

Nigh to Thesprotian land I was brought by the roll of the ocean.  
Here did a prince heroic, the king of Thesprotia, Pheidon,  
Freely receive me as guest ; for the well-loved son of the monarch  
Found me, as faint from the cold sea air and outworn I was lying,  
Gave me a hand and supported my steps till we came to the palace ;  
Ay and he clothed me about with a garment—with mantle and tunic.

*Odyssey*  
*XIV*  
*315-354*

There did I hear of Odysseus : the monarch himself (he assured me)  
Here had received and entreated him well on his way to his homeland.  
Also he showed me the wealth that Odysseus had gotten together,  
Treasures of bronze and of gold and of well-wrought iron that lay there—  
Treasures sufficient to feed one's heirs to the tenth generation—  
Such was the wealth that Odysseus had stored in the halls of the monarch.  
Now he had gone, I was told, to Dodona, to list to the counsel  
Zeus from the thick-leaved height of his oak might utter, to guide him  
So as to win once more to the fruit-rich Ithacan island,  
Whence so long he is missed, whether open his coming or secret.  
Yea he assured me on oath, as he poured in his hall a libation,  
Dragged to the sea was the ship and the band of the rowers was ready,  
Waiting to carry him home to the well-loved land of his fathers.  
Me ere this he despatched—for it chanced that a vessel was sailing,  
Manned with Thesprotian folk, to the island of bountiful harvests  
Dulichium, and he bade them convey me to chieftain Acastus,  
Carefully. Ah but a plot right cowardly won their approval  
Touching myself—that I yet might sink to the depths of disaster.  
Far from the land was already the ship as she voyaged the waters :  
Then they began to devise to enslave me and sell me as bondsman.  
Firstly they stript from my body my garment—the mantle and tunic ;  
Round me, in stead of my raiment, they cast vile rags and a doublet  
Tattered and torn—in the which thou beholdest me sitting before thee.  
Now in the even, arriving at far-seen Ithaca's corn-lands,  
Me in the well-decked vessel they left, where straitly they bound me,  
Using a twisted rope, but themselves, from the ship disembarking,  
Hastily made them a meal by the surf-beat strand of the ocean.  
Then did the gods themselves unloosen the knots of the cordage,  
Easily bending it back ; and, my head in the wrapper enveloped,  
Down by the polished rudder descending, I laid on the water  
Softly my breast, and with both of my hands kept rowing and shore-ward  
Swam—and I quickly was out of the water and far from pursuers.  
Then I ascended the shore to a thick-leaved copse of the woodland ;  
Cowering here in the bushes I lay ; and with much lamentation



Hither and thither they wandered and sought me—till, deeming it useless  
Further afield to explore, they departed again, and returning  
Mounted the hollow ship; and the gods everlasting concealed me  
Easily; ay and they guided me well, till I came to thy farmstead,  
Home of a good wise man—where life once more is vouchsafed me.”

Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd:  
“Ah, poor friend, right deeply thou touchest the heart in my bosom  
Telling of all thou hast seen and all thou hast suffered in far lands.  
Still not aright do I think thou hast spoken—nor canst thou convince me—  
Touching Odysseus . . . And yet . . . what avails it for any as thou beest  
Profitless lies to invent?—Ah well, one thing I am sure of  
Touching my master’s return: he was hated of all the immortals  
Utterly, since they permitted him neither to perish in Troyland  
Nor in the arms of his friends, when wound to an end was the warfare,  
Else had the whole of Achaea erected a tomb to his honour,  
Yea and for Telemachus he had left great glory behind him.  
Ah but the Spirits of storm to a death inglorious swept him.  
Well—for myself—all lonely I live with my swine, and the city  
Never I visit, except when the wise-souled Penelopeia  
Summons me thither, if haply a rumour arriveth from somewhere.  
Then will they all sit round such comer and question him closely,  
All who for aye are mourning the master that never returneth,  
Ay and the ones that delight them unpunished in eating his substance,  
All but myself—for I care not at all to examine and question  
Since an Aetolian once with a fabulous story befooled me,  
One who had slain some man and had wandered in many a country  
Ere he arrived at my farm; and a loving reception I gave him.  
This was his story: in Creta with Idomeneus he had seen him;  
Here he was mending his ships, that the storms of the ocean had shattered,  
Yea and he surely was bound to arrive by the summer or autumn  
Bringing abundance of treasure and all his heroic companions.  
Thus, old man, though many thy woes—since now to my homestead  
Heaven hath brought thee—attempt not with fables to please or console me.  
Never for reason of this will I give thee respect and affection,  
Nay but for fear of the god of the stranger—and also for pity.”

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
“Verily dwells in thy bosom a right incredulous spirit,  
Since not e’en with an oath am I able to move and convince thee.  
Well, let us make an agreement, and bind us to keep it hereafter,



Both of us calling to witness the gods who inhabit Olympus :  
Should he return, this master of thine, and arrive at thy farmstead  
Then shalt thou clothe me in garments—in mantle and tunic—and send me  
Safely to Dulichium, to the which I was longing to journey.  
Should he however, thy master, arrive not just as I told thee,  
Order thy drudges to seize me and over a precipice hurl me,  
So that another that cometh to beg shall beware of deceiving.”

*Odyssey*  
XIV  
894 - 431

Him then addressing in turn gave answer the good old swineherd :  
“ Yea and forsooth, O stranger, my good reputation and prowess  
Thus were bruited abroad midst mortals, now and hereafter,  
Were I to bring thee as guest to my cottage and kindly entreat thee,  
Then to a murderer turn and of life's dear treasure bereave thee !  
Light were ever my heart when I prayed to the Father Cronion !  
Now it is time for the supper, and soon, as I hope, will my fellows  
Enter, and then we can make us a right good meal in the cottage.”

Thus these twain, as they sat, held converse one with the other.  
Meanwhile near to the farm were coming the swine and the swineherds.  
Then, as the droves of the sows were penned in the places for sleeping  
Indescribable grunting and squealing arose in the farmyard.  
Forthwith loudly he called to his fellows, the good old swineherd :  
“ Bring ye the best of the hogs ! I will slaughter the beast for a stranger  
Come from afar ; and ourselves will enjoy it as well, for the labour,  
Toiling and moiling in charge of the white-tusked pigs, is unending—  
Ay and we toil while others consume our labours unpunished.”

These words uttered he clave him the wood with the pitiless hatchet,  
While that a five-year hog, well-fatted, was brought by the fellows.  
Close by the side of the hearth it was placed ; nor now did the swineherd  
Fail to remember the gods, since good was the heart in his bosom.  
First in the flame as an earnest he cast an oblation of bristles  
Cut from the head of the hog, and to every deity offered  
Vows that Odysseus the wise might come once more to his homeland,  
Then uplifting a billet of oak that was left from his cleaving  
Smote—and the hog fell dead ; and they opened its gullet, and singed it,  
Speedily jointed it too ; and from every member the swineherd  
Cut for oblation a slice and in unctuous fat he enwrapped it.  
This when he cast in the fire, with fine-ground barley besprinkled,  
Chopping the rest of it small on the skewers they spitted the pieces,  
Carefully roasted the whole, and withdrawing it all from the skewers



*Odyssey* Laid it together in heaps on the trenchers ; and then did the swineherd

*XIV* Rise to dispense it, for well was he practised in dealing it fairly.  
*482 - 470* Seven the messes he made in apportioning all and dividing ;  
One for the nymphs and for Maia's son, Hermeias the herald,  
Setting aside with a prayer, and the rest to the others allotting,  
Unto Odysseus he gave as an honour the long, undivided  
Chine of the white-tusked hog, and delighted the heart of his master,  
So that with swift-winged words addressed him the wileful Odysseus :  
" Would, Eumaeus, that Zeus our Father may love thee as I do,  
Seeing that, poor as I be, thou dost honour and treat me with goodness."  
Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
" Eat, unfortunate friend ! come eat and enjoy what is present,  
Such as we have ! For the rest, it is God that shall give or withhold it  
Howsoever he willeth—to God are possible all things."

These words spoken, the earnest he burnt to the gods everlasting,  
Poured a libation, and unto Odysseus the sacker of cities  
Handed the glowing wine ; and he sat him adown to his portion.  
Bread was dispensed to them all by Mesaulius. Him had the swineherd  
Bought at his sole expense in the years when his master was absent,  
Saying thereof no word to his mistress and agéd Laertes,  
Purchased by means of his own possessions from Taphian people.  
Now did they stretch forth hands to the food that was lying before them,  
Till, when at last they had lost all pleasure in meat and the wine-cup,  
Then was the rest of the bread by Mesaulius cleared, and they straightway,  
Sated with bread and with flesh, felt moved by a longing for slumber.

Now came night unlit by the moon and tempestuous ; Zeus rained  
Ceaseless, and strongly was blowing the West, that is ever the rain-wind.  
Then did Odysseus, addressing them all, make proof of the swineherd,  
Whether his cloak he was willing to doff and to lend, or to order  
One of his fellows to strip—so great was his care for the stranger.  
" List to my words, Eumaeus, and all of you others, his fellows !  
After a prayer I will tell you a tale. 'Tis the wine that incites me—  
Maddening stuff, that induceth the sagest to break into singing,  
Ay and to laugh right sweetly, and even to dance will arouse him ;  
Yea more—maketh him speak what oft were better unspoken.  
Still—as the silence is broken already—my tale shall be ended.  
Would that I still were young, in the prime of my strength, as aforetime,  
E'en at the time when beneath Troy's ramparts we posted an ambush.  
Leader thereof was Odysseus—and prince Menelaus Atrides ;



Also myself was a third in command, since thus they had wished it.  
Now when at last we had come to the city's precipitous ramparts,  
There all round of the citadel walls in the covert of thickets,  
Crouching beneath our shields in the middle of reeds and of marshes,  
Lay we in ambush. Foul was the night; though fallen the North Wind,  
Keenly it froze, and the snow kept falling and glinted as hoar-frost  
Bitterly cold, while icicles formed on the rims of the bucklers.  
Well now, each of the rest of the men in his mantle and doublet  
Quietly slept, with his shield as a covering over his shoulders,  
While for myself—I had left, when I started, my cloak with a comrade  
Carelessly, never suspecting the cold might make me to suffer;  
So with my buckler alone and shining jerkin I followed.  
Now at the tierce of the night, when the stars were passed to their setting,  
Thus did I speak, addressing Odysseus, who happ'd to be near me,  
Nudging his side with my arm; and he instantly listened attentive:  
'Zeus-born son of Laertes, thou wise and wileful Odysseus,  
Verily soon I shall cease from the living. By cold I am conquered,  
Frozen to death; for a cloak I possess not; a deity fooled me  
Making me come with a jerkin alone; too late I repent it.'  
Thus did I speak, and at once in his mind this plan he invented,—  
Such was the hero not only in fighting but also at counsel;  
Dropping the tones of his voice to a whisper he turned to me saying:  
'Keep thee quiet—that none of the other Achaeans shall hear thee!'  
Then on his elbow upraising himself he addressed his companions:  
'Listen, my friends! As I slumbered a deity sent me a vision.  
Lo, right far from the ships we are come. 'Twere better if some one  
Carried a message to King Agamemnon, the prince of the people,  
Begging him urge more men from the vessels to come and support us.'  
Thus did he speak, and at once bold Thoas, the son of Andraemon,  
Hastily rising and doffing his cloak of Phoenician purple  
Started to run to the ships of the Greeks—while wrapped in his raiment  
Softly I lay, till the Morning appeared, enthroned in her glory.  
Would that I now were young, in the prime of my strength, as aforetime!  
Then might one of the herds at a pig-farm give me a mantle  
Both as a kindness and eke for respect of a brave old soldier—  
Now they despise me, beholding me vested in wretched apparel."

Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd:  
"Gaffer, in praise of my lord thou hast told us a capital story;  
Neither as yet hast thou uttered a profitless word or a foolish,  
So thou shalt lack not a garment; and nothing besides will I grudge thee,



*Odyssey* Nought that 'tis right to bestow on unfortunate beggars that meet one,  
*XIV* Just for to-night—In the morn thou'lt wrap thee again in thy tatters,  
*511 - 533* Seeing that here no mantles in plenty nor changes of tunics  
Have we to deck us withal; each man one garment possesses.  
Shouldst thou await the return of the well-loved son of Odysseus,  
He will be ready to clothe thee in raiment, in mantle and tunic,  
Ay and will send thee wherever thy heart and thy spirit shall call thee."

These words spoken he rose to his feet and adjusted a bedstead  
Nigh to the hearth, and upon it he cast soft fleeces and goatskins.  
Here did Odysseus recline; and he covered him o'er with a mantle  
Heavy and large, that was ever at hand as a change of apparel  
Ready for donning whenever arose some terrible tempest.  
Thus in the cottage was sleeping Odysseus, and lying around him  
Slumbered the boys of the farm; but the master of swineherds it pleased not  
There to remain in a bed and afar from the swine to be sleeping.  
So he accoutred himself, and he went; and Odysseus exulted  
Seeing the man thus care for the wealth of his lord in his absence.  
After his sharp-edged sword he had slung to his stalwart shoulders,  
Over his body a mantle he cast right heavy and wind-proof;  
Then, upsnatching the fell of a fine fat goat for his mattress,  
Also a lance sharp-pointed, from dogs and from men to protect him,  
Forth to the white-tusked boars he betook him, to slumber beside them  
Under a hollow rock in a place well screened from the North Wind.



# ODYSSEY BOOK XV

**N**OW to the spacious land Lacedaemon was Pallas Athene  
Gone, for the gallant son of the great-souled hero Odysseus  
Thence she was willed to recall to his home and to hasten his coming.  
Nestor's glorious son and Telemachus she discovered  
Couched in the porch of the hall of the far-famed prince Menelaus.  
Sleeping was Nestor's son, for by slumber soft he was conquered,  
While sweet sleep had abandoned the son of Odysseus, and wakeful  
All the ambrosial night he had brooded on thoughts of his father.  
Standing anigh then addressed him the grey-eyed goddess Athene :  
"Telemachus, no more is it meet from thy home to absent thee,  
Leaving possessions behind and strangers too in thy homestead  
Wantonly wasting thy wealth, lest soon they shall wholly despoil it,  
Yea and divide it among them, and vain prove therefore thy journey.  
Come now, ask that at once Menelaus good at the war-cry  
Send thee, and still in thy home mayst meet with thy excellent mother,  
Though already her father and brothers incessantly bid her  
Marry with Eurymachus, who hath ever excelled with his presents  
All of the rest, and is now increasing his gifts as a wooer.  
So shalt thou stay her from taking the goods from the house, if thou wiltst not.  
What is the spirit that dwells in the heart of a widow thou knowest.  
Ever she aims at enriching the house of the man that will wed her :  
Nought for her earlier children or husband loved in her girlhood  
Cares she, if once he is dead ; and she asks no longer about him.  
Therefore return to thy home, and entrust with the care of the household  
One of the women attendants that seemeth the best and the wisest,  
Till that a glorious bride by the gods everlasting be sent thee.  
Something besides will I say ; do thou lay it to heart, I beseech thee.  
Lo, with malicious intent are lurking the chief of the suitors  
Just 'twixt Ithacan shores and the rock-bound island of Samos,  
Wishing to slay thee before thou arrivest the land of thy fathers.  
Yet do I reckon not thereof, for the earth far sooner shall swallow  
Many a one of the wooers who daily consume thy possessions.  
Keep thou the well-built ship right far from the shores of the island ;  
Voyage also at night ; and a favouring breeze shall attend thee,  
Sent by the goddess that alway affordeth thee aid and protection.  
Now on the nearest beach of the Ithacan isle disembarking,  
After despatching the vessel and all of thy mates to the city,  
Hasten afoot and betake thee at first to the hut of the swineherd,



Even the thrall who attends to thy swine and is loyal as alway.  
 Here shalt thou rest for a night, and shalt urge him to enter the city  
 Bearing a message to give to the wise-souled Penelopeia,  
 So that she learn that again she hath got thee in safety from Pylos."

These words uttered, the goddess departed to lofty Olympus.  
 Forthwith Nestor's son from his pleasant slumbers he wakened,  
 Stirring the youth with a touch of his heel; and he spake and addressed him:  
 "Wake, Peisistratus, wake! and the hard-hoofed steeds from the stable  
 Hasten to bring and to yoke to the car! Let us start on the journey!"  
 Straightway Nestor's son Peisistratus answered him saying:  
 "Telemachus, though eager for starting we surely can never  
 Drive in the darkness of night. Ere long will be coming the daylight.  
 Wait till the hero bringeth the gifts on the car to be laden,  
 Even the hero Atrides, the spear-famed prince Menelaus,  
 Yea and until with a kind farewell he shall speed thy departure,  
 Since that a guest should surely remember as long as he liveth  
 Whosoever to strangers hath offered so kindly a welcome."

Thus did he speak, and anon came Morning enthroned in her glory.  
 Then drew nigh to the twain Menelaus good at the war-cry,  
 Newly from sleep by the side of the fair-haired Helen arisen.  
 Him as he saw approaching, the well-loved son of Odysseus,  
 Hastily seizing to cover his body a glistening tunic,  
 Donned it, and casting a great thick cloak on his sinewy shoulders  
 Went to the door. Here waited the prince, till approached and addressed him  
 Hero Telemachus, loved son of Odysseus the godlike:  
 "Captain of warrior hosts, Zeus-loved Menelaus Atrides,  
 Let me return, I beseech, to the well-loved land of my fathers  
 Now—for already my heart is beginning to yearn for the homeland."  
 Him then in answer addressed Menelaus good at the war-cry:  
 "Telemachus, I will try no longer here to retain thee,  
 Since thou yearnst to depart; for I always censure another,  
 Whosoever receiveth a stranger and showeth affection,  
 Showeth dislike too much. Fair measure is better in all things.  
 Equally great is the wrong if a host, when his guest is unwilling,  
 Urge him to go—or attempt to retain him when eager for starting.  
 Cherish a present guest; if he wishes to leave thee, allow him!  
 Wait howbeit a while, till I bring, on the car to be laden,  
 Beautiful gifts—thou shalt see them thyself; and the maids shall be bidden  
 Get us a dinner prepared in the hall from the store of provisions.



Honour and glory to me it will bring, and to you an advantage,  
Ere ye depart on a journey so boundless, with food to refresh you.  
Wishest thou also in Hellas and midmost Argos to travel,  
Wait—I will come! I will order them straightway horses to harness;  
Unto the cities of men I will guide thee, and never shall any  
Send us away as we came; some present he surely will give us,  
Either a well-wrought tripod of bronze maybe, or a cauldron,  
Or peradventure a couple of mules, or a gold-wrought goblet."

*Odyssey*  
XV  
78 - 117

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Captain of warrior hosts, Zeus-loved Menelaus Atrides,  
Unto my native land I am fain to return, for behind me  
None, when I came, did I leave as a guard to protect my possessions;  
Else it is like that in seeking my godlike father I perish,  
Or some treasure of worth disappear from the halls of my homestead."  
Now when he heard these words, Menelaus good at the war-cry  
Straightway spake to his wife and the women attendants, and bade them  
Get him a dinner prepared in the hall from the store of provisions.  
Meanwhile thither approached Boëthous' son, Eteóneus,  
Newly arisen from sleep—for he dwelt not far from the palace.  
Him Menelaus commanded to kindle a fire, and upon it  
Roast of the meat; and he heard the behest, nor was slow to obey it.  
Then to the fragrant room of his treasure descended the hero,  
Neither alone did he go; Megapenthes followed, and Helen.  
Now when he came to the place where stored were all of the treasures,  
Forthwith prince Menelaus a twy-cupped goblet selected,  
Also his son Megapenthes he ordered to carry a wine-bowl  
Solid of silver; and Helen to wardrobe-boxes betook her,  
Where rich-broidered apparel was hoarded, the work of her needle;  
Hence uplifted a garment and took it the fairest of women,  
One that was richest embroidered of all of the robes and the largest,  
Glistening, like to a star; and the lowest of all it was lying.  
Then to the front of the palace they passed, and here they discovered  
Telemachus, and the prince fair-haired Menelaus addressed him:  
"Telemachus, the return to thy home, for the which thou art sighing,  
May it be granted by Zeus, loud-thundering husband of Hera!  
Mine is the granting of gifts; and of heirlooms stored in my palace  
One will I give, most fair, most precious of all my possessions;  
Yea I will give thee a bowl rich-worked; it is solid of silver  
All of it, save that in gold are finished the lips of the vessel;  
Wrought was the bowl by Hephaestus; and hero Phaëdimus gave it,

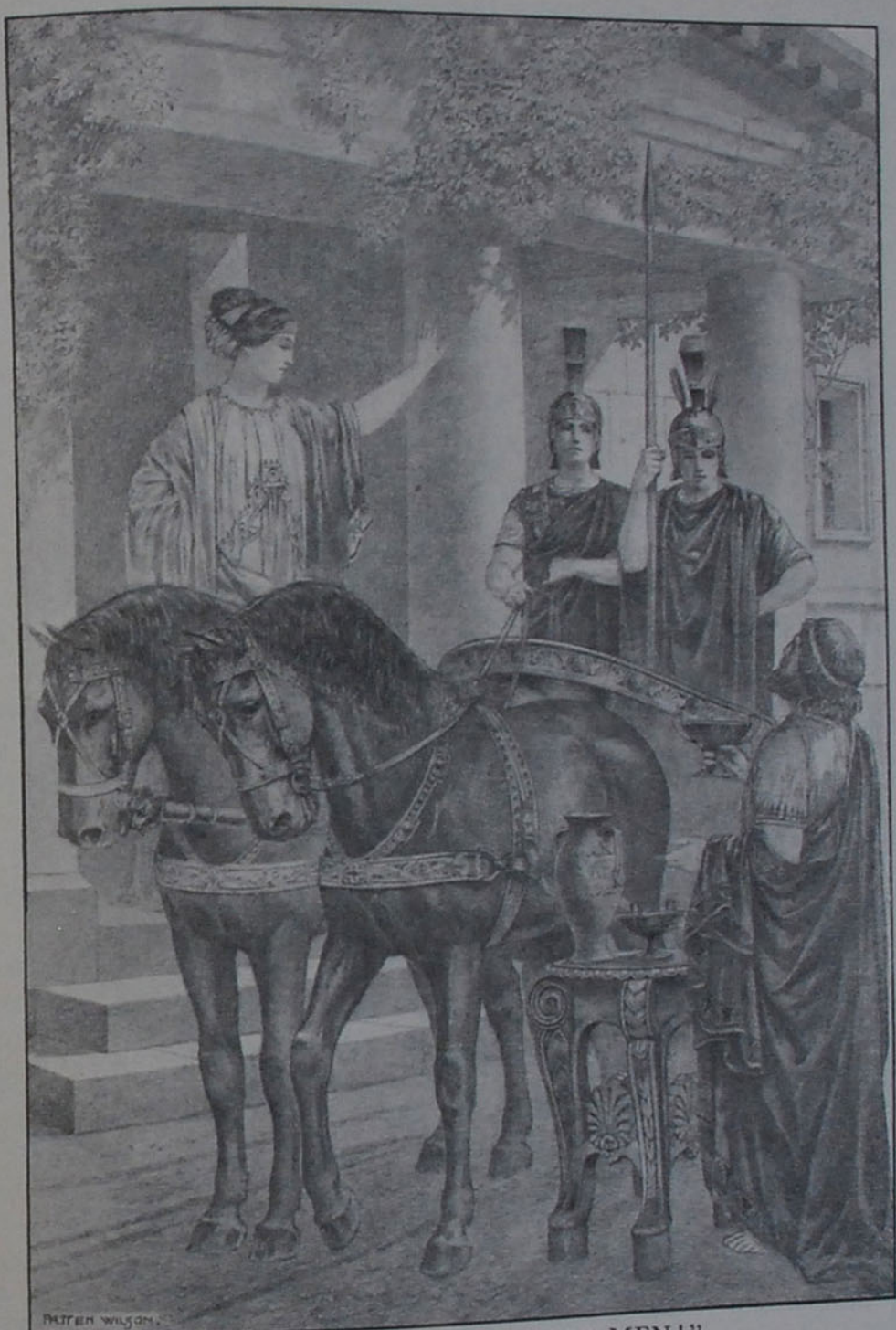


King of the people of Sidon, when once in his palace I sojourned  
While I was voyaging home. This cup will I also present thee."

