day
A high wheeled waggon yoked, to take away
The goodly clothes and wash them in the stream?
For in the house all lying soiled are they.

"Now for yourself it is no more than fit
That, when the councillors at council sit,
In clean array among your lords you go:
Also your house has five sons born in it,

"Two of them wedded now, but three are yet
Young bachelors, who evermore must get
New-washed attire when to the dance they go:
And now on all this charge my mind is set."

So spake she: for her mouth for maiden shame
To her own father marriage might not name.
Howbeit he understood and answered her:
"Go, child: I grudge not any wish you frame,
BOOK SIXTH

"Mules or aught else: this thing my thralls shall do,
And yoke the high wheeled tilted wain for you."
So said he, and gave order to his thralls;
And they obeyed him: forthwith out they drew

The lightly running mule-cart to the door,
And fetched the mules and yoked them; and she bore
The bright clothes from the inner chamber forth
And laid them on the smooth-planed waggon-floor.

While on the box a skin of wine, and food
For sustenance, with many dainties good,
Her mother laid, and in a golden flask
Poured liquid oil, for bathing when they would,

She and her women. Then into the wain
Mounting, she took the whip and broidered rein,
And lashed the mules; and they with clattering feet
Bore girl and raiment up the road amain,

Her women hasting by her side to go;
Until they reached the lovely river's flow,
Where never-failing water brims the pools,
Bright, and abundant gushing from below,

Soilure to cleanse however deep in grain:
And there, the mules unyoking from the wain
Beside the eddying river, turned them loose
To graze the honeyed herbage of the plain.
Then from the cart the clothes their hands among
They fetched and into the dark water flung,
And trod them in the trenches busily
Contending: but when all were washed and wrung,

By the seashore they spread them on a reach
Where the waves cleanest washed the pebbled beach.
And now, when they had bathed and oiled themselves,
In the hot sun they left the clothes to bleach,

While by the river bank they sat and fed.
But when their hearts with food were comforted
Their kerchiefs they undid to play at ball:
And in the game white-armed Nausicaa led.

Artemis the Arrow-showerer even so
Rejoices on the mountain side to go
All down the long slope of Taygetus
Or Erymanthus, while before her bow

Wild boar and fleetfoot deer flee fast away,
And round her move the wildwood nymphs at play,
Daughters of Zeus the Lord of Thunder-clouds;
And Leto joys at heart: for fair are they,

Yet fairest of them all the child she bred;
And over all the rest her brows and head
Rise, easily known among them: even so
Among her women shone the maid unwed.
BOOK SIXTH

But when for faring homeward she was fain
To fold the fair clothes up, and yoke the wain,
The grey-eyed Goddess counsel took once more
That now Odysseus might awake again,

And see the fair maid who his way should tell
On to the town where the Phaeacians dwell.
Thereat the princess to a handmaiden
Threw the ball wide, and missed her, and it fell

In a deep eddy. From them all outbroke
A long shrill cry: and bright Odysseus woke;
And sitting up he pondered inwardly:
“O me! what land is this of mortal folk?

“Are these fierce savages and men of blood,
Or hospitable and of godly mood?
And are these voices as of womenkind,
That echo round me now, the maiden brood

“Of nymphs who haunt the crags that top the hill
And grassy meads and fountains of the rill?
Or am I nigh to folk of human speech?
Come, for myself now make essay I will.”

So saying, bright Odysseus from his bed
Crept, and from off the bushy thicket shred
A leafy bough to hide his nakedness,
And like a lion on the mountains bred
THE ODYSSEY

Strode forth, that, in his might of none in awe,
With eyes asfire, through rain and gusty flaw
Goes hunting after the wild woodland deer,
Or sheep or oxen: for his hungry maw

Even the fenced yard where the flocks are pent
Bids him adventure: so Odysseus went
Among the fair-tressed maids to cast himself,
Though naked: for his need was imminent.

Dreadful to them the sea-stained man drew nigh:
And up and down they ran dispersedly
Along the jutting beaches: only then
The daughter of Alcinous did not fly:

Such courage put Athena in her breast:
Unfaltering she stood up and undistressed,
And faced him: and Odysseus held debate,
Whether to clasp her knees in prayer were best,

Or where he stood with supplicating speech
From far away her mercy to beseech:
Till thus debating best he thought from far
The lovely maiden with soft words to reach;

Lest, if her knees he touched, she wrathfully
Might turn away. Then subtle-soft said he:
“'I kneel to you, Protectress: God are you
Or mortal? if a God indeed you be

162
BOOK SIXTH

"Of those who in wide heaven abide in bliss,
Unto none else than very Artemis,
Daughter of Zeus Most High, I liken one
So tall and fair and beautiful as this:

"But if a mortal, such as dwell on earth,
Thrice fortunate are they who gave you birth,
Father and mother, and thrice fortunate
Your brethren: surely evermore great mirth

"And joyance fills them, while with hearts elate
They see a thing so lovely-delicate
Upon the dancing floor. But far beyond
All others is that man most fortunate,

"Who loading you with many a precious thing
May woo you and to share his home may bring:
For never mortal man or woman yet
Mine eyes have gazed on with such marvelling.

"Once on a time indeed a young palm tree
In Delos by Apollo’s sanctuary
Upspringing thus I saw—for thither too
I voyaged, and much people followed me,

"When on that journey evil-starred I went
That brought me woe—and in astonishment
Long gazed I on it; for in all the world
No shaft so stately up from earth is sent.
THE ODYSSEY

"So wondering now I stand at gaze once more, Lady, and fear to clasp your knees, and sore Is mine affliction: for but yesternight Out of the purple deep I won to shore

"The twentieth day: so long across the sea From the Far Isle the sharp squalls hurried me Unresting; and now heaven has flung me here, Doubtless for more misfortunes yet to be;

"Nor may I reckon yet my labour done, Till the Gods finish that they have begun. Pity me then, Protectress! for to you Out of woes manifold I first have won,

"And beside you nought else I understand, Nor know what folk possess this town and land. Then guide me to the city, and bestow From such clothes-wrappings as lie here at hand,

"A rag for covering. So what you require May the Gods grant you to your heart’s desire; Husband and house, and in your household ways Fair concord: since no height of bliss is higher

"Than this, when in one house according well A husband and a wife together dwell: Great grief to foes, but joy to well-wishers; And their full bliss themselves alone can tell."
BOOK SIXTH

But to his word made answer straightway then White-armed Nausicaa: “Stranger, to my ken Nor knave nor fool you seem: but Zeus himself Ruling from heaven allots their weal to men,

“After his pleasure, be they good or ill: And your own burden you must carry still. Yet coming to our land and city now Raiment you shall not lack nor what you will,

“Such as a suppliant in his need might claim From far-off people to whose hands he came. And I myself will guide you to the town, And tell you what the people have for name.

“Phaeacians are the dwellers in this land And town: and I, who here before you stand, Am daughter to Alcinous high of heart, Who holds Phaeacia’s lordship in his hand.”

Then to her fair-tressed maidens cried she thus: “Stand still, my women! why so timorous At a man’s face? you do not surely think This man is here with ill intent to us?

“That living mortal is not, nor shall be, Who to Phaeacia bearing enmity May come: for very dear to heaven we are, And dwell apart amid the surging sea,
“At the world’s end, where never foot has trod
Of other mortals. But to our abode
We must make welcome this poor wanderer.
Strangers and beggars all are dear to God.

“How small soe’er, the grace to them we show
Is precious. With this stranger be it so.
Give him to eat and drink, and make him bathe
In shelter, down the windswept bank below.”

So spake Nausicaa: and from hand to hand
Her women passing down the sign to stand,
Set him in shelter, as Nausicaa,
Renowned Alcinous’ daughter, gave command.

