
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

GoogleTM books

<https://books.google.com>



The Odyssey

Homer



Harvard College Library

FROM

Thomas Yost Cooper.....

2000
8/10
7/10

THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BLANK VERSE

BY

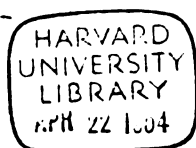
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

VOLUME I.



BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & Co.
1871

Gh 62.935 (1)



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871,
BY JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

UNIVERSITY PRESS: WELCH, BIGELOW, & CO.,
CAMBRIDGE.

P R E F A C E.

THE kind reception which my translation of the Iliad has met with from my countrymen has encouraged me to attempt a translation of the Odyssey in the same form of verse. I have found this a not unpleasing employment for a period of life which admonishes me that I cannot many times more appear before the public in this or any other manner. The task of translating verse is not, it is true, merely mechanical, since it requires that the translator should catch from his author somewhat of the glow with which he wrote, just as a good reader is himself moved by the words which he delivers, and communicates the emotion to his hearers; yet is the translator spared the labor of invention, — the task of producing the ideas which it is his business to express, as well as that of bringing them into their proper relations with each other. A great part of the fatigue which attends original composition, long pursued, is therefore avoided, and this gentler exercise of the intellectual faculties agrees better with that stage of life when the brain begins to be haunted by a presentiment that the time of its final repose is not far off.

Some of the observations which I have made, in my Preface to the *Iliad*, on that work and the translation which I have made of it, apply also to the *Odyssey* and to the version which I now lay before the reader. The differences between the two poems have been so well pointed out by critics, that I shall have occasion to speak of but two or three of them. In executing my task, I have certainly missed in the *Odyssey* the fire and vehemence of which I was so often sensible in the *Iliad*, and the effect of which naturally was to kindle the mind of the translator. I hope that the version which I have made will not on that account be found lacking in a sufficient degree of spirit and appearance of freedom to make it readable. Another peculiarity of the *Iliad*, of a less agreeable nature, consists in the frequent recurrence of hand-to-hand combats, in which the more eminent warriors despatch, by the most summary butchery, and with a fierce delight in their own prowess, their weaker adversaries. These incidents so often occur in the narrative, being thrown together in clusters, and described with an unsparing minuteness, that I have known persons, soon sated with these horrors, to pass over the pages in which they are described, and take up the narrative further on. There is nothing of this kind in the *Odyssey*, at least until near the close, where Ulysses takes a bloody vengeance on the suitors who have plundered his estate, and conspired to take the life of his son, and in that part of the poem the horror which so enormous a slaughter would naturally awaken is mitigated by the recollection of their

guilt. The gods of the *Odyssey* are not so often moved by brutal impulses as those of the *Iliad*, nor do they seem to dwell in a sphere so far removed from the recognition of those rules of right and wrong which are respected in human society. In the composition of the two poems, one of the most remarkable differences is the abundance of similes in the *Iliad*, and their comparatively rare appearance in the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad* the desire of illustrating his subject by a similitude sometimes seizes the poet in the midst of one of the most interesting parts of his narrative, and immediately there follows a striking picture of some incident bearing a certain resemblance to the one which he is relating. Sometimes, after one simile is minutely given, a second suggests itself, and is given with equal minuteness, and there is one instance at least of a third. It is curious to mark what a fascination the picturesque resemblance of objects and incidents has for the poet, and how one set of these images draws after it another, passing in magnificent procession across the mirror of his imagination. In the *Odyssey* are comparatively few examples of this mode of illustration; the poet is too much occupied with his narrative to think of them. How far this point of difference between the two poems tends to support the view of those who maintain that they could not have proceeded from the same author, is a question on which it is not my purpose to enter.

In the Preface to my version of the *Iliad*, I gave very briefly my reason for preserving the names derived from the Latin, by

which the deities of the Grecian mythology have hitherto been known to English readers, — that is to say, Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Pluto, Mars, Venus, and the rest, instead of Zeus, Herè, and the other names which are properly Greek. As the propriety of doing this is questioned by some persons of exact scholarship, I will state the argument a little more at large. The names I have employed have been given to the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece from the very beginnings of our language. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the rest, down to Proctor and Keats, — a list whose chronology extends through six hundred years, — have followed this usage, and we may even trace it back for centuries before either of them wrote. Our prose writers have done the same thing; the names of Latin derivation have been adopted by the earliest and latest translators of the New Testament. To each of the deities known by these names there is annexed in the mind of the English reader — and it is for the English reader that I have made this translation — a peculiar set of attributes. Speak of Juno and Diana, and the mere English reader understands you at once; but when he reads the names of Herè and Artemis, he looks into his classical dictionary. The names of Latin origin are naturalized; the others are aliens and strangers. The conjunction *and* itself, which has been handed down to us unchanged from our Saxon ancestors, holds not its place in our language by a firmer and more incontestable title than the names which we have hitherto given to the deities of ancient Greece.

We derive this usage from the Latin authors, — from Virgil, and Horace, and Ovid, and the prose writers of ancient Rome. Art as well as poetry knows these deities by the same names. We talk of the Venus de Medicis, the Venus of Milo, the Jupiter of Phidias, and never think of calling a statue of Mars a statue of Ares.

For my part, I am satisfied with the English language as it has been handed down to us. If the lines of my translation had bristled with the names of Zeus and Herè, and Poseidon and Ares, and Artemis and Demeter, I should feel that I had departed from the immemorial usage of the English tongue, that I had introduced obscurity where the meaning should have been plain, and that I had given just cause of complaint to the readers for whom I wrote.

W. C. BRYANT.

AUGUST, 1871.

CONTENTS

OF VOL. I.

BOOK I.

VISIT OF PALLAS TO TELEMACHUS.

	Page
A Council of the Gods.—Deliberations concerning Ulysses.—Mercury despatched to Calypso, to bid her send Ulysses to Ithaca.—Visit of Pallas, in the Shape of Mentor, to Telemachus, advising him to repair to Pylos and Sparta in Quest of his Father, Ulysses.—Revels of the Suitors of Penelope.—Phemius, the Minstrel, and his Song of the Return of the Grecians.—The Suitors rebuked by Telemachus . . .	1

BOOK II.

DEPARTURE OF TELEMACHUS FROM ITHACA

The Chief Men of Ithaca assembled by Telemachus.—His Complaint of the Suitors.—Their Attempt to justify themselves.—Prophecy of the Return of Ulysses by the Seer, Halitherses.—Request of Telemachus for a Vessel to visit Pylos and Sparta, in Quest of his Father, granted by the Assembly.—Preparations for his Departure	24
---	----

BOOK III.

INTERVIEW OF TELEMACHUS WITH NESTOR.

Arrival of Telemachus, with Pallas in the Shape of Mentor, at Pylos.—His Interview with Nestor.—Nestor's Narrative of his Return from Troy.—History of the Death of Agamemnon and the Revenge of Orestes.—Departure of Pallas to Heaven.—Telemachus sent by Nestor with his Son Peisistratus to Menelaus at Sparta	47
--	----

BOOK IV.

CONFERENCE OF TELEMACHUS AND MENELAUS.

Arrival of Telemachus and his Companion at Sparta.—A Wedding ; the Marriage of the Daughter of Menelaus.—Helen in Sparta.—Entertain-	
--	--

ment of the Guests.—Helen's Account of her Return to her Husband.
 —The Trojan Horse.—Narrative of the Visit of Menelaus to Egypt,
 in Order to consult the Sea-God, Proteus.—Menelaus informed by him
 that Ulysses is detained by Calypso in her Island.—Plot of the Suitors
 to lie in Wait for Telemachus on his Voyage and destroy him.—
 Penelope visited and consoled by Pallas in a Dream . . . 74

BOOK V.

DEPARTURE OF ULYSSES FROM CALYPSO.

Mercury despatched by Jupiter to Calypso with a Message commanding her
 to send away Ulysses.—A Raft constructed by Ulysses.—His Depart-
 ure on the Raft.—A Storm raised by Neptune, and the Raft destroyed.
 —Escape of Ulysses from the Tempest, and his Landing on the Isle of
 Scher' inhabited by the Phæacians . . . 119

BOOK VI.

ULYSSES DISCOVERED BY NAUSICAÄ.

Nausicaä, Daughter of Alcinoüs, King of the Phæacians, directed by Pallas to
 go to the River and wash her Marriage Robes.—Sports of her Maidens
 after the Washing is performed.—Ulysses awakened by the Noise, re-
 lieved and clothed by Nausicaä, and bidden to follow her into the City,
 and there make his Suit to the Queen, the Wife of Alcinoüs . . . 144

BOOK VII.

RECEPTION OF ULYSSES BY ALCINOÛS.

Return of Nausicaä to the City, followed by Ulysses.—Palace and Garden
 of Alcinoüs.—Reception of Ulysses by the Queen and her Husband.—
 Narrative given by Ulysses of his Voyage and Shipwreck . . . 162

BOOK VIII.

FESTIVALS IN HONOR OF ULYSSES.

A General Council of the Phæacians, in which it is determined to send
 Ulysses home to Ithaca.—A Solemn Feast.—Lay of the Trojan War,
 sung by Demodocus the Minstrel.—Public Games.—Ulysses conquers
 in throwing the Discus.—The Amour of Mars and Venus sung by De-
 modocus.—His Song of the Trojan Horse and the Fall of Troy . . . 180

Contents.

xi

BOOK IX.

THE CICONIANS, LOTUS-EATERS, AND CYCLOPS.

The Adventures of Ulysses after the Fall of Troy related by him at the Request of Alcinoüs.—His Attack on the Ciconians and the Destruction of their City.—Rally and Reinforcement of the Ciconians, who slaughter many of the Companions of Ulysses.—The Lotus-Eaters, who subsist on Flowers.—Arrival of Ulysses at the Land of the Cyclops.—Polyphemus and his Barbarities.—Revenge of Ulysses, who puts out the single Eye of Polyphemus and escapes 210

BOOK X.

ÆOLUS, THE LESTRIGONIANS, AND CIRCE.

Arrival of Ulysses at the Land of Æolus, who gives him the Winds in a Bag.—Folly of the Seamen, who untie the Bag while Ulysses is asleep.—A Tempest.—Disastrous Encounter with the Gigantic Læstrigons.—Arrival at the Island of Circè.—Transformation of the Greeks to Swine, and Recovery of their former Shape.—Preparations for a Journey to the Region of the Dead 238

BOOK XI.

VISIT OF ULYSSES TO THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

Voyage to the Land of the Dead.—Interview with Tiresias the Seer.—The Heroes and Heroines whom Ulysses saw there.—Interview with his Mother, and with Agamemnon, Achilles, and others.—Occupations of the Dead.—Punishments of the Guilty 267

BOOK XII.

THE SIRENS, SCYLLA, AND CHARYBDIS.

Return of Ulysses to the Island of Circè.—Her Counsels respecting his Homeward Voyage.—The Sirens.—Escape from Scylla and Charybdis.—His Arrival at Trinacria.—Slaughter of the Oxen of the Sun by his Companions.—A Tempest in Consequence, by which his Companions all perish, and he only escapes by swimming to the Island of Calypso . 301

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

TELL me, O Muse, of that sagacious man
Who, having overthrown the sacred town
Of Ilium, wandered far and visited
The capitals of many nations, learned
The customs of their dwellers, and endured 5
Great suffering on the deep ; his life was oft
In peril, as he labored to bring back
His comrades to their homes. He saved them not,
Though earnestly he strove ; they perished all,
Through their own folly ; for they banqueted, 10
Madmen ! upon the oxen of the Sun, —
The all-o'erlooking Sun, who cut them off
From their return. O goddess, virgin-child
Of Jove, relate some part of this to me.
Now all the rest, as many as escaped 15

The cruel doom of death, were at their homes
Safe from the perils of the war and sea,
While him alone, who pined to see his home
And wife again, Calypso, queenly nymph,
Great among goddesses, detained within 20
Her spacious grot, in hope that he might yet
Become her husband. Even when the years
Brought round the time in which the gods decreed
That he should reach again his dwelling-place
In Ithaca, though he was with his friends, 25
His toils were not yet ended. Of the gods
All pitied him save Neptune, who pursued
With wrath implacable the godlike chief,
Ulysses, even to his native land.

Among the Ethiopians was the god 30
Far off, — the Ethiopians most remote
Of men. Two tribes there are; one dwells beneath
The rising, one beneath the setting sun.
He went to grace a hecatomb of beeves
And lambs, and sat delighted at the feast; 35
While in the palace of Olympian Jove
The other gods assembled, and to them
The father of immortals and of men
Was speaking. To his mind arose the thought

Of that Ægisthus whom the famous son 40

Of Agamemnon, prince Orestes, slew.

Of him he thought and thus bespake the gods : —

“ How strange it is that mortals blame the gods

And say that we inflict the ills they bear,

When they, by their own folly and against 45

The will of fate, bring sorrow on themselves !

As late Ægisthus, unconstrained by fate,

Married the queen of Atreus' son and slew

The husband just returned from war. Yet well

He knew the bitter penalty, for we 50

Warned him. We sent the herald Argicide,

Bidding him neither slay the chief nor woo

His queen, for that Orestes, when he came

To manhood and might claim his heritage,

Would take due vengeance for Atrides slain. 55

So Hermes said ; his prudent words moved not

The purpose of Ægisthus, who now pays

The forfeit of his many crimes at once.”

Pallas, the blue-eyed goddess, thus replied : —

“ O father, son of Saturn, king of kings ! 60

Well he deserved his death. So perish all

Guilty of deeds like his ! But I am grieved

For sage Ulysses, that most wretched man,

So long detained, repining, and afar
From these he loves, upon a distant isle 65
Girt by the waters of the central deep, —
A forest isle, where dwells a deity
The daughter of wise Atlas, him who knows
The ocean to its utmost depths, and holds
Upright the lofty columns which divide 70
The earth from heaven. The daughter there detains
The unhappy chieftain, and with flattering words
Would win him to forget his Ithaca.
Meanwhile, impatient to behold the smokes
That rise from hearths in his own land, he pines 75
And willingly would die. Is not thy heart,
Olympius, touched by this? And did he not
Pay grateful sacrifice to thee beside
The Argive fleet in the broad realm of Troy?
Why then, O Jove, art thou so wroth with him? 80
Then answered cloud-compelling Jove: “My child,
What words have passed thy lips? Can I forget
Godlike Ulysses, who in gifts of mind
Excels all other men, and who has brought
Large offerings to the gods that dwell in heaven? 85
Yet he who holds the earth in his embrace,
Neptune, pursues him with perpetual hate

Because of Polypheme, the Cyclops, strong
Beyond all others of his giant race,
Whose eye Ulysses had put out. The nymph 90
Thoosa brought him forth, — a daughter she
Of Phorcys, ruling in the barren deep, —
And in the covert of o'erhanging rocks
She met with Neptune. For this cause the god
Who shakes the shores, although he slay him not, 95
Sends forth Ulysses wandering far away
From his own country. Let us now consult
Together and provide for his return,
And Neptune will lay by his wrath, for vain
It were for one like him to strive alone 100
Against the might of all the immortal gods.”

And then the blue-eyed Pallas spake again : —
“O father! son of Saturn, king of kings!
If such the pleasure of the blessed gods
That now the wise Ulysses shall return 105
To his own land, let us at once despatch
Hermes, the Argicide, our messenger,
Down to Ogygia, to the bright-haired nymph,
And make our steadfast purpose known to bring
The sufferer Ulysses to his home, 110
And I will haste to Ithaca, and move

His son, that with a resolute heart he call
The long-haired Greeks together and forbid
The excesses of the suitor train, who slay
His flocks and slow-paced beeves with crooked horns. 115
To Sparta I will send him and the sands
Of Pylos, to inquire for the return
Of his dear father. So a glorious fame
Shall gather round him in the eyes of men."

She spake, and fastened underneath her feet 120
The fair, ambrosial golden sandals worn
To bear her over ocean like the wind,
And o'er the boundless land. In hand she took,
Well tipped with trenchant brass, the mighty spear,
Heavy and huge and strong, with which she bears 125
Whole phalanxes of heroes to the earth,
When she, the daughter of a mighty sire,
Is angered. From the Olympian heights she plunged,
And stood among the men of Ithaca,
Just at the porch and threshold of their chief, 130
Ulysses. In her hand she bore the spear,
And seemed the stranger Mentès, he who led
The Taphians. There before the gate she found
The haughty suitors. Some beguiled the time
With draughts, while sitting on the hides of beeves 135

Which they had slaughtered. Heralds were with them,
And busy menials: some who in the bowls
Tempered the wine with water, some who cleansed
The tables with light sponges, and who set
The banquet forth and carved the meats for all. 140

Telemachus the godlike was the first
To see the goddess as he sat among
The crowd of suitors, sad at heart, and thought
Of his illustrious father, who might come
And scatter those who filled his palace halls, 145
And win new honor, and regain the rule
Over his own. As thus he sat and mused
Among the suitors, he beheld where stood
Pallas, and forth he sprang; he could not bear
To keep a stranger waiting at his door. 150

He came, and taking her right hand received
The brazen spear, and spake these winged words:—
“Hail, stranger! thou art truly welcome here;
First come and share our feast and be refreshed,
Then say what thou requirest at our hands.” 155

He spake and led the way, and in his steps
Pallas Athenè followed. Entering then
The lofty halls, he set the spear upright
By a tall column, in the armory

With polished walls, where rested many a lance 160
Of the large-souled Ulysses. Then he placed
His guest upon a throne, o'er which he spread
A covering many-hued and beautiful,
And gave her feet a footstool. Near to her
He drew his party-colored seat, aloof 165
From where the suitors sat ; that so his guest
Might not amid those haughty revellers
Be wearied with the tumult and enjoy
His meal the less, and that himself might ask
News of his absent father. In a bowl 170
Of silver, from a shapely ewer of gold,
A maid poured water for the hands, and set
A polished table near them. Then approached
A venerable matron bringing bread
And delicacies gathered from the board ; 175
And he who served the feast before them placed
Chargers with various meats, and cups of gold ;
While round the board a herald moved, and poured
Wine for the guests. The haughty suitors now
Came in, and took their places on the thrones 180
And couches ; heralds poured upon their hands
The water ; maidens heaped the canisters
With bread, and all put forth their hands to share

The banquet on the board, while to the brim
Boys filled the beakers. When the calls of thirst 185
And hunger were appeased, the suitors thought
Of other things that well become a feast, —
Song and the dance. And then a herald brought
A shapely harp, and gave it to the hands
Of Phemius, who had only by constraint 190
Sung to the suitors. On the chords he struck
A prelude to his lay, while, as he played,
Telemachus, that others might not hear,
Leaned forward, and to blue-eyed Pallas spake: —
“ My friend and guest, wilt thou take no offence 195
At what I say? These revellers enjoy
The harp and song, for at no cost of theirs
They waste the substance of another man,
Whose white bones now are mouldering in the rain
Upon some main-land, or are tossed about 200
By ocean billows. Should they see him once
In Ithaca, their prayers would rather rise
For swifter feet than richer stores of gold
And raiment. But an evil fate is his,
And he has perished. Even should we hear 205
From any of the dwellers upon earth
That he is near at hand, we could not hope.

For him is no return. But now, I pray,
Tell me, and frankly tell me, who thou art,
And of what race of men, and where thy home, 210
And who thy parents; how the mariners
Brought thee to Ithaca, and who they claim
To be, for well I deem thou couldst not come
Hither on foot. All this, I pray, relate
Truly, that I may know the whole. Art thou 215
For the first time arrived, or hast thou been
My father's guest? for many a stranger once
Resorted to our palace, and he knew
The way to win the kind regard of men."

Pallas, the blue-eyed goddess, answered thus: — 220
"I will tell all and truly. I am named
Mentes; my father was the great in war
Anchialus. I rule a people skilled
To wield the oar, the Taphians, and I come
With ship and crew across the dark blue deep 225
To Temesè, and to a race whose speech
Is different from my own, in quest of brass,
And bringing bright steel with me. I have left
Moored at the field behind the town my bark,
Within the bay of Reithrus, and beneath 230
The woods of Neïus. We claim to be

Guests by descent, and from our fathers' time,
As thou wilt learn if thou shouldst meet and ask
Laertes, the old hero. It is said
He comes no more within the city walls, 235
But in the fields dwells sadly by himself,
Where an old handmaid sets upon his board
His food and drink when weariness unnerves
His limbs in creeping o'er the fertile soil 240
Of his rich vineyard. I am come because
I heard thy father had at last returned,
And now am certain that the gods delay
His journey hither ; for the illustrious man
Cannot have died, but is detained alone 245
Somewhere upon the ocean, in some spot
Girt by the waters. There do cruel men
And savage keep him, pining to depart.
Now let me speak of what the gods reveal,
And what I deem will surely come to pass, 250
Although I am no seer and have no skill
In omens drawn from birds. Not long the chief
Will be an exile from his own dear land,
Though fettered to his place by links of steel ;
For he has large invention, and will plan 255
A way for his escape. Now tell me this,

And truly ; tall in stature as thou art,
Art thou in fact Ulysses' son ? In face
And glorious eyes thou dost resemble him
Exceedingly ; for he and I of yore 60
Were oftentimes companions, ere he sailed
For Ilium, whither also went the best
Among the Argives in their roomy ships,
Nor have we seen each other since that day."

Telemachus, the prudent, spake : " O guest, 265
True answer shalt thou have. My mother says
I am his son ; I know not ; never man
Knew his own father. Would I were the son
Of one whose happier lot it was to meet
Amidst his own estates the approach of age. 270
Now the most wretched of the sons of men
Is he to whom they say I owe my birth.
Thus is thy question answered." Then again
Spake blue-eyed Pallas : " Of a truth, the gods
Ordain not that thy race, in years to come, 275
Should be inglorious, since Penelope
Hath borne thee such as I behold thee now.
But frankly answer me, — what feast is here,
And what is this assembly ? What may be
The occasion ? is a banquet given ? is this 280

A wedding? A collation, where the guests
Furnish the meats, I think it cannot be,
So riotously goes the revel on
Throughout the palace. A well-judging man,
If he should come among them, would be moved 285
With anger at the shameful things they do."

Again Telemachus, the prudent, spake:—
"Since thou dost ask me, stranger, know that once
Rich and illustrious might this house be called
While yet the chief was here. But now the gods 290
Have grown unkind and willed it otherwise,
They make his fate a mystery beyond
The fate of other men. I should not grieve
So deeply for his loss if he had fallen
With his companions on the field of Troy, 295
Or midst his kindred when the war was o'er.
Then all the Greeks had built his monument,
And he had left his son a heritage
Of glory. Now has he become the prey
Of Harpies, perishing ingloriously, 300
Unseen, his fate unheard of, and has left
Mourning and grief, my portion. Not for him
Alone I grieve; the gods have cast on me
Yet other hardships. All the chiefs who rule

The isles, Dulichium, Samos, and the groves 305
That shade Zacynthus, and who bear the sway
In rugged Ithaca, have come to woo
My mother, and from day to day consume
My substance. She rejects not utterly
Their hateful suit, and yet she cannot bear 310
To end it by a marriage. Thus they waste
My heritage, and soon will seek my life."

Again in grief and anger Pallas spake : —
" Yea, greatly dost thou need the absent chief
Ulysses here, that he might lay his hands 315
Upon these shameless suitors. Were he now
To come and stand before the palace gate
With helm and buckler and two spears, as first
I saw him in our house, when drinking wine
And feasting, just returned from Ephyre, 320
Where Ilus dwelt, the son of Mermerus, —
For thither went Ulysses in a bark,
To seek a deadly drug with which to taint
His brazen arrows ; Ilus gave it not ;
He feared the immortal gods ; my father gave 325
The poison, for exceedingly he loved
His guest, — could now Ulysses, in such guise,
Once meet the suitors, short would be their lives

And bitter would the marriage banquet be.
Yet whether he return or not to take 330
Vengeance, in his own palace, on this crew
Of wassailers, rests only with the gods.
Now let me counsel thee to think betimes
How thou shalt thrust them from thy palace gates.
Observe me, and attend to what I say : 335
To-morrow thou shalt call the Achaian chiefs
To an assembly ; speak before them all,
And be the gods thy witnesses. Command
The suitors all to separate for their homes ;
And if thy mother's mind be bent to wed, 340
Let her return to where her father dwells,
A mighty prince, and there they will appoint
Magnificent nuptials, and an ample dower
Such as should honor a beloved child.
And now, if thou wilt heed me, I will give 345
A counsel for thy good. Man thy best ship
With twenty rowers, and go forth to seek
News of thy absent father. Thou shalt hear
Haply of him from some one of the sons
Of men, or else some word of rumor sent 350
By Jove, revealing what mankind should know.
First shape thy course for Pylos, and inquire

Of noble Nestor ; then, at Sparta, ask
Of fair-haired Menelaus, for he came
Last of the mailed Achaïans to his home. 355
And shouldst thou learn that yet thy father lives,
And will return, have patience yet a year,
However hard it seem. But shouldst thou find
That he is now no more, return forthwith
To thy own native land, and pile on high 360
His monument, and let the funeral rites
Be sumptuously performed as may become
The dead, and let thy mother wed again.
And when all this is fully brought to pass,
Take counsel with thy spirit and thy heart 365
How to destroy the suitor crew that haunt
Thy palace, whether by a secret snare
Or open force. No longer shouldst thou act
As if thou wert a boy ; thou hast outgrown
The age of childish sports. Hast thou not heard 370
What honor the divine Orestes gained
With all men, when he slew the murderer,
The crafty wretch Ægisthus, by whose hand
The illustrious father of Orestes died ?
And then, my friend, — for I perceive that thou 375
Art of a manly and a stately growth, —

Be also bold, that men hereafter born
May give thee praise. And now must I depart
To my good ship, and to my friends who wait,
Too anxiously perhaps, for my return.

380

Act wisely now, and bear my words in mind."

The prudent youth Telemachus rejoined: —

"Well hast thou spoken, and with kind intent,
O stranger! like a father to a son;

And ne'er shall I forget what thou hast said.

385

Yet stay, I pray thee, though in haste, and bathe

And be refreshed, and take to thy good ship

Some gift with thee, such as may please thee well,

Precious and rare, which thou mayst ever keep

In memory of me, — a gift like those

390

Which friendly hosts bestow upon their guests."

Then spake the blue-eyed Pallas: "Stay me not,

For now would I depart. Whatever gift

Thy heart may prompt thee to bestow, reserve

Till I come back, that I may bear it home,

395

And thou shalt take some precious thing in turn."

So spake the blue-eyed Pallas, and withdrew,

Ascending like a bird. She filled his heart

With strength and courage, waking vividly

His father's memory. Then the noble youth

400

Went forth among the suitors. Silent all
They sat and listened to the illustrious bard,
Who sang of the calamitous return
Of the Greek host from Troy, at the command
Of Pallas. From her chamber o'er the hall 405
The daughter of Icarius, the sage queen
Penelope, had heard the heavenly strain
And knew its theme. Down by the lofty stairs
She came, but not alone; there followed her
Two maidens. When the glorious lady reached 410
The threshold of the strong-built hall, where sat
The suitors, holding up a delicate veil
Before her face, and with a gush of tears,
The queen bespake the sacred minstrel thus: —
“Phemius! thou knowest many a pleasing theme, — 415
The deeds of gods and heroes, such as bards
Are wont to celebrate. Take then thy place
And sing of one of these, and let the guests
In silence drink the wine; but cease this strain;
It is too sad; it cuts me to the heart, 420
And wakes a sorrow without bounds, — such grief
I bear for him, my lord, of whom I think
Continually; whose glory is abroad
Through Hellas and through Argos, everywhere.”

And then Telemachus, the prudent, spake :— 425
 “Why, O my mother! canst thou not endure
 That thus the well-graced poet should delight
 His hearers with a theme to which his mind
 Is inly moved? The bards deserve no blame;
 Jove is the cause, for he at will inspires 430
 The lay that each must sing. Reprove not, then,
 The minstrel who relates the unhappy fate
 Of the Greek warriors. All men most applaud
 The song that has the newest theme; and thou—
 Strengthen thy heart to hear it. Keep in mind 435
 That not alone Ulysses is cut off
 From his return, but that with him at Troy
 Have many others perished. Now withdraw
 Into thy chamber; ply thy household tasks,
 The loom, the spindle; bid thy maidens speed 440
 Their work. To say what words beseem a feast
 Belongs to man, and most to me; for here
 Within these walls the authority is mine.”

The matron, wondering at his words, withdrew
 To her own place, but in her heart laid up 445
 Her son's wise sayings. When she now had reached,
 With her attendant maids, the upper rooms,
 She mourned Ulysses, her beloved spouse;

And wept, till blue-eyed Pallas closed her lids
In gentle slumbers. Noisily, meanwhile, 450
The suitors revelled in the shadowy halls;
And thus Telemachus, the prudent, spake: —

“Ye suitors of my mother, insolent
And overbearing; cheerful be our feast,
Not riotous. It would become us well 455
To listen to the lay of such a bard,
So like the gods in voice. I bid you all
Meet in full council with the morrow morn,
That I may give you warning to depart
From out my palace, and to seek your feasts 460
Elsewhere at your own charge, — haply to hold
Your daily banquets at each other’s homes.
But if it seem to you the better way
To plunder one man’s goods, go on to waste
My substance; I will call the immortal gods 465
To aid me, and if Jupiter allow
Fit retribution for your deeds, ye die,
Within this very palace, unavenged.”

He spake; the suitors bit their close-pressed lips,
Astonished at the youth’s courageous words. 470
And thus Antinoüs, Eupeithes’ son,
Made answer: “Most assuredly the gods,

Telemachus, have taught thee how to frame
 Grand sentences and gallantly harangue.
 Ne'er may the son of Saturn make thee king 475
 Over the sea-girt Ithaca, whose isle
 Is thy inheritance by claim of birth."

Telemachus, the prudent, thus rejoined : —
 "Wilt thou be angry at the word I speak,
 Antinoüs? I would willingly accept 480
 The kingly station if conferred by Jove.
 Dost thou indeed regard it as the worst
 Of all conditions of mankind? Not so
 For him who reigns; his house grows opulent,
 And he the more is honored. Many kings 485
 Within the bounds of sea-girt Ithaca
 There are, both young and old, let any one
 Bear rule, since great Ulysses is no more;
 But I will be the lord in mine own house,
 And o'er my servants whom the godlike chief, 490
 Ulysses, brought from war, his share of spoil."

Eurymachus, the son of Polybus,
 Addressed the youth in turn : "Assuredly,
 What man hereafter, of the Achaian race,
 Shall bear the rule o'er sea-girt Ithaca 495
 Rests with the gods. But thou shalt keep thy wealth,
 And may no son of violence come to make

A spoil of thy possessions while men dwell
 In Ithaca. And now, my friend, I ask
 Who was thy guest; whence came he, of what land 500
 Claims he to be, where do his kindred dwell
 And where his patrimonial acres lie?
 With tidings of thy father's near return
 Came he, or to receive a debt? How swift
 Was his departure, waiting not for us 505
 To know him! yet in aspect and in air
 He seemed to be no man of vulgar note."

Telemachus, the prudent, answered thus:—
 "My father's coming, O Eurymachus,
 Is to be hoped no more; nor can I trust 510
 Tidings from whatsoever part they come,
 Nor pay regard to oracles, although
 My mother send to bring a soothsayer
 Within the palace, and inquire of him.
 But this man was my father's guest; he comes 515
 From Taphos; Mentès is his name, a son
 Of the brave chief Anchialus; he reigns
 Over the Taphians, men who love the sea."

He spake, but in his secret heart he knew
 The immortal goddess. Then the suitors turned, 520
 Delighted, to the dance and cheerful song,
 And waited for the evening. On their sports

The evening with its shadowy blackness came ;
Then each to his own home withdrew to sleep,
While to his lofty-chamber, in full view, 525
Built high in that magnificent palace home,
Telemachus went up, and sought his couch,
Intent on many thoughts. The chaste and sage
Dame Eurycleia by his side went up
With lighted torches, — she a child of Ops, 530
Pisenor's son. Her, in her early bloom,
Laertes purchased for a hundred beeves,
And in his palace honored equally
With his chaste wife ; yet never sought her bed.
He would not wrong his queen. 'T was she who bore 535
The torches with Telemachus. She loved
Her young lord more than all the other maids,
And she had nursed him in his tender years.
He opened now the chamber door and sat
Upon the couch, put his soft tunic off 540
And placed it in the prudent matron's hands.
She folded it and smoothed it, hung it near
To that fair bed, and, going quickly forth,
Pulled at the silver ring to close the door,
And drew the thong that moved the fastening bolt. 545
He, lapped in the soft fleeces, all night long
Thought of the voyage Pallas had ordained.

BOOK II.

NOW when the Morning, child of Dawn, appeared,
The dear son of Ulysses left his bed
And put his garments on. His trenchant sword
He hung upon his shoulders, and made fast
His shapely sandals to his shining feet, 5
And issued from his chamber like a god.
At once he bade the clear-voiced heralds call
The long-haired Greeks to council. They obeyed;
Quickly the chiefs assembled, and when all
Were at the appointed place, Telemachus 10
Went to the council, bearing in his hand
A brazen spear, yet went he not alone.
Two swift dogs followed him, while Pallas shed
A heavenly beauty over him, and all
Admired him as he came. He took the seat 15
Of his great father, and the aged men
Made way for him. And then Ægyptius spake, —
A hero bowed with age, who much had seen

And known. His son, the warlike Antiphus,
 Went with the great Ulysses in his fleet 20
 To courser-breeding Troy, and afterward
 The cruel Cyclops, in the vaulted cave,
 Slew him for his last meal. Three other sons
 There were, and one of these, Eurynomus,
 Was of the suitor train; the others took 25
 Charge of their father's acres. Never yet
 Had he forgotten his lost son or ceased
 To grieve for him, and as he spoke he wept.

“Hear, men of Ithaca, what I shall say.
 No council, no assembly, have we held 30
 Since great Ulysses in his roomy ships
 Departed from our isle. Who now is he
 That summons us? On which of our young men
 Or elders presses this necessity?
 Is it belike that one of you has heard 35
 Of an approaching foe, and can declare
 The tidings clearly? Or would he propose
 And urge some other matter which concerns
 The public weal? A just and generous mind
 I deem is his, and 't is my hope that Jove 40
 Will bring to pass the good at which he aims.”

As thus he spake Ulysses' son rejoiced

In his auspicious words, nor longer kept
His seat, but, yielding to an inward force,
Rose midst them all to speak, while in his hand 45
Peisenor, the sagacious counsellor
And herald, placed the sceptre. Then he turned
To the old man, Ægyptius, speaking thus: —
“O aged man, not far from thee is he
Who called this council, as thou soon shalt know. 50
Mine chiefly is the trouble; I have brought
No news of an approaching foe, which I
Was first to hear, and would declare to all,
Nor urge I other matters which concern
The public weal; my own necessity — 55
The evil that has fallen on my house —
Constrains me; it is twofold. First, that I
Have lost an excellent father, who was king
Among you, and ruled o’er you with a sway
As gentle as a father’s. Greater yet 60
Is the next evil, and will soon o’erthrow
My house and waste my substance utterly.
Suitors, the sons of those who, in our isle,
Hold the chief rank, importunately press
Round my unwilling mother. They disdain 65
To ask her of Icarius, that the king

Her father may endow her, and bestow
His daughter on the man who best may gain
His favor, but with every day they come
Into our palace, sacrificing here 70
Oxen and sheep and fatling goats, and hold
High festival, and drink the purple wine
Unstinted, with unbounded waste; for here
Is no man like Ulysses to repel
The mischief from my house. Not such are we 75
As he was, to resist the wrong. We pass
For weaklings, immature in valor, yet
If I had but the power, assuredly
I would resist, for by these men are done
Insufferable things, nor does my house 80
Perish with honor. Ye yourselves should feel
Shame at these doings; ye should dread reproach
From those who dwell around us, and should fear
The offended gods, lest they repay these crimes
With vengeance. I beseech you, O my friends, 85
Both by Olympian Jove, and her by whom
Councils of men are summoned and dissolved, —
The goddess Themis, — that ye all refrain,
And leave me to my grief alone, unless
Ulysses, my great father, may have done 90

Wrong in his anger to the gallant Greeks,
 Which ye, by prompting men to acts like these,
 Seek to avenge on me. Far better 't were,
 Should ye yourselves destroy our goods and slay
 Our herds, since, were it so, there might in time 95
 Be some requital. We, from street to street,
 Would plead continually for recompense,
 Till all should be restored. But now ye heap
 Upon me wrongs for which is no redress."

Thus angrily he spake, and dashed to earth 100
 The sceptre, shedding tears. The people felt
 Compassion; all were silent for a space,
 And there was none who dared with railing words
 Answer Telemachus, save one alone,
 Antinoüs, who arose and thus replied: — 105

"Telemachus, thou youth of braggart speech
 And boundless in abuse, what hast thou said
 To our dishonor? Thou wouldst fix on us
 A brand of shame. The blame is not with us,
 The Achaian suitors; 't is thy mother's fault, 110
 Skilled as she is in crafty shifts. 'T is now
 Already the third year, and soon will be
 The fourth, since she began to cozen us.
 She gives us all to hope, and sends fair words

To each by message, yet in her own mind 115
Has other purposes. This shrewd device
She planned; she laid upon the loom a web,
Delicate, wide, and vast in length, and said
Thus to us all: 'Young princes, who are come
To woo me, since Ulysses is no more, — 120
My noble husband, — urge me not, I pray,
To marriage, till I finish in the loom —
That so my threads may not be spun in vain —
A funeral vesture for the hero-chief
Laertes, when his fatal hour shall come 125
With death's long sleep. Else some Achaian dame,
Might blame me, should I leave without a shroud
Him who in life possessed such ample wealth!'
Such were her words, and easily they wrought
Upon our generous minds. So went she on, 130
Weaving that ample web, and every night
Unravelling it by torchlight. Three full years
She practised thus, and by the fraud deceived
The Grecian youths; but when the hours had brought
The fourth year round, a woman who knew all 135
Revealed the mystery, and we ourselves
Saw her unravelling the ample web.
Thenceforth, constrained, and with unwilling hands,

She finished it. Now let the suitors make
Their answer to thy words, that thou mayst know 140
Our purpose fully, and the Achaïans all
May know it likewise. Send thy mother hence,
Requiring that she wed the suitor whom
Her father chooses and herself prefers.
But if she still go on to treat the sons 145
Of Greece with such despite, too confident
In gifts which Pallas has bestowed on her
So richly, noble arts, and faculties
Of mind, and crafty shifts, beyond all those
Of whom we ever heard that lived of yore, 150
The bright-haired ladies of the Achaïan race,
Tyro, Alcmena, and Mycenè, famed
For glossy tresses, none of them endowed
As is Penelope, though this last shift
Be ill devised, — so long will we consume 155
Thy substance and estate as she shall hold
Her present mood, the purpose which the gods
Have planted in her breast. She to herself
Gains great renown, but surely brings on thee
Loss of much goods. And now we go not hence 160
To our affairs nor elsewhere, till she wed
Whichever of the Greeks may please her most."

And then rejoined discreet Telemachus : —

“ Antinoüs, grievous wrong it were to send
Unwilling from this palace her who bore 165
And nursed me. Whether he be living yet
Or dead, my father is in distant lands ;
And should I, of my own accord and will,
Dismiss my mother, I must make perforce
Icarius large amends, and that were hard. 170
And he would do me mischief, and the gods
Would send yet other evils on my head.
For then my mother, going forth, would call
On the grim Furies, and the general curse
Of all men would be on me. Think not I 175
Will ever speak that word. But if ye bear
A sense of injury for what is past,
Go from these halls ; provide for other feasts,
Consuming what is yours, and visiting
Each other’s homes in turn. But if it seem 180
To you the wiser and the better way
To plunder one man’s goods, go on to waste
My substance. I shall call the eternal gods
To aid me, and, if Jupiter allow
Fit retribution for your crimes, ye die 185
Within this very palace unavenged.”

