With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear;
She welcomes all, and while she questions each
Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear
Affectionate, as well beseems a wife
Whose mate hath perish'd in a distant land.
Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend!
(Would any furnish thee with decent vest
And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease;
Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,
His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep
Have eaten him, and on some distant shore
Whelm'd in deep sands his mould'ring bones are laid.
So hath he perish'd; whence, to all his friends,
But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart;
For such another Lord, gentle as he,
Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,
Though I should wander even to the house
Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart
So feelingly (though that desiring too)
To see once more my parents and my home,
As to behold Ulysses yet again.
Ah stranger; absent as he is, his name
Fills me with rev'rence, for he lov'd me much,
Cared for me much, and, though we meet no more,
Holds still an elder brother's part in me.
Him answer'd, then, the Hero toil-inured.
My friend! since his return, in thy account,
Is an event impossible, and thy mind
Always incredulous that hope rejects,
I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath—
Ulysses comes again; and I demand
No more, than that the boon such news deserves,
Be giv'n me soon as he shall reach his home.
Then give me vest and mantle fit to wear,
Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both,
I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.
For him whom poverty can force aside
From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
Be Jove, of all in heav'n, my witness first,
Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last,
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.

In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
Ere, this month closed, another month succeed,
He shall return, and punish all who dare
Insult his consort and his noble son.
To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Old friend! that boon thou wilt ne'er earn from me;
Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine
Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
Some other theme; recall not this again
To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.
Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come
Ev'n as myself, and as Penelope,
And as his ancient father, and his son
Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.
Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
His son Telemachus; who, when the Gods
Had giv'n him growth like a young plant, and I
Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
In person or in mind to his own sire,
Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
I know not how, his sober intellect,
And after tidings of his sire is gone
To far-famed Pylus; his return, meantime,
In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
That the whole house may perish of renown'd
Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more.
But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect!
But come, my ancient guest! now let me learn
Thy own afflictions; answer me in truth.
Who, and whence art thou? in what city born?
Where dwell thy parents; in what kind of ship
Cam'st thou? the mariners, why brought they thee
To Ithaca? and of what land are they?
For, that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure.
Him answer'd, then, Ulysses, ever-wise.
I will with truth resolve thee; and if here
Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
And food for many a day, and business none
But to regale at ease while others toiled,
I could exhaust the year complete, my woes
Rehearsing, nor, at last, rehearse entire

My sorrows by the will of heav'n sustained.
I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
In spacious Crete; son of a wealthy sire,
Who other sons train'd num'rous in his house,
Born of his wedded wife; but he begat
Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
Castor Hylacides esteem'd and lov'd,
For him I boast my father. Him in Crete,
While yet he liv'd, all reverenc'd as a God,
So rich, so prosp'rous, and so blest was he
With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,
And his illustrious sons among themselves
Portion'd his goods by lot; to me, indeed,
They gave a dwelling, and but little more,
Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain
Nor base, forlorn as thou perceiv'st me now.
But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
What once was in the ear. Ah! I have borne
Much tribulation; heap'd and heavy woes.
Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
From Mars and Pallas; at what time I drew,
(Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.
Such was I once in arms. But household toils
Sustain'd for children's sake, and carking cares
T' enrich a family, were not for me.
My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din
Of battle, the smooth spear and glitt'ring shaft,
Objects of dread to others, but which me
The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.
Thus diff'rent minds are diff'rently amused;
For ere Achaia's fleet had sailed to Troy,
Nine times was I commander of an host
Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found
In all those enterprizes great success.
From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most
Chusing, and sharing also much by lot
I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth

Among the Cretans rev'rence and respect.
But when loud-thund'ring Jove that voyage dire
Ordain'd, which loos'd the knees of many a Greek,
Then, to Idomeneus and me they gave
The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid
We found not, so importunate the cry
Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.
There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth
(Priam's proud city pillag'd) steer'd again
Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.
Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised
For me much evil. One short month, no more,
I gave to joys domestic, in my wife
Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,
When the desire seiz'd me with sev'ral ships
Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews,
To sail for Ægypt; nine I fitted forth,
To which stout mariners assembled fast.
Six days the chosen partners of my voyage
Feasted, to whom I num'rous victims gave
For sacrifice, and for their own regale.
Embarking on the sev'nth from spacious Crete,
Before a clear breeze prosp'rous from the North
We glided easily along, as down
A river's stream; nor one of all my ships
Damage incurr'd, but healthy and at ease
We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.
The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
And safe I moor'd in the Ægyptian stream.
Then, charging all my mariners to keep
Strict watch for preservation of the ships,
I order'd spies into the hill-tops; but they
Under the impulse of a spirit rash
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultur'd fields
Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
Their wives and little ones, and slew the men.
Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
With horse and foot, and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people; none found courage more
To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on ev'ry side.
There, num'rous by the glittering spear we fell

Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would
That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate
In Ægypt, for new woes were yet to come!)
Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
My buckler, there I left them on the field,
Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next,
The chariot of the sov'reign, clasp'd his knees,
And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home.
With many an ashen spear his warriors sought
To slay me, (for they now grew fiery wroth)
But he, through fear of hospitable Jove,
Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive.
Sev'n years I there abode, and much amass'd
Among the Ægyptians, gifted by them all;
But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
A shrewd Phœnician, in all fraud adept,
Hungry, and who had num'rous harm'd before,
By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
T' attend him to Phœnicia, where his house
And his possessions lay; there I abode
A year complete his inmate; but (the days
And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
And the new seasons ent'ring on their course)
To Lybia then, on board his bark, by wiles
He won me with him, partner of the freight
Profess'd, but destin'd secretly to sale,
That he might profit largely by my price.
Not unsuspicious, yet constrain'd to go,
With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale
Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
Ran right before it through the middle sea,
In the offing over Crete; but adverse Jove
Destruction plann'd for them and death the while.
For, Crete now left afar, and other land
Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
A cloud cærulean hung, dark'ning the Deep.
Then, thund'ring oft, he hurl'd into the bark
His bolts; she smitten by the fires of Jove,

Quaked all her length; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
And, o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
But Jove himself, when I had cast away
All hope of life, conducted to my arms
The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
Around that beam I clung, driving before
The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
And, on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood
Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
There me the Hero Phidon, gen'rous King
Of the Thesprotians, freely entertained;
For his own son discov'ring me with toil
Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence
Led me humanely to his father's house,
Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
To his own land; he shew'd me also gold,
Brass, and bright steel elab'rate, whatsoe'er
Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed
A less illustrious family than his
To the tenth generation, so immense
His treasures in the royal palace lay.
Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
There, from the tow'ring oaks of Jove to ask
Counsel divine, if openly to land
(After long absence) in his opulent realm
Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise.
To me the monarch swore, in his own hall
Pouring libation, that the ship was launch'd,
And the crew ready for his conduct home.
But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
Bear me to King Acastus with all speed;
But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
In deeper gulphs of woe than I had known.
For, when the billow-cleaving bark had left
The land remote, framing, combined, a plot
Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest

And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold.
At even-tide reaching the cultur'd coast
Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
But me, meantime, the Gods easily loos'd
By their own pow'r, when, with wrapper vile
Around my brows, sliding into the sea
At the ship's stern, I lay'd me on the flood.
With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
Till past all ken of theirs; then landing where
Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
Close couchant down I lay; they mutt'ring loud,
Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.
Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods
Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply,
Alas! my most compassionable guest!
Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute
Of thy sad wand'rings and thy num'rous woes.
But, speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
All credence; I at least can give thee none.
Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent
Palpable falsehoods? as for the return
Of my regretted Lord, myself I know
That had he not been hated by the Gods
Unanimous, he had in battle died
At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
Concluded,) in his people's arms at home.
Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
And he had even for his son atchiev'd
Immortal glory; but alas! by beaks
Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
Here is my home the while; I never seek
The city, unless summon'd by discrete
Penelope to listen to the news
Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
Both who regret the absence of our King,
And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge

His property; but as for me, no joy
Find I in list'ning after such reports,
Since an Ætolian cozen'd me, who found
(After long wand'ring over various lands
A fugitive for blood) my lone retreat.
Him warm I welcom'd, and with open arms
Receiv'd, who bold affirm'd that he had seen
My master with Idomeneus at Crete
His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm,
And that in summer with his godlike band
He would return, bringing great riches home,
Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
Forlorn! since thee the Gods have hither led,
Seek not to gratify me with untruths
And to deceive me, since for no such cause
I shall respect or love thee, but alone
By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind,
Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
In terms express a cov'nant, and the Gods
Who hold Olympus, witness to us both!
If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive,
Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
In vest and mantle, that I may repair
Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
But, if thy Lord come not, then, gath'ring all
Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock,
That other mendicants may fear to lie.
To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
Yes, stranger! doubtless I should high renown
Obtain for virtue among men, both now
And in all future times, if, having first
Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
I, next, should slay thee; then my pray'rs would mount,
Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.
But the hour calls to supper, and, ere long,
The partners of my toils will come prepared
To spread the board with no unsav'ry cheer.
Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
Within their customary penns, and loud

The hubbub was of swine prison'd within.
Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
The bright-tusk'd multitude a painful charge,
While others, at no cost of theirs, consume
Day after day, the profit of our toils.
So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
And dragging thither a well-fatted brawn
Of the fifth year his servants held him fast
At the hearth-side. Nor failed the master swain
T' adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he)
But consecration of the victim, first,
Himself performing, cast into the fire
The forehead bristles of the tusky boar,
Then pray'd to all above, that, safe, at length,
Ulysses might regain his native home.
Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell,
Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair,
They carv'd him quickly, and Eumæus spread
Thin slices crude taken from ev'ry limb
O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,
Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.
The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well,
And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.
Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
Of distribution, for he understood
The hospitable entertainer's part.
Sev'n-fold partition of the banquet made,
He gave, with previous pray'r, to Maia's son [1]
And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
Then served his present guests, honouring first
Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine;
By that distinction just his master's heart
He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.
Eumæus! be thou as belov'd of Jove
As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect!
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Eat, noble stranger! and refreshment take

[1] Mercury.