And there beside the running river’s brim
Raiment they laid, a shirt and cloak for him,
And gave him the gold flask of liquid oil,
Bidding him wash the soil from every limb.

Then to the girls Odysseus made reply:
“Women, stand off a little way, while I
Wash the brine off my shoulders and with oil
Anoint me; for the day is long gone by

“Since last with oil I have anointed me.
But in your sight my bathing shall not be:
For I would think it shame to strip myself
Coming where maidens lovely-tressed might see.”
BOOK SIXTH

So spake he to the women: forthwith they
Word to their mistress brought, and drew away:
While he with river-water washed the brine
That on his back and goodly shoulders lay

Clotted all over, and rubbed off his head
The salt scurf of the sea unharvested:
And when he oiled his body and did on
The raiment given him by the maid unwed,

Athena, God's own daughter, in their sight
Increased him to an ampler breadth and height,
And made the long hair cluster on his head,
Curled like a hyacinth-blossom curling tight.

Even as a master craftsman, one by aid
Of Pallas or Hephaestus perfect made
In manifold devices, overlays
Gold-leaf on silver, so the Goddess laid

Fresh beauty on his shoulders and his head.
Thus while in radiant grace apparelled
Upon the beach he sat apart, the girl
Marvelled, and to her fair-tressed women said:

"Listen, O white-armed girls, to what I say.
Not without warrant of the Gods' array,
Who hold Olympus, does this man arrive
In the divine Phaeacian land to-day."
"Uncomely at the first he seemed to be. 
But now the Gods are not more fair than he,
Who hold wide heaven: I would that such an one
Dwelt here and bore a husband’s name to me,

"And in this country chose to stay his feet.
Now, maidens, give our guest to drink and eat."
So spake she: and they heard her and obeyed,
And set before Odysseus drink and meat.

Then toilworn bright Odysseus fed thereon
In haste, and drank; for he long time had gone
Fasting from food. But now the white-armed maid
Nausicaa planned a fresh device anon.

Folding the clothes, she laid them on the wain,
And harnessed up the strong-hoofed mules again;
Then mounting to her seat, she turned to him
With words of counsel and made utterance plain:

"Rise now, and get you to the town, O guest,
That I may guide your going as is best
To my wise father’s house, where you shall see,
I tell you, all Phaeacia’s lordliest.

"Now therefore—for no fool you are, I trow—
While by the fields and farms of men we go,
Follow apace behind the mules and cart
Beside my maids, and I the way will show."
BOOK SIXTH

"But when we reach the city, round it stand
Walls high-embattled, and on either hand
Lies a fair haven, and between the two
A narrow entrance down a neck of land.

"Lining the road the curving ships abeach
Lie with a separate shipyard marked for each:
And in a space about the precinct fair,
Poseidon’s shrine, the market-place you reach,

"With massive deeply-sunken stones fenced in
All round; and busily the folk therein
Work at the rigging of their black-hulled ships,
Cables and cordage, and cut oarblades thin.

"Since neither upon quiver nor on bow
Do the Phaeacian folk their care bestow,
But masts and oars, and balanced ships wherein
Rejoicing over the grey sea they go.

"And taunting speech from them I fain would shun,
Hereafter flung at this that I have done:
Proud-hearted are our people; and of them,
Meeting us, thus might say some baser one:

"And who is this, the stranger tall and gay
That here beside Nausicaa takes his way?
And where may she have found him? Aye, no doubt
She brings a husband back with her to-day!
THE ODYSSEY

"Is he some wanderer from across the foam
—Since no men near our island have their home—
Lured hither from his ship? or has some God,
Long prayed for, heard her prayer at last and come

"Out of the skies descending amorous,
To have her all her life-days? Better thus!
Though she must go herself to fetch him in,
This outland lord; for she despises us,

"The people of her own Phaeacian name,
Where many men and good to woo her came!
So will they say: and to my shame would be
That word, as I myself would think it shame.

"If any other girl in suchlike way
While her own parents lived, should go astray
In a man's company, and regard them not,
Nor wait for marriage in the face of day.

"Now, stranger, mark my words, and they are these:
So from my father you may get with ease
Convoy and passage. You will light upon
Athena's goodly grove of poplar trees

"By the roadside; therein a spring wells out,
And the king's close and croft lie round about
In the rich meadow, as far off the town
As a man's voice will carry if he shout.
BOOK SIXTH

"There sit you down a certain while, and wait
Till we have reached the town and palace gate:
But when you deem us there, draw nigh the town,
And ask where stands my father's house of state,

"Alcinous high of heart, who holds the throne
Among our people: lightly is it known;
A child might guide you thither; for of all
Phaeacian houses stands that house alone.

"But when the forecourt and the palace wall
Have hidden you, pass quickly up the hall
Straight to my mother. In the firelight she
Sits by the hearth, while off her distaff fall

"The threads of dim sea-purple, strand by strand,
Marvellous, and her maids behind her stand
By the hall-pillar, and my father's chair
Next hers, where he, the winecup in his hand,

"Sits like a God. Yet pass him by, nor stay
Till round our mother's knees your hands you lay.
For thus, although from very far you come,
Quickly shall dawn your glad returning day.

"Yea surely if within her heart she bore
Kindness towards you, you might hope once more
To see your friends thereafter, and to reach
Your house well-builTed and your native shore."
THE ODYSSEY

Even on that word her whip outleaping shone;
And in a little while the mules were gone,
Leaving the river, and with crossing feet
Went nimbly trotting, while she drove them on

Softly, that so, behind but little space,
Odysseus and the women might keep pace.
And the sun sank as to that stately grove
They drew anigh, Athena’s holy place.

There stayed Odysseus bright, and made his vow
To great Zeus’ daughter, praying: “Hearken thou!
Daughter of Zeus the Lord of Thunder-clouds,
Maiden, Unweariable, hear me now:

“Though once before thou heardst me not, when he
The Lord who shakes the earth, was breaking me,
And I was broken: grant me here to find
Kindness and pity!” So he prayed, and she

Heard, but as yet apparent vision none
Vouchsafed him; for she feared her grandsire’s son:
And he against divine Odysseus raged
In furious wise, ere yet his land he won.
BOOK SEVENTH

THE ENTRY OF ODYSSEUS TO ALCINOUS

SO there while toilworn bright Odysseus prayed,
Her strong mules to the city bore the maid:
Till to her father's house magnificent
She came, and by the palace gateway stayed.

Then came her brethren, fair as Gods to see,
On either side, and from the swingle-tree
The mules unloosing, bore the raiment in;
And to her inner chamber glided she:

And there her bower-woman, an aged dame,
Eurymedusa of Overseas by name,
Kindled her fire; who borne in rocking ships
From the Land Overseas aforetime came.

Her had they portioned for Alcinous' share,
Who ruled Phaeacia and the people there
As God among them; and within his halls
Then had she nursed Nausicaa the fair.
She kindled fire and supper laid within.
And now Odysseus rose the town to win:
But round him, still devising for his good,
Athena spread a veil of vapour thin,

Lest any proud Phaeacian on the way
Should meet him, and some bitter word might say,
Or seek to know what manner of man he was.
But she, the Goddess with the eyes of grey,

Ere he began the pleasant town to tread,
In likeness of a maiden yet unwed
Bearing a pitcher, met him as he came
And stood before him. And Odysseus said:

"Child, I beseech you of your courtesy
To show your lord Alcinous' house to me,
Protector of the people of this land:
For from a country far across the sea

"Hither, a stranger by distress undone,
I come, and of the people know I none
Who dwell in farm or city." Thereunto
The Goddess answer made, the Grey-eyed One:

"Stranger my lord, that house indeed will I
Show you at your petition, since full nigh
It is to my own princely father's house.
But while I lead the way, go silently,
BOOK SEVENTH

"And look at none, nor question whom you meet,
For in no friendly wise our folk entreat
A stranger wandering, nor glad are they
The com'er from an alien shore to greet;

"But the great sea-gulf, sailing to and fro,
In their swift ships they cross; which for them so
The Shaker of the Earth has wrought, that swift
As a bird's wing or as a thought they go."