So spake Telemachus. The Thunderer, Jove,
Sent flying from a lofty mountain-top
Two eagles. First they floated on the wind
Close to each other, and with wings outspread; 190
But as they came to where the murmuring crowd
Was gathered just beneath their flight, they turned
And clapped their heavy pinions, looking down
With deadly omen on the heads below,
And with their talons tore each other's cheeks 195
And necks, and then they darted to the right
Away through Ithaca among its roofs.
All who beheld the eagles were amazed,
And wondered what event was near at hand.
Among the rest an aged hero spake, 200
Named Halitherses, Mastor's son. He knew,
More truly than the others of his age,
To augur from the flight of birds, and read
The will of fate, — and wisely thus he spake: —
“Hear, men of Ithaca, what I shall say. 205
I speak of what most narrowly concerns
The suitors, over whom already hangs
Great peril, for Ulysses will not be
Long at a distance from his home and friends.
Even now he is not far, and meditates 210

Slaughter and death to all the suitor train ;
And evil will ensue to many more
Of us, who dwell in sunny Ithaca.

Now let us think what measures may restrain
These men, — or let them of their own accord 215
Desist, — the soonest were for them the best.

For not as one untaught do I foretell
Events to come, but speak of what I know.

All things that I predicted to our chief,
What time the Argive troops embarked for Troy, 220
And sage Ulysses with them, are fulfilled ;

I said that after many hardships borne,
And all his comrades lost, the twentieth year
Would bring him back, a stranger to us all, —
And all that then I spake of comes to pass." 225

Eurymachus, the son of Polybus,
Answered the seer : " Go to thy house, old man,
And to thy boys, and prophesy to them,
Lest evil come upon them. I can act,
In matters such as these, a prophet's part 230
Better than thou. True, there are many birds
That fly about in sunshine, but not all
Are ominous. Ulysses far away
Has perished ; well it would have been if thou

Hadst perished with him ; then thou wouldst not prate 235
Idly of things to come, nor wouldst thou stir
Telemachus to anger, in the hope
Of bearing to thy house some gift from him.
Now let me say, and be assured my words
Will be fulfilled : Experienced as thou art, 240
If thou by treacherous speeches shalt inflame
A younger man than thou to violent deeds,
The sharper punishment shall first be his,
But we will lay on thee a penalty,
Old man, which thou shalt find it hard to bear, 245
And bitterly wilt thou repent. And now
Let me persuade Telemachus to send
His mother to her father. They will make
A marriage for her there, and give with her
A liberal dowry, such as may become 250
A favorite daughter on her wedding-day,
Else never will the sons of Greece renounce,
I think, the difficult suit. We do not fear
Telemachus himself, though glib of speech,
Nor care we for the empty oracle 255
Which thou, old man, dost utter, making thee
Only more hated. Still will his estate
Be wasted, nor will order e'er return

While she defers her marriage with some prince
Of the Achaians. We shall urge our suit 260
For that most excellent of womankind
As rivals, nor withdraw to seek the hand
Of others, whom we fitly might espouse."

To this discreet Telemachus replied : —
"Eurymachus, and ye, the illustrious train 265
Of suitors, I have nothing more to ask, —
No more to say, — for now the gods and all
The Achaians know the truth. But let me have
A gallant bark, and twenty men to make
From coast to coast a voyage, visiting 270
Sparta and sandy Pylos, to inquire
For my long-absent father, and the chance
Of his return, if any of mankind
Can tell me aught, or if some rumor come
From Jove, since thus are tidings often brought 275
To human knowledge. Should I learn that yet
He lives and may return, I then would wait
A twelvemonth, though impatient. Should I hear
That he no longer lives, I shall return
Homeward, and pile his monument on high 280
With funeral honors that become the dead,
And give my mother to a second spouse."

He spake and took his seat, and then arose
Mentor, once comrade of the excellent chief
Ulysses, who, departing with his fleet, 285
Consigned his household to the aged man,
That they should all obey him, and that he
Should safely keep his charge. He rose amid
The assembly, and addressed them wisely thus: —

“Hear and attend, ye men of Ithaca, 290
To what I say. Let never sceptred king
Henceforth be gracious, mild, and merciful,
And righteous; rather be he deaf to prayer
And prone to deeds of wrong, since no one now
Remembers the divine Ulysses more, 295
Among the people over whom he ruled
Benignly like a father. Yet I bear
No envy to the haughty suitors here,
Moved as they are to deeds of violence
By evil counsels, since, in pillaging 300
The substance of Ulysses, who they say
Will nevermore return, they risk their lives.
But I am angry with the rest, with all
Of you who sit here mute, nor even with words
Of stern reproof restrain their violence, 305
Though ye so many are and they so few.”

Leiocritus, Evenor's son rejoined: —

“Malicious Mentor, foolish man! what talk
Is this of holding us in check? 'T were hard
For numbers even greater than our own 310
To drive us from a feast. And should the prince
Of Ithaca, Ulysses, come himself,
Thinking to thrust the illustrious suitors forth
That banquet in these palace halls, his queen
Would have no cause for joy at his return, 315
Greatly as she desired it. He would draw
Sure death upon himself in strife with us
Who are so many. Thou hast spoken ill.
Now let the people who are gathered here
Disperse to their employments. We will leave 320
Mentor and Halitherses, who were both
His father's early comrades, to provide
For the youth's voyage. He will yet remain
A long time here, I think, to ask for news
In Ithaca, and never will set sail.” 325

Thus having said, he instantly dismissed
The people; they departed to their homes;
The suitors sought the palace of the prince.

Then to the ocean-side, apart from all,
Went forth Telemachus, and washed his hands 330

In the gray surf, and prayed to Pallas thus : —

“Hear me, thou deity who yesterday,
In visiting our palace, didst command
That I should traverse the black deep to learn
News of my absent father, and the chance
Of his return ! The Greeks themselves withstand
My purpose ; the proud suitors most of all.”

335

Such was his prayer, and straightway Pallas stood,
In form and voice like Mentor, by his side,
And thus accosted him with winged words : —

340

“Telemachus, thou henceforth shalt not lack
Valor or wisdom. If with thee abides
Thy father’s gallant spirit, as he was
In deed and word, thou wilt not vainly make
This voyage. But if thou be not in truth
The son of him and of Penelope,
Then I rely not on thee to perform
What thou dost meditate. Few sons are like
Their fathers : most are worse, a very few
Excel their parents. Since thou wilt not lack
Valor and wisdom in the coming time,
Nor is thy father’s shrewdness wanting quite
In thee, great hope there is that happily
This plan will be fulfilled. Regard not then

345

350

The suitor train, their purposes and plots. 355
 Senseless are they, as little wise as just,
 And have no thought of the black doom of death
 Now drawing near to sweep them in a day
 To their destruction. But thy enterprise
 Must suffer no delay. So much am I 360
 Thy father's friend and thine, that I will cause
 A swift bark to be fitted out for sea,
 And will myself attend thee. Go now hence
 Among the suitors, and make ready there
 The needful stores, and let them all be put 365
 In vessels, — wine in jars, and meal, the strength
 Of man, in close thick skins, — while I engage,
 Among the people here, a willing crew.
 Ships are there in our sea-girt Ithaca
 Full many, new and old, and I will choose 370
 The best of these, and see it well equipped.
 Then will we drag it down to the broad sea."

Thus Pallas spake, the child of Jupiter.
 Telemachus obeyed the heavenly voice,
 And stayed not; home he hastened, where he saw 375
 Sadly the arrogant suitors in the hall,
 Busily flaying goats and roasting swine.
 Antinoüs, laughing, came to meet the youth,

And fastened on his hand, and thus he spake : —

“Telemachus, thou youth of lofty speech 380
And boundless in abuse, let neither word
Nor deed that may displease thee vex thy heart,
But gayly eat and drink as thou wert wont.
The Achaians generously will provide
Whatever thou requirest, ship and men, — 385
All chosen rowers, — that thou mayst arrive
Sooner at sacred Pylos, there to learn
Tidings of thy illustrious father's fate.”

Then spake discreet Telemachus in turn : —

“Antinoös, never could I sit with you, 390
Arrogant ones! in silence nor enjoy
The feast in quiet. Is it not enough,
O suitors, that while I was yet a child
Ye wasted on your revelries my large
And rich possessions? Now that I am grown, 395
And, when I hear the words of other men,
Discern their meaning, now that every day
Strengthens my spirit, I will make the attempt
To bring the evil fates upon your heads,
Whether I go to Pylos or remain 400
Among this people. I shall surely make
This voyage, and it will not be in vain.

Although I go a passenger on board
Another's ship, — since neither ship have I
Nor rowers, — ye have judged that so were best.” 405

He spake, and quickly from the suitor's hand
Withdrew his own. The others who prepared
Their banquet in the palace scoffed at him,
And flung at him their bitter taunts, and one
Among the insolent youths reviled him thus : — 410

“Telemachus is certainly resolved
To butcher us. He goes to bring allies
From sandy Pylos or the Spartan coast,
He is so bent on slaughter. Or perhaps
He visits the rich land of Ephyre 415
In search of deadly poisons to be thrown
Into a cup and end us all at once.”

Then said another of the haughty youths : —
“Who knows but, wandering in his hollow bark,
He too may perish, far from all his friends, 420
Just as Ulysses perished? This would bring
Increase of labor ; it would cast on us
The trouble to divide his goods, and give
His palace to his mother, and to him
Who takes the woman as his wedded wife.” 425

So spake they, but Telemachus went down

To that high-vaulted room, his father's, where
Lay heaps of gold and brass, and garments store
In chests, and fragrant oils. And there stood casks
Of delicate old wine and pure, a drink 430
For gods, in rows against the wall, to wait
If ever, after many hardships borne,
Ulysses should return. Upon that room
Close-fitting double doors were shut, and there
Was one who night and day kept diligent watch, 435
A woman, Eurycleia, child of Ops,
Peisenor's son. Telemachus went in
And called her to him, and bespoke her thus:—

“Nurse, let sweet wine be drawn into my jars,
The finest next to that which thou dost keep 440
Expecting our unhappy lord, if yet
The nobly born Ulysses shall escape
The doom of death and come to us again.
Fill twelve, and fit the covers close, and pour
Meal into well-sewn skins, and let the tale 445
Be twenty measures of the flour of wheat.
This none but thou must know. Let all these things
Be brought together; then, as night shuts in,
When to her upper chamber, seeking rest,
My mother shall withdraw, I come and take

What thou providest for me. I am bound
For Sparta and for Pylos in the sands,
To gather news concerning the return
Of my dear father, if I haply may."

So spake the youth, and his beloved nurse 455
Sobbed, wept aloud, and spake these winged words: —

"Why should there come, dear child, a thought like this
Into thy heart. Why wouldst thou wander forth
To distant regions, — thou an only son
And dearly loved? Ulysses, nobly born, 460
Has perished, from his native land afar,
'Mid a strange race. These men, when thou art gone,
At once will lay their plots to take thy life,
And share thy wealth among them. Stay thou here
Among thy people; need is none that thou 465
Shouldst suffer, roaming o'er the barren deep."

Then spake discreet Telemachus again: —
"Be of good cheer, O nurse, for my design
Is not without the sanction of a god;
But swear thou not to let my mother know 470
Of my intent until the eleventh day
Or twelfth shall pass, or till, in missing me,
She learn of my departure, lest she weep
And stain with tears the beauty of her face."

He spake; the ancient woman solemnly
Swore by the gods, and when the rite was o'er
Drew wine into the jars, and poured the meal
Into the well-sewn skins. Telemachus
Entered the hall and joined the suitor train.

475

Then did the blue-eyed goddess turn her thoughts
To other plans, and taking on herself
The semblance of Telemachus, she ranged
The city, speaking to each man in turn,
And bidding him at nightfall to repair
To where the good ship lay. That gallant ship
She begged of the renowned Noëmon, son
Of Phronius, who with cheerful grace complied.

480

485

The sun went down, the city streets lay all
In shadow. Then she drew the good ship down
Into the sea, and brought and put on board
The appointments every well-built galley needs,
And moored her at the bottom of the port,
Where, in a throng, obedient to the word
Of Pallas, round her came her gallant crew.

490

With yet a new device the blue-eyed maid
Went to the palace of the godlike chief
Ulysses, where she poured a gentle sleep
Over the suitors. As they drank she made

495

Their senses wander, and their hands let fall
 The goblets. Now no longer at the board 500
 They sat, but sallied forth, and through the town
 Went to their slumbers, for the power of sleep
 Had fallen heavily upon their lids.

Then blue-eyed Pallas from those sumptuous halls
 Summoned Telemachus. She took the form 505
 And voice of Mentor, and bespake him thus : —

“Telemachus, already at their oars
 Sit thy well-armed companions and await
 Thy coming ; let us go without delay.”

Thus having spoken, Pallas led the way 510
 With rapid footsteps which he followed fast ;
 Till having reached the galley and the sea
 They found their long-haired comrades at the beach,
 And thus the gallant prince Telemachus
 Bespake them : “Hither, comrades, let us bring 515
 The sea-stores from the dwelling where they lie ;
 My mother knows not of it, nor her maids ;
 The secret has been told to one alone.”

He spake, and went before them. In his steps
 They followed. To the gallant bark they brought 520
 The stores, and, as the well-beloved son
 Of King Ulysses bade, they laid them down

Within the hull. Telemachus went up
The vessel's side, but Pallas first embarked,
And at the stern sat down, while next to her 525
Telemachus was seated. Then the crew
Cast loose the fastenings and went all on board,
And took their places on the rowers' seats,
While blue-eyed Pallas sent a favoring breeze,
A fresh wind from the west, that murmuring swept 530
The dark-blue main. Telemachus gave forth
The word to wield the tackle; they obeyed,
And raised the fir-tree mast, and, fitting it
Into its socket, bound it fast with cords,
And drew and spread with firmly twisted ropes 535
The shining sails on high. The steady wind
Swelled out the canvas in the midst; the ship
Moved on, the dark sea roaring round her keel,
As swiftly through the waves she cleft her way.
And when the rigging of that swift black ship 540
Was firmly in its place, they filled their cups
With wine, and to the ever-living gods
Poured out libations, most of all to one,
Jove's blue-eyed daughter. Thus through all that night
And all the ensuing morn they held their way. 545

BOOK III.

NOW from the fair broad bosom of the sea
Into the brazen vault of heaven the sun
Rose shining for the immortals and for men
Upon the foodful earth. The voyagers
Arrived at Pylos, nobly built, the town 5
Of Neleus. There, upon the ocean-side,
They found the people offering coal-black steers
To dark-haired Neptune. On nine seats they sat,
Five hundred on each seat; nine steers were slain
For each five hundred there. While they performed 10
The rite, and, tasting first the entrails, burned
The thighs to ocean's god, the Ithacans
Touched land, and, lifting up the good ship's sail,
Furled it and moored the keel, and then stepped out
Upon the shore. Forth from the galley came 15
Telemachus, the goddess guiding him,
And thus to him the blue-eyed Pallas said: —
“Telemachus, there now is no excuse,

Not even the least, for shamefaced backwardness.

Thou hast come hither o'er the deep to ask

20

For tidings of thy father, — what far land

Conceals him, what the fate that he has met.

Go then at once to Nestor, the renowned

In horsemanship, and we shall see what plan

He hath in mind for thee. Entreat him there

25

That frankly he declare it. He will speak

No word of falsehood; he is truly wise."

And thus discreet Telemachus replied: —

"O Mentor, how shall I approach the chief,

And with what salutation? Little skill

30

Have I in courtly phrase, and shame becomes

A youth in questioning an aged man."

Pallas, the blue-eyed goddess, spake again: —

"In part thy mind will prompt thy speech; in part

A god will put the words into thy mouth, —

35

For well I deem that thou wert neither born

Nor trained without the favor of the gods."

Thus having said, the blue-eyed Pallas moved

With hasty pace before, and in her steps

He followed close, until they reached the seats

40

Of those assembled Pylians. Nestor there

Sat with his sons, while his companions stood

Around him and prepared the feast, and some
Roasted the flesh at fires, and some transfix'd
The parts with spits. As they beheld the approach 45
Of strangers they advanced, and took their hands,
And bade them sit. Pisistratus, a son
Of Nestor, came the first of all, and took
A hand of each, and placed them at the feast
On the soft hides that o'er the ocean sand 50
Were spread beside his brother Thrasymed
And his own father ; brought for their repast
Parts of the entrails, poured for them the wine
Into a golden goblet, held it forth
In his right hand, and with these words bespake 55
Pallas, the child of ægis-bearing Jove : —

“ Pray, stranger, to King Neptune. Ye have chanced
Upon his feast in coming to our coast.
And after thy libation poured, and prayer
Made to the god, give over to thy friend 60
The goblet of choice wine that he may make
Libation also ; he, I question not,
Prays to the gods ; we all have need of them.
A younger man is he than thou, and seems
In age to be my equal ; therefore I 65
Will give the golden goblet first to thee.”

He spake, and in the hands of Pallas placed
The goblet of choice wine. Well pleased was she
With one so just and so discreet, — well pleased
That first to her he reached the cup of gold, 70
And thus she prayed to Neptune fervently : —

“Hear, Neptune, thou who dost embrace the earth,
And of thy grace disdain not to bestow
These blessings on thy suppliants. First of all
Vouchsafe to Nestor and his sons increase 75
Of glory ; on the Pylian people next
Bestow, for this most sumptuous hecatomb,
Large recompense ; and, lastly, grant to us —
Telemachus and me — a safe return
To our own country with the end attained 80
Which brought us hither in our gallant bark.”

Thus did she pray, while she fulfilled the prayer ;
And then she handed to Telemachus
The fair round goblet, and in words like hers
The dear son of Ulysses prayed. Meanwhile 85
The Pylians, having roasted well the flesh
And drawn it from the spits, distributing
To each his portion, held high festival.
And when the calls of hunger and of thirst
Were silenced, Nestor, the Gerenian knight, 90

Began discourse, and thus bespake his guests : —

“ The fitting time is come to ask our guests
Who they may be, since now their feast is o’er.
Say then, O strangers, who ye are, and whence
Ye come along the pathway of the deep. 95
Have ye an errand here, or do ye roam
The seas at large, like pirates, braving death,
And visiting with ravage foreign states ? ”

And then discreet Telemachus replied
Boldly, — for Pallas strengthened in that hour 100
His heart that he might confidently ask
News of his absent father, and so win
A worthy fame among the sons of men : —

“ O Nestor, son of Neleus, pride of Greece !
Thou bid’st us tell thee whence we came, and I 105
Will faithfully declare it. We are come
From Ithaca, beneath the Neritus,
And private, and not general, is the cause
Of which I am to speak. I came to ask
Concerning my great father, the large-souled 110
And nobly-born Ulysses, who ’t is said
With thee, his friend in arms, laid waste the town
Of Ilium. We have heard where all the rest
Who warred against the Trojans were cut off,

And died sad deaths ; his fate alone the son 115
 Of Saturn hath not chosen to reveal, —
 Whether he fell on land by hostile hands,
 Or while at sea was whelmed beneath the waves
 Of Amphitritè. Wherefore to thy knees
 I come, to ask that thou — if so thou wilt — 120
 Relate the manner of his mournful death,
 As thou didst see it with thine eyes, or else
 As thou from other wanderers hast heard
 Its history ; for she who brought him forth
 Bore him to be unhappy. Think thou not 125
 To soften aught, through tenderness to me,
 In thy recital, but in faithful words
 Tell me the whole, whatever thou hast seen.
 And I conjure thee, that if, in his life,
 My father, great Ulysses, ever gave 130
 Promise of word or deed for thee, and kept
 His promise, in the realm of Troy, where ye
 Achæians bore such hardships, that thou now
 Remember it and speak without disguise.”

And Nestor the Gerenian knight replied : — 135
 “ My friend, since thou recallest to my mind
 The sufferings borne by us the sons of Greece,
 Although of peerless valor, in that land,

Both when we ranged in ships the darkling sea
For booty wheresoe'er Achilles led, 140
And when around King Priam's populous town
We fought, where fell our bravest, know thou then
That there the valiant Ajax lies, and there
Achilles; there Patroclus, like the gods
In council; there my well-beloved son 145
Blameless and brave, Antilochus the swift
Of foot and warlike, — many woes beside
We bore, and who of mortal birth could give
Their history? Nay, though thou shouldst remain
Five years or six, and ask of all the griefs 150
Endured by the brave Greeks, thou wouldst depart
Outwearied to thy home, ere thou hadst heard
The whole. Nine years in harassing the foe
We passed, beleaguering them and planning wiles
Innumerable. Saturn's son at last 155
With difficulty seemed to close the war.
Then was there none who might presume to vie
In wisdom with Ulysses; that great man
Excelled in every kind of stratagem, —
Thy father, — if indeed thou be his son. 160
I look on thee amazed; all thy discourse
Is just like his, and one would ne'er believe

A younger man could speak so much like him.
While we were there, Ulysses and myself
In council or assembly never spake 165
On different sides, but with a like intent
We thoughtfully consulted how to guide
The Achaïans in the way we deemed the best ;
But after we had overthrown and spoiled
King Priam's lofty city, and set sail 170
For home, and by some heavenly power the Greeks
Were scattered, Jupiter ordained for them
A sad return. For all were neither wise
Nor just, and many drew upon themselves
An evil doom, — the fatal wrath of her, 175
The blue-eyed maid, who claims her birth from Jove.
'T was she who kindled strife between the sons -
Of Atreus. They had called the Achaïans all
To an assembly, not with due regard
To order, at the setting of the sun, 180
And thither came the warriors overpowered
With wine. The brother kings set forth the cause
Of that assembly. Menelaus first
Bade all the Greeks prepare for their return
O'er the great deep. That counsel little pleased 185
King Agamemnon, who desired to keep

The people longer there, that he might soothe
By sacred hecatombs the fiery wrath
Of Pallas. Fool! who could not see how vain
Were such persuasion, for the eternal gods 190
Are not soon won to change their purposes.
They stood disputing thus, with bitter words,
Till wrangling noisily on different sides
Rose up the well-armed Greeks. The ensuing night
We rested, but we cherished in our breasts 195
A mutual hate; so for our punishment
Had Jove ordained. With early morn we drew
Our ships to the great deep, and put our goods
And our deep-bosomed women all on board.
Yet half the host went not, but on the shore 200
Remained with Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
And shepherd of the people. All the rest
Embarked, weighed anchor, and sailed swiftly thence;
A deity made smooth the mighty deep,
And when we came to Tenedos we paid 205
Our offerings to the gods and longed for home —
Vainly; it pleased not unpropitious Jove
To favor our return, and once again
He sent among us strife. A part of us
Led by Ulysses, that sagacious prince, 210

To please Atrides Agamemnon turned
Their well-oared galleys back. But I, with all
The vessels of the fleet that followed me,
Fled on my way, perceiving that some god
Was meditating evil. With us fled, 215
Encouraging his men, the warlike son
Of Tydeus. Fair-haired Menelaus came
Later to us in Lesbos, where we planned
For a long voyage, whether we should sail
Around the rugged Chios, toward the isle 220
Of Psyria, keeping that upon the left,
Or under Chios pass beside the steeps
Of windy Mimas. We besought the god
That he would show a sign, and he complied,
And bade us to Eubœa cross the deep 225
Right in the midst, the sooner to escape
All danger. Then the wind blew strong and shrill,
And swiftly o'er the fishy gulfs our fleet
Flew on, and reached Geræstus in the night.
There, having passed the mighty deep, we made 230
To Neptune offerings of many a thigh
Of beeves. The fourth day dawned, and now the men
Of Diomed, the mighty horseman, son
Of Tydeus, stopped at Argos with their fleet,

While I went on to Pylos with the wind, 235
Which never, from the moment that the god
First sent it o'er the waters, ceased to blow.

“So, my dear child, I reached my home, nor knew
Nor heard from others who among the Greeks
Was saved, or who had perished on the way. 240
Yet what I since have heard while here I sit
Within my palace thou shalt duly learn.
Nor is it what I ought to keep from thee.

“’T is said the Myrmidonian spearmen, led
By great Achilles’ famous son, returned 245
Happily home; as happily the son
Of Pæas, Philoctetes the renowned.
Idomeneus brought also back to Crete
All his companions who survived the war;
The sea took none of them. But ye have heard, 250
Though far away, the fate of Atreus’ son, —
How he came home, and how Ægisthus laid
A plot to slay him, yet on his own head
Drew heavy punishment, — so fortunate
It is when he who falls by murder leaves 255
A son; for ’t was the monarch’s son who took
Vengeance upon the crafty murderer
Ægisthus, by whose hand Atrides died.

Thou too, my friend, for thou art large of frame,
And of a noble presence, be thou brave, 260
That men in time to come may give thee praise."

Then spake discreet Telemachus again : —
"O Nestor, son of Neleus, pride of Greece,
Ample was his revenge, and far and wide
The Greeks will spread his fame to be the song 265
Of future times. O might the gods confer
On me an equal power to avenge myself
On that importunate, overbearing crew
Of suitors, who insult me, and devise
Evil against me! But the gods deny 270
Such fortune to my father and to me,
And all that now is left me is to bear."

Again spake Nestor the Gerenian knight : —
"Since thou, my friend, hast spoken words which bring
What I have heard to mind, — the rumor goes 275
That in thy palace many suitors wait
About thy mother, and in spite of thee
Do grievous wrong. Now tell me; dost thou yield
Willingly, or because the people, swayed
By oracles, regard thee as their foe? 280
Thy father yet may come again, — who knows? —
Alone, or with the other Greeks, to take

The vengeance which these violent deeds deserve.
 Should blue-eyed Pallas deign to favor thee,
 As once she watched to guard the glorious chief 285
 Ulysses in the realm of Troy, where we,
 The Achaians, bore such hardships, — for I ne'er
 Have seen the gods so openly befriend
 A man as Pallas there befriended him, —
 Should she thus deign to favor thee and keep 290
 Watch over thee, then haply some of these
 Will never think of marriage rites again.”

Then spake discreet Telemachus again : —
 “O aged man ! I cannot think thy words
 Will be fulfilled ! for they import too much 295
 And they amaze me. What thou sayst I wish
 May come to pass, but know it cannot be,
 Not even though the gods should will it so.”

Then thus the blue-eyed goddess, Pallas, spake : —
 “Telemachus, what words have passed thy lips ? 300
 Easily can a god, whene'er he will,
 In the most distant regions safely keep
 A man ; and I would rather reach my home
 Securely, after many hardships borne,
 Than perish suddenly on my return 305
 As Agamemnon perished by the guile

Of base Ægisthus and the queen. And yet
 The gods themselves have not the power to save
 Whom most they cherish from the common doom
 When cruel fate brings on the last long sleep." 310

Discreet Telemachus made answer thus: —

"Let us, O Mentor, talk no more of this,
 Though much we grieve; he never will return,
 For his is the black doom of death ordained
 By the great gods. Now suffer me to ask 315
 Of Nestor further, since to him are known,
 Beyond all other men, the rules of right
 And prudence. He has governed, so men say,
 Three generations, and to me he seems
 In aspect like the ever-living gods. 320
 O Nestor, son of Neleus, truly say
 How died the monarch over mighty realms,
 Atrides Agamemnon? Where was then
 His brother Menelaus? By what arts
 Did treacherous Ægisthus plan his death, 325
 And slay a braver warrior than himself?
 Was not the brother in the Achaian town
 Of Argos? or was he a wanderer
 In other lands, which made the murderer bold?"

The knight, Gerenian Nestor, answered thus: — 330

“I will tell all and truly. Thou hast guessed
Rightly and as it happened. Had the son
Of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaus, come
From Troy, and found Ægisthus yet alive
Within the palace, he had never flung 335
The loose earth on his corpse, but dogs and birds
Had preyed upon it, lying in the fields
Far from the city, and no woman’s voice
Of all the Greeks had raised the wail for him.
Great was the crime he plotted. We were yet 340
Afar, enduring the hard toils of war,
While he, securely couched in his retreat
At Argos, famed for steeds, with flattering words
Corrupted Agamemnon’s queen. At first
The noble Clytemnestra turned away 345
With horror from the crime; for yet her heart
Was right, and by her side there stood a bard
With whom Atrides, when he went to Troy,
Had left his wife with many an earnest charge.
But when the gods and fate had spread a net 350
For his destruction, then Ægisthus bore
The minstrel to a desert isle, and there
Left him to be devoured by birds of prey,
And led the queen, as willing as himself,

To his own palace. Many a victim's thigh 355
Upon the hallowed altars of the gods
He offered, many a gift of ornaments
Woven or wrought in gold he hung within
Their temples, since at length the mighty end
For which he hardly dared to hope was gained. 360
We sailed together from the coast of Troy,
Atrides, Menelaus, and myself,
Friends to each other. When the headland height
Of Athens, hallowed Sunium, met our eyes,
Apollo smote with his still shafts, and slew 365
Phrontis, Onetor's son, who steered the bark
Of Menelaus, holding in his hands
The rudder as the galley scudded on, —
And skilled was he beyond all other men
To guide a vessel when the storm was high. 370
So there did Menelaus stay his course,
Though eager to go on, that he might lay
His friend in earth and pay the funeral rites.
But setting sail again with all his fleet
Upon the dark-blue sea, all-seeing Jove 375
Decreed a perilous voyage. He sent forth
His shrill-voiced hurricane, and heaped on high
The mountain waves. There, scattering the barks

Far from each other, part he drove to Crete,
Where the Cydonians dwell, beside the stream 380
Of Jardanus. A smooth and pointed rock
Just on the bounds of Gortys stands amidst
The dark-blue deep. The south wind thitherward
Sweeps a great sea towards Phœstus, and against
The headland on the left, where that small rock 385
Meets and withstands the mighty wave. The ships
Were driven on this, and scarce the crews escaped
With life; the ships were dashed against the crags
And wrecked, save five, and these, with their black prows,
Were swept toward Egypt by the winds and waves. 390

“Thus adding to his wealth and gathering gold
He roamed the ocean in his ships among
Men of strange speech. Ægisthus meantime planned
His guilty deeds at home; he slew the king
Atrides, and the people took his yoke. 395
Seven years in rich Mycenæ he bore rule,
And on the eighth, to his destruction, came
The nobly-born Orestes, just returned
From Athens, and cut off that man of blood,
The crafty wretch Ægisthus, by whose hand 400
Fell his illustrious father. Then he bade
The Argives to the solemn burial-feast

Of his bad mother and the craven wretch
Ægisthus. Menelaus, that same day,
The great in war, arrived, and brought large wealth — 405
So large his galleys could contain no more.

“And thou, my friend, be thou not long away,
Wandering from home, thy rich possessions left,
And in thy palace-halls a lawless crew,
Lest they devour thy substance, and divide 410
Thy goods, and thou have crossed the sea in vain.
Yet must I counsel and enjoin on thee
To visit Menelaus, who has come
Just now from lands and nations of strange men,
Whence one could hardly hope for a return ; 415
Whom once the tempest’s violence had driven
Into that great wide sea o’er which the birds
Of heaven could scarce fly hither in a year,
Such is its fearful vastness. Go thou now,
Thou with thy ship and friends ; or if thou choose 420
The way by land, a car and steeds are here,
And here my sons to guide thee to the town
Of hallowed Lacedæmon, there to find
The fair-haired Menelaus. Earnestly
Beseech of him that he declare the truth. 425
Falsely he will not speak, for he is wise.”

He spake ; the sun went down ; the darkness crept
Over the earth, and blue-eyed Pallas said : —
“ Most wisely hast thou spoken, ancient man.
Now cut ye out the tongues, and mingle wine, 430
That we to Neptune and the other gods
May pour libations, and then think of rest ;
For now the hour is come ; the light is gone,
Nor at a feast in honor of the gods
Should we long sit, but in good time withdraw.” 435

Jove’s daughter spake ; they hearkened to her words ;
The heralds came to them, and on their hands
Poured water ; boys began to fill the bowls
To the hard brim, and ministered to each
From left to right. Then threw they to the flames 440
The victims’ tongues, and, rising, poured on earth
Wine to the gods ; and when that rite was paid,
And when their thirst was satiate, Pallas rose
With nobly-born Telemachus to go
To their good ship, but Nestor still detained 445
The twain, and chidingly bespake them thus : —

“ Now Jove and all the other gods forbid
That ye should go from me to your good ship,
As from some half-clad wretch, too poor to own
Mantles and blankets in whose soft warm folds 450

He and his guests might sleep ; but I have both —
Mantles and blankets — beautifully wrought,
And never shall the son of that great man
Ulysses lie upon a galley's deck
While I am living. After me I hope
My sons, who dwell within my palace-halls,
Will duly welcome all who enter here."

455

And thus again the blue-eyed Pallas spake : —
"Well hast thou said, my aged friend, and well
Doth it become Telemachus to heed
Thy words, for that were best. Let him remain
With thee and sleep in thine abode, while I
Repair to our black ship, encouraging
The crew, and setting them their proper tasks,
For I am eldest of them all ; the rest
Are young men yet, and moved by friendship joined
Our enterprise ; the peers in age are they
Of the large-souled Telemachus. To-night
I sleep within the hull of our black ship,
And sail with early morning for the land
Of the Cauconians, large of soul, from whom
A debt is due me, neither new nor small.
Send meantime from thy palace in a car,
And with thy son, this youth, and be the steeds

460

465

470

The fleetest and the strongest in thy stalls.”

475

The blue-eyed Pallas, having spoken thus,
Passed like an eagle out of sight, and all
Were seized with deep amazement as they saw.
The aged monarch, wondering at the sight,
Took by the hand Telemachus, and said : —

480

“Of craven temper, and unapt for war,
O friend, thou canst not be, since thus the gods
Attend and guide thee in thy youth. And this,
Of all the gods whose dwelling is in heaven,
Can be no other than the spoiler-queen
Pallas, the child of Jove, who also held
Thy father in such eminent esteem
Among the Grecians. Deign to favor us,
O queen ! bestow on me and on my sons
And on my venerable spouse the meed
Of special glory. I will bring to thee
A sacrifice, a broad-horned yearling steer,
Which never man hath tamed or led beneath
The yoke. Her will I bring with gilded horns,
And lay an offering on thine altar-fires.”

485

490

495

Such were his words, and Pallas heard the prayer,
And then Gerenian Nestor led the way,
And with his sons and sons-in-law approached

His glorious palace. When they came within
The monarch's sumptuous halls, each took his place 500
In order on the couches and the thrones.

The old man mingled for them as they came
A bowl of delicate wine, eleven years old,
Drawn by the damsel cupbearer, who took
Its cover from the jar. The aged chief 505
Mingled it in the bowl, and, pouring out
A part to Pallas, offered earnest prayer
To her, who sprang from ægis-bearing Jove.

When due libations had been made, and all
Drank till they wished no more, most went away, 510
Each to his home to sleep; but Nestor made
Telemachus, the son of the great chief
Ulysses, rest upon a sumptuous couch
Within the echoing hall, and near to him
The chief of squadrons, skilled to wield the spear, 515
Peisistratus, who only of his sons
Abode in Nestor's halls unwedded yet;
While in an inner room of that tall pile
The monarch slumbered on a bed of state,
Decked for him by the labors of his queen. 520

Soon as the daughter of the dawn appeared,
The rosy-fingered Morning, Nestor left

His bed and went abroad, and took his seat
On smooth white stones before his lofty doors,
That glistened as with oil, on which before 525
Sat Neleus, wise in council as the gods.
But he had yielded to the will of fate,
And passed into the Underworld. Now sat
Gerenian Nestor in his father's place,
The guardian of the Greeks. Around his seat, 530
Just from the chambers of their rest, his sons
Echephron, Stratius, and Aretus came,
Perseus, and Thrasymedes; after these
Came brave Peisistratus, the sixth and last.
They led Telemachus, the godlike youth, 535
And placed him near them. The Gerenian knight
Nestor began, and thus bespake his sons: —

“Do quickly what I ask, dear sons, and aid
To render Pallas, first of all the gods,
Propitious, — Pallas, who has deigned to come, 540
And at a solemn feast to manifest
Herself to me. Let one of you go forth
Among the fields, and bring a heifer thence,
Led by the herdsman. To the dark-hulled ship
Of the large-souled Telemachus I bid 545
Another son repair, and bring the crew

Save only two ; and let another call
Laërceus hither, skilled to work in gold,
That he may plate with gold the heifer's horns.
Let all the rest remain to bid the maids
Within prepare a sumptuous feast, and bring
Seats, wood, and limpid water from the fount."

550

He spake, and all were busy. From the field
The bullock came ; from the swift-sailing bark
Came the companions of the gallant youth
Telemachus ; with all his implements —
Hammer and anvil, and well-jointed tongs —
With which he wrought, the goldsmith also came,
And to be present at the sacred rites
Pallas came likewise. Nestor, aged knight,
Brought forth the gold ; the artisan prepared
The metal, and about the bullock's horns
Wound it, that Pallas might with pleasure see
The victim so adorned. Then Stratius grasped
The horns, and, aided by Echephron, led
The bullock. From his room Aretus brought
A laver filled with water in one hand,
And in the other hand a canister
Of cakes, while Thrasymedes, great in war,
Stood near with a sharp axe, about to smite

555

560

565

570

The victim. Perseus held a vase to catch
The blood, while Nestor, aged horseman, took
Water and cakes, and offering first a part,
And flinging the shorn forelock to the flames,
Prayed to the goddess Pallas fervently. 575

And now, when they had prayed, and flung the cakes,
The large-souled Thrasymedes, Nestor's son,
Struck, where he stood, the blow; the bullock's strength
Gave way. At once the daughters of the king,
And his sons' wives, and queen Eurydicè, — 580
Nestor's chaste wife, and daughter eldest born
Of Clymenus, broke forth in shrilly cries.

From the great earth the sons then lifted up
And held the victim's head. Peisistratus,
The chief of squadrons, slew it. When the blood 585
Had ceased to flow, and life had left its limbs,
They quickly severed joint from joint; they hewed
The thighs away, and duly covered them
With caul, a double fold, on which they laid
Raw strips of flesh. The aged monarch burned 590
These over the cleft wood, and poured dark wine
Upon them, while beside him stood the youths
With five-pronged spits; and when the thighs were burned
And entrails tasted, all the rest they carved

Into small portions and transfix'd with spits, 595
And roasted, holding the sharp spits in hand.
Meantime, fair Polycastè, youngest born
Of Nestor's daughters, gave Telemachus
The bath ; and after he had bathed she shed
A rich oil over him, and in a cloak 600
Of noble texture and a tunic robed
The prince, who, like a god in presence, left
The bath, and took his place where Nestor sat,
The shepherd of the people. When the youths
Had roasted well and from the spits withdrawn 605
The flesh, they took their places at the feast.
Then rose up chosen men, and poured the wine
Into the cups of gold ; and when at length
The thirst and appetite were both allayed,
The knight, Gerenian Nestor, thus began : — 610
“ Rise now, my sons ; join to the bright-haired steeds
My car, and let Telemachus depart.”
He spake ; they hearkened and obeyed, and straight
Yoked the swift horses to the car. Then came
The matron of the household, laying bread 615
And wine within the car, and dainties such
As make a prince's fare. Telemachus
Then climbed into the sumptuous seat. The son

Of Nestor and the chief of armed bands,
Peisistratus, climbed also, took his place 620
Beside him, grasped the reins, and with the lash
Urged on the coursers. Not unwillingly
They darted toward the plain, and left behind
The lofty Pylos. All that day they shook
The yoke on both their necks. The sun went down; 625
The highways lay in darkness when they came
To Pheræ and the abode of Diocles,
Son of Orsilochus, who claimed to be
The offspring of Alpheius. They with him
Found welcome there, and there that night they slept. 630
And when the rosy-fingered Morn appeared,
They yoked the horses, climbed the shining car,
And issued from the palace gate beneath
The sounding portico. Peisistratus
Wielded the lash to urge the coursers on, 635
And not unwillingly they flew and reached
A land of harvests. Here the travellers found
Their journey's end, so swiftly those fleet steeds
Had borne them on. And now the sun went down,
And darkness gathered over all the ways. 640

BOOK IV.