Such as thou may'st; God[1] gives, and God denies
At his own will, for He is Lord of all.
He said, and to the everlasting Gods
The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made
Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
Of city-spoiler Laertiades
Sitting beside his own allotted share.
Meantime, Mesaulius bread dispensed to all,
Whom, in the absence of his Lord, himself
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expence
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.
And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none
Felt more or thirst, Mesaulius clear'd the board.
Then, fed to full satiety, in haste
Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in show'rs,
With howlings of the ever wat'ry West.
Ulysses, at that sound, for trial sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family, began.
Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-lab'rers! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces ev'n the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft, better suppress'd.
But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay!
Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself
Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.
Approaching to the city's lofty wall
Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird

[1] Θεος—without a relative, and consequently signifying God in the abstract, is not unfrequently found in Homer, though fearing to give offence to serious minds unacquainted with the original, I have not always given it that force in the translation. But here, the sentiment is such as fixes the sense intended by the author with a precision that leaves no option. It is observable too, that—δυναται γαρ απαντα—is an ascription of power such as the poet never makes to his Jupiter.

The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
Under our arms, then Boreas blowing loud,
A rueful night came on, frosty and charged
With snow that blanch'd us thick as morning rime,
And ev'ry shield with ice was crystall'd o'er.
The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept
Beneath their bucklers; I alone my cloak,
Improvident, had left behind, no thought
Conceiving of a season so severe;
Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.
The night, at last, nigh spent, and all the stars
Declining in their course, with elbow thrust
Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear.
Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.
No cloak have I; some evil dæmon, sure,
Beguil'd me of all prudence, that I came
Thus sparely clad; I shall, I must expire.
So I; he, ready as he was in arms
And counsel both, the remedy at once
Devised, and thus, low-whisp'ring, answer'd me.
Hush! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.
My friends! all hear—a monitory dream
Hath reach'd me, for we lie far from the ships.
Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request
To Agamemnon, Atreus' son, our Chief,
That he would reinforce us from the camp.
He spake, and at the word, Andræmon's son
Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm
Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.
Oh for the vigour of such youth again!
Then, some good peasant here, either for love
Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
My ancient guest! I cannot but approve
Thy narrative, nor hast thou utter'd aught
Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside
Needful to solace penury like thine,

Shall harm thee here; yet, at the peep of dawn
Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again;
For *we* have no great store of cloaks to boast,
Or change of vests, but singly one for each.
But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
He will himself with vest and mantle both
Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.
So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins
Of sheep and goats; then lay the Hero down,
O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
The winter's blast and terrible arose.
So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths
Slept all beside him; but the master-swain
Chose not his place of rest so far remote
From his rude charge, but to the outer court
With his nocturnal furniture, repair'd,
Gladd'ning Ulysses' heart that one so true
In his own absence kept his rural stores.
Athwart his sturdy shoulders, first, he flung
His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
Thick-woven, winter-proof; he lifted, next,
The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk
Surpassing others, and his javelin took
Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
From the sharp current of the Northern blast.

BOOK XV

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS, admonished by Minerva, takes leave of Menelaus, but ere he sails, is accosted by Theoclymenos, a prophet of Argos, whom at his earnest request he takes on board. In the meantime Eumæus relates to Ulysses the means by which he came to Ithaca. Telemachus arriving there, gives orders for the return of his bark to the city, and repairs himself to Eumæus.

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Minerva went, that she might summon thence
Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule
Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
Fast-bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
Amid the silent night, when, drawing near
To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.
Thou canst no longer prudently remain
A wand'rer here, Telemachus! thy home
Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made
Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
And in the end thy voyage bootless prove.
Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home
Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge
And her own father even now to wed
Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
Of proffer'd dow'r superior to them all.
Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare.
For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;
Her whole anxiety is to encrease
His substance whom she weds; no care hath she
Of her first children, or remembers more
The buried husband of her virgin choice.

Returning then, to her of all thy train
Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife.
Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith
Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
The chief of all her suitors thy return
In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide
Many a lewd reveller at thy expence.
Yet, steer thy galley from those isles afar,
And voyage make by night; some guardian God
Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosp'rous gales.
Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore
Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
The swine-herd; for Eumæus is thy friend.
There sleep, and send him forth into the town
With tidings to Penelope, that safe
Thou art restored from Pylus home again.
She said, and sought th' Olympian heights sublime.
Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.
Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus! lead forth
The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.
To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.
Telemachus! what haste soe'er we feel,
We can by no means prudently attempt
To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn.
Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son,
Spear-practis'd Menelaus shall his gifts
Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
Dismiss thee; for the guest in mem'ry holds
Through life, the host who treats him as a friend.
Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
Appearing, Menelaus, from the side
Of beauteous Helen ris'n, their bed approach'd,
Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
Cloathing himself hastily in his vest
Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd.

Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again,
My native isle, for I desire to go.
Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms.
Telemachus! I will not long delay
Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike
The host whose assiduity extreme
Distresses, and whose negligence offends;
The middle course is best; alike we err,
Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
And hind'ring the impatient to depart.
This only is true kindness—To regale
The present guest, and speed him when he would.
Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts
Placed in thy chariot, and till I command
My women from our present stores to spread
The table with a plentiful repast.
For both the honour of the guest demands,
And his convenience also, that he eat
Sufficient, ent'ring on a length of road.
But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way
And traverse Argos, I will, then, myself
Attend thee; thou shalt journey with my steeds
Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide
To many a city, whence we shall not go
Ungratified, but shall in each receive
Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright,
Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
I would at once depart, (for guardian none
Of my possessions have I left behind)
Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost
Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.
Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,
He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board
At once with remnants of the last regale.
Then Eteoneus came, Boetheus' son
Newly aris'n, for nigh at hand he dwelt,
Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire
By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.
He next, himself his fragrant chamber sought,
Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son

Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived
Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd
To his son's hand an argent beaker bright.
Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
Where lay her variegated robes, fair works
Of her own hand. Producing one, in size
And in magnificence the chief, a star
For splendour, and the lowest placed of all,
Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.
Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
The Hero of the golden locks began.
May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate,
Grant thee, Telemachus! such voyage home
As thy own heart desires! accept from all
My stores selected as the richest far
And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This.
I give thee wrought elaborate a cup,
Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
Of the Sidonians, when, on my return,
Beneath his roof I lodg'd. I make it thine.
So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
Presented to him, whom she thus address'd.
I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe
In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell!
Prosp'rous and happy be thy voyage home!
She ceas'd, and gave it to him, who the gift
Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,
Admiring them the while. They, following, next,
The Hero Menelaus to his hall
Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.
A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,

And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Various, selected from her present stores,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.
Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
Of glorious Menelaus, serv'd the cup.
Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
In the resplendent chariot, drove at once
Right through the sounding portico abroad.
But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
A golden cup bearing with richest wine
Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
That not without libation first perform'd
They might depart; he stood before the steeds,
And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.
Health to you both, young friends! and from my lips
Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
For he was ever as a father kind
To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.
To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
And doubtless, so we will; at our return
We will report to him, illustrious Prince!
Thy ev'ry word. And oh, I would to heav'n
That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
Depart, with all benevolence by thee
Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.
While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd
An eagle; in his talons pounced he bore
A white-plumed goose domestic, newly ta'en
From the house-court. Ran females all and males
Clamorous after him; but he the steeds
Approaching on the right, sprang into air.
That sight rejoicing and with hearts reviv'd
They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.
Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief!
If us, this omen, or thyself regard.
While warlike Menelaus musing stood
What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,

His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.
Hear me; for I will answer as the Gods
Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass.
As he, descending from his place of birth
The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
So shall Ulysses, after many woes
And wand'rings to his home restored, avenge
His wrongs, or even now is at his home
For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thund'ring mate!
So will I, there arrived, with vow and pray'r
Thee worship, as thou wert, thyself, divine.
He said, and lash'd the coursers; fiery they
And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
All day the yoke on either side they shook,
Journeying swift; and now the setting sun
To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads,
When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
Of good Diocles slept, their lib'ral host,
Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.
But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds,
They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.
Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gates
Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech
Turning to his companion, thus began.
How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee
Not promise only, but performance kind
Of my request? we are not bound alone
To friendship by the friendship of our sires,
But by equality of years, and this
Our journey shall unite us still the more.
Bear me not, I intreat thee, noble friend!
Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side,
Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,
Detain me in his palace through desire
To feast me, for I dread the least delay.
He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best
He might effect the wishes of his friend,

And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds
With sudden deviation to the shore
He sought the bark, and placing in the stern
Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts
Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd
With ardour, urged Telemachus away.
Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,
Ere my arrival notice give of thine
To the old King; for vehement I know
His temper, neither will he let thee hence,
But, hasting hither, will himself enforce
Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart
Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.
So saying, he to the Pylian city urged
His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate
Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime
Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.
My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb
The sable bark, for I would now return.
He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once
All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he
Thus expedited, and beside the stern
To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,
A stranger, born remote, who had escaped
From Argos, fugitive for blood, a seer
And of Melampus' progeny, approach'd.
Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,
Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
And the magnificence of his abode.
He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King,
The mighty Neleus, migrated at length
Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.
Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
Of Phylacus imprisonment and woe,
And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.