So saying, Athena quickly up the street
Led, and he followed her immortal feet;
While none, as he passed through them, noted him
Of all the crews of the Phaeacian fleet;

Because Athena of the fair-tressed head,
Terrible Goddess, as the way she led,
Still in her heart devising for his good,
A mist miraculous around him shed;

Though all things there with wondering eyes saw he;
The harbours, and the galleys swinging free,
The lordly market-places, and long walls,
High, palisaded, marvellous to see.

Now to the glorious palace nigh they drew.
Then first the grey-eyed Goddess spoke anew:
"Stranger my lord," Athena said, "behold!
This is the house you bid me show to you."
"There feasting you shall find the royal seed. Go in, and keep good courage; for indeed The fearless man, from wheresoe'er he come, Is evermore the better man at need.

"There in the hall the mistress of the same First you shall find, whom people call by name Arete: lord Alcinous and she By the same lineage from Nausithous came,

"Whom to the Shaker of the Earth of yore, Fairest of women, Periboea bore, The youngest daughter of Eurymedon The mighty-hearted, who in days before

"Bare rule among the haughty Giant race; Whom in their folly down from their high place He drew, and with them perished. By her side Poseidon lay, and got in that embrace

"Nausithous high of heart, who ruled among This folk Phaeacian. From Nausithous sprung Rhexenor and Alcinous; whereof he, Struck by Apollo's silver shaft, died young,

"New-wedded in his halls, without a son, Leaving one woman-child and only one, Arete. Her Alcinous took to wife, And honoured her as living woman none
BOOK SEVENTH

"Of wedded wives is honoured upon earth:
Such is the worship paid her (and her worth
No less) by King Alcinous our lord,
And by the children who from them have birth.

"Yea, all her people, when she goes abroad,
Salute her and account her as a God.
For of so excellent a wit is she,
Her woman’s wisdom puts a period

"To strife of men who in her favour stand.
And if to you she hold a helping hand,
Hope you may have to see your friends, and reach
Your high-roofed house, and your own native land."

So saying, the Goddess with the eyes of grey
Over the barren sea-foam took her way
From pleasant Scheria, until Marathon
And wide-wayed Athens underneath her lay,

And to Erechtheus’ fortress entered in.
Thereat, Alcinous’ lordly house to win
Odysseus turned; but paused in deep amaze
Ere he the brazen threshold passed within.

For like a sun or moon one splendour blent
Filled all that high-roofed house magnificent
Where great Alcinous dwelt: the brazen walls
Athwart and endlong from the threshold went
THE ODYSSEY

Even to the inmost chamber up the hall;
And a great frieze of blue ran round the wall;
And golden doors the stately house within
Shut off, and silver doorway-pillars tall

Out of the brazen threshold sprang to hold
The silver lintel; and the latch was gold;
And gold and silver hounds on either hand
Stood, that Hephaestus' cunning art of old

Had wrought to guard Alcinous' house from ill,
Immortal, ageless, indestructible.
And on both sides chairs round the walls were set
To the inner chamber from the doorway sill;

Whereon were cloths laid, thin and woven fair,
The work of women; and on every chair
Lords of Phaeacia seated, ate and drank
At will; for plenty was perpetual there.

And on well-built pedestals were bright
Gold images, that in their hands upright
Held blazing cressets all along the hall,
To light the banqueters throughout the night.

Withindoors fifty serving-women sit:
Some turn the mill and grind bright corn in it;
And others weave at looms or twist the yarn,
While, like the leaves of a tall poplar, flit
BOOK SEVENTH

The glancing shuttles through their finger-tips,
As from the warp-threads down the thin oil drips
For far as the Phaeacians pass all men
In skill to sweep the sea in racing ships,

So far their women in the weaver’s art
Excel all others, since to them apart
Athena skill in lovely workmanship
Has granted, and an understanding heart.

Without the courtyard of the house of state
An orchard of four acres nigh the gate
Is planted, with a fence all round it drawn;
And there grow fruit-trees flourishing and great:

Pear-trees and pomegranates, and apple-trees
Laden with shining apples, and by these,
Sweet-juiced figs and olives burgeoning,
Whose fruiting ceases not nor perishes

Winter or summer, all the year; for there
The western breezes ever soft and fair
Ripen one crop and bring another on.
Apple on apple growing, pear on pear,

Grape-bunch on grape-bunch, fig on fig they lie
Mellowing to age: and trenched deep thereby
The many-fruitied vineyard of the king
Is set: one side of it lies warm and dry,
Where raisins in the heat of the sun are spread,
And on one side they gather grapes, and tread
The vintage in the winepress; while in front
The clusters newly set their blossom shed,

And midway some the first faint colour show.
There likewise, by the vineyard's utmost row,
Are set trim garden beds of every sort,
Full-flowering while the seasons come and go.

And there two springs gush forth, and of the two
One is divided all the garden through,
And one beneath the courtyard gateway runs
Toward the high house: from it the townsfolk drew.

Such glorious gifts the Gods that house had lent.
There toilworn bright Odysseus stood intent
At gaze, until, when he had gazed his fill,
Crossing the threshold swiftly in he went.

Phaeacia's lords and councillors he found
Within, libation pouring on the ground
To the keen-sighted Shining One, to whom
The last cup went, when they to bed were bound.

But toilworn bright Odysseus through their ring
Went, clad in mist that for a covering
Athena shed about him, till he reached
Arete and Alcinous the king.
And round Arete’s knees his hands he threw:
Then off him that miraculous mist withdrew,
And the Phaeacians sat with startled eyes
Marvelling a stranger in their hall to view.

Then made Odysseus supplication thus:
“O daughter of Rhexenor glorious,
Arete, to your husband here I come
And to your knees, in case most piteous,

“And to these guests that banquet at your board:
To whom may heaven a happy life afford,
And each man to his children after him
Hand down the wealth wherewith his house is stored,

“And dues that on their lords the folk bestow.
Now grant me sending, that I soon may go
To my own country; for long time it is
That far away from friends I suffer woe.”

So saying, down he sat him in mid-hall
In the ashes on the hearth; and dumbly all
Sat, till when silence now had lasted long,
An aged lord at last these words let fall;

The oldest living of Phaeacian blood,
Named Echeneïs; one who understood
Wise words and many sayings of ancient days:
He spoke among them and gave counsel good.
"Alcinous, seemly is it not, nor fit,  
That here a stranger on the hearth should sit  
Among the ashes: but all these your lords  
Keep silence for your word, and wait for it.

"Come therefore, raise the stranger on his feet,  
And set him in a silver-studded seat;  
And bid the heralds yet another bowl  
Mingle for us to make libation meet

"To Zeus the Hurler of the heavenly brand,  
In grace of whose protection suppliants stand.  
But let the housekeeper to this our guest  
Give supper from what lies within at hand.”

But the King’s sacred Highness when he heard  
Drew subtle-souled Odysseus on the word  
Up from the hearth; and where Laodamas  
The knight, his son to all the rest preferred,

Sat next himself, from off the shining chair  
He bade him rise, and set Odysseus there.  
Then a maid, bringing in a ewer of gold,  
Poured forth above a silver basin fair

Water for washing, and beside him spread  
A polished table, whereon wheaten bread  
With divers dainties the grave housekeeper  
Laid largely, that the stranger might be fed.
BOOK SEVENTH

Now thirst and hunger he began to slake.
Then to a herald the King’s Highness spake:
“Pontonous, mix a bowl and serve it round
In hall, that we may now libation make

“To Zeus the Hurler of the heavenly brand,
In grace of whose protection suppliants stand.”
So spake the King; and he the honeyed wine
Mingled and served to all from the left hand.