These words spake Menelaus the prince, and the twy-cupped chalice  
Placed in the hand of his guest; and the stalwart youth Megapenthes  
Brought him the bowl, and in front of him stationed the glittering vessel  
Solid of silver; and next came fair-faced Helen anigh him,  
Holding a robe in her hands, and she spake and greeted him saying:  
"I too bring thee a present, my well-loved child—a memento—  
Handwork of Helen—her gift for the longed-for day of thy marriage,  
Even a robe for thy wife. Let thy mother belov'd in the meanwhile  
Lay it aside in her chamber; and may'st thou in safety and gladness  
Come to thy well-built home once more and the land of thy fathers!"  
These words spoken she reached him the robe, and with joy he received it.  
All of the presents did then Peisistratus take, and he stowed them  
Into the chest of the car, upon each of them gazing in wonder.

Now to the palace he led them, the fair-haired prince Menelaus.  
Here, so soon as they sat them adown on the couches and armchairs,  
Water for washing of hands by a maiden was brought in an ewer  
Beautiful, golden, and over a basin of silver she poured it,  
Bidding them wash; and she stationed a polished table beside them.  
Then did a grave house-dame bring bread, and she laid it before them,  
Lavishly adding thereto from her stores full many a dainty.  
Nigh them Boëthous' son stood carving the meat and dispensing,  
While that the bearer of wine was the son of renowned Menelaus.  
Then did they stretch forth hands to the food that was lying before them,  
Till, when at last they had lost all longing for meat and the wine-cup,  
Forthwith Telemachus and Nestor's glorious offspring  
Yoking the horses and up on the rich-wrought chariot mounting  
Drave from the gate of the house and the loudly reëchoing portal.  
After them hasted on foot fair-haired Menelaus Atrides  
Bringing a bumper—a chalice of gold full-brimmed—in his right hand,  
Wine honey-hearted, to pour as libation before they departed.  
Fronting the horses he stood, and restrained them and uttered his speeding:  
"Now farewell to you both, young men! and to Nestor the chieftain  
Carry my greeting, for like to a father he treated me kindly  
While in the Trojan land were warring the sons of Achæa."  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn made answer:  
"Yea, assuredly just as thou biddst, Zeus-loved Menelaus,  
All we shall tell him whene'er we arrive; and I would that as surely





"FAREWELL TO YOU BOTH, YOUNG MEN!"







Coming to Ithaca's isle 'twere mine to discover Odysseus  
There in his home, and to tell him of all thou hast shown me of kindness  
Ere I returned thus laden with many a beautiful treasure."

E'en as he spake these words on the right came winging an eagle,  
Bearing a great white goose in the clutch of his talons—a tame one  
Robbed from the yard of a farm; and a clamorous rabble pursued it,  
Women and men—but the bird, when it now full nigh had approached them,  
Suddenly swooped to the right in the front of the horses. Exulting  
All of them saw it, and warm was the hope that arose in their bosoms.  
Broken by Nestor's son Peisistratus first was the silence:  
"Captain of warrior hosts, Zeus-loved Menelaus, bethink thee  
Whether to us or to thee some deity sendeth this omen!"

Thus did he speak, and in doubt was the warlike prince Menelaus  
How to respond to the youth and the portent rightly interpret.  
Ere he replied forestalled him the long-robed Helen and answered:  
"Listen, for lo I will utter a thing that the blessed immortals  
Put in my heart to predict—and I trow it will find a fulfilment.  
E'en as to capture the goose that was feeding secure by the farmstead  
Down from the mountain he swooped, from his native haunts and his eyrie,  
Thus shall Odysseus, with all of his toils and his wanderings ended,  
Come once more to his home and avenge him—or even already  
There is arrived, and already is plotting the doom of the suitors."  
Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn made answer:  
"May it be granted by Zeus, loud-thundering husband of Hera!  
Then in the land of my birth as a goddess I'll ever invoke thee."

Speaking, he smote with the lash at the horses: in eager excitement  
Thorough the streets of the city and out to the open they galloped.  
So for the whole of the day kept shaking the yoke on their shoulders,  
Till, when the sun sank down and darkened was every roadway,  
Unto the township of Phera they came, and the house of Diocles,  
Offspring of Orsilochus, who was son of the river Alphéus.  
Here did they rest for the night, and as host he entreated them kindly.

Now when the morning was newly arisen, the roseate-fingered,  
Yoked they the horses and up on the rich-wrought chariot mounting  
Drave from the gate of the house and the loudly reëchoing portal.  
Then did he whip to a start, and the steeds flew eagerly onward,  
Till ere long they arrived at the steep-built city of Pylos.



*Odyssey* Here spake Telemachus and to Nestor's son he addressed him :  
*XV* "Tell me, Peisistratus—couldst thou not promise and also accomplish  
*194-232* This that I ask? We can claim that a lifelong friendship unites us,  
Since that my father by thine was belov'd—and in age we are equals ;  
Ay and to oneness of heart still more will this journey contribute.  
Take me not further, I pray, but allow me to halt by my vessel,  
Lest that the ancient king (as I fear) in his palace detain me,  
Eager to show me a kindness—for home it is need that I hasten."  
Thus did he speak, and a while with his heart Peisistratus communed  
How it was seemly to make him the promise and also fulfil it.  
Thus as he pondered thereon this plan seemed surely the better :  
Turning his horses he came to the beach and the swift-winged vessel ;  
Here on the poop of the ship he embarked the magnificent presents,  
All of the raiment and gold that the prince Menelaus had given ;  
Then he addressed him with swift-winged words and exhorted him, saying :  
"Haste thee aboard, and the whole of thy company bid to embark them,  
Ere I arrive at the palace and bring to my father the tidings,  
Since right well do I know in the mind and the spirit within me,  
Such is his obstinate temper, he ne'er will allow thy departure ;  
Hither himself he will come to invite thee, nor ever, believe me,  
Empty return, and despite thy excuse will be terribly angered."

These words spoken, he started his fair-maned horses and drave them  
On to the Pylian city, and soon was arrived at the palace.  
Telemachus meanwhile uproused and commanded his shipmates :  
"Set ye in order the gear, good friends, in the black-hulled vessel,  
So we can get us aboard and be making a start on the journey."  
Thus when he spake right gladly they hark'd to his words and obeyed him.  
Quickly they mounted the vessel and sat them adown on the benches.

So was he busied and making oblation and vows to Athene  
Close by the stern of the ship, when a man drew nigh him, an exile,  
One that had murdered a man and was fled from a distance, from Argos,  
Famed as a prophet and claiming descent from the stock of Melampus.  
Formerly Pylos, the mother of flocks, was the home of Melampus ;  
Rich was the man and of mighty estate in the Pylian people,  
Till at the last to a country of strangers he came from his homeland,  
Fleeing the proudest of all men living, the arrogant Neleus,  
Him who had seized his possessions and during a year's revolution  
Kept them by force ; meantime, in the dwelling of Phylacus prisoned,  
Heavily fettered he lay and suffered grievous afflictions.



Cause of it all was the daughter of Neleus—ay and his blindness,  
Terrible blindness of heart that was sent by the vengeful Erinys.  
Yet this doom he escaped, and the bellowing cattle to Pylos  
Back out of Phylace driving avenged on the godlike Neleus  
All of that shameful deed, and he brought to the home of his brother  
Neleus' daughter, and gave her as wife; then he left for a far land,  
E'en for the horse-rich pastures of Argos; and here he was fated  
Further to dwell and to rule o'er many a son of the Argives.  
Here did he marry a wife, and a high-roofed homestead he built him;  
Antiphates he begat and Mantius, progeny stalwart;  
Offspring of Antiphates was the valiant-hearted Oicles;  
Then was Oicles the sire of the warrior Amphiaráus,  
Him who was shown by Apollo and Zeus that beareth the aegis  
Every manner of love. Eld's threshold still he attained not,  
Since that he perished at Thebes through gifts to a treacherous woman.  
Amphiaráus was father of Antilochus and Alcmaeon.  
Two sons Mantius also begat, Polyphoides and Cleitus.  
Cleitus was taken from earth by the Morning, the golden-enthronéd,  
All for his beauty's sake—and he dwelleth amid the immortals,  
While that the high-souled prince Polyphoides was made by Apollo  
Greatest of seers, since living no longer was Amphiaráus.  
He to the town Hyperesia moved, enraged with his father;  
Here did he make him a home and predicted the future for all men.  
Now it was this man's son, Theoclymenus named, who approaching  
Closely to Telemachus, stood there at his side and beheld him  
Pouring libation and praying beside of his swift black vessel.  
Then he uplifted his voice and with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Friend, since just in the act of performing oblation I find thee,  
Lo, by thy gift to the god and the deity's self I beseech thee,  
Yea and thy life and the lives of the men that attend thee as shipmates,  
Answer me truly the question I ask thee, nor try to conceal it,  
Whence and what mortal thou beest. Tell too of thy city and parents."

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn made answer:  
"Yea, O stranger, the truth will I tell thee and plainly declare it.  
Ithaca's isle is the land of my birth, and my sire is Odysseus—  
Were he alive!—but alas, by a grievous doom he is perished.  
Wherefore now I am come with my men and my black-hulled vessel  
Tidings to seek of my sire who so long is away from his homeland."  
Then did the godlike seer Theoclymenus answer him saying:  
"I too wander afar—for I murdered a man in my homeland,



*Odyssey* One of my tribe, that hath many a brother and many a kinsman  
*XV* There in the horse-rich pastures of Argos—Achaean of station.  
*273-311* Fearing their vengeance, before that the darkness of death overtook me,  
Thence I am fled, and am fated from people to people to wander.  
Give me a place on thy ship—as a fugitive, lo, I beseech thee!—  
Lest they shall slay me; for closely, methinks, do they follow behind me.”

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
“Nay, if thou wishest it, ne’er will I drive thee away from my vessel.  
Come with us! Also at home thou art welcome to all we can give thee.”  
These words uttered, the brass-bound spear from the hand of the stranger  
Taking, he laid it reclined on the deck of the twy-beaked galley.  
Then embarking aboard of the ocean-voyaging vessel  
Nigh to the steerage he sat him adown, and closely beside him  
Bade Theoclymenus sit, and the shipmates loosened the hawser.  
Forthwith Telemachus uproused and commanded his comrades  
Set their hands to the gear, and they speedily rose and obeyed him.  
Raising the pinewood mast to its height, in the cleft of the cross-bar  
Firmly they fixed it, and bracing it taut to the prow with the forestays  
Hoisted the fair white sails with the ropes tight-twisted of oxhide.  
Sent was a favouring breeze by the grey-eyed goddess Athene,  
Sweeping with vehement gusts thro’ a clear blue sky, that the vessel  
Over the salt sea water with speed might finish her journey.  
Soon past Crouni they sailed and the beautiful river of Chalcis,  
Till, when the sun sank down and darkened was every roadway,  
Sped by the breezes of Zeus she was near to the haven of Pheae,  
Then passed Elis the wonderful land where rule the Epeans.  
Thence to the Pinnacled Isles he directed the course of the vessel,  
Wondering whether his death were lying before him or safety.

Now in the hut was Odysseus again with the good old swineherd  
Sitting at supper, and all of the farmyard fellows beside them,  
Till, when at last they had lost all pleasure in meat and the wine-cup,  
Then in the midst did Odysseus begin, thus testing the swineherd  
Whether he still was inclined to entreat him with kindness and bid him  
There to remain at the farm or to urge him to visit the city:  
“List to my words, Eumaeus, and all of you others, his fellows!  
Early the morn I am minded to get me adown to the city;  
There will I beg, lest here both master and men I shall ruin.  
Give me advice and vouchsafe me a guide right trusty to lead me  
Unto the city. Within it alone I shall fare, as I needs must,



Wandering round in the hope that a cup or a crust will be offered.  
Also I mean to arrive at the palace of godlike Odysseus,  
There to relate what I know to the wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Ay and moreover am fain to apply to the insolent suitors  
Whether a meal they'll give me from all their boundless provisions.  
Easily might I supply them with service, whatever was wished for,  
Since (and of this I assure thee and I beg thee to listen and mark me)  
Under the favour of Hermes the herald of heaven, who alway  
Crowneth the labour of men with the guerdon of grace and of glory,  
Such is my deftness in serving no mortal can hope to excel me  
Either at skilfully building a fire or in cleaving the fuel,  
Ay or at carving or roasting the meat or at brimming the wine-cup,  
Duties at which great folk have service of men that be meaner."

*Odyssey*  
XV  
312-350

Him then in heavy displeasure addressed Eumaeus the swineherd :  
"Out and alas ! how comes it, my friend, such thought is arisen  
Now in thy mind ? By my troth, thou'rt utterly set on perdition,  
Thus intending to venture thyself in the rout of the suitors,  
Whose fierce insolence reacheth aloft to the brazen heaven.  
Underlings such as thyself these men keep not to attend them ;  
Striplings they have, all finely apparelled in mantles and tunics ;  
Gleaming with oil is the head and comely the face when a servant  
Serveth the men at a feast ; and the polished banqueting-tables  
Ever with bread and with flesh and with wine groan heavily laden.  
Nay but abide with us still ! There's none that is harmed by thy presence,  
Neither myself nor another of all of my fellows who live here.  
Willst thou await the return of the well-loved son of Odysseus,  
He will be ready to clothe thee in raiment, in mantle and tunic,  
Ay and will send thee wherever thy heart and thy spirit shall call thee."  
Him gave answer at once long-suffering godlike Odysseus :  
"Would, Eumaeus, that Zeus our Father may love thee as I do,  
Since thou hast given me rest from my roamings and terrible hardships.  
Nought is an evil for man more sad than to rove as an outcast ;  
Yet for the belly—accurséd thing !—full many an insult  
Beareth a man when he suffers as wanderer pain and privation.  
Well now, seeing thou holdest me here, and biddst me await him,  
Give to me tidings, I pray, of the mother of godlike Odysseus,  
Yea and his sire, whom he left on the threshold of eld when he parted.  
Are they alive peradventure and still in the realm of the sunlight ?  
Are they departed already to dwell in the mansion of Hades ?"



*Odyssey*  
XV  
351 - 389

Forthwith answering spake Eumaeus master of swineherds :  
“ Well, O stranger, the truth will I tell thee and plainly declare it.  
Touching Laertes—he liveth ; but Zeus he is ever imploring  
Out of his body to wither his soul in the halls of his homestead,  
So unspeakably mourns he the son that is gone and is vanished,  
Yea and the wife of his youth, wise Anticleia—for sorely  
Grieved he at heart when she died, and to eld untimely it brought him.  
She too perished of grief for her son—for the noble Odysseus.  
Grievous indeed was her death, and I pray none other may end so,  
None that is dwelling anigh and is friendly in word and in action.  
Now while yet she was living on earth, though living in sorrow,  
Still was it ever my joy to inquire and learn of her welfare,  
Since as her child she had loved and with long-robed Ctímene reared me—  
Ctímene, tall fair maiden, the youngest of all of her children—  
Reared us together, and little she honoured me less than her daughter.  
Now when we both had arrived at the season of love and of beauty  
Her for a countless treasure they sent to a Samian chieftain ;  
Me did my lady—whenas she had given me mantle and tunic,  
Beautiful raiment to clothe me withal, and had shod me in sandals—  
Send to the farm ; but she loved me at heart still more than aforetime.  
Now is my happiness vanished away ; but the blessed immortals  
Prosper the work of my hands—this task that I alway attend to ;  
Yea and enough is my food and my drink, and I give to the honest.  
Still, I am able to gain no pleasant news of my mistress  
Neither by word nor deed—for the house by a plague is infested,  
Even this insolent horde ; and a thrall hath greatly the longing  
Now and again with his lady to speak and to learn what is needed,  
Ay and to get him a meal and a drink, and a trifle to carry  
Back to the farm—such trifles as comfort the heart of a servant.”

Him then in turn thus answered and spake deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“ Heav’ns ! how far thou hast wandered when small, Eumaeus the swineherd,  
E’en as a child so far from thy native land and thy parents !  
Come now, tell me the thing that I ask thee and clearly explain it.  
Perished the wide-way’d city of warriors, pillaged by foemen,  
Where was the dwelling-place of thy sire and his lady, thy mother ?  
Or in a lonesome spot while tending the sheep or the oxen  
Captured by hostile men wast thou carried aboard and exported  
Unto the home of this master of thine, who purchased thee dearly ?”

Forthwith answering spake Eumaeus master of swineherds :  
208



“Since, O stranger, thou fain wouldst hear of this matter and learn it,  
Listen in silence and make thee at ease, and quaff of the wine-cup  
There as thou sittest. The night at this season is endless; for sleeping  
Time is enough, and to feast or to list to a tale—and thou needst not  
Lay thee to slumber before it is time. Much sleep is a mischief.  
Touching the others, whoever is bid by his heart and his spirit  
Now can depart to his bed, and as soon as the morning appeareth,  
After his breakfast is done, let him follow the swine of the master.  
We two here in the cottage remaining, and drinking and feasting,  
Each will delight him in hearing the toils and the griefs of the other,  
While we relate of the past—since trouble is sweet to remember,  
After it ends, for a man that hath wandered afar and hath suffered.  
So I will tell thee of all that thou fain wouldst learn of the matter.

There is an isle Syrië (thou hast heard its name peradventure)  
Past the Ortygian isle, where pauseth the sun and returneth;  
Not so exceedingly full is the island of folk, but is fertile,  
Richly abounding in flocks and in herds and in corn and in vineyards.  
Famine hath never invaded the land, nor ever another  
Pestilence such as afflicts poor mortals grievously oft times.  
Here when the folk that inhabit the land grow aged and feeble,  
Then with his silvern bow, and with Artemis, cometh Apollo,  
Launching his painless bolts, and assails them and suddenly slays them.  
Towns in the isle are twain, and the whole is divided amongst them.  
Over the one and the other alike ruled solely my father,  
Ctesius Ormenides, who a god everlasting resembled.  
Once came hither a crew of the famed Phoenician sea-folk,  
Hucksters with countless trinkets and gauds in their black-hulled vessel.  
Now in the house of my sire was a young Phoenician woman  
Comely and tall and endowed with a deftness in exquisite handwork.  
Her with their wileful ways these sly Phoenicians cheated.  
Firstly, anigh to the hollow ship, as she tended the washing,  
One of them met her and won her by love—such love as deceiveth  
Often the womanly heart, yea even of her that is upright.  
Then, as the fellow demanded her name and the name of her homeland,  
Straight she confessed it, describing the high-roofed house of her father:  
‘Native of Sidon, the city abounding in bronze, I avow me,  
Daughter of Arybas—one who was lavishly dowered with riches.  
Taphians stole me away—sea-roving robbers, who caught me  
While from the fields I was coming. They carried me over the ocean  
Here to the home of this master of mine; and he paid for me dearly.’



Then did the man who in secret had won her address her in answer :  
' Say now, wouldst thou be willing to come with us back to thy homeland,  
Unto the high-roofed house of thy father and mother, and see them,  
Even themselves? for I know them to live and be famed for their riches.'  
Then did the woman address him again, and she answered him saying :  
' Ay, 'twere possible so, if ye all were willing, ye sailors,  
Surely to promise on oath to convey me unharmed to my homeland.'

Thus did she speak, and they all of them promised on oath, as she bade them.  
Then, so soon as they gave her the oath and had finished the plighting,  
Spake once more to the sailors the woman and answered them saying :  
' Now keep silence ! Let none of you venture a word to address me,  
None of the crew, if we pass in the street of the village, or haply  
Meet at the fountain, for fear lest somebody go and relate it  
Unto the master at home, and the old man, growing suspicious,  
Straitly confine me in bonds and devise some plan to destroy you.  
Keep ye the matter in mind. Push forward the purchase of cargo.  
Then, when at last your vessel is freighted with store of provisions,  
Speedily send to the palace a message to tell me the tidings.  
Gold I will bring you—whatever shall come to the reach of my fingers ;  
Ay and besides, for my fare, I am willing to make you a present.  
There is a child of the goodman . . . I serve as his nurse in the palace—  
Such a precocious chit . . . on my walks comes trotting beside me.  
Him I shall manage to wheedle aboard ; and a profit enormous  
Sure he will bring, wherever to foreign folk ye export him.'

These words spoken, the woman returned to the beautiful mansion.  
Now for the whole of a year did the sailors, abiding amongst us,  
Traffic and lade on the hollow ship great store of provisions.  
Then, when at last their vessel was freighted and ready for sailing,  
One of them bearing a message they sent to report to the woman.  
So he arrived—sly fellow—and entered the house of my father  
Bringing a necklace of gold that with droplets of amber was beaded.  
Now as the maiden attendants and also their lady, my mother,  
Crowded around in the hall to examine and handle the trinket,  
Bidding their prices, he silently gave to the woman the signal.  
After the sign he had made to the hollow ship he departed.  
Taking me then by the hand she conducted me forth, and it happened,  
Passing the porch of the house, she discovered the tables and goblets  
Left by the guests, who had there on my sire been paying attendance—  
These to the session had gone and the place of the people's assembly.



So three goblets she took and concealing them well in her bosom  
Carried them off—and I went with the woman in innocent folly.  
Set was already the sun and darkened was every roadway  
Ere to the far-famed haven we came—though urgently hasting—  
Where was at anchor the vessel of those Phoenician seamen.  
Forthwith now they embarked, and they took us aboard and departed,  
Sailing the watery ways with a stern-wind sent by the Father.  
Six days long did we sail—and by night no less than by daytime—  
Till when the light of a seventh was added by Father Cronion  
Suddenly smit was the woman by Artemis, darter of arrows ;  
Into the bilge down-dropping she plunged as a gull of the ocean.  
Her dead body, to serve as a spoil for the seals and the fishes,  
Out of the vessel they cast ; and with desolate heart I was left there,  
Till on the Ithacan isle by the wind and the currents of ocean  
Wafted we happ'd ; and there I was bought by the wealth of Laertes.  
So did I come to behold this land on the which I am dwelling.”

Then did Odysseus the offspring of Zeus thus answer him saying :  
“ Ah, Eumaeus, profoundly thou stirrest the spirit within me,  
Telling the tale of thy life—of the toils and the woes thou hast suffered.  
Natheless unto the evil hath Zeus much happiness added  
Bringing thee after thy perils and toils to the home of a master  
Kindly—a master that gives thee of food and of drink in abundance,  
Tending thee well. ’Tis a life right pleasant thou livest—but, ah me !  
Ere I arrived I had roamed through many a city of mortals !”

Thus these twain, as they sat, held converse one with another.  
Then did they lay them to sleep, for a space not long, but a little.  
Soon rose Morning enthroned in her glory.

And now on the sea-shore

Telemachus and his men were striking the sails, and the mast-tree  
Quickly they lowered, and pulled with the oars to her moorings the vessel,  
Then cast sleepers, and after the stern they had fastened with cables  
Out of the vessel they stepped on the surf-beat strand of the ocean,  
Where they prepared them a meal ; and they mingled them fiery red wine.  
Then, when at last they had lost all pleasure in meat and the wine-cup,  
Spake sage Telemachus, and thus he began to address them :  
“ Ye now hasten ahead to the town with the black-hulled vessel !  
Touching myself, I am going to visit the farms and the herdsmen.  
After inspecting the fields I shall come to the city at nightfall.



*Odyssey* Early the morn I shall offer, as wages due for the voyage,  
*XV* Lavish abundance of meat and of savoury wine for a banquet.”