[1] Iphyclus the son of Phylacus had seized and detained cattle belonging to Neleus; Neleus ordered his nephew Melampus to recover them, and as security for his obedience seized on a considerable part of his possessions. Melampus attempted the service, failed, and was cast into prison; but at length escaping, accomplished his errand, vanquished Neleus in battle, and carried off his daughter Pero, whom Neleus had promised to the brother of Melampus, but had afterward refused her.

But, 'scaping death, he drove the lowing beeves
From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged
His num'rous injuries at Neleus' hands
Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms
King Neleus' daughter fair, the promis'd bride.
To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,
There destin'd to inhabit and to rule
Multitudes of Achaians. In that land
He married, built a palace, and became
Father of two brave sons, Antiphates
And Mantius; to Antiphates was born
The brave Oïcleus; from Oïcleus sprang
Amphiaraüs, demagogue renown'd,
Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend
Alike the Thund'rer and Apollo prized;
Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age.
But by his mercenary consort's arts [1]
Persuaded, met his destiny at Thebes.
He 'gat Alcmæon and Amphilocus.
Mantius was also father of two sons,
Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd
From earth to heav'n, and dwells among the Gods,
Stol'n by Aurora for his beauty's sake.
But (brave Amphiaraüs once deceased)
Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
Above all others in the prophet's part.
He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd
Throughout all lands the oracle of all.
His son, named Theoclymenus, was he
Who now approach'd; he found Telemachus
Libation off'ring in his bark, and pray'r,
And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd.
Ah, friend! since sacrificing in this place
I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
And by the lives of these thy mariners
I beg true answer; hide not what I ask.
Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from whom?

[1] His wife Eryphyle, bribed by Polynices, persuaded him, though aware that death awaited him at that city, to go to Thebes, where he fell accordingly.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I will inform thee, stranger! and will solve
Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire.
But he hath perish'd by a woeful death,
And I, believing it, with these have plow'd
The ocean hither, int'rested to learn
A father's fate long absent from his home.
Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.
I also am a wand'rer, having slain
A man of my own tribe; brethren and friends
Num'rous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
And pow'rful are the Achaians dwelling there.
From them, through terrour of impending death,
I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.
Ah save a suppliant fugitive! lest death
O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.
Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
I shall not, be assured, since thou desir'st
To join me, chace thee from my bark away.
Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
In Ithaca, what best the land affords.
So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
His spear, which on the deck he lay'd, then climb'd
Himself the bark, and, seated in the stern,
At his own side placed Theoclymenus.
They cast the hawsers loose; then with loud voice
Telemachus exhorted all to hand
The tackle, whom the sailors prompt obey'd.
The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep
They lodg'd it, and its cordage braced secure,
Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.
Fair wind, and blowing fresh through æther pure
Minerva sent them, that the bark might run
Her nimblest course through all the briny way.
Now sank the sun, and dusky ev'ning dimm'd
The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,
His bark stood right for Pheræ; thence she stretch'd
To sacred Elis where the Epeans rule,
And through the sharp Echinades he next
Steer'd her, uncertain whether fate ordain'd
His life or death, surprizal or escape.
Meantime Ulysses and the swine-herd ate

Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains
Theirs also; and when hunger now and thirst
Had ceased in all, Ulysses thus began,
Proving the swine-herd, whether friendly still,
And anxious for his good, he would intreat
His stay, or thence hasten him to the town.
  Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear!
It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,
Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn
The city, there to beg—But give me first
Needful instructions, and a trusty guide
Who may conduct me thither; there my task
Must be to roam the streets; some hand humane
Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,
A little bread, and a few drops to drink.
Ulysses' palace I shall also seek,
And to discrete Penelope report
My tidings; neither shall I fail to mix
With those imperious suitors, who, themselves
Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.
Me shall they find, in whatsoe'er they wish
Their ready servitor, for (understand
And mark me well) the herald of the skies,
Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
Their grace receive and polish, is my friend,
So that in menial offices I fear
No rival, whether I be called to heap
The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.
  To whom, Eumæus! at those words displeased,
Thou didst reply. Gods! how could such a thought
Possess thee, stranger? surely thy resolve
Is altogether fixt to perish there,
If thou indeed hast purposed with that throng
To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.
None, such as thou, serve *them;* their servitors
Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested; sleek their heads,
And smug their countenances; such alone
Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards
Groan overcharg'd with bread, with flesh, with wine.
Rest here content; for neither me nor these

Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.
To whom Ulysses, toil-inured.
I wish thee, O Eumæus! dear to Jove
As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
Vouchsafed me kind, from wand'ring and from woe!
No worse condition is of mortal man
Than his who wanders; for the poor man, driv'n
By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
A thousand mis'ries, day by day, endures.
Since thou detain'st me, then, and bidd'st me wait
His coming, tell me if the father still
Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
He left so nearly on the verge of life?
And lives his mother? or have both deceased
Already, and descended to the shades?
To whom the master swine-herd thus replied.
I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,
But supplication off'ring to the Gods
Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
So deeply his long-absent son he mourns,
And the dear consort of his early youth,
Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.
She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
And died deplorably;[1] may never friend
Of mine, or benefactor die as she!
While yet she liv'd, dejected as she was,
I found it yet some solace to converse
With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
Together with her lovely youngest-born
The Princess Ctimena; for side by side
We grew, and I, scarce honour'd less than she.
But soon as our delightful prime we both
Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
And were requited with rich dow'r; but me
Cloath'd handsomely with tunic and with vest,
And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
She order'd forth, yet loved me still the more.
I miss her kindness now; but gracious heav'n

[1] She is said to have hanged herself.

Prospers the work on which I here attend;
Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
Refresh, sometimes, a worthy guest like thee.
But kindness none experience I, or can,
From fair Penelope (my mistress now)
In word or action, so is the house curs'd
With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
Might they approach their mistress, and receive
Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,
And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
For perquisites are ev'ry servant's joy.
Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
Ev'n in thy infancy! But tell me true.
The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes
Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
Surprizing thee alone, on herd or flock
Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
And sell thee at this Hero's house, who pay'd
Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small?
To whom the master swine-herd in reply.
Stranger! since thou art curious to be told
My story, silent listen, and thy wine
At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
And such as time for sleep afford, and time
For pleasant conf'rence; neither were it good
That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.
Whoever here is weary, and desires
Early repose, let him depart to rest,
And, at the peep of day, when he hath fed
Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd;
But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
Supplied, will solace mutually derive
From recollection of our sufferings past;
For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
Finds the recital ev'n of sorrow sweet.
Now hear thy question satisfied; attend!
There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
Of such an isle) named Syria;[1] it is placed

[1] Not improbably the isthmus of Syracuse, an island, perhaps, or peninsula at that period, or at least imagined to be such by Homer. The birth of Diana gave fame to Ortygia. F.

Above Ortigia, and a dial owns [1]
True to the tropic changes of the year.
No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
No famine knows that people, or disease
Noisome, of all that elsewhere seize the race
Of miserable man; but when old age
Steals on the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
With silver bow and bright Diana come,
Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest.
Two cities share between them all the isle,
And both were subject to my father's sway
Ctesius Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
It chanced that from Phœnicia, famed for skill
In arts marine, a vessel thither came
By sharpers mann'd, and laden deep with toys.
Now, in my father's family abode
A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside
The ship, a certain mariner of those
Seduced her; for all women, ev'n the wise
And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
Who was she, he enquired, and whence? nor she
Scrupled to tell at once her father's home.
I am of Sidon,[2] famous for her works
In brass and steel; daughter of Arybas,
Who rolls in affluence; Taphian pirates thence
Stole me returning from the field, from whom
This Chief procured me at no little cost.
Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
That thou may'st once more visit the abode
Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves?
For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd.
To whom the woman. Even that might be,
Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
Assure me of a safe conveyance home.