Pouring therefrom they drank their fill, and thus
Thereafter spake and said Alcinous:
“Hear, lords and councillors Phaeacian,
The counsel that I deem the best for us.

“Now to your beds full-feasted go your way:
To-morrow shall the elders’ full array
Meet in our halls the guest to entertain,
And to the Gods fair sacrifice to pay.

“Thereafter to the sending will we see;
So that this guest, from pain and labour free,
Under our convoy his own land may reach,
Swiftly and glad, though very far it be.

“Nor in the middle passage need he dread
Ill or misfortune ere his land he tread:
Howbeit he then shall suffer whatsoever
Fate and the awful Spinners of the Thread

183
"Spun for the newborn babe his mother bore.
But if from heaven descending on our shore
Moves an immortal, certainly the Gods
In other wise deal now than heretofore:

"Seeing that aforetime evermore have they
Appeared in open vision when we pay
Our lordly sacrifices, and where we
Sit feasting, sit beside us every day:

"Yea, or a traveller on the road alone
Meeting, they make their Godhead fully known:
Since even as the Cyclopes, or the fierce
Tribes of the Giants, our blood is nigh their own."

But thereto sage Odysseus made reply:
"Alcinous, think it not: in nowise I
In shape or frame am like the Deathless Ones
Who hold wide heaven, but like mankind who die.

"And with those men you know, whose grief to bear
Is heaviest, may my misery well compare:
But a more piteous tale than theirs were mine;
Such sorrows has God dealt me for my share.

"Now let me sup, though sore be my distress;
Since a man's belly is full of shamelessness,
And bids him still perforce remember it,
Though vexed and bearing grief at heart no less
BOOK SEVENTH

"Than I at heart bear grief to-day: and yet
It bids me eat and drink and quite forget
All I have suffered, so as it be filled.
But you, at break of day in council met,

"Make haste to send me, though ill-starred am I,
To my own country: for I would not die
Before I once again my heritage
And serfs have seen, and palace great and high."

So spoke he; and with his fair words content
All to the stranger’s journey gave assent.
Then offering having poured, they drank their fill,
And each to his own house to rest they went;

Till now beside Odysseus of them all
Only the King and Queen were left in hall,
Arete and Alcinous: and the maids
Clearing the dishes of the festival.

Then silence first white-armed Arete broke
—For her eyes, lighting on the shirt and cloak,
The goodly raiment knew, that she herself
Had fashioned, working with her women-folk—

And framing speech, a winged word said she:
"Guest, now shall the first question come from me.
Who and whence are you? whose gift clad you thus?
Say, come you hither wandering over sea?"
Then answer made Odysseus subtle-souled:
"Hard were it, Queen, the troubles manifold
The heavenly Gods have dealt me to declare.
But this you ask of me may soon be told.

"A certain Far Isle lies in the sea's heart
Where Atlas' daughter, full of guileful art,
Abides, Calypso of the fair-tressed head,
Terrible Goddess: and with her has part

"Nor God nor mortal: only luckless me
Heaven to her threshold led, when mightily
Zeus shattered with his fiery thunderbolt
My racing ship amid the purple sea.

"There all my comrades good were slain outright,
But I, the rocking ship's keel clasping tight,
Drifted nine days, and on the tenth the Gods
Cast me on that Far Isle at black of night,

"Where dwells Calypso of the fair-tressed head,
Terrible Goddess: courteously she fed
And sheltered me, and loved, and would have made
Deathless and ageless alway, as she said,

"But never to her will my heart could sway.
Seven years with her in the island must I stay,
And the immortal raiment wherewithal
She clad me wetted with my tears alway.
"But when the eighth revolving year came on, She sent me thence, and bade me to be gone (Whether that Zeus a message sent to her, Or her own mind at last was wrought upon),

"And on a raft compact with bolt and band, With bread and sweet wine laden, from her land She sped me, in immortal raiment clad, Forth of the isle, a gentle wind and bland

"Sending behind me. Thus across the sea Seventeen days I voyaged ceaselessly, And on the eighteenth morning through the mist The mountains of your land loomed up to me.

"And glad was I, ill-fated! for not so Might I part company from all the woe Wherewith Poseidon Shaker of the Earth Pursued me, letting loose a gale to blow,

"That stopped my way; and all the seas upleapt; And me a monstrous billow sobbing swept From off the raft, and the squall shattered it. But I still swimming through the great gulf crept

"Till to your coast with wind and tide I wore. There had the billow as it swept ashore Upon a joyless place of mighty rocks Hurled me to land; but turning back once more
"I swam, till where the river meets the sea
I chose what seemed the likeliest place to be,
Being smooth of rocks and sheltered from the wind;
And reeled ashore with no breath left in me.

"And then the heavenly night came up, and I
Left the bright-running river, and thereby
Among the bushes made myself a lair,
Heaping all round me the dead leaves to lie,

"And God on me unmeasured slumber shed.
So in the mounded leaves, discomfited,
All night I slept and after morning came
On to mid-noon; and ere my sweet sleep fled

"The sun drew downward. Then was I aware
That on the beach your daughter’s women there
Played, and among them, like the Goddesses,
She stood. Before her feet I fell in prayer;

"And she of perfect wisdom lacked no whit;
Yea, more than from a maid so young were fit
To hope in him who met her: for indeed
The young in years are ever weak of wit.

"She washed me in the river pool, and fed
With red wine and enough of wheaten bread,
And clad me in these garments. Thus it was.
Grievous my tale, but I the truth have said."
BOOK SEVENTH

Answered and said Alcinous: "Sooth to tell, Guest, in this thing my daughter did not well, That hither with her maids she brought you not Herself, since first before her feet you fell."

And subtle-souled Odysseus answer made:
"Prince, on that faultless maiden be there laid
No blame herein: for with her handmaidens
She bade me follow, but behind I stayed

"For fear of shame, lest haply should you see,
Your mind might deem some hateful thought of me:
So full of wicked jealousy we are,
The tribes of mankind on the earth that be."

Answered and spoke Alcinous: "Nay, O guest,
Not so is framed my heart within my breast,
To be stirred up to anger without cause.
In all things to observe the law is best.

"Fain were I—Zeus our Father hear me vow,
And thou Athena, and Apollo thou!—
Such as you are and minded as I am,
You took to wife my daughter even now,

"And were called son-in-law of me the King,
Abiding with us. House and furnishing,
If to abide it pleased you, I would give.
But no Phaeacian to your will shall bring
"Hindrance or stay: forbid it Zeus our Lord! 
And for your time of sending, take this word 
If you will know: to-morrow, as I deem, 
Fast bound in slumber shall you lie aboard,

"While they across the tranquil sea shall steer 
Till home you reach and all you hold most dear 
In your own native country, yea, although 
Even than Euboea it were much less near:

"And that is farthest of all lands, they say 
Who saw it of our people, on the day 
When they to visit Tityus, son of Earth, 
Took fair-haired Rhadamanthys on his way.

"Yet one day then sufficed to go and come 
Unlabouring, and fulfil their journey home; 
And you shall know too how no ships nor lads 
With swifter oars than mine fling up the foam."

Then bright Odysseus was to gladness stirred, 
And prayed aloud, and spoke, and said a word: 
"O Zeus our Father, may Alcinous now 
Fulfil the promise I this night have heard!

"So on the fruitful earth his fame should stand 
Deathless, and I might see my native land."
So spake they, each to other: but the while 
White-armed Arete gave her maids command
BOOK SEVENTH

A bedstead in the porch without the hall
To lay for him, with purple and with pall
Trimly arrayed, and coverlets thereon
To spread, and fleecy blankets over all.