506-544

Then did the godlike seer Theoclymenus answer him saying:  
“Ay but for me, dear child . . . where now shall I go? In his mansion  
Which of thy rockbound Ithaca’s chieftains will offer me shelter?  
Willst thou I make me my way forthwith to thy home and thy mother?”  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn made answer:  
“Were it but otherwise, yes—to the home of my fathers I’d bid thee  
Straight to proceed; for it fails not in welcome to guests; but thou mightst there  
Evilly fare, for I thence shall be absent myself, and my mother  
Ne’er will behold thee; for little she cares in the halls with the suitors  
Oft to appear, but alone in her upper apartment she weaveth.  
Nay, I will name thee another—a man would give thee a welcome.  
Eurymachus he is called, wise Polybus’ glorious offspring.  
He as a god by the people of Ithaca now is regarded,  
Being a man far better than all of the rest; and he greatly  
Longeth my mother to win and to rule in the stead of Odysseus.  
Ah but the Father alone who dwells on the heights of Olympus  
Knows if he first will vouchsafe them espousals or utter destruction.”

Scarce had he spoken when, lo, on the right came flying a falcon,  
Messenger bird of Apollo, the soaring hawk, in his talons  
Clutching and tearing a dove; and to earth fell floating the feathers  
’TwiXt where Telemachus was reclining and beached was his vessel;  
Whom then apart from the rest of the men Theoclymenus calling,  
Gave him a clasp of the hand, as he opened his lips and addressed him:  
“Sure as a sign from a god on the right came flying the falcon!  
Yea and as soon as I saw it I knew that the bird was an omen.  
Telemachus, more royal than yours no race is existing  
Here in the Ithacan land; ye shall aye be established in power.”  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn made answer:  
“Stranger, I pray for the word thou hast spoken to find a fulfilment;  
Then shalt thou speedily find both friendship and many a present  
Come from me—such that whoever shall meet thee will hold thee as blessed.”  
These words spoken, he called Peiraeus, his trusty companion:  
“Clytius’ son, Peiraeus, of all thou’rt ever the foremost  
Me to obey—of the men that as shipmates followed to Pylos.  
Now too listen, and take our friend as a guest to thy homestead!  
Carefully tend him and kindly entreat him until my arrival!”  
Straight did the spearman renowned, Peiraeus, address him in answer:



“Telemachus, yea surely ; and thinkest thou long to remain here,  
Still he shall stay as my guest, nor ever be wanting in welcome.”

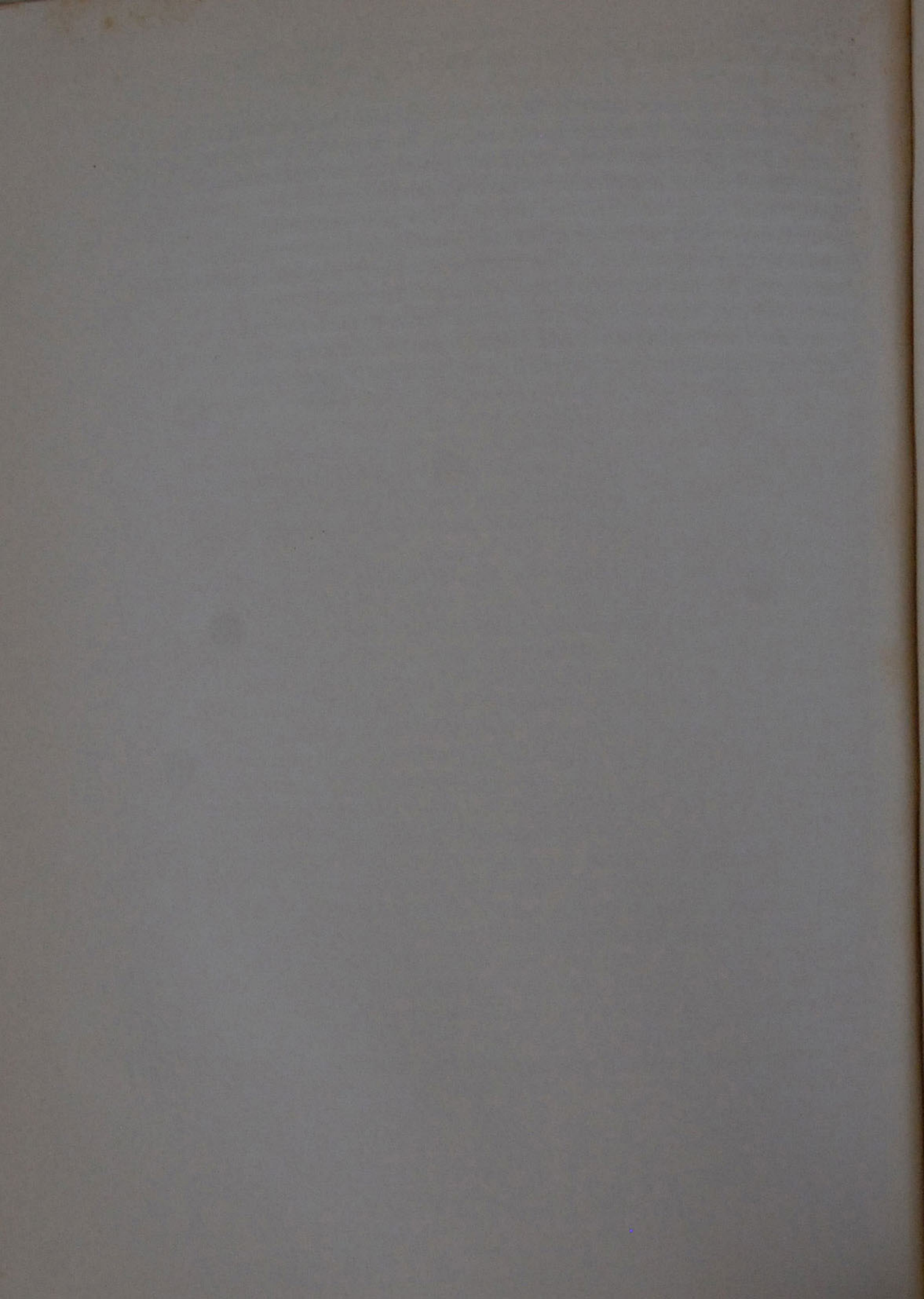
*Odyssey*

*XV*

*545 - 557*

These words uttered he mounted the vessel and called to his comrades,  
Bidding them also embark and unloose from the moorings the cables.  
Then did they get them aboard and they took their seats on the benches.  
Telemachus meanwhile on his feet bound beautiful sandals,  
Also his spear bronze-bladed and mighty, of terrible keenness,  
Took from the deck ; and the men made loose from the moorings the cables.  
Then out-thrusting they sailed for the town, as the prince had commanded,  
Even the well-loved son of the hero, godlike Odysseus.  
Him on his way bare swiftly his feet, till he came to the farmstead  
Where was the numberless drove of his swine, and the good old swineherd  
Watching them even by night, with devotion true to his masters.







# ODYSSEY BOOK XVI

**N**OW in the hut was Odysseus again with the good old swineherd  
Making him ready a breakfast at dawn on the fire they had kindled,  
After the herdsmen had started with droves of the pigs to the pastures.  
Telemachus then approached ; and the dogs from their barking incessant  
Ceased as they fawned on their master, & godlike Odysseus perceived them  
Fawning in joy—and a sound as of footsteps approaching resounded.  
Quickly he turned to the swineherd, and swift-winged words he addressed him :  
“ Surely, methinks, Eumaeus, a comrade of thine, or acquaintance,  
Soon will be here, for the dogs have suddenly ceased from their barking,  
Ay and they fawn in delight ; and I notice a noise as of footsteps.”

All these words not yet had he uttered when, lo, in the doorway  
Stood his belovéd—his son ! Up leapt in amazement the swineherd,  
Out of his hands down-dropping the vessels with which he was busied  
Mixing the glittering wine, and to welcome his master he hastened,  
Kissed him on both of his cheeks, on his beautiful eyes and his forehead,  
Kissed him on both of his hands, while big tears fell from his eyelids.  
Just as a father who welcomes his son with a tender affection,  
One that was absent for ten long years in a distant country,  
Even his darling, his only begotten, whom much he hath grieved for,  
Thus to the godlike Telemachus did the good old swineherd  
Cling, and he kissed him and kissed him, as one that had 'scaped from destruction,  
While with a pitiful cry these swift-winged words he addressed him :  
“ Telemachus, sweet light of my eyes, thou art come ! and I thought not  
E'er to behold thee again when I knew thee departed for Pylos !  
Enter, my child, my belov'd, come, enter ! I long to rejoice me  
Seeing thee here in my home just safely arrived from a far land.  
Seldom it haps that thou comest to visit thy farm and thy herdsmen ;  
Ever thou bidest at home, and thou seemest to find it a pleasure  
There to remain and to gaze at the ravening horde of the suitors.”  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
“ Well, I will do as thou biddest me, dad ; 'tis for this I am come here,  
Even to see thee and learn all news thou art able to give me,  
Whether my mother is still at the palace, or whether already  
One of the wooers has won her to wife, and the bed of Odysseus  
Stript of its bedding is lying befouled, all covered with cobwebs.”

Forthwith answering spake Eumaeus master of swineherds :



“ Ay, assuredly, still with a steadfast heart she abideth  
There in the halls of the palace ; and filled with the gloom of her sorrow  
Waneth the day and waneth the night, while ever she weepeth.”  
These words spoken, the spear bronze-bladed he took from his master.  
Then stept over the threshold of stone and entered the cottage  
Telemachus ; and his father Odysseus, who saw him approaching,  
Rose to vacate him his seat ; but the youth restrained and addressed him :  
“ Seated remain, O stranger ! A seat no doubt I shall find me  
Somewhere else in my farm—and here is the man to provide it !”

Thus did he speak, and Odysseus again sat down, and the swineherd  
Strewed for a seat green branches and covered them o’er with a sheepskin ;  
Here forthwith did the well-loved son of Odysseus recline him,  
While that the trenchers of meat were set by the swineherd before them,  
Even the rest of the roast that was left of the evening supper ;  
Bread moreover he busily hasted to pile in the baskets,  
Wine too, sweet as the honey, he mixed in a mazer of ivy ;  
Then did he sit him adown in the front of the godlike Odysseus.  
So they extended their hands to the food that was lying before them,  
Till, when at last they had lost all longing for meat and the wine-cup,  
Then spake Telemachus addressing the good old swineherd :  
“ Dad, whence cometh the stranger, thy guest ? how haps it that sailors  
Brought him to Ithacan land ? what folk did they boast to belong to ?  
Seeing, methinks, it was never on foot that he hither has journeyed.”

Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
“ Well, now listen, my son, for the whole of the truth I will tell thee.  
First, he avows that his home is the widespread island of Creta.  
Then he affirms he has strayed through many a city of mortals  
Ceaselessly drifting about : such fate did a deity spin him.  
Lastly, escaped from a ship in the which Thesprotian sea-folk  
Held him as slave, he arrived at the farm—and to thee I consign him.  
Deal with him just as thou wilt. As a suppliant, lo, he entreats thee.”

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
“ Ah, Eumaeus, in sooth ’tis a grievous word thou hast spoken.  
How can I hope to receive this stranger as guest in my homestead ?  
Lo—for myself—I am still but a youth, nor as yet can I trust me  
Unto the strength of my hands, should any assail me in anger,  
While for my mother—her heart is divided asunder with doubtings  
Whether with me to remain and attend to the needs of the household,



Honouring duly the bed of her lord and the voice of the people ;  
Or is she meaning to follow as bride some Ithacan chieftain,  
Best of the suitors that woo her—whose offer of gifts is the largest ?  
Touching the stranger—as now he is come to thy home, I shall give him  
Beautiful raiment to clothe him withal, both mantle and tunic ;  
Also a two-edged sword will I give, and provide him with sandals,  
Ay and will send him wherever his heart and his spirit shall call him.  
Else, if thou wishest to keep him thyself as a guest at the farmstead,  
Clothes will I send for him hither and plentiful store of provisions,  
Eatables—lest the expense bring ruin on thee and thy fellows.  
Thither to go—to the suitors—I certainly ne'er will permit him,  
Seeing in truth these men are mightily wanton and cruel,  
Lest they insult him—a thing that to me were terribly grievous,—  
Ay, they can injure him too—for the one midst many opponents,  
Though right sturdy he seems, were quickly o'er mastered by numbers.”

Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus :  
“ Friend—for I trow I possess thy permission to offer an answer—  
Truly the heart in my bosom is wounded to hear thee recounting  
All of the wanton and insolent deeds by the suitors committed  
There in the halls of thy home, in despite of thyself and thy manhood.  
Say, is it really thy will to submit ? or else do the people  
Hold thee perhaps in abhorrence, induced by a warning from heaven ?  
Lay'st thou the fault on thy brothers—on whom to support him in fighting  
Trusteth a man, how grievous soever the feud that ariseth ?  
Would that I too were young and with suchlike feelings affected,  
Either the son of Odysseus the peerless, or even Odysseus  
Come from his wanderings back (since ever to hope is permitted) ;  
Then might even an alien churl cut the head from my shoulders  
Were I to fail me in proving a bane to the whole of that rabble,  
Going at once to the halls of the son of Laertes, Odysseus.  
Should however their numbers, alone as I stand, overwhelm me,  
Verily willing I were far rather to fall in my homestead,  
Ay and to die, than for ever to see such shameful procedure,  
Guests disgracefully treated, and servant-maids of the household  
Haled by the men thro' the halls of my beautiful home to dishonour ;  
Wine too wastefully drawn, and the fellows feasting and feasting  
Recklessly—all for an end that is vain and shall ne'er be accomplished.”

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
“ Well, O stranger, the truth will I tell thee and plainly declare it :

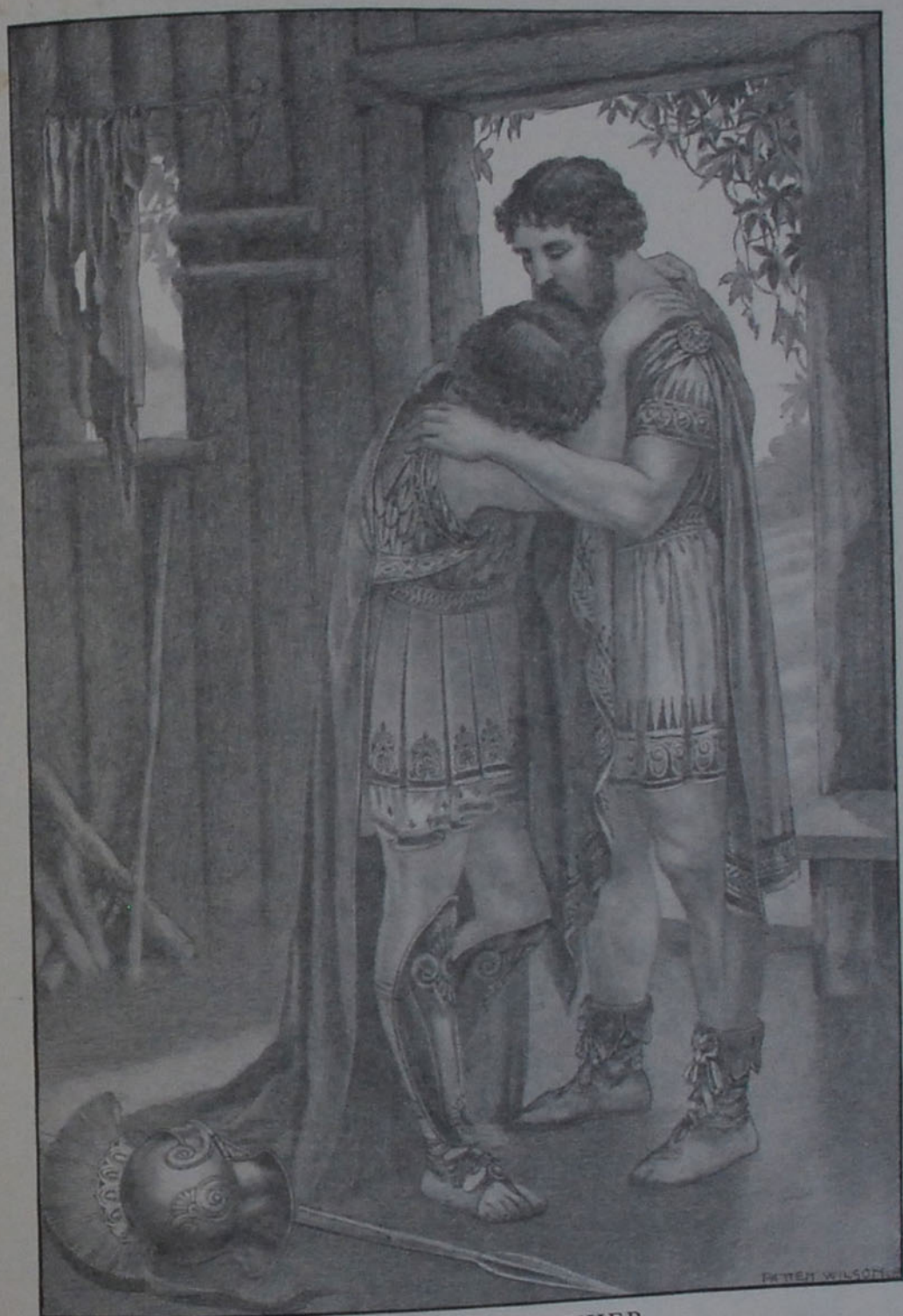


*Odyssey* Neither the whole of the people at all disliketh or hates me,  
*XVI* Nor is the fault in my brothers—on whom to support him in fighting  
*114-158* Trusteth a man, how grievous soever the feud that ariseth,  
Since that Cronion hath doomed our race in its heirs to be single.  
Sole was the son that was born to Arceisius, even Laertes ;  
Sole was the son of Laertes, Odysseus my father, who left me  
Sole in his palace as heir, nor ever had joy of his offspring ;  
Hence it is come that by foes unnumbered is holden my homestead.  
All of the foremost men who as chieftains rule in the islands,  
Samos and Dulichium and the woodland heights of Zacynthus,  
Ay and as many as well as in rockbound Ithaca lord it,  
All come wooing my mother and wasting the wealth of the household.  
She meanwhile dares neither reject their hateful proposals  
Nor can she end it ; and thus do the men, consuming, devouring,  
Ruin my home ; me too they will soon o'erwhelm in its ruin.  
Nay but we know not the truth ; on the knees of the gods it is lying !  
Dad, come haste thee away, and to wise-souled Penelopeia  
Say she hath gotten me safely returned from the journey to Pylos.  
Here I shall stay. Come hither as soon as the message is given.  
Only to her shalt thou give it. Let none of the other Achaeans  
Know of it, since full many a man plots evil against me."

Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
"Ay but I know it, I know it, and well understand what thou biddest !  
Yet come, tell me a thing that I ask thee and plainly declare it !  
While on the road shall I take to Laertes also a message ?  
Ever till now hath the poor old man, though mourning Odysseus,  
Seen to the work of the fields, and together with thralls in the farmstead  
Ever hath eaten and drunk when the heart in his bosom enjoined him.  
Since however the day thou didst sail in the vessel for Pylos  
Never, they say, hath he eaten or drunken again as aforetime,  
Nor hath he seen to the work of the fields, but with wailing and moaning  
Sitteth and mourns, and the flesh on his bones is for ever decreasing."

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
"Yea, it is sad ; but I leave him alone, though truly it grieves me.  
Were all things to depend somehow on the ruling of mortals,  
First would both of us choose for my father to come to the homeland.  
Nay—now, after thy message, return—nor away to the country  
Wander in quest of Laertes, but speak to my mother and bid her  
Send her attendant as quickly as e'er she is able, the house-dame,  
Secretly ;—she is the one should carry the news to the grandsire."





TELEMACHUS RECOGNIZES HIS FATHER







Hearing the message, the swineherd aroused him and, taking his sandals,  
Fastened them under his feet, and he went to the town; but Athene  
Failed not to note, as he came from the farm, Eumaeus the swineherd.  
Nigh she approached, and in form she had likened herself to a woman  
Beautiful, stately of person, and skilful in exquisite handwork.  
Right in the door of the cottage she stood and appeared to Odysseus;  
Neither by Telemachus was she seen, though standing before him  
(Nowise to all do immortals reveal them in visible presence);  
Only Odysseus perceived her, and also the dogs; but they barked not;  
Whining they slunk them away to the end of the cottage and cowered.  
Then did she nod to him, moving her brows; and the godlike Odysseus  
Noting it went from the cottage and passing the wall of the farmyard  
Halted before her; and thus did the goddess Athena address him:  
"Zeus-born son of Laertes, thou wise and wileful Odysseus,  
Now is the moment to speak to thy son and reveal him thy story;  
So shall ye forge you a plot for the doom and the death of the suitors.  
Then to the far-famed city descend; nor fear ye that I too  
Long shall delay to be nigh you—so fiercely I yearn for the combat."  
Spake, and her golden wand she extended, and lo, as it touched him,  
Firstly a fair fresh mantle around him was cast, and a doublet  
Covered his breast, and renewed was his body in stature and manhood;  
Dark once more was the tint of his skin, and in face he was fuller;  
Blue-black bristled the beard once more on his chin as aforetime.

This when the goddess had wrought she departed again, and Odysseus  
Back to the cottage returned; and his well-loved son with amazement  
Stared—and averted his eyes in his dread to behold an immortal.  
Then did he open his lips and with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Wholly another a moment ago, O stranger, thou seemedst.  
Other the clothes thou art wearing and other is also thy person;  
Sure thou art one of the gods who inhabit the infinite heaven.  
Nay then, grant us thy grace! We will offer thee grateful oblations—  
Vessels of gold, well wrought, will we give. Have mercy and spare us!"

Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus:  
"Sooth, I am none of the gods. Why deemst thou me like an immortal?  
Nay, I am nought but thy father—the father for whom thou lamentest,  
Suffering many a woe and many an insult enduring."

These words uttered, his son he embraced, and he kissed him, and teardrops  
Fell from his cheek to the earth. (Till now he had ever restrained them.)



Telemachus nathless, still doubting the man was his father,  
 Once more opened his lips, and in answer he spake to him saying :  
 "No, thou art never Odysseus my sire, but a spirit from heaven  
 Come to beguile me, that ever the more I shall mourn in my sorrow.  
 Ne'er might wonders as these be devised by the wit of a mortal,  
 Never at least by himself; but a god that was present to aid him  
 Easily, just as he willed, might make one youthful or agéd.  
 'Twas but a moment agone thou wast old and in pitiful raiment;  
 Now thou art like to the gods who inhabit the infinite heaven."

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
 "Telemachus, no need to be filled with exceeding amazement  
 Only for this—that thy father is here once more in his homestead.  
 Ne'er will another Odysseus return but the man that thou seest here,  
 Even myself, as I am. Long, long have I suffered and wandered;  
 Now in the twentieth year I am come to the land of my fathers.  
 Touching this marvel, Athena the driver of spoil hath performed it,  
 Making me such as she pleased (to the gods are possible all things),  
 Changing me now to a beggar in semblance—a moment thereafter  
 Turning me into a youth that is clad in a beautiful garment.  
 Easy is all for the gods who inhabit the infinite heaven,  
 Either to grant to a man great glory or else to abase him."

These words spoken, he sat him adown. Then bursting in tears fell  
 Telemachus on the neck of his valiant father and kissed him.

Now in the bosoms of both was a longing awakened for wailing;  
 Loudly they cried; more ceaseless the cry than of birds that bewail them,  
 Ospreys or crook-claw'd vultures lamenting the loss of their younglings  
 Robbed from the nest by a churl ere yet they had gotten their feathers;  
 So incessantly fell from their eyelids the pitiful teardrops;  
 Yea and the light of the sun were set on the long lamentation  
 Had not the youth of a sudden exclaimed, addressing his father:  
 "What was the vessel and what was the crew, dear father, that brought thee  
 Unto the Ithacan isle? What folk do they boast to belong to?  
 Seeing, methinks, it was never on foot that thou hither hast journeyed."

Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus :  
 "Well now, listen, my son—for the whole of the truth I will tell thee:  
 Here was I brought by the famed Phaeacian seamen, who ofttimes  
 Homeward safely escort some wandering wight who arrives there.