[1] Ὄθι τροπαὶ ἠελίοιο — The Translator has rendered the passage according to that interpretation of it to which several of the best expositors incline. Nothing can be so absurd as to suppose that Homer, so correct in his geography, could mean to place a Mediterranean island under the Tropic.

[2] A principal city of Phœnicia.

Then sware the mariners as she required,
And, when their oath was ended, thus again
The woman of Phœnicia them bespake.
Now, silence! no man, henceforth, of you all
Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
Or at yon fountain; lest some tattler run
With tidings home to my old master's ear,
Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
But be ye close; purchase your stores in haste;
And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
Quick send me notice, for I mean to bring
What gold soever opportune I find,
And will my passage cheerfully defray
With still another moveable. I nurse
The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
To scamper at my side; him will I bring,
Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.
So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
With purchased goods freighted of ev'ry kind,
And when, her lading now complete, she lay
For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
To summon down the woman to the shore.
A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
Then, ent'ring at my father's gate, produced
A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
My mother (then at home) with all her maids
Handling and gazing on it with delight,
Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
Significant, gave unobserv'd, the while,
To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.
She, thus informed, leading me by the hand
Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
The cups and tables which my father's guests
Had used, (but they were to the forum gone
For converse with their friends assembled there)
Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child
Accompanied, at the decline of day,
When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore.
We, stepping nimbly on, soon reach'd the port

Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.
They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleav'd
Their liquid road, by favourable gales,
Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night
Continual sailed, but when Saturnian Jove
Now bade the sev'nth bright morn illume the skies,
Then, shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again,
The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
And I survived to mourn her. But the winds
And rolling billows them bore to the coast
Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced
That e'er I saw the isle in which I dwell.
To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief, replied.
Eumæus! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
Enumerating thus at large. But Jove
Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good,
That after num'rous sorrows thou hast reach'd
The house of a kind master, at whose hands
Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
City after city of the world explored.
Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprized.
Meantime the comrades of Telemachus
Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in.
The anchors heav'd aground,[1] and hawsers tied
Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
When neither hunger now, nor thirst remained
Unsatisfied, Telemachus began.
Push ye the sable bark without delay
Home to the city. I will to the field
Among my shepherds, and, (my rural works
Survey'd,) at eve will to the town return.
To-morrow will I set before you wine
And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.
To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
Whither must I, my son? who, of the Chiefs

[1] The anchors were lodged on the shore, not plunged as ours.

Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me?
Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house?
Then thus Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I would invite thee to proceed at once
To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
Of kind reception, but it were a course
Now not adviseable; for I must myself,
Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears
Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
Weaving continual at the palace-top.
But I will name to thee another Chief
Whom thou may'st seek, Eurymachus, the son
Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
The people here reverence as a God.
Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks
More ardent than his rivals far, to wed
My mother, and to fill my father's throne.
But, He who dwells above, Jove only knows
If some disastrous day be not ordain'd
For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.
While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd,
Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,
A falcon; in his pounces clench'd he bore
A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes
Between the galley and Telemachus.
Then, calling him apart, the prophet lock'd
His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.
Not undirected by the Gods his flight
On our right hand, Telemachus! this hawk
Hath wing'd propitious; soon as I perceived
I knew him ominous—In all the isle
No family of a more royal note
Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.
Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Grant heav'n, my guest! that this good word of thine
Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.
Piræus, son of Clytius! (for of all
My followers to the shore of Pylus, none
More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd)

Now also to thy own abode conduct
This stranger, whom with hospitable care
Cherish and honour till myself arrive.
To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd.
Telemachus! however long thy stay,
Punctual I will attend him, and no want
Of hospitality shall he find with me.
So saying, he climb'd the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose,
And each, obedient, to his bench repair'd.
Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,
And lifted from the deck his glitt'ring spear.
Then, as Telemachus had bidden them,
Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose
The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep
And sought the city, while with nimble pace
Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd
The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,
The swine-herd, faithful to his num'rous charge.

BOOK XVI

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS dispatches Eumæus to the city to inform Penelope of his safe return from Pylus; during his absence, Ulysses makes himself known to his son. The suitors, having watched for Telemachus in vain, arrive again at Ithaca.

IT was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.
Eumæus! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st;
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.
Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while,
As when a father folds in his embrace
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.
Light of my eyes, thou com'st; it is thyself,
Sweetest Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
Thou hadst departed for the Pylian coast.
Enter, my precious son; that I may sooth

My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
Visitest, in the city custom'd much
To make abode, that thou may'st witness there
The manners of those hungry suitors proud.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
It will be so. There is great need, my friend!
But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
That I may look on thee, and from thy lips
Learn if my mother still reside at home,
Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
Leaving untenanted Ulysses' bed
To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.
To whom the master swine-herd in return.
Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.
So saying, Eumæus at his hand received
His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone
Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire
Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
But him Telemachus forbidding, said—
Guest, keep thy seat; our cottage will afford
Some other, which Eumæus will provide.
He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
Reposed again; then good Eumæus spread
Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.
He, next, disposed his dishes on the board
With relicts charged of yesterday; with bread,
Alert, he heap'd the baskets; with rich wine
His ivy cup replenish'd; and a seat
Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast
Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied) Telemachus, his speech
Addressing to their gen'rous host, began.
Whence is this guest, my father? How convey'd
Came he to Ithaca? What country boast
The mariners with whom he here arrived?
For, that on foot he found us not, is sure.
To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
I will with truth answer thee, O my son!

He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd
In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.
Ev'n now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own;
I yield him to thee; treat him as thou wilt;
He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.
Then thus, Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Thy words, Eumæus, pain my very soul.
For what security can I afford
To any in my house? myself am young,
Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel
An offer'd insult, and my mother's mind
In doubtful balance hangs, if, still with me
An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,
Attentive only to her absent Lord
And her own good report, or shall espouse
The noblest of her wooers, and the best
Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.
But I will give him, since I find him lodg'd
A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak,
Sword double-edged, and sandals for his feet,
With convoy to the country of his choice.
Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,
And I will send him raiment, with supplies
Of all sorts, lest he burthen thee and thine.
But where the suitors come, there shall not he
With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride
And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer
They wound him, and through him, wound also me;
For little is it that the boldest can
Against so many; numbers will prevail.
Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.
Oh amiable and good! since even I
Am free to answer thee, I will avow
My heart within me torn by what I hear
Of those injurious suitors, who the house
Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.
But say—submittest thou to their controul
Willingly, or because the people, sway'd
By some response oracular, incline
Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,
Slow to assist thee—for a brother's aid

Is of importance in whatever cause.
For oh that I had youth as I have will,
Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire,
Or that himself might wander home again.
Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
If I would fail, ent'ring Ulysses' gate,
To be the bane and mischief of them all.
But if alone to multitudes opposed
I should perchance be foiled; nobler it were
With my own people, under my own roof
To perish, than to witness evermore
Their unexampled deeds, guests shoved aside,
Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
Indulging glutt'nous appetite day by day
Enormous, without measure, without end.
To whom, Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive
True answer. Enmity or hatred none
Subsists the people and myself between,
Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid
Is of importance in whatever cause,
For Jove hath from of old with single heirs
Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat
Except Laertes, and Laertes none
Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me
Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd.
Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;
For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,
Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
Zacynthus, others also rulers here
In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek
In marriage, and my household stores consume.
But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd
Refuses absolute, nor yet consents
To end them; they my patrimony waste
Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,
As I expect, but heav'n disposes all.
Eumæus! haste, my father! bear with speed
News to Penelope that I am safe,
And have arrived from Pylus; I will wait
Till thou return; and well beware that none

Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.
To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. But say beside,
Shall I not also, as I go, inform
Distress'd Laertes? who while yet he mourn'd
Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
And dieted among his menials oft
As hunger prompted him, but now, they say,
Since thy departure to the Pylian shore,
He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
And weeping, wasted even to the bone.
Him then Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.
For, were the ordering of all events
Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
Should be to see my father's glad return.
But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
In quest of Him, but hither speed again.
Rather request my mother that she send
Her household's governess without delay
Privately to him; she shall best inform
The ancient King that I have safe arrived.
He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
His sandals, to the city bent his way.
Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd
By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair
Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts,
Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood
Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
But to his son invisible; for the Gods
Appear not manifest alike to all.
The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
The sign, and, issuing through the outer court,
Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.
Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd!
Disclose thyself to thy own son, that, death
Concerting and destruction to your foes,
Ye may the royal city seek, nor long

Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.
Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs;
Swarthy again his manly hue became,
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage; wonder at that sight
Seiz'd on Telemachus; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspicious of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.
Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy cloaths, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heav'n.
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate; ah spare us, Pow'r divine!
To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.
So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then, perforce restrained.
Telemachus, (for he believed him not
His father yet) thus, wond'ring, spake again.
My father, said'st thou? no. Thou art not He,
But some Divinity beguiles my soul
With mock'ries to afflict me still the more;
For never mortal man could so have wrought
By his own pow'r; some interposing God
Alone could render thee both young and old,
For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
But wear'st the semblance, now, of those in heav'n!
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Telemachus! it is not well, my son!
That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.
Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.
Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes
Which I have borne, I visit once again