THEY came to Lacedæmon's valley, seamed
With dells, and to the palace of its king,
The glorious Menelaus, whom they found
Within, and at a wedding banquet, made
Both for his blameless daughter and his son, 5
And many guests. Her he must send away,
Bride of the son of that invincible chief,
Achilles. He betrothed her while in Troy,
And gave his kingly word, and now the gods .
Fulfilled it by the marriage. He was now 10
Sending her forth, with steeds and cars, to reach
The noble city of the Myrmidons,
Where ruled her consort. From the Spartan coast
He brought Alector's daughter for his son,
The gallant Megapenthes, borne to him 15
By a handmaiden in his later years.
For not to Helen had the gods vouchsafed
Yet other offspring, after she had brought

A lovely daughter forth, Hermione,
Like golden Venus both in face and form.

20

So banqueting the neighbors and the friends
Of glorious Menelaus sat beneath
The lofty ceiling of those spacious halls,
Delighted with the feast. A sacred bard
Amidst them touched the harp and sang to them
While, as the song began, two dancers sprang
Into the midst and trod the measure there.

25

But they — the hero-youth Telemachus
And Nestor's eminent son — were at the gate,
And standing in the entrance with their steeds.
The worthy Eteoneus, coming forth, —
The trusty servant of the glorious son

30

Of Atreus, — saw, and hastening thence to tell
The shepherd of the people, through the hall
He came to him, and spake these winged words: —

35

“O Menelaus, foster-child of Jove,
Two strangers have arrived, two men who seem
Descended from almighty Jupiter.

Shall we then loose the harness from their steeds,
Or bid them elsewhere seek a friendly host?”

40

The fair-haired king indignantly replied: —
“Nay, Eteoneus, thou hast not been wont,

Son of Boëthus, thus to play the fool.
Thou pratest idly, like a child. Ourselves
Have sat, as guests, at generous banquets given 45
By other men, when journeying hitherward
In hope that Jove might grant a respite here
From our disasters. Hasten, then, to loose
The steeds, and bring the strangers to the feast.”

He spake; the attendant hastened forth and called 50
The other trusty servitors, with charge
To follow. They unyoked the sweaty steeds,
And bound them to the stalls, and gave them oats,
With which they mingled the white barley-grains,
And close against the shining wall they placed 55
The car, and then they led the guests within
The sumptuous palace. Entering, these admired
The palace of the foster-child of Jove,
For like the splendor of the sun and moon
Its glory was. They with delighted eyes 60
Gazed, and, descending to the polished baths,
They bathed. The attendant maids who at the bath
Had ministered, anointing them with oil,
Arrayed the stranger guests in fleecy cloaks
And tunics. Each sat down upon a throne 65
Near to Atrides. Now a handmaid brought

A beautiful ewer of gold, and laver wrought
Of silver, and poured water for their hands,
And spread a polished table near their seat ;
The reverend matron of the household came 70
With bread, and set before them many a dish
Gathered from all the feast. The carver next
Brought chargers lifted high, and in them meats
Of every flavor, and before them placed
Beakers of gold. The fair-haired monarch gave 75
His hand to each, and then bespoke them thus : —

“Now taste our banquet and rejoice, and when
Ye are refreshed with food we will inquire
Who ye may be ; for ye are not of those
Whose race degenerates, ye are surely born 80
Of sceptred kings, the favorites of Jove.
Ignoble men have never sons like you.”

Thus having said, and taking in his hands
A fatling bullock's chine, which menials brought
Roasted, and placed beside the king in sign 85
Of honor, this he laid before his guests.
And they put forth their hands and banqueted ;
And when the calls of hunger and of thirst
At length were stilled, Telemachus inclined
His head toward Nestor's son, that no one else 90

Might listen to his words, and thus he said : —

“ See, son of Nestor, my beloved friend,
In all these echoing rooms the sheen of brass,
Of gold, of amber, and of ivory ;
Such is the palace of Olympian Jove
Within its walls. How many things are here
Of priceless worth ! I wonder as I gaze.”

95

The fair-haired Menelaus heard him speak,
And thus accosted both with winged words : —

“ Dear sons, no mortal man may vie with Jove,
Whose palace and possessions never know
Decay, but other men may vie or not
In wealth with me. ’T was after suffering
And wandering long that in my fleet I brought
My wealth with me, and landed on this coast
In the eighth year. For I had roamed afar
To Cyprus and to Phœnicè, and where
The Egyptians dwell, and Ethiopia’s sons,
And the Sidonians, and the Erembian race,
And to the coast of Lybia, where the lambs
Are yeaned with budding horns. There do the ewes
Thrice in the circle of the year bring forth
Their young. There both the master of the herd
And herdsman know no lack of cheese, or flesh,

100

105

110

Or of sweet milk ; for there the herds yield milk 115
The whole year round. While I was roaming thus,
And gathering store of wealth, another slew
My brother, unforewarned, and through the fraud
Of his own guilty consort. Therefore small
Is the content I find in bearing rule 120
O'er these possessions. Ye have doubtless heard
This from your parents, be they who they may ;
For much have I endured, and I have lost
A palace, a most noble dwelling-place,
Full of things rare and precious. Even now 125
Would I possessed within my palace here
But the third part of these ; and would that they
Were yet alive who perished on the plain
Of Troy afar from Argos and its steeds !
Yet while I grieve and while I mourn them all, 130
Here, sitting in my palace, I by turns
Indulge my heart in weeping, and by turns
I pause, for with continual sorrow comes
A weariness of spirit. Yet, in truth,
For none of all those warriors, though their fate 135
Afflicts me sorely, do I so much grieve
As for one hero. When I think of him,
The feast and couch are joyless, since, of all

The Achaian chiefs, none brought so much to pass
As did Ulysses, both in what he wrought 140
And what he suffered. Great calamities
Fell to his lot in life, and to my own
Grief for his sake that cannot be consoled.
Long has he been divided from his friends,
And whether he be living now or dead 145
We know not. Old Laertes, the sage queen
Penelope, and young Telemachus,
Whom, when he went to war he left new-born
At home, are sorrowing somewhere for his sake."

He spake, and woke anew the young man's grief 150
For his lost father. From his eyelids fell
Tears at the hearing of his father's name,
And with both hands he held before his eyes
The purple mantle. Menelaus saw
His tears, and pondered, doubting which were best, — 155
To let the stranger of his own accord
Speak of his father, or to question him
At first, and then to tell him all he knew.

As thus he pondered, Helen, like in form
To Dian of the golden distaff, left 160
Her high-roofed chamber, where the air was sweet
With perfumes, and approached. Adrasta placed

A seat for her of costly workmanship ;
Alcippè brought a mat of soft light wool,
And Phylo with a silver basket came, 165
Given by Alcandra, wife of Polybus,
Who dwelt at Thebes, in Egypt, and whose house
Was rich in things of price. Two silver baths
He gave to Menelaus, tripods two,
And talents ten of gold. His wife bestowed 170
Beautiful gifts on Helen, — one of gold,
A distaff; one a silver basket edged
With gold and round in form. This Phylo brought
Heaped with spun yarn and placed before the queen ;
Upon it lay the distaff, wrapped in wool 175
Of color like the violet. Helen there
Sat down, a footstool at her feet, and straight
Questioned with earnest words her husband thus : —
“ Say, Menelaus, foster-child of Jove,
Is it yet known what lineage these men claim, — 180
These visitants? And what I now shall say,
Will it be false or true? Yet must I speak.
Woman or man I think I never saw
So like another as this youth, on whom
I look with deep astonishment, is like 185
Telemachus, the son whom our great chief

Ulysses left at home a tender babe
 When ye Achaians for my guilty sake
 Went forth to wage the bloody war with Troy."

And fair-haired Menelaus answered her : —

190

"Yea, wife, so deem I as it seems to thee.
 Such are his feet, his hands, the cast of the eye,
 His head, the hair upon his brow. Just now,
 In speaking of Ulysses, as I told
 How he had toiled and suffered for my sake,
 The stranger held the purple cloak before
 His eyes, and from the lids dropped bitter tears."

195

Peisistratus, the son of Nestor, spake
 In answer : "Menelaus, foster-child
 Of Jove and son of Atreus! sovereign king!
 He is, as thou hast said, that hero's son;
 But he is modest, and he deems that ill
 It would become him, on arriving here,
 If he should venture in discourse while thou
 Art present, in whose voice we take delight
 As if it were the utterance of a god.
 The knight Gerenian Nestor sent me forth
 To guide him hither, — for he earnestly
 Desired to see thee, that thou mightest give
 Counsel in what he yet should say or do.

200

205

210

For bitterly a son, who finds at home
 No others to befriend him, must lament
 The absence of a father. So it is
 With young Telemachus; for far away
 His father is, and in the land are none 215
 Who have the power to shelter him from wrong."

The fair-haired Menelaus answered thus: —
 "O wonder! Then the son of one most dear,
 Who for my sake so oft has braved and borne
 The conflicts of the battle-field, hath come 220
 Beneath my roof. I thought that I should greet
 His father with a warmer welcome here
 Than any other of the Argive race,
 When Jove the Olympian Thunderer should grant
 A safe return to us across the deep 225
 In our good ships. I would have founded here
 For him a city in Argos, and have built
 Dwellings, and would have brought from Ithaca
 Him and his son, and all his wealth and all
 His people. To this end I would have caused 230
 Some neighboring district where my sway is owned
 To be dispeopled. Dwelling here we oft
 Should then have met each other, and no cause
 Would e'er have parted us, two faithful friends

Delighting in each other, till at last 235
 Came Death's black cloud to wrap us in its shade.
 A god, no doubt, hath seen in this a good
 Too great for us, and thus to him alone,
 Unhappy man ! denied a safe return."

He spake ; his words awoke in every heart 240
 Grief for the absent hero's sake. Then wept
 The Argive Helen, child of Jove ; then wept
 Telemachus ; nor tearless were the eyes
 Of Nestor's son, for to his mind arose
 The memory of the good Antilochus, 245
 Slain by the bright Aurora's eminent son ;
 Of him he thought, and spake these winged words : —

" O son of Atreus ! aged Nestor saith,
 When in his palace we discourse of thee
 And ask each other's thought, that thou art wise 250
 Beyond all other men. Now, if thou mayst,
 Indulge me, for not willingly I weep
 Thus at the evening feast, and soon will Morn,
 Child of the Dawn, appear. I do not blame
 This sorrow for whoever meets his fate 255
 And dies ; the only honors we can pay
 To those unhappy mortals is to shred
 Our locks away, and wet our cheeks with tears.

I lost a brother, not the least in worth
Among the Argives, whom thou must have seen. 260
I knew him not : I never saw his face ;
Yet is it said Antilochus excelled
The others ; swift of foot, and brave in war."

The fair-haired Menelaus answered him : —
" Since thou my friend hast spoken thus, as one 265
Discreet in word and deed, of riper years
Than thou, might speak and act, — for thou art born
Of such a father, and thy words are wise, —
And easy is it to discern the son
Of one on whom Saturnius has bestowed 270
Both at the birth-hour and in wedded life
His blessing ; as he gives to Nestor now
A calm old age that lapses pleasantly,
Within his palace-halls, from day to day,
And sons wise-minded, mighty with the spear, — 275
Then let us lay aside this sudden grief
That has o'ertaken us, and only think
Of banqueting. Let water now be poured
Upon our hands ; there will be time enough
To-morrow for discourse ; Telemachus 280
And I will then engage in mutual talk."

He spake , Asphalion, who with diligent heed

Served the great Menelaus, on their hands
Poured water, and they shared the meats that lay
Upon the board. But Helen, Jove-born dame, 285
Had other thoughts, and with the wine they drank
Mingled a drug, an antidote to grief
And anger, bringing quick forgetfulness
Of all life's evils. Whoso drinks, when once
It is infused and in the cup, that day 290
Shall never wet his cheeks with tears, although
His father and his mother lie in death,
Nor though his brother or beloved son
Fall butchered by the sword before his eyes.
Such sovereign drugs she had, that child of Jove, 295
Given her by Polydamna, wife of Thon,
A dame of Egypt, where the bounteous soil
Brings forth abundantly its potent herbs,
Of healing some and some of bane, and where
Dwell the physicians who excel in skill 300
All other men, for they are of the race
Of Pæon. Now when Helen in the cups
Had placed the drug, and bidden them to pour
The wine upon it, thus she spake again : —
“ Atrides Menelaus, reared by Jove, 305
And ye the sons of heroes ! — Jupiter

The sovereign, gives, at pleasure, good and ill
To one or to another, for his power
Is infinite, — now sitting in these halls,
Feast and enjoy free converse. I will speak 310
What suits the occasion. I could not relate,
I could not even name, the many toils
Borne by Ulysses, stout of heart. I speak
Only of what that valiant warrior did
And suffered once in Troy, where ye of Greece 315
Endured such hardships. He had given himself
Unseemly stripes, and o'er his shoulders flung
Vile garments like a slave's, and entered thus
The enemy's town, and walked its spacious streets.
Another man he seemed in that disguise, — 320
A beggar, though when at the Achaian fleet
So different was the semblance that he wore.
He entered Ilium thus transformed, and none
Knew who it was that passed, but I perceived,
And questioned him; he turned my quest aside 325
With crafty answers. After I had seen
The bath administered, anointed him
And clothed him, and had sworn a solemn oath
Not to reveal his visit to the men
Of Ilium till he reached again the tents 330

And galleys, then he opened to me all
The plans of the Achaïans. Leaving me,
On his return he slew with his long spear
Full many a Trojan, and in safety reached
The Argive camp with tidings for the host. 335
Then wept aloud the Trojan dames, but I
Was glad at heart, for I already longed
For my old home, and deeply I deplored
The evil fate that Venus brought on me,
Who led me thither from my own dear land, 340
And from my daughter and my marriage-bower,
And from my lawful spouse, in whom I missed
No noble gift of person or of mind."

Then fair-haired Menelaus said to her : —
"All thou hast spoken, woman, is most true. 345
Of many a valiant warrior I have known
The counsels and the purposes, and far
Have roamed in many lands, but never yet
My eyes have looked on such another man
As was Ulysses, of a heart so bold 350
And such endurance. Witness what he did
And bore, the heroic man, what time we sat,
The bravest of the Argives, pent within
The wooden horse, about to bring to Troy

Slaughter and death. Thou camest to the place, 355
 Moved, as it seemed, by some divinity
 Who thought to give the glory of the day
 To Troy. Deiphobus, the godlike chief,
 Was with thee. Thrice about the hollow frame
 That held the ambush thou didst walk and touch 360
 Its sides, and call the Achaian chiefs by name,
 And imitate the voices of the wives
 Of all the Argives. Diomed and I
 Sat with the great Ulysses in the midst,
 And with him heard thy call, and rose at once 365
 To sally forth or answer from within;
 But he forbade, impatient as we were,
 And so restrained us. All the Achaian chiefs
 Kept silence save Anticlus, who alone
 Began to speak, when, with his powerful hands, 370
 Ulysses pressed together instantly
 The opening lips, and saved us all, and thus
 Held them till Pallas lured thee from the spot."

Then spake discreet Telemachus again: —
 "Atrides Menelaus, reared by Jove, 375
 Ruler of tribes! the harder was his lot,
 Since even thus he could not shun the stroke
 Of death, not though a heart of steel were his.

But now dismiss us to our beds, that there,
Couched softly, we may welcome balmy sleep." 380

He spake, and Argive Helen called her maids
To make up couches in the portico,
And throw fair purple blankets over them,
And tapestry above, and cover all
With shaggy cloaks. Forth from the palace halls 385
They went with torches, and made ready soon
The couches; thither heralds led the guests.

There in the vestibule Telemachus,
The hero, and with him the eminent son
Of Nestor, took their rest. Meanwhile the son 390
Of Atreus lay within an inner room
Of that magnificent pile, and near to him
The glorious lady, long-robed Helen, slept.

But when at length the daughter of the Dawn,
The rosy-fingered Morning, brought her light, 395
Then Menelaus, great in battle, rose,

Put on his garments, took his trenchant sword,
And, having hung it on his shoulder, laced
The shapely sandals to his shining feet,
And issued from his chamber like a god 400

In aspect. Near Telemachus he took
His seat, and calling him by name he spake:—

“What urgent cause, my brave Telemachus,
Brings thee to sacred Lacedæmon o’er
The breast of the great ocean? Frankly say, 405
Is it a private or a public need?”

And thus discreet Telemachus replied: —
“Atrides Menelaus, reared by Jove,
Ruler of nations! I am come to ask
News of my father, if thou knowest aught. 410
My heritage is wasting; my rich fields
Are made a desolation. Enemies
Swarm in my palace, and from day to-day
Slaughter my flocks and slow-paced horned herds;
My mother’s suitors they, and measureless 415
Their insolence. And therefore am I come
To clasp thy knees, and pray thee to relate
The manner of my father’s sorrowful death
As thou hast seen it with thine eyes, or heard
Its story from some wandering man, — for sure 420
His mother brought him forth to wretchedness
Beyond the common lot. I ask thee not
To soften aught in the sad history
Through tenderness to me, or kind regard,
But tell me plainly all that thou dost know; 425
And I beseech thee, if at any time

My father, good Ulysses, brought to pass
Aught that he undertook for thee in word
Or act while ye were in the realm of Troy,
Where the Greeks suffered sorely, bear it now 430
In mind, and let me have the naked truth."

Then Menelaus of the amber locks
Drew a deep sigh, and thus in answer said : —
"Heavens! they would climb into a brave man's bed,
These craven weaklings. But as when a hart 435
Has hid her new-born suckling fawns within
The lair of some fierce lion, and gone forth
Herself to range the mountain-sides and feed
Among the grassy lawns, the lion comes
Back to the place and brings them sudden death, 440
So will Ulysses bring a bloody fate
Upon the suitor crew. O father Jove,
And Pallas, and Apollo! I could wish
That now, with prowess such as once was his
When he, of yore, in Lesbos nobly built, 445
Rising to strive with Philomela's son,
In wrestling threw him heavily, and all
The Greeks rejoiced, Ulysses might engage
The suitors. Short were then their term of life,
And bitter would the nuptial banquet be. 450

Now for the questions thou hast put, and craved
From me a true reply, I will not seek
To pass them by with talk of other things,
Nor yet deceive thee, but of all that once
Was told me by the Ancient of the Deep, 455
Whose words are truth, I shall keep nothing back.

“In Egypt still, though longing to come home,
The gods detained me; for I had not paid
The sacrifice of chosen hecatombs,
And ever do the gods require of us 460
Remembrance of their laws. There is an isle
Within the billowy sea before you reach
The coast of Egypt, — Pharos is its name, —
At such a distance as a ship could pass
In one whole day with a shrill breeze astern. 465
A sheltered haven lies within that isle,
Whence the good ships go forth with fresh supplies
Of water. There the gods constrained my stay
For twenty days, and never in that time
Blew favoring winds across the waters, such 470
As bear the galley over the great deep.
Now would our stores of food have been consumed,
Now would the courage of my men have died,
Had not a goddess pitied me, and come

To my relief, by name Idothea, born 475
To the great Proteus, Ancient of the Deep.
For she was moved by my distress, and came
To me while I was wandering alone,
Apart from all the rest. They through the isle
Roamed everywhere from place to place, and, pinched 480
With hunger, threw the hook for fish. She came,
And, standing near, accosted me and said: —

“ ‘Stranger, thou art an idiot, or at least
Of careless mood, or else art willingly
Neglectful, and art pleased with suffering, 485
That thou dost linger in this isle so long
And find no means to leave it, while the hearts
Of thy companions faint with the delay.’

“She spake, and I replied: ‘Whoe’er thou art,
O goddess, let me say, not willingly 490
I linger here. I surely must have sinned
Against the immortal dwellers of high heaven;
But tell me — for the gods know all things — who
Of all the immortals holds me windbound here,
Hindering my voyage; tell me also how 495
To reach my home across the fishy deep.’

“I ended, and the glorious goddess said
In answer: ‘Stranger, I will truly speak;

The deathless Ancient of the Deep, whose words
Are ever true, Egyptian Proteus, oft 500
Here makes his haunt. To him are fully known —
For he is Neptune's subject — all the depths
Of the great ocean. It is said I owe
To him my birth. If him thou canst insnare
And seize, he will disclose to thee thy way 505
And all its distances, and tell thee how
To reach thy home across the fishy deep ;
And further will reveal, if so he choose,
O foster-child of Jove, whate'er of good
Or ill has in thy palace come to pass, 510
While thou wert wandering long and wearily.'

"So said the goddess, and I spake again : —
'Explain by what device to snare and hold
The aged deity, lest he foreknow
Or else suspect our purpose and escape. 515
'T were hard for mortals to constrain a god.'

"I ended, and the glorious goddess thus
Made answer : 'When the climbing sun has reached
The middle heaven, the Ancient of the Deep,
Who ne'er deceives, emerges from the waves, 520
And, covered with the dark scum of the sea,
Walks forth, and in a cavern vault lies down.

Thither fair Halosydna's progeny,
The sea-calves from the hoary ocean, throng,
Rank with the bitter odor of the brine, 525
And slumber near him. With the break of day
I will conduct thee thither and appoint
Thy place, but thou shalt choose to go with thee
Three of the bravest men in thy good ships,
And let me now relate the stratagems 530
Of the old prophet. He at first will count
The sea-calves, going o'er them all by fives;
And when he has beheld and numbered all,
Amidst them all will he lie down, as lies
A shepherd midst his flock. And then, as soon 535
As ye behold him stretched at length, exert
Your utmost strength to hold him there, although
He strive and struggle to escape your hands;
For he will try all stratagems, and take
The form of every reptile on the earth, 540
And turn to water and to raging flame, —
Yet hold him firmly still, and all the more
Make fast the bands. When he again shall take
The form in which thou sawest him asleep,
Desist from force, and loose the bands that held 545
The ancient prophet. Ask of him what god

Afflicts thee thus, and by what means to cross
The fishy deep and find thy home again.'

“Thus having said, the goddess straightway sprang
Into the billowy ocean, while I sought 550
The galleys, where they rested on the sand,
With an uneasy spirit. When I reached
The ship and shore we made our evening meal.
The hallowed night came down; we lay and slept
Upon the sea-beach. When the Morning came, 555
The rosy-fingered daughter of the Dawn,
Forth on the border of the mighty main
I went, and prayed the immortals fervently.
I led three comrades, whom I trusted most
In all adventures. Entering the depths 560
Of the great sea, the goddess brought us thence
Four skins of sea-calves newly flayed, that thus
We might deceive her father. Then she scooped
Beds for us in the sea-sand, and sat down
To wait his coming. We were near to her, 565
And there she laid us duly down, and threw
A skin o'er each. Now did our ambush seem
Beyond endurance, for the noisome smell
Of those sea-nourished creatures sickened us;
And who could bear to sleep beside a whale? 570

But she bethought her of an antidote,
A sovereign one, and so relieved us all.
To each she brought ambrosia, placing it
Beneath his nostrils, and the sweets it breathed
O'ercame the animal odor. All the morn 575
We waited patiently. The sea-calves came
From ocean in a throng, and laid themselves
In rows along the margin of the sea.
At noon emerged the aged seer, and found
His well-fed sea-calves. Going o'er them all 580
He counted them, ourselves among the rest,
With no misgiving of the fraud, and then
He laid him down to rest. We rushed with shouts
Upon him suddenly, and in our arms
Caught him; nor did the aged seer forget 585
His stratagems; and first he took the shape
Of a maned lion, of a serpent next,
Then of a panther, then of a huge boar,
Then turned to flowing water, then became
A tall tree full of leaves. With resolute hearts 590
We held him fast, until the aged seer
Was wearied out, in spite of all his wiles,
And questioned me in speech at last and said:—
“O son of Atreus! who of all the gods

Hath taught thee how to take me in this snare, 595
Unwilling as I am? What wouldst thou have?’

“He spake; I answered: ‘Aged prophet, well
Thou knowest. Why deceitfully inquire?
It is that I am held a prisoner long
Within this isle, and vainly seek the means 600
Of my escape, and grief consumes my heart.
Now — since the gods know all things — tell me this,
What deity it is, that, hindering thus
My voyage, keeps me here, and tell me how
To cross the fishy deep and reach my home.’ 605

“Such were my words, and he in answer said: —
‘But thou to Jove and to the other gods
Shouldst first have paid acceptable sacrifice,
And shouldst have then embarked to reach with speed
Thy native land across the dark-blue deep. 610
Now it is not thy fate to see again
Thy friends, thy stately palace, and the land
That saw thy birth, until thou stand once more
Beside the river that through Egypt flows
From Jove, and offer sacred hecatombs 615
To the ever-living gods inhabiting
The boundless heaven, and they will speed thee forth
Upon the voyage thou dost long to make.’

“He spake. My heart was broken as I heard
His bidding to recross the shadowy sea 620
To Egypt, for the way was difficult
And long; and yet I answered him and said: —

“‘Duly will I perform, O aged seer,
What thou commandest. But I pray thee tell,
And truly, whether all the sons of Greece 625
Whom Nestor and myself, in setting sail,
Left on the Trojan coast, have since returned
Safe with their galleys, or have any died
Untimely in their ships or in the arms
Of their companions since the war was closed?’ 630

“I spake; again he answered me and said: —
‘Why dost thou ask, Atrides, since to know
Thou needest not, nor is it well to explore
The secrets of my mind? Thou canst not, sure,
Refrain from tears when thou shalt know the whole. 635
Many are dead, and many left in Troy.

Two leaders only of the well-armed Greeks
Were slain returning; in that combat thou
Didst bear a part; one, living yet, is kept,
Far in the mighty main, from his return. 640

“‘Amid his well-oared galleys Ajax died.
For Neptune first had driven him on the rocks

Of Gyræ, yet had saved him from the sea ;
And he, though Pallas hated him, had yet
Been rescued, but for uttering boastful words, 645
Which drew his fate upon him. He had said
That he, in spite of all the gods, would come
Safe from those mountain waves. When Neptune heard
The boaster's challenge, instantly he laid
His strong hand on the trident, smote the rock 650
And cleft it to the base. Part stood erect,
Part fell into the deep. There Ajax sat,
And felt the shock, and with the falling mass
Was carried headlong to the billowy depths
Below, and drank the brine and perished there. 655
Thy brother in his roomy ships escaped
The danger, for imperial Juno's aid
Preserved him. But when near Meleia's heights
About to land, a tempest seized and swept
The hero thence across the fishy deep, 660
Lamenting his hard lot, to that far cape
Where once abode Thyestes, and where now
His son Ægisthus dwelt. But when the gods
Sent other winds, and safe at last appeared
The voyage, they returned, and reached their home. 665
With joy he stepped upon his native soil,

And kissed the earth that bore him, while his tears
At that most welcome sight flowed fast and warm.
Him from a lofty perch a spy beheld,
Whom treacherous Ægisthus planted there, 670
Bribed by two golden talents. He had watched
The whole year through, lest, coming unobserved,
The king might make his prowess felt. The spy
Flew to the royal palace with the news,
And instantly Ægisthus planned a snare. 675
He chose among the people twenty men,
The bravest, whom he stationed out of sight,
And gave command that others should prepare
A banquet. Then with chariots and with steeds,
And with a deadly purpose in his heart, 680
He went, and, meeting Agamemnon, bade
The shepherd of the people to the feast,
And slew him at the board as men might slay
A bullock at the crib. Of all who went
With Agamemnon thither, none survived, 685
And of the followers of Ægisthus none,
But all were slaughtered in the banquet-hall.'

“He spake; my heart was breaking, and I wept,
While sitting on the sand, nor in my heart
Cared I to live, or longer to behold 690

The sweet light of the sun. But when there came
Respite from tears and writhing on the ground,
The Ancient of the Deep, who ne'er deceives,
Spake yet again : ' Atrides, lose no time
In tears ; they profit nothing. Rather seek 695
The means by which thou mayst the soonest reach
Thy native land. There thou perchance mayst find
Ægisthus yet alive, or haply first
Orestes may have slain him, and thyself
Arrive to see the funeral rites performed.' 700

" He spake, and though afflicted still, my heart
Was somewhat comforted ; my spirit rose,
And thus I answered him with winged words : —

" ' These men I know ; name now the third, who still
Is kept from his return afar within 705
The mighty main, — alive, perchance, or dead ;
For, though I dread to hear, I long to know.' "

" I spake, and Proteus answered me again : —
' It is Laertes' son, whose dwelling stands
In Ithaca. I saw him in an isle, 710
And in the cavern-palace of the nymph
Calypso, weeping bitterly, for she
Constrains his stay. He cannot leave the isle
For his own country ; ship arrayed with oars

And seamen has he none to bear him o'er 715
The breast of the great ocean. But for thee,
'T is not decreed that thou shalt meet thy fate
And die, most noble Menelaus, where
The steeds of Argos in her pastures graze.
The gods will send thee to the Elysian plain, 720
And to the end of earth, the dwelling-place
Of fair-haired Rhadamanthus. There do men
Lead easiest lives. No snow, no bitter cold,
No beating rains, are there; the ocean-deeps
With murmuring breezes from the West refresh 725
The dwellers. Thither shalt thou go; for thou
Art Helen's spouse, and son-in-law of Jove.'

"He spake, and plunged into the billowy deep.
I to the fleet returned in company
With my brave men, revolving, as I went, 730
A thousand projects in my thought. I reached
My galley by the sea, and we prepared
Our evening meal. The hallowed night came down,
And there upon the ocean-beach we slept.
But when the rosy-fingered Morn appeared, 735
The daughter of the Dawn, we drew our ships
To the great deep, and raised the masts and spread
The sails; the crews, all entering, took their seats

Upon the benches, ranged in order due,
And beat the foaming water with their oars. 740
Again to Egypt's coast I brought the fleet,
And to the river that descends from Jove,
And there I offered chosen hecatombs ;
And having thus appeased the gods, I reared
A tomb to Agamemnon, that his fame 745
Might never die. When this was done I sailed
For home ; the gods bestowed a favoring wind.
But now remain thou till the eleventh day,
Or till the twelfth, beneath my roof, and then
Will I dismiss thee with munificent gifts, — 750
Three steeds, a polished chariot, and a cup
Of price, with which to pour, from day to day,
Wine to the gods in memory of me."

Then spake discreet Telemachus again : —
"Atrides, seek not to detain me long, 755
Though I could sit contentedly a year
Beside thee, never longing for my home,
Nor for my parents, such delight I find
In listening to thy words ; but even now,
In hallowed Pylos, my companions grow 760
Weary, while thou delayest my return.
The gifts, — whate'er thou choolest to bestow, —

Let them be such as I can treasure up.
The steeds to Ithaca I may not take
I leave them to adorn thy retinue ; . 765
For thou art ruler o'er a realm of plains,
Where grows much lotos, and sweet grasses spring,
And wheat and rye, and the luxuriant stalks
Of the white barley. But in Ithaca
Are no broad grounds for coursing, meadows none. 770
Goats graze amid its fields, a fairer land
Than those where horses feed. No isle that lies
Within the deep has either roads for steeds
Or meadows, least of all has Ithaca."

He spake ; the valiant Menelaus smiled, 775
And kindly touched him with his hand and said : —

"Dear son, thou comest of a generous stock ;
Thy words declare it. I will change my gifts,
As well I may. Of all that in my house
Are treasured up, the choicest I will give, 780
And the most precious. I will give a cup
Wrought all of silver save its brim of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan. Phædimus
The hero, King of Sidon, gave it me,
When I was coming home, and underneath 785
His roof was sheltered. Now it shall be thine."

So talked they with each other. Meantime came
 Those who prepared the banquet to the halls
 Of the great monarch. Bringing sheep they came
 And strengthening wine. Their wives, who on their brows
 Wore showy fillets, brought the bread, and thus 791
 Within the house of Menelaus all
 Was bustle, setting forth the evening meal.

But in the well-paved court which lay before
 The palace of Ulysses, where of late 795
 Their insolence was shown, the suitor train
 Amused themselves with casting quoits and spears,
 While by themselves Antinoüs, and the youth
 Of godlike mien, Eurymachus, who both
 Were eminent above the others, sat. 800
 To them Noëmon, son of Phronius, went,
 Drew near, bespoke Antinoüs and inquired:—

“Is it among us known, or is it not,
 Antinoüs, when Telemachus returns
 From sandy Pylos? Thither he is gone, 805
 And in my galley, which I need to cross
 To spacious Elis. There I have twelve mares
 And hardy mule-colts with them yet untamed,
 And some I must subdue to take the yoke.”

He spake, and they were both amazed; for they 810

Had never thought of him as visiting
Neleian Pylos, deeming that the youth
Was somewhere in his fields, among the flocks,
Or haply with the keeper of the swine.

Then did Antinoös, Eupeithes' son, 815
Make answer: "Tell me truly when he sailed,
And what young men of Ithaca he chose
To go with him. Were they his slaves, or hired
To be his followers? Tell, for I would know
The whole. Took he thy ship against thy will? 820
Or didst thou yield it at his first request?"

Noëmon, son of Phornius, thus replied: —
"Most willingly I gave it, for what else
Would any one have done when such a man
Desired it in his need? It would have been 825
Hard to deny it. For the band of youths
Who followed him, they are the bravest here
Of all our people; and I saw embark,
As their commander, Mentor, or some god
Like Mentor altogether. One thing moves 830
My wonder. Only yesterday, at dawn,
I met with Mentor here, whom I before
Had seen embarking for the Pylian coast."

Noëmon spake, and to his father's house

Departed. Both were troubled at his words, 835
 And all the suitors took at once their seats,
 And ceased their pastimes. Then Antinoüs spake,
 Son of Eupeithes, greatly vexed ; his heart
 Was darkened with blind rage ; his eyes shot fire.

“ Strange doings these ! a great and proud exploit. 840
 Performed, — this voyage of Telemachus,
 Which we had called impossible ! The boy,
 In spite of us, has had his will and gone,
 And carried off a ship, and for his crew
 Chosen the bravest of the people here. 845
 He yet will prove a pest. May Jupiter
 Crush him ere he can work us further harm !
 Now give me a swift bark and twenty men
 That I may lie in ambush and keep watch
 For his return within the straits between 850
 This isle and rugged Samos ; then, I deem,
 He will have sought his father to his cost.”

He spake ; they praised his words and bade him act,
 And rose and left their places, entering
 The palace of Ulysses. Brief the time 855
 That passed before Penelope was warned
 Of what the suitors treacherously planned.
 The herald Medon told her all. He heard

In the outer court their counsels while within
They plotted, and he hastened through the house 860
To bring the tidings to Penelope.

Penelope perceived him as he stepped
Across the threshold, and bespake him thus : —

“Why, herald, have the suitor princes sent
Thee hither? comest thou to bid the maids 865
Of great Ulysses leave their tasks and make
A banquet ready? Would their wooing here
And elsewhere were but ended, and this feast
Were their last feast on earth! Ye who in throngs
Come hither and so wastefully consume 870
The substance of the brave Telemachus,
Have ye not from your parents, while ye yet
Were children, heard how once Ulysses lived
Among them, never wronging any man
In all the realm by aught he did or said, — 875
As mighty princes often do, through hate
Of some and love of others? Never man
Endured injustice at his hands, but you —
Your vile designs and acts are known; ye bear
No grateful memory of a good man’s deeds.” 880

And then, in turn, experienced Medon spake : —
“O queen, I would this evil were the worst!

The suitors meditate a greater still,
 And a more heinous far. May Jupiter
 Never permit the crime! Their purpose is 885
 To meet Telemachus, on his return,
 And slay him with the sword; for thou must know
 That on a voyage to the Pylian coast
 And noble Lacedæmon he has sailed,
 To gather tidings of his father's fate." 890

He spake, and her knees failed her and her heart
 Sank as she heard. Long time she could not speak;
 Her eyes were filled with tears, and her clear voice
 Was choked; yet, finding words at length, she said:—

“O herald! wherefore should my son have gone? 895
 There was no need that he should trust himself
 To the swift ships, those horses of the sea,
 With which men traverse its unmeasured waste.
 Was it that he might leave no name on earth?”

And then again experienced Medon spake:— 900
 “I know not whether prompted by some god
 Or moved by his own heart thy son has sailed
 For Pylos, hoping there to hear some news
 Of his returning father, or his fate.”

Thus having said, the herald, traversing 905
 The palace of Ulysses, went his way,

While a keen anguish overpowered the queen,
Nor could she longer bear to keep her place
Upon her seat, — and many seats were there, —
But on the threshold of her gorgeous rooms 910
Lay piteously lamenting. Round her came
Her maidens wailing, — all, both old and young,
Who formed her household. These Penelope,
Sobbing in her great sorrow, thus bespake: —

“Hear me, my friends, the heavens have cast on me 915
Griefs heavier than on any others born
And reared with me, — me, who had lost by death
Already a most gracious husband, one
Who bore a lion heart and who was graced
With every virtue, greatly eminent 920
Among the Greeks, and widely famed abroad
Through Hellas and all Argos. Now my son,
He whom I loved, is driven before the storms
From home, inglorious, and I was not told
Of his departure. Ye too, worthless crew! 925
Ye took no thought, not one of you, to call
Me from my sleep, although ye must have known
Full well when he embarked in his black ship.
And if it had been told me that he planned
This voyage, then, impatient as he was 930

To sail, he would have certainly remained,
Or else have left me in these halls a corpse.
And now let one of my attendants call
The aged Dolius, whom, when first I came
To this abode, my father gave to me 935
To be my servant, and who has in charge
My orchards. Let him haste and take his place
Beside Laertes, and to him declare
All that has happened, that he may devise
Some fitting remedy, or go among 940
The people, to deplore the dark designs
Of those who now are plotting to destroy
The heir of great Ulysses and his own."

Then Eurycleia, the beloved nurse,
Answered: "Dear lady, slay me with the sword, 945
Or leave me here alive; I will conceal
Nothing that has been done or said. I gave
All that he asked, both bread and delicate wine,
And took a solemn oath, which he required,
To tell thee nought of this till twelve days passed, 950
Or till thou shouldst thyself inquire and hear
Of his departure, that those lovely cheeks
Might not be stained with tears. Now bathe and put
Fresh garments on, and to the upper rooms

Ascending, with thy handmaids offer prayer 955
 To Pallas, daughter of the God who bears
 The ægis. She will then protect thy son,
 Even from death. Grieve not the aged man,
 Already much afflicted. Sure I am
 The lineage of Arcesius has not lost 960
 The favor of the gods, but some one yet
 Surviving will possess its lofty halls
 And its rich acres, stretching far away."

She spake; the queen repressed her grief, and held
 Her eyes from tears. She took the bath and put 965
 Fresh garments on, and, to the upper rooms
 Ascending with her maidens, heaped with cakes
 A canister, and prayed to Pallas thus:—

"Daughter invincible of Jupiter
 The Ægis-bearer, hear me. If within 970
 Thy courts the wise Ulysses ever burned
 Fat thighs of beeves or sheep, remember it,
 And rescue my dear son, and bring to naught
 The wicked plots of the proud suitor-crew."

She spake, and wept aloud. The goddess heard 975
 Her prayer. Meantime the suitors filled with noise
 The shadowy palace-halls, and there were some
 Among that throng of arrogant youths who said:—

“Truly the queen, whom we have wooed so long,
Prepares for marriage; little does she know 980
The bloody death we destine for her son.”

So spake they, unaware of what was done
Elsewhere. Antinoüs then stood forth and said:—

“Good friends, I warn you all that ye refrain
From boasts like these, lest some one should report 985
Your words within. Now let us silently
Rise up, and all conspire to put in act
The counsel all so heartily approve.”

He spake, and chose a crew of twenty men,
The bravest. To the seaside and the ship 990
They went, and down to the deep water drew
The ship, and put the mast and sails on board,
And fitted duly to their leathern rings
The oars, and spread the white sail overhead.
Their nimble-handed servants brought them arms, 995
And there they moored the galley, went on board,
And supped and waited for the evening star.