While I was lying asleep on the swift-winged vessel they bore me  
Over the ocean, and set me on Ithaca; glorious presents  
Also they gave me of bronze and of gold and of woven apparel.  
These by the grace of the gods are safely bestowed in a cavern.  
Now am I hither arrived by the hest and the help of Athene,  
So that we two may plan for the slaying of foes that molest us.  
Come now, tell me the tale of the suitors! recount me the number!  
So shall I learn how many and who be the men to be dealt with,  
Ay and shall counsel me well with the valiant spirit within me,  
Pondering whether we twain shall be able alone to oppose them  
Sole and unaided, or needs must seek for the succour of others."

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Father, it's true that I ever was told of thy wonderful prowess,  
Told of thy might in the battle as well as thy wisdom in counsel;  
Still—too bold is thy speech. Dread holdeth me. Never, believe me,  
Two could hope to contend with so many and valiant foemen.  
Nor is it merely a ten, or a double of ten, that they number;  
Greater by far is the tale; thou shalt learn it at once; I will count them.  
Hailing from Dulichium, of the choicest youths of the island,  
Fifty and two, and they bring in their train six pages to serve them.  
Then from the island of Samos a couple of dozen of chieftains;  
Also a score at the least of Achaean youths from Zacynthus;  
Lastly, of Ithacan nobles a dozen—the pick of the princes.  
Medon the herald is present with these, and an exquisite singer,  
Also a couple of carles right skilful in carving at banquets.  
Thus, if the whole of the number we find in the palace collected,  
Bitter and baleful I fear might prove the attempt to avenge thee.  
Nay but reflect if perchance thou art able to find us a helper;  
Think if thou knowest of one that is heartily willing to aid us."

Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus:  
"Well, I will tell thee the truth. Attentively listen and mark me!  
Think now! Gained we the help of Athena and also her Father,  
Were it sufficient? or need I to think of another to aid us?"

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Truly redoubtable helpers I hold them—the two that thou namest.  
Yea, and although far off in the clouds they are sitting, they also  
Rule all things on the earth—not only among the immortals."



Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus :  
“ Verily no long time shalt thou find these twain to absent them  
Far from the din of the battle, as soon as the suitors and we two  
Put to the test in the halls of my palace the fury of Ares.  
Well now, thus let us act : so soon as the morning appeareth  
Thou shalt return and consort thee again with the insolent suitors.  
Me then, after a while, shall the swineherd lead to the city  
Likened again to a poor old beggar of pitiful aspect.  
Should they dishonour me, there in my home, let the heart in thy bosom  
Calmly endure it, although right cruel the treatment I suffer ;  
E'en if they drag me along by the feet to the gate of the palace,  
Yea and attack me with missiles—be calm and behold it in silence !  
Natheless, speak an thou wilt, and advise them to cease from their folly !  
Urge and enjoin them with gentle entreaty ! But ne'er, I assure thee,  
Ne'er will they listen ; for truly the day of their doom is upon them.  
Also a thing will I say, which carefully mark and remember :  
Should in her wisdom the goddess Athena remind and exhort me,  
Then with a nod I shall give thee a sign ; and as soon as thou not'st it,  
All of the weapons of war we possess in the palace collecting  
Stow them away in the lofty recess of the room of the treasure,  
Every one—and with words of persuasion addressing the suitors  
Try to cajole them, if missing the arms they shall ply thee with questions.  
Say : ‘ I've stowed them because of the smoke. They resemble no longer  
Those once left by Odysseus behind him when sailing for Troyland ;  
Ruined is all by the breath of the fire, where'er it has reached them.  
Also a reason was put in my mind by the Father Cronion,  
Even the fear lest heated with wine and beginning to quarrel  
One on the other ye fall and with blood bring shame on your feastings,  
Ay and your wooings ; for iron itself attracteth to bloodshed.’  
Only remember for us to retain two lances and broadswords,  
Also a couple of targets of oxhide, ready to handle,  
So we can rush and possess us thereof ; then unto their ruin  
Pallas Athena the goddess and counsellor Zeus will entice them.  
Further, a thing will I say, which carefully mark and remember :  
Art thou indeed of the blood of my fathers and truly my offspring,  
See to it nobody learn that Odysseus is here in his homestead ;  
Neither Laertes himself may know of it, neither the swineherd ;  
None of the thralls of the palace, nor Penelopeia thy mother.  
Only shall I and thyself the fidelity test of the women,  
Ay and of some of the thralls make trial, to gain us assurance  
Whether of all still any remaineth that fears and respects us,



Which too payeth thee neither regard nor esteems thee as master."

*Odyssey*

*XVI*

*307 - 343*

Him straightway then in answer addressed his illustrious offspring:  
"Father, methinks, right soon of the spirit that dwelleth within me  
Proof thou shalt have. Not at all light-minded frivolity guides me.  
Yea, but I deem thy intent would nowise bring an advantage  
Either to thee or to me; and I urge thee to give it reflexion.  
Time thou wilt spend and in vain thus testing the thralls on the farm-lands  
Wandering round; meanwhile these insolent fellows securely  
All our wealth in the palace devour, and the waste is unending.  
Still I exhort thee to gain us assurance concerning the women,  
Which of them honour thee not and which are guiltless among them.  
Going around to the steadings and testing the men I am truly  
Loth to advise. 'Twere easy to manage the matter hereafter,  
Art thou assured of a pledge from the Father that beareth the aegis."

While these twain held converse together the one with the other  
Nearing the Ithacan port was the well-built vessel that erstwhile  
Safely from Pylos had brought prince Telemachus and his comrades.  
These, when at last they arrived at the deep expanse of the harbour,  
High on the sands uphauling the black-hulled vessel they left her,  
While that the tackle was borne by a band of courageous attendants.  
Quickly to Clytius' mansion they carried the beautiful presents;  
Then despatching a herald at once to the house of Odysseus  
Bade him to carry the message to wise-souled Penelopeia  
Telemachus had arrived at the farm and had bidden the vessel  
Keep on her course to the town, that the high-souled lady his mother  
Now might rest from her fears and the shedding incessant of teardrops.

These twain lighted the one on the other—the herald and swineherd—  
Both of them seeking the queen, with the selfsame news to impart her.  
So, when at last they arrived at the house of the glorious chieftain,  
First in the midst of the maiden attendants addressed her the herald:  
"Lady, I bring thee a message: thy son is arrived, thy beloved."  
Then came forward the swineherd and standing anigh her reported  
All of the message her son, her beloved, had bidden him give her;  
Till, when at last he had ended the message enjoined by his master,  
Leaving the palace and garths, once more to his swine he betook him.

Now on the soul of the suitors astonishment fell and confusion.  
Out of the hall of the palace they passed by the wall of the courtyard.



*Odyssey*  
*XVI*  
*344-382* There on the benches they sat them adown in the front of the gateway.  
Eurymachus then began, prince Polybus' son, to address them :  
"Comrades, truly a fine and an impudent deed hath accomplished  
Telemachus with this voyage we thought he'd never accomplish.  
Come, let us launch us a good black vessel, the best of the galleys,  
Ship then as rowers aboard of it seamen, who quickly as may be  
Word to the others shall carry at once to return to the city."

Not yet all he had uttered when, turning his head as he sat there,  
Amphinomus was aware of the ship in the bay of the harbour  
Lowering sail, and the oarage at rest in the hands of the rowers.  
So with a lightsome laughter he spake in the midst of his comrades :  
"Hurry is none for a message—Behold ! they are here in the harbour.  
Either a deity told them or else peradventure they sighted,  
While she was passing, the vessel, but were not able to catch her."

Thus did he speak, and arising they went to the shore of the ocean.  
Speedily here uphauling the black-hulled vessel they beached her,  
While that the tackle was borne by a band of courageous attendants.  
Thence in a body they fared to the place of assembly, and no one  
Either of youths or of elders besides they permitted to enter.  
Then rose Antinoüs, Eupithes' son, to address them :  
"Lo now ! surely immortals delivered this fellow from evil !  
Sentinels sat all day on the wind-swept height of a headland,  
Many and watching in turn, and at even, when set was the sunlight,  
Ne'er did we lay us to sleep on the shore, but afloat on the ocean  
Cruised in the swift-winged ship and awaited the sacred morning,  
Lying in wait for this fellow himself, to entrap and destroy him,  
Telemachus—whom a god meanwhile led homeward in safety.  
Come now, straight let us plan some violent death for this fellow  
Telemachus, nor again let him give us the slip—for I warrant  
Never as long as the lad is alive shall we settle this matter,  
Since he is clever himself, with a wit right ready at plotting,  
Nor do the people regard us with favour at all as aforetime.  
Come, let us do it before he has called the Achaeans together  
Unto a meeting ; for ne'er will he slacken his efforts, I warrant ;  
Nay he will wax in his wrath, and will rise in the council and tell them  
How that we wove for his sudden destruction but failed to ensnare him.  
Scarce will the people approve when they hear of the shameful proceedings ;  
Rather, I fear, they will bring some evil upon us and chase us  
Forth from this country of ours to the land of a nation of strangers.



Come, let us hasten to seize him, afar from the town on the farm-lands,  
Or on the road. Let us keep for ourselves his estate and his chattels,  
Parting them fairly amongst us, but leaving the right to the homestead  
Unto his mother and unto the man who shall win her in marriage.  
Should however the word I have spoken displease you, and should ye  
Wish him to live and be master of all his paternal possessions,  
Then no more let us eat of the pleasant stores of his substance,  
Gathering hither to feast ; let us each one out of his homestead  
Try with his presents to woo her as wife ; and at last she will marry  
Him that shall offer the most and is destined by heaven to win her."

So did he speak ; but they all sat utterly silent and speechless,  
Till prince Amphinomus made answer, and thus he addressed them  
(Famed was the prince, and his sire was the son of Aretias, Nisus ;  
Leading the suitors he came from the island of pasture and corn-land  
Dulichium, and in speech he was pleasing to Penelopeia  
Most of them all ; for in truth he was gifted with good understanding :)  
So with a kindly intent he arose and began to address them :  
"Never—to speak for myself, O friends—can I wish you to murder  
Telemachus. 'Tis a deed right dreadful to murder a person  
Royal of race. Nay, first let us ask for the counsel of heaven.  
Should the oracular answers of Zeus the Almighty approve it,  
Then will I kill him myself, or will urge all others to do so.  
Should the immortals oppose it, I bid you to cease from the project."

Thus spake Amphinomus, and his words found favour among them.  
So forthwith they arose and they went to the house of Odysseus.  
Entering here in the hall on the polished seats they reclined them.

Now did a new thought come to the wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Even to stand in the sight of the lawless and insolent suitors,  
Since she had heard of the death of her son that was planned in the palace  
(Medon the herald informed her, who oft to the plottings had listened).  
So to the banqueting-hall she betook her amidst of her maidens,  
Till, when at last she had come to the suitors, that fairest of women  
Stood by the post of the door of the massively builded apartment  
Holding in front of her cheeks soft folds of her glistening head-dress ;  
Then she addressed her to Antinous and reproached and rebuked him :  
"Antinous, outrageous deviser of evil ! They call thee  
Here in the Ithacan people of all of thy fellows the foremost  
Both as a speaker and also as counsellor. Such thou wast never.



Madman! Wherefore art weaving for Telemachus his destruction,  
Weaving his death, and regardest not suppliants having to help them  
Zeus as a witness? A terrible deed is to murder a comrade.  
Hast thou forgotten the time when thy sire fled hither for safety  
Fearing the people? for truly exceedingly great was their anger,  
Since he had followed a band of the Taphian pirates and with them  
Harried Thesprotian folk, the allies of the Ithacan nation;  
So they had vowed to destroy him—to tear him the heart from the body—  
Ay and to eat his estate—his abundant and splendid possessions.  
Then did Odysseus restrain them and curb them in spite of their fury;  
Whose house now thou consum'st with impunity, wooing his consort,  
Slaying his son, and bringing on me an unspeakable sorrow.  
Nay but I bid thee to cease and to order the others to cease too."

Forthwith Eurymachus, prince Polybus' son, gave answer:  
"Daughter of Icarius, O wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Cease from thy fears, and let nought of this matter disquiet thy spirit.  
Nowhere liveth a man nor shall ever be born to existence  
Such as to raise 'gainst Telemachus thy beloved a finger  
While on the earth I am living at least and beholding the sunlight.  
This will I venture to say, and it surely will find a fulfilment:  
Soon with the dark red blood of the man were dripping a spear-blade,  
Even my own; for of old did Odysseus, the sacker of cities,  
Taking me oft on his knees from the roast some savoury morsel  
Set in my hands, and he held to my lips red wine in a goblet.  
Therefore is Telemachus most dear to me—even of all men  
Dearest; nor needeth he fear, I assure him, that death shall assail him—  
Not from the suitors at least: none 'scapes when it cometh from heaven."

Thus did he comforting speak, but at heart he was plotting to slay him.  
Then she ascended again to her glistening upper apartment;  
Here she lamented Odysseus her lord, her beloved, till softly  
Slumber delicious was poured on her eyes by the goddess Athene.

Now in the even to Telemachus and Odysseus the swineherd  
Came; and he found them, the one and the other, preparing the supper  
After a pig had been slaughtered, a yearling. (Already Athene,  
Once more drawing anigh to Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
Back with a stroke of her wand to an aged beggar had changed him,  
Also had clad him in sorry apparel, for fear that the swineherd  
Seeing him there might know him and tell wise Penelopeia,



Hasting to take her the news, nor keep it concealed in his bosom.)  
First spake Telemachus to the swineherd, and thus he addressed him :  
“So thou art back, good friend ! Come, tell us the news of the city !  
Are they already arrived, those lordly and arrogant suitors,  
Back from the ambush, or still do they watch for my homeward returning ?”  
Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
“Nay but I cared not at all such tidings to seek and to ask for  
Lounging about in the town ; for the spirit within me was urgent,  
After my message was done, to depart right speedily homeward.  
Also I happened to meet with the messenger swift of thy comrades,  
Even thy herald, and he first told to thy mother the tidings.  
One thing more however I know—with my eyes I beheld it.  
Just as I reached in my faring the hill that is sacred to Hermes,  
Over the city, I sighted a swift-winged ship that was steering  
Into the Ithacan harbour with men right many aboard her ;  
Filled was the vessel with shields and it bristled with numberless spear-points.  
These were (so I imagined) the suitors ; but truly I know not.”

Thus did he speak, while smiling the stalwart son of Odysseus  
Looked in the eyes of his father, avoiding the gaze of the swineherd.

Now when at last they had finished their work and the supper was ready,  
Fell they a-feasting and sated their souls with the banquet abundant,  
Till, when at last they had lost all longing for meat and the wine-cup,  
Then they bethought them of rest and accepted the blessing of slumber.







# ODYSSEY BOOK XVII

**N**OW when the morning was newly arisen, the roseate-fingered,  
Telemachus, loved son of the godlike hero Odysseus,  
Straightway under his feet bound firmly his beautiful sandals,  
Took then his stalwart spear, well fitting the grasp of his fingers,  
Meaning to start forthwith for the town; & hespake to his swineherd :  
“Well now, dad, I shall go to the city in order to show me  
Unto my mother, for never—of this I am sure—she will never  
Cease from her wretched bewailing and shedding of tears and lamenting  
Ere she beholdeth my face. Now list to the orders I give thee :  
This poor stranger I wish thee to guide to the city and bid him  
There go beg for his food, and let every one who is willing  
Reach him a crust and a cup ; but for me it is possible nowise  
All such beggars to house, for my spirit is burdened with sorrows.  
Should he be sorely offended thereat, he will only be making  
All of it worse for himself. I prefer to be open and truthful.”

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“Neither myself, O friend, am I wishful at all to be kept here,  
Since for a beggar it's better by far in the town than the country  
Begging his bread. I shall get it from every one that is willing.  
Nor am I longer, I trow, of an age to abide on a farmstead  
Where I shall need to obey the commands of a master in all things.  
Nay now, go on thy way. This man, as thou biddest, shall guide me,  
After I've thaw'd me a bit by the fire and the sunlight is warmer.  
Wearing a raiment so terribly tattered I fear to encounter  
Hoar-frost early a-morn; and ye said that the city is distant.”

Thus did he speak, and the youth went forth of the hut and the farmyard  
Striding apace ; and he sowed as he went ill doom for the suitors ;  
Till, when at last he arrived at the pleasant abode of his fathers,  
Taking the spear that he bore on a high roof-pillar he leaned it ;  
Over the threshold of stone then stepping he entered the mansion.  
Here was the first to behold him the old nurse Eurycleia,  
While she was strewing the seats and their delicate carvings with fleeces.  
Sobbing she hurried to meet him, and round him assembled the others,  
All of the women attendants of long-enduring Odysseus,  
Lovingly offering welcome and kissing his head and his shoulders.  
Then came forth of her chamber the wise-souled Penelopeia,



Like to the daughter of Leto or Queen Aphrodite the golden,  
Fell on the neck of her child, her belov'd, and embraced him, and sobbing  
Kissed him on both of his cheeks, on his beautiful eyes and his forehead ;  
Then with a pitiful cry these swift-winged words she addressed him :  
"Telemachus, sweet light of my eyes, thou art come ! and I thought not  
E'er to behold thee again when I knew thee departed for Pylos  
Secretly—ay and despite of my wishes—to seek for thy father.  
Ah but inform me at once : was a sign to be seen of his presence ?"  
Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
"Mother, arouse no wailing, I pray thee, nor stir in my bosom  
Sorrow of heart ! I am barely escapéd from utter destruction.  
Nay now, bathe thee in water and cast fresh raiment around thee,  
Then to thy upper apartment ascend with the women thy handmaids ;  
There make vows to perform to the gods sufficing oblation,  
Praying that Zeus may haply accomplish the work of requital.  
Now I shall go to the square and invite me a guest to the palace,  
Even a stranger who joined us when hither returning from Pylos.  
Him did I forward send with the rest of my goodly companions,  
Telling my mate Peiraeus to take him as guest to his homestead,  
Yea and to treat him with care and with honour until my arrival."

Thus did he speak, and the word that he uttered abode with her wingless.  
Forthwith bathing in water she cast fresh raiment around her,  
Then made vows to perform to the gods sufficing oblation,  
Praying that Zeus might haply accomplish the work of requital.  
Telemachus straightway fared forth from the hall of the palace,  
Bearing a spear in his hand, and by dogs fleet-footed was followed.  
O'er him a wondrous beauty was shed by the goddess Athene,  
So that the folk all gazed in astonishment while he approached them.  
Round him at once there gathered a throng of the arrogant suitors  
Speaking him fair, while deep in their bosoms they brooded on evil.  
These however he shunned and the press of the people avoiding  
Came where Mentor was sitting with Antiphos and Halitherses,  
Friends still faithful as ever of yore to the house of his father.  
Here then he sat him adown ; and they asked him of all that had happened.

Now Peiraeus approached, bold spearman, escorting the stranger  
Thorough the town to the place of the council ; nor longer a moment  
Telemachus held back from the stranger, but hastened to meet him.  
First however began Peiraeus to speak and addressed him :  
"Telemachus, send some of thy maidens at once to my homestead,



So that they bring to thee all of the gifts of the prince Menelaus."  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
"Nay, Peiraeus, we know not as yet how all shall be ended.  
Should these arrogant suitors infesting the halls of my mansion  
Slay me by stealth, and divide my paternal possessions among them,  
Rather for thee to enjoy than for any of them be the presents!  
Should however I sow for the fellows death and destruction,  
Then shall I gladly permit thee to bring these gifts to my homestead."

These words uttered, he guided his wayworn guest to the palace,  
Till, when at last they arrived at the pleasant abode of his fathers,  
Laying aside their mantles of wool on the chairs and the couches,  
Into the bath with its tub well-polished they entered and washed them.  
Then, when the women had bathed them and rubbed them with oil of the olive,  
Throwing around them again soft woollen mantles and tunics,  
Out of the tub of the bath they returned and on couches reclined them.  
Water for washing of hands by a maiden was brought in an ewer  
Beautiful, golden ; and over a basin of silver she poured it,  
Bidding them wash ; and she stationed a polished table beside them.  
Then did the grave house-dame bring bread, and she laid it before them,  
Lavishly adding thereto from her stores full many a dainty.

Fronting the prince was his mother, anigh to the post of the doorway,  
Lying reclined on her couch, and a delicate thread she was spinning.  
Then did they stretch forth hands to the food that was lying before them,  
Till, when at last they had lost all longing for meat and the wine-cup,  
Thus she began to address him, the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
"Telemachus, I shall now to my upper apartment ascending  
Lay me again on the bed that is ever the place of my groanings,  
Watered so oft by my tears from the day that Odysseus thy father  
Sailed with the lordly Atridae for Ilion. Yea, for thou car'st not,  
Ere that the arrogant suitors return to the hall of the palace,  
Plainly to tell me if aught thou hast heard of thy father's returning."

Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
"Well now, mother, the whole of the truth I will fully relate thee.  
Firstly to Pylos we came, where Nestor, the prince of the people,  
Bidding me welcome as guest in his high-roofed palace received me,  
Lovingly treated me too, as a father his son that has wandered  
Long in a country of strangers and newly is come to his homeland.  
Lovingly thus by the king and his valiant sons I was treated.



Still, of my sire, stout-hearted Odysseus, as yet, he asserted,  
Whether as dead or alive, no mortal had given him tidings.  
Natheless unto the spearman renowned, Menelaus Atrides,  
Onward he sent me, and steeds and a strong-built car he provided.  
Here too Helen of Argos I saw, whose beauty so many  
Sufferings brought, by the will of the gods, on the Trojans and Argives.  
Forthwith questioned me then Menelaus good at the war-cry  
What was the wish that had led me to visit divine Lacedaemon ;  
Straight I replied and the whole of the truth to the prince I related.  
Then once more did he speak and thus he addressed me in answer :  
'Nay, by the gods ! in the bed of a man right valiant-hearted  
E'en as it haps when a hind in the lair of a powerful lion  
Maketh a bed for her fawns, new-litter'd and delicate sucklings,  
Fares then forth to the slopes and the grassy ravines of the mountains  
Seeking for pasture—and lo, to his covert returning the lion  
Suddenly maketh of both of the yeanlings a terrible ending ;  
Thus shall a terrible ending be made of the men by Odysseus.  
Would that, by Father Zeus and Athena and Phoebus Apollo,  
Such as he proved when of yore in the flourishing island of Lesbos  
Fearless he met with the huge Philomeleides in a contest,  
Wrestled and heavily threw him, and all the Achaeans exulted ;  
Would that he came—e'en such an Odysseus—to visit the suitors,  
Bringing to all of them speedy perdition and nuptials of anguish !  
Now for the matter whereof thou dost ask and entreat me, I promise  
Nought will I wrest from the truth, nor evasively speak and deceive thee ;  
All that the ancient god of the sea—that prophet unerring—  
Told me, of this will I nought keep back nor attempt to conceal it.  
Once on an island, he said, he had seen him and suffering sorely,  
Held in the halls of Calypso the nymph ; and she still with compulsion  
Keepeth him there all hopeless of reaching the land of his fathers,  
Since no ship he possesses with oars well fitted or comrades  
Such as to help him to traverse the wide expanses of ocean.'  
Such words uttered the spearman renown'd Menelaus Atrides.  
This then finished I started again, and a favouring stern-breeze  
Sent by the gods soon wafted me back to the land of my fathers."

Thus did he end, and his words moved deeply the heart in her bosom.  
Then did the seer divine Theoclymenus speak and address her :  
"Lady and honoured wife of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
He knows nothing for certain ; but list to the word I shall utter :



Lo as a prophet I tell thee the truth nor will try to conceal it :  
First then witness it Zeus, and the table at which I am welcomed,  
Yea and the hearth to the which I am come of the noble Odysseus,  
Verily now already Odysseus is here in his homeland  
Resting or stealing around ; and of all these crimes he is learning ;  
Yea he is here, and is sowing disaster for all of the suitors,—  
Such was the omen that lately anigh to the well-decked vessel,  
Where I was sitting, I saw ; and to Telemachus I proclaimed it.”  
Him then in turn gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“ Ah and I would, O stranger, thy word might find a fulfilment !  
Quickly enough thou’dst know of my friendship, and many a present  
Out of my hands, and be envied of every mortal that met thee.”