They out of hall the bedding to prepare
Went by an upborne litten torch’s flare;
And when the couch was laid and fully spread,
Came back and stood before Odysseus there;

And thus they bade him: “Up and to your rest
Betake you, for your bed is made, O guest.”
Thus said they; welcome was the word to him.
So there lay bright Odysseus sore-distressed,

Asleep upon the mortised bed’s array,
Beneath the echoing porch. But far away
Up in the high house slept Alcinous,
And the house-mistress couched beside him lay.
BOOK EIGHTH

HOW ODYSSEUS CONSORTED WITH THE PHAEACIANS

BUT when rose-fingered Dawn of Morning shone,
Alcinous’ sacred Highness rose anon:
And from his bed the stormer of the town,
High-born Odysseus, hasted to be gone.

And the King’s Majesty led on the way
To the Phaeacian market-place that they
Beside their ships had builded: there they took
Their seat upon smooth stones that nigh it lay.

And meanwhile up the town, in seeming guise
One of the heralds of Alcinous wise,
Pallas Athena went, the home-going
Of valiant-souled Odysseus to devise:

And passing onward, stayed beside each man
With speech upon her lips, and thus began:
“Come hither, hasten to the market-place,
O lords and councillors Phaeacian!”
BOOK EIGHTH

“That you may learn the stranger’s name and fame
Who, drifted on the seatide hither, came
But yesternight to wise Alcinous’ house,
Like to the everlasting Gods in frame.”

So saying, she roused the soul of every one,
And all together men began to run,
Till market-square and seats were filled with folk
That on Laertes’ subtle-hearted son

Came thro'nging up to gaze with wondering sight.
And on his head and shoulders by her might
Athena shed strange beauty, and increased
His stature to an ampler breadth and height:

That to the whole Phaeacian people he
Gracious and dear and worshipful might be,
And, when they put him to the proof that day,
Might all their feats accomplish easily.

So the crowd thickened round and closelier clung.
Then spake Alcinous thus the folk among:
“Hear, lords and councillors Phaeacian,
While my heart’s counsel issues from my tongue.

“This stranger here—I know not if he spring
From realms of sunset or of sunrising—
Is come a wanderer to my house, and craves
Promise of convoy on his wayfaring.

193
THE ODYSSEY

"Then, as our wont is, speed we him to-day:
Since no man verily, be he who he may,
Comes to my house and long abides therein
Grieving for lack of convoy on his way.

"Now to the bright sea let us haul from shore
A dark ship that has never sailed before,
And two and fifty lads from all the folk
Be chosen, who can pull the strongest oar.

"Then lashing down each oar upon the thwart
Come you ashore, and with a cheerful heart
Assemble in our house to share the feast
That I in bounty will to all impart.

"These are the young men's orders: but on all
The sceptre-bearers and the chiefs I call
To meet together in my goodly house
And make the stranger welcome in our hall.

"Let none excuse himself: and hither bring
Demodocus, that is of minstrels king;
With such a charm has God adorned his song,
Gladness to give, whate'er he lists to sing."

So saying, his footsteps to the house he bent,
And after him the sceptre-bearers went:
While up the town a herald ran to fetch
Demodocus the minstrel excellent.
BOOK EIGHTH

And two and fifty lads, a chosen band,
Went where the barren ocean lipped the land,
And coming where the black ship lay abeach,
Down to deep water hauled her from the strand:

And in the black ship laid her sails and mast,
And all her oars with leathern thongs made fast
Ranged in their order, and the gleaming sails
Shook out, and in the tideway anchor cast.

Thereon to wise Alcinous’ mighty hall
They hasted up; and soon the palace all,
Porch, yard, and gallery, with old and young
Was filled, that gathered to the festival.

Also Alcinous for his guests’ delight,
Slaughtered twelve sheep, eight swine with tushes white,
Two cloven-footed oxen: flaying these
They dressed them and a goodly banquet dight.

Then came the herald, and with him brought he
The faithful minstrel, whom exceedingly
The Muse held dear, and gave him good and ill,
His eyesight took, and gave him minstrelsy.

For him, amid the folk that sat at meat,
Pontonous set a silver-studded seat
Against a lofty pillar in the hall,
And hung upon a pin his viol sweet,
Guiding his hand to reach it where it stood
Above his head, and laid a dish of food
On a fair table by him, and a cup
Of wine to drink of whensoe’er he would.

So to the ready feast before them spread
They reached their hands: and after they had fed
To quench their thirst and hunger, then the Muse
Moved him to sing of deeds of hardihead

The fame whereof to heaven’s wide cope had won:
Even of the strife Achilles Peleus’ son
Strove with Odysseus, at the splendid feast
Spread for the Gods, with words of malison.

And glad was Agamemnon, king of men,
To see the best Achaeans wrangling then.
For so in goodly Pytho from the shrine
Phoebus Apollo answer made again,

When to inquire he crossed the stone-hewn sill,
In the beginning of that gathering ill
That down on Trojans and on Danaans rolled,
As Zeus had ordered by his sovran will.

Hereof the famous minstrel in his song
Told: but Odysseus with his fingers strong
Took the great purple cloak and lapped his head
Therein, and drew the folds his face along,
BOOK EIGHTH

For shame lest haply the Phaeacian folk
Might see the tears that from his eyelids broke:
And when the glorious minstrel ceased to sing,
He wiped his tears, and from his head the cloak

Cast back, and took the cup with double rim,
And to the Gods poured offering from the brim;
But when the minstrel once more preluded,
And the Phaeacian princes called on him

to sing again, the lay such gladness bred,
Once more Odysseus likewise round his head
With muffled moaning drew the cloak, and thus
From all the rest concealed the tears he shed:

Only among them heed Alcinous bore
Of his guest’s grief, and heard him sighing sore
Where he sat next him, and spoke suddenly
To the Phaeacian masters of the oar:

“Hear, lords and councillors Phaeacian!
Now have our hearts partaken all they can
Of banquet and of viol-play that is
Companion of the joyous feasts of man;

“Let us go forth, and be our sports begun
Of all sorts, that our guest, his journey done,
May tell his friends how all men we excel
To box and wrestle and to leap and run.”
So saying, he led, and they behind his feet
Went; and the herald hung the viol sweet
Back on its pin, and took the minstrel’s hand,
And led him out of hall along the street,

Where the Phaeacian princes all were gone
To see the sports and feast their eyes thereon.
So to the market-place they all at once
Passed, and a mighty concourse followed on.

Then of their youths rose up both many and good:
Acronēs and Ocyalus upstood,
Nauteus and Prymneus and Anchialus,
The Oarsman and the Racer of the Flood;

Ponteus and Proreus; and with these there came
He who had Scaler of the Ships to name,
And Thoön, and Amphialus whose sire
And grandsire shipwrights were of ancient fame.

And, not by slaughtering Ares' self outdone,
Uprose Euryalus the Sounder’s son,
Who next the faultless prince Laodamas
Of all Phaeacia was the goodliest one.

And with the rest stood forth the princes three
Of unabased Alcinous’ family,
Laodamas, and Halius after him,
And Clytoneüs like a God to see.
BOOK EIGHTH

Now with the footrace first the games began.
A goal was set, and out and home they ran.
So all at once across the level ground
They sped contending; but the fleetest man

Was princely Clytoneüs: by the space
That mules in ploughing back and forward trace,
He shot ahead, and to the goal returned
Leaving the rest behind him in the race.

Next in the wrestling-ring they put to test
Their champions, and Euryalus the rest
Outmastered: and Amphialus again
In leaping was accounted far the best.