Now in the upper chamber the chaste queen,
Penelope, lay fasting; food or wine
She had not tasted, and her thoughts were still 1000
Fixed on her blameless son. Would he escape
The threatened death, or perish by the hands

Of the insolent suitors? As a lion's thoughts,
 When, midst a crowd of men, he sees with dread
 The hostile circle slowly closing round, 1005
 Such were her thoughts, when balmy sleep at length
 Came creeping over her as on her couch
 She lay reclined, her limbs relaxed in rest.

Now Pallas framed a new device; she called
 A phantom up, in aspect like the dame 1010
 Iphthima, whom Eumelus had espoused
 In Pheræ, daughter of the high-souled chief
 Icarius. Her she sent into the halls
 Of great Ulysses, that she might beguile
 The sorrowful Penelope from tears 1015
 And lamentations. By the thong that held
 The bolt she slid into the royal bower,
 And standing by her head bespoke the queen:—

“Penelope, afflicted as thou art,
 Art thou asleep? The ever-blessed gods 1020
 Permit thee not to grieve and weep; thy son,
 Who has not sinned against them, shall return.”

And then discreet Penelope replied,
 Still sweetly slumbering at the Gate of Dreams:—

“Why, sister, art thou here, who ne’er before 1025
 Hast come to me? The home is far away

In which thou dwellest. Thou exhortest me
To cease from grieving, and to lay aside
The painful thoughts that crowd into my mind,
And torture me who have already lost 1030
A noble-minded, lion-hearted spouse,
One eminent among Achaia's sons
For every virtue, and whose fame was spread
Through Hellas and through Argos. Now my son,
My best beloved, goes to sea, — a boy, 1035
Unused to hardships, and unskilled to deal
With strangers. More I sorrow for his sake
Than for his father's. I am filled with fear,
And tremble lest he suffer wrong from those
Among whom he has gone, or on the deep, 1040
Where he has enemies who lie in wait
To slay him ere he reach his home again."

And then the shadowy image spake again : —
"Be of good courage; let not fear o'ercome
Thy spirit, for there goes with him a guide 1045
Such as all others would desire to have
Beside them ever, trusting in her power, —
Pallas Athene, and she looks on thee
With pity. From her presence I am sent,
Her messenger, declaring this to thee." 1050

Again discreet Penelope replied : —

“If then thou be a goddess and hast heard
A goddess speak these words, declare, I pray,
Of that ill-fated one, if yet he live
And look upon the sun, or else have died
And passed to the abodes beneath the earth.”

1055

Once more the shadowy image spake : “Of him
Will I say nothing, whether living yet
Or dead ; no time is this for idle words.”

She said, and from the chamber glided forth
Beside the bolt, and mingled with the winds.
Then quickly from her couch of sleep arose
The daughter of Icarius, for her heart
Was glad, so plainly had the dream conveyed
Its message in the stillness of the night.

1060

1065

Meanwhile the suitors on their ocean-path
Went in their galley, plotting cruelly
To slay Telemachus. A rocky isle
Far in the middle sea, between the coast
Of Ithaca and craggy Samos, lies,
Named Asteris ; of narrow bounds, yet there
A sheltered haven is to which two straits
Give entrance. There the Achaians lay in wait.

1070

BOOK V.

AURORA, rising from her couch beside
The famed Tithonus, brought the light of day
To men and to immortals. Then the gods
Came to their seats in council. With them came
High-thundering Jupiter, amongst them all
The mightiest. Pallas, mindful of the past,
Spake of Ulysses and his many woes,
Grieved that he still was with the island nymph : —

“O father Jove, and all ye blessed ones
Who live forever ! let not sceptred king
Henceforth be gracious, mild, and merciful
And righteous ; rather be he deaf to prayer
And prone to deeds of wrong, since no one now
Remembers the divine Ulysses more
Among the people over whom he ruled
Benignly, like a father. Still he lies,
Weighed down by many sorrows, in the isle
And dwelling of Calypso, who so long

Constrains his stay. To his dear native land
 Depart he cannot ; ship arrayed with oars 20
 And seamen has he none, to bear him o'er
 The breast of the broad ocean. Nay, even now,
 Against his well-beloved son a plot
 Is laid, to slay him as he journeys home
 From Pylos the divine, and from the walls 25
 Of famous Sparta, whither he had gone
 To gather tidings of his father's fate."

Then answered her the Ruler of the storms : —
 "My child, what words are these that pass thy lips?
 Was not thy long-determined counsel this, — 30
 That in good time Ulysses should return,
 To be avenged? Guide, then, Telemachus
 Wisely, — for so thou canst, — that, all unharmed,
 He reach his native land, and, in their barks,
 Homeward the suitor-train retrace their way." 35

He spake, and turned to Hermes, his dear son : —
 "Hermes, — for thou in this my messenger
 Art, as in all things, — to the bright-haired nymph
 Make known my steadfast purpose, — the return
 Of suffering Ulysses. Neither gods 40
 Nor men shall guide his voyage. On a raft,
 Made firm with bands, he shall depart and reach,

After long hardships, on the twentieth day,
The fertile shore of Scheria, on whose isle
Dwell the Phæacians, kinsmen of the gods. 45
They like a god shall honor him, and thence
Send him to his loved country in a ship,
With ample gifts of brass and gold, and store
Of raiment, — wealth like which he ne'er had brought
From conquered Ilion, had he reached his home 50
Safely, with all his portion of the spoil.
So is it preordained that he behold
His friends again, and stand once more within
His high-roofed palace, on his native soil.”

He spake; the herald Argicide obeyed, 55
And hastily beneath his feet he bound
The fair, ambrosial golden sandals, worn
To bear him over ocean like the wind,
And o'er the boundless land. His wand he took,
Wherewith he softly seals the eyes of men, 60
And opens them at will from sleep. With this
In hand, the mighty Argus-queller flew,
And, lighting on Pieria, from the sky
Plunged downward to the deep, and skimmed its face
Like hovering seamew, that on the broad gulfs 65
Of the unfruitful ocean seeks her prey,

And often dips her pinions in the brine ;
So Hermes flew along the waste of waves.
But when he reached that island, far away,
Forth from the dark-blue ocean-swell he stepped 70
Upon the sea-beach, walking till he came
To the vast cave in which the bright-haired nymph
Made her abode. He found the nymph within ;
A fire blazed brightly on the hearth, and far
Was wafted o'er the isle the fragrant smoke 75
Of cloven cedar, burning in the flame,
And cypress-wood. Meanwhile, in her recess,
She sweetly sang, as busily she threw
The golden shuttle through the web she wove.
And all about the grotto alders grew, 80
And poplars, and sweet-smelling cypresses.
In a green forest, high among whose boughs
Birds of broad wing, wood-owls, and falcons built
Their nests, and crows, with voices sounding far,
All haunting for their food the ocean-side, 85
A vine, with downy leaves and clustering grapes,
Crept over all the cavern rock. Four springs
Poured forth their glittering waters in a row,
And here and there went wandering side by side.
Around were meadows of soft green, o'ergrown 90

With violets and parsley. 'T was a spot
Where even an immortal might awhile
Linger, and gaze with wonder and delight.
The herald Argus-queller stood; and saw,
And marvelled; but as soon as he had viewed 95
The wonders of the place, he turned his steps,
Entering the broad-roofed cave. Calypso there,
The glorious goddess, saw him as he came,
And knew him; for the ever-living gods
Are to each other known, though one may dwell 100
Far from the rest. Ulysses, large of heart,
Was not within. Apart, upon the shore,
He sat and sorrowed, where he oft in tears
And sighs and vain repinings passed the hours,
Gazing with wet eyes on the barren deep. 105

Now, placing Hermes on a shining seat
Of state, Calypso, glorious goddess, said: —

“Thou of the golden wand, revered and loved,
What, Hermes, brings thee hither? Passing few
Have been thy visits. Make thy pleasure known. 110
My heart enjoins me to obey, if aught
That thou commandest be within my power;
But first accept the offerings due a guest.”

The goddess, speaking thus, before him placed

A table, where the heaped ambrosia lay, 115
And mingled the red nectar. Ate and drank
The herald Argus-queller, and, refreshed,
Answered the nymph, and made his message known : —

“ Art thou a goddess, and dost ask of me,
A god, why came I hither ? Yet, since thou 120
Requiest, I will truly tell the cause.

I came unwillingly, at Jove's command ;
For who of choice would traverse the wide waste
Of the salt ocean, with no city near
Where men adore the gods with solemn rites 125

And chosen hecatombs. No god has power
To elude or to resist the purposes
Of ægis-bearing Jove. With thee abides,
He bids me say, the most unhappy man
Of all who round the city of Priam waged 130
The battle through nine years, and, in the tenth,
Laying it waste, departed for their homes.

But in their voyage they provoked the wrath
Of Pallas, who called up the furious winds
And angry waves against them. By his side 135
Sank all his gallant comrades in the deep.

Him did the winds and waves drive hither. Him
Jove bids thee send away with speed ; for here

He must not perish, far from all he loves.

So is it preordained that he behold

140

His friends again, and stand once more within

His high-roofed palace, on his native soil."

He spake; Calypso, glorious goddess, heard,

And shuddered, and with winged words replied: —

"Ye are unjust, ye gods, and, envious far

145

Beyond all other beings, cannot bear

That ever goddess openly should make

A mortal man her consort. Thus it was

When once Aurora, rosy-fingered, took

Orion for her husband; ye were stung,

150

Amid your blissful lives, with envious hate,

Till chaste Diana, of the golden throne,

Smote him with silent arrows from her bow,

And slew him in Ortygia. Thus, again,

When bright-haired Ceres, swayed by her own heart, 155

In fields which bore three yearly harvests, met

Iasion as a lover, this was known

Erelong to Jupiter, who flung from high

A flaming thunderbolt, and laid him dead.

And now ye envy me, that with me dwells

160

A mortal man. I saved him as he clung

Alone upon his floating keel; for Jove

Had cloven with a bolt of fire from heaven
His galley in the midst of the black sea,
And all his gallant comrades perished there. 165
Him kindly I received; I cherished him,
And promised him a life that ne'er should know
Decay or death. But since no god has power
To elude or to withstand the purposes
Of ægis-bearing Jove, let him depart — 170
If so the sovereign moves him and commands —
Over the barren deep. I send him not;
For neither ship arrayed with oars have I,
Nor seamen, o'er the boundless waste of waves
To bear him hence. My counsel I will give, 175
And nothing will I hide that he should know,
To place him safely on his native shore."

The herald Argus-queller answered her: —
"Dismiss him thus, and bear in mind the wrath
Of Jove, lest it be kindled against thee." 180

Thus having said, the mighty Argicide
Departed; and the nymph, who now had heard
The doom of Jove, sought the great-hearted man,
Ulysses. Him she found beside the deep,
Seated alone, with eyes from which the tears 185
Were never dried; for now no more the nymph

Delighted him ; he wasted his sweet life
In yearning for his home. Night after night
He slept constrained within the hollow cave,
The unwilling by the fond ; and day by day 190
He sat upon the rocks that edged the shore,
And in continual weeping and in sighs
And vain repinings wore the hours away,
Gazing through tears upon the barren deep.

The glorious goddess stood by him and spake : — 195

“Unhappy ! sit no longer sorrowing here,
Nor waste life thus. Lo ! I most willingly
Dismiss thee hence. Rise, hew down trees, and bind
Their trunks with brazen clamps into a raft,
And fasten planks above, a lofty floor, 200
That it may bear thee o’er the dark-blue deep.
Bread will I put on board, water, and wine, —
Red wine, that cheers the heart, — and wrap thee well
In garments, and send after thee the wind,
That safely thou attain thy native shore, 205
If so the gods permit thee, who abide
In the broad heaven above, and better know
By far than I, and far more wisely judge.”

Ulysses, the great sufferer, as she spake
Shuddered, and thus with winged words replied : — 210

“Some other purpose than to send me home
Is in thy heart, O goddess, bidding me
To cross this frightful sea upon a raft,—
This perilous sea, where never even ships
Pass with their rapid keels, though Jove bestow 215
The wind that glads the seaman. Nay, I climb
No raft, against thy wish, unless thou swear
The great oath of the gods that thou in this
Dost meditate no other harm to me.”

He spake; Calypso, glorious goddess, smiled, 220
And smoothed his forehead with her hand, and said:—

“Perverse, and slow to see where guile is not!
How could thy heart permit thee thus to speak?
Now bear me witness, Earth, and ye broad Heavens
Above us, and ye waters of the Styx 225
That flow beneath us, mightiest oath of all,
And most revered by all the blessed gods,
That I design no other harm to thee,
But that I plan for thee, and counsel thee
What I would do were I in need like thine, 230
I bear a juster mind; my bosom holds
A pitying heart, and not a heart of steel.”

Thus having said, the glorious goddess moved
Away with hasty steps, and where she trod

He followed, till they reached the vaulted cave, — 235
The goddess and the hero. There he took
The seat whence Hermes had just risen. The nymph
Brought forth whatever mortals eat and drink
To set before him. She right opposite
To that of great Ulysses took her seat. 240
Ambrosia there her maidens laid, and there
Poured nectar. Both put forth their hands, and took
The ready viands, till at length the calls
Of hunger and of thirst were satisfied;
Calypso, glorious goddess, then began : — 245
“Son of Laertes, man of many wiles,
High-born Ulysses! thus wilt thou depart
Home to thy native country? Then farewell;
But, couldst thou know the sufferings Fate ordains
For thee ere yet thou landest on its shore, 250
Thou wouldst remain to keep this home with me
And be immortal, strong as is thy wish
To see thy wife, — a wish that day by day
Possesses thee. I cannot deem myself
In face or form less beautiful than she; 255
For never with immortals can the race
Of mortal dames in form or face compare.”
Ulysses, the sagacious, answered her : —

“Bear with me, gracious goddess; well I know
All thou couldst say. The sage Penelope 260
In feature and in stature comes not nigh
To thee, for she is mortal, — deathless thou,
And ever young; yet day by day I long
To be at home once more, and pine to see
The hour of my return. Even though some god 265
Smite me on the black ocean, I shall bear
The stroke, for in my bosom dwells a mind
Patient of suffering; much have I endured,
And much survived, in tempests on the deep,
And in the battle; let this happen too.” 270

He spake; the sun went down; the night came on;
And now the twain withdrew to a recess
Deep in the vaulted cave, where, side by side,
They took their rest. But when the child of Dawn,
Aurora, rosy-fingered, looked abroad, 275
Ulysses put his vest and mantle on;
The nymph too, in a robe of silver-white,
Ample, and delicate, and beautiful,
Arrayed herself, and round about her loins
Wound a fair golden girdle, drew a veil 280
Over her head, and planned to send away
Magnanimous Ulysses. She bestowed

A heavy axe, of steel and double-edged,
Well fitted to the hand, the handle wrought
Of olive-wood, firm set and beautiful. 285

A polished adze she gave him next, and led
The way to a far corner of the isle,
Where lofty trees, alders and poplars, stood,
And firs that reached the clouds, sapless and dry
Long since, and fitter thus to ride the waves. 290
Then, having shown where grew the tallest trees,
Calypso, glorious goddess, sought her home.

Trees then he felled, and soon the task was done.
Twenty in all he brought to earth, and squared
Their trunks with the sharp steel, and carefully 295
He smoothed their sides, and wrought them by a line.
Calypso, gracious goddess, having brought
Wimbles, he bored the beams, and, fitting them
Together, made them fast with nails and clamps.
As when some builder, skilful in his art, 300
Frames for a ship of burden the broad keel,
Such ample breadth Ulysses gave the raft.
Upon the massy beams he reared a deck,
And floored it with long planks from end to end.
On this a mast he raised, and to the mast 305
Fitted a yard; he shaped a rudder next,

To guide the raft along her course, and round
 With woven work of willow-boughs he fenced
 Her sides against the dashings of the sea.

Calypso, gracious goddess, brought him store 310
 Of canvas, which he fitly shaped to sails,
 And, rigging her with cords and ropes and stays,
 Heaved her with levers into the great deep.

'T was the fourth day. His labors now were done,
 And on the fifth the goddess from her isle 315

Dismissed him, newly from the bath, arrayed
 In garments given by her, that shed perfumes.

A skin of dark red wine she put on board,
 A larger one of water, and for food

A basket, stored with viands such as please 320

The appetite. A friendly wind and soft
 She sent before. The great Ulysses spread

His canvas joyfully to catch the breeze,

And sat and guided with nice care the helm,

Gazing with fixed eye on the Pleiades, 325

Boötes setting late, and the Great Bear,

By others called the Wain, which, wheeling round,

Looks ever toward Orion, and alone

Dips not into the waters of the deep.

For so Calypso, glorious goddess, bade 330

That on his ocean journey he should keep
That constellation ever on his left.

Now seventeen days were in the voyage past,
And on the eighteenth shadowy heights appeared,
The nearest point of the Phæacian land, 335
Lying on the dark ocean like a shield.

But mighty Neptune, coming from among
The Ethiopians, saw him. Far away
He saw, from mountain-heights of Solyma,
The voyager, and burned with fiercer wrath, 340
And shook his head, and said within himself: —

“Strange! now I see the gods have new designs
For this Ulysses, formed while I was yet
In Ethiopia. He draws near the land
Of the Phæacians, where it is decreed 345
He shall o’erpass the boundary of his woes;
But first, I think, he will have much to bear.”

He spake, and round about him called the clouds
And roused the ocean, — wielding in his hand
The trident, — summoned all the hurricanes 350
Of all the winds, and covered earth and sky
At once with mists, while from above the night
Fell suddenly. The east wind and the south
Pushed forth at once, with the strong-blowing west,

And the clear north rolled up his mighty waves. 355

Ulysses trembled in his knees and heart,

And thus to his great soul, lamenting, said : —

“What will become of me? unhappy man!

I fear that all the goddess said was true,

Foretelling what disasters should o’ertake 360

My voyage ere I reach my native land.

Now are her words fulfilled. How Jupiter

Wraps the great heaven in clouds and stirs the deep

To tumult! Wilder grow the hurricanes

Of all the winds, and now my fate is sure. 365

Thrice happy, four times happy, they who fell

On Troy’s wide field, warring for Atreus’ sons :

O, had I met my fate and perished there,

That very day on which the Trojan host,

Around the dead Achilles, hurled at me 370

Their brazen javelins, I had then received

Due burial, and great glory with the Greeks ;

Now must I die a miserable death.”

As thus he spake, upon him, from on high,

A huge and frightful billow broke ; it whirled 375

The raft around, and far from it he fell.

His hands let go the rudder ; a fierce rush

Of all the winds together snapped in twain

The mast ; far off the yard and canvas flew
Into the deep ; the billow held him long 380
Beneath the waters, and he strove in vain
Quickly to rise to air from that huge swell
Of ocean, for the garments weighed him down
Which fair Calypso gave him. But at length
Emerging, he rejected from his throat 385
The bitter brine that down his forehead streamed.
Even then, though hopeless with dismay, his thought
Was on the raft ; and, struggling through the waves,
He seized it, sprang on board, and, seated there,
Escaped the threatened death. Still to and fro 390
The rolling billows drave it. As the wind
In autumn sweeps the thistles o'er the field,
Clinging together, so the blasts of heaven
Hither and thither drove it o'er the sea.
And now the south wind flung it to the north 395
To buffet ; now the east wind to the west.

Ino Leucothea saw him clinging there, —
The delicate-footed child of Cadmus, once
A mortal, speaking with a mortal voice,
Though now within the ocean gulfs she shares 400
The honors of the gods. With pity she
Beheld Ulysses struggling thus distressed,

And, rising from the abyss below, in form
 A cormorant, the sea-nymph took her perch
 On the well-banded raft, and thus she said : —

405

“Ah, luckless man! how hast thou angered thus
 Earth-shaking Neptune, that he visits thee
 With these disasters? Yet he cannot take,
 Although he seek it earnestly, thy life.
 Now do my bidding, for thou seemest wise.

410

Laying aside thy garments, let the raft
 Drift with the winds, while thou, by strength of arm,
 Makest thy way in swimming to the land
 Of the Phæacians, where thy safety lies.
 Receive this veil, and bind its heavenly woof
 Beneath thy breast, and have no further fear
 Of hardship or of danger. But, as soon
 As thou shalt touch the island, take it off,
 And turn away thy face, and fling it far
 From where thou standest into the black deep.”

415

420

The goddess gave the veil as thus she spoke,
 And to the tossing deep went down, in form
 A cormorant; the black wave covered her.
 But still Ulysses, mighty sufferer,
 Pondered, and thus to his great soul he said : —

425

“Ah me! perhaps some god is planning here

Some other fraud against me, bidding me
Forsake my raft. I will not yet obey,
For still far off I see the land in which
'T is said my refuge lies. This will I do, 430
For this seems wisest. While the fastenings last
That hold these timbers, I will keep my place
And bide the tempest here; but when the waves
Shall dash my raft in pieces, I will swim,
For nothing better will remain to do." 435

As he revolved this purpose in his mind,
Earth-shaking Neptune sent a mighty wave,
Horrid and huge and high, and where he sat
It smote him. As a violent wind uplifts
The dry chaff heaped upon a threshing-floor, 440
And sends it scattered through the air abroad,
So did that wave fling loose the ponderous beams.
To one of these, Ulysses, clinging fast,
Bestrode it, like a horseman on his steed;
And now he took the garments off, bestowed 445
By fair Calypso, binding round his breast
The veil, and forward plunged into the deep,
With palms outspread, prepared to swim. Meanwhile
Neptune beheld him, — Neptune, mighty king, —
And shook his head, and said within himself: — 450

“Go thus, and laden with mischances roam
The waters till thou come among the race
Cherished by Jupiter, but well I deem
Thou wilt not find thy share of suffering light.”

Thus having said he urged his coursers on, 455
With their fair-flowing manes, until he came
To Ægæ, where his glorious palace stands.

But Pallas, child of Jove, had other thoughts.
She stayed the course of every wind beside,
And bade them rest, and lulled them into sleep, 460
But summoned the swift north to break the waves,
That so Ulysses, the high-born, escaped
From death and from the fates, might be the guest
Of the Phæacians, — men who love the sea.

Two days and nights among the mighty waves 465
He floated, oft his heart foreboding death.
But when the bright-haired Eos had fulfilled
The third day's course, and all the winds were laid,
And calm was on the watery waste, he saw
That land was near, as, lifted on the crest 470
Of a huge swell, he looked with sharpened sight;
And as a father's life preserved makes glad
His children's hearts, when long time he has lain
Sick, wrung with pain, and wasting by the power

Of some malignant genius, till at length 475
The gracious gods bestow a welcome cure,
So welcome to Ulysses was the sight
Of woods and fields. By swimming on he thought
To climb and tread the shore; but when he drew
So near that one who shouted could be heard 480
From land, the sound of ocean on the rocks
Came to his ear, — for there huge breakers roared
And spouted fearfully, and all around
Was covered with the sea-foam. Haven here
Was none for ships, nor sheltering creek, but shores 485
Beetling from high, and crags and walls of rock.
Ulysses trembled both in knees and heart,
And thus to his great soul, lamenting, said : —
“ Now woe is me ! as soon as Jove has shown
What I had little hoped to see, the land, 490
And I through all these waves have ploughed my way,
I find no issue from the hoary deep.
For sharp rocks border it, and all around
Roar the wild surges ; slippery cliffs arise
Close to deep gulfs, and footing there is none 495
Where I might plant my steps and thus escape.
All effort now were fruitless to resist
The mighty billow hurrying me away

To dash me on the pointed rocks. If yet
I strive, by swimming further, to descry 500
Some sloping shore or harbor of the isle,
I fear the tempest, lest it hurl me back,
Heavily groaning, to the fishy deep ;
Or huge sea-monster, from the multitude
Which sovereign Amphitritè feeds, be sent 505
Against me by some god, — for well I know
The power who shakes the shores is wroth with me.”

While he revolved these doubts within his mind,
A huge wave hurled him toward the rugged coast.
Then had his limbs been flayed, and all his bones 510
Broken at once, had not the blue-eyed maid,
Minerva, prompted him. Borne toward the rock,
He clutched it instantly with both his hands,
And panting clung till that huge wave rolled by,
And so escaped its fury. Back it came, 515
And smote him once again, and flung him far
Seaward. As to the claws of Polypus,
Plucked from its bed, the pebbles thickly cling,
So flakes of skin, from off his powerful hands,
Were left upon the rock. The mighty surge 520
O'erwhelmed him ; he had perished ere his time, —
Hapless Ulysses ! — but the blue-eyed maid,

Pallas, informed his mind with forecast. Straight
Emerging from the wave that shoreward rolled,
He swam along the coast and eyed it well, 525
In hope of sloping beach or sheltered creek.
But when, in swimming, he had reached the mouth
Of a soft-flowing river, here appeared
The spot he wished for, smooth, without a rock,
And here was shelter from the wind. He felt 530
The current's flow, and thus devoutly prayed : —

“Hear me, O sovereign power, whoe'er thou art !
To thee, the long-desired, I come. I seek
Escape from Neptune's threatenings on the sea.
The deathless gods respect the prayer of him 535
Who looks to them for help, a fugitive,
As I am now, when to thy stream I come,
And to thy knees, from many a hardship past.
O thou that here art ruler, I declare
Myself thy suppliant ; be thou merciful.” 540

He spoke ; the river stayed his current, checked
The billows, smoothed them to a calm, and gave
The swimmer a safe landing at his mouth.
Then dropped his knees and sinewy arms at once,
Unstrung, for faint with struggling was his heart. 545
His body was all swoln ; the brine gushed forth

From mouth and nostrils ; all unnerved he lay,
Breathless and speechless ; utter weariness
O'ermastered him. But when he breathed again,
And his flown senses had returned, he loosed 550
The veil that Ino gave him from his breast,
And to the salt flood cast it. A great wave
Bore it far down the stream ; the goddess there
In her own hands received it. He, meanwhile,
Withdrawing from the brink, lay down among 555
The reeds, and kissed the harvest-bearing earth,
And thus to his great soul, lamenting, said : —

“ Ah me ! what must I suffer more ? what yet
Will happen to me ? If by the river's side
I pass the unfriendly watches of the night, 560
The cruel cold and dews that steep the bank
May, in this weakness, end me utterly,
For chilly blows the river-air at dawn ;
But should I climb this hill, to sleep within
The shadowy wood, among thick shrubs, if cold 565
And weariness allow me, then I fear,
That, while the pleasant slumbers o'er me steal,
I may become the prey of savage beasts.”

Yet, as he longer pondered, this seemed best.
He rose, and sought the wood, and found it near 570

The water, on a height, o'erlooking far
The region round. Between two shrubs that sprang
Both from one spot he entered, — olive-trees,
One wild, one fruitful. The damp-blowing wind
Ne'er pierced their covert ; never blazing sun 575
Darted his beams within, nor pelting shower
Beat through, so closely intertwined they grew.
Here entering, Ulysses heaped a bed
Of leaves with his own hands ; he made it broad
And high, for thick the leaves had fallen around. 580
Two men and three, in that abundant store,
Might bide the winter storm, though keen the cold.
Ulysses, the great sufferer, on his couch
Looked and rejoiced, and placed himself within,
And heaped the leaves high o'er him and around, 585
As one who, dwelling in the distant fields,
Without a neighbor near him, hides a brand
In the dark ashes, keeping carefully
The seeds of fire alive, lest he, perforce,
To light his hearth must bring them from afar ; 590
So did Ulysses in that pile of leaves
Bury himself, while Pallas o'er his eyes
Poured sleep, and closed his lids, that he might take,
After his painful toils, the fitting rest.

BOOK VI.

THUS overcome with toil and weariness,
The noble sufferer Ulysses slept,
While Pallas hastened to the realm and town
Peopled by the Phæacians, who of yore
Abode in spacious Hypereia, near 5
The insolent race of Cyclops, and endured
Wrong from their mightier hands. A godlike chief,
Nausithoüs, led them to a new abode,
And planted them in Scheria, far away
From plotting neighbors. With a wall he fenced 10
Their city, built them dwellings there, and reared
Fanes to the gods, and changed the plain to fields.
But he had bowed to death, and had gone down
To Hades, and Alcinoüs, whom the gods
Endowed with wisdom, governed in his stead. 15
Now to his palace, planning the return
Of the magnanimous Ulysses, came
The blue-eyed goddess Pallas, entering

The gorgeous chamber where a damsel slept, —
 Nausicaä, daughter of the large-souled king 20
 Alcinoüs, beautiful in form and face
 As one of the immortals. Near her lay,
 And by the portal, one on either side,
 Fair as the Graces, two attendant maids.
 The shining doors were shut. But Pallas came 25
 As comes a breath of air, and stood beside
 The damsel's head and spake. In look she seemed
 The daughter of the famous mariner
 Dymas, a maiden whom Nausicaä loved,
 The playmate of her girlhood. In her shape 30
 The blue-eyed goddess stood, and thus she said : —
 “Nausicaä, has thy mother then brought forth
 A careless housewife? Thy magnificent robes
 Lie still neglected, though thy marriage day
 Is near, when thou art to array thyself 35
 In seemly garments, and bestow the like
 On those who lead thee to the bridal rite ;
 For thus the praise of men is won, and thus
 Thy father and thy gracious mother both
 Will be rejoiced. Now with the early dawn 40
 Let us all hasten to the washing-place.
 I too would go with thee, and help thee there,

That thou mayst sooner end the task, for thou
Not long wilt be unwedded. Thou art wooed
Already by the noblest of the race 45
Of the Phæacians, for thy birth like theirs
Is of the noblest. Make thy suit at morn
To thy illustrious father, that he bid
His mules and car be harnessed to convey
Thy girdles, robes, and mantles marvellous 50
In beauty. That were seemlier than to walk,
Since distant from the town the lavers lie."

Thus having said, the blue-eyed Pallas went
Back to Olympus, where the gods have made,
So saith tradition, their eternal seat. 55
The tempest shakes it not, nor is it drenched
By showers, and there the snow doth never fall.
The calm clear ether is without a cloud;
And in the golden light, that lies on all,
Days after day the blessed gods rejoice. 60
Thither the blue-eyed goddess, having given
Her message to the sleeping maid, withdrew.

Soon the bright morning came. Nausicaä rose,
Clad royally, as marvelling at her dream
She hastened through the palace to declare 65
Her purpose to her father and the queen.

She found them both within. Her mother sat
Beside the hearth with her attendant maids,
And turned the distaff loaded with a fleece
Dyed in sea-purple. On the threshold stood 70
Her father, going forth to meet the chiefs
Of the Phæacians in a council where
Their noblest asked his presence. Then the maid,
Approaching her beloved father, spake: —

“I pray, dear father, give command to make 75
A chariot ready for me, with high sides
And sturdy wheels, to bear to the river-brink,
There to be cleansed, the costly robes that now
Lie soiled. Thee likewise it doth well beseem
At councils to appear in vestments fresh 80
And stainless. Thou hast also in these halls
Five sons, two wedded, three in boyhood’s bloom,
And ever in the dance they need attire
New from the wash. All this must I provide.”

She ended, for she shrank from saying aught 85
Of her own hopeful marriage. He perceived
Her thought and said: “Mules I deny thee not,
My daughter, nor aught else. Go then; my grooms
Shall make a carriage ready with high sides
And sturdy wheels, and a broad rack above.” 90

He spake, and gave command. The grooms obeyed,
And, making ready in the outer court
The strong-wheeled chariot, led the harnessed mules
Under the yoke and made them fast; and then
Appeared the maiden, bringing from her bower 95
The shining garments. In the polished car
She piled them, while with many pleasant meats
And flavoring morsels for the day's repast
Her mother filled a hamper, and poured wine
Into a goatskin. As her daughter climbed 100
The car, she gave into her hands a cruse
Of gold with smooth anointing oil for her
And her attendant maids. Nausicaä took
The scourge and showy reins, and struck the mules
To urge them onward. Onward with loud noise 105
They went, and with a speed that slackened not,
And bore the robes and her, — yet not alone,
For with her went the maidens of her train.
Now when they reached the river's pleasant brink,
Where lavers had been hollowed out to last 110
Perpetually, and freely through them flowed
Pure water that might cleanse the foulest stains,
They loosed the mules, and drove them from the wain
To browse the sweet grass by the eddying stream;

And took the garments out, and flung them down 115
In the dark water, and with hasty feet
Trampled them there in frolic rivalry.

And when the task was done, and all the stains
Were cleansed away, they spread the garments out
Along the beach and where the stream had washed 120
The gravel cleanest. Then they bathed, and gave
Their limbs the delicate oil, and took their meal

Upon the river's border, — while the robes
Beneath the sun's warm rays were growing dry.
And now, when they were all refreshed by food, 125
Mistress and maidens laid their veils aside

And played at ball. Nausicaä the white-armed
Began a song. As when the archer-queen
Diana, going forth among the hills, —
The sides of high Taygetus or slopes 130
Of Erymanthus, — chases joyously

Boars and fleet stags, and round her in a throng
Frolic the rural nymphs, Latona's heart
Is glad, for over all the rest are seen
Her daughter's head and brow, and she at once 135
Is known among them, though they all are fair,
Such was this spotless virgin midst her maids.

Now when they were about to move for home

With harnessed mules and with the shining robes
Carefully folded, then the blue-eyed maid, 140
Pallas, bethought herself of this, — to rouse
Ulysses and to bring him to behold
The bright-eyed maiden, that she might direct
The stranger's way to the Phæacian town.
The royal damsel at a handmaid cast 145
The ball; it missed, and fell into the stream
Where a deep eddy whirled. All shrieked aloud.
The great Ulysses started from his sleep
And sat upright, discoursing to himself: —
“ Ah me! upon what region am I thrown? 150
What men are here, — wild, savage, and unjust,
Or hospitable, and who hold the gods
In reverence? There are voices in the air,
Womanly voices, as of nymphs that haunt
The mountain summits, and the river-founts, 155
And the moist grassy meadows. Or perchance
Am I near men who have the power of speech?
Nay, let me then go forth at once and learn.”
Thus having said, the great Ulysses left
The thicket. From the close-grown wood he rent, 160
With his strong hand, a branch well set with leaves,
And wound it as a covering round his waist.

Then like a mountain lion he went forth,
That walks abroad, confiding in his strength,
In rain and wind ; his eyes shoot fire ; he falls 165
On oxen, or on sheep, or forest-deer,
For hunger prompts him even to attack
The flock within its closely guarded fold.
Such seemed Ulysses when about to meet
Those fair-haired maidens, naked as he was, 170
But forced by strong necessity. To them
His look was frightful, for his limbs were foul
With sea-foam yet. To right and left they fled
Along the jutting river-banks. Alone
The daughter of Alcinoüs kept her place, 175
For Pallas gave her courage and forbade
Her limbs to tremble. So she waited there.
Ulysses pondered whether to approach
The bright-eyed damsel and embrace her knees
And supplicate, or, keeping yet aloof, 180
Pray her with soothing words to show the way
Townward and give him garments. Musing thus,
It seemed the best to keep at distance still,
And use soft words, lest, should he clasp her knees,
The maid might be displeased. With gentle words 185
Skilfully ordered thus Ulysses spake : —

“O queen, I am thy suppliant, whether thou
Be mortal or a goddess. If perchance
Thou art of that immortal race who dwell
In the broad heaven, thou art, I deem, most like 190
To Dian, daughter of imperial Jove,
In shape, in stature, and in noble air.
If mortal and a dweller of the earth,
Thrice happy are thy father and his queen,
Thrice happy are thy brothers; and their hearts 195
Must overflow with gladness for thy sake,
Beholding such a scion of their house
Enter the choral dance. But happiest he
Beyond them all, who, bringing princely gifts,
Shall bear thee to his home a bride; for sure 200
I never looked on one of mortal race,
Woman or man, like thee, and as I gaze
I wonder. Like to thee I saw of late,
In Delos, a young palm-tree growing up
Beside Apollo’s altar; for I sailed 205
To Delos, with much people following me,
On a disastrous voyage. Long I gazed
Upon it wonder-struck, as I am now, —
For never from the earth so fair a tree
Had sprung. So marvel I, and am amazed 210

At thee, O lady, and in awe forbear
To clasp thy knees. Yet much have I endured.
It was but yestereve that I escaped
From the black sea, upon the twentieth day,
So long the billows and the rushing gales 215
Farther and farther from Ogygia's isle
Had borne me. Now upon this shore some god
Casts me, perchance to meet new sufferings here ;
For yet the end is not, and many things
The gods must first accomplish. But do thou, 220
O queen, have pity on me, since to thee
I come the first of all. I do not know
A single dweller of the land beside.
Show me, I pray, thy city ; and bestow
Some poor old robe to wrap me, — if, indeed, 225
In coming hither, thou hast brought with thee
Aught poor or coarse. And may the gods vouchsafe
To thee whatever blessing thou canst wish,
Husband and home and wedded harmony.
There is no better, no more blessed state, 230
Than when the wife and husband in accord
Order their household lovingly. Then those
Repine who hate them, those who wish them well
Rejoice, and they themselves the most of all."

And then the white-armed maid Nausicaä said: — 235
“Since then, O stranger, thou art not malign
Of purpose nor weak-minded, — yet, in truth,
Olympian Jupiter bestows the goods
Of fortune on the noble and the base
To each one at his pleasure; and thy griefs 240
Are doubtless sent by him, and it is fit
That thou submit in patience, — now that thou
Hast reached our lands, and art within our realm,
Thou shalt not lack for garments nor for aught
Due to a suppliant stranger in his need. 245
The city I will show thee, and will name
Its dwellers, — the Phæacians, — they possess
The city; all the region lying round
Is theirs, and I am daughter of the prince
Alcinoüs, large of soul, to whom are given 250
The rule of the Phæacians and their power.”

So spake the damsel, and commanded thus
Her fair-haired maids: “Stay! whither do ye flee,
My handmaids, when a man appears in sight?
Ye think, perhaps, he is some enemy. 255
Nay, there is no man living now, nor yet
Will live, to enter, bringing war, the land
Of the Phæacians. Very dear are they

To the great gods. We dwell apart, afar
Within the unmeasured deep, amid its waves 260
The most remote of men ; no other race
Hath commerce with us. This man comes to us
A wanderer and unhappy, and to him
Our cares are due. The stranger and the poor
Are sent by Jove, and slight regards to them 265
Are grateful. Maidens, give the stranger food
And drink, and take him to the river-side
To bathe where there is shelter from the wind."

So spake the mistress ; and they stayed their flight
And bade each other stand, and led the chief 270
Under a shelter as the royal maid,
Daughter of stout Alcinoüs, gave command,
And laid a cloak and tunic near the spot
To be his raiment, and a golden cruse
Of limpid oil. Then, as they bade him bathe 275
In the fresh stream, the noble chieftain said : —

"Withdraw, ye maidens, hence, while I prepare
To cleanse my shoulders from the bitter brine,
And to anoint them ; long have these my limbs
Been unrefreshed by oil. I will not bathe 280
Before you. I should be ashamed to stand
Unclothed in presence of these bright-haired maids."

He spake; they hearkened and withdrew, and told
The damsel what he said. Ulysses then
Washed the salt spray of ocean from his back 285
And his broad shoulders in the flowing stream,
And wiped away the sea-froth from his brows.
And when the bath was over, and his limbs
Had been anointed, and he had put on
The garments sent him by the spotless maid, 290
Jove's daughter, Pallas, caused him to appear
Of statelier size and more majestic mien,
And bade the locks that crowned his head flow down,
Curling like blossoms of the hyacinth.
As when some skilful workman trained and taught 295
By Vulcan and Minerva in his art
Binds the bright silver with a verge of gold,
And graceful is his handiwork, such grace
Did Pallas shed upon the hero's brow
And shoulders, as he passed along the beach, 300
And, glorious in his beauty and the pride
Of noble bearing, sat aloof. The maid
Admired, and to her bright-haired women spake: —
“Listen to me, my maidens, while I speak.
This man comes not among the godlike sons 305
Of the Phæacian stock against the will

Of all the gods of heaven. I thought him late
 Of an unseemly aspect; now he bears
 A likeness to the immortal ones whose home
 Is the broad heaven. I would that I might call 310
 A man like him my husband, dwelling here,
 And here content to dwell. Now hasten, maids,
 And set before the stranger food and wine."