Thus these three as they sat held converse one with another.  
Meantime sported the suitors in front of the hall of Odysseus  
Taking delight in the hurling of spears and in casting the discus,  
Using the levelled ground that was often the scene of their uproars,  
Till, when the season of supper was there and from every quarter  
Came from the pastures the sheep, with the men who conducted them away,  
Then spake Medon the herald (the one that of all of the henchmen  
Pleased them the best and was aye in attendance whenever they feasted):  
“ Now, young masters, with sports all hearts are fully contented ;  
Get you again to the house, and a banquet we there will prepare us.  
Much do I know that is worse than enjoying a supper in season.”

Thus as he spake they arose and departed, obeying his summons.  
Then, when they all had arrived at the fair-built house of Odysseus,  
Laying aside their mantles of wool on the chairs and the couches,  
Straight of the sheep and the goats they began choice fatlings to slaughter,  
Slaughtered as well fat hogs, and they took of the cattle a heifer,  
Making them ready a feast.

But to start for the town from the farmstead

Now did Odysseus and also the good old swineherd bestir them.  
Then of the twain first spake Eumaeus master of swineherds :  
“ Since thou art eagerly wishing, my friend, to be gone to the city  
Even to-day, as the master commanded—although for my own part  
Here far liefer I’d leave thee behind as a guard of the steading—  
Natheless, since I revere him and dread lest haply hereafter  
Words of rebuke he shall utter (it pains when a master reproves one),  
So come now let us start, for the day, as thou seest, is already



*Odyssey* Fully advanced; it will soon strike colder as even approacheth."

XVII  
191-227

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
"Ay but I know it, I know it, and well understand what thou wishest.  
Well—let us go! Thou shalt guide me the whole of the way to the city.  
Give me a stick, I beseech thee, if one cut ready thou ownest,  
Such as to steady my steps; for ye called it a treacherous footpath."  
These words spoken he slung on his shoulders the beggarly wallet,  
Terribly tattered and torn, with a twisted cord to suspend it,  
While Eumaeus provided a staff—e'en such as he wished for.

Thus these twain fared forth; but the dogs and the drivers remained there  
Guarding the farm, while down to the city he guided his master  
Under the form of a beggar, a man right wretched and agéd,  
Staying his steps with a staff and invested in sorry apparel.

So when at last by a path full narrow and stony descending  
Nigh to the gate of the city they came, they arrived at a fountain  
Bountiful, basin'd in stone, whence water is drawn by the townsman  
(Ithacus built it, and Neritus later and also Polyctor).  
Round it a thicket of alders, that love to be nourished by moisture,  
Wholly encircled the spring; and the clear cold water was falling  
Down from the height of a rock, and above was erected an altar  
Unto the nymphs, at the which all travellers made an oblation.  
Here did it hap that the goatherd Melanthius lighted upon them,  
Driving his goats—prime beasts for the food of the suitors selected,  
Chosen from all of the flocks. And he brought two drivers to help him.

Now as he saw those twain he reviled them, and loudly addressed them  
Words indecent and shocking that angered the heart of Odysseus:  
"Lo and behold! E'en so! One scoundrel is leading another!  
How it is true that a like and like heav'n bringeth together!  
Where art thou taking this gluttonous hog, thou detestable swineherd—  
Taking this pestilent knave of a beggar, this spoiler of banquets,  
One that for aye will be loafing and rubbing his shoulders on door-posts,  
Begging for morsels of meat?—not, I trow, for a sword or a kettle!  
Shouldst thou allow me the lout to be left as a guard in my stading,  
Sweep me the stalls and supply to the kids fresh branches for fodder,  
Soon with the swilling of whey he'd grow him a thigh—and a fat one!  
Since however a right bad trade he hath learned, he will never  
Willingly set him to work, for the tramping and begging is doubtless





PATTEN WILSON.

THE MEETING WITH MELANTHIUS







More to his mind, and to batten on doles his insatiate belly.  
Hark ! I will tell thee a thing that will certainly find a fulfilment :  
Should he attempt to approach to the palace of godlike Odysseus,  
Soon at his head will be hurled by the men full many a footstool,  
Barking his ribs, as around all over the palace they pelt him."

These words said, in his fury he kicked as he passed at Odysseus,  
Striking his hip—but to thrust him aside from the path it availed not.  
Steadily still he remained on the road, and he pondered in spirit  
Whether to rush at the fellow and flog him to death with his cudgel,  
Or by the ankles to lift him and shatter his skull on the roadway.  
Still he endured it, restraining his wrath ; and the swineherd in anger  
Glared at the man and uplifting his hands made loud invocation :  
" Daughters of Zeus, O Nymphs of the fountain, if ever Odysseus  
Offered you roasted oblation of thighs enwrappt in the caul-fat  
Either of rams or of kids, vouchsafe me this longing's fulfilment :  
O for the master himself to return ! Some deity bring him !  
Then shall he scatter to nothing the whole of thy vaunting and glory  
Which thou in arrogance bruitest abroad, down here in the city  
Loafing, and letting thy flocks by the knavish herdsmen be ruined."  
Him then in turn gave answer Melanthius master of goatherds :  
" Nay by the gods, just list to the bark of the venomous mongrel !  
Soon I shall get him aboard of a black-deck'd vessel and take him  
Far from the Ithacan isle, and a fortune fine he shall win me.  
Ay and for Telemachus—with his silvern bow may Apollo  
Smite him to-day ! Or I would that he died by the hands of the suitors,  
Seeing the day of return for Odysseus is vanished for ever."

These words uttered he left them, and leisurely footing they followed,  
While that he hastened before and arrived full soon at the palace,  
Straightway entered, and sat him adown in the midst of the suitors  
Opposite Eurymachus, who of all to his soul was the dearest.  
Quickly a portion of meat was conveyed to his side by the servants,  
While that the grave house-dame brought bread, and she set it before him  
Bidding him eat.

Meantime was Odysseus arrived with the swineherd.  
Nigh to the palace they halted, and music was wafted around them,  
Tones of a hollow lute ; for beginning to sing was the minstrel  
Phemius. Grasping his hand then spake to the swineherd Odysseus :  
" Sure, it is here, Eumaeus—the beautiful home of Odysseus !



*Odyssey* XVII 265 - 303  
Yea and in sooth it is easily known midst many a mansion.  
Buildings on buildings! and see how skilfully planned is the courtyard!  
Look at the wall and the coping of battlements! Look at the portal,  
Double and massively barr'd! 'Twould fear no arms of assailants!  
Also I ween that within is a company holding a revel,  
Many a man—for a savour is floating around us, and music,  
Tones of a lute, which heaven hath wedded as consort to banquets."  
Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd:  
"Easily guessed!—and in sooth ere now not a fool thou appearedst.  
Well now, come, let us think how next we shall act in the matter.  
Either do thou first enter the pleasant abodes of the palace  
Unto the throng of the suitors, and I outside will await thee,  
Else, if it pleaseth thee more, stay here, and as first I will enter.  
Long however remain not, for fear lest any beholding  
Pelt thee and drive thee away. Now think what is best, I beseech thee."

Forthwith answering spake long-suffering godlike Odysseus:  
"Ay but I know it, I know it, and well understand what thou wishest.  
Well then, thou be the foremost to enter; I here will await thee.  
Verily neither of missiles nor blows am I lacking in knowledge!  
Hardened in sooth is my heart—so many a hardship I suffered  
Tossed on the sea and the billows of war. Now this shall be added!  
Also an ill one never can hide is a ravening belly,  
Thing accurséd that brings on a man right many misfortunes;  
Yea, it is nought but the belly that full-benched vessels equippeth,  
Vessels that over the waste of the sea bear doom to the foeman."

While these twain stood thus conversing the one with the other  
Nigh them a dog uplifted his head and his ears as he lay there,  
E'en old Argus, the dog whom long-enduring Odysseus  
Bred for himself—but in vain. To the sacred town of the Trojans  
Ere he had trained him he went; and at first young fellows had led him  
After the goats of the mountain to hunt, and the hares, and the roe-deer;  
Then neglected he lay, in the years when his master was absent,  
Making his bed of the muck that was piled in the front of the portal,  
Even the dung of the mules and the oxen, before it was carried  
Out to the fields of the farm by the thralls of Odysseus to dung them.  
There he was lying—the poor old Argus, infested with vermin.  
Yet e'en now, as he looked and was ware that his master was present,  
Both of his ears down-dropping and wagging his tail he attempted  
Nearer to come to Odysseus his lord, but was wholly unable



Thither to creep ; and Odysseus averted his eyes as he saw it,  
Drying a tear, that he easily hid from the swineherd, and asked him :  
“ Sure, Eumaeus, 'tis strange that the dog should lie on a dunghill.  
Goodly in form he appears ; but indeed one knows not for certain  
Whether he also had fleetness of foot with a beautiful body,  
Or if he only was like to a hound that is fed from the table,  
Such as so often is kept by the rich on account of his beauty.”

Him then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
“ Nay, 'tis the dog of a man that is perished afar from his homeland.  
Were he again to be gifted with bodily power and prowess,  
Were he the dog that was left by Odysseus when sailing for Troyland,  
Soon at the sight of his strength thou'dst marvel and also his swiftness.  
E'en in the uttermost depths of the forest was known to escape him  
Never a brute that he chased—for at following trail he was peerless.  
Now he is fallen on days right evil : his master is perished  
Far from his home, and the maids are too neglectful to tend him.  
Such is a thrall when his lord no longer commands in the household !  
Ne'er is he willing to work at his duty as honesty bids him.  
Half of his worth doth the Father of heaven who speaketh in thunder  
Take from a man when the day of captivity cometh upon him.”

These words spoken, he entered the pleasant abodes of the palace.  
Straight to the hall he betook him and came to the arrogant suitors,  
While that the doom and the darkness of death descended on Argus,  
Just as again, in the twentieth year, he had welcomed his master.

Now as the swineherd was making his way in the midst of the mansion  
Godlike Telemachus was the first to perceive him, and forthwith  
Beckoned to bid him approach ; and he looked for a settle and found one  
Standing unused, where wont to be seated at feasts was the carver  
While he was portioning messes abundant of meat for the suitors.  
This he uplifted and bore to the side of the table and placed it  
Opposite Telemachus ; and he sat him adown ; and a henchman  
Served him a portion of meat, and of bread that he took from a basket.

After him soon now followed Odysseus and entered the palace  
Under the form of a beggar, a man right wretched and aged,  
Staying his steps with a staff and invested in sorry apparel.  
Down on the threshold of ash inside of the portal he sat him,  
Leaning himself on the pillar of cypress, that erst by the joiner



*Odyssey* Smoothly was planed and was cut to the line with the skill of a master.

XVII

841 - 878

Telemachus now called to the swineherd to come, and addressed him,  
Taking the whole of a loaf from the midst of a beautiful basket,  
Also as much of the meat as to grasp in his hands he was able :  
"Carry and give this food to the stranger, and also advise him  
Making the round of the table entreat each one of the suitors,  
Seeing it profiteth nought for a mortal in want to be shamefaced."  
Thus did he speak, and the swineherd obeying, as soon as he heard it,  
Came close up to the man and with swift-winged words he addressed him :  
"Telemachus sends this to thee, stranger, and bids me advise thee  
Making the round of the table entreat each one of the suitors,  
Seeing it profiteth nought for a beggar (he saith) to be shamefaced."  
Forthwith answering spake these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
"King of the gods, great Zeus, grant Telemachus to be happy  
Here amid men, and to gain all blessings his soul desireth."

Thus did he speak, and in both of his hands he received it, and laid it  
Down at his feet, outspreading beneath it his beggarly wallet.  
Now as he ate, once more to the feasters the singer was singing,  
Till, when at last he had dined and the godlike singer had ended,  
Clamour was raised in the hall by the suitors.

But Pallas Athene,

Taking her stand by the side of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
Urgently moved him to go and to gather him crusts from the suitors,  
So as to learn which men were just, which lawless among them  
(Yet e'en so she was minded to save not one from destruction).  
So from the right he began and in turn each man he entreated,  
Holding his hand for a dole, like one long practised in begging.  
Now while moved by compassion they gave, and beheld him with wonder,  
Each one questioning, "Who is the fellow, and where did he come from?"  
Thus in the midst addressed them Melanthius master of goatherds :  
"List to my words, O suitors of far-famed Penelopeia,  
Touching this stranger!—Methinks ere now I've certainly seen him.  
Ay, it is even the beggar the swineherd hither was guiding!  
Whence he is come, and the folk that he boasts to belong to, I know not."

Forthwith Antinous outspake upbraiding the swineherd :  
"Ah, thou notorious swineherd! and wherefore here to the city  
Bringst thou the man? Dost fancy us lacking in vagrants already,



Lacking in plenty of pestilent beggars and spoilers of banquets?  
Deemst thou it nought that the wealth of thy lord is consumed by a rabble  
Gathering here in his halls, that thou callst this fellow to join them?"  
Him straightway then in answer addressed Eumaeus the swineherd:  
"Antinous, thou art brave, but thy words are truly ignoble.  
Where is the man goes searching around for a guest and invites him,  
Other than one of the craftsmen that work for the weal of the people,  
Either a prophet, a healer of ills, or a master of woodcraft,  
Ay or a singer divine, to delight with his singing the feasters?  
Over the whole wide world such guests are bidden to banquets,  
While—what mortal inviteth a beggar to come and annoy him?  
Ah but thou ever wast hard—and of all of the suitors the hardest—  
Unto the thralls of Odysseus, and specially me! . . . But I care not . . .  
Care not a whit . . . so long as the wise-souled Penelopeia  
Lives in the halls of her palace, and Telemachus the heroic."

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Silence, I beg! It is useless to waste more words in replying.  
Antinous is accustomed for ever to chide and to quarrel,  
Using the bitterest taunts, wherewith he inciteth the others."  
Turning to Antinous then swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Antinous, it is finely thou car'st for me like to a father,  
Bidding me chase this stranger away from the hall of my homestead,  
Ay and to force him with threats!—May God forbend that I do so!  
Come, take something and give it! I grudge not the gift; I enjoin it.  
Pay not regard to my mother herein, nor to any besides her,  
Any attendant that serves in the palace of godlike Odysseus!  
Nay but I know such thoughts have never a place in thy bosom:  
Liefer by far thou'dst ever be eating than give to another."

Him prince Antinous addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Telemachus, big boaster, unbridled in fury, what prat'st thou?  
Were but the rest of the suitors to make him the present that I shall,  
Verily three good months your house would mourn for his absence."  
Seizing a stool, as he spake, he displayed it from under the table,  
Where it was set as support for his smooth-skinned feet as he feasted.

All of the rest now offered a bounty, and soon was the wallet  
Filled with the bread and the meat; and Odysseus, although he was minded  
Straight to the threshold returning to taste of the gift of the princes,  
Halted by Antinous, as he passed, and accosted him, saying:



*Odyssey* "Give to me, friend!—for thou seemst not the worst of the noble Achaeans,  
*XVII*  
*415 - 458* Nay but the best of them all. Thou art like to a monarch among them.  
So it behoves thee to give me a still more generous portion  
E'en than the others; and over the whole wide world I will laud thee.  
Once I was owner of house and of home, and was held by my fellows  
Rich in estate, and was wont full often to give to a vagrant,  
Every beggar, whatever he seemed and whatever he wanted.  
Many and many a thrall I possessed and abundance of all things  
Such as allow of an easy existence and rich reputation.  
Then I was ruined by Father Cronion. I ween that he willed it,  
Since it was he who enrolled me with robbers that rove on the ocean  
Sailing for Egypt—a land far distant and doomed to destroy me.  
Here, in the river of Egypt I stationed my twy-beaked galleys;  
Then did I issue an order to all of my trusty companions  
Quietly there to remain by the side of the vessels and guard them,  
While that I sent forth scouts to explore from the neighbouring outlooks.  
Yielding however to wanton desires and to arrogant boldness  
Soon they invaded the beautiful fields of the people of Egypt,  
Wasting the country and taking away both women and children,  
Slaughtering also the men; and the cry reached quickly the city.  
These then, hearing the shout, as the new-born day was appearing,  
Came, and the whole of the plain seemed full of the footmen and horses,  
Full of the flashing of bronze; and the god that delighteth in thunder  
Cast on my comrades a panic so fearful that none had the courage  
Firmly to stand and to face them—for danger was pressing on all sides.  
Now of my friends with the edge of the sword full many they slaughtered,  
Many they captured, and led them away to the labours of bondmen.  
Me to a stranger that met us they sold, and he took me to Cyprus,  
Dmetor descended from Jasus, a powerful Cyprian chieftain.  
Thence I escaped, and am hither arrived in the sorest affliction."

Forthwith Antinous uplifting his voice made answer:

"Which of the deities sent us this nuisance, this bane of the banquet!  
Get thee away to the midst of the hall and apart from my table,  
Lest thou shalt come to an Egypt of anguish and Cyprus of sorrow!  
Why—what a shameless, audaciously impudent beggar thou seemest,  
Worrying each one after the other! And truly they load thee  
Recklessly, neither withholding the hand nor withheld by a scruple,  
Giving the goods of another; and plenty they keep for themselves too!"

Stepping a little aback deep-plotting Odysseus addressed him:



“Nay by the gods, thou’rt lacking in soul though noble in aspect.  
Never a morsel of salt thou’dst give to the poor at thy doorway,  
Seeing that feasting thy full at the board of another thou wilt not  
Break me a mouthful of bread, though plenty is lying before thee.”

*Odyssey*  
*XVII*  
*454-491*

Thus did he speak ; but the man with a heart more maddened to fury  
Glared at Odysseus askance, and with swift-winged words he addressed him :  
“Now no longer, I vow, shalt thou hope to escape or unpunished  
Out of the hall make good thy retreat—for thou utterest insults.”

These words spoken he seized on the stool, and he hurled it and struck him  
Under the shoulder atop of the back on the right ; but he stood there  
Firm as a rock, nor staggered at all by the stroke of the missile,  
Silently shaking his head as a man that is brooding on evil,  
Back to the threshold returned, and he sat him adown, and beside him  
Laying the well-filled wallet he spake these words to the suitors :

“List to my words, O suitors of far-famed Penelopeia,  
While that I utter a thing that the heart in my bosom enjoins me.  
Never a pain or a grief would enter the soul of a fighter  
Should he be smit by the foe while warding them off his possessions,  
Fighting perchance in defence of his white-wool’d sheep or his cattle.  
Antinous for the sake of the pitiful belly hath struck me,  
Thing accurséd, that bringeth on men such numberless evils.  
Now if in heaven be gods of the beggar, or any Avengers,  
Ere he shall wed may death put an end to the man and his marriage.”

Then spake Antinous, Eupheithes’ son, and addressed him :  
“Sit thou in silence, my friend, and attend to thy food—or depart hence—  
Lest that because of the words thou hast uttered my youngers shall drag thee  
Forth by the hand or the foot and shall strip thee thy skin from thy body.”

Thus spake Antinous ; but his words exceedingly angered  
All of the rest, one arrogant youth and another exclaiming :  
“Antinous, ’tis ignoble to strike an unfortunate beggar.  
Lo, thou art doomed—if indeed there liveth a god in the heavens ;  
Yea and we know that the gods in the likeness of pilgrims and strangers  
Many disguises assume as they visit the cities of mortals,  
Keeping a watch on the deeds of the lawless and those of the righteous.”  
Such words uttered the suitors ; but little he recked of their prating.  
Telemachus meanwhile great grief in his bosom was nursing,  
Seeing the blow ; but the fall of a tear he restrained, and he sat there  
Silently shaking his head as a man that is brooding on evil.



*Odyssey*  
*XVII*  
*492 - 529*

Now ere long it was heard by the wise-souled Penelopeia  
How that the stranger was struck in the hall, and she spake mid her maidens :  
“ Also be thou so smit by the glorious archer Apollo ! ”  
Then did the house-dame Eurynomé thus answer her, saying :  
“ O for a speedy fulfilment of all our curses upon them !  
None would ever again see Morning enthroned in her glory . ”  
Her then addressing in turn spake wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“ Yea, nurse, all of the men do I hate with their evil devices,  
Specially Antinous ; as the darkness of death I detest him .  
Lo, an unfortunate stranger was roaming around in the palace  
Begging an alms of the men, for necessity urged him to do so .  
Now though all of the rest gave fully and willingly, this man  
Smote him behind with a stool on the right at the base of the shoulder . ”

While now thus she was speaking amidst of her women attendants  
Up in her chamber, Odysseus was making a meal of the viands .  
Then to the good old swineherd she called to approach, and addressed him :  
“ Good Eumaeus, I pray thee to go and to order the stranger  
Hither to come ; I am wishful to give him a welcome and ask him  
Whether perchance he has heard of the long-enduring Odysseus ;  
Ay and perhaps he has seen him—for far, as it seems, he has wandered . ”

Her then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
“ Ah that the princely Achaeans a while would cease from their clamour !  
Such is the charm of his words ’twould ravish thy heart with enchantment .  
Three nights long did I keep him and three days granted him shelter  
There in my hut, where first he had come when he fled from the vessel ;  
Still, not yet had he ended relating his tale of misfortune .  
E’en as a listener gazeth entranced on a bard as he singeth,  
One that hath learn’d from immortals a strain of enrapturing beauty,  
So that the hearer remains all motionless, longing to listen,  
Thus was I charmed by his words as he sat by my side in my homestead .  
Well, he avoweth his friendship of yore with the house of Odysseus ;  
Says that his home was in Creta, the land of the offspring of Minos ;  
Thence, he asserts, he is come, and has met full many a hardship,  
Wandering further and further ; and vows that he heard of Odysseus,  
Not in a far-off land, but the rich Thesprotian country,  
Ay and alive—and he brings to his home full many a treasure . ”

Him then in turn gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“ Go now, summon him here to my presence, to tell me his story ,



While these men . . . let them sit by the portal and ply their amusements—  
Nay, all over my house—as their soul seems fain to be merry !  
Houses they have of their own and possessions untouched by the spoiler,  
Viands and sweet pure wine in abundance to nourish the household,  
Natheless every day to the halls of my palace resorting,  
Slaughtering also my sheep and my fat-fed goats and my oxen,  
Ever they revel in banquets, carousing on glittering red wine  
Recklessly ; great is the waste, and a man no longer is present,  
Such as Odysseus of yore, to avert this curse from the homestead.  
Should however Odysseus return to the land of his fathers,  
Soon with the aid of his son these insolent men he will punish.”

E'en as she spake loud sneezed prince Telemachus, and the mansion  
Echoed in wondrous wise, and the queen outbreaking in laughter  
Hastily turned to the swineherd and swift-winged words she addressed him :  
“Go, I entreat thee, and summon the stranger to come to my presence.  
Didst not perceive that my son sneezed loud at the words that I uttered ?  
Wherefore a full and an utter destruction shall come on the suitors,  
All of them—all ! Not one shall escape from his doom and perdition.  
Also a thing will I say, which carefully mark and remember :  
Should I for certain perceive he is telling me truthfully all things,  
Then I shall clothe him in beautiful raiment, in mantle and tunic.”

Thus did she speak, and the swineherd departing, as soon as he heard it,  
Nigh to Odysseus approached, and with swift-winged words he addressed him :  
“Stranger and father, behold, wise Penelopeia invites thee,  
Even the mother of Telemachus ; she is moved in her spirit  
Something to ask thee concerning her lord, though long she hath mourned him.  
Should she for certain perceive thou art telling her truthfully all things,  
Then she will clothe thee in mantle and tunic, the which thou art needing  
Mostly of all. Thou art sure to suffice for the needs of thy stomach  
Begging thy bread of the people—from each that is willing to help thee.”  
Him then in answer addressed long-suffering godlike Odysseus :  
“Yea, Eumaeus, and all of the truth were quickly related  
Unto the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelopeia.  
Well do I know of his story ; we suffered affliction together.  
Still, I am somewhat afraid of the throng of the arrogant suitors,  
Whose fierce insolence reacheth aloft to the brazen heaven.  
Thus this man just now . . . I was going around in the palace  
Nowise doing him harm, but he struck me and grievously hurt me ;  
Neither by Telemachus was I aided nor yet by the others.