My native country in the twentieth year.
This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,
She cloath'd me even with what form she would,
For so she can. Now poor I seem and old,
Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.
The Gods who dwell in yonder heav'n, with ease
Dignify or debase a mortal man.
So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus
His arms around his father's neck, and wept.
Desire intense of lamentation seized
On both; soft murmurs utt'ring, each indulged
His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,
(Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest
Some swain hath stol'n her yet unfeather'd young.
So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd
Of tend'rest grief, nor had the setting sun
Cessation of their weeping seen, had not
Telemachus his father thus address'd.
What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,
My father! and what country boast the crew?
For, that on foot thou not arriv'dst, is sure.
Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.
My son! I will explicit all relate.
Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons
I came, a race accustom'd to convey
Strangers who visit them across the Deep.
Me, o'er the billows in a rapid bark
Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
They lay'd; rich gifts they gave me also, brass,
Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
Which, warn'd from heav'n, I have in caves conceal'd.
By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know
How pow'rful, certainly, and who they are,
And consultation with my dauntless heart
May hold, if we be able to contend
Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.
Then, answer thus his son, discrete, return'd.
My father! thy renown hath ever rung
In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
But terribly thou speak'st; amazement-fixt

I hear; can two a multitude oppose,
And valiant warriors all? for neither ten
Are they, nor twenty, but more num'rous far.
Learn, now, their numbers. Fifty youths and two
Came from Dulichium; they are chosen men,
And six attendants follow in their train;
From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons
Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
Herself, her twelve chief rulers; Medon, too,
Is there the herald, and the bard divine,
With other two, intendants of the board.
Should we within the palace, we alone,
Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
Frustrating thy return. But recollect—
Think, if thou canst, on whose confed'rate arm
Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.
To him replied his patient father bold.
I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.
Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire
Alone suffice? or need we other aids?
Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
Though throned above the clouds; for their controul
Is universal both in earth and heav'n.
To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.
Not long will they from battle stand aloof,
When once, within my palace, in the strength
Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge
The suitors. But thyself at early dawn
Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there
With that imperious throng; me in due time
Eumæus to the city shall conduct,
In form a miserable beggar old.
But should they with dishonourable scorn
Insult me, thou unmov'd my wrongs endure,
And should they even drag me by the feet
Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath
Refraining, gently counsel them to cease
From such extravagance; but well I know
That cease they will not, for their hour is come.
And mark me well; treasure what now I say

Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,
Suggest the measure, then, shaking my brows,
I will admonish thee; thou, at the sign,
Remove what arms soever in the hall
Remain, and in the upper palace safe
Dispose them; should the suitors, missing them,
Perchance interrogate thee, then reply
Gently—I have removed them from the smoke;
For they appear no more the arms which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Jove taught me; lest, intoxicate with wine,
Ye should assault each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.
Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,
Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force
Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise
Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.
This word store also in remembrance deep—
If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,
Then, of Ulysses to his home returned
Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
The menials any, or ev'n Penelope,
That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
Of our domestic women, and may prove
Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
So gracious and so worthy to be loved.
  Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught
That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
But this I think not likely to avail
Or thee or me; ponder it yet again;
For tedious were the task, farm after farm
To visit of those servants, proving each,
And the proud suitors merciless devour
Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught.
Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
Advise) who slights thee of the female train,
And who is guiltless; but I would not try

From house to house the men, far better proved
Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heav'n
Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.
Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,
Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylian shore
Had brought Telemachus with all his band.
Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
His lusty followers haled her far aground,
Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd.
Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
An herald charg'd with tidings to the Queen,
That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent
Home to the city; lest the matchless dame
Should still deplore the absence of her son.
They, then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
And at the palace of the godlike Chief
Arriving, compass'd by the female throng
Inquisitive, the herald thus began.
Thy son, O Queen! is safe; ev'n now return'd.
Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
His message also from her son received,
And, his commission punctually discharged,
Leaving the palace, sought his home again.
Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
The suitors; issuing forth, on the outside
Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
When Polybus' son, Eurymachus, began.
My friends! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
By us impossible, in our despight
Telemachus hath atchieved. Haste! launch we forth
A sable bark, our best, which let us man
With mariners expert, who, rowing forth
Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.
Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
Amphinomus beheld a bark arrived
Just then in port; he saw them furling sail,
And seated with their oars in hand; he laugh'd
Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake.
Our message may be spared. Lo! they arrive.
Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,

Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs.
He spake; they, rising, hasted to the shore.
Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
To his own home. Then, all, to council those
Assembling, neither elder of the land
Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.
Ah! how the Gods have rescued him! all day
Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
Successive watch'd; and, when the sun declined,
We never slept on shore, but all night long
Till sacred dawn arose, plow'd the abyss,
Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
In our despight, safe to his home again.
But frame we yet again means to destroy
Telemachus; ah—let not Him escape!
For end of this our task, while he survives,
None shall be found, such prudence he displays
And wisdom, neither are the people now
Unanimous our friends as heretofore.
Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
To council; for he will not long delay,
But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
Amid them all, how we in vain devised
His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
From our own country to a distant land.—
Prevent him, therefore, quickly; in the field
Slay him, or on the road; so shall his wealth
And his possessions on ourselves devolve
Which we will share equally, but his house
Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.
Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather chuse
That he should live and occupy entire
His patrimony, then, no longer, here
Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
But let us all with spousal gifts produced
From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
Leaving her in full freedom to espouse
Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.

He ceased; the assembly silent sat and mute.
Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son, himself,
Of King Aretias. He had thither led
The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
Corn-clad of green Dulichium had arrived,
And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
Penelope, for he was just and wise,
And thus, well-counselling the rest, began.
Not I, my friends! far be the thought from me
To slay Telemachus! it were a deed
Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heav'n,
And if Jove's oracle that course approve,
I will encourage you, and will myself
Be active in his death; but if the Gods
Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.
So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
Arising then, into Ulysses' house
They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.
A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
Penelope; she purposed to appear
Before her suitors, whose design to slay
Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd,
The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
Toward the hall with her attendant train
She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
The columns standing of the stately dome,
And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.
Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech
Pre-eminent, but such wast never thou.
Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
Rejectest thou the suppliant's pray'r,[1] which Jove
Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods.
Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
Here, when he fled before the people's wrath

[1] Alluding probably to entreaties made to him at some former time by herself and Telemachus, that he would not harm them. Clarke.

Whom he had irritated by a wrong
Which, with a band of Taphian robbers joined,
He offer'd to the Thesprots, our allies?
They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
All his delights and his possessions waste,
But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife,
Slaying his son, and filling me with woe.
But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest.
To whom the son of Polybus replied,
Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
Take courage, fair Penelope, and chace
These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,
And faculty of sight retain, shall harm
Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
And thus will I perform; his blood shall stream
A sable current from my lance's point
That moment; for the city-waster Chief
Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
Hath fill'd my infant grasp with sav'ry food,
And giv'n me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold
Telemachus of all men most my friend,
Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.
So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought
Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.
And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd
Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
Ulysses, at the stroke rend'ring him old,
And his apparel sordid as before,
Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
Penelope, and let the secret forth.
Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
Noble Eumæus! thou art come; what news
Bring'st from the city? Have the warrior band

Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
The port again, or wait they still for me?
To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd
To make my message known, and to return.
But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
From thy companions, met me on the way,
Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,
For this I saw. Passing above the town
Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones
To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark
Ent'ring the port; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were num'rous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge.
Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.
He spake, and by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.
Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,
They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger, now, and thirst both sated, all
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

BOOK XVII

ARGUMENT

TELEMACHUS returns to the city, and relates to his mother the principal passages of his voyage; Ulysses, conducted by Eumæus, arrives there also, and enters among the suitors, having been known only by his old dog Argus, who dies at his feet. The curiosity of Penelope being excited by the account which Eumæus gives her of Ulysses, she orders him immediately into her presence, but Ulysses postpones the interview till evening, when the suitors having left the palace, there shall be no danger of interruption. Eumæus returns to his cottage.

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
When the illustrious offspring of divine
Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet;
He seiz'd his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
And to the city meditating quick
Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.
Father! I seek the city, to convince
My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
I judge, and lamentation shall not cease
Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
Thyself, this hapless guest, that he may beg
Provision there, a morsel and a drop
From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.
I cannot, vext and harass'd as I am,
Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Nor is it my desire to be detained.
Better the mendicant in cities seeks
His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
Than in the villages. I am not young,
Nor longer of an age that well accords
With rural tasks, nor could I all perform
That it might please a master to command.
Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
Before the hearth, and when the risen sun

Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st,
For this is a vile garb; the frosty air
Of morning would benumb me thus attired,
And, as ye say, the city is remote.
He ended, and Telemachus in haste
Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went
With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts
Arriving, he reclined his spear against
A column, and proceeded to the hall.
Him Euryclea, first, his nurse, perceived,
While on the variegated seats she spread
Their fleecy cov'ring; swift with tearful eyes
She flew to him, and the whole female train
Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
Clasping him, and his forehead and his neck
Kissing affectionate; then came, herself,
As golden Venus or Diana fair,
Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
The chaste Penelope; with tears she threw
Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint
Maternal, in wing'd accents thus began.
Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes! my son!
My lov'd Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire.
But haste; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Ah mother! let my sorrows rest, nor me
From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
But, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
With all the maidens of thy train ascend
To thy superior chamber, there to vow
A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
When Jove shall have avenged our num'rous wrongs.
I seek the forum, there to introduce
A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
Whom sending forward with my noble band,
I bade Piræus to his own abode
Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
The stranger, till I should myself arrive.