She spake; they heard and cheerfully obeyed,
 And set before Ulysses food and wine. 315
 The patient chief Ulysses ate and drank
 Full eagerly, for he had fasted long.

White-armed Nausicaä then had other cares.
 She placed the smoothly folded robes within
 The sumptuous chariot, yoked the firm-hoofed mules, 320
 And mounted to her place, and from the seat
 Spake kindly, counselling Ulysses thus: —

"Now, stranger, rise and follow to the town,
 And to my royal father's palace I
 Will be thy guide, where, doubt not, thou wilt meet 325
 The noblest men of our Phæacian race.
 But do as I advise, — for not inapt
 I deem thee. While we traverse yet the fields
 Among the tilth, keep thou among my train
 Of maidens, following fast behind the mules 330

And chariot. I will lead thee in the way.
But when our train goes upward toward the town,
Fenced with its towery wall, and on each side
Embraced by a fair haven, with a strait
Of narrow entrance, where our well-oared barks 335
Have each a mooring-place along the road,
And there round Neptune's glorious fane extends
A market-place, surrounded by huge stones,
Dragged from the quarry hither, where is kept
The rigging of the barks, — sail-cloth and ropes, — 340
And oars are polished there, — for little reck
Phæacians of the quiver and the bow,
And give most heed to masts and shrouds and ships
Well poised, in which it is their pride to cross
The foamy deep, — when there I would not bring 345
Rude taunts upon myself, for in the crowd
Are brutal men. One of the baser sort
Perchance might say, on meeting us: 'What man,
Handsome and lusty-limbed, is he who thus
Follows Nausicaä? where was it her luck 350
To find him? will he be her husband yet?
Perhaps she brings some wanderer from his ship,
A stranger from strange lands, for we have here
No neighbors; or, perhaps, it is a god

Called down by fervent prayer from heaven to dwell 355
 Henceforth with her. 'T is well if she have found
 A husband elsewhere, since at home she meets
 Her many noble wooers with disdain ;
 They are Phæacians.' Thus the crowd would say,
 And it would bring reproach upon my name. 360
 I too would blame another who should do
 The like, and, while her parents were alive,
 Without their knowledge should consort with men
 Before her marriage. Stranger, now observe
 My words, and thou shalt speedily obtain 365
 Safe-conduct from my father, and be sent
 Upon thy voyage homeward. We shall reach
 A beautiful grove of poplars by the way,
 Sacred to Pallas ; from it flows a brook,
 And round it lies a meadow. In this spot 370
 My father has his country-grounds, and here
 His garden flourishes, as far from town
 As one could hear a shout. There sit thou down
 And wait till we are in the city's streets
 And at my father's house. When it shall seem 375
 That we are there, arise and onward fare
 To the Phæacian city, and inquire
 Where dwells Alcinoüs the large-souled king,

My father ; 't is not hard to find ; a child
 Might lead thee thither. Of the houses reared 380
 By the Phæacians there is none like that
 In which Alcinoüs the hero dwells.
 When thou art once within the court and hall,
 Go quickly through the palace till thou find
 My mother where she sits beside the hearth, 385
 Leaning against a column in its blaze,
 And twisting threads, a marvel to behold,
 Of bright sea-purple, while her maidens sit
 Behind her. Near her is my father's throne,
 On which he sits at feasts, and drinks the wine 390
 Like one of the immortals. Pass it by
 And clasp my mother's knees ; so mayst thou see
 Soon and with joy the day of thy return,
 Although thy home be far. For if her mood
 Be kindly toward thee, thou mayst hope to greet 395
 Thy friends once more, and enter yet again
 Thy own fair palace in thy native land."

Thus having said, she raised the shining scourge
 And struck the mules, that quickly left behind
 The river. On they went with easy pace 400
 And even steps. The damsel wielded well
 The reins, and used the lash with gentle hand,

So that Ulysses and her train of maids
On foot could follow close. And now the sun
Was sinking when they came to that fair grove
Sacred to Pallas. There the noble chief

405

Ulysses sat him down, and instantly
Prayed to the daughter of imperial Jove: —

“O thou unconquerable child of Jove
The Ægis-bearer! hearken to me now,
Since late thou wouldst not listen to my prayer,
What time the mighty Shaker of the shores
Pursued and wrecked me! Grant me to receive
Pity and kindness from Phæacia’s sons.”

410

So prayed he, supplicating. Pallas heard
The prayer, but came not to him openly.
Awe of her father’s brother held her back;
For he would still pursue with violent hate
Ulysses, till he reached his native land.

415

BOOK VII.

SO prayed Ulysses the great sufferer.
The strong mules bore the damsel toward the town,
And when she reached her father's stately halls
She stopped beneath the porch. Her brothers came
Around her, like in aspect to the gods, 5
And loosed the mules, and bore the garments in.
She sought her chamber, where an aged dame
Attendant there, an Epirote, and named
Eurymedusa, lighted her a fire.
She by the well-oared galleys had been brought 10
Beforetime from Epirus, and was given
To king Alcinoüs, ruler over all
Phæacia's sons, who hearkened to his voice
As if he were a god. 'T was she who reared
White-armed Nausicaä in the royal halls, 15
Tended her hearth, and dressed her evening meal.
Now rose Ulysses up, and townward turned
His steps, while friendly Pallas wrapt his way

In darkness, lest some one among the sons
Of the Phæacians with unmannerly words 20
Might call to him or ask him who he was.
And just as he was entering that fair town
The blue-eyed Pallas met him, in the form
Of a young virgin with an urn. She stood
Before him, and Ulysses thus inquired : — 25

“Wilt thou, my daughter, guide me to the house
Where dwells Alcinoüs, he who rules this land?
I am a stranger, who have come from far
After long hardships, and of all who dwell
Within this realm I know not even one.” 30

Pallas, the blue-eyed goddess, thus replied : —
“Father and stranger, I will show the house ;
The dwelling of my own good father stands
Close by it. Follow silently, I pray,
And I will lead. Look not on any man 35
Nor ask a question ; for the people here
Affect not strangers, nor do oft receive
With kindly welcome him who comes from far.
They trust in their swift barks, which to and fro,
By Neptune’s favor, cross the mighty deep. 40
Their galleys have the speed of wings or thought.”

Thus Pallas spake, and quickly led the way.

He followed in her steps. They saw him not, —
Those trained Phæacian seamen, — for the power
That led him, Pallas of the amber hair, 45
Forbade the sight, and threw a friendly veil
Of darkness over him. Ulysses saw,
Wondering, the haven and the gallant ships,
The market-place where heroes thronged, the walls
Long, lofty, and beset with palisades, 50
A marvel to the sight. But when they came
To the king's stately palace, thus began
The blue-eyed goddess, speaking to the chief:

“Father and stranger, here thou seest the house
Which thou hast bid me show thee. Thou wilt find 55
The princes, nurslings of the gods, within,
Royally feasting. Enter, and fear not;
The bold man ever is the better man,
Although he come from far. Thou first of all
Wilt see the queen. Aretè is the name 60
The people give her. She is of a stock
The very same from which Alcinoüs
The king derives his lineage. For long since
Nausithoüs, its founder, was brought forth
To Neptune, the great Shaker of the shores, 65
By Peribæa, fairest of her sex,

And youngest daughter of Eurymedon,
The large of soul, who ruled the arrogant brood
Of giants, and beheld that guilty race
Cut off, and perished by a fate like theirs. 70
Her Neptune wooed; she bore to him a son,
Large-souled Nausithoüs, whom Phæacia owned
Its sovereign. To Nausithoüs were born
Rhexenor and Alcinoüs. He who bears
The silver bow, Apollo, smote to death 75
Rhexenor, newly wedded, in his home.
He left no son, and but one daughter, named
Aretè; her Alcinoüs made his wife,
And honored her as nowhere else on earth
Is any woman honored who bears charge 80
Over a husband's household. From their hearts
Her children pay her reverence, and the king
And all the people, for they look on her
As if she were a goddess. When she goes
Abroad into the streets, all welcome her 85
With acclamations. Never does she fail
In wise discernment, but decides disputes
Kindly and justly between man and man.
And if thou gain her favor, there is hope
That thou mayst see thy friends once more, and stand 90

In thy tall palace on thy native soil."

The blue-eyed Pallas, having spoken thus,
Departed o'er the barren deep. She left
The pleasant isle of Scheria, and repaired
To Marathon and to the spacious streets
Of Athens, entering there the massive halls
Where dwelt Erectheus, while Ulysses toward
The gorgeous palace of Alcinoüs turned
His steps, yet stopped and pondered ere he crossed
The threshold. For on every side beneath
The lofty roof of that magnanimous king
A glory shone as of the sun or moon.

95

100

There from the threshold, on each side, were walls
Of brass that led towards the inner rooms,
With blue steel cornices. The doors within
The massive building were of gold, and posts
Of silver on the brazen threshold stood,
And silver was the lintel, and above
Its architrave was gold; and on each side
Stood gold and silver mastiffs, the rare work
Of Vulcan's practised skill, placed there to guard
The house of great Alcinoüs, and endowed
With deathless life, that knows no touch of age.
Along the walls within, on either side,

105

110

And from the threshold to the inner rooms, 115
Were firmly planted thrones on which were laid
Delicate mantles, woven by the hands
Of women. The Phæacian princes here
Were seated; here they ate and drank, and held
Perpetual banquet. Slender forms of boys 120
In gold upon the shapely altars stood,
With blazing torches in their hands to light
At eve the palace guests; while fifty maids
Waited within the halls, where some in querns
Ground small the yellow grain; some wove the web 125
Or twirled the spindle, sitting, with a quick
Light motion, like the aspen's glancing leaves.
The well-wrought tissues glistened as with oil.
As far as the Phæacian race excel
In guiding their swift galleys o'er the deep, 130
So far the women in their woven work
Surpass all others. Pallas gives them skill
In handiwork and beautiful design.
Without the palace-court, and near the gate,
A spacious garden of four acres lay. 135
A hedge enclosed it round, and lofty trees
Flourished in generous growth within, — the pear
And the pomegranate, and the apple-tree

With its fair fruitage, and the luscious fig
 And olive always green. The fruit they bear 140
 Falls not, nor ever fails in winter time
 Nor summer, but is yielded all the year.
 The ever-blowing west-wind causes some
 To swell and some to ripen ; pear succeeds
 To pear ; to apple apple, grape to grape, 145
 Fig ripens after fig. A fruitful field
 Of vines was planted near ; in part it lay
 Open and basking in the sun, which dried
 The soil, and here men gathered in the grapes,
 And there they trod the wine-press. Farther on 150
 Were grapes unripened yet, which just had cast
 The flower, and others still which just began
 To redden. At the garden's furthest bound
 Were beds of many plants that all the year
 Bore flowers. There gushed two fountains : one of them
 Ran wandering through the field ; the other flowed 156
 Beneath the threshold to the palace-court,
 And all the people filled their vessels there.
 Such were the blessings which the gracious gods
 Bestowed on King Alcinoüs and his house. 160
 Ulysses, the great sufferer, standing there,
 Admired the sight ; and when he had beheld

The whole in silent wonderment, he crossed
 The threshold quickly, entering the hall
 Where the Phæacian peers and princes poured 165
 Wine from their goblets to the sleepless one,
 The Argus-queller, to whose deity
 They made the last libations when they thought
 Of slumber. The great sufferer, concealed
 In a thick mist, which Pallas raised and cast 170
 Around him, hastened through the hall and came
 Close to Aretè and Alcinoüs,
 The royal pair. Then did Ulysses clasp
 Aretè's knees, when suddenly the cloud
 Raised by the goddess vanished. All within 175
 The palace were struck mute as they beheld
 The man before them. Thus Ulysses prayed:—
 "Aretè, daughter of the godlike chief
 Rhexenor! to thy husband I am come
 And to thy knees, from many hardships borne, 180
 And to these guests, to whom may the good gods
 Grant to live happily, and to hand down,
 Each one to his own children, in his home,
 The wealth and honors which the people's love
 Bestowed upon him. Grant me, I entreat, 185
 An escort, that I may behold again

And soon my own dear country. I have passed
Long years in sorrow, far from all I love."

He ended, and sat down upon the hearth
Among the ashes, near the fire, and all
Were silent utterly. At length outspoke
Echeneus, oldest and most eloquent chief
Of the Phæacians; large his knowledge was
Of things long past. With generous intent,
And speaking to the assembly, he began:—

190

205

"Alcinoüs, this is not a seemly sight,—
A stranger sitting on the hearth among
The cinders. All the others here await
Thy order, and move not. I pray thee, raise
The stranger up, and seat him on a throne
Studded with silver. Be thy heralds called,
And bid them mingle wine, which we may pour
To Jove, the god of thunders, who attends
And honors every suppliant. Let the dame
Who oversees the palace feast provide
Our guest a banquet from the stores within."

200

205

This when the reverend king Alcinoüs heard,
Forthwith he took Ulysses by the hand,—
That man of wise devices,—raised him up
And seated him upon a shining throne,

210

From which he bade Laodamas arise,
His manly son, whose seat was next to his.

“Now mingle wine, Protonoüs, in a vase,
For all within the palace, to be poured
To Jove, the god of thunders, who attends 215
And honors every suppliant.” As he spake
Protonoüs mingled the delicious wines,
And passed from right to left, distributing
The cups to all; and when they all had poured
A part to Jove, and all had drunk their fill, 220
Alcinoüs took the word, and thus he said:—

“Princes and chiefs of the Phæacians, hear.
I speak as my heart bids me. Since the feast
Is over, take your rest within your homes.
To-morrow shall the Senators be called 225
In larger concourse. We will pay our guest
Due honor in the palace, worshipping
The gods with solemn sacrifice. And then
Will we bethink us how to send him home,
That with no hindrance and no hardship borne 230
Under our escort he may come again
Gladly and quickly to his native land,
Though far away it lie, and that no wrong
Or loss may happen to him ere he set

Foot on its soil; and there must he endure 235
 Whatever, when his mother brought him forth,
 Fate and the unrelenting Sisters spun
 For the new-born. But should he prove to be
 One of the immortals who has come from heaven,
 Then have the gods a different design. 240
 For hitherto the gods have shown themselves
 Visibly at our solemn hecatombs,
 And sat with us, and feasted like ourselves,
 And when the traveller meets with them alone,
 They never hide themselves; for we to them 245
 Are near of kin, as near as is the race
 Of Cyclops and the savage giant brood."

Ulysses the sagacious answered him:—
 "Nay, think not so, Alcinoüs. I am not
 In form or aspect as the immortals are, 250
 Whose habitation is the ample heaven.
 But I am like whomever thou mayst know,
 Among mankind, inured to suffering;
 To them shouldst thou compare me. I could tell
 Of bitterer sorrows yet, which I have borne; 255
 Such was the pleasure of the gods. But now
 Leave me, whatever have my hardships been,
 To take the meal before me. Nought exceeds

The impatient stomach's importunity
When even the afflicted and the sorrowful 260
Are forced to heed its call. So even now,
Midst all the sorrow that is in my heart,
It bids me eat and drink, and put aside
The thought of my misfortunes till itself
Be satiate. But, ye princes, with the dawn 265
Provide for me, in my calamity,
The means to reach again my native land.
For, after all my hardships, I would die
Willingly, could I look on my estates,
My servants, and my lofty halls once more." 270

He ended; they approved his words, and bade
Set forward on his homeward way the guest
Who spake so wisely. When they all had made
Libations and had drunk, they each withdrew
To sleep at home, and left the noble chief 275
Ulysses in the palace, where with him
Aretè and her godlike husband sat,
While from the feast the maidens bore away
The chargers. The white-armed Aretè then
Began to speak; for when she cast her eyes 280
On the fair garments which Ulysses wore,
She knew the mantle and the tunic well,

Wrought by herself and her attendant maids,
And thus with winged words bespake the chief : —

“Stranger, I first must ask thee who thou art,
And of what race of men. From whom hast thou
Received those garments? Sure thou dost not say
That thou art come from wandering o’er the sea.”

285

Ulysses, the sagacious, answered thus : —

“’T were hard, O sovereign lady, to relate
In order all my sufferings, for the gods
Of heaven have made them many ; yet will I
Tell all thou askest of me, and obey
Thy bidding. Far within the ocean lies
An island named Ogygia, where abides
Calypso, artful goddess, with bright locks,
Daughter of Atlas, and of dreaded power.
No god consorts with her, nor any one
Of mortal birth. But me in my distress
Some god conveyed alone to her abode,
When, launching his white lightning, Jupiter
Had cloven in the midst of the black sea
My galley. There my gallant comrades all
Perished, but I in both my arms held fast
The keel of my good ship, and floated on
Nine days, till on the tenth, in the dark night,

290

295

300

305

The gods had brought me to Ogygia's isle,
 Where dwells Calypso of the radiant hair
 And dreaded might, who kindly welcomed me,
 And cherished me, and would have made my life 310
 Immortal, and beyond the power of age
 In all the coming time. And there I wore
 Seven years away, still moistening with my tears
 The ambrosial raiment which the goddess gave.
 But when the eighth year had begun its round 315
 She counselled my departure, whether Jove
 Had so required, or she herself had changed
 Her purpose. On a raft made strong with clamps
 She placed me, sent on board an ample store
 Of bread and pleasant wine, and made me put 320
 Ambrosial garments on, and gave a soft
 And favorable wind. For seventeen days
 I held my steady course across the deep,
 And on the eighteenth day the shadowy heights
 Of your own isle appeared, and then my heart, 325
 Ill-fated as I was, rejoiced. Yet still
 Was I to struggle with calamities
 Sent by earth-shaking Neptune, who called up
 The winds against me, and withstood my way,
 And stirred the boundless ocean to its depths. 330

Nor did the billows suffer me to keep
My place, but swept me, groaning, from the raft,
Whose planks they scattered. Still I labored through
The billowy depth, and swam, till wind and wave
Drove me against your coast. As there I sought
To land, I found the surges hurrying me
Against huge rocks that lined the frightful shore;
But, turning back, I swam again and reached
A river and the landing-place I wished,
Smooth, without rocks, and sheltered from the wind.
I swooned, but soon revived. Ambrosial night
Came on. I left the Jove-descended stream
And slept among the thickets, drawing round
My limbs the withered leaves, while on my lids
A deity poured bounteously the balm
Of slumber. All night long, among the leaves,
I slept, with all that sorrow in my heart,
Till morn, till noon. Then as the sun went down
The balmy slumber left me, and I saw
Thy daughter's handmaids sporting on the shore,
And her among them, goddess-like. To her
I came a suppliant, nor did she receive
My suit unkindly as a maid so young
Might do, for youth is foolish. She bestowed

335

340

345

350

Food and red wine abundantly, and gave, 355
When I had bathed, the garments I have on.
Thus is my tale of suffering truly told."

And then Alcinoüs answered him and said : —
"Stranger, one duty hath my child o'erlooked, —
To bid thee follow hither with her maids, 360
Since thou didst sue to her the first of all."

Ulysses, the sagacious, thus replied : —
"Blame not for that, O hero, I entreat,
Thy faultless daughter. She commanded me
To follow with her maids, but I refrained 365
For fear and awe of thee, lest, at the sight,
Thou mightest be displeased ; for we are prone
To dark misgivings, — we, the sons of men."

Again Alcinoüs spake : "The heart that beats
Within my bosom is not rashly moved 370
To wrath, and better is the temperate mood.
This must I say, O Father Jupiter,
And Pallas and Apollo ! I could wish
That, being as thou art, and of like mind
With me, thou wouldst receive to be thy bride 375
My daughter, and be called my son-in-law,
And here abide. A palace I would give,
And riches, shouldst thou willingly remain.

Against thy will let no Phæacian dare
 To keep thee here. May Father Jove forbid ! 380
 And that thou mayst be sure of my intent,
 I name to-morrow for thy voyage home.
 Sleep in thy bed till then ; and they shall row
 O'er the calm sea thy galley, till thou come
 To thine own land and home, or wheresoe'er 385
 Thou wilt, though further off the coast should be
 Than far Eubœa, most remote of lands, —
 So do the people of our isle declare,
 Who saw it when they over sea conveyed
 The fair-haired Rhadamanthus, on his way 390
 To visit Tityus, son of Earth. They went
 Thither, accomplishing with little toil
 Their voyage in the compass of a day,
 And brought the hero to our isle again.
 Now shalt thou learn, and in thy heart confess, 395
 How much our galleys and our youths excel
 With bladed oars to stir the whirling brine."

So spake the king, and the great sufferer
 Ulysses heard with gladness, and preferred
 A prayer, and called on Jupiter and said : — 400

"Grant, Father Jove, that all the king has said
 May be fulfilled ! so shall his praise go forth

Over the foodful earth, and never die,
And I shall see my native land again."

So they conferred. White-armed Aretè spake, 405
And bade her maidens in the portico
Place couches, and upon them lay fair rugs
Of purple dye, and tapestry on these,
And for the outer covering shaggy cloaks.
Forth from the hall they issued, torch in hand ; 410
And when with speed the ample bed was made,
They came and summoned thus the chief to rest : —

"Rise, stranger, go to rest ; thy bed is made."
Thus spake the maidens, and the thought of sleep
Was welcome to Ulysses. So that night 415
On his deep couch the noble sufferer
Slumbered beneath the sounding portico.
Alcinoüs laid him down in a recess
Within his lofty palace, near to whom
The queen his consort graced the marriage-bed. 420

BOOK VIII.

WHEN Morn appeared, the rosy-fingered child
Of Dawn, Alcinoüs, mighty and revered,
Rose from his bed. Ulysses, noble chief,
Spoiler of cities, also left his couch.
Alcinoüs, mighty and revered, went forth
Before, and led him to the market-place
Of the Phæacians, built beside the fleet,
And there on polished stones they took their seats
Near to each other. Pallas, who now seemed
A herald of the wise Alcinoüs, went
Through all the city, planning how to send
Magnanimous Ulysses to his home,
And came and stood by every chief and said : —
“ Leaders and chiefs of the Phæacians, come
Speedily to the market-place, and there
Hear of the stranger who from wandering o’er
The deep has come where wise Alcinoüs holds
His court ; in aspect he is like the gods.”

She spake, and every mind and heart were moved,
And all the market-place and all its seats 20
Were quickly filled with people. Many gazed,
Admiring, on Laertes' well-graced son;
For on his face and form had Pallas shed
A glory, and had made him seem more tall
And of an ampler bulk, that he might find 25
Favor with the Phæacians, and be deemed
Worthy of awe and able to achieve
The many feats which the Phæacian chiefs,
To try the stranger's prowess, might propose.

And now when all the summoned had arrived, 30
Alcinoüs to the full assembly spake:—

“Princes and chiefs of the Phæacians, hear:
I speak the promptings of my heart. This guest—
I know him not—has come to my abode,
A wanderer,—haply from the tribes who dwell 35
In the far East, or haply from the West,—
And asked an escort and safe-conduct home;
And let us make them ready, as our wont
Has ever been. No stranger ever comes
Across my threshold who is suffered long 40
To pine for his departure. Let us draw
A dark-hulled ship down to the holy sea

On her first voyage. Let us choose her crew
Among the people, two-and-fifty youths
Of our best seamen. Then make fast the oars 45
Beside the benches, leave them there, and come
Into our palace and partake in haste
A feast which I will liberally spread
For all of you. This I command the youths ;
But you, ye sceptred princes, come at once 50
To my fair palace, that we there may pay
The honors due our guest ; let none refuse.
Call also the divine Demodocus,
The bard, on whom a deity bestowed
In ample measure the sweet gift of song, 55
Delightful when the spirit prompts the lay."

He spake, and led the way ; the sceptred train
Of princes followed him. The herald sought
Meantime the sacred bard. The chosen youths
Fifty-and-two betook them to the marge 60
Of the unfruitful sea ; and when they reached
The ship and beach they drew the dark hull down
To the deep water, put the mast on board
And the ship's sails, and fitted well the oars
Into the leathern rings, and, having moored 65
Their bark in the deep water, went with speed

To their wise monarch in his spacious halls.
There portico and court and hall were thronged
With people, young and old in multitude ;
And there Alcinoüs sacrificed twelve sheep, 70
Eight white-toothed swine, and two splay-footed beeves.
And these they flayed, and duly dressed, and made
A noble banquet ready. Then appeared
The herald, leading the sweet singer in,
Him whom the Muse with an exceeding love 75
Had cherished, and had visited with good
And evil, quenched his eyesight and bestowed
Sweetness of song. Pontonoüs mid the guests
Placed for the bard a silver-studded throne,
Against a lofty column hung his harp 80
Above his head, and taught him how to find
And take it down. Near him the herald set
A basket and fair table, and a cup
Of wine, that he might drink when he desired ;
Then all put forth their hands and shared the feast. 85
And when their thirst and hunger were allayed,
The Muse inspired the bard to sing the praise
Of heroes ; 't was a song whose fame had reached
To the high heaven, a story of the strife
Between Ulysses and Achilles, son 90

Of Peleus, wrangling at a solemn feast
Made for the gods. They strove with angry words,
And Agamemnon, king of men, rejoiced
To hear the noblest of the Achaian host
Contending; for all this had been foretold
To him in sacred Pythia by the voice
Of Phœbus, when the monarch to inquire
At the oracle had crossed the rock which formed
Its threshold. Then began the train of woes
Which at the will of sovereign Jupiter
Befell the sons of Ilium and of Greece.

95

100

So sang renowned Demodocus. Meanwhile
Ulysses took into his brawny hands
An ample veil of purple, drawing it
Around his head to hide his noble face,
Ashamed that the Phæacians should behold
The tears that flowed so freely from his lids.
But when the sacred bard had ceased his song,
He wiped the tears away and laid the veil
Aside, and took a double beaker filled
With wine, and poured libations to the gods.
Yet when again the minstrel sang, and all
The chiefs of the Phæacian people, charmed
To hear his music, bade the strain proceed,

105

110

Again Ulysses hid his face and wept. 115

No other eye beheld the tears he shed.

Alcinoüs only watched him, and perceived

His grief, and heard the sighs he drew, and spake

To the Phæacians, lovers of the sea : —

“Now that we all, to our content, have shared 120

The feast and heard the harp, whose notes so well

Suit with a liberal banquet, let us forth

And try our skill in games, that this our guest,

Returning to his country, may relate

How in the boxing and the wrestling match, 125

In leaping and in running, we excel.”

He spake, and went before ; they followed him.

Then did the herald hang the clear-toned harp

Again on high, and taking by the hand

Demodocus, he led him from the place, 130

Guiding him in the way which just before

The princes of Phæacia trod to see

The public games. Into the market-place

They went ; a vast innumerable crowd

Pressed after. Then did many a valiant youth 135

Arise, — Acroneus and Ocyalus,

Elatreus, Nauteus, Prymneus, after whom

Upstood Anchialus, and by his side

Eretmeus, Ponteus, Proreus, Thoön, rose ;
Anabesineüs and Amphialus, 140
A son of Polyneius, Tecton's son ;
Then rose the son of Naubolus, like Mars
In warlike port, Euryalus by name,
And goodliest both in feature and in form
Of all Phæacia's sons save one alone, 145
Laodamas the faultless. Next three sons
Of King Alcinoüs rose : Laodamas,
Halius, and Clytoneius, like a god
In aspect. Some of these began the games,
Contending in the race. For them a course 150
Was marked from goal to goal. They darted forth
At once and swiftly, raising, as they ran,
The dust along the plain. The swiftest there
Was Clytoneius in the race. As far
As mules, in furrowing the fallow ground, 155
Gain on the steers, he ran before the rest,
And reached the crowd, and left them all behind.
Others in wrestling strove laboriously, —
And here Euryalus excelled them all ;
But in the leap Amphialus was first ; 160
Elatreus flung the quoit with firmest hand ;
And in the boxer's art Laodamas,

The monarch's valiant son, was conqueror.

This when the admiring multitude had seen,
Thus spake the monarch's son, Laodamas : —

165

“And now, my friends, inquire we of our guest
If he has learned and practised feats like these.
For he is not ill-made in legs and thighs
And in both arms, in firmly planted neck
And strong-built frame ; nor does he seem to lack
A certain youthful vigor, though impaired
By many hardships, — for I know of nought
That more severely tries the strongest man,
And breaks him down, than perils of the sea.”

170

Euryalus replied : “Laodamas,
Well hast thou said, and rightly : go thou now
And speak to him thyself, and challenge him.”

175

The son of King Alcinoüs, as he heard,
Came forward, and bespake Ulysses thus : —

“Thou also, guest and father, try these feats,
If thou perchance wert trained to them. I think
Thou must be skilled in games, since there is not
A greater glory for a man while yet
He lives on earth than what he hath wrought out,
By strenuous effort, with his feet and hands.
Try, then, thy skill, and give no place to grief.

180

185

Not long will thy departure be delayed ;
Thy bark is launched ; the crew are ready here."

Ulysses, the sagacious, answered thus : —

"Why press me, O Laodamas ! to try
These feats, when all my thoughts are of my woes,
And not of games ? I, who have borne so much
Of pain and toil, sit pining for my home
In your assembly, supplicating here
Your king and all the people of your land."

190

195

Then spake Euryalus with chiding words : —

"Stranger, I well perceive thou canst not boast,
As many others can, of skill in games ;
But thou art one of those who dwell in ships
With many benches, rulers o'er a crew
Of sailors, — a mere trader looking out
For freight, and watching o'er the wares that form
The cargo. Thou hast doubtless gathered wealth
By rapine, and art surely no athlete."

200

Ulysses, the sagacious, frowned and said : —

205

"Stranger, thou speakest not becomingly,
But like a man who recks not what he says.
The gods bestow not equally on all
The gifts that men desire, — the grace of form,
The mind, the eloquence. One man to sight

210

Is undistinguished, but on him the gods
Bestow the power of words. All look on him
Gladly ; he knows whereof he speaks ; his speech
Is mild and modest ; he is eminent
In all assemblies, and, whene'er he walks 215
The city, men regard him as a god.
Another in the form he wears is like
The immortals, yet has he no power to speak
Becoming words. So thou hast comely looks, —
A god would not have shaped thee otherwise 220
Than we behold thee, — yet thy wit is small,
And thy unmannerly words have angered me
Even to the heart. Not quite unskilled am I
In games, as thou dost idly talk, and once,
When I could trust my youth and my strong arms, 225
I think that in these contests I was deemed
Among the first. But I am now pressed down
With toil and sorrow ; much have I endured
In wars with heroes and on stormy seas.
Yet even thus, a sufferer as I am, 230
Will I essay these feats ; for sharp have been
Thy words, and they provoke me to the proof.”
He spake, and rising with his mantle on
He seized a broader, thicker, heavier quoit,

By no small odds, than the Phæacians used, 235
And swinging it around with vigorous arm
He sent it forth; it sounded as it went;
And the Phæacians, skilful with the oar
And sail, bent low as o'er them, from his hand,
Flew the swift stone beyond the other marks. 240
And Pallas, in a human form, set up
A mark where it descended, and exclaimed:—

“Stranger! a blind man, groping here, could find
Thy mark full easily, since it is not
Among the many, but beyond them all. 245
Then fear thou nothing in this game at least;
For no Phæacian here can throw the quoit
As far as thou, much less exceed thy cast.”

She spake; Ulysses the great sufferer
Heard, and rejoiced to know he had a friend 250
In that great circle. With a lighter heart
Thus said the chief to the Phæacian crowd:—

“Follow that cast, young men, and I will send
Another stone, at once, as far, perchance,
Or further still. If there are others yet 255
Who feel the wish, let them come forward here,—
For much your words have chafed me,—let them try
With me the boxing or the wrestling match,

Or foot-race; there is nought that I refuse, —
Any of the Phæacians. I except 260
Laodamas; he is my host, and who
Would enter such a contest with a friend?
A senseless, worthless man is he who seeks
A strife like this with one who shelters him
In a strange land; he mars the welcome given. 265
As for the rest, there is no rival here
Whom I reject or scorn; for I would know
Their prowess, and would try my own with theirs
Before you all. At any of the games
Practised among mankind I am not ill, 270
Whatever they may be. The polished bow
I well know how to handle. I should be
The first to strike a foe by arrows sent
Among a hostile squadron, though there stood
A crowd of fellow-warriors by my side 275
And also aimed their shafts. The only one
Whose skill in archery excelled my own,
When we Achæians drew the bow at Troy,
Was Philoctetes; to all other men
On earth that live by bread I hold myself 280
Superior. Yet I claim no rivalry
With men of ancient times, — with Hercules

And Eurytus the Æchalian, who defied
The immortals to a contest with the bow.
Therefore was mighty Eurytus cut off. 285
Apollo, angry to be challenged, slew
The hero. I can hurl a spear beyond
Where others send an arrow. All my fear
Is for my feet, so weakened have I been
Among the stormy waves with want of food 290
At sea, and thus my limbs have lost their strength.”

He ended here, and all the assembly sat
In silence; King Alcinoüs only spake:—

“Stranger, since thou dost speak without offence,
And but to assert the prowess of thine arm, 295
Indignant that amid the public games
This man should rail at thee, and since thy wish
Is only that all others who can speak
Becomingly may not in time to come
Dispraise that prowess, now, then, heed my words, 300
And speak of them within thy palace halls
To other heroes when thou banquetest
Beside thy wife and children, and dost think
Of things that we excel in,—arts which Jove
Gives us, transmitted from our ancestors. 305
In boxing and in wrestling small renown

Have we, but we are swift of foot ; we guide
 Our galleys bravely o'er the deep ; we take
 Delight in feasts ; we love the harp, the dance,
 And change of raiment, the warm bath and bed. 310
 Rise, then, Phæacian masters of the dance,
 And tread your measures, that our guest may tell
 His friends at home how greatly we surpass
 All other men in seamanship, the race,
 The dance, the art of song. Go, one of you, 315
 And bring Demodocus his clear-toned harp,
 That somewhere in our palace has been left."

Thus spake the godlike king. The herald rose
 To bring the sweet harp from the royal house.
 Then the nine umpires also rose, who ruled 320
 The games ; they smoothed the floor, and made the ring
 Of gazers wider. Next the herald came,
 And brought Demodocus the clear-toned harp.
 The minstrel went into the midst, and there
 Gathered the graceful dancers ; they were youths 325
 In life's first bloom. With even steps they smote
 The sacred floor. Ulysses, gazing, saw
 The twinkle of their feet and was amazed.
 The minstrel struck the chords and gracefully
 Began the lay : he sang the loves of Mars 330

And Venus of the glittering crown, who first
Had met each other stealthily beneath
The roof of Vulcan. Mars with many gifts
Won her, and wronged her spouse, the King of Fire ;
But from the Sun, who saw their guilt, there came 335
A messenger to Vulcan. When he heard
The unwelcome tidings, planning his revenge,
He hastened to his smithy, where he forged
Chains that no power might loosen or might break,
Made to hold fast forever. When the snare 340
In all its parts was finished, he repaired,
Angry with Mars, to where the marriage-bed
Stood in his chamber. To the posts he tied
The encircling chains on every side, and made
Fast to the ceiling many, like the threads 345
Spun by the spider, which no eye could see,
Not even of the gods, so artfully
He wrought them. Then, as soon as he had wrapped
The snare about the bed, he feigned to go
To Lemnos nobly built, most dear to him 350
Of all the lands. But Mars, the god who holds
The shining reins, had kept no careless watch,
And when he saw the great artificer
Depart he went with speed to Vulcan's house,

Drawn thither by the love of her who wears 355
The glittering crown. There Cytherea sat,
Arrived that moment from a visit paid.

Entering, he took her by the hand and said : —

“ Come, my beloved, let us to the couch.

Vulcan is here no longer ; he is gone, 360
And is among the Sintians, men who speak
A barbarous tongue, in Lemnos far away.”

He spake, and she approved his words, and both
Lay down upon the bed, when suddenly
The network, wrought by Vulcan’s skilful hand, 365
Caught them, and clasped them round, nor could they lift
Or move a limb, and saw that no escape
Was possible. And now approached the King
Of Fire, returning ere he reached the isle
Of Lemnos, for the Sun in his behalf 370

Kept watch and told him all. He hastened home
In bitterness of heart, but when he reached
The threshold stopped. A fury without bounds
Possessed him, and he shouted terribly,
And called aloud on all the gods of heaven : — 375

“ O Father Jove, and all ye blessed ones,
And deathless ! Come, for here is what will move
Your laughter, yet is not to be endured.

Jove's daughter, Venus, thus dishonors me,
Lame as I am, and loves the butcher Mars; 380
For he is well to look at, and is sound
Of foot, while I am weakly, — but for this
Are none but my two parents to be blamed,
Who never should have given me birth. Behold
Where lie embraced the lovers in my bed, — 385
A hateful sight. Yet they will hardly take
Even a short slumber there, though side by side,
Enamored as they are; nor will they both
Be drowsy very soon. The net and chains
Will hold them till her father shall restore 390
All the large gifts which, on our marriage-day,
I gave him to possess the impudent minx
His daughter, who is fair, indeed, but false."

He spake, and to the brazen palace flocked
The gods; there Neptune came, who shakes the earth;
There came beneficent Hermes; there too came 396
Apollo, archer-god; the goddesses,
Through womanly reserve, remained at home.
Meantime the gods, the givers of all good,
Stood in the entrance; and as they beheld 400
The cunning snare of Vulcan, there arose
Infinite laughter from the blessed ones,

And one of them bespake his neighbor thus : —

“Wrong prospers not ; the slow o’ertakes the swift.

Vulcan the slow has trapped the fleetest god 405

Upon Olympus, Mars ; though lame himself,

His net has taken the adulterer,

Who now must pay the forfeit of his crime.”

So talked they with each other. Then the son

Of Jove, Apollo, thus to Hermes said : — 410

“Hermes, thou son and messenger of Jove,

And bountiful of gifts, couldst thou endure,

Fettered with such strong chains as these, to lie

Upon a couch with Venus at thy side ? ”

The herald-god, the Argus-queller, thus 415

Made answer : “Nay, I would that it were so,

O archer-king, Apollo ; I could bear

Chains thrice as many, and of infinite strength,

And all the gods and all the goddesses

Might come to look upon me, I would keep 420

My place with golden Venus at my side.”

He spake, and all the immortals laughed to hear.

Neptune alone laughed not, but earnestly

Prayed Vulcan, the renowned artificer,

To set Mars free, and spake these winged words : — 425

“Release thy prisoner. What thou dost require

I promise here, — that he shall make to thee
Due recompense in presence of the gods."

Illustrious Vulcan answered: "Do not lay,
Earth-shaking Neptune, this command on me, 430
Since little is the worth of pledges given
For worthless debtors. How could I demand
My right from thee among the assembled gods,
If Mars, set free, escape from debt and chains?"

Again the god who shakes the earth replied: — 435
"Vulcan, though Mars deny the forfeit due,
And take to flight, it shall be paid by me."

Again illustrious Vulcan said: "Thy word
I ought not and I seek not to decline."

He spake, and then the might of Vulcan loosed 440
The net, and, freed from those strong fetters, both
The prisoners sprang away. Mars flew to Thrace,
And laughter-loving Venus to the isle
Of Cyprus, where at Paphos stand her grove
And perfumed altar. Here the Graces gave 445
The bath, anointed with ambrosial oil
Her limbs, — such oil as to the eternal gods
Lends a fresh beauty, and arrayed her last
In graceful robes, a marvel to behold.

So sang the famous bard, while inly pleased 450

Ulysses heard, and pleased were all the rest,
Phæacia's sons, expert with oar and sail.

Alcinoüs called his sons Laodamas
And Halius forth, and bade them dance alone,
For none of all the others equalled them. 455

Then taking a fair purple ball, the work
Of skilful Polybus, and, bending back,
One flung it toward the shadowy clouds on high,
The other springing upward easily
Grasped it before he touched the ground again. 460

And when they thus had tossed the ball awhile,
They danced upon the nourishing earth, and oft
Changed places with each other, while the youths,
That stood within the circle filled the air
With their applauses; mighty was the din. 465
Then great Ulysses to Alcinoüs said: —

“O King Alcinoüs! mightiest of the race
For whom thou hast engaged that they excel
All others in the dance, what thou hast said
Is amply proved. I look and am amazed.” 470

Well pleased Alcinoüs the mighty heard,
And thus to his seafaring people spake: —
“Leaders and chiefs of the Phæacians, hear!
Wise seems the stranger. Haste we to bestow

Gifts that may well beseem his liberal hests. 475
Twelve honored princes in our land bear sway,
The thirteenth prince am I. Let each one bring
A well-bleached cloak, a tunic, and beside
Of precious gold a talent. Let them all
Be brought at once, that, having seen them here, 480
Our guest may with a cheerful heart partake
The evening meal. And let Euryalus,
Who spake but now so unbecomingly,
Appease him both with words and with a gift."