Wherefore to Penelopeia announce 'twere best in her chamber  
Still to remain, though great be her longing, till after the sunset ;  
Then she can ask me concerning her lord and his day of returning,  
Letting me sit still nearer the hearth, as my raiment is truly  
Wretched—thou know'st it thyself ; for of thee first begged I assistance."

Thus did he speak, and the swineherd, departing as soon as he heard it,  
Over the threshold was stepping, when Penelopeia addressed him :  
"Why, Eumaeus, thou bringest him not ! What meaneth the vagrant ?  
Feeleth he fear unduly for any ? or else in the palace  
Feeleth he shame ? For a beggar it profiteth ill to be shamefaced."  
Her then in answer addressed these words Eumaeus the swineherd :  
"Nay but he speaketh aright—and he feeleth as many another,  
Wishing to keep him aloof from the insults of men overbearing.  
So he enjoins thee to stay in thy chamber till after the sunset.  
Ay and for thee, O Queen, it is better by far and is wiser  
Thus to converse with the stranger alone, and to list to his story."  
Him then in turn gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
"Nowise wanting in wits is the stranger, whoever he may be.  
Not on the earth, I believe, can be found in the races of mortals  
Men so wanton as these or that plot such wicked devices."

Such was the answer she gave ; and the good old swineherd departing  
Unto the throng of the suitors, as soon as his message was ended,  
Hastened to Telemachus and with swift-winged words he addressed him,  
Holding his head right close, to be noticed by none of the others :  
"Friend, I am going—to see to the swine and the things at the farmstead,  
Even thy living and mine. See thou to the things at the palace.  
Firstly of all see well to thyself, and consult with thy spirit,  
Lest some evil befall. Thou art hated of many Achaeans.  
Zeus confound them before that they bring some mischief upon us !"  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
"Ay, dad, thus it shall stand. Start homeward after thy supper ;  
Then in the morning return and bring fat beasts for oblation.  
All things else shall be managed by me and the blessed immortals."

Thus did he speak, and again on the well-carved settle the swineherd  
Sat him, and took of the meat and the drink to his soul's satisfaction.  
Then to his swine he departed, and quitted the hall and the gardens,  
All of them full of the throng of the feasters with music and dancing  
Making them merry—for nigh was approaching already the twilight.



# ODYSSEY BOOK XVIII

**N**OW there came to the palace a well-known beggar, who always  
Begged in the Ithacan town. He was famed for his ravenous belly.  
Endless his eating and drinking; but no great strength had the fellow,  
Neither endurance, although right big was the bulk of his body.  
Once was his name Arnaeus. The lady his mother had called him  
So from his birth; but the youths all gave him the title of Irus,  
Since that he willingly went on a message whene'er he was bidden.  
He now came, and attempted to drive from his palace Odysseus,  
Uttering threats and abuse, and with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Get thee agone, old man—or be dragged by the feet—from the doorway!  
Canst thou not see that they all are nodding and winking to bid me  
Drag thee away? Natchless I am half unwilling to do so.  
Up with thee! up! or the quarrel is like to be settled by fighting."

Glaring askance at the man deep-plotting Odysseus addressed him:  
"Nay, good sir, I am harming thee nothing by word or by action.  
Ne'er will I grudge it if any shall give thee a dole—and a large one.  
Sure there's room for us both on the threshold, and surely thou needst not  
Envy the luck of another. Thou seemest a beggar and vagrant,  
E'en as myself; and we look to the gods to vouchsafe us a blessing.  
Challenge me not to a fray too hotly, nor rouse me to anger,  
Lest that in spite of my age on thy breast and thy lips I shall paint thee  
Red with thy blood. And indeed 'twould save me from further annoyance  
Now and to-morrow, for truly methinks thou'dst dream of returning  
Never again to the house of Odysseus the son of Laertes."

Then to a fury aroused thus answered him Irus the vagrant:  
"Nay by the gods, how glibly he talks, this gluttonous porker!  
Like to a crone that attends to an oven! I'll work him a mischief—  
Slog him with both of my fists, and the whole of his teeth I will knock clean  
Out of his jaws—as the tusks of a hog that has ravaged a cornfield.  
Gird thee! and all of the men here present shall judge of the matter,  
Viewing us fight. I will teach thee to box with a man that is younger!"

Thus these twain in the front of the high hall door of the mansion,  
Over the smooth-worn threshold, provoked each other to anger.  
Now when the powerful prince, lord Antinous, had perceived it,  
Sweetly and loudly he laughed, and he spake to the suitors around him:



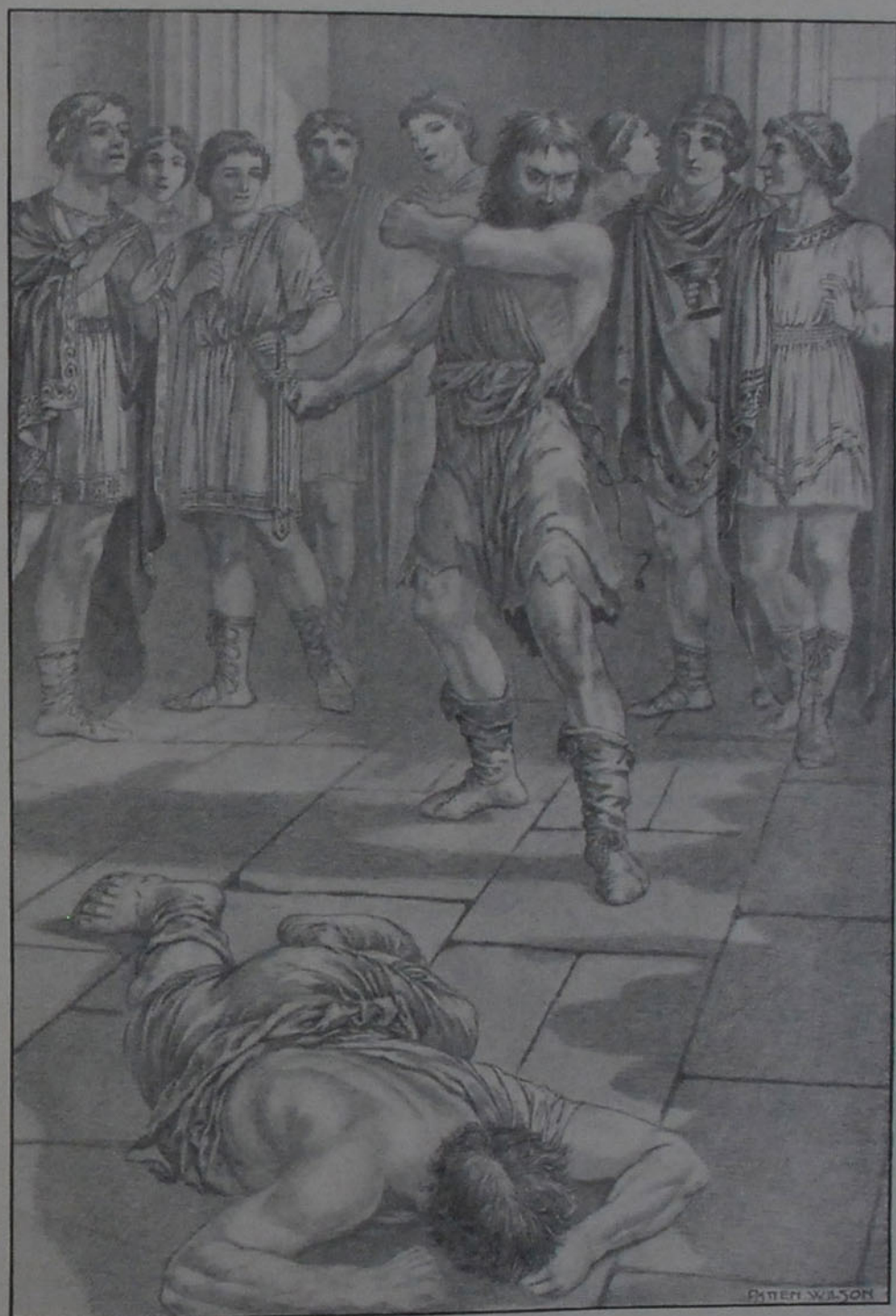
“Comrades, here is a thing that has happened never aforetime!  
Such an amusement as never before God sent to the palace!  
Look at the stranger and Irus! The one is inciting the other  
Unto a contest of fists! Come! Quick! Let us set them a-fighting.”

Scarce had he uttered the words, all leapt to their feet and with laughter  
Gathered around and encircled the raggedly raimented beggars.  
Then spake Antinous, Eupheithes' son, and addressed them:  
“Listen, ye high-born suitors, I pray! I will make a proposal.  
There on the hearth are lying the stomachs of goats, that for supper  
Ready we laid, well filled with the blood of the beasts and the caul-fat.  
Now of the twain whichever shall conquer and prove him the better,  
He shall advance and shall take of the stomachs the one that he chooseth;  
He too alway shall join us at feasts, nor shall ever another  
Beggar be present or e'er be permitted to sue for a pittance.”  
Thus spake Antinous, and his words pleased all of the others.

Then with a crafty intent deep-plotting Odysseus addressed them:  
“Friends, it is hopeless, I know, to contest with a man that is younger,  
Since I am old and outworn with my woes; but the belly compels me,  
Maker of mischief that bringeth upon me defeat and a flogging.  
Come now, all of you swear me an oath and a solemn assurance  
None shall in favour of Irus, uplifting a hand to assail me,  
Wantonly strike me a blow and oblige me to yield to the fellow.”  
Thus did he speak, and they all of them swore to refrain, as he bade them.  
Then, when at length they had given the oath and had finished the plighting,  
Once more spake in the midst prince Telemachus and addressed him:  
“Stranger, if truly thy heart and thy valiant spirit command thee  
Thus to defend thee against him, be fearful of none of the nobles,  
Since not only with one shall he fight, whoever shall strike thee.  
Host of the banquet am I; these chieftains also approve it,  
Antinous and Eurymachus—both noted for wisdom.”

Thus did he speak, and they all consented thereto; and Odysseus  
Girded his loins with his rags, and his sinewy thighs he uncovered  
Goodly and great; and the vast broad shoulders appeared, and the mighty  
Chest and the arms. (At his side once more was the goddess Athene  
Giving again their strength to the limbs of the prince of the people.)  
Forthwith every suitor was filled with exceeding amazement,  
While that the one, as he gazed, spake thus to another beside him:  
“Irus, un-Irus'd, will soon be imbibing the broth he was brewing!”





ODYSSEUS AND IRUS







Look at the old man's thigh that is showing from under his tatters!"  
Thus did they speak, and the spirit of Irus was seized by a panic.  
Yet e'en so he was girt by the servants and brought with compulsion  
Utterly cowed, with the flesh on his limbs all quaking in terror.  
Then spake Antinous and reproached him and loudly rebuked him:  
"Better it were thou hadst died—nay, ne'er been living—thou bully,  
Since thou art terribly fear'd by the fellow and quakest to meet him,  
Though he is old and outworn with the misery fallen upon him.  
Now will I tell thee a thing that will certainly find a fulfilment:  
Should this fellow prevail in the combat and prove him the better,  
Into a black-hulled ship I shall cast thee at once and shall send thee  
Over to Echetus, lord of the mainland and maimer of mortals;  
Then with the merciless steel he will shear thee thy nose and thy ears off,  
Tear from thy body thy vitals and cast them to dogs to be fought for."

So as he spake still more did the man's limbs tremble in terror.  
Thus to the ring he was brought, and with hands uplifted they stood there.  
Now at the first was in doubt long-suffering godlike Odysseus  
Whether to smite him a stroke to deprive him of life as it felled him,  
Or with a moderate blow of the fist on the earth to extend him.  
Thus as he pondered thereon this plan seemed surely the better,  
Lightly to strike—for he feared to be known to the princely Achaeans.  
So they uplifted their hands. First Irus a blow on the shoulder  
Planted; but under the ear on the neck he was smitten, and inward  
Crushed was the bone, and at once from his mouth red blood was a-spouting.  
Moaning he fell in the dust and, his teeth tight-clenching together,  
Drummed with his heels on the ground as he lay; and the arrogant suitors  
Dying for laughter uplifted their hands in delight; but Odysseus  
Hauled him away by the feet from the doorway and into the courtyard,  
Right to the gates of the porch, and there by the wall of the courtyard  
Set him and propped him, and placed in the hands of the fellow a cudgel.  
Then upraising his voice these swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Sit now here as a scare for the pigs and the dogs! I advise thee  
Never again to attempt o'er strangers and beggars to lord it,  
Meddlesome fool, lest haply befall thee a greater misfortune."

These words spoken, he slung on his shoulders the beggarly wallet,  
Terribly tattered and torn; and thereon was a cord to suspend it.  
Then to the threshold returning he sat him adown; and the suitors  
Merrily laughing re-entered the palace and gave him a welcome:  
"Zeus vouchsafe, O stranger, and other immortals, to grant thee



All of thy dearest desires—yea, all that thy spirit can long for,  
Since thou hast stopped this insatiate fellow from playing the vagrant  
Here in the Ithacan land. So now right soon we shall ship him  
Over to Echetus, king of the mainland and maimer of mortals.”  
Thus did they speak, and the godlike Odysseus rejoiced at the omen.

Antinous now laid at his side of the stomachs a great one  
Filled with the blood and the fat of the goats, while Amphinomus too  
Lifted a couple of loaves from the basket and placed them beside him,  
Then from a goblet of gold drank welcome and weal to him, saying :  
“Hail to thee, stranger and father ! I wish thee for ever in future  
Happier days—since now thou art holden of many misfortunes.”  
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“Amphinomus, as it seems, thou art verily gifted with wisdom,  
E'en as thy father—for oft did I hear of his high reputation,  
Nisus of Dulichium, as a man that was brave and was wealthy.  
Being, they say, his son thou art like him in good understanding.  
So I will tell thee the truth : attentively listen and mark me.  
Nothing is nourished by earth more utterly feeble than man is,  
Nothing of all that is breathing on earth and is creeping upon it.  
'Verily never,' he saith to himself, 'shall I suffer misfortune  
While God granteth me manhood and still are supple my knee-joints.'  
Ay but whenever affliction is sent by the blessed immortals  
All, though sorely unwilling, he bears with a heart of endurance.  
Such forsooth is the mind of an earth-born mortal : it changes  
E'en as the Father of men and of gods sends seasons of fortune.  
I too once had the hope to be blest in the world, but committed  
Many infatuate deeds in the pride of my arrogant temper,  
Trusting moreover my father and also my brothers to help me.  
Wherefore ne'er is it wise for a man to be lawless, but rather  
Quietly all to enjoy, whatsoever the immortals shall give him.  
Thus an infatuate deed I behold these suitors committing,  
Wantonly wasting the wealth of a man and insulting his consort,  
Yea and a man that, I ween, not afar from his friends and his homeland  
Long shall remain. He is even at hand ! Some deity lead thee  
Safely away to thy home, lest here in his palace thou haply  
Meet him whene'er he returns to the well-loved land of his fathers,  
Since not bloodless (or much I mistake) will they part from the combat,  
He and the suitors, whene'er he shall enter the halls of his homestead.”

These words spoken, he poured of the wine honey-sweet a libation,



Emptied the goblet and handed it back to the warrior chieftain.  
He thro' the palace returned, with his heart sore troubled within him,  
Bowing his head ; for in sooth in his spirit he boded of evil.  
Yet e'en so he escaped not his doom : him too did Athene  
Destine to death by the hands and the spear of the son of Odysseus.  
Then did he seat him again on the chair from the which he had risen.

Now was a thought vouchsafed by the grey-eyed goddess Athene  
Unto the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelopeia,  
E'en to appear to the suitors and make all hearts at her beauty  
Open with rapture as never before—since thus she was minded  
Still more honour to win from her lord and her son than aforetime.  
So with a lightsome laugh to her woman she called and addressed her :  
“Eurynomé, in my heart is a longing as ne'er I remember,  
Under the gaze of the suitors to stand, though truly I hate them.  
Also a rede to my son will I give that will tend to his welfare—  
Not to consort too oft with the band of the arrogant suitors,  
Seeing they speak fair words while secretly brooding on evil.”  
Then did the house-dame Eurynomé thus answer her saying :  
“Ay, it is verily wisely and well thou hast spoken, my daughter.  
Go to thy child and impart him thy wish, nor attempt to conceal it ;  
Not howbeit before thou hast bathed and thy face is anointed ;  
Not like this, with thy cheeks all stained by thy tears, I beseech thee !  
Go ! for it profiteth little to mourn thus ever and alway.  
Yea and thy son, he is now of an age to be wise—and of heaven  
This was thy dearest demand, with a beard on his chin to behold him.”

Her then in turn gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“Eurynomé, I beseech thee, refrain, though urged by affection,  
Giving me comfort and bidding me bathe and anoint me with unguents.  
All of the pride of my beauty the gods who inhabit Olympus  
Withered as soon as my lord in the hollow ships had departed.  
Seek now Autoñoë and Hippodameia, and bid them  
Hither to come ; in the hall I am wishful to have them beside me ;  
Never alone to the men will I go, since shyness forbids it.”  
Thus did she speak, and her woman departing from out of the chamber  
Went to the maidens, to give them the message and hasten their coming.

Now did a new thought come to the grey-eyed goddess Athene.  
Over the daughter of Icarius sweet slumber diffusing  
Backward she made her to sink, and with joints all loosened she lay there



Stretched on her couch. Meanwhile, as she slumbered, the beautiful goddess  
Gifts ambrosial gave her, to dazzle the eyes of the princes.  
First, to her features fair new beauty and brighter she added,  
Such as the bloom immortal with which fair-crowned Cytherea  
Gleameth whenever she goes to the beautiful dance of the Graces.  
Taller moreover she made her in stature and larger in person,  
Whiter she made her of skin than is fresh-sawn ivory's whiteness.  
After that thus she had wrought she departed, the beautiful goddess.

Then did the white-armed maidens approach from the women's apartment,  
Talking aloud as they came; and at once sweet slumber released her.  
Rubbing her cheeks with her hands, these words half wakened she murmured:  
"Sure in my weary affliction a deep soft trance overcame me!  
Would that as gentle a death pure Artemis willed to vouchsafe me  
Now on the spot! No more would mourning and grief in my spirit  
Wither the days of my life, as I wail for my well-loved husband's  
Manifold courage and skill, who was peerless among the Achaeans."

Spake, and began to descend from her glistening upper apartment;  
Neither alone did she go: two handmaids followed behind her.  
Now when at last she had come to the suitors, that fairest of women  
Stood by the post of the door of the massively builded apartment,  
Holding in front of her cheeks soft folds of her glistening head-dress,  
While to the right and the left stood one of her faithful attendants.  
Straight were loosened the knees of the men, and enraptured by passion  
Each one uttered a prayer to the gods to possess her in marriage.  
Then to her well-loved son, prince Telemachus, she addressed her:  
"Telemachus, no more is thy mind and thy thought to be trusted.  
E'en as a boy in thy thoughts thou wast guided with greater discretion.  
Now thou art grown so tall and art come to the measure of manhood,  
So that a stranger beholding thy beauty of person and stature  
Sure would deem thee a son of a wealthy and fortunate father;  
Yet no more is thy mind and thy judgment right as aforesaid.  
Lo, what deed thou hast caused to be wrought in the hall of thy palace,  
Thus permitting a stranger to suffer injurious usage!  
How if the stranger, who here as a guest in the home of thy fathers  
Quietly sat, some damage received from his grievous maltreatment?  
Thine were wholly the shame and disgrace in the judgment of all men."

Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Mother, I take it amiss nowise that herein thou art angered.



Well am I able within me to reason, and well to distinguish  
Better from worse. Ere now it was merely unreasoning childhood.  
Still, all things to contrive as is wise I am wholly unable,  
Ever distraught by the presence of those who on this and on that side  
Urge me with evil intent ; nor is any at hand to assist me.  
Touching howbeit the fight of the stranger with Irus, it happened  
Not by the will of the suitors ; and also he proved him the stronger.  
Ay and by Father Zeus and Athena and Phoebus Apollo,  
Would that the suitors themselves e'en thus in the halls of my homestead  
Utterly crushed were wagging the head—some out in the courtyard,  
Others inside of the house—with the joints all loosed in their bodies,  
Even as Irus the beggar anigh to the gate of the courtyard  
Sitteth and waggeth his head, just like to a man that is drunken ;  
Neither erect on his feet is he able to stand, nor betake him  
Homeward (if home he possess) since every joint is unloosened.”

Thus did the mother and son hold converse the one with the other.  
Then spake Eurymachus and addressed him to Penelopeia :  
“ Daughter of Icarus, O wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Could now all the Achaeans in Iasan Argos behold thee,  
Far more suitors, I trow, would feast in the hall of thy palace  
E'en from the dawn of the morrow—for verily far thou excellest  
Every woman in beauty and stature and inward discernment.”

Him straightway gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“ Eurymachus, if indeed I excelled in the beauty of person,  
All was destroyed by the gods when the Argives, sailing for Troyland,  
Mounted the vessels—with whom went also Odysseus my husband.  
O that he came once more and had care of my life as aforetime !  
Thus were fairer my fame, and my lot more happy ; for alway  
Now am I sad ; such woes hath a deity sent to assail me.  
Yea and I mind, on the day that he went and was leaving his homeland,  
Tenderly clasping my hand by the wrist these words he addressed me :  
‘ Listen, my wife ! for I trow of the well-greaved sons of Achaea  
Nowise all shall return unscathed from the land of the Trojans,  
Seeing they say that the Trojans themselves are famous as fighters,  
Whether at hurling the spear or at launching a bolt from the bowstring,  
Yea and as chariot-drivers of fleet-paced horses—and war-cars  
Ever decide most swiftly the turn of a dubious conflict.  
Therefore I know not if heaven will save me, or dooms me to perish  
There in the country of Troy. So, carefully see to the household.



Mindfully tend in the halls of the palace my father and mother  
Even as now—nay, still more mindfully while I am absent.  
Cometh the day that thy son as a bearded man thou beholdest,  
Then shalt thou marry whomever thou wilt, and relinquish thy homestead;  
Such was the word that he spake, and it all now findeth fulfilment.  
Come shall the night that will force me to face a detestable marriage,  
Ah unfortunate one, whose happiness heaven hath ruined!  
Also a grief right sore hath befallen my heart and my spirit:  
This was a habit, I trow, ne'er practised by suitors aforetime.  
Those that will sue for a woman of worth and a rich man's daughter,  
Wishing to woo her to wife and competing the one with another,  
Ever themselves bring cattle and fat-fed sheep for a banquet  
Unto the friends of the maiden, and offer her glorious love-gifts;  
Nor do they eat with impunity thus the possessions of others."  
So did she speak, and it joyed long-suffering godlike Odysseus  
While she was coaxing a gift from the men and beguiling their spirits  
Thus with her winsome words, though things far other she longed for.

Then spake Antinous, Eupheithes' son, and addressed her:  
"Daughter of Icarus, O wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Truly if any Achaean is willing to send for a present,  
Gifts thou shalt have—and indeed 'twere wrong to refuse to receive them.  
Yet—not a man of us all shall depart to his homestead or elsewhere  
Ere thou art wed to the man who is best of the noble Achaeans."

Thus spake Antinous, and his words pleased all of the others.  
Forthwith each commanded a henchman to go for a present.  
Antinous had a robe both ample and beautiful brought him,  
Richly embroidered; with brooches, a dozen in all, it was fastened,  
Fashioned of gold, and with clasps well-bent were fitted the brooches.  
Eurynomus soon after they brought a magnificent necklace,  
Golden and beaded with amber that shone as the sun in his glory.  
Then prince Eurydamas two earrings received by his henchman  
Triple with pendants of mulberry colour and wonderful lustre.  
Back from the house of Pisander the chieftain, the son of Polyctor,  
Carried his servant a necklet—a jewel of exquisite beauty.  
Likewise all of the others received some beautiful present.  
Then to her upper apartment ascended the fairest of women,  
While at her side were borne by her maidens the glorious love-gifts.