But with the quoit Elatreus lightly won,
And in the boxing match Alcinous’ son,
Laodamas the good: and so the games
To all men’s great contentment now were done.

Then prince Laodamas around him drew
The rest, and asked them: “Fellows, what think you,
Were we to ask the stranger in what feats
He had most practice, and which best he knew?

“No weakling nor ill-shapen man to see,
But stout of thigh and clean of limb is he,
Strong-necked, great-handed, nor yet past his prime,
Though broken now with many a misery.

199
"For nought is crueller than the sea, I trow, 
A man how strong soever to bring low."
Then answering said Euryalus: "Right well 
You speak, Laodamas, advising so.

"Go therefore, your own self the challenge bear, 
Accost him." But Alcinous' princely heir 
Hearing that word, strode forth into the midst 
And to Odysseus uttered challenge there:

"Stranger my lord, arise now too and show 
Your prowess in such contests as you know; 
As some you must: for while his life endures, 
Nought may more honour on a man bestow

"Than what his own good feet and hands can do. 
Come, make essay, and cast your cares from you; 
Since shortly you shall leave us; while I speak, 
Your ship is launched and ready is your crew."

But subtle-souled Odysseus made reply: 
"Laodamas, why taunt me thus? and why 
Challenge to proof of contest one whose griefs 
Nearer his heart than any contest lie?

"Of late have I been oft in evil case 
And much have toiled; and in your market-place 
I sit now, fain to leave you, of the King 
And all the people suppling grace."
BOOK EIGHTH

Thereat Euryalus in wrathful wise
Spoke and made answer: “Stranger, to mine eyes
Not as one practised in the feats of men
You seem, but as a trader, one who plies

“In a benched merchant-ship, and gives commands
To sailor folk who traffic in far lands;
A cargo-reckoner, covetous of gains
Ill-gotten, and no tall man of your hands.”

But sage Odysseus answered with a frown:
“Ill have you spoken, friend, and like a clown.
So little do the Gods to all alike
In looks and wit and speech impart renown.

“For of two men the one indeed but slight
May be to outward semblance, but such might
Of speech a God has crowned his form withal,
That all men gaze upon him in delight.

“Master is he of grave discourse and sweet:
A prince among the people when they meet:
That on him even as on a God they gaze
When he goes forth amid them down the street.

“And one is as the immortals fair of face,
But on his words there lies no crown of grace.
So, though your shape is goodly, nor could God
Mend it, your wits are but in sorry case.
"Now is my heart within my bosom stirred
To wrath by this your ill-considered word.
For not one ignorant of feats am I,
As you talk vainly, but was once preferred

"Among the foremost in the rank to stand
While my prime lasted and my strength of hand.
Now am I cramped with woes and misery:
For much have I endured, in wars on land

"Of men, and in the bitter ocean-flood.
Yet now, although my plight be nowise good,
Your lists will I adventure: for your word
Was biting, and your speech has fired my blood."

He spoke, and casting not his cloak away
Stepped forward, and caught up a quoit that lay,
Bigger and heavier and more massive far
Than the Phaeacians cast with in their play,

And in his strong hand swung it round and threw.
And the stone boomed; and cowering backward drew
The oarsmen of the famed Phaeacian ships,
As hurtling over all their heads it flew.

Lightly from off his hand it whirling sped,
And passed the others and fell far ahead.
But in the likeness of a man the cast
Athena marked, and spake aloud and said:
BOOK EIGHTH

"Sure a blind man, O guest, by touch could tell
Your shot, so far beyond the rest it fell,
Alone: of one event at least be sure;
For none this cast will equal or excel."

So spake she: and sore-tried Odysseus bright
Rejoiced through all his miseries at the sight
Of one kind comrade in the lists; and now
To the Phaeacians spoke in tones more light:

"Reach to that, lads: and with a second throw
As far or farther I may haply go.
And now to any feat I challenge you,
Come whoso will, you have provoked me so.

"Stand up against me, for I shrink from none,
To wrestle or to box or even to run,
Against all champions of Phaeacia,
Except Laodamas your master’s son.

"His guest I am: with friends I do not strive.
Most vain and senseless of all men alive
Surely is he who upon alien lists
The host who shelters him to strife would drive:

"And loss is all he gains himself thereby.
But of the rest no champion I deny
Nor flinch from, but desire to know their worth
And strive against them: not unskilled am I"
THE ODYSSEY

“In any feat of manhood: well I know
The poise and handling of the polished bow,
And could pick off my man by arrowshot
The first, amid the thickest of the foe,

“Though by my side stood comrades not a few,
Where men the targets were on which we drew.
For Philoctetes only was my match
In Troy, when the Achaean warshafts flew.

“But all the rest I say I far excel
Whoso on earth amid her cornfields dwell,
Of living mortals—for I will not strive
With former men of whom old stories tell

“To stand a rival, neither Heracles
Nor yet Oechalian Eurytus: for these
In archery against immortal Gods
Contended; wherefore in his palaces

“Died mighty Eurytus full suddenly,
And to the bourn of age he came not nigh:
For him Apollo in his anger slew
Because he challenged him to archery.

“Likewise a javelin farther I can throw
Than others shoot an arrow from the bow.
Only I doubt lest haply in the race
Phaeacian runners may my feet outgo;
BOOK EIGHTH

"Being by the many-surring ocean-swell
Outworn, where no ship found and victualled well
Conveyed me; therefore are my limbs unstrung."
He spoke, and on them all deep silence fell.

Only Alcinous spoke then, answering thus:
"Guest, in nowise your speech displeases us;
Being fain to show your native manlihood,
And wrathful at the speech discourteous

"This man has flung at you amid our play.
Since no one living will your worth gainsay
Who knows the utterance of well-ordered speech.
But mark my word, that on a future day

"To some heroic guest you will recall,
When you sit feasting in your own high hall
Beside your wife and children, that you then
May of our prowess make memorial,

"Telling him how from father unto son
By grace of heaven great fame our deeds have won.
For in the boxing or the wrestling ring
Faultless we haply are not: but to run

"Fleet-footed, and well-skilled a ship to steer,
And evermore to us the feast is dear,
And change of raiment, and warm baths and beds,
And harp and dancing, when we make good cheer."
THE ODYSSEY

"Now come, all you Phaeacians who excel
Your footsteps in the dance to measure well,
Make sport before us here, that to his friends
This guest of ours returning home may tell

"How we surpass in handling of a fleet
And song and dance and swiftness of our feet.
And some one, where it lies within the house,
Fetch for Demodocus his viol sweet."

So spoke Alcinous the godlike king.
Thereat a herald rose and went to bring
The hollow viol from the royal house:
And the nine chosen men who kept the ring,

The public deemsters, rose up on their feet,
Who ordered all the contests as was meet.
They swept a smooth broad dancing-ground and fair;
And now the herald with the viol sweet

Came to Demodocus anigh: and he
Moved to the midst: and forthwith orderly,
Lads in the early flower of youth upstood,
Such as in dancing had most subtlety.

Then with their feet they smote the holy ground.
And while Odysseus gazed on them astound
As their feet flashed, the minstrel preluding
Sang to his viol with a lovely sound:

206
Singing how Ares joined in love's delight  
With Aphrodite of the garland bright;  
And how at first within Hephaestus' house  
The twain by stealth were mingled, out of sight.

For with great gifts he brought the bed to shame  
Of lord Hephaestus. But to him there came  
The Sun-God bearing tidings; for his eyes  
Had marked them mingling in the lovers' game.

So when he heard this tale of grievous sin,  
Straight to his smithy went Hephaestus in,  
And set his anvil on the anvil-stock,  
Devising mischief deep his heart within:

And forged him fetters that should still hold good  
Whoso break through them or unlock them would:  
And, wroth with Ares, drew the forged snare  
Into the chamber where his own bed stood:

So that the toils all round the bedposts met  
And hung down from the rafters in a net  
Thin as a spider's web, invisible  
Even to the Gods: so subtly were they set.