He spake; they all approved, and each one sent 485
His herald with a charge to bring the gifts,
And thus Euryalus addressed the king:—

"O King Alcinoüs, mightiest of our race,
I will obey thee, and will seek to appease
Our guest. This sword of brass will I bestow, 490
With hilt of silver, and an ivory sheath
New wrought, which he may deem a gift of price."

He spake, and gave the silver-studded sword
Into his hand, and spake these winged words:—

"Stranger and father, hail! If any word 495
That hath been uttered gave offence may storms
Sweep it away forever. May the gods
Give thee to see thy wife again, and reach

Thy native land, where all thy sufferings
And this long absence from thy friends shall end!" 500

Ulysses, the sagacious, thus replied: —

"Hail also, friend! and may the gods confer
On thee all happiness, and may the time
Never arrive when thou shalt miss the sword
Placed in my hands with reconciling words!" 505

He spake, and slung the silver-studded sword
Upon his shoulders. Now the sun went down,
And the rich presents were already brought.
The noble heralds came and carried them
Into the palace of Alcinoüs, where 510
His blameless sons received and ranged them all
In fair array before the queenly dame
Their mother. Meantime had the mighty king
Alcinoüs to his palace led the way,
Where they who followed took the lofty seats, 515
And thus Alcinoüs to Aretè said: —

"Bring now a coffer hither, fairly shaped,
The best we have, and lay a well-bleached cloak
And tunic in it; set upon the fire
A brazen caldron for our guest, to warm 520
The water of his bath, that having bathed
And viewed the gifts which the Phæacian chiefs

Have brought him, ranged in order, he may sit
 Delighted at the banquet and enjoy
 The music. I will give this beautiful cup
 Of gold, that he, in memory of me,
 May daily in his palace pour to Jove
 Libations, and to all the other gods."

525

He spake; Aretè bade her maidens haste
 To place an ample tripod on the fire.
 Forthwith upon the blazing fire they set
 A laver with three feet, and in it poured
 Water, and heaped fresh fuel on the flames.
 The flames crept up the vessel's swelling sides,
 And warmed the water. Meantime from her room
 Aretè brought a beautiful chest, in which
 She laid the presents destined for her guest, —
 Garments and gold which the Phæacians gave, —
 And laid the cloak and tunic with the rest,
 And thus in winged words addressed the chief: —

530

535

540

"Look to the lid thyself, and cast a cord
 Around it, lest, upon thy voyage home,
 Thou suffer loss, when haply thou shalt take
 A pleasant slumber in the dark-hulled ship."

Ulysses, the sagacious, heard, and straight
 He fitted to its place the lid, and wound

545

And knotted artfully around the chest
 A cord, as queenly Circè long before
 Had taught him. Then to call him to the bath
 The housewife of the palace came. He saw 550
 Gladly the steaming laver, for not oft
 Had he been cared for thus, since he had left
 The dwelling of the nymph with amber hair,
 Calypso, though attended while with her
 As if he were a god. Now when the maids 555
 Had seen him bathed, and had anointed him
 With oil, and put his sumptuous mantle on,
 And tunic, forth he issued from the bath,
 And came to those who sat before their wine.
 Nausicaä, goddess-like in beauty, stood 560
 Beside a pillar of that noble roof,
 And looking on Ulysses as he passed,
 Admired, and said to him in winged words: —
 “Stranger, farewell, and in thy native land
 Remember thou hast owed thy life to me.” 565
 Ulysses, the sagacious, answering said: —
 “Nausicaä, daughter of the large-souled king
 Alcinoüs! so may Jove, the Thunderer,
 Husband of Juno, grant that I behold
 My home, returning safe, as I will make 570

To thee as to a goddess day by day
My prayer ; for, lady, thou hast saved my life."

He spake, and near Alcinoüs took his place
Upon a throne. And now they served the feast
To each, and mingled wine. A herald led 575
Thither the gentle bard Demodocus,
Whom all the people honored. Him they placed
Amidst the assembly, where he leaned against
A lofty column. Sage Ulysses then
Carved from the broad loin of a white-tusked boar 580
A part, where yet a mass of flesh remained
Bordered with fat, and to the herald said : —

"Bear this, O herald, to Demodocus,
That he may eat. Him, even in my grief,
Will I embrace, for worthily the bards 585
Are honored and revered o'er all the earth
By every race of men. The Muse herself
Hath taught them song ; she loves the minstrel tribe."

He spake ; the herald laid the flesh before
Demodocus the hero, who received 590
The gift well pleased. Then all the guests put forth
Their hands and shared the viands on the board ;
And when their thirst and hunger were allayed,
Thus to the minstrel sage Ulysses spake : —

“Demodocus, above all other men 595
I give thee praise, for either has the Muse,
Jove’s daughter, or Apollo, visited
And taught thee. Truly hast thou sung the fate
Of the Achaian warriors, — what they did
And suffered, — all their labors as if thou 600
Hadst been among them, or hadst heard the tale
From an eye-witness. Now, I pray, proceed,
And sing the invention of the wooden horse
Made by Epeius with Minerva’s aid,
And by the chief Ulysses artfully 605
Conveyed into the Trojan citadel,
With armed warriors in its womb to lay
The city waste. And I, if thou relate
The story rightly, will at once declare
To all that largely hath some bounteous god 610
Bestowed on thee the holy gift of song.”

He spake; the poet felt the inspiring god,
And sang, beginning where the Argives hurled
Firebrands among their tents, and sailed away
In their good galleys, save the band that sat 615
Beside renowned Ulysses in the horse,
Concealed from sight, amid the Trojan crowd,
Who now had drawn it to the citadel.

So there it stood, while, sitting round it, talked
The men of Troy, and wist not what to do. 620
By turns three counsels pleased them, — to hew down
The hollow trunk with the remorseless steel ;
Or drag it to a height, and cast it thence
Headlong among the rocks ; or, lastly, leave
The enormous image standing and unharmed, 625
An offering to appease the gods. And this
At last was done ; for so had fate decreed
That they should be destroyed whene'er their town
Should hold within its walls the horse of wood,
In which the mightiest of the Argives came 630
Among the sons of Troy to smite and slay.
Then sang the bard how, issuing from the womb
Of that deceitful horse, the sons of Greece
Laid Ilium waste ; how each in different ways
Ravaged the town, while, terrible as Mars, 635
Ulysses, joined with Menelaus, sought
The palace of Deiphobus, and there
Maintained a desperate battle, till the aid
Of mighty Pallas made the victory his.
So sang renowned Demodocus ; the strain 640
Melted to tears Ulysses, from whose lids
They dropped and wet his cheeks. As when a wife
Weeps her beloved husband, slain before

His town and people, fighting to defend
Them and his own dear babes from deadly harm, 645
She sees him gasp and die, and at the sight
She falls with piercing cries upon his corpse,
Meantime the victors beat her on the back
And shoulders with their spears, and bear her off
To toil and grieve in slavery, where her cheeks 650
In that long bitter sorrow lose their bloom ;
So from the eyelids of Ulysses fell
The tears, yet fell unnoticed by them all
Save that Alcinoüs, sitting at his side,
Saw them, and heard his heavy sighs, and thus 655
Bespake his people, masters of the oar : —
“ Princes and chiefs of the Phæacian race,
Give ear. Let now Demodocus lay by
His clear-toned harp. The matter of his song
Delights not all alike. Since first we sat 660
At meat, and since our noble bard began
His lay, our guest has never ceased to grieve ;
Some mighty sorrow weighs upon his heart.
Now let the bard refrain, that we may all
Enjoy the banquet, both our guest and we 665
Who welcome him, for it is fitting thus.
And now are all things for our worthy guest
Made ready, both the escort and these gifts,

The pledges of our kind regard. A guest,
A suppliant, is a brother, even to him 670
Who bears a heart not easy to be moved.
No longer, then, keep back with studied art
What I shall ask; 't were better far to speak
With freedom. Tell the name thy mother gave,
Thy father, and all those who dwell within, 675
And round thy city. For no living man
Is nameless from the time that he is born.
Humble or high in station, at their birth
The parents give them names. Declare thy land,
Thy people, and thy city, that our ships 680
May learn, and bear thee to the place; for here
In our Phæacian ships no pilots are,
Nor rudders, as in ships of other lands.
Ours know the thoughts and the intents of men.
To them all cities and all fertile coasts 685
Inhabited by men are known; they cross
The great sea scudding fast, involved in mist
And darkness, with no fear of perishing
Or meeting harm. I heard Nausithoüs,
My father, say that Neptune was displeased 690
With us for safely bearing to their homes
So many men, and that he would destroy
In after time some good Phæacian ship,

Returning from a convoy, in the waves
Of the dark sea, and leave her planted there, 695
A mountain huge and high, before our town.
So did the aged chieftain prophesy ;
The god, as best may please him, will fulfil
My father's words, or leave them unfulfilled.
Now tell me truly whither thou hast roamed, 700
And what the tribes of men that thou hast seen ;
Tell which of them are savage, rude, unjust,
And which are hospitable and revere
The blessed gods. Declare why thou didst weep
And sigh when hearing what unhappy fate 705
Befell the Argive and Achaian host
And town of Troy. The gods decreed it ; they
Ordain destruction to the sons of men,
A theme of song thereafter. Hadst thou not
Some valiant kinsman who was slain at Troy ? 710
A son-in-law ? the father of thy wife ?
Nearest of all are they to us, save those
Of our own blood. Or haply might it be
Some bosom-friend, one eminently graced
With all that wins our love ; for not less dear 715
Than if he were a brother should we hold
The wise and gentle man who is our friend."

BOOK IX.

ULYSSES, the sagacious, answered thus:—

“O King Alcinoüs, most renowned of men!

A pleasant thing it is to hear a bard

Like this, endowed with such a voice, so like

The voices of the gods. Nor can I deem

5

Aught more delightful than the general joy

Of a whole people when the assembled guests

Seated in order in the royal halls

Are listening to the minstrel, while the board

Is spread with bread and meats, and from the jars

10

The cupbearer draws wine and fills the cups.

To me there is no more delightful sight.

“But now thy mind is moved to ask of me

The story of the sufferings I have borne,

And that will wake my grief anew. What first,

15

What next, shall I relate? what last of all?

For manifold are the misfortunes cast

Upon me by the immortals. Let me first

Declare my name, that ye may know, and I
Perchance, before my day of death shall come, 20
May be your host, though dwelling far away.
I am Ulysses, and my father's name
Laertes; widely am I known to men
As quick in shrewd devices, and my fame
Hath reached to heaven. In sunny Ithaca 25
I dwell, where high Neritus, seen afar,
Rustles with woods. Around are many isles,
Well peopled, near each other. Samos there
Lies, with Dulichium, and Zacynthus dark
With forests. Ithaca, with its low shores, 30
Lies highest toward the setting sun; the rest
Are on the side where first the morning breaks.
A rugged region 't is, but nourishes
Nobly its youths, nor have I ever seen
A sweeter spot on earth. Calypso late, 35
That glorious goddess, in her grotto long
Detained me from it, and desired that I
Should be her husband; in her royal home
Æëan Circè, mistress of strange arts,
Detained me also, and desired that I 40
Should be her husband, — yet they could not move
The purpose of my heart. For there is nought

More sweet and dear than our own native land
And parents, though perchance our lot be cast
In a rich home, yet far from our own kin 45
And in a foreign land. Now let me speak
Of the calamitous voyage which the will
Of Jove ordained on my return from Troy.

“The wind that blew me from the Trojan shore
Bore me to the Ciconians, who abode 50
In Ismarus. I laid the city waste
And slew its dwellers, carried off their wives
And all their wealth and parted them among
My men, that none might want an equal share.
And then I warned them with all haste to leave 55
The region. Madmen! they obeyed me not.

“And there they drank much wine, and on the beach
Slew many sheep and many slow-paced steers
With crumpled horns. Then the Ciconians called
To their Ciconian neighbors, braver men 60
Than they, and more in number, whose abode
Was on the mainland, trained to fight from steeds,
Or, if need were, on foot. In swarms they came,
Thick as new leaves or morning flowers in spring.
Then fell on our unhappy company 65
An evil fate from Jove, and many griefs.

They formed their lines, and fought at our good ships,
Where man encountered man with brazen spears.
While yet 't was morning, and the holy light
Of day waxed brighter, we withstood the assault, 70
And kept our ground, although more numerous they.
But when the sun was sloping toward the west
The enemy prevailed; the Achaian band
Was routed, and was made to flee. That day
There perished from each galley of our fleet 75
Six valiant men; the rest escaped with life.

“Onward we sailed, lamenting bitterly
Our comrades slain, yet happy to escape
From death ourselves. Nor did we put to sea
In our good ships until we thrice had called 80
Aloud by name each one of our poor friends
Who fell in battle by Ciconian hands.
The Cloud-compeller, Jove, against us sent
The north-wind in a hurricane, and wrapped
The earth and heaven in clouds, and from the skies 85
Fell suddenly the night. With stooping masts
Our galleys scudded; the strong tempest split
And tore the sails; we drew and laid them down
Within the ships, in fear of utter wreck,
And toward the mainland eagerly we turned 90

The rudders. There we lay two days and nights,
Worn out with grief and hardship. When at length
The fair-haired Morning brought the third day round,
We raised the masts, and, spreading the white sails
To take the wind, we sat us down. The wind 95
Carried us forward with the pilot's aid;
And then should I have reached my native land
Safely, had not the currents and the waves
Of ocean and the north-wind driven me back,
What time I strove to pass Maleia's cape, 100
And swept me to Cytheræ from my course.

“Still onward driven before those baleful winds
Across the fishy deep for nine whole days,
On the tenth day we reached the land where dwell
The Lotus-eaters, men whose food is flowers. 105
We landed on the mainland, and our crews
Near the fleet galleys took their evening meal.
And when we all had eaten and had drunk
I sent explorers forth — two chosen men,
A herald was the third — to learn what race 110
Of mortals nourished by the fruits of earth
Possessed the land. They went and found themselves
Among the Lotus-eaters soon, who used
No violence against their lives, but gave

Into their hands the lotus plant to taste. 115
Whoever tasted once of that sweet food
Wished not to see his native country more,
Nor give his friends the knowledge of his fate.
And then my messengers desired to dwell
Among the Lotus-eaters, and to feed 120
Upon the lotus, never to return.
By force I led them weeping to the fleet,
And bound them in the hollow ships beneath
The benches. Then I ordered all the rest
Of my beloved comrades to embark 125
In haste, lest, tasting of the lotus, they
Should think no more of home. All straightway went
On board, and on the benches took their place,
And smote the hoary ocean with their oars.

“Onward we sailed with sorrowing hearts, and reached
The country of the Cyclops, an untamed 131
And lawless race, who, trusting to the gods,
Plant not, nor plough the fields, but all things spring
For them untended, — barley, wheat, and vines
Yielding large clusters filled with wine, and nursed 135
By showers from Jove. No laws have they; they hold
No councils. On the mountain heights they dwell
In vaulted caves, where each one rules his wives

And children as he pleases ; none give heed
To what the others do. Before the port 140
Of that Cyclopean land there is an isle,
Low-lying, neither near nor yet remote,—
A woodland region, where the wild goats breed
Innumerable ; for the foot of man
Disturbs them not, and huntsmen toiling through 145
Thick woods, or wandering over mountain heights,
Enter not here. The fields are never grazed
By sheep, nor furrowed by the plough, but lie
Untilled, unsown, and uninhabited
By man, and only feed the bleating goats. 150
The Cyclops have no barks with crimson prows,
Nor shipwrights skilled to frame a galley's deck
With benches for the rowers, and equipped
For any service, voyaging by turns
To all the cities, as is often done 155
By men who cross the deep from place to place,
And make a prosperous region of an isle.
No meagre soil is there ; it well might bear
All fruits in their due time. Along the shore
Of the gray deep are meadows smooth and moist. 160
The vine would flourish long ; the ploughman's task
Is easy, and the husbandman would reap

Large harvests, for the mould is rich below.
And there is a safe haven, where no need
Of cable is; no anchor there is cast, 165
Nor hawsers fastened to the strand, but they
Who enter there remain until it please
The mariners, with favorable wind,
To put to sea again. A limpid stream
Flows from a fount beneath a hollow rock 170
Into that harbor at its further end,
And poplars grow around it. Thither went
Our fleet; some deity had guided us
Through the dark night, for nothing had we seen.
Thick was the gloom around our barks; the moon 175
Shone not in heaven, the clouds had quenched her light.
No eye discerned the isle, nor the long waves
That rolled against the shore, till our good ships
Touched land, and, disembarking there, we gave
Ourselves to sleep upon the water-side 180
And waited for the holy Morn to rise.

“And when at length the daughter of the Dawn,
The rosy-fingered Morn, appeared, we walked
Around the isle, admiring as we went.
Meanwhile the nymphs, the daughters of the God 185
Who bears the ægis, roused the mountain goats,

That so our crews might make their morning meal.
And straightway from our ships we took in hand
Our crooked bows and our long-bladed spears.

“ ‘Let all the rest of my beloved friends 190
Remain, while I, with my own bark and crew,
Go forth to learn what race of men are these,
Whether ill-mannered, savage, and unjust,
Or kind to guests and reverent toward the gods.’

“I spake, and, having ordered all my crew 195
To go on board and cast the hawsers loose,
Embarked on my own ship. They all obeyed,
And manned the benches, sitting there in rows,
And smote the hoary ocean with their oars.
But when we came upon that neighboring coast, 200
We saw upon its verge beside the sea
A cave high vaulted, overbrowed with shrubs
Of laurel. There much cattle lay at rest,
Both sheep and goats. Around it was a court
A high enclosure of hewn stone, and pines 205
Tall stemmed, and towering oaks. Here dwelt a man
Of giant bulk, who by himself, alone,
Was wont to tend his flocks. He never held
Converse with others, but devised apart
His wicked deeds. A frightful prodigy 210

Was he, and like no man who lives by bread,
 But more like a huge mountain summit, rough
 With woods, that towers alone above the rest.

“Then, bidding all the others stay and guard
 The ship, I chose among my bravest men 215
 Twelve whom I took with me. I had on board
 A goatskin of dark wine, — a pleasant sort,
 Which Maron late, Evanthes’ son, a priest
 Of Phæbus, guardian god of Ismarus,
 Gave me, when, moved with reverence, we saved 220
 Him and his children and his wife from death.
 For his abode was in the thick-grown grove
 Of Phæbus. Costly were the gifts he gave, —
 Seven talents of wrought gold; a chalice all
 Of silver; and he drew for me, besides, 225
 Into twelve jars, a choice rich wine, unspoiled
 By mixtures, and a beverage for gods.
 No one within his dwelling, maids or men,
 Knew of it, save the master and his wife,
 And matron of the household. Whensoe’er 230
 They drank this rich red wine, he only filled
 A single cup with wine, and tempered that
 With twenty more of water. From the cup
 Arose a fragrance that might please the gods,

And hard it was to put the draught aside.
Of this I took a skin well filled, besides
Food in a hamper, — for my thoughtful mind
Mistake me, lest I should encounter one
Of formidable strength and savage mood,
And with no sense of justice or of right.

235

240

“Soon were we at the cave, but found not him
Within it; he was in the fertile meads,
Tending his flocks. We entered, wondering much
At all we saw. Around were baskets heaped
With cheeses; pens were thronged with lambs and kids,
Each in a separate fold; the elder ones,
The younger, and the newly yeaned, had each
Their place apart. The vessels swam with whey, —
Pails smoothly wrought, and buckets into which
He milked the cattle. My companions then
Begged me with many pressing words to take
Part of the cheeses, and, returning, drive
With speed to our good galley lambs and kids
From where they stabled, and set sail again
On the salt sea. I granted not their wish;
Far better if I had. ’T was my intent
To see the owner of the flocks and prove
His hospitality. No pleasant sight

250

255

Was that to be for those with whom I came.

“ And then we lit a fire, and sacrificed, 260
And ate the cheeses, and within the cave
Sat waiting, till from pasturing his flocks
He came; a heavy load of well-dried wood
He bore, to make a blaze at supper-time.
Without the den he flung his burden down 265
With such a crash that we in terror slunk
Into a corner of the cave. He drove
His well-fed flock, all those whose milk he drew,
Under that spacious vault of rock, but left
The males, both goats and rams, without the court. 270
And then he lifted a huge barrier up,
A mighty weight; not two-and-twenty wains,
Four-wheeled and strong, could move it from the ground :
Such was the enormous rock he raised, and placed
Against the entrance. Then he sat and milked 275
The ewes and bleating goats, each one in turn,
And gave to each its young. Next, half the milk
He caused to curdle, and disposed the curd
In woven baskets; and the other half
He kept in bowls to be his evening drink. 280
His tasks all ended thus, he lit a fire,
And saw us where we lurked, and questioned us : —

“ ‘Who are ye, strangers? Tell me whence ye came
 Across the ocean. Are ye men of trade,
 Or wanderers at will, like those who roam 285
 The sea for plunder, and, with their own lives
 In peril, carry death to distant shores?’

“ He spake, and we who heard with sinking hearts
 Trembled at that deep voice and frightful form,
 And thus I answered: ‘We are Greeks who come 290
 From Ilium, driven across the mighty deep
 By changing winds, and while we sought our home
 Have made a different voyage, and been forced
 Upon another course; such was the will
 Of Jupiter. We boast ourselves to be 295
 Soldiers of Agamemnon, Atreus’ son,
 Whose fame is now the greatest under heaven,
 So mighty was the city which he sacked,
 So many were the warriors whom he slew;
 And now we come as suppliants to thy knees, 300
 And ask thee to receive us as thy guests,
 Or else bestow the gifts which custom makes
 The stranger’s due. Great as thou art, reverse
 The gods; for suitors to thy grace are we,
 And hospitable Jove, whose presence goes 305
 With every worthy stranger, will avenge

Suppliants and strangers when they suffer wrong.'

"I spake, and savagely he answered me:—

'Thou art a fool, O stranger, or art come
From some far country, — thou who biddest me 310
Fear or regard the gods. We little care —
We Cyclops — for the Ægis-bearer, Jove,
Or any other of the blessed gods;
We are their betters. Think not I would spare
Thee or thy comrades to avoid the wrath 315
Of Jupiter, unless it were my choice;
But say, — for I would know, — where hast thou left
Thy gallant bark in landing? was it near,
Or in some distant corner of the isle?'

"He spake to tempt me, but I well perceived 320
His craft, and answered with dissembling words:

"'Neptune, who shakes the shores, hath wrecked my bark
On rocks that edge thine island, hurling it
Against the headland. From the open sea
The tempest swept it hitherward, and I, 325
With these, escaped the bitter doom of death.'

"I spake; the savage answered not, but sprang,
And, laying hands on my companions, seized
Two, whom he dashed like whelps against the ground.
Their brains flowed out, and weltered where they fell. 330

He hewed them limb from limb for his repast,
And, like a lion of the mountain wilds,
Devoured them as they were, and left no part, —
Entrails nor flesh nor marrowy bones. We wept
To see his cruelties, and raised our hands 335
To Jove, and hopeless misery filled our hearts.
And when the Cyclops now had filled himself,
Devouring human flesh, and drinking milk
Unmingled, in his cave he laid him down,
Stretched out amid his flocks. The thought arose 340
In my courageous heart to go to him,
And draw the trenchant sword upon my thigh,
And where the midriff joins the liver deal
A stroke to pierce his breast. A second thought
Restrained me, — that a miserable death 345
Would overtake us, since we had no power
To move the mighty rock which he had laid
At the high opening. So all night we grieved,
Waiting the holy Morn; and when at length
That rosy-fingered daughter of the Dawn 350
Appeared, the Cyclops lit a fire, and milked
His fair flock one by one, and brought their young
Each to its mother's side. When he had thus
Performed his household tasks, he seized again

Two of our number for his morning meal. 355
These he devoured, and then he moved away
With ease the massive rock that closed the cave,
And, driving forth his well-fed flock, he laid
The massive barrier back, as one would fit
The lid upon a quiver. With loud noise 360
The Cyclops drove that well-fed flock afield,
While I was left to think of many a plan
To do him mischief and avenge our wrongs,
If haply Pallas should confer on me
That glory. To my mind, as I revolved 365
The plans, this seemed the wisest of them all.

“Beside the stalls there lay a massive club
Of olive-wood, yet green, which from its stock
The Cyclops hewed, that he might carry it
When seasoned. As it lay it seemed to us 370
The mast of some black galley, broad of beam,
With twenty oarsmen, built to carry freight
Across the mighty deep, — such was its length
And thickness. Standing by it, I cut off
A fathom’s length, and gave it to my men, 375
And bade them smooth its sides, and they obeyed
While I made sharp the smaller end, and brought
The point to hardness in the glowing fire;

And then I hid the weapon in a heap
Of litter, which lay thick about the cave. 380
I bade my comrades now decide by lot
Which of them all should dare, along with me,
To lift the stake, and with its point bore out
Our enemy's eye, when softly wrapped in sleep.
The lot was cast, and fell on those whom most 385
I wished with me, — four men, and I the fifth.

“At eve the keeper of these fair-woolled flocks
Returned, and brought his well-fed sheep and goats
Into the spacious cavern, leaving none
Without it, whether through some doubt of us 390
Or through the ordering of some god. He raised
The massive rock again, and laid it close
Against the opening. Then he sat and milked
The ewes and bleating goats, each one in turn,
And gave to each her young. When he had thus 395
Performed his household tasks, he seized again
Two of our number for his evening meal.
Then drew I near, and bearing in my hand
A wooden cup of dark red wine I said : —

“‘Take this, O Cyclops, after thy repast 400
Of human flesh, and drink, that thou mayst know
What liquor was concealed within our ship.

I brought it as an offering to thee,
For I had hope that thou wouldst pity us,
And send us home. Yet are thy cruelties 405
Beyond all limit. Wicked as thou art,
Hereafter who, of all the human race,
Will dare approach thee, guilty of such wrong?’

“As thus I spake, he took the cup and drank.
The luscious wine delighted mightily 410
His palate, and he asked a second draught.

“‘Give me to drink again, and generously,
And tell thy name, that I may make a gift
Such as becomes a host. The fertile land
In which the Cyclops dwell yields wine, ’t is true, 415
And the large grapes are nursed by rains from Jove,
But nectar and ambrosia are in this.’

“He spake; I gave him of the generous juice
Again, and thrice I filled and brought the cup,
And thrice the Cyclops in his folly drank. 420
But when I saw the wine begin to cloud
His senses, I bespake him blandly thus:—

“‘Thou hast inquired, O Cyclops, by what name
Men know me. I will tell thee, but do thou
Bestow in turn some hospitable gift, 425
As thou hast promised. Noman is my name,

My father and my mother gave it me,
And Noman am I called by all my friends.'

"I ended, and he answered savagely : —

'Noman shall be the last of all his band 430
Whom I will eat, the rest will I devour
Before him. Let that respite be my gift."

"He spake, and, sinking backward at full length,
Lay on the ground, with his huge neck aside ;
All-powerful sleep had overtaken him. 435

Then from his mouth came bits of human flesh
Mingled with wine, and from his drunken throat
Rejected noisily. I put the stake
Among the glowing coals to gather heat,
And uttered cheerful words, encouraging 440

My men, that none might fail me through their fears.
And when the olive-wood began to blaze, —
For though yet green it freely took the fire, —
I drew it from the embers. Round me stood

My comrades, whom some deity inspired 445
With calm, high courage. In their hands they took
And thrust into his eye the pointed bar,

While perched upon a higher stand than they
I twirled it round. As when a workman bores
Some timber of a ship, the men who stand 450

Below him with a strap, on either side
Twirl it, and round it spins unceasingly,
So, thrusting in his eye that pointed bar,
We made it turn. The blood came streaming forth
On the hot wood; the eyelids and the brow 455
Were scalded by the vapor, and the roots
Of the scorched eyeball crackled with the fire.
As when a smith, in forging axe or adze,
Plunges, to temper it, the hissing blade
Into cold water, strengthening thus the steel, 460
So hissed the eyeball of the Cyclops round
That olive stake. He raised a fearful howl;
The rocks rang with it, and we fled from him
In terror. Plucking from his eye the stake
All foul and dripping with the abundant blood, 465
He flung it madly from him with both hands.
Then called he to the Cyclops who in grots
Dwelt on that breezy height. They heard his voice
And came by various ways, and stood beside
The cave, and asked the occasion of his grief. 470

“ ‘What hurts thee, Polyphemus, that thou thus
Dost break our slumbers in the ambrosial night
With cries? Hath any of the sons of men
Driven off thy flocks in spite of thee, or tried

By treachery or force to take thy life ?’

475

“Huge Polyphemus answered from his den : —

‘O friends ! ’t is Noman who is killing me ;

By treachery Noman kills me ; none by force.’

“Then thus with winged words they spake again : —

‘If no man does thee violence, and thou

480

Art quite alone, reflect that none escape

Diseases ; they are sent by Jove. But make

Thy prayer to Father Neptune, ocean’s king.’

“So spake they and departed. In my heart

I laughed to think that by the name I took,

485

And by my shrewd device, I had deceived

The Cyclops. Meantime, groaning and in pain,

And groping with his hands, he moved away

The rock that barred the entrance. There he sat

With arms outstretched, to seize whoever sought

490

To issue from the cavern with the flock,

So dull of thought he deemed me. Then I planned

How best to save my comrades and myself

From death. I framed a thousand stratagems

And arts, — for here was life at stake, and great

495

The danger was. At last I fixed on this.

“The rams were plump and beautiful, and large

With thick dark fleeces. These I silently

Bound to each other, three and three, with twigs
Of which that prodigy of lawless guilt, 500
The Cyclops, made his bed. The middle ram
Of every three conveyed a man; the two,
One on each side, were there to make him safe.
Thus each of us was borne by three; but I
Chose for myself the finest one of all, 505
And seized him by the back, and, slipping down
Beneath his shaggy belly, stretched myself
At length, and clung with resolute heart, and hands
That firmly clenched the rich abundant fleece,
Then sighed we for the holy Morn to rise. 510

“And when again the daughter of the Dawn,
The rosy-fingered Morn, looked forth, the males
Went forth to pasture, while the ewes remained
Within the stables, bleating, yet un milked,
For heavy were their udders. Carefully 515
The master handled, though in grievous pain,
The back of every one that rose and passed,
Yet, slow of thought, perceived not that my men
Were clinging hid beneath their woolly breasts.
As the last ram of all the flock went out, 520
His thick fleece heavy with my weight, and I
In agitated thought, he felt his back,

And thus the giant Polyphemus spake : —

“ ‘ My favorite ram, how art thou now the last
 To leave the cave? It hath not been thy wont 525
 To let the sheep go first, but thou didst come
 Earliest to feed among the flowery grass,
 Walking with stately strides, and thou wert first
 At the fresh stream, and first at eve to seek
 The stable; now thou art the last of all. 530
 Grievest thou for thy master, who has lost
 His eye, put out by a deceitful wretch
 And his vile crew, who stupefied me first
 With wine, — this Noman, — who, if right I deem,
 Has not escaped from death. O, didst thou think 535
 As I do, and hadst but the power of speech
 To tell me where he hides from my strong arm,
 Then should his brains, dashed out against the ground,
 Be scattered here and there; then should my heart
 Be somewhat lighter, even amid the woes 540
 Which Noman, worthless wretch, has brought on me!’

“ He spake, and sent him forth among the rest;
 And when we were a little way beyond
 The cavern and the court, I loosed my hold
 Upon the animal and unbound my men. 545
 Then quickly we surrounded and drove off,

Fat sheep and stately paced, a numerous flock,
And brought them to our ship, where joyfully
Our friends received us, though with grief and tears
For those who perished. Yet I suffered not 550
That they should weep, but, frowning, gave command
By signs to lift with speed the fair-woolled sheep
On board, and launch our ship on the salt sea.
They went on board, where each one took his place
Upon the benches, and with diligent oars 555
Smote the gray deep; and when we were as far
As one upon the shore could hear a shout,
Thus to the Cyclops tauntingly I called: —

“‘ Ha! Cyclops! those whom in thy rocky cave
Thou, in thy brutal fury, hast devoured, 560
Were friends of one not unexpert in war;
Amplly have thy own guilty deeds returned
Upon thee. Cruel one! who didst not fear
To eat the strangers sheltered by thy roof,
Jove and the other gods avenge them thus.’ 565

“I spake; the anger in his bosom raged
More fiercely. From a mountain peak he wrenched
Its summit, hurling it to fall beside
Our galley, where it almost touched the helm.
The rock dashed high the water where it fell, 570

And the returning billow swept us back
 And toward the shore. I seized a long-stemmed pike
 And pushed it from the shore, encouraging
 The men to bend with vigor to their oars
 And so escape. With nods I gave the sign.

575

Forward to vigorous strokes the oarsmen leaned
 Till we were out at sea as far from land
 As when I spake before, and then again
 I shouted to the Cyclops, though my crew
 Strove to prevent it with beseeching words,
 And one man first and then another said: —

580

“O most unwise! why chafe that savage man
 To fury, — him who just has cast his bolt
 Into the sea, and forced us toward the land
 Where we had wellnigh perished! Should he hear
 A cry from us, or even a word of speech,
 Then would he fling a rock to crush our heads
 And wreck our ship, so fatal is his cast.”

585

“He spake, but moved not my courageous heart;
 And then I spake again, and angrily: —

590

“Cyclops, if any man of mortal birth
 Note thine unseemly blindness, and inquire
 The occasion, tell him that Laertes' son,
 Ulysses, the destroyer of walled towns,
 Whose home is Ithaca, put out thine eye.’

595

“I spake; he answered with a wailing voice:—

‘Now, woe is me! the ancient oracles
Concerning me have come to pass. Here dwelt
A seer named Telemus Eurymides,
Great, good, and eminent in prophecy, 600
And prophesying he grew old among
The Cyclops. He foretold my coming fate,—
That I should lose my sight, and by the hand
And cunning of Ulysses. Yet I looked
For one of noble presence, mighty strength, 605
And giant stature landing on our coast.
Now a mere weakling, insignificant
And small of stature, has put out my eye,
First stupefying me with wine. Yet come
Hither, I pray, Ulysses, and receive 610
The hospitable gifts which are thy due;
And I will pray to Neptune, and entreat
The mighty god to guide thee safely home.
His son am I, and he declares himself
My father. He can heal me if he will, 615
And no one else of all the immortal gods
Or mortal men can give me back my sight.’

“He spake; I answered: ‘Rather would I take
Thy life and breath, and send thee to the abode
Of Hades, where thou wouldst be past the power 620

Of even Neptune to restore thine eye.'

"As thus I said, the Cyclops raised his hands,
And spread them toward the starry heaven, and thus
Prayed to the deity who rules the deep: —

"Hear, dark-haired Neptune, who dost swathe the earth!
If I am thine, and thou dost own thyself 626
My father, grant that this Ulysses ne'er
May reach his native land! But if it be
The will of fate that he behold again
His friends, and enter his own palace-halls 630
In his own country, late and sorrowful
Be his return, with all his comrades lost,
And in a borrowed ship, and may he find
In his own home new griefs awaiting him.'

"He prayed, and Neptune hearkened to his prayer. 635
And then the Cyclops seized another stone,
Far larger than the last, and swung it round,
And cast it with vast strength. It fell behind
Our black-prowed galley, where it almost struck
The rudder's end. The sea was dashed on high 640
Beneath the falling rock, and bore our ship
On toward the shore we sought. When we reached
The island where together in a fleet
Our other galleys lay, we found our friends
Sitting where they had waited long in grief. 645

We touched the shore, and drew our galley up
On the smooth sand, and stepped upon the beach ;
And taking from on board the sheep that formed
Part of the Cyclops' flock, divided them,
That none might be without an equal share. 650
When all the rest were shared, my warrior friends
Decreed the ram to me. Of him I made
Upon the beach a sacrifice to Jove
The Cloud-compeller, Saturn's son, whose rule
Is over all ; to him I burned the thighs. 655
He heeded not the offering ; even then
He planned the wreck of all my gallant ships,
And death of my dear comrades. All that day
Till set of sun we sat and feasted high
Upon the abundant meats and delicate wine. 660
But when the sun went down, and darkness crept
Over the earth, we slumbered on the shore ;
And when again the daughter of the Dawn,
The rosy-fingered Morn, looked forth, I called
My men with cheerful words to climb the decks 665
And cast the hawsers loose. With speed they went
On board and manned the benches, took in hand
The oars and smote with them the hoary deep.
Onward in sadness, glad to have escaped,
We sailed, yet sorrowing for our comrades lost." 670

BOOK X.

“WE reached the Æolian isle, where Æolus,
Dear to the gods, a son of Hippotas,
Made his abode. It was a floating isle ;
A wall of brass enclosed it, and smooth rocks
Edged it around. Twelve children in his halls 5
Were born, six daughters and six blooming sons ;
He gave his daughters to his sons for wives,
And they with their dear father and his queen
Banquet from day to day, with endless change
Of meats before them. In his halls all day 10
The sound of pipes is in the perfumed air ;
At night the youths beside their modest wives
Sleep on fair couches spread with tapestry.
So coming to his town and fair abode,
I found a friendly welcome. One full month 15
The monarch kept me with him, and inquired
Of all that might concern the fate of Troy,
The Argive fleet, and the return to Greece,

And just as it befell I told him all.

And when I spake to him of going thence, 20

And prayed him to dismiss me, he complied,

And helped to make us ready for the sea.

The bladder of a bullock nine years old

He gave, in which he had compressed and bound

The stormy winds of air ; for Saturn's son 25

Had given him empire o'er the winds, with power

To calm them or to rouse them at his will.

This in our roomy galley he made fast

With a bright chain of silver, that no breath

Of ruder air might blow. He only left 30

The west wind free to waft our ships and us

Upon our way. But that was not to be ;

We perished by a folly of our own.

“Nine days we held our way, both day and night ;

And now appeared in sight our native fields 35

On the tenth night, where on the shore we saw

Men kindling fires. Meantime a pleasant sleep

Had overcome my weary limbs, for long

Had I been guiding with incessant toil

The rudder, nor would trust it to the hand 40

Of any other, such was my desire

To reach our country by the shortest way.

Then talked my crew among themselves, and said
That I had brought with me from Æolus,
The large-souled son of Hippotas, rich gifts 45
Of gold and silver. Standing side by side
And looking at each other, thus they said : —

“ ‘How wonderfully is our chief revered
And loved by all men, wander where he will
Into what realm soever ! From the coast 50
Of Troy he sailed with many precious things,
His share of spoil, while we, who with him went
And with him came, are empty-handed yet ;
And now hath Æolus, to show how much
He prizes him, bestowed the treasures here. 55
Come, let us see them ; let us know how much
Of gold and silver is concealed in this.’

“ Thus speaking to each other, they obeyed
The evil counsel. They untied the sack,
And straight the winds rushed forth and seized the ship,
And swept the crews, lamenting bitterly, 61
Far from their country out upon the deep ;
And then I woke, and in my noble mind
Bethought me whether I should drop at once
Into the deep and perish, or remain 65
And silently endure and keep my place

Among the living. I remained, endured,
And covered with my mantle lay within
My galley, while the furious whirlwind bore
Back to the Æolian isle our groaning crews. 70

“We landed on the coast, and to our barks
Brought water. Then my men prepared a meal
Beside the fleet; and having tasted food
And wine, I took a herald and a friend,
And, hastening to the sumptuous palace-halls 75
Of Æolus, I found him with his wife
And children banqueting. We sat us down
Upon the threshold at the palace doors,
And they were all astonished, and inquired:—

“‘Why art thou here? What god thine enemy 80
Pursues thee, O Ulysses! whom we sent
So well prepared to reach thy native land,
Thy home, or any place that pleased thee most?’