He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
Would Jove but recompense her num'rous wrongs.
Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
And ev'ry eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts.
He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
And Halytherses, long his father's friends
Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
Toward the forum; nor Telemachus
Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
And was accosted by Piræus thus.
Sir! send thy menial women to bring home
The precious charge committed to my care,
Thy gifts at Menelaus' hands received.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Piræus! wait; for I not yet foresee
The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
And parcel my inheritance by lot,
I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
But should I with success plan for them all
A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend.
So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
And plung'd his feet into a polish'd bath.
There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
From the attendant maidens each received
Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
And spread the polish'd table, which with food
Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
The mistress of the household charge supplied.

Meantime, beside a column of the dome
His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd
Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
Stretch'd forth their hands, and, hunger now and thirst
Both satisfied, Penelope began.
Telemachus! I will ascend again,
And will repose me on my woeful bed;
For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
Had occupied the house again, of all
That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast)
Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.
Her answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
Mother, at thy request I will with truth
Relate the whole. At Pylus shore arrived
We Nestor found, Chief of the Pylian race.
Receiving me in his august abode,
He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
As a glad father shews to his own son
Long-lost and newly found; so Nestor me,
And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
But yet assured me that he nought had heard
From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
Whether alive or dead; with his own steeds
He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence
To spear-famed Menelaus, Atreus' son.
There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
Auth'ress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
The Hero Menelaus then enquired
What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale
Of Lacedæmon; plainly I rehearsed
The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.
Ye Gods! they are ambitious of the bed
Of a brave man, however base themselves.
But, as it chances when the hart hath laid
Her fawns new-yean'd and sucklings yet, to rest
In some resistless lion's den, she roams,
Meantime, the hills, and in the grassy vales
Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
Returning soon, both her and hers destroys,
So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.

Jove! Pallas! and Apollo! oh that such
As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced,
Ulysses, now, might mingle with his foes!
Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.
But thy enquiries neither indirect
Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
But all that from the Ancient of the Deep [1]
I have received will utter, hiding nought.
The God declared that he had seen thy sire
In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd
An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
Calypso, wanting also means by which
To reach the country of his birth again,
For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.
So Menelaus spake, the spear-renown'd.
My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd—
And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.
He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
The godlike Theoclymenus began.
Consort revered of Laertiades!
Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
Be Jove of all in heav'n my witness first,
Then this thy hospitable board, and, last,
The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, at whose hearth I have arrived,[2]
That, even now, within his native isle
Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
Witness of these enormities, and seeds
Sowing of dire destruction for his foes;
So sure an augury, while on the deck
Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.
Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Grant heav'n, my guest, that this good word of thine

[1] Proteus.
[2] The hearth was the altar on which the lares or household-gods were worshipped.

Fail not! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd
The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
Of their contentions, sports, and clamours rude.
But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
And from the pastures on all sides the sheep
Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
(For he of all the heralds pleas'd them most,
And waited at the board) them thus address'd.
Enough of play, young princes! ent'ring now
The house, prepare we sedulous our feast,
Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.
He spake, whose admonition pleas'd. At once
All, rising, sought the palace; there arrived,
Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
Or couch he spread, then, brisk, to slaughter fell
Of many a victim; sheep and goats and brawns
They slew, all fatted, and a pastur'd ox,
Hast'ning the banquet; nor with less dispatch
Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
To seek the town, when thus the swain began.
My guest! since thy fixt purpose is to seek
This day the city as my master bade,
Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
A keeper of our herds, yet, through respect
And rev'rence of his orders, whose reproof
I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,
I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
For day already is far-spent, and soon
The air of even-tide will chill thee more.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Let us depart,
And lead, thyself, the way; but give me, first,
(If thou have one already hewn) a staff
To lean on, for ye have described the road
Rugged, and ofttimes dang'rous to the foot.
So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
Eumæus gratified him with a staff,

And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept
By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.
But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd
The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
Pellucid all the citizens supplied,
(Ithacus had that fountain framed of old
With Neritus and Polyctor, over which
A grove of water-nourish'd alders hung
Circular on all sides, while cold the rill
Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood
The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd
With sacrifice frequented, still, and pray'r)
Melantheus, son of Dolius, at that fount
Met them; the chosen goats of ev'ry flock,
With two assistants, from the field he drove,
The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,
In surly accent boorish, such as fired
Ulysses with resentment, thus began.
Ay—this is well—The villain leads the vile—
Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.
Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct
This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,
Defiler base of banquets? many a post
Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs
Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,
Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.
Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard
Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply
My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes
Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.
But no such useful arts hath he acquired,
Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort
From others food for his unsated maw.
But mark my prophecy, for it is true,
At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,
His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd
Against them by the offended princes there.
He spake, and drawing nigh, with his rais'd foot,
Insolent as he was and brutish, smote
Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path

The firm-set Chief, who, doubtful, mused awhile
Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
To slay him, or uplifting him on high,
Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath
Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
Him then Eumæus with indignant look
Rebuking, rais'd his hands, and fervent pray'd.
Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove!
If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
This my request. O let the Hero soon,
Conducted by some Deity, return!
So shall he quell that arrogance which safe
Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.
To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
Melantheus. Marvellous! how rare a speech
The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send
Far hence at a convenient time on board
My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
I would, that he who bears the silver bow
As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
In his own house, or that the suitors might,
As that same wand'rer shall return no more!
He said, and them left pacing slow along,
But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arrived;
There ent'ring bold, he with the suitors sat
Opposite to Eurymachus, for him
He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
Directress of the household gave him bread.
And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre,
Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.
This house, Eumæus! of Ulysses seems
Passing magnificent, and to be known
With ease for his among a thousand more.
One pile supports another, and a wall
Crested with battlements surrounds the court;
Firm, too, the folding doors all force of man
Defy; but num'rous guests, as I perceive,
Now feast within; witness the sav'ry steam

Fast-fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
Divine associate of the festive board.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Thou hast well-guess'd; no wonder, thou art quick
On ev'ry theme; but let us well forecast
This business. Wilt thou, ent'ring first, thyself,
The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
Me leaving here? or shall I lead the way
While thou remain'st behind? yet linger not,
Lest, seeing thee without, some servant strike
Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.
Him answer'd, then, the patient Hero bold.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Lead thou the way
Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows
To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
Learn'd patience. Follow, next, what follow may!
But, to suppress the appetite, I deem
Impossible; the stomach is a source
Of ills to man, an avaricious gulph
Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
Seas travers'd, and fierce battles waged remote.
Thus they discoursing stood; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since, himself, but rarely used,
Departing, first, to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chace
Of wild goat, hart and hare; but now he lodg'd
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should, in due time, manure his spacious fields.
There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul
All over, Argus; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old.
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.
I can but wonder seeing such a dog

Thus lodg'd, Eumæus! beautiful in form
He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been
As fleet as fair I know not; rather such
Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
Their tables, nourish'd more for shew than use.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He is the dog of one dead far remote.
But had he now such feat-performing strength
As when Ulysses left him, going hence
To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,
Astonish'd, his agility and force.
He never in the sylvan deep recess
The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
Their steps infallible; but he hath now
No comfort, for (the master dead afar)
The heedless servants care not for his dog.
Domestics, missing once their Lord's controul,
Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks;
For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
At once the half of that man's worth away.
He said, and, ent'ring at the portal, join'd
The suitors. Then his destiny released
Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
Ulysses in the twentieth year restored.
Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast
His eye around, and seeing vacant there
The seat which the dispenser of the feast
Was wont to occupy while he supplied
The num'rous guests, planted it right before
Telemachus, and at his table sat,
On which the herald placed for him his share
Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
Staff-propp'd, and in loose tatters foul attired.
Within the portal on the ashen sill
He sat, and, seeming languid, lean'd against
A cypress pillar by the builder's art
Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
Then took Telemachus a loaf entire
Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh

A portion large as his two hands contained,
And, beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.
These to the stranger; whom advise to ask
Some dole from ev'ry suitor; bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.
He spake; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.
Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more
The suitors, one by one; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant ev'ry good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete
Accomplishment of all that he desires!
He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceas'd to eat,
Then also ceas'd the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impell'd the Chief
Crusts to collect, or any pittance small
At ev'ry suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust; yet deliv'rance none
From evil she design'd for any there.
From left to right[1] his progress he began
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng,
As one familiar with the beggar's art.
They, pitying, gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and th' assembly thus address'd.
Hear me, ye suitors of th' illustrious Queen!
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Elsewhere; the swine-herd brought him; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.
So he; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way

[1] That he might begin auspiciously. Wine was served in the same direction. F.