Now did the suitors again to the pleasure of dancing and singing



Turn to delight them, intending to stay till the coming of even ;  
Nor was the rout at an end when the darkness of even descended.  
Then forthwith to the hall three braziers bringing they set them  
There as a light, and around them they laid dry faggots of fuel,  
Long since seasoned and ready to blaze, new split with the hatchet.  
Pine-brands too they inserted, and maidens alternately fed them,  
Thralls of the patient Odysseus himself ; and to these he addressed him,  
Even the Zeus-born prince, their master, the wily Odysseus :  
“ Maids, whose lord is Odysseus—although so long he is absent—  
Go to the chamber wherein your honoured lady abideth,  
There by her side ye can twist with the spindle the yarn, or delight her  
Sitting together within her apartment and carding the sheep-wool.  
Leave me alone—I will see to the lights for the whole of the party.  
E’en if they wish to remain till the coming of fair-throned Morning  
None shall be able to beat me, I trow. I am full of endurance.”

Thus did he speak ; but they laughed, as they looked each one at the other.  
Then right shamefully chid him the fair-cheeked maiden Melantho,  
Dolius’ daughter—but Penelopeia had nourished and reared her  
E’en as her child, and had given her toys to her soul’s satisfaction ;  
Yet was her heart untouched by the sorrows of Penelopeia,  
Yea and to Eurymachus she had given her love and her honour.  
This was the one that with words of abuse accosted Odysseus :  
“ Wretched, impertinent tramp, thou art surely bereft of thy senses.  
Get thee away from the palace, and go to a smithy and sleep there,  
Or to a tavern, instead of annoying us here with thy prating !  
Ay, in the presence of princes thou prat’st, with thy impudent spirit  
All unabashed. Is it wine that has got to thy wits ? or, it may be,  
Such is the bent of thy mind, to be always foolishly blabbing.  
Crazy methinks thou art gone through conquering Irus the vagrant.  
Have but a care—for I fear that a better than Irus arising  
Soon will be cuffing thy pate with his sinewy hands and will hunt thee  
Out of the bounds of the palace, with blood all richly bedabbled.”

Glaring askance at the maid deep-plotting Odysseus addressed her :  
“ Forthwith Telemachus shall be told what thou sayest, thou hussy !  
Straight I shall go to him—straight ; and at once he will cut thee in pieces.”  
Thus did he speak. At his words in alarm fled all of the women  
Hurrying out of the hall, their knee-joints loosened with terror,  
Quaking affrighted because they believed he had spoken in earnest.  
Then to the lights he attended, and nigh to the glow of the braziers



Stationed himself, and he gazed at the rout ; but the heart in his bosom  
Pondered on things far other, nor destined to fail of fulfilment.

Nowise willed it Athena to suffer the arrogant suitors  
Still to refrain from insulting contempt, for she wished the resentment  
Deeper to sink in the heart of Odysseus the son of Laertes.  
Then made Eurymachus, prince Polybus' son, a beginning,  
Jeering in scorn at Odysseus and setting his fellows a-laughing :  
“ List to my words, O suitors of far-famed Penelopeia,  
While that I utter a thing that the heart in my bosom enjoins me !  
Sure it was heaven that guided this tramp to the house of Odysseus !  
Leastways so it appeareth to me, for a beacon of pine-brands  
There on his head is alight ! He hath never a hair—not the least one ! ”  
Spake, and withal to Odysseus, the sacker of cities, he turned him :  
“ Stranger, in case thou art willing to serve, come say, shall I take thee  
Up to an inland farm (I can offer thee wages sufficient),  
There to collect me the stones for the walls and to plant me the fruit-trees ?  
There, too, bread I am willing to give in unfailing abundance,  
Also to keep thee in dress and with shoes for thy feet to provide thee.  
Since however a right bad trade thou hast learnt, thou wilt never  
Willingly set thee to work, for the tramping and begging is doubtless  
More to thy mind, and to batten on doles thy insatiate belly.”

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“ Eurymachus, would only we twain had a trial of labour,  
Late in the season of spring, when the days grow longer and longer,  
Even a trial of grass, I holding a well-bent sickle,  
Thou with a like, that we each might vie with the other at mowing,  
Fasting till late in the gloom, with a crop right heavy before us.  
Else let them give us a team to be driven—the strongest of oxen,  
Tawny of colour and mighty in bulk, well sated with fodder,  
Equal in age and in bearing the yoke, and of strength unexhausted—  
Give us a field four-acred with soil that will yield to the ploughshare,  
Then thou'dst see if the furrow I cut is a clean and a straight one.  
Else let a war be awakened by Zeus whenever he willeth  
Even to-morrow, and give me a shield and a couple of lances,  
Give me a helmet of bronze, well-fitted to cover my temples,  
Then thou'dst see me amidst of the foremost ranks of the fighters,  
Neither again thou'dst talk with a scornful contempt of my belly.  
Yea, in thy pride thou art utterly wanton—thy heart is unfeeling—  
While in thy folly thou deemest thyself some mighty and great one,



Since it is only with men right weak thou consortest and cowards.  
O that Odysseus returned ! that he came once more to his homeland !  
Soon thou'dst find that the doors, though verily broad is the doorway,  
Prove too strait for thy flight, as thou hurriest out of the portal."

*Odyssey*  
*XVIII*  
*383 - 418*

Thus did he speak ; but the man with a heart more maddened to fury  
Glared at Odysseus askance and with swift-winged words he addressed him :  
" Ah, thou impertinent wretch, I'll punish thee soon for thy prating !  
Ay, in the presence of princes thou prat'st, with thy impudent spirit  
All unabashed. Is it wine that has got to thy wits? or, it may be,  
Such is the bent of thy mind to be always foolishly blabbing.  
Crazy methinks thou art gone through conquering Irus the vagrant."

Loudly he uttered the words, and he seized on a stool—but Odysseus  
Turning to Amphinomus sank down by the knees of the chieftain,  
Fearing the blow ; and he cast—and the footstool smote on the right hand  
One that was bearing the wine, and the bowl to the ground with a clatter  
Crash'd, and the youth with a groan on his back in the dust was extended.

Straight in the shadowy halls was a clamour aroused by the suitors,  
While each looked in the face of another anigh him exclaiming :  
" Would that this tramp of a stranger had elsewhere met his perdition  
Ere he had come to the palace to cause such tumult and uproar.  
Lo, we're quarrelling over a tramp ; all joy in the banquet  
Now will be utterly spoilt, for nought but unpleasantness reigneth."

Then spake Telemachus and with words right royal addressed them :  
" Sirs, ye appear to be mad. No more your conduct conceals it  
How ye partook of the food and the wine. Some demon excites you.  
Now, if enough he has feasted, let each go sleep at his homestead—  
Nay, he shall go when he wills ; I will drive no guest from my palace."

Thus did he speak, and the men all biting their lips in amazement  
Marvelled at Telemachus and the dauntless words he had uttered,  
Till prince Amphinomus made answer and thus he addressed them  
(Famed was the prince, and his father was son of Aretias, Nisus) :  
" Listen, my friends : when the word that is spoken is spoken with justice,  
None should surely be wroth with the speaker and answer in anger.  
Neither maltreat, I beseech you, the stranger or other soever,  
None of the drudges that serve in the palace of godlike Odysseus.  
Come, let the bearer of wine now prime for libation the goblets,



*Odyssey*  
*XVIII*  
*419-428*

Then let us pour and return for the night each one to his homestead.  
Touching the stranger, I vote in the halls of Odysseus to leave him.  
Telemachus can befriend him, for his was the house that he came to.”

Thus did he speak, and his word seemed pleasant to all of the others.  
So was a bowl made ready of wine; lord Mulus mixed it,  
Herald of Dulichium, who on Amphinomus was attendant.  
Then to them all he dispensed it in turn, and they made a libation  
Unto the blessed immortals and drank of the wine honey-hearted.  
After libation and drinking as much as their spirits enjoined them  
Straight they departed to lay them to sleep each one in his homestead.



# ODYSSEY BOOK XIX

**N**OW when the godlike Odysseus was left in the hall of his homestead,  
Plotting with help of the goddess Athena the doom of the suitors,  
Quickly he turned to his son, & with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
"Telemachus—those weapons of war—we shall need to conceal them,  
Every one, and with words of persuasion addressing the suitors  
Try to cajole them, if missing the arms they shall ply thee with questions.  
Say: 'I've stowed them because of the smoke. They resemble no longer  
Those once left by Odysseus behind him when sailing for Troyland;  
Spoilt are all by the breath of the fire, where'er it has reached them.  
Also a reason was put in my mind by the Father Cronion,  
Even the fear lest heated with wine and beginning to quarrel  
One on another ye fall, and with blood bring shame on the feastings,  
Ay and the woings; for iron itself attracteth to bloodshed.'"

These words uttered, the youth, as his well-loved father commanded,  
Called from her chamber and spake to the nurse, old Eurycleia:  
"Go, dear mother, and shut me the maids in the women's apartment,  
While I shall bear to the room of the treasure the arms of my father,  
Lying—the beautiful things—all tarnished by smoke and uncared for  
During the years that my father was absent and during my childhood.  
Now I will stow them away where vapour and smoke shall not reach them."  
Then did the dear old nurse make answer, and thus she addressed him:  
"Ay and if also, my child, thou'dst give such care and attention  
Unto the whole of the house, and the guarding of all of the treasures!  
Come now, who shall attend thee and carry a cresset to light thee?  
None of the maids thou permittest to come who attend to the lighting."  
Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Lo, this stranger will light me. I ne'er shall allow to be idle  
One that has tasted my rations, although he is come from a distance."

Thus did he speak, and the word that he uttered abode with her wingless.  
Quickly she bolted the doors of the fair-built women's apartment.  
Then with his glorious son uprising the hero Odysseus  
Carried the bronze-bossed shields and the helms to the innermost chamber,  
Also the keen-edged spears; and before them the goddess Athene  
Went with a cresset of gold that around poured wonderful lustre.  
Suddenly then to his sire turned Telemachus, and addressed him:  
"Father, it sure is a marvellous thing that I plainly behold here—



Leastways so it appears—for the walls and the beautiful alcoves,  
 Ay and the rafters of pine and the pillars that rise to the rooftrees,  
 All to my eyes seem flooded with light of a radiant splendour.  
 Surely within is a god who inhabits the infinite heaven.”  
 Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
 “Hush! and conceal such things in thy heart, and refrain thee from questions!  
 Thus it is ever the wont of the gods who inhabit Olympus.  
 Go now, lay thee to sleep, and alone in the hall thou shalt leave me.  
 Here will I try to incite to a quarrel the maids and thy mother ;  
 Then by her sorrows induced she will ask me the whole of my story.”

So did he speak, and his son went forth from the hall and betook him  
 Unto his chamber, to sleep, by the light of the radiant torches,  
 Where to repose was his wont whensoever sweet sleep overcame him.  
 There did he lay him to rest and awaited the sacred morning,  
 While in the hall of his palace remaining the godlike Odysseus  
 Planned with the help of the goddess Athena the doom of the suitors.

Now came forth of her chamber the wise-souled Penelopeia,  
 Like to the daughter of Leto or Queen Aphrodite the golden.  
 Nigh to the hearth they had placed her the couch she was wont to recline on,  
 Skilfully carved and with silver and ivory wrought by the artist  
 Icmalius, and below for the feet he had fashioned a footstool  
 Joined to the couch, on the which outspread was a beautiful sheepskin.  
 Hither she came and reclined her, the wise-souled Penelopeia.  
 Then did the white-armed maids from the women's apartment approaching  
 Set them a-clearing the tables and all of the food and the goblets  
 Out of the which they had drunk, those insolent men, as they feasted.  
 Then from the braziers the ashes they cast on the ground, and they piled them  
 Freshly with many a log, to illumine the hall and to warm it.

Now once more was Odysseus assailed by the maiden Melantho :  
 “Stranger, it seems thou art fain e'en now to annoy us, at night-time  
 Lolling about in the house and leering after the women.  
 Get thee away from the palace, thou wretch ! Let thy supper content thee !  
 Else with a brand they'll beat thee and teach thee the way to the portal.”  
 Glaring askance at the maid deep-plotting Odysseus addressed her :  
 “Wherefore thus, good woman, with furious anger assail me ?  
 Merely because I am dirty and clothed in a sorry apparel ?  
 Merely because I am tramping the land ? But necessity makes me.  
 E'en as myself must needs be a man that is beggar and vagrant.



Once I was owner of house and of home and was held by my fellows  
Rich in estate, and was wont full often to give to a vagrant,  
Every beggar, whatever he seemed and whatever he wanted.  
Many and many a thrall I possessed and abundance of all things  
Such as allow of an easy existence and rich reputation.  
Then I was ruined by Father Cronion—I ween that he willed it.  
Wherefore, woman, beware lest thou too utterly losest  
All the renown and the glory in which thou excell'st as a handmaid.  
Well can it happen if only thy lady is driven to anger,  
Or . . . if Odysseus return—and of hope still left is a remnant—  
Else, if indeed he is dead and is ne'er to return to his homeland,  
Such is already his son—yea such, by the grace of Apollo,  
Telemachus is become, no handmaid here in his palace  
Playing the wanton escapeth his eye—no more is he childish.”

Thus as he spake he was heard by the wise-souled Penelopeia.  
Straight to the maiden she turned and addressed her and sharply rebuked her :  
“ Neither, thou shameless, impertinent thing, doth thy conduct escape me.  
Gross is the sin thou committ'st : with thy head thou shalt purge the pollution.  
Also thou knewest it well—for thou verily heardst me assert it—  
How I was minded to come to the hall and to question the stranger  
Touching the fate of my lord ; for my endless sorrow outwears me.”

Turning her then to her woman, the house-dame, thus she addressed her :  
“ Eurynomé, come, bring me a chair with a cover of sheepskin,  
So that the stranger can sit and can tell me his story and also  
Listen to all that I ask—for I wish him to answer my questions.”  
Thus did she speak, and the woman, a chair well-polished selecting,  
Speedily brought it and placed it, and covered it o'er with a sheepskin.  
Here did he sit him adown, long-suffering godlike Odysseus.  
Then she began to address him, the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
“ Firstly of all, O stranger, I wish thee to answer a question :  
Whence and what mortal thou beest. Tell too of thy city and parents.”  
Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“ Lady, on earth there lives not the man would wish to offend thee  
Saying thee nay, for thy fame is as high as the infinite heaven,  
E'en as the fame of a monarch that feareth the gods and is blameless,  
One that as ruler supreme of a great and a powerful nation  
Ever defendeth the right ; and the dark earth beareth in season  
Barley and wheat, and the trees are laden with fruitage, and alway  
Yean unfailing the flocks, and the sea gives fish in abundance ;



So by his wisdom he guideth his people and maketh them prosper.  
Wherefore all thou shalt ask will I answer thee here in thy palace ;  
Yet, I beseech thee to question me not of my race and my homeland,  
Lest by thy words still more thou shalt fill with affliction my spirit  
Waking the past, where many a sorrow was mine ; and I must not  
Here in thy home—in the house of a stranger—with groaning and wailing  
Sit and lament ; and it profiteth nought to be endlessly mourning.  
Yea and I fear 'twould anger thy handmaid (even thyself too) ;  
Then she will say I am swimming in tears as a man that is drunken."

Him then in answer addressed these words wise Penelopeia :  
"Stranger, if e'er I was deemed to excel in the beauty of person,  
All was destroyed by the gods when the Argives, sailing for Troyland,  
Mounted the vessels—with whom went also my husband Odysseus.  
O that he came once more, and had care of my life as aforetime !  
So were fairer my fame, and my lot more happy ; for alway  
Now I am sad—such woes hath a deity sent to assail me.  
All of the foremost men who as chieftains rule in the islands,  
Samos and Dulichium and the woodland heights of Zacynthus,  
Yea and the princes around me in far-seen Ithaca dwelling,  
All come wooing, despite my refusal, and wasting my homestead.  
Wherefore little I care for my guests, or if beggars entreat me,  
Little for heralds I care, who work for the weal of the people ;  
Wasted away is my heart as I yearn for Odysseus, and alway  
While these suitors incite me to wed I am spinning devices.  
First was the shroud that I wove (and a deity prompted me surely).  
Rearing a spacious loom in my hall I betook me to weaving,  
Working a broad and a delicate web ; and anon I addressed them :  
'Princes who sue for my hand, since dead is the noble Odysseus,  
Patiently wait, though eager to hasten my marriage, till fully  
Woven this web—lest vainly I forfeit the fruits of my spinning.  
Lo, 'tis a shroud for the hero Laertes, to wrap him, whenever  
Bringing his destined doom low-laying death overtakes him ;  
Else in Achaea's land might well some woman reproach me,  
Were he to lie, who possessed such riches, lacking a grave-cloth.'  
So did I speak, and within them the valiant heart was persuaded.  
Thus then all of the day at the spacious loom I was weaving ;  
During the night I unravelled the web, with my torches beside me.  
Three long years with my secret device I befooled the Achaeans,  
Till, when the fourth year came, and as season was followed by season,  
After the waning of months, and when many a day was accomplished,



Then by the help of my maidens—the reckless and impudent creatures—  
Coming upon me by stealth they surprised me, and loudly reproached me.  
Thus was I forced, though sorely unwilling, to finish the labour.  
Now can I neither escape from a marriage, nor yet am I able  
Further device to discover ; and urgently also my parents  
Bid me to marry ; and vexed is my son as they waste his possessions ;  
Yes, for he knows—is already a man, and is capable fully  
Care to bestow on his home : such glory the Father vouchsafes him.  
Nay but I beg thee to tell me the race to the which thou belongest.  
Not from a rock thou art sprung nor the ancient fabulous oak-tree.”

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“Lady and consort revered of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
Never, methinks, thou’lt weary of asking me after my kindred.  
Well, I will tell thee the truth—though verily pain it will cause me  
More than the pain that I feel, as is ever the way when a mortal  
Such long years as myself from the land of his birth is an exile,  
Visiting many a city of strangers and suffering hardships.  
Yet e’en so I will answer thy question and all thou hast asked me.  
There is a land called Crete in the midst of the wine-dark ocean,  
Fertile and fair, girt round by the water, with people upon it  
Many—a numberless host ; and ninety the towns they inhabit.  
Mixed is the speech of the tongues of the diverse races—Achaean,  
True-born Cretans, a race high-hearted, Cydonian people,  
Long-plumed Dorian folk and the heaven-descended Pelasgi.  
One of the towns, and the greatest, is Cnosus, the city that Minos  
Ruled nine years ; and he shared in the counsels of Zeus the Almighty.  
Minos’ son, and my father, was Deucalion the heroic.  
Also by Deucalion prince Idomeneus was begotten.  
He was my brother ; he sailed with the crook-beaked vessels to Troyland,  
Following Atreus’ sons. He was better at arms and was elder ;  
I, who was younger, was called by the name right famous of Aethon.  
There I Odysseus beheld : as my guest I received him with presents.  
Unto the island of Crete he was borne by the might of the storm-wind  
While he was steering for Troy, swept southward afar from Malea.  
So in Amnisus he stayed, by the cavern of Eileithyia.  
Hard is the haven to win, and he barely escaped from the tempest.  
Then to the city of Cnosus he came and he asked for my brother,  
Saying that Idomeneus was a friend whom he loved and respected.  
Ay but already the tenth or eleventh morn had arisen  
Since in the crook-beaked ships he had sailed for the land of the Trojans.



*Odyssey*  
*XIX*  
*194-232*

So to the house I invited Odysseus and treated him kindly,  
Offering freely of all the abundant wealth of the homestead.  
Also I gave him and all of the men that had followed him thither  
Presents collected in public of glittering wine and of barley,  
Oxen moreover to slaughter for feasts to their souls' satisfaction.  
Ten days long in the port were prisoned the godlike Achaeans,  
Penned by the hurricane North, that permitted not even on dry land  
Any to stand on his feet; for a hostile deity roused it.  
Then on the thirteenth morning it fell, and at once they departed."

Thus in the likeness of truth he related a tissue of falsehood.  
Meantime weeping she listened, her cheeks all flooded with teardrops,  
Like to the snow when it melteth away from the heights of the mountains,  
Thawed by the breath of the Eurus—the snow that the Zephyr hath sprinkled.  
E'en as it melteth and filleth with water the beds of the rivers,  
Thus was her beautiful face all flooded with tears as she listened,  
Mourning the death of her husband—who sat at her side; and Odysseus,  
Touched to the heart by the grief of his wife, felt tender compassion;  
Yet did his eyes keep fixed, as of horn they had been or of iron,  
Motionless under the lids. Tears came, but he skilfully hid them.  
Now when at last she had taken her fill of her tears and lamenting  
Once more found she the words for an answer, and thus she addressed him:  
"Friend—for a friend I will call thee—to test thee is now my intention,  
Whether in sooth he was there with his valiant comrades, and whether  
Truly my husband was welcomed as guest in thy halls, as thou sayest.  
Tell me exactly, I pray, of the raiment he wore on his body;  
Tell me the manner of man that he seemed—and his followers also."

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
"Lady, to answer is hard, for I never again was anigh him  
These long years—and already methinks full twenty they number  
Since he departed and sailed from the shores of my native country.  
Yet e'en so can I tell how still in my heart he is imaged.  
Purple and thick was the cloak that was worn by the godlike Odysseus,  
Twofold, knit by a brooch that was fashioned of gold and was furnished  
Doubly with sockets for pins; and the front was embossed with a picture:  
Here was a hound that was holding a dappled fawn with his forefeet,  
Watching it struggle; and all that beheld were greatly astonished  
How, though golden, the hound kept watching the fawn as he choked it,  
While in the longing to win an escape with the legs it was writhing.  
Further, I noticed the tunic he wore: 'twas of linen that glister'd



Like to the delicate skin that is peeled from a shrivelling onion ;  
 Such was the softness thereof ; and it gleamed as the sun in his glory.  
 Verily many a woman that saw it was filled with amazement.  
 Also a thing I will say, which carefully mark and consider :  
 Whether at home such garment was worn by Odysseus I know not ;  
 Haply he got it as gift from a friend when he mounted the vessel,  
 Or from a stranger perhaps—for of many a man did Odysseus  
 Win the affection, and few were like him among the Achaeans.  
 I too gave him a present—a dagger of bronze and a tunic  
 Beautiful, purple of colour and fringed with a border of tassels.  
 Also with honour I brought him aboard of his well-decked vessel.  
 Then, I remember, a herald—his elder in years by a little—  
 Alway attended him ; ay, I can also describe his appearance :  
 Round in the shoulders and dark in his skin, and with hair that was curly.  
 Eurybatés was his name, and of all of his comrades Odysseus  
 Honoured him most, for the man had a mind that was like to the master's."

Thus as he spake to a longing for tears still more he aroused her,  
 Since in her heart she confessed that the token was sure that he gave her.  
 Now when at last she had sated her soul with her tearful lamenting,  
 Once more finding the words for an answer she spake and addressed him :  
 "Stranger, before it was only thy misery moved my compassion ;  
 Now as a friend I shall welcome and honour thee here in my homestead.  
 Yes—these garments, I gave them myself—just such as thou sayest—  
 Folded I carried them forth from my room, and the glittering brooch too  
 Added to serve as adornment. But, ah, no more shall I see him !  
 Ne'er shall I welcome him home to the well-loved land of his fathers ;  
 Nay, for I know to his doom in the hollow ship he departed  
 Sailing for Ilium, city of doom, name ne'er to be uttered."