“They spake, and sorrowfully I replied:—
‘The fault is all with my unthinking crew 85
And my own luckless slumber. Yet, my friends,
Repair the mischief, for ye have the power.’

“Thus with submissive words I spake, but they
Sat mute, the father only answered me:—

“‘Hence with thee! Leave our island instantly, 90

Vilest of living men ! It may not be
That I receive or aid as he departs
One who is hated by the blessed gods, —
And thou art hated by the gods. Away !’

“He spake, and sent us from the palace-door 95
Lamenting. Sorrowfully went we on.
And now with rowing hard and long, — the fruit
Of our own folly, — all our crews lost heart,
And every hope of safe return was gone.

“Six days and nights we sailed ; the seventh we came
To lofty Læstrigoni with wide gates, 101
The city of Lamos, where, on going forth,
The shepherd calls to shepherd entering in.
There might a man who never yields to sleep
Earn double wages, first in pasturing herds, 105
And then in tending sheep ; for there the fields
Grazed in the daytime are by others grazed
At night. We reached its noble haven, girt
By towering rocks that rise on every side,
And the bold shores run out to form its mouth, — 110
A narrow entrance. There the other crews
Stationed their barks, and moored them close beside
Each other, in that hill-encircled port.
No billow, even the smallest, rises there ;

The water glimmers with perpetual calm. 115

I only kept my dark-hulled ship without,
And bound its cable to a jutting rock.

“I climbed a rugged headland, and looked forth.

No marks of tilth appeared, the work of men
Or oxen, only smokes that from below 120

Rose in the air. And then I sent forth scouts
To learn what race of men who live by bread

Inhabited the land. Two chosen men

I sent, a herald made the third ; and these
Went inland by a level path, on which 125

The wains brought fuel from the woody heights
Into the city. On their way they met,

Before the town, a damsel with an ewer, —

The stately daughter of Antiphates,

The Læstrigonian, who was coming down 130

To where Artacia's smoothly flowing fount

Gave water for the city. They drew near

And spake, and asked her who was sovereign there,

And who his people. Straight she pointed out

A lofty pile in which her father dwelt. 135

They entered that proud palace, and beheld,

Tall as a mountain peak, the monarch's wife,

And shuddered at the sight. With eager haste

She called her husband, King Antiphates,
From council. With a murderous intent 140
He came, and, seizing one of my poor friends,
Devoured him, while the other two betook
Themselves to sudden flight and reached the ships.
And then he raised a fearful yell that rang
Through all the city. The strong Læstrigons 145
Rushed forth by thousands from all sides, more like
To giants than to common men. They hurled
Stones of enormous weight from cliffs above,
And cries of those who perished and the crash
Of shattered galleys rose. They speared our friends 150
Like fishes for their horrid feasts, and thus
Bore them away. While those within the port
Were slaughtered, drawing my good sword I cut
The hawsers fastened to my ship's blue prow,
And cheered my men, and bade them fling themselves 155
Upon the oars, that so we might escape
Our threatened fate. They heard, and plied their oars
Like men who rowed for life. The galley shot
Forth from these beetling rocks into the sea
Full gladly ; all the others perished there. 160

“Onward we sailed, with sorrow in our hearts
For our lost friends, though glad to be reprieved

From death. And now we landed at an isle, —
Ææa, where the fair-haired Circè dwelt,
A goddess high in rank and skilled in song, 165
Own sister of the wise Æætes. Both
Were children of the source of light, the Sun,
And Persè, Ocean's daughter, brought them forth.
We found a haven here, where ships might lie ;
And guided by some deity we brought 170
Our galley silently against the shore,
And disembarked, and gave two days and nights
To rest, unmanned with hardship and with grief.

“When bright-haired Morning brought the third day
round,

I took my spear and my good sword, and left 175
The ship, and climbed a height, in hope to spy
Some trace of human toil, or hear some voice.
On a steep precipice I stood, and saw
From the broad earth below a rising smoke,
Where midst the thickets and the forest-ground 180
Stood Circè's palace. Seeing that dark smoke,
The thought arose within my mind that there
I should inquire. I pondered till at last
This seemed the wisest, — to return at once
To my good ship upon the ocean-side, 185

And give my crew their meal, and send them forth
To view the region. Coming to the spot
Where lay my well-oared bark, some pitying god
Beneath whose eye I wandered forth alone
Sent a huge stag into my very path, 190
High-horned, which from his pasture in the wood
Descended to the river-side to drink,
For grievously he felt the hot sun's power.
Him as he ran I smote; the weapon pierced,
Just at the spine, the middle of his back. 195
The brazen blade passed through, and with a moan
He fell amid the dust, and yielded up
His life. I went to him, and set my foot
Against him, and plucked forth the brazen spear,
And left it leaning there. And then I broke 200
Lithe osiers from the shrubs, and twined of these
A rope, which, doubled, was an ell in length.
With that I tied the enormous creature's feet,
And slung him on my neck, and brought him thus
To my black ship. I used the spear to prop 205
My steps, since he no longer could be borne
Upon the shoulder, aided by the hand,
Such was the animal's bulk. I flung him down
Before the ship, encouraging my men

With cheerful words, and thus I said to each : — 210

“ ‘ My friends, we will not, wretched as we are,
Go down to Pluto’s realm before our time.
While food and wine are yet within the hold
Of our good galley, let us not forget
Our daily meals, and famine-stricken pine.’ 215

“ I spake ; they all obeyed, and at my word
Came forth, and standing by the barren deep
Admired the stag, for he was huge of bulk ;
And when their eyes were tired with wondering,
My people washed their hands, and soon had made 220
A noble banquet ready. All that day
Till set of sun we sat and feasted there
Upon the abundant meat and delicate wine ;
And when the sun went down, and darkness came,
We slept upon the shore. But when the Morn, 225
The rosy-fingered child of Dawn, looked forth,
I called a council of my men and spake : —

“ ‘ Give ear, my friends, amid your sufferings,
To words that I shall say. We cannot here
Know which way lies the west, nor where the east, 230
Nor where the sun, that shines for all mankind,
Descends below the earth, nor where again
He rises from it. Yet will we consult,

If room there be for counsel, — which I doubt,
For when I climbed that height I overlooked 235
An isle surrounded by the boundless deep, —
An isle low lying. In the midst I saw
Smoke rising from a thicket of the wood.'

“I spake; their courage died within their hearts
As they remembered what Antiphates, 240
The Læstrigon, had done, and what foul deeds
The cannibal Cyclops, and they wept aloud.
Tears flowed abundantly, but tears were now
Of no avail to our unhappy band.

“Numbering my well-armed men, I made of them 245
Two equal parties, giving each its chief.
Myself commanded one; Eurylochus,
The hero, took the other in his charge.

“Then in a brazen helm we shook the lots;
The lot of brave Eurylochus leaped forth, 250
And he with two-and-twenty of our men
Went forward with quick steps, and yet in tears,
While we as sorrowful were left behind.

“They found the fair abode where Circè dwelt,
A palace of hewn stone within the vale, 255
Yet nobly seated. There were mountain wolves
And lions round it, which herself had tamed

With powerful drugs ; yet these assaulted not
 The visitors, but, wagging their long tails,
 Stood on their hinder feet, and fawned on them, 260
 Like mastiffs on their master when he comes
 From banqueting and brings them food. So fawned
 The strong-clawed wolves and lions on my men.
 With fear my men beheld those beasts of prey,
 Yet went, and, standing in the portico 265
 Of the bright-haired divinity, they heard
 Her sweet voice singing, as within she threw
 The shuttle through the wide immortal web,
 Such as is woven by the goddesses, —
 Delicate, bright of hue, and beautiful. 270

“Polites then, a chief the most beloved
 And most discreet of all my comrades, spake : —
 “‘Some one is here, my friends, who sweetly sings,
 Weaving an ample web, and all the floor
 Rings to her voice. Whoever she may be, 275
 Woman or goddess, let us call to her.’

“He spake ; aloud they called, and forth she came
 And threw at once the shining doors apart,
 And bade my comrades enter. Without thought
 They followed her. Eurylochus alone 280
 Remained without, for he suspected guile.

She led them in and seated them on thrones.
Then mingling for them Pramnian wine with cheese,
Meal, and fresh honey, and infusing drugs
Into the mixture, — drugs which made them lose 285
The memory of their home, — she handed them
The beverage and they drank. Then instantly
She touched them with a wand, and shut them up
In sties, transformed to swine in head and voice,
Bristles and shape, though still the human mind 290
Remained to them. Thus sorrowing they were driven
Into their cells, where Circè flung to them
Acorns of oak and ilex, and the fruit
Of cornel, such as nourish wallowing swine.

“Back came Eurylochus to our good ship 295
With news of our poor comrades and their fate.
He strove to speak, but could not; he was stunned
By that calamity; his eyes were filled
With tears, and his whole soul was given to grief.
We marvelled greatly; long we questioned him, 300
And thus he spake of our lost friends at last: —

“‘Through yonder thickets, as thou gav’st command,
Illustrious chief! we went, until we reached
A stately palace of hewn stones, within
A vale, yet nobly seated. Some one there, 305

Goddess or woman, weaving busily
An ample web, sang sweetly as she wrought.
My comrades called aloud, and forth she came,
And threw at once the shining doors apart,
And bade us enter. Without thought the rest 310
Followed, while I alone, suspecting guile,
Remained without. My comrades, from that hour,
Were seen no more; not one of them again
Came forth, though long I sat and watched for them.'

"He spake; I slung my silver-studded sword 315
Upon my shoulders, — a huge blade of brass, —
And my bow with it, and commanded him
To lead the way. He seized and clasped my knees
With both his hands in attitude of prayer,
And sorrowfully said these winged words: — 320

"Take me not thither; force me not to go,
O foster-child of Jove! but leave me here;
For thou wilt not return, I know, nor yet
Deliver one of our lost friends. Our part
Is to betake ourselves to instant flight 325
With these who yet remain, and so escape.'

"He spake, and I replied: 'Eurylochus,
Remain thou here, beside our roomy ship,
Eating and drinking. I shall surely go.

A strong necessity is laid on me.'

330

"I spake, and from the ship and shore went up
Into the isle; and when I found myself
Within that awful valley, and not far
From the great palace in which Circè dwelt,
The sorceress, there met me on my way
A youth; he seemed in manhood's early prime,
When youth has most of grace. He took my hand
And held it, and, accosting me, began:—

335

"'Rash mortal! whither art thou wandering thus
Alone among the hills, where every place
Is strange to thee? Thy comrades are shut up
In Circè's palace in close cells like swine.
Com'st thou to set them free? Nay, thou like them
Wilt rather find thyself constrained to stay.
Let me bestow the means to make thee safe
Against that mischief. Take this potent herb,
And bear it with thee to the palace-halls
Of Circè, and it shall avert from thee
The threatened evil. I will now reveal
The treacherous arts of Circè. She will bring
A mingled draught to thee, and drug the bowl,
But will not harm thee thus; the virtuous plant
I gave thee will prevent it. Hear yet more:

340

345

350

When she shall smite thee with her wand, draw forth
Thy good sword from thy thigh and rush at her 355
As if to take her life, and she will crouch
In fear, and will solicit thine embrace,
Refuse her not, that so she may release
Thy comrades, and may send thee also back
To thine own land ; but first exact of her 360
The solemn oath which binds the blessed gods,
That she will meditate no other harm
To thee, nor strip thee of thy manly strength.'

“The Argus-queller spake, and plucked from earth
The potent plant and handed it to me, 365
And taught me all its powers. The root is black,
The blossom white as milk. Among the gods
Its name is Moly ; hard it is for men
To dig it up ; the gods find nothing hard.

“Back through the woody island Hermes went 370
Toward high Olympus, while I took my way
To Circè's halls, yet with a beating heart.
There, as I stood beneath the portico
Of that bright-haired divinity, I called
Aloud ; the goddess heard my voice and came, 375
And threw at once the shining doors apart,
And prayed me to come in. I followed her,

Yet grieving still. She led me in and gave
A seat upon a silver-studded throne,
Beautiful, nobly wrought, and placed beneath 380
A footstool, and prepared a mingled draught
Within a golden chalice, and infused
A drug with mischievous intent. She gave
The cup; I drank it off; the charm wrought not,
And then she smote me with her wand and said: — 385
'Go to the sty, and with thy fellows sprawl.'

"She spake; but drawing forth the trusty sword
Upon my thigh, I rushed at her as if
To take her life. She shrieked and, stooping low,
Ran underneath my arm and clasped my knees, 390
And uttered piteously these winged words: —

"'Who art thou? of what race and of what land,
And who thy parents? I am wonder-struck
To see that thou couldst drink that magic juice
And yield not to its power. No living man, 395
Whoever he might be, that tasted once
Those drugs, or passed them o'er his lips, has yet
Withstood them. In thy breast a spirit dwells
Not to be thus subdued. Art thou not then
Ulysses, master of wise stratagems, 400
Whose coming hither, on his way from Troy,

In his black galley, oft has been foretold
By Hermes of the golden wand. But sheathe
Thy sword and share my couch, that, joined in love,
Each may hereafter trust the other's faith.' 405

"She spake, and I replied: 'How canst thou ask,
O Circè, that I gently deal with thee,
Since thou, in thine own palace, hast transformed
My friends to swine, and plottest even now
To keep me with thee, luring me to pass 410
Into thy chamber and to share thy couch,
That thou mayst strip me of my manly strength.
I come not to thy couch till thou engage,
O goddess, by a solemn oath, that thou
Wilt never seek to do me further harm.' 415

"I spake; she straightway took the oath required,
And, after it was uttered and confirmed,
Up to her sumptuous couch I went. Meanwhile
Four diligent maidens ministered within
The palace, — servants of the household they, 420
Who had their birth from fountains and from groves,
And sacred rivers flowing to the sea.
One spread the thrones with gorgeous coverings;
Above was purple arras, and beneath
Were linen webs; another, setting forth 425

The silver tables just before the thrones,
Placed on them canisters of gold ; a third
Mingled the rich wines in a silver bowl,
And placed the golden cups ; and, last, the fourth
Brought water from the fountain, and beneath 430
A massive tripod kindled a great fire
And warmed the water. When it boiled within
The shining brass, she led me to the bath,
And washed me from the tripod. On my head
And shoulders pleasantly she shed the streams 435
That from my members took away the sense
Of weariness, unmanning body and mind.
And when she thus had bathed me and with oil
Anointed me, she put a princely cloak
And tunic on me, led me in, and showed 440
My seat, — a stately silver-studded throne,
High-wrought, — and placed a footstool for my feet.
Then came a handmaid with a golden ewer,
And from it poured pure water for my hands
Into a silver laver. Next she placed 445
A polished table near to me, on which
The matron of the palace laid the feast
With many delicacies from her store,
And bade me eat. The banquet pleased me not.

My thoughts were elsewhere ; dark imaginings 450
Were in my mind. When Circè marked my mood,
As in a gloomy revery I sat,
And put not forth my hands to touch the feast,
She came to me and spake these winged words : —

“ ‘Why sittest thou like one who has no power 455
Of speech, Ulysses, wrapt in thoughts that gnaw
Thy heart, and tasting neither food nor wine?
Still dost thou dream of fraud? It is not well
That thou shouldst fear it longer, since I pledged
Myself against it with a mighty oath.’ 460

“She spake, and I replied : ‘What man whose heart
Is faithful could endure to taste of food
Or wine till he should see his captive friends
Once more at large? If with a kind intent
Thou bidst me eat and drink, let me behold 465
With mine own eyes my dear companions free.’

“I spake ; and Circè took her wand and went
Forth from her halls, and, opening the gate
That closed the sty, drove forth what seemed a herd
Of swine in their ninth year. They ranged themselves 470
Before her, and she went from each to each
And shed on them another drug. Forthwith
Fell from their limbs the bristles which had grown

All over them, when mighty Circè gave
At first the baleful potion. Now again 475
My friends were men, and younger than before,
And of a nobler mien and statelier growth.
They knew me all; and each one pressed my hand
In his, and there were tears and sobs of joy
That sounded through the palace. Circè too 480
Was moved, the mighty goddess; she drew near
And stood by me, and spake these winged words:—
 “‘Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
Ulysses! go to thy good ship beside
The sea and draw it up the beach, and hide 485
The goods and weapons in the caverns there,
And come thou back and bring with thee thy friends.’
 “She spake, and easily my generous mind
Was moved by what she said. Forthwith I went
To my good ship beside the sea, and found 490
My friends in tears, lamenting bitterly.
As in some grange the calves come leaping round
A herd of kine returning to the stall
From grassy fields where they have grazed their fill,
Nor can the stall contain the young which spring 495
Around their mothers with continual bleat;
So when my comrades saw me through their tears,

They sprang to meet me, and their joy was such
As if they were in their own native land
And their own city, on the rugged coast 500
Of Ithaca, where they were born and reared;
And as they wept they spake these winged words:—

“O foster-child of Jove! we welcome thee
On thy return with a delight as great
As if we all had reached again the land 505
That gave us birth, our Ithaca. And now
Tell by what death our other friends have died.’

“They spake; I answered with consoling words:—
‘First draw our galley up the beach, and hide
Our goods and all our weapons in the caves, 510
And then let all make haste to follow me,
And see our friends in Circè’s sacred halls,
Eating and drinking at the plenteous board.’

“I spake; and cheerfully my men obeyed,
Save that Eurylochus alone essayed 515
To hold them back, and spake these winged words:—

“‘Ah, whither are we going, wretched ones?
Are ye so eager for an evil fate,
That ye must go where Circè dwells, who waits
To turn us into lions, swine, or wolves, 520
Forced to remain and guard her spacious house?

So was it with the Cyclops, when our friends
Went with this daring chief to his abode,
And perished there through his foolhardiness.'

"He spake; and then I thought to draw my sword 525
From my stout thigh, and with the trenchant blade
Strike off his head and let it fall to earth,
Though he were my near kinsman; yet the rest
Restrained me, each one speaking kindly words:—

"'Nay, foster-child of Jove! if thou consent, 530
This man shall stay behind and with the ship,
And he shall guard the ship, but lead us thou
To where the sacred halls of Circè stand.'

"They spake, and from the ship and shore went up
Into the land, nor was Eurylochus 535
Left with the ship; he followed, for he feared
My terrible threat. Meantime had Circè bathed
My comrades at the palace, and with oil
Anointed them, and robed them in fair cloaks
And tunics. There we found them banqueting. 540
When they and those who came with me beheld
Each other, and the memory of the past
Came back to them, they wept abundantly,
And all the palace echoed with their sobs.
And then the mighty goddess came and said:— 545

“‘Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
Prolong thou not these sorrows. Well I know
What ye have suffered on the fishy deep,
And all the evil that malignant men
Have done to you on land. Now take the food 550
Before you, drink the wine, till ye receive
Into your hearts the courage that was yours
When long ago ye left your fatherland,
The rugged Ithaca. Ye are unnerved
And spiritless with thinking constantly 555
On your long wanderings, and your minds allow
No space for mirth, for ye have suffered much.’

“She spake; her words persuaded easily
Our generous minds, and there from day to day
We lingered a full year, and banqueted 560
Nobly on plenteous meats and delicate wines.
But when the year was ended, and the hours
Renewed their circle, my beloved friends
From Circè’s palace called me forth and said:—

“‘Good chief, do not forget thy native land, 565
If fate indeed permit that ever thou
Return in safety to that lofty pile
Thy palace in the country of thy birth.

“So spake they, and my generous mind was moved.

All that day long until the set of sun 570
We sat and feasted on the abundant meats
And delicate wines; and when the sun went down
They took their rest within the darkened halls,
While I to Circè's sumptuous couch went up,
A suppliant at her knees. The goddess heard 575
My prayer, as thus in winged words I said: —
 “O Circè! make, I pray, the promise good
Which thou hast given, to send me to my home.
My heart is pining for it, and the hearts
Of all my friends, who weary out my life 580
Lamenting round me when thou art not nigh.’
 “I spake; the mighty goddess thus replied: —
‘Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
Ulysses! ye must not remain with me
Unwillingly; but ye have yet to make 585
Another voyage, and must visit first
The abode of Pluto, and of Proserpine
His dreaded queen, and there consult the soul
Of the blind seer Tiresias, — him of Thebes, —
Whose intellect was spared; for Proserpine 590
Gave back to him in death the power of mind,
That only he might know of things to come.
The rest are shades that flit from place to place.’

“Thus spake the goddess; and my heart was wrung
 With sorrow, and I sat upon the couch 595
 And wept, nor could I longer wish to live
 And see the light of day. But when my grief,
 With shedding tears and tossing where I sat,
 Was somewhat spent, I spake to Circè thus: —

“‘O Circè, who will guide me when I make 600
 This voyage? for no galley built by man
 Has ever yet arrived at Pluto’s realm.’

“I spake; the mighty goddess answered me: —
 ‘Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
 Take thou no thought of who shall guide thy bark, 605
 But raise the mast and spread the glimmering sail,
 And seat thyself, and let the north wind waft
 Thy galley on. As soon as thou shalt cross
 Océanus, and come to the low shore
 And groves of Proserpine, the lofty groups 610
 Of poplars, and the willows that let fall
 Their withered fruit, moor thou thy galley there
 In the deep eddies of Océanus,
 And pass to Pluto’s comfortless abode.
 There into Acheron are poured the streams 615
 Of Pyriphlegethon, and of that arm
 Of Styx, Cocytus. At the place where meet
 The ever-roaring waters stands a rock;

Draw near to that, and there I bid thee scoop
In earth a trench, a cubit long and wide. 620
And round about it pour to all the dead
Libations, — milk and honey first, and next
Rich wine, and lastly water, scattering
White meal upon them. Offer there thy prayer
Fervently to that troop of airy forms, 625
And make the vow that thou wilt sacrifice,
When thou at last shalt come to Ithaca,
A heifer without blemish, barren yet,
In thine own courts, and heap the altar-pyre
With things of price; and to the seer alone, 630
Tiresias, by himself, a ram whose fleece
Is wholly black, the best of all thy flocks.
And after thou hast duly offered prayer
To all the illustrious nations of the dead,
Then sacrifice a ram and a black ewe, 635
Their faces turned toward Erebus, but thine
The other way and toward the river streams.
Thither the souls of those who died will flock
In multitudes. Then call thy friends, and give
Command to flay in haste the sheep that lie 640
Slain by the cruel brass, and, burning there
The carcasses, pay worship to the gods, —
The powerful Pluto and dread Proserpine.

Draw then the sword upon thy thigh, and sit,
 And suffer none of all those airy forms 645
 To touch the blood until thou first bespeak
 Tiresias. He will come, and speedily, —
 The leader of the people, — and will tell
 What voyage thou must make, what length of way
 Thou yet must measure, and will show thee how 650
 Thou mayst return across the fishy deep.'

"She spake; and while she spake the Morn looked forth
 Upon her golden throne. The Nymph bestowed
 On me a cloak and tunic, and arrayed
 Herself in a white robe with ample folds, — 655
 A delicate web and graceful. Round her loins
 She clasped a shining zone of gold, and hung
 A veil upon her forehead. Forth I went
 Throughout the palace and aroused my friends,
 And thus I said in cheerful tones to each : — 660

"“No longer give yourselves to idle rest
 And pleasant slumber; we are to depart.
 The gracious Circè counsels us to go.’

"I spake, and easily their generous minds
 Inclined to me. Yet brought I not away 665
 All my companions safely from the isle.
 Elpenor was the youngest of our band,

Not brave in war was he, nor wise in thought.
He, overcome with wine, and for the sake
Of coolness, had lain down to sleep, apart 670
From all the rest, in Circè's sacred house;
And as my friends bestirred themselves, the noise
And tumult roused him; he forgot to come
By the long staircase; headlong from the roof
He plunged; his neck was broken at the spine, 675
And his soul went to the abode of death.

“My friends came round me, and I said to them:—
‘Haply your thought may be that you are bound
For the dear country of your birth; but know
That Circè sends us elsewhere, to consult 680
The Theban seer, Tiresias, in the abode
Of Pluto and the dreaded Proserpine.’

“I spake, and their hearts failed them as they heard;
They sat them down, and wept, and tore their hair,
But fruitless were their sorrow and their tears. 685

“Thus as we sadly moved to our good ship
Upon the sea-shore, weeping all the while,
Circè, meantime, had visited its deck,
And there had bound a ram and a black ewe
By means we saw not; for what eye discerns 690
The presence of a deity, who moves
From place to place, and wills not to be seen?”

BOOK XI.

“NOW, when we reached our galley by the shore,
We drew it first into the mighty deep,
And set the mast and sails, and led on board
The sheep, and sorrowfully and in tears
Embarked ourselves. The fair-haired and august 5
Circè, expert in music, sent with us
A kindly fellow-voyager, — a wind
That breathed behind the dark-prowed bark, and swelled
The sails; and now, with all things in their place
Throughout the ship, we sat us down, — the breeze 10
And helmsman guiding us upon our way.
All day our sails were stretched, as o’er the deep
Our vessel ran; the sun went down; the paths
Of the great sea were darkened, and our bark
Reached the far confines of Océanus. 15

“There lies the land, and there the people dwell
Of the Cimmerians, in eternal cloud
And darkness. Never does the glorious sun

Look on them with his rays, when he goes up
Into the starry sky, nor when again 20
He sinks from heaven to earth. Unwholesome night
O'erhangs the wretched race. We touched the land,
And, drawing up our galley on the beach,
Took from on board the sheep, and followed on
Beside the ocean-stream until we reached 25
The place of which the goddess Circè spake.

“Here Perimedes and Eurylochus
Held in their grasp the victims, while I drew
The trusty sword upon my thigh, and scooped
A trench in earth, a cubit long and wide, 30
Round which we stood, and poured to all the dead
Libations, — milk and honey first, and next
Rich wine, and lastly water, scattering
White meal upon them. Then I offered prayer
Fervently to that troop of airy forms, 35
And made a vow that I would sacrifice,
When I at last should come to Ithaca,
A heifer without blemish, barren yet,
In my own courts, and heap the altar-pyre
With things of price, and to the seer alone, 40
Tiresias, by himself, a ram whose fleece
Was wholly black, the best of all my flocks.

“When I had worshipped thus with prayer and vows
The nations of the dead, I took the sheep
And pierced their throats above the hollow trench. 45
The blood flowed dark ; and thronging round me came
Souls of the dead from Erebus, — young wives
And maids unwedded, men worn out with years
And toil, and virgins of a tender age
In their new grief, and many a warrior slain 50
In battle, mangled by the spear, and clad
In bloody armor, who about the trench
Flitted on every side, now here, now there,
With gibbering cries, and I grew pale with fear.
Then calling to my friends, I bade them flay 55
The victims lying slaughtered by the knife,
And, burning them with fire, invoke the gods, —
The mighty Pluto and dread Proserpine.
Then from my thigh I drew the trusty sword,
And sat me down, and suffered none of all 60
Those airy phantoms to approach the blood
Until I should bespeak the Theban seer.

“And first the soul of my companion came,
Elpenor, for he was not buried yet
In earth’s broad bosom. We had left him dead 65
In Circè’s halls, unwept and unentombed.

We had another task. But when I now
Beheld I pitied him, and, shedding tears,
I said these winged words: 'How camest thou,
Elpenor, hither into these abodes 70
Of night and darkness? Thou hast made more speed,
Although on foot, than I in my good ship.'

"I spake; the phantom sobbed and answered me: —
'Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
Ulysses! 't was the evil doom decreed 75
By some divinity, and too much wine,
That wrought my death. I laid myself to sleep
In Circè's palace, and, remembering not
The way to the long stairs that led below,
Fell from the roof, and by the fall my neck 80
Was broken at the spine; my soul went down
To Hades. I conjure thee now, by those
Whom thou hast left behind and far away,
Thy consort and thy father, — him by whom
Thou when a boy wert reared, — and by thy son 85
Telemachus, who in thy palace-halls
Is left alone, — for well I know that thou,
In going hence from Pluto's realm, wilt moor
Thy gallant vessel in the Ææan isle, —
That there, O king, thou wilt remember me, 90

And leave me not when thou departest thence
Unwept, unburied, lest I bring on thee
The anger of the gods. But burn me there
With all the armor that I wore, and pile,
Close to the hoary deep, a mound for me, —
A hapless man of whom posterity
Shall hear. Do this for me, and plant upright
Upon my tomb the oar with which I rowed,
While yet a living man, among thy friends.'

95

"He spake and I replied: 'Unhappy youth,
All this I duly will perform for thee.'

100

"And then the soul of Anticleia came, —
My own dead mother, daughter of the king
Autolycus, large-minded. Her I left
Alive, what time I sailed for Troy, and now
I wept to see her there, and pitied her,
And yet forbade her, though with grief, to come
Near to the blood till I should first accost
Tiresias. He too came, the Theban seer,
Tiresias, bearing in his hand a wand
Of gold; he knew me and bespake me thus: —

105

110

"'Why, O unhappy mortal, hast thou left
The light of day to come among the dead
And to this joyless land? Go from the trench

And turn thy sword away, that I may drink 115
The blood, and speak the word of prophecy.'

"He spake; withdrawing from the trench, I thrust
Into its sheath my silver-studded sword,
And after drinking of the dark red blood
The blameless prophet turned to me and said: — 120

"'Illustrious chief Ulysses, thy desire
Is for a happy passage to thy home,
Yet will a god withstand thee. Not unmarked
By Neptune shalt thou, as I deem, proceed
Upon thy voyage. He hath laid up wrath 125

Against thee in his heart, for that thy hand
Deprived his son of sight. Yet may ye still
Return, though after many hardships borne,
If thou but hold thy appetite in check

And that of thy companions, when thou bring 130
Thy gallant bark to the Trinacrian isle,
Safe from the gloomy deep. There will ye find
The beeves and fatling wethers of the Sun, —
The all-beholding and all-hearing Sun.

If these ye leave unharmed, and keep in mind 135
The thought of your return, ye may go back,
Though sufferers, to your home in Ithaca;
But if thou do them harm, the event will be

Destruction to thy ship and to its crew ;
And thou, if thou escape it, wilt return 140
Late to thy country, all thy comrades lost,
And in a foreign bark, and thou shalt find
Wrong in thy household, — arrogant men who waste
Thy substance, wooers of thy noble wife,
And offering bridal gifts. On thy return 145
Thou shalt avenge thee of their violent deeds ;
And when thou shalt have slain them in thy halls,
Whether by stratagem or by the sword
In open fight, then take a shapely oar
And journey on, until thou meet with men 150
Who have not known the sea nor eaten food
Seasoned with salt, nor ever have beheld
Galleys with crimson prows, nor shapely oars,
Which are the wings of ships. I will declare
A sign by which to know them, nor canst thou 155
Mistake it. When a traveller, meeting thee,
Shalt say that thou dost bear a winnowing-fan
Upon thy sturdy shoulder, stop and plant
Thy shapely oar upright in earth, and there
Pay to King Neptune solemn sacrifice, — 160
A ram, a bull, and from his herd of swine
A boar. And then returning to thy home,

See that thou offer hallowed hecatombs
To all the ever-living ones who dwell
In the broad heaven, to each in order due.
So at the last thy death shall come to thee
Far from the sea, and gently take thee off
In a serene old age that ends among
A happy people. I have told thee true.'

165

"He spake, and thus I answered him: 'The gods,
Tiresias, have decreed as thou hast said.
But tell, and tell me truly, — I behold
The soul of my dead mother; there she sits
In silence by the blood, and will not deign
To look upon her son nor speak to him
Instruct me, mighty prophet, by what means
To make my mother know me for her son.'

175

"I spake, and instantly the seer replied: —
'Easily that is told; I give it thee
To bear in mind. Whoever of the dead
Thou sufferest to approach and drink the blood
Will speak the truth; those whom thou dost forbid
To taste the blood will silently withdraw.'

180

"The soul of King Tiresias, saying this,
Passed to the abode of Pluto; he had given
The oracle I asked. I waited still

185

Until my mother, drawing near again,
 Drank the dark blood; she knew me suddenly,
 And said in piteous tones these winged words: —

“ ‘How didst thou come, my child, a living man, 190
 Into this place of darkness? Difficult
 It is for those who breathe the breath of life
 To visit these abodes, through which are rolled
 Great rivers, fearful floods, — the first of these
 Océanus, whose waters none can cross 195
 On foot, or save on board a trusty bark.
 Hast thou come hither on thy way from Troy,
 A weary wanderer with thy ship and friends?
 And hast thou not been yet at Ithaca,
 Nor in thine island palace seen thy wife?’ 200

“She spake, I answered: ‘’T is necessity,
 Dear mother, that has brought me to the abode
 Of Pluto, to consult the Theban seer,
 Tiresias. Not to the Achaian coast
 Have I returned, nor reached our country, yet 205
 Continually I wander; everywhere
 I meet misfortune, — even from the time
 When, in the noble Agamemnon’s train,
 I came to Ilium, famed for steeds, and made
 War on its dwellers. Tell me now, I pray, 210

And truly, how it was that fate on thee
 Brought the long sleep of death? by slow disease?
 Or, stealing on thee, did the archer-queen.
 Diana, slay thee with her silent shafts?
 And tell me of my father, and the son 215
 Left in my palace. Rests the sway I bore
 On them, or has another taken it,
 Since men believe I shall return no more?
 And tell me of my wedded wife, her thoughts
 And purposes, and whether she remains 220
 Yet with my son. Is she the guardian still
 Of my estates, or has the noblest chief
 Of those Achaians led her thence a bride?'

"I spake; my reverend mother answered thus: —
 'Most certain is it that she sadly dwells 225
 Still in thy palace. Weary days and nights
 And tears are hers. No man has taken yet
 Thy place as ruler, but Telemachus
 Still has the charge of thy domain, and gives
 The liberal feasts which it befits a prince 230
 To give, for all invite him. In the fields
 Thy father dwells, and never in the town
 Is seen; nor beds nor cloaks has he, nor mats
 Of rich device, but, all the winter through

He sleeps where sleep the laborers, on the hearth, 235
Amid the dust, and wears a wretched garb ;
And when the summer comes, or autumn days
Ripen the fruit, his bed is on the ground,
And made of leaves, that everywhere are shed
In the rich vineyards. There he lies and grieves, 240
And, cherishing his sorrow, mourns thy fate,
And keenly feels the miseries of age.
And thus I underwent my fate and died ;
For not the goddess of the unerring bow
Stealing upon me smote me in thy halls 245
With silent arrows, nor did slow disease
Come o'er me, such as, wasting cruelly
The members, takes at last the life away ;
But constant longing for thee, anxious thoughts
Of thee, and memory of thy gentleness, 250
Ulysses, made an end of my sweet life.'

“ She spake ; I longed to take into my arms
The soul of my dead mother. Thrice I tried,
Moved by a strong desire, and thrice the form
Passed through them like a shadow or a dream. 255
And then did the great sorrow in my heart
Grow sharper, and in winged words I said : —

“ ‘ Beloved mother, why wilt thou not keep

Thy place, that I may clasp thee, so that here,
In Pluto's realm and in each other's arms,
We each might in the other soothe the sense
Of misery? Hath mighty Proserpine
Sent but an empty shade to meet me here,
That I might only grieve and sigh the more?'

260

"I spake, and then my reverend mother said: —
'Believe not that Jove's daughter Proserpine
Deceives thee. 'T is the lot of all our race
When they are dead. No more the sinews bind
The bones and flesh, when once from the white bones
The life departs. Then like a dream the soul
Flies off, and flits about from place to place.
But haste thou to the light again, and mark
What I have said, that thou in after days
Mayst tell it to thy wife on thy return.'

265

270

"Thus we conferred. Meantime the women came
Around me, moved by mighty Proserpine;
In throngs they gathered to the dark red blood.
Then, as I pondered how to question each,
This seemed the wisest, — from my sturdy thigh
I plucked the trenchant sword, and suffered not
All that were there to taste the blood at once;
So one by one they came, and each in turn

280

Declared her lineage. Thus I questioned all.

“Then saw I high-born Tyro first, who claimed
To be the daughter of that blameless man 285
Salmoneus, and who called herself the wife
Of Cretheus, son of Æolus. She loved
Enipeus, hallowed river, fairest stream
Of all that flow on earth, and often walked
Beside its pleasant waters. He whose arms 290
Surround the islands, Neptune, once put on
The river’s form, and at its gulfy mouth
Met her; the purple waters stood upright
Around them like a wall, and formed an arch,
And hid the god and woman. There he loosed 295
The virgin zone of Tyro, shedding sleep
Upon her. Afterward he took her hand
And said: ‘Rejoice, O maiden, in our love,
For with the year’s return shalt thou bring forth
Illustrious sons; the embraces of the gods 300
Are not unfruitful. Rear them carefully.
And now return to thy abode, and watch
Thy words, and keep thy secret. Thou must know
That I am Neptune, he who shakes the earth.’

“He spake, and plunged into the billowy deep. 305
And she became a mother, and brought forth

Pelias and Neleus, valiant ministers
Of mighty Jupiter. On the broad lands
Of Iäolchos Pelias dwelt, and reared
Vast flocks of sheep, while Neleus made his home 310
In Pylos midst the sands. The queenly dame,
His mother, meanwhile brought forth other sons
To Cretheus, — Æson first, and Pheres next,
And Amythaon, great in horsemanship.

“And after her I saw Antiopè, 315
The daughter of Asopus, — her who made
A boast that she had slumbered in the arms
Of Jove. Two sons she bore, — Amphion one,
The other Zethus, — and they founded Thebes
With its seven gates, and girt it round with towers; 320
For, valiant as they were, they could not dwell
Safely in that great town unfenced by towers.

“And after her I saw Amphitryon’s wife,
Alcmena, her who brought forth Hercules,
The dauntless hero of the lion-heart, — 325
For she had given herself into the arms
Of mighty Jupiter. I also saw
Megara there, a daughter of the house
Of haughty Creion. Her Amphitryon’s son,
Untamable in strength, had made his wife, 330

“The mother, too, of *Œdipus* I saw,
 Beautiful *Epicastè*, who in life
 Had done unwittingly a heinous deed, —
 Had married her own son, who, having slain
 Her father first, espoused her ; but the gods 335
 Published abroad the rumor of the crime.
 He in the pleasant town of *Thebes* bore sway
 O’er the *Cadmeians* ; yet in misery
 He lived, for so the offended gods ordained.
 And she went down to *Hades* and the gates 340
 That stand forever barred ; for, wild with grief,
 She slung a cord upon a lofty beam
 And perished by it, leaving him to bear
 Woes without measure, such as on a son
 The furies of a mother might inflict. 345

“And there I saw the dame supremely fair,
Chloris, whom *Neleus* with large marriage-gifts
 Wooed, and brought home a bride ; the youngest she
 Among the daughters of *Iäsus’* son,
Amphion, ruler o’er *Orchomenus*, 350
 The *Minyeian* town, and o’er the realm
 Of *Pylos*. Three illustrious sons she bore
 To *Neleus*, — *Nestor*, *Chromius*, and a chief
 Of lofty bearing, *Periclymenus*.