Into the city? are we not enough
Infested with these troublers of our feasts?
Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat
At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
This fellow hither, found we know not where?
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Antinoüs! though of high degree, thou speak'st
Not wisely. What man to another's house
Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
He be of those who by profession serve
The public, prophet, healer of disease,
Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
Whose music may exhilarate the guests?
These, and such only, are in ev'ry land
Call'd to the banquet; none invites the poor,
Who much consume, and no requital yield.
But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st
Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me;
Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Peace! answer not verbose a man like him.
Antinoüs hath a tongue accustom'd much
To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.
Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
Antinoüs! as a father for his son
Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
The stranger harshly hence; but God forbid![1]
Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
Exhort thee to it; neither, in this cause,
Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
Whatever menial throughout all the house
Of famed Ulysses. Ah! within thy breast
Dwells no such thought; thou lov'st not to impart
To others, but to gratify thyself.
To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
High-soaring and intemp'rate in thy speech
How hast thou said, Telemachus? Would all
As much bestow on him, he should not seek
Admittance here again three months to come.
So saying, he seized the stool which, banqueting,
He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath

[1] Here again Θεὸς occurs in the abstract.

The table forth advanced it into view.
The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh
Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,
Returning to his threshold, there to taste
The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd.
Kind sir! vouchsafe to me! for thou appear'st
Not least, but greatest of the Achaians here,
And hast a kingly look. It might become
Thee therefore above others to bestow,
So should I praise thee wheresoe'er I roam.
I also lived the happy owner once
Of such a stately mansion, and have giv'n
To num'rous wand'rers (whencesoe'er they came
All that they needed; I was also served
By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
The envied owner opulent and blest.
But Jove (for so it pleas'd him) hath reduced
My all to nothing, prompting me, in league
With rovers of the Deep, to sail afar
To Ægypt, for my sure destruction there.
Within th' Ægyptian stream my barks well-oar'd
I station'd, and, enjoining strict my friends
To watch them close-attendant at their side,
Commanded spies into the hill-tops; but they,
Under the impulse of a spirit rash
And hot for quarrel, the well-cultur'd fields
Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
Their wives and little-ones, and slew the men.
Ere long, the loud alarm their city reach'd.
Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
With horse and foot and with the gleam of arms
Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
Struck all my people; none found courage more
To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on ev'ry side.
There, num'rous by the glitt'ring spear we fell
Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
Alive to servitude; but me they gave
To Dmetor, King in Cyprus, Jasus' son;
He entertained me liberally, and thence
This land I reach'd, but poor and woe-begone.
Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
What dæmon introduced this nuisance here,

This troubler of our feast? stand yonder, keep
Due distance from my table, or expect
To see an Ægypt and a Cyprus worse
Than those, bold mendicant and void of shame!
Thou hauntest each, and, inconsid'rate, each
Gives to thee, because gifts at other's cost
Are cheap, and, plentifully serv'd themselves,
They squander, heedless, viands not their own.
To whom Ulysses while he slow retired.
Gods! how illib'ral with that specious form!
Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
From thy own board, who at another's fed
So nobly, canst thou not spare a crust to me.
He spake; then raged Antinoüs still the more,
And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.
Take such dismission now as thou deserv'st,
Opprobrious! hast thou dared to scoff at me?
So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint
Of his right shoulder smote him; firm as rock
He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged
He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.
Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow.
But me Antinoüs struck for that I ask'd
Food from him merely to appease the pangs
Of hunger, source of num'rous ills to man.
If then the poor man have a God t' avenge
His wrongs, I pray to him that death my seize
Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive!
To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
Son of Eupithes. Either seated there
Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still;
Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot
We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.
He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
Ev'n his own proud companions censured him.
Antinoüs! thou didst not well to smite
The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd

For ever, if there be a God in heav'n;[1]
For, in similitude of strangers oft,
The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
Repair to populous cities, where they mark
The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.
So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
But in his heart Telemachus that blow
Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
Terrible things. Penelope, meantime,
Told of the wand'rer so abused beneath
Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.
So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
Thee also. Then Eurynome replied,
Oh might our pray'rs prevail, none of them all
Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.
Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Nurse! they are odious all, for that alike
All teem with mischief; but Antinoüs' looks
Remind me ever of the gloom of death.
A stranger hath arrived who, begging, roams
The house, (for so his penury enjoins)
The rest have giv'n him, and have fill'd his bag
With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him.
While thus the Queen conversing with her train
In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made
Plenteous repast. Then, calling to her side
Eumæus, thus she signified her will.
Eumæus, noble friend! bid now approach
Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
If he has seen Ulysses, or have heard
Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
For much a wand'rer by his garb he seems.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Were those Achaians silent, thou shouldst hear,
O Queen! a tale that would console thy heart.

[1] Ει δη πθ τις επουρανιος θεος εσι

Eustathius, and Clarke after him, understand an aposiopesis here, as if the speaker meant to say—what if there should be? or—suppose there should be? But the sentence seems to fall in better with what follows interpreted as above, and it is a sense of the passage not unwarranted by the opinion of other commentators. See Schaufelbergerus.

Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
A fugitive, and came direct to me)
But half untold his hist'ry still remains.
As when his eye one fixes on a bard
From heav'n instructed in such themes as charm
The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
The people press, insatiable, to hear,
So, in my cottage, seated at my side,
That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides,
And thence he hath arrived, after great loss,
A suppliant to the very earth abased;
He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
And that he comes laden with riches home.
To whom Penelope, discrete, replied.
Haste; call him. I would hear, myself, his tale.
Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate
Sport jocular, or here; their hearts are light,
For their possessions are secure; *their* wine
None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own,
While my abode, day after day, themselves
Haunting, my beeves and sheep and fatted goats
Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues;
For no such friend as was Ulysses once
Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
Revisit once his native shores again,
Then, aided by his son, he should avenge,
Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.
Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force,
That all the palace rang; his mother laugh'd,
And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.
Haste—bid him hither—hear'st thou not the sneeze
Propitious of my son? oh might it prove
A presage of inevitable death
To all these revellers! may none escape!
Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
Mantle and tunic both for his reward.
She spake; he went, and where Ulysses sat

Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.
Penelope, my venerable friend!
Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.
Oppress'd by num'rous troubles, she desires
To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord.
And should the event verify thy report,
Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)
Tunic and mantle; but she gives no more;
Thy sustenance thou must, as now, obtain,[1]
Begging it at their hands who chuse to give.
Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
Eumæus! readily I can relate
Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen
Icarius' daughter; for of him I know
Much, and have suff'red sorrows like his own.
But dread I feel of this imperious throng
Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts
Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.
And, even now, when for no fault of mine
Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd
My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus
Nor any interposed to stay his arm.
Now, therefore, let Penelope, although
Impatient, till the sun descend postpone
Her questions; then she may enquire secure
When comes her husband, and may nearer place
My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad
Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.
He ceas'd; at whose reply Eumæus sought
Again the Queen, but ere he yet had pass'd
The threshold, thus she greeted his return.
Com'st thou alone, Eumæus? why delays
The invited wand'rer? dreads he other harm?
Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe
Fills him? the bashful poor are poor indeed.
To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
He hath well spoken; none who would decline
The rudeness of this contumelious throng
Could answer otherwise; thee he entreats
To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen,
Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,

[1] This seems added by Eumæus to cut off from Ulysses the hope that might otherwise tempt him to use fiction.

To hold thy conf'rence with the guest, alone.
Then answer thus Penelope return'd.
The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none
Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.
So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)
The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd.
Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm;
For num'rous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail!
To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither; I will keep,
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.
He ended; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and, both with wine and food
Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

BOOK XVIII

ARGUMENT

THE beggar Irus arrives at the palace; a combat takes place between him and Ulysses, in which Irus is by one blow vanquished. Penelope appears to the suitors, and having reminded them of the presents which she had a right to expect from them, receives a gift from each. Eurymachus, provoked by a speech of Ulysses, flings a foot-stool at him, which knocks down the cup-bearer; a general tumult is the consequence, which continues, till by the advice of Telemachus, seconded by Amphinomus, the suitors retire to their respective homes.

Now came a public mendicant, a man
Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
Of Ithaca; one never sated yet
With food or drink; yet muscle had he none,
Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show.
Arnæus was the name which at his birth
His mother gave him, but the youthful band
Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
To drive Ulysses forth from his own home,
And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.
  Forth from the porch, old man! lest by the foot
I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
Wink on me, and by signs give me command
To drag thee hence? nor is it aught but shame
That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
Thou force me to adjust our diff'rence.
  To whom Ulysses, low'ring dark, replied.
Peace, fellow! neither word nor deed of mine
Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon,
However plentiful, which thou receiv'st.
The sill may hold us both; thou dost not well
To envy others; thou appear'st like me
A vagrant; plenty is the gift of heav'n.
But urge me not to trial of our fists,
Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.