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
 "Lady and consort revered of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
 Waste no longer with weeping thy beautiful body, nor sorrow,  
 Wearing thy spirit away, for thy lord !—Though scarce can I blame thee ;  
 Every woman is fain to lament when she loseth her husband,  
 One who loved her in youth and has made her the mother of children,  
 Though not a man as Odysseus, the equal, they say, of immortals.  
 Stay howbeit thy tears and consider my words, I beseech thee.  
 This I can tell thee for certain, nor longer I wish to conceal it,  
 Touching thy husband's return . . . that I heard of Odysseus but lately,  
 Not in a far-off land but the rich Thesprotian country,



Ay and alive; and he brings full many a beautiful treasure,  
Gifts that he got by request from the people. His trusty companions  
All he has lost, and his hollow ship, on the wine-dark ocean,  
While he was leaving the isle Thrinacia—since they had angered  
Zeus and the sun-god Eëlios; for they slaughtered his oxen.  
All of them perished, entombed in the fathomless surges of ocean—  
All but himself; he was borne on the keel of his ship to the dry land,  
Land of a nation akin to the gods, Phaeacian people.  
These right heartily welcomed and honoured him like an immortal,  
Giving him many a gift; and they wished of themselves to convoy him  
Safely again to his home, and Odysseus had verily been here  
Long since, only it seemed to his mind more prudent and better  
Wealth to collect as he journeyed around through many a country,  
Since more wily and gainful devices than others of mortals  
Knoweth Odysseus; on earth there lives not his equal in cunning.  
Now it was this that I heard from the King of Thesprotia, Pheidon:  
Oft he assured me on oath, as he poured in his hall a libation,  
Dragged to the sea was the ship, and the crew of the rowers was ready,  
Waiting to carry him home to the well-loved land of his fathers.  
Me ere this he despatched—for it chanced that a vessel was sailing,  
Manned with Thesprotian folk, to the island of bountiful harvests  
Dulichium; and he showed me the wealth that Odysseus had gathered,  
Treasures sufficient to feed one's heirs to the tenth generation;  
Such was the wealth that Odysseus had stored in the halls of the monarch.  
Now he was gone, I was told, to Dodona, to list to the counsel  
Zeus from the thick-leaved height of his oak might utter to guide him  
So as to win once more to the well-loved land of his fathers  
Whence so long he is missed, whether open his coming or secret.  
Thus, as I say, he is safe; ere long thou'lt learn his arrival;  
Yea he is even at hand, nor afar from his friends and his homeland  
Long will he tarry—And yet, I will give thee an oath to confirm it.  
First then witness it Zeus, of immortals the highest and strongest,  
Yea and the hearth to the which I am come of the noble Odysseus,  
Verily all these things that I tell thee will find a fulfilment.  
Whilst this year on its path still circles return shall Odysseus,  
Even as this moon dies and the new-born moon is appearing.”

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:  
“Stranger, I pray for the word thou hast spoken to find a fulfilment;  
Then shalt thou speedily find both friendship and many a present  
Come from me—such that whoever shall meet thee will hold thee as blessed.



Ah but in this wise bodeth my spirit, and thus it will happen :  
Ne'er shall Odysseus return to his home, and ne'er shalt thou gain thee  
Escort hence—for the house now lacketh a lord and a master  
Such as Odysseus when living amidst us—if e'er he was living—  
Ready to welcome and honour a guest and to speed him at parting.  
Hearken, my maids—ye shall wash this stranger and place him a bedstead.  
Strew it with bedding—a mattress and wrappers and glistening blankets,  
So that he lie right warm till the fair-throned morn shall awake him.  
Mind at the dawning of day to prepare him a bath and anoint him ;  
Then at the table with Telemachus let his seat be provided  
Here in the hall—'Twill be worse for the fellow, whoe'er of the suitors  
Harms him or wantonly vexes his soul. No longer shall such one  
Here find profit, although full sorely his spirit be angered.  
Nay, O stranger . . . for how wilt thou ever discern me a woman  
Better than others in good understanding and thoughtful devices,  
Should I allow thee unwashed and unkempt and in sorry apparel  
Here to be seated as guest in my hall? Short-lived is a mortal.  
Every one who is hard in his nature and hard in his actions,  
All men call down curses upon him and long for his ruin  
While he is living ; as soon as he dieth they merrily mock him.  
Every one who is blameless in nature and blameless in action,  
Widely is spread his repute by the guests he hath kindly entreated  
E'en to the ends of the earth, and by many is lauded his goodness."

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
"Lady and consort revered of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
Verily unto my soul have wrappers and glistening blankets  
Hateful appeared from the day when the snow-clad mountains of Creta  
Faded from sight as I voyaged from thence on the long-oared vessel.  
Nay, I will lie as so often I lay all sleepless till daybreak,  
Since full many a night on a bed unspeakably wretched  
Have I reclined and awaited the fair-throned beautiful morning.  
Also the bathing of feet delighteth my heart as aforesaid  
Now no longer, and never my foot shall be touched by a woman,  
Any of all of the maidens who work in thy palace as servants,  
Save peradventure a dame right agéd, devoted and loyal,  
One that has learnt in her heart to endure much sorrow, as I have.  
Should such woman be present I would not forbid her to bathe me."

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
"Stranger beloved—for ne'er was a man more full of discretion,



None more worthy of love that has come as a guest to my homestead—  
 Such is the wisdom and prudence thou showest in all thou hast spoken.  
 Truly an ancient attendant I own, full sage and discerning,  
 One who was nurse to my lord—ill-fated Odysseus; she reared him,  
 Yea in her arms she received him as soon as his mother had borne him;  
 She will provide thee a bath for the feet, though agéd and feeble.  
 Come now, rise at my bidding, thou wise-souled Eurycleia!  
 Bathe this man. He is like to thy master in age; and Odysseus  
 Now is perhaps just such in his hands and his feet as this stranger,  
 Since that a man grows old full soon if he meeteth misfortune.”

Thus did she speak, and her agéd attendant, bitterly weeping,  
 Covered her face with her hands, while words right doleful she uttered:  
 “Woe to me! Woe for my child! All helpless I mourn thee—of all men  
 Hated by heaven the most, though pious and heaven revering.  
 Never did any of mortals to Zeus that delighteth in thunder  
 Offerings make of the fat thigh-flesh, and of chosen oblations,  
 Such as thyself wert wont while praying the Father to bring thee  
 Unto a smooth old age and thy glorious son to his manhood;  
 Yet hath he taken from thee—thee only—the day of returning.  
 Yea and perchance e’en thus in an alien people the women  
 Mocked him whenever he came to the far-famed house of a chieftain,  
 Even as here thou art mocked by the women—the impudent creatures.  
 Ay and to shun their taunts and their ceaseless insults thou wilt not  
 These should bathe thee; but, lo, I am ready to do as my mistress  
 Bids me, the daughter of Icarus, wise Penelopeia.  
 Gladly thy feet will I wash—not only for Penelopeia,  
 Nay, but for thine own sake; for the heart in my bosom with pity  
 Deeply is moved. Moreover, attentively mark what I tell thee:  
 Many a wayworn stranger arrives at the palace, but never  
 Mortal I saw so like to another as here is the likeness—  
 So in thy form and thy voice and thy feet thou art like to Odysseus.”  
 Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
 “True, old lady—and thus says every one that beheld us,  
 Me and Odysseus: exceedingly like is the one to the other;  
 So ’tis affirmed—as thyself moreover hast noted and told me.”

Thus did he speak, and the old nurse, taking a glittering basin  
 Used for the washing of feet, poured into it plentiful water,  
 Firstly the cold—then added a beaker of warm; and Odysseus  
 Sat by the hearth; but his face he had suddenly turned to the darkness,



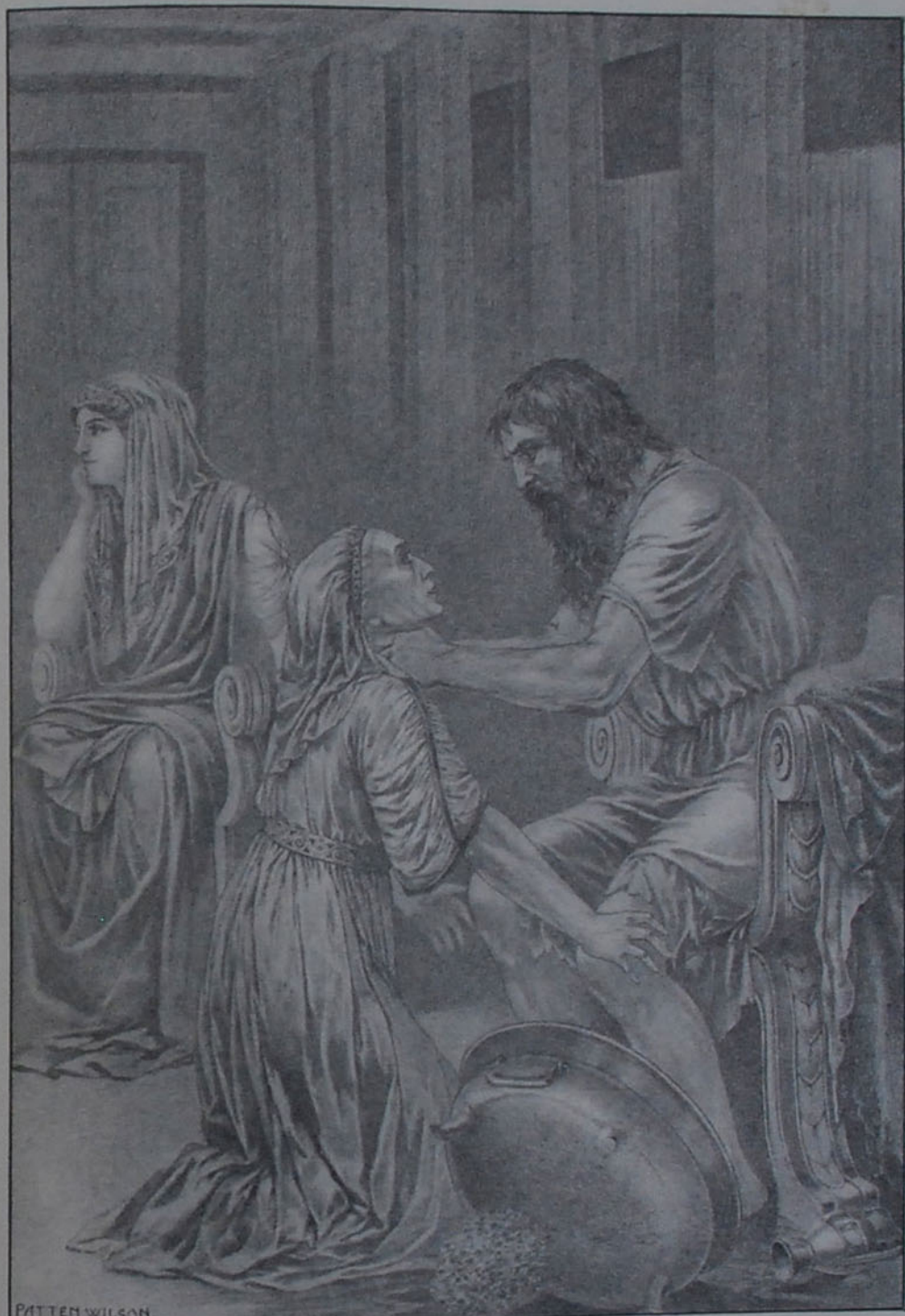
Struck by the fear lest while that she handled his body the woman,  
Seeing the scar, might know him, and all might then be discovered.  
So she approached, and she set her to wash him—her lord; and she straightway  
Knew him, perceiving the wound that a boar's white tusk had inflicted  
Once when he went to Parnassus to visit the sire of his mother,  
Autolycus and his sons—brave prince, who in craft was unrivalled,  
Skilled in the taking of oaths, and deceits that a deity taught him,  
Even Hermeias himself; for he burnt well-pleasing oblations,  
Thighs of the lambs and the kids, and the god vouchsafed him his favour.  
Now it had chanced, when he came to the fertile Ithacan country,  
Autolycus found there with a new-born infant his daughter.  
Him laid Eurycleia the nurse on the knees of his grandsire  
E'en as he ended his supper, and turned to the prince and addressed him:  
“Autolycus, now think of the name that thou wilt to be given  
Unto the son of thy daughter—the darling that long she has prayed for.”  
Then prince Autolycus upraising his voice made answer:  
“Daughter, and lord of my daughter, a name I will tell you to give him.  
Hither, behold, I am come much angered at many a mortal,  
Many a man and a woman on earth which nourisheth all things;  
Wherefore name him Odysseus, ‘The Angered’; moreover I promise,  
Should he arrive at his manhood, and come to the home of his mother,  
Even the palace that lies on Parnassus amid my possessions,  
Out of my wealth I will make him a gift and dismiss him rejoicing.”  
So to receive from the prince these glorious presents Odysseus  
Came to Parnassus, and Autolycus and the sons of the chieftain  
Offered him greeting with grasp of the hand and with words of affection;  
Amphitheë moreover, his mother's mother, embraced him,  
Giving him kisses on both of his beautiful eyes and his forehead.  
Autolycus now ordered his sons, the illustrious princes,  
Quickly a meal to prepare; and they hastily did as he bade them.  
Bringing a five-year male from the herd of the cattle, they killed it,  
Flayed it and deftly prepared it—divided the whole of the carcass,  
Skilfully chopped it in pieces and spitted the pieces on skewers.  
Then, when with care it was roasted and ready, they portioned the messes.  
Thus then all of the day, till the sun sank down in the ocean,  
Feasting they sat, and their souls lacked nought in the plentiful banquet,  
Till, when the sun went down and come was the gloom of the twilight,  
Weary they laid them to rest and accepted the blessing of slumber.  
Now when the morning was newly arisen, the roseate-fingered,  
Forthwith gat them away to the chase both dogs and their masters,  
Sons of the prince, old Autolycus; and the godlike Odysseus



Went with them. Soon they arrived at the woodclad slopes of the mountain,  
Even Parnassus, and entered at once in the wind-swept gorges,  
Just as the sun with his light new-risen was smiting the cornfields,  
Mounting on high from the placid and fathomless depths of the ocean.  
Then at a glade of the woodland the beaters arrived, and before them  
Onward the dogs spread, scenting a trail, and the sons of the chieftain  
Followed behind, and amidst of them all went godlike Odysseus  
Close to the dogs, and his quivering spear in his hand he was swaying.  
Here was a monstrous boar, that had made him a lair in the thicket,  
Whither the might of the wind ne'er breathed through laden with moisture,  
Neither did ever the sun with the shafts of his radiance pierce it,  
Nor did the rain drip through it at all, so deep in the covert  
Hid was the lair of the boar ; and of leaves was a plentiful downfall.  
Soon did the sound of the feet of the dogs and the beaters arouse him  
Nearer approaching. He rushed from the depths of the thicket to meet them.  
Every bristle erect, and his eyes all flaming, he stood there  
Facing them. Then to advance was the first and the foremost Odysseus.  
Lifting his long sharp spear in his powerful hand, he attacked him,  
Eagerly trying to stab ; but the boar, too quick for him, lashed out  
Sideways, striking him over the knee with the tusk ; and it ripped through  
Much of the flesh ; but as far as the bone of the man it attained not.  
Then by Odysseus was smitten the boar : on the right, by the shoulder,  
Struck him and passed clean through him the point of the glittering spear-blade.  
Over he rolled in the dust with a scream, and fled was his spirit.  
Autolycus' dear sons then busied them over the carcass ;  
Also they tended the wound of the valiant godlike Odysseus—  
Bound it with skill, and the dark red blood with a song of enchantment  
Staunch'd ; and at once they returned to the home of their well-loved father.  
Here did the prince old Autolycus and the sons of the chieftain  
Carefully see to his healing, and offered him glorious presents ;  
Soon too, lovingly speeding his willing departure, they sent him  
Back to the Ithacan isle ; and his mother, the queen, and his father  
Joyed to behold him returned to his home, and they asked him of all things—  
Questioned him how he had come by the wound ; and he duly related  
How by the glittering tusk of a boar he was struck on Parnassus,  
When with the sons of the chief, prince Autolycus, he was hunting.

Now as the flat of her hand passed o'er it, the agéd attendant  
Knew it at once by the touch. Down dropt she the foot she was holding.  
On to the edge of the basin the leg struck sharply. The vessel  
Clattered and rang as it fell on its side, upsetting the water.





PATTEN WILSON.

THE RECOGNITION OF ODYSSEUS BY EURYCLEIA







Joy overwhelmed her together with grief, while gathering teardrops  
Flooded her eyes, and the flow of her clear-voiced utterance failed her.  
Then, to the chin of Odysseus uplifting her hand, she addressed him :  
“Yea, thou art truly Odysseus—my child ! my belovéd ! my master !  
Nor did I know thee until I had handled the whole of thy body !”

E'en as she spake she was eagerly glancing at Penelopeia,  
Wishing to tell her that here in his home was her own dear husband,  
Yet was her mistress unable to answer her look or to note it,  
Since that the goddess Athena diverted her mind ; and Odysseus  
Groped with his right for the throat of the woman and clutched it and held it,  
While with the other he drew her anigh him and spake to her saying :  
“Nurse, dost thou wish to destroy me—the child thou didst tenderly nourish  
Here on thy breast—when at last, all perils and sufferings ended,  
Now in the twentieth year I am come to the land of my fathers ?  
Since thou art ware of the truth (for a god to thy heart hath revealed it)  
Keep thou silence—that none in the palace suspect it beside thee.  
This moreover I say—'twill certainly find a fulfilment—  
Should God grant me to vanquish the arrogant suitors, not even  
Thee will I spare, fond nurse of my childhood, whenever the others  
Here in my halls I shall slay—those faithless ones of the handmaids.”

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Eurycleia :  
“Nay but my child, what word by the door of thy lips hath escaped thee !  
Surely thou knowest how strong is my will and unbending my spirit.  
Firm I will keep me—as firm and as rigid as stone or as iron.  
Also a thing will I say, which carefully mark and remember :  
Should God grant it indeed that thou vanquish the arrogant suitors,  
Then I will tell thee of all concerning the maids in the palace,  
Which of them honour thee not and which are guiltless among them.”  
Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“Nurse, why talkst thou of these ? It is nowise needful to tell me.  
Well shall I mark them and learn to distinguish the one from the other.  
Keep such words to thyself ! Leave all to the gods, and be silent !”

Thus did he speak ; and the nurse passed forth from the hall to procure her  
Water again for his feet ; for the whole he had spilt of the other.  
So, when at last he was bathed and anointed with oil of the olive,  
Nearer again to the hearth drew up with his settle Odysseus,  
Wishing to warm him, and covered the scar with his ragged apparel.



Then wise Penelopeia began once more to address him :  
"Stranger, for mine own sake still one slight question I ask thee.  
Soon will be coming for all the delectable season of slumber,  
Coming for all whom sweet sleep visits in spite of their sorrows,  
While for myself . . . it was sorrow unending a deity sent me.  
All day long I am soothing my spirit with weeping and wailing,  
While I attend to my work and the tasks of my maids in the palace.  
Then, when the darkness is come and all are buried in slumber,  
Sleepless I lie on my couch with a close-throged heart, and around it  
Stinging anxieties swarm and distress me amidst of my mourning.  
E'en as the daughter of Pandareüs, pale-plumaged Aëdon,  
Singeth her exquisite song when the season of spring is advancing,  
Out of her hidden retreat in the midst of the clustering branches  
Pouring with many a varying note her melodious music,  
While she bewaileth the darling she slew in her ignorant madness,  
Itylus—even her child, whose father was Zethus the monarch ;  
Thus too wavers my spirit and swaying to this and to that side  
Biddeth me now to remain with my son, protecting securely  
All my possessions and slaves and the high-roofed halls of my homestead,  
Paying respect to the bed of my lord and the voice of the people ;  
Then it will bid me to follow the man who of all the Achaeans  
Proveth the best of the suitors and offereth numberless presents.  
Touching my son—so long as he still was a child and was thoughtless  
Never he wished me to wed and abandon the home of my husband ;  
Now he is grown ; and as soon as he reached full measure of manhood  
Straight he began to beseech me to go—to depart from the palace—  
Angered in heart at the waste of his wealth by the princes Achaean.  
Now will I beg thee to list to a dream that I dreamt, and to rede it.  
Geese, some twenty in number, I keep at the house, and they feed on  
Wheat that I put in the water ; and watching them giveth me pleasure.  
Once, from the mountain descending, an eagle, enormous and hook-beaked,  
Killed them by seizing and breaking the necks of them all ; and they lay there  
Strewn in a heap in the court, while soaring to heaven he vanished.  
Then, as I wept and lamented aloud (although I was dreaming),  
Hurriedly gathered around me the fair-tressed maids of Achaea,  
Hearing me bitterly wail for my geese all killed by the eagle.  
Swiftly howbeit returning he sat on the end of a roof-beam,  
Whence with the voice of a man he addressed me and stayed me from weeping :  
' Daughter of far-famed Icarius, take courage ! I bring thee  
No mere dream but a vision of truth that will find a fulfilment.  
Lo these geese—they betoken the suitors ; and I, that as eagle



Firstly appeared in thy dream, am returned to thee now as thy husband,  
Yea and will bring down fearful destruction on all of the suitors.  
Thus as he spake, from its spell sweet slumber released me, and straightway  
Peering around I perceived that my geese were still in the courtyard  
Greedy eating the corn at the side of the trough, as aforetime."

*Odyssey*  
*XIX*  
*549 - 586*

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
"None, O lady, I ween, were able the dream to interpret  
Elsewise wresting its meaning, for truly Odysseus in person  
Telleth thee how he shall bring it to pass. Doom threatens the suitors,  
All of them. None shall escape from his lot and the death that awaits him."

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
"Stranger, a dream is a thing right difficult, hard to interpret ;  
Neither is all that we dream oft certain to find a fulfilment.  
Twain are fabled the gates of the shadowy visions of Dreamland,  
One of them fashioned of horn, and of ivory fashioned the other.  
Every vision that passeth the white sawn ivory portal  
Lightly deceives, and the message it bringeth is never accomplished ;  
All which pass to the earth by the gate smooth-polished of ox-horn  
Smoothly accomplish the truth, so oft as a mortal beholds them.  
Never howbeit from thence (do I fear) did my wonderful vision  
Come to me ; else to myself and my son 'twere joyfully welcome.  
Also a thing will I say, which carefully mark and remember :  
Soon will be here the detestable dawn that will cut me for ever  
Hence, from the home of Odysseus. I purpose to summon a contest,  
Using the axes that here in the hall he has often erected,  
Set in a row as the ribs of a vessel, a dozen in number.  
Placing him then at a distance he shot through all with his arrow.  
Now am I minded to offer this trial of skill to the suitors.  
Who with his hands most easily stringeth the bow of Odysseus,  
Should he be able to shoot clean through all twelve of the axes,  
Him I shall follow as wife, and shall bid farewell to this mansion,  
Beautiful, beautiful home of my girlhood, abounding in comfort—  
Home that I often in future, methinks, in my dreams shall remember."

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
"Lady and consort revered of Odysseus the son of Laertes,  
Make no further delay with this trial of skill in thy homestead,  
Seeing that verily soon will return deep-plotting Odysseus  
Ere by the men, as in vain with the bow smooth-polished they fumble,



*Odyssey* Stretched is the string on the notch and the iron is pierced by an arrow."

*XIX*  
*687 - 604*

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :  
"Shouldst thou be willing to sit at my side in the hall and delight me,  
Never the whole of the night would slumber descend on my eyelids.  
Sleep howbeit we must ; for to live and to lack it is able  
None of mankind ; such fate is allotted by heaven to mortals,  
Every wight that is dwelling on earth, rich giver of harvests.  
So I shall mount to my upper apartment, and there, when I enter,  
Lay me again on the bed that is ever the place of my groanings,  
Watered so oft by my tears from the day that Odysseus departed  
Sailing to Ilion, city of doom, name ne'er to be uttered.  
There I shall lay me to rest. Do thou lay thee to sleep in the palace.  
Strew thee a bed on the ground ; or the maidens shall place thee a bedstead."

These words spoken she went to her glistering upper apartment ;  
Neither alone did she go : she was followed by all of her maidens.  
So, to her upper apartment ascending with maiden attendants,  
Here she lamented Odysseus, her well-loved husband, till gently  
Slumber was