She brought forth Pero also, marvellous 355
In beauty, wooed by all the region round ;
But Neleus would bestow the maid on none
Save him who should drive off from Phylacè
The beeves, broad-fronted and with crooked horns,
Of valiant Iphicles, — a difficult task. 360
One man alone, a blameless prophet, dared
Attempt it ; but he found himself withstood
By fate, and rigid fetters, and a force
Of rustic herdsmen. Months and days went by,
And the full year, led by the hours, came round. 365
The valiant Iphicles, who from the seer
Had heard the oracles explained, took off
The shackles, and the will of Jove was done.
“Then saw I Leda, wife of Tyndarus,
Who bore to Tyndarus two noble sons, 370
Castor the horseman, Pollux skilled to wield
The cestus. Both of them have still a place
Upon the fruitful earth ; for Jupiter
Gave them such honor that they live by turns
Each one a day, and then are with the dead 375
Each one by turns ; they rank among the gods.
“The wife of Aloëus next appeared,
Iphidameia, who, as she declared,

Had won the love of Neptune. She brought forth
Two short-lived sons, — one like a god in form, 380
Named Otus; and the other, far renowned,
Named Ephialtes. These the bounteous earth
Nourished to be the tallest of mankind,
And goodliest, save Orion. When the twain
Had seen but nine years of their life, they stood 385
In breadth of frame nine cubits, and in height
Nine fathoms. They against the living gods
Threatened to wage, upon the Olympian height,
Fierce and tumultuous battle, and to fling
Ossa upon Olympus, and to pile 390
Pelion with all its growth of leafy woods,
On Ossa, that the heavens might thus be scaled.
And they, if they had reached their prime of youth,
Had made their menace good. The son of Jove
And amber-haired Latona took their lives 395
Ere yet beneath their temples sprang the down
And covered with its sprouting tufts the chin.

“Phædra I saw, and Procris, and the child
Of the wise Minos, Ariadne, famed
For beauty, whom the hero Theseus once 400
From Crete to hallowed Athens’ fertile coast
Led, but possessed her not. Diana gave

Ear to the tale which Bacchus brought to her,
And in the isle of Dia slew the maid.

“And Mæra I beheld, and Clymenè, 405
And Eriphylè, hateful in her guilt,
Who sold her husband for a price in gold.
But vainly might I think to name them all, —
The wives and daughters of heroic men
Whom I beheld, — for first the ambrosial night 410
Would wear away. And now for me the hour
Of sleep is come, at my good ship among
My friends, or haply here. Meantime the care
For my return is with the gods and you.”

He spake, and all were silent: all within 415
The shadows of those palace-halls were held
Motionless by the charm of what he said.
And thus the white-armed queen Aretè spake: —

“Phæacians, how appears this man to you
In form, in stature, and well-judging mind? 420
My guest he is, but each among you shares
The honor of the occasion. Now, I pray,
Dismiss him not in haste, nor sparingly
Bestow your gifts on one in so much need;
For in your dwellings is much wealth, bestowed 425
Upon you by the bounty of the gods.”

Then also Echeneüs, aged chief,
The oldest man of the Phæacians, spake : —

“ My friends, the word of our sagacious queen
Errs not, nor is ill-timed, and yours it is 430
To hearken and obey : but all depends
Upon Alcinoüs, — both the word and deed.”

And then in turn Alcinoüs spake : “ That word
Shall be fulfilled, if I am ruler here
O'er the Phæacians, skilled in seamanship. 435
But let the stranger, though he long for home,
Bear to remain till morning, that his store
Of gifts may be complete. To send him home
Shall be the charge of all, but mostly mine,
Since mine it is to hold the sovereign power.” 440

And then the wise Ulysses said : “ O King
Alcinoüs, eminent o'er all thy race!
Shouldst thou command me to remain with thee
Even for a twelvemonth, and at length provide
For my return, and give me princely gifts, 445
Even that would please me ; for with fuller hands,
The happier were my lot on my return
To my own land. I should be honored then,
And meet a kinder welcome there from all
Who see me in my Ithaca once more.” 450

And then again in turn Alcinoüs spake : —
“Ulysses, when we look on thee, we feel
No fear that thou art false, or one of those,
The many, whom the dark earth nourishes,
Wandering at large, and forging lies, that we 455
May not suspect them. Thou hast grace of speech
And noble thoughts, and fitly hast thou told,
Even as a minstrel might, the history
Of all thy Argive brethren and thy own.
Now say, and frankly, didst thou also see 460
Any of those heroic men who went
With thee to Troy, and in that region met
Their fate? A night immeasurably long
Is yet before us. Let us have thy tale
Of wonders. I could listen till the break 465
Of hallowed morning, if thou canst endure
So long to speak of hardships thou hast borne.”

He spake, and wise Ulysses answered thus : —
“O King Alcinoüs, eminent beyond
All others of thy people. For discourse 470
There is a time ; there is a time for sleep.
If more thou yet wouldst hear, I will not spare
To give the story of the greater woes
Of my companions, who were afterward

Cut off from life ; and though they had escaped 475
The cruel Trojan war, on their return
They perished by a woman's fraud and guilt.

“When chaste Proserpina had made the ghosts
Of women scatter right and left, there came
The soul of Agamemnon, Atreus' son. 480

He came attended by a throng of those
Who in the palace of Ægisthus met
A fate like his and died. When he had drunk
The dark red blood, he knew me at a look,

And wailed aloud, and, bursting into tears, 485
Stretched out his hands to touch me ; but no power
Was there of grasp or pressure, such as once
Dwelt in those active limbs. I could not help
But weep at sight of him, for from my heart
I pitied him, and spake these winged words : — 490

“‘Most glorious son of Atreus, king of men !
How, Agamemnon, has the fate that brings
To man the everlasting sleep of death
O'ertaken thee ? Did Neptune, calling up
The winds in all their fury, make thy fleet 495
A wreck, or did thine enemies on land
Smite thee, as thou wert driving off their bees
And their fair flocks, or fighting to defend

Some city, and the helpless women there?’

“I spake, and Agamemnon thus replied:—

500

‘Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,

’T was not that Neptune calling up the winds

In all their fury wrecked me in my fleet,

Nor hostile warriors smote me on the land,

But that Ægisthus, bent upon my death,

505

Plotted against me with my guilty wife,

And bade me to his house and slew me there,

Even at the banquet, as a hind might slay

A bullock at the stall. With me they slew

My comrades, as a herd of white-toothed swine

510

Are slaughtered for some man of large estates,

Who makes a wedding or a solemn feast.

Thou hast seen many perish by the sword

In the hard battle, one by one, and yet

Thou wouldst have pitied us, hadst thou beheld

515

The slain beside the wine-jar, and beneath

The loaded tables, while the pavement swam

With blood. I heard Cassandra’s piteous cry,

The cry of Priam’s daughter, stricken down

By treacherous Clytemnestra at my side.

520

And there I lay, and, dying, raised my hands

To grasp my sword. The shameless woman went

Her way, nor stayed to close my eyes, nor press
 My mouth into its place, although my soul
 Was on its way to Hades. There is nought 525
 That lives more horrible, more lost to shame,
 Than is the woman who has brought her mind
 To compass deeds like these, — the wretch who plans
 So foul a crime, — the murder of the man
 Whom she a virgin wedded. I had looked 530
 For a warm welcome from my children here,
 And all my household in my ancient home.
 This woman, deep in wickedness, hath brought
 Disgrace upon herself and all her sex,
 Even those who give their thoughts to doing good.' 535

“He spake, and I replied: ‘O, how the God
 Who wields the thunder, Jupiter, must hate
 The house of Atreus for the women’s sake!
 At first we fell by myriads in the cause
 Of Helen; Clytemnestra now hath planned 540
 This guile against thee while thou wert afar.’

“I spake, and instantly his answer came: —
 ‘Therefore be not compliant to thy wife,
 Nor let her hear from thee whatever lies
 Within thy knowledge. Tell her but a part, 545
 And keep the rest concealed. Yet is thy life,

Ulysses, in no danger from thy spouse ;
 For wise and well instructed in the rules
 Of virtuous conduct is Penelope,
 The daughter of Icarius. When we went 550
 To war, we left her a young bride ; a babe
 Was at her breast, a boy, who now must sit
 Among grown men ; and fortunate is he,
 For certainly his father will behold
 The youth on his return, and he embrace 555
 His father, as is meet. But as for me,
 My consort suffered not my eyes to feed
 Upon the sight of my own son ; for first
 She slew me. This, then, I admonish thee, —
 Heed thou my words. Bring not thy ship to land 560
 Openly in thy country, but by stealth,
 Since now no longer can we put our trust
 In woman. Meantime, tell me of my son,
 And faithfully, if thou hast heard of him
 As living, whether in Orchomenus, 565
 Or sandy Pylos, or in the broad realm
 Of Menelaus, Sparta ; for not yet
 Has my Orestes passed from earth and life.’
 “He spake, and I replied : ‘Why ask of me
 That question, O Atrides ? I know not 570

Whether thy son be living or be dead,
And this is not a time for idle words.'

"Thus in sad talk we stood, and freely flowed
Our tears. Meanwhile the ghosts of Peleus' son
Achilles, and Patroclus, excellent 575
Antilochus, and Ajax, all drew near, —
Ajax for form and stature eminent
O'er all the Greeks save Peleus' faultless son.

Then did the soul of fleet Æacides
Know me, and thus in winged words he said: — 580

"Ulysses! what hath moved thee to attempt
This greatest of thy labors? How is it
That thou hast found the courage to descend
To Hades, where the dead, the bodiless forms
Of those whose work is done on earth, abide?' 585

"He spake; I answered: 'Greatest of the Greeks!
Achilles, son of Peleus! 'T was to hear
The counsel of Tiresias that I came,
If haply he might tell me by what means
To reach my rugged Ithaca again; 590
For yet have I not trod my native coast,
Nor even have drawn nigh to Greece. I meet
Misfortunes everywhere. But as for thee,
Achilles, no man lived before thy time,

Nor will hereafter live, more fortunate
Than thou, — for while alive we honored thee
As if thou wert a god, and now again
In these abodes thou rulest o'er the dead ;
Therefore, Achilles, shouldst thou not be sad.'

595

“I spake ; Achilles quickly answered me : —
'Noble Ulysses, speak not thus of death,
As if thou couldst console me. I would be
A laborer on earth, and serve for hire
Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,
Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down
To death. Speak rather of my noble son,
Whether or not he yet has joined the wars
To fight among the foremost of the host.
And tell me also if thou aught hast heard
Of blameless Peleus, — whether he be yet
Honored among his many Myrmidons,
Or do they hold him now in small esteem
In Hellas and in Phthia, since old age
Unnerves his hands and feet, and I no more
Am there, beneath the sun, to give him aid,
Strong as I was on the wide plain of Troy,
When warring for the Achaian cause I smote
That valiant people. Could I come again,

600

605

610

615

But for a moment, with my former strength,
Into my father's palace, I would make 620
That strength and these unconquerable hands
A terror to the men who do him wrong,
And rob him of the honor due a king.'

"He spake; I answered: 'Nothing have I heard
Of blameless Peleus, but I will relate 625
The truth concerning Neoptolemus,
Thy son, as thou requirest. Him I took
From Scyros in a gallant bark to join
The well-armed Greeks. Know, then, that when we sat
In council, planning to conduct the war 630
Against the city of Troy, he always rose
The first to speak, nor were his words unwise.
The godlike Nestor and myself alone
Rivalled him in debate. And when we fought
About the city walls, he loitered not 635
Among the others in the numerous host,
But hastened on before them, giving place
To no man there in valor. Many men
He slew in desperate combat, whom to name
Were past my power, so many were they all 640
Whom in the cause of Greece he struck to earth.
Yet one I name, Eurypylus, the son

Of Telephus, who perished by his sword
With many of his band, Citeians, led
To war because of liberal gifts bestowed 645
Upon their chieftain's wife; the noblest he
Of men, in form, whom I have ever seen,
Save Memnon. When into the wooden steed,
Framed by Epeius, we the chiefs of Greece
Ascended, and to me was given the charge 650
Of all things there, to open and to shut
The close-built fraud, while others of high rank
Among the Greeks were wiping off their tears,
And their limbs shook, I never saw thy son
Turn pale in his fine face, or brush away 655
A tear, but he besought me earnestly
That he might leave our hiding-place, and grasped
His falchion's hilt, and lifted up his spear
Heavy with brass, for in his mind he smote
The Trojan crowd already. When at last 660
We had o'erthrown and sacked the lofty town
Of Priam, he embarked upon a ship,
With all his share of spoil, — a large reward,—
Unhurt, not touched in combat hand to hand,
Nor wounded from afar, as oftentimes 665
Must be the fortune of a fight, for Mars

Is wont to rage without regard to men.'

"I spake. The soul of swift Æacides
Over the meadows thick with asphodel
Departed with long strides, well pleased to hear 670
From me the story of his son's renown.

"The other ghosts of those who lay in death
Stood sorrowing by, and each one told his griefs;
But that of Ajax, son of Telamon,
Kept far aloof, displeased that I had won 675
The victory contending at the fleet
Which should possess the arms of Peleus' son.

His goddess-mother laid them as a prize
Before us, and the captive sons of Troy
And Pallas were the umpires to award 680
The victory. And now how much I wish
I had not conquered in a strife like that,
Since for that cause the dark earth hath received
The hero Ajax, who in nobleness
Of form and greatness of exploits excelled 685
All other Greeks, except the blameless son
Of Peleus. Then I spake in soothing words:—

"O Ajax, son of blameless Telamon!
Wilt thou not even in death forget the wrath
Caused by the strife for those accursed arms? 690

The gods have made them fatal to the Greeks,
 For thou, the bulwark of our host, didst fall,
 And we lamented thee as bitterly
 When thou wert dead as we had mourned the son
 Of Peleus. Nor was any man to blame ;
 'T was Jupiter who held in vehement hate
 The army of the warlike Greeks, and laid
 This doom upon thee. Now, O king, draw near,
 And hear our voice and words, and check, I pray,
 The anger rising in thy generous breast.'

695

700

“I spake ; he answered not, but moved away
 To Erebus, among the other souls
 Of the departed. Yet would I have had
 Speech of him, angry as he was, or else
 Have spoken to him further, but my wish
 Was strong to see yet others of the dead.

705

“Then I beheld the illustrious son of Jove,
 Minos, a golden sceptre in his hand,
 Sitting to judge the dead, who round the king
 Plead their causes. There they stood or sat
 In Pluto's halls, — a pile with ample gates.

710

“And next I saw the huge Orion drive,
 Across the meadows green with asphodel,
 The savage beast whom he had slain ; he bore

The brazen mace, which no man's power could break. 715

“And Tityus there I saw, — the mighty earth
His mother, — overspreading, as he lay,
Nine acres, with two vultures at his side,
That, plucking at his liver, plunged their beaks
Into the flesh ; nor did his hands avail
To drive them off, for he had offered force
To Jove's proud wife Latona, as she went
To Pytho, through the pleasant Panopeus.

720

“And next I looked on Tantalus, a prey
To grievous torments, standing in a lake
That reached his chin. Though painfully athirst,
He could not drink ; as often as he bowed
His aged head to take into his lips
The water, it was drawn away, and sank
Into the earth, and the dark soil appeared
Around his feet ; a god had dried it up.

725

730

And lofty trees drooped o'er him, hung with fruit, —
Pears and pomegranates, apples fair to sight,
And luscious figs, and olives green of hue.
And when that ancient man put forth his hands
To pluck them from their stems, the wind arose
And whirled them far among the shadowy clouds.

735

“There I beheld the shade of Sisyphus

Amid his sufferings. With both hands he rolled
A huge stone up a hill. To force it up, 740
He leaned against the mass with hands and feet;
But, ere it crossed the summit of the hill
A power was felt that sent it rolling back,
And downward plunged the unmanageable rock
Before him to the plain. Again he toiled 745
To heave it upward, while the sweat in streams
Ran down his limbs, and dust begrimed his brow.

“Then I beheld the mighty Hercules, —
The hero’s image, — for he sits himself
Among the deathless gods, well pleased to share 750
Their feasts, and Hebe of the dainty feet -
A daughter of the mighty Jupiter
And golden-sandalled Juno — is his wife.
Around his image flitted to and fro
The ghosts with noise, like fear-bewildered birds. 755
His look was dark as night. He held in hand
A naked bow, a shaft upon the string,
And fiercely gazed, like one about to send
The arrow forth. Upon his breast he wore
The formidable baldrick, on whose band 760
Of gold were sculptured marvels, — forms of bears,
Wild boars, grim lions, battles, skirmishings,

And death by wounds, and slaughter. He who wrought
That band had never done the like before,
Nor could thereafter. As I met his eye, 765
The hero knew me, and, beholding me
With pity, said to me in winged words: —

“Son of Laertes, nobly born and wise,
And yet unhappy; surely thou dost bear
A cruel fate, like that which I endured 770
While yet I saw the brightness of the sun.
The offspring of Saturnian Jupiter
Am I, and yet was I compelled to serve
One of a meaner race than I, who set
Difficult tasks. He sent me hither once 775
To bring away the guardian hound; he deemed
No harder task might be. I brought him hence;
I led him up from Hades, with such aid
As Hermes and the blue-eyed Pallas gave.’

“Thus having spoken, he withdrew again 780
Into the abode of Pluto. I remained
And kept my place, in hope there yet might come
Heroes who perished in the early time,
And haply I might look on some of those, —
The ancients, whom I greatly longed to see, — 785
On Theseus and Pirithoüs, glorious men,

The children of the gods. But now, there flocked
Already round me, with a mighty noise,
The innumerable nations of the dead;
And I grew pale with fear, lest from the halls 790
Of Pluto the stern Proserpine should send
The frightful visage of the monster-maid,
The Gorgon. Hastening to my ship, I bade
The crew embark, and cast the hawsers loose.
Quickly they went on board, and took their seats 795
Upon the benches. Through Océanus
The current bore my galley, aided first
By oars and then by favorable gales."

BOOK XII.

“NOW when our bark had left Océanus
And entered the great deep, we reached the isle
Ææa, where the Morning, child of Dawn,
Abides, and holds her dances, and the Sun
Goes up from earth. We landed there and drew 5
Our galley up the beach; we disembarked
And laid us down to sleep beside the sea,
And waited for the holy Morn to rise.

“Then when the rosy-fingered Morn appeared,
The child of Dawn, I sent my comrades forth 10
To bring from Circè's halls Elpenor's corse.
And where a headland stretched into the deep
We hewed down trees, and held the funeral rites
With many tears; and having there consumed
The body and the arms with fire, we built 15
A tomb, and reared a column to the dead,
And on its summit fixed a tapering oar.

“All this was duly done; yet was the news

Of our return from Hades not concealed
From Circè. She attired herself in haste 20
And came; her maids came with her, bringing bread
And store of meats and generous wine; and thus
Spake the wise goddess, standing in the midst: —

“‘ Ah, daring ones! who, yet alive, have gone
Down to the abode of Pluto; twice to die 25
Is yours, while others die but once. Yet now
Take food, drink wine, and hold a feast to-day,
And with the dawn of morning ye shall sail;
And I will show the way, and teach you all
Its dangers, so that ye may not lament 30
False counsels followed, either on the land
Or on the water, to your grievous harm.’

“She spake, and our confiding minds were swayed
Easily by her counsels. All that day
Till set of sun we sat and banqueted 35
Upon the abundant meats and generous wine;
And when the Sun went down, and darkness came,
The crew beside the fastenings of our bark
Lay down to sleep, while Circè took my hand,
Led me apart, and made me sit, and took 40
Her seat before me, and inquired of all
That I had seen. I told her faithfully,

And then the mighty goddess Circè said : —

“ ‘ Thus far is well ; now heedfully attend
To what I say, and may some deity 45
Help thee remember it ! Thou first wilt come
To where the Sirens haunt. They throw a spell
O’er all who pass that way. If unawares
One finds himself so nigh that he can hear
Their voices, round him nevermore shall wife 50
And lisping children gather, welcoming
His safe return with joy. The Sirens sit
In a green field, and charm with mellow notes
The comer, while beside them lie in heaps
The bones of men decaying underneath 55
The shrivelled skins. Take heed and pass them by.
First fill with wax well kneaded in the palm
The ears of thy companions, that no sound
May enter. Hear the music, if thou wilt,
But let thy people bind thee, hand and foot, 60
To the good ship, upright against the mast,
And round it wind the cord, that thou mayst hear
The ravishing notes. But shouldst thou then entreat
Thy men, commanding them to set thee free,
Let them be charged to bind thee yet more fast 65
With added bands. And when they shall have passed

The Sirens by, I will not judge for thee
Which way to take; consider for thyself;
I tell thee of two ways. There is a pile
Of beetling rocks, where roars the mighty surge 70
Of dark-eyed Amphitritè; these are called
The Wanderers by the blessed gods. No birds
Can pass them safe, not even the timid doves,
Which bear ambrosia to our father Jove,
But ever doth the slippery rock take off 75
Some one, whose loss the God at once supplies,
To keep their number full. To these no bark
Guided by man has ever come, and left
The spot unwrecked; the billows of the deep
And storms of fire in air have scattered wide 80
Timbers of ships and bodies of drowned men.
One only of the barks that plough the deep
Has passed them safely, — Argo, known to all
By fame, when coming from Ææta home, —
And her the billows would have dashed against 85
The enormous rocks, if Juno, for the sake
Of Jason, had not come to guide it through.

“Two are the rocks; one lifts to the broad heaven
Its pointed summit, where a dark gray cloud
Broods, and withdraws not; never is the sky 90

Clear o'er that peak, not even in summer days
 Or autumn; nor can man ascend its steeps,
 Or venture down, — so smooth the sides, as if
 Man's art had polished them. There in the midst
 Upon the western side toward Erebus 95
 There yawns a shadowy cavern; thither thou,
 Noble Ulysses, steer thy bark, yet keep
 So far aloof that, standing on the deck,
 A youth might send an arrow from a bow
 Just to the cavern's mouth. There Scylla dwells, 100
 And fills the air with fearful yells; her voice
 The cry of whelps just littered, but herself
 A frightful prodigy, — a sight which none
 Would care to look on, though he were a god.
 Twelve feet are hers, all shapeless; six long necks, 105
 A hideous head on each, and triple rows
 Of teeth, close set and many, threatening death.
 And half her form is in the cavern's womb,
 And forth from that dark gulf her heads are thrust,
 To look abroad upon the rocks for prey, — 110
 Dolphin, or dogfish, or the mightier whale,
 Such as the murmuring Amphitritè breeds
 In multitudes. No mariner can boast
 That he has passed by Scylla with a crew

Unharm'd; she snatches from the deck, and bears 115
Away in each grim mouth, a living man.

“ ‘Another rock, Ulysses, thou wilt see,
Of lower height, so near her that a spear,
Cast by the hand, might reach it. On it grows
A huge wild fig-tree with luxuriant leaves. 120
Below, Charybdis, of immortal birth,
Draws the dark water down; for thrice a day
She gives it forth, and thrice with fearful whirl
She draws it in. O, be it not thy lot
To come while the dark water rushes down! 125
Even Neptune could not then deliver thee.
Then turn thy course with speed toward Scylla's rock,
And pass that way; 't were better far that six
Should perish from the ship than all be lost.’

“She spake, and I replied: ‘O goddess, deign. 130
To tell me truly, cannot I at once
Escape Charybdis and defend my friends
Against the rage of Scylla when she strikes?’

“I spake; the mighty goddess answered me: —
‘Rash man! dost thou still think of warlike deeds, 135
And feats of strength? And wilt thou not give way
Even to the deathless gods? That pest is not
Of mortal mould; she cannot die, she is

A thing to tremble and to shudder at,
And fierce, and never to be overcome. 140

There is no room for courage; flight is best.
And if thou shouldst delay beside the rock
To take up arms, I fear lest once again
She fall on thee with all her heads, and seize
As many men. Pass by the monster's haunt 145
With all the speed that thou canst make, and call
Upon Cratæis, who brought Scylla forth
To be the plague of men, and who will calm
Her rage, that she assault thee not again.

“‘Then in thy voyage shalt thou reach the isle 150
Trinacria, where, in pastures of the Sun,
His many beeves and fatling sheep are fed, —
Seven herds of oxen, and as many flocks
Of sheep, and fifty in each flock and herd.
They never multiply; they never die. 155

Two shepherdesses tend them, goddesses,
Nymphs with redundant locks, — Lampelia one,
The other Phaëthusa. These the nymph
Næëra to the overgoing Sun
Brought forth, and when their queenly mother's care 160
Had reared them, she appointed them to dwell
In far Trinacria, there to keep the flocks

And oxen of their father. If thy thoughts
Be fixed on thy return, so that thou leave
These flocks and herds unharmed, ye all will come 165
To Ithaca, though after many toils.

But if thou rashly harm them, I foretell
Destruction to thy ship and all its crew ;
And if thyself escape, thou wilt return
Late and in sorrow, all thy comrades lost.' 170

“She spake ; the Morning on her golden throne
Looked forth ; the glorious goddess went her way
Into the isle, I to my ship, and bade
The men embark and cast the hawsers loose.
And straight they went on board, and duly manned 175
The benches, smiting as they sat with oars
The hoary waters. Circè, amber-haired,
The mighty goddess of the musical voice,
Sent a fair wind behind our dark-prowed ship
That gayly bore us company, and filled 180
The sails. When we had fairly ordered all
On board our galley, we sat down, and left
The favoring wind and helm to bear us on,
And thus in sadness I bespake the crew : —

“‘My friends ! it were not well that one or two 185
Alone should know the oracles I heard

From Circe, great among the goddesses ;
And now will I disclose them, that ye all,
Whether we are to die or to escape
The doom of death, may be forewarned. And first 190
Against the wicked Sirens and their song
And flowery bank she warns us. I alone
May hear their voice, but ye must bind me first
With bands too strong to break, that I may stand
Upright against the mast ; and let the cords 195
Be fastened round it. If I then entreat
And bid you loose me, make the bands more strong.'

“Thus to my crew I spake, and told them all
That they should know, while our good ship drew near
The island of the Sirens, prosperous gales 200
Wafting it gently onward. Then the breeze
Sank to a breathless calm ; some deity
Had hushed the winds to slumber. Straightway rose
The men and furled the sails and laid them down
Within the ship, and sat and made the sea 205
White with the beating of their polished blades,
Made of the fir-tree. Then I took a mass
Of wax and cut it into many parts,
And kneaded each with a strong hand. It grew
Warm with the pressure, and the beams of him 210

Who journeys round the earth, the monarch Sun.
 With this I filled the ears of all my men
 From first to last. They bound me, in their turn,
 Upright against the mast-tree, hand and foot,
 And tied the cords around it. Then again 215
 They sat and threshed with oars the hoary deep.
 And when, in running rapidly, we came
 So near the Sirens as to hear a voice
 From where they sat, our galley flew not by
 Unseen by them, and sweetly thus they sang: — 220
 “O world-renowned Ulysses! thou who art
 The glory of the Achaians, turn thy bark
 Landward, that thou mayst listen to our lay.
 No man has passed us in his galley yet,
 Ere he has heard our warbled melodies. 225
 He goes delighted hence a wiser man ;
 For all that in the spacious realm of Troy
 The Greeks and Trojans by the will of Heaven
 Endured we know, and all that comes to pass
 In all the nations of the fruitful earth.’ 230
 “’T was thus they sang, and sweet the strain. I longed
 To listen, and with nods I gave the sign
 To set me free ; they only plied their oars
 The faster. Then upsprang Eurylochus

And Perimedes, and with added cords 235
Bound me, and drew the others still more tight.
And when we now had passed the spot, and heard
No more the melody the Sirens sang,
My comrades hastened from their ears to take
The wax, and loosed the cords and set me free. 240

“As soon as we had left the isle, I saw
Mist and a mountain billow, and I heard
The thunder of the waters. From the hands
Of my affrighted comrades flew the oars,
The deep was all in uproar ; but the ship 245
Stopped there, for all the rowers ceased their task.
I went through all the ship exhorting them
With cheerful words, man after man, and said : —

““Reflect, my friends, that we are not untried
In evil fortunes, nor in sadder plight 250
Are we than when within his spacious cave
The brutal Cyclops held us prisoners ;
Yet through my valor we escaped, and through
My counsels and devices, and I think
That ye will live to bear this day’s events 255
In memory like those. Now let us act.
Do all as I advise ; go to your seats
Upon the benches, smiting with your oars

These mighty waves, and haply Jove will grant
That we escape the death which threatens us. 260
Thee, helmsman, I adjure, — and heed my words,
Since to thy hands alone is given in charge
Our gallant vessel's rudder, — steer thou hence
From mist and tumbling waves, and well observe
The rock, lest where it juts into the sea 265
Thou heed it not, and bring us all to wreck.'

"I spake, and quickly all obeyed my words.
Yet said I nought of Scylla, — whom we now
Could not avoid, — lest all the crew in fear
Should cease to row, and crowd into the hold. 270
And then did I forget the stern command
Which Circè gave me, not to arm myself
For combat. In my shining arms I cased
My limbs, and took in hand two ponderous spears,
And went on deck, and stood upon the prow, — 275
For there it seemed to me that Scylla first
Would show herself, — that monster of the rocks, —
To seize my comrades. Yet I saw her not,
Though weary grew my eyes with looking long
And eagerly upon those dusky cliffs. 280

"Sadly we sailed into the strait, where stood
On one hand Scylla, and the dreaded rock

Charybdis on the other, drawing down
Into her horrid gulf the briny flood ;
And as she threw it forth again, it tossed 285
And murmured as upon a glowing fire
The water in a caldron, while the spray,
Thrown upward, fell on both the summit-rocks ;
And when once more she swallowed the salt sea,
It whirled within the abyss, while far below 290
The bottom of blue sand was seen. My men
Grew pale with fear ; we looked into the gulf
And thought our end was nigh. Then Scylla snatched
Six of my comrades from our hollow bark,
The best in valor and in strength of arm. 295
I looked to my good ship ; I looked to them,
And saw their hands and feet still swung in air
Above me, while for the last time on earth
They called my name in agony of heart.
As when an angler on a jutting rock 300
Sits with his taper rod, and casts his bait
To snare the smaller fish, he sends the horn
Of a wild bull that guards his line afar
Into the water, and jerks out a fish,
And throws it gasping shoreward ; so were they 305
Uplifted gasping to the rocks, and there

Scylla devoured them at her cavern's mouth,
Stretching their hands to me with piercing cries
Of anguish. 'T was in truth the saddest sight,
Whatever I have suffered and where'er
Have roamed the waters, that mine eyes have seen.

310

“Escaping thus the rocks, the dreaded haunt
Of Scylla and Charybdis, we approached
The pleasant island of the Sun, where grazed
The oxen with broad foreheads, beautiful,
And flocks of sheep, the fatlings of the god
Who makes the round of heaven. While yet at sea
I heard from my black ship the low of herds
In stables, and the bleatings of the flocks,
And straightway came into my thought the words
Of the blind seer Tiresias, him of Thebes,
And of Ææan Circè, who had oft
Warned me to shun the island of the god
Whose light is sweet to all. And then I said
To my companions with a sorrowing heart: —

315

320

325

““My comrades, sufferers as ye are, give ear.
I shall disclose the oracles which late
Tiresias and Ææan Circè gave.
The goddess earnestly admonished me
Not to approach the island of the Sun,

330

Whose light is sweet to all, for there she said
Some great misfortune lay in wait for us.
Now let us speed the ship and pass the isle.'

"I spake; their hearts were broken as they heard,
And bitterly Eurylochus replied: —

335

"'Austere art thou, Ulysses; thou art strong
Exceedingly; no labor tires thy limbs;
They must be made of iron, since thy will
Denies thy comrades, overcome with toil
And sleeplessness, to tread the land again, 340
And in that isle amid the waters make
A generous banquet. Thou wouldst have us sail
Into the swiftly coming night, and stray
Far from the island, through the misty sea.
By night spring up the mighty winds that make 345
A wreck of ships, and how can one escape
Destruction, should a sudden hurricane
Rise from the south or the hard-blowing west,
Such as, in spite of all the sovereign gods,
Will cause a ship to founder in the deep? 350
Let us obey the dark-browed Night, and take
Our evening meal, remaining close beside
Our gallant bark, and go on board again
When morning breaks, and enter the wide sea.'

“So spake Eurylochus; the rest approved. 355
And then I knew that some divinity
Was meditating evil to our band,
And I bespake him thus in winged words:—
“‘Eurylochus, ye force me to your will,
Since I am only one. Now all of you 360
Bind yourselves to me firmly, by an oath,
That if ye haply here shall meet a herd
Of beeves or flock of sheep, ye will not dare
To slay a single ox or sheep, but feed
Contented on the stores that Circè gave.’ 365
“I spake, and readily my comrades swore
As I required; and when that solemn oath
Was taken, to the land we brought and moored
Our galley in a winding creek, beside
A fountain of sweet water. From the deck 370
Stepped my companions and made ready there
Their evening cheer. They ate and drank till thirst
And hunger were appeased, and then they thought
Of those whom Scylla from our galley’s deck
Snatched and devoured; they thought and wept till sleep
Stole softly over them amid their tears. 376
Now came the third part of the night; the stars
Were sinking when the Cloud-compeller Jove

Sent forth a violent wind with eddying gusts,
 And covered both the earth and sky with clouds, 380
 And darkness fell from heaven. When Morning came,
 The rosy-fingered daughter of the Dawn,
 We drew the ship into a spacious grot.
 There were the seats of nymphs, and there we saw
 The smooth fair places where they danced. I called 385
 A council of my men, and said to them : —

“ ‘My friends, in our good ship are food and drink ;
 Abstain we from these beeves, lest we be made
 To suffer ; for these herds and these fair flocks
 Are sacred to a dreaded god, the Sun, — 390
 The all-beholding and all-hearing Sun.’

“ I spake, and all were swayed by what I said
 Full easily. A month entire the gales
 Blew from the south, and after that no wind
 Save east and south. While yet we had our bread 395
 And ruddy wine, my comrades spared the beeves,
 Moved by the love of life. But when the stores
 On board our galley were consumed, they roamed
 The island in their need, and sought for prey,
 And snared with barbed hooks the fish and birds, — 400
 Whatever came to hand, — till they were gaunt
 With famine. Meantime I withdrew alone

Into the isle, to supplicate the gods,
If haply one of them might yet reveal
The way of my return. As thus I strayed 405
Into the land, apart from all the rest,
I found a sheltered nook where no wind came,
And prayed with washen hands to all the gods
Who dwell in heaven. At length they bathed my lids
In a soft sleep. Meantime, Eurylochus 410
With fatal counsels thus harangued my men : —

“ ‘Hear, my companions, sufferers as ye are,
The words that I shall speak. All modes of death
Are hateful to the wretched race of men ;
But this of hunger, thus to meet our fate, 415
Is the most fearful. Let us drive apart
The best of all the oxen of the Sun,
And sacrifice them to the immortal ones
Who dwell in the broad heaven. And if we come
To Ithaca, our country, we will there 420
Build to the Sun, whose path is o’er our heads,
A sumptuous temple, and endow its shrine
With many gifts and rare. But if it be
His will, approved by all the other gods,
To sink our bark in anger, for the sake 425
Of these his high-horned oxen, I should choose

Sooner to gasp my life away amid
The billows of the deep, than pine to death
By famine in this melancholy isle.'

“So spake Eurylochus; the crew approved. 430
Then from the neighboring herd they drove the best
Of all the beeves; for near the dark-prowed ship
The fair broad-fronted herd with crooked horns
Were feeding. Round the victims stood my crew,
And, offering their petitions to the gods, 435
Held tender oak-leaves in their hands, just plucked
From a tall tree, for in our good ship's hold
Was no white barley now. When they had prayed,
And slain and dressed the beeves, they hewed away
The thighs and covered them with double folds 440
Of caul, and laid raw slices over these.
Wine had they not to pour in sacrifice
Upon the burning flesh; they poured instead
Water, and roasted all the entrails thus.
Now when the thighs were thoroughly consumed, 445
And entrails tasted, all the rest was carved
Into small portions, and transfixed with spits.

“Just then the gentle slumber left my lids.
I hurried to the shore and my good ship,
And, drawing near, perceived the savory steam 450

From the burnt-offering. Sorrowfully then
I called upon the ever-living gods: —

“‘O Father Jove, and all ye blessed gods,
Who live forever, ’t was a cruel sleep
In which ye lulled me to my grievous harm ;
My comrades here have done a fearful wrong.’

455

“Lampetia, of the trailing robes, in haste
Flew to the Sun, who journeys round the earth,
To tell him that my crew had slain his beeves,
And thus in anger he bespake the gods: —

460

“‘O Father Jove, and all ye blessed gods
Who never die, avenge the wrong I bear
Upon the comrades of Laertes’ son,
Ulysses, who have foully slain my beeves,
In which I took delight whene’er I rose
Into the starry heaven, and when again
I sank from heaven to earth. If for the wrong
They make not large amends, I shall go down
To Hades, there to shine among the dead.’

465

“The cloud-compelling Jupiter replied: —
‘Still shine, O Sun! among the deathless gods
And mortal men, upon the nourishing earth.
Soon will I cleave, with a white thunderbolt,
Their galley in the midst of the black sea.’

470

“This from Calypso of the radiant hair
I heard thereafter; she herself, she said,
Had heard it from the herald Mercury. 475

“When to the ship I came, beside the sea,
I sternly chid them all, man after man,
Yet could we think of no redress; the beeves 480
Were dead; and now with prodigies the gods
Amazed my comrades, — the skins moved and crawled,
The flesh both raw and roasted on the spits
Low'd with the voice of oxen. Six whole days
My comrades feasted, taking from the herd 485
The Sun's best oxen. When Saturnian Jove
Brought the seventh day, the tempest ceased; the wind
Fell, and we straightway went on board. We set
The mast upright, and, spreading the white sails,
We ventured on the great wide sea again. 490

“When we had left the isle, and now appeared
No other land, but only sea and sky,
The son of Saturn caused a lurid cloud
To gather o'er the galley, and to cast
Its darkness on the deep. Not long our ship 495
Ran onward, ere the furious west wind rose
And blew a hurricane. A strong blast snapped
Both ropes that held the mast; the mast fell back;

The tackle dropped entangled to the hold ;
 The mast, in falling on the galley's stern, 500
 Dashed on the pilot's head and crushed the bones,
 And from the deck he plunged like one who dives
 Into the deep ; his gallant spirit left
 The limbs at once. Jove thundered from on high,
 And sent a thunderbolt into the ship, 505
 That, quaking with the fearful blow, and filled
 With stifling sulphur, shook my comrades off
 Into the deep. They floated round the ship
 Like seamews ; Jupiter had cut them off
 From their return. I moved from place to place, 510
 Still in the ship, until the tempest's force
 Parted the sides and keel. Before the waves
 The naked keel was swept. The mast had snapped
 Just at the base, but round it was a thong
 Made of a bullock's hide ; with this I bound 515
 The mast and keel together, took my seat
 Upon them, and the wild winds bore me on.

" The west wind ceased to rage ; but in its stead
 The south wind blew, and brought me bitter grief.
 I feared lest I must measure back my way 520
 To grim Charybdis. All night long I rode
 The waves, and with the rising sun drew near

The rock of Scylla and the terrible
Charybdis as her gulf was drawing down
The waves of the salt sea. There as I came 525
I raised myself on high till I could grasp
The lofty fig-tree, and I clung to it
As clings a bat, — for I could neither find
A place to plant my feet, nor could I climb,
So distant were the roots, so far apart 530
The long huge branches overshadowing
Charybdis. Yet I firmly kept my hold
Till she should throw the keel and mast again
Up from the gulf. They, as I waited long,
Came up again, though late, — as late as one 535
Who long has sat adjudging strifes between
Young suitors pleading in the market-place
Rises and goes to take his evening meal;
So late the timbers of my bark returned,
Thrown from Charybdis. Then I dropped amid 540
The dashing waves, and came with hands and feet
On those long timbers in the midst, that they
Might bear my weight. I sat on them and rowed
With both my hands. The father of the gods
And mortals suffered not that I should look 545
On Scylla's rock again, else had I not

Escaped a cruel death. For nine long days
I floated on the waters; on the tenth
The gods at nightfall bore me to an isle, —
Ogygia, where Calypso, amber-haired, 550
A mighty goddess, skilled in song, abides,
Who kindly welcomed me, and cherished me.
Why should I speak of this? Here in these halls
I gave the history yesterday to thee
And to thy gracious consort, and I hate 555
To tell again a tale once fully told.”

END OF VOL. I.

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

CANCELLED
DUE OCT '67 H
1515352

CANCELLED
AUG 20 1993
BOOK DUE
1515352

WIDENER
JUL 20 1993
SEP 08 2005
CANCELLED

WIDENER
JUL 20 1993
CANCELLED



3 2044 021 027 776