But when all round the bed his network fell,  
To Lemnos then, the city builded well,  
He feigned to journey forth, that is to him  
Dearest of all the lands wherein men dwell.
Nor blindly did gold-harnessed Ares wake
To see the Artificer his journey make:
But to renowned Hephaestus’ house he went,
Burning the fruit of his desire to take

With Cytherea goodly-garlanded;
Who from the palace of her father dread
But now was come and seated: entering in,
He clasped her hand, and spake a word and said:

“Come, dearest, let us take our love’s disport:
For now no more Hephaestus treads your court;
But to far Lemnos and the Sintians,
A people rude of speech, has made resort.”

So spake he, and his wooing pleased her well.
To bed they got them, and asleep they fell:
And round about them as they lay, the toils
Descended by Hephaestus’ craft and spell.

Nor move could they, nor raise up foot or hand,
As now they knew, when round them clung the band.
Then came anigh the Haltfoot God renowned,
Returning ere he reached the Lemnian land;

Because to him the Sun-God keeping scout
Brought word. Then stood he in the porch without,
Mad in his anger, and to all the Gods
He called, and with a dreadful voice cried out:
BOOK EIGHTH

"Lord Zeus and blessed deathless Gods each one, Come hither! see what mocking deeds are done Intolerable, by this child of Zeus Who me the Haltfoot holds in honour none,

"And loves destroying Ares, for that he Well-shapen is and fair, but I to see From birth a weakling: that my parents did, None other; would they had not gotten me!

"Now shall you see how these two lovers lie Beneath my blankets: sore at heart am I. Yet for a while I think they will not now Lie thus again, although their love be high.

"Soon will they both to sleep no more be fain. But I will hold them by my craft and chain, Till all the wedding gifts I gave her sire For that fair wanton he return again;

"For lovely is his daughter, but unchaste." He spoke, and to the bronze-paved hall in haste Gathered the Gods: the Helper Hermes came; Poseidon, he who holds the earth embraced,

Came; prince Apollo the Far-reacher came. But the she-Goddesses abode for shame Each in her dwelling. In the porch the Gods, Givers of blessing, stood, and like a flame
THE ODYSSEY

Unquenchable their laughter rose to see
The craft Hephaestus wrought by subtlety.
Each on the other looked the blessed Gods,
Saying: "In ill deeds is no mastery:

"Slow has caught swift: the Lame One's art to-day
Though slow, avails him by the heels to lay
Ares, most swift of all the Gods in heaven:
And now adulterer's ransom he must pay."

Thus while their talk from each to other went,
Light speech the God-born prince Apollo sent
To Hermes: "Fleetfoot Hermes, son of Zeus,
Giver of blessing, would you be content

"Abed in mighty fetters chained to lie
If golden Aphrodite lay thereby?"
Then answering said the fleetfoot Shining One:
"Far-smiting prince Apollo, that would I!

"Even though fetters that no force could free
Lay thrice as heavy on me, and to see
Came all you Gods and all the Goddesses;
If golden Aphrodite lay by me."

So spake he, and the deathless people through
Ran laughter; yet Poseidon thereunto
Joined not, but to the Master of the Forge
Made suit the bonds from Ares to undo.
BOOK EIGHTH

And uttering a winged word he spake:
"Release him, and I promise he shall make
Before the session of the deathless Gods
In full such payment as you choose to take."

Then answering him the Haltfoot One renowned
Said thus: "Poseidon, Circler of the Ground,
Ask me not this: for knavish are the bonds
Wherewith a knave in covenant may be bound.

"How shall I sue you, where the Gods are met,
If Ares with the chain slip off the debt,
Defaulting?" But the Shaker of the Earth
Poseidon spake again, and urged him yet:

"Hephaestus, even if Ares slip away
Making default, myself in full will pay."
Then answered him the Haltfoot One renowned:
"I will not and I may not say you nay."

So answered strong Hephaestus, and the chain
Undid that bound them; and the lovers twain,
No sooner from the mastering fetters freed,
Darted away: to Thrace he fled amain;

But laughing Aphrodite to the lands
Of Cyprian Paphos, where her precinct stands
And odorous incense on her altar smokes:
And there the Graces bathed her with their hands,
And with imperishable oil anew
Anointed her, and round her body drew
The raiment fair wherewith the Gods are clad
Who live for ever, wonderful to view.

Thus while the glorious minstrel framed his lay,
Gladly Odysseus heard him sing and play:
And gladly all the famous mariners,
The long-oared rowers of Phaeacia.

And next the single dance Alcinous bade
By Halius and Laodamas be played,
Who were the champions. So the fair red ball
They took, that Polybus with skill had made,

And, bending back, one sent it spinning round
Up to the dusky clouds, and one a bound
Made high from earth, and caught it as it fell
Lightly, before his feet had touched the ground.

Then, having practised throwing up the ball,
They danced upon the earth that nurtures all,
Cross-chasing; and the young men in the lists
Stood beating time, and made great din withal.

Spake to Alcinous then Odysseus bright:
"Lord of the land, Alcinous most of might,
You vouched your dancers for the best alive,
And so they are: I marvel at the sight."
BOOK EIGHTH

That the King's Highness heard right joyfully, 
And to those masters of the oar said he:
"Hear, lords and councillors Phaeacian! 
A prudent man the stranger seems to be.

"Come, let us give him guesting as is fit. 
Twelve princes of the land in judgment sit, 
And the thirteenth am I. Bring each of you 
A clean-washed cloak and shirt, and each with it

"A talent's weight of precious gold bestow: 
And let us bring them all at once, that so 
The stranger, holding in his hands our gifts, 
Rejoicing in his heart to sup may go.

"But let Euryalus atonement make 
With gift and speech, because the word he spake 
Was nowise seemly." So he said; and all 
Assent accorded his advice to take,

And sent their heralds home the gifts to bring. 
Then spake Euryalus thus answering: 
"Lord of the land, Alcinous most of might, 
As you require will I make good this thing.

"Therefore this sword he shall accept of me, 
All bronze, with silver hilts, and ivory 
Fresh from the carver round the scabbard turned; 
And it a thing of price to him shall be."
THE ODYSSEY

Then in his hand the silver-studded sword
He laid, and spoke to him a winged word:
"Hail, lord and guest! if aught was said amiss,
Wind-scattered let it pass beyond record;

"And may the high Gods grant you to behold
Your wife and native country, since of old
Far from your friends you have affliction borne."
And answering spake Odysseus subtle-souled:

"Hail also, friend! to you the high Gods bliss
Grant likewise, nor hereafter may you miss
This sword that you have given me, and for all
Made full atonement with such speech as this."

So spake he, and the silver-studded sword
He cast around his shoulders with the word.
Now to Alcinous’ house ere set of sun
The stately heralds each one to his lord

The gifts magnificent began to bring.
And there the children of the faultless king
Received the goodly gifts and laid them out,
By their grave mother’s side, while following

Alcinous’ sacred Highness into hall
The princes passed, and took their places all
On the high seats; and to Arete then
Spoke the King’s Highness, and these words let fall:
BOOK EIGHTH

"Wife, fetch a chest, the fairest you have got,  
And in it lay yourself, washed clean of spot,  
A cloak and shirt: and you, above the fire  
Set on a caldron and make water hot;  

"So, after he has bathed, our guest shall see  
My royal people's gifts laid orderly,  
That they have brought him, and thereafter take  
Delight in banquet and in minstrelsy.  

"And I to him this lovely cup of gold  
Will give, that me in memory he may hold  
Through all the days, when in his hall he pours  
To Zeus and the Immortals, as of old."

Then gave Arete to her thralls command  
Straightway a caldron on the fire to stand.  
And the bath-caldron on the fire they slung  
And filled with water, and took logs in hand

And kindled them to make the water hot.  
Then, while the flame about the bellied pot  
Curled, and the water heated, from her bower  
A chest of rich device Arete got,  

And laid in it the goodly gifts her folk  
Had given, the gold and raiment: and a cloak  
And goodly shirt of her own gift thereto  
She added, and a winged word she spoke:
“Look to the lid yourself now, nor be slow
To tie the knot, that no man work you woe
Upon your voyaging, when once again
Sunk in sweet sleep on the black ship you go.”

To toilworn bright Odysseus thus said she:
And he made fast the lid, and speedily
Tied fast the curious knot, whereof to him
Circe the Queen had taught the mystery.

Now to the heated bath the housekeeper
Bade him go in; and he went following her
Well pleased; for since fair-tressed Calypso’s house
He left behind him, few his comforts were:

But there good cheer continually he had,
Even as a God’s life is, to make him glad.
Now the thralls bathed him and anointed him,
And in a shirt and cloak his body clad.

Thus from the bath he went in clean array,
And took amid the banqueters his way.
But by the doorway of the stately hall
In godlike beauty stood Nausicaa;

And eyed him marvelling, and bespake him so:
“Fare well, O guest, that when you homeward go,
Me too you may remember, and that first
To me the ransom of your life you owe.”
BOOK EIGHTH

And subtle-souled Odysseus answered thus:

"Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinous
The mighty-hearted, so for me may Zeus
Ordain, Queen Hera’s husband thunderous,

“To see the light of my returning day
And reach my home: for then would I alway
To you, O maid who rendered me my life,
As to a God, in that far country pray.”

He spoke, and by Alcinous on the seat
Sat down, while now they portioned out the meat
And mixed the wine: and presently there came
A herald leading in the minstrel’s feet,

Demodocus, who all throughout the town
Was of the people held in high renown.
With him he entered, and amid the guests
Against a lofty pillar set him down.

Then subtle-souled Odysseus from the chine
Cut largely of a silver-tushed swine
(Yet larger was the rest, and round it fat
Lay deep), and to a herald making sign,

“Lo, herald,” said he, “take this dish of meat
Now to Demodocus that he may eat,
While with a mourning heart I bid him hail:
Since from all men who have on earth their seat
"Of honour and of reverence ample share
Falls to the lot of minstrels, whomso’er
The Muse has guided in the paths of song
Who has the race of minstrels in her care."

So spake he: and the herald at his call
Bearing in hand the dish across the hall,
Set it before the lord Demodocus;
And he received it and rejoiced withal.

Then to the ready food before them spread
They reached their hands; and after they had fed
To quench their thirst and hunger, subtle-souled
Odysseus to the minstrel spake and said:

"Demodocus, of mortals all the most
I praise you: since for teacher you may boast
Apollo or the maiden Muse divine:
So well the woe of the Achaean host,

"And over well, in order meet you sing;
Their toil in doing and in suffering:
As though yourself you had been present there,
Or heard from an eyewitness everything.

"Now pass on further in your song to tell
How the arraying of the horse befel,
That by Athena’s aid Epeius framed,
And bright Odysseus to the citadel"
BOOK EIGHTH

"Drew subtly, filled with them who overthrew Troy town: and if you tell that story true, To all men will I testify that God Has given full grace of song divine to you."

So spake he to the minstrel: forthwith he Made invocation and the song let free, Beginning where the Argives fired their huts, And on their benched galleys put to sea;

While in mid-Troy around Odysseus good Already they within the horse of wood Crouched hidden, that the Trojans’ hands had drawn Into their citadel: so there it stood;

And seated round, in long debate and deep They wavered, to which plan of three to keep: Whether to smite apart the hollow wood With pitiless bronze, or drag it up the steep,

And hurl it down the cliffs, or let it lie An offering great, the Gods to pacify: As in the end it was ordained to be; Because the doom predestined now drew nigh,

For Troy to perish, when the town gave room To the great horse of wood within whose womb The Argive captains crouched, intent to bear Upon the Trojans violent death and doom.
Then sang he how from out it pouring down
The sons of the Achaeans sacked the town,
Leaving their hollow ambush, and dispersed
Asunder to lay waste the city's crown:

But where Deiphobus in lodging lay
Odysseus, like to Ares, took his way
With godlike Menelaus, and therein
Dared and achieved the war's most grim affray,

By valiant-souled Athena's help made strong.
Thereof the famous minstrel framed his song:
But melted was Odysseus, and the tear
Under his eyelids stole his cheek along.

Even such tears as by a wife are shed
Who clasps her own dear husband fallen dead
In the front rank, before the walls, where he
From town and children kept the day of dread;

And as her eyes behold him gasp and die,
She clings around him with a bitter cry;
While on her back and shoulders from behind
They smite with spears, and to captivity

Hale her away, through toil and grief to go,
And her cheeks dwindle for most piteous woe:
So piteously Odysseus weeping now
From all the rest concealed his tears' downflow:

220
BOOK EIGHTH

Only among them heed Alcinous bore
Of his guest’s grief, and heard him sighing sore
Where he sat next him, and spoke suddenly
To the Phaeacian masters of the oar:

"Hear, lords and councillors Phaeacian!
Now let the minstrel’s viol for a span
Be hushed; for not to all the song gives joy.
Since at this supper-tide his lay began,

"Our guest has never ceased his mournful moan,
Such grief meseems about his heart is grown.
Then let the minstrel hush, that we may all
Rejoice together, not the hosts alone

"But the guest likewise: better is it so;
Since from the reverence that to guests we owe
Come convoy and the gifts of amity
That we upon him of our love bestow.

"The supplicant guest is as a brother dear
To him whose soul to wisdom has drawn near
Even but a little. Then conceal not now
By craft or counsel what I fain would hear:

"Plain words are fairest: therefore now proclaim
What in that far-off country was the name
Father and mother gave you, and all else
Who in your city dwell, or round the same.
"For wholly nameless none alive on earth
Is born, be he of much or little worth;
But upon every man some name bestow
Father and mother when they give him birth.

"Likewise your land and folk and city say,
That thitherward our ships their course may lay.
For our Phaeacian galleys pilot none
Require, nor helms like other ships have they,

"But understand men's mind and purpose well
Of their own selves, and know where all men dwell
In fertile fields and cities; and they pass
Exceeding swift across the ocean-swell,

"Hidden in mist and cloud: nor ever they
Fear to take damage or be cast away.
Yet from my sire Nausithous have I heard
A prophecy: Poseidon, he would say,

"Bore jealousy against us, for that we
Give a safe passage to all folk that be,
And some time a well-wrought Phaeacian ship
Would smite, returning on the misty sea

"From convoy, and cast up a mighty hill
Around our city. That may God fulfil
Even as the old man said, or may perchance
Leave unfulfilled, according as he will."
BOOK EIGHTH

"But come now, utter forth and plainly tell,  Of the strange lands wherein your wanderings fell,  And to what countries of mankind you came,  Their peoples, and their cities builded well:

"Whether men fierce and lawless and unkind,  Or hospitable and of godly mind.  And say why inwardly you weep and wail  To hear what anguish was to Troy assigned

"And the Argive Danaans: which things all were done  By operation of the Gods, who spun  For men the web of ruin, that thereof  For ages yet to be a song might run.

"Saw you perchance before the Trojan wall  A sister's husband or wife's father fall,  A valiant man? for next one's kin and blood  Is such affinity most close of all:

"Or one knit close to you in friendship's bands,  Gracious of heart and mighty of his hands?  Since nowise lesser than a brother born  The comrade is who wisdom understands."