So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
More tranquil here; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
Ulysses' mansion, never to return.
  Then answer'd Irus, kindling with disdain.
Gods! with what volubility of speech
The table-hunter prates, like an old hag
Collied with chimney-smutch! but ah beware!
For I intend thee mischief, and to dash
With both hands ev'ry grinder from thy gums,
As men untooth a pig pilf'ring the corn.
Come—gird thee, that all here may view the strife—
But how wilt thou oppose one young as I?
  Thus on the threshold of the lofty gate
They, wrangling, chafed each other, whose dispute
The high-born youth Antinoüs mark'd; he laugh'd
Delighted, and the suitors thus address'd.
  Oh friends! no pastime ever yet occurr'd
Pleasant as this which, now, the Gods themselves
Afford us. Irus and the stranger brawl
As they would box. Haste—let us urge them on.
  He said; at once loud-laughing all arose;
The ill-clad disputants they round about
Encompass'd, and Antinoüs thus began.
  Attend ye noble suitors to my voice.
Two paunches lie of goats here on the fire,
Which fill'd with fat and blood we set apart
For supper; he who conquers, and in force
Superior proves, shall freely take the paunch
Which he prefers, and shall with us thenceforth
Feast always; neither will we here admit
Poor man beside to beg at our repasts.
  He spake, whom all approved; next, artful Chief
Ulysses thus, dissembling, them address'd.
  Princes! unequal is the strife between
A young man and an old with mis'ry worn;
But hunger, always counsellor of ill,
Me moves to fight, that many a bruise received,
I may be foil'd at last. Now swear ye all
A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake
Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.
  He ceas'd, and, as he bade, all present swore
A solemn oath; then thus, amid them all

Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.
Guest! if thy courage and thy manly mind
Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find
Yet other foes to cope with; I am here
In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
Discrete, accord unanimous with me.
He ceas'd, whom all approved. Then, with his rags
Ulysses braced for decency his loins
Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
His chest and arms robust; while, at his side,
Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more
Minerva stood; the assembly with fixt eyes
Astonish'd gazed on him, and, looking full
On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.
Irus shall be in Irus found no more.
He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid!
So he—meantime in Irus' heart arose
Horrible tumult; yet, his loins by force
Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
Pale, and his flesh all quiv'ring as he came;
Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked.
Now, wherefore liv'st, and why wast ever born
Thou mountain-mass of earth! if such dismay
Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
Ancient as he, and worn with many woes?
But mark, I threaten not in vain; should he
O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
To Echetus thou go'st; my sable bark
Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
Enemy of mankind; of nose and ears
He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel,
And tearing by the roots the parts away [1]
That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.
He said; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
Shook under him; into the middle space
They led him, and each raised his hands on high.

[1] Tradition says that Echetus, for a love-affair, condemned his daughter to lose her eyes, and to grind iron barley-grains, while her lover was doomed to suffer what Antinoüs threatens to Irus. F.

Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
At once, or fell him with a managed blow.
To smite with managed force at length he chose
As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength,
He should be known. With elevated fists
Both stood; him Irus on the shoulder struck,
But he his adversary on the neck
Push'd close beneath his ear; he split the bones,
And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth.
With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth
Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.
The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
In glad surprize, laugh'd all their breath away.
Then, through the vestibule, and right across
The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
Into the portico, where propping him
Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.
There seated now, dogs drive and swine away,
Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme controul
O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.
So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
He threw suspended by its leathern twist,
And tow'rd the threshold turning, sat again,
They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.
Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies
Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatsoe'er it be,
Thy heart's desire! who hast our ears reliev'd
From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
Soon to Epirus he shall go dispatch'd
To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.
So they, to whose propitious words the Chief
Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed
The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
Two loaves, selected from the rest; he fill'd
A goblet also, drank to him, and said,
My father, hail! O stranger, be thy lot
Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard!
To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st

With much discretion, who art also son
Of such a sire, whose fair report I know,
Dulichian Nysus, opulent and good.
Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
Judicious; hear me, therefore; mark me well.
Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
No creature weak as man; for while the Gods
Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn;
But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind;
For such as the complexion of his lot
By the appointment of the Sire of all,
Such is the colour of the mind of man.
I, too, have been familiar in my day
With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought
Of my own father's and my brethren's pow'r.
Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
Use modestly what gift soe'er of heav'n.
So do not these. These ever bent I see
On deeds injurious, the possessions large
Consuming, and dishonouring the wife
Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
Ev'n at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
Steal hence in time! ah, meet not his return
To his own country! for they will not part,
(He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
If once he enter at these gates again!
He ended, and, libation pouring, quaff'd
The generous juice, then in the prince's hand
Replaced the cup; he, pensive, and his head
Inclining low, pass'd from him; for his heart
Forboded ill; yet 'scaped not even he,
But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
To the heroic arm and spear resign'd
Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
The seat whence he had ris'n, he sat again.
Minerva then, Goddess, cærulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
Before the suitors; so to expose the more
Their drift iniquitous, and that herself

More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd,[1]
And, bursting into laughter, thus began.
I wish, Eurynome! (who never felt
That wish till now) though I detest them all,
To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
I will admonish, for his good, my son,
Not to associate with that lawless crew
Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend.
Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
My daughter! wisely hast thou said and well.
Go! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
Without reserve; but shew not there thy cheeks
Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
And he is now bearded, and hath attained
That age which thou wast wont with warmest pray'r
To implore the Gods that he might live to see.
Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
To bathe, Eurynome! or to anoint
My face with oil; for all my charms the Gods
Inhabitants of Olympus then destroy'd,
When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
Hippodamia and Autonöe
That they attend me to the hall, and wait
Beside me there; for decency forbids
That I should enter to the men, alone.
She ceas'd, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.
But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarius' daughter; on her couch
Reclining, soon as she reclin'd, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.
Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess cloath'd her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face
She with ambrosia purified, with such
As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance

[1] This seems the sort of laughter intended by the word Αχρειον.

She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
Beneath her touch, and ampler size she grew,
And fairer than the elephantine bone
Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
Divine, the awful Deity retired.
And now, loud-prattling as they came, arrived
Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound,
She wiped away a tear, and thus she said.
Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
Hath here involved. O would that by a death
As gentle chaste Diana would herself
This moment set me free, that I might waste
My life no longer in heart-felt regret
Of a lamented husband's various worth
And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!
She said, and through her chambers' stately door
Issuing, descended; neither went she sole,
But with those two fair menials of her train.
Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
In presence of the num'rous guests, beneath
The portal of the stately dome she stood
Between her maidens, with her lucid veil
Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then, ev'ry knee
Trembled, and ev'ry heart with am'rous heat
Dissolv'd, her charms all coveting alike,
While to Telemachus her son she spake.
Telemachus! thou art no longer wise
As once thou wast, and even when a child.
For thriven as thou art, and at full size
Arrived of man, so fair proportion'd, too,
That ev'n a stranger, looking on thy growth
And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born,
Yet is thy intellect still immature.
For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
To be abused in thy own palace? how?
Know'st not that if the stranger seated here
Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine?
Her answer'd, then, Telemachus discrete.
I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
Able to mark and to discern between
Evil and good, child as I lately was,
Although I find not promptitude of thought

Sufficient always, overaw'd and check'd
By such a multitude, all bent alike
On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.
But Irus and the stranger have not fought,
Urged by the suitors, and the stranger prov'd
Victorious; yes—heav'n knows how much I wish
That, (in the palace some, some in the court)
The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs,
Even as that same Irus, while I speak,
With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
Erect, or to regain his proper home.
So they; and now addressing to the Queen
His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed.
O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
Throughout Iäsian Argos [1] view thy charms,
Discrete Penelope! more suitors still
Assembling in thy courts would banquet here
From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.
To whom replied Penelope discrete.
The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
Could he, returning, my domestic charge
Himself intend, far better would my fame
Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
Clasping my wrist with his right hand, he said.
My love! for I imagine not that all
The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,
Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,
And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds
High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring
The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war—
I know not, therefore, whether heav'n intend
My safe return, or I must perish there.
But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,
While I am absent, or more dearly still

[1] From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

My parents, and what time our son thou seest
Mature, then wed; wed even whom thou wilt,
And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,
All which shall full accomplishment ere long
Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,
Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,
Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors.
But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind
Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore
The suitors' custom'd practice; all who chose
To engage in competition for a wife
Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced
From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast
For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,
But never ate as ye, at others' cost.
She ceased; then brave Ulysses toil-inured
Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw
From each some gift, although on other views,
And more important far, himself intent.
Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithes' son.
Icarius' daughter wise! only accept
Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand
That grace, nor can be decently refused;
But to our rural labours, or elsewhere
Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.
Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved.
Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first
A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
Than twelve, all golden, and to ev'ry clasp
Was fitted opposite its eye exact.
Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
Bestudded, ev'ry bead bright as a sun.
Two servants for Eurydamas produced
Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse.
The herald of Polyctor's son, the prince
Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
A sumptuous ornament. Each Greecian gave,
And each a gift dissimilar from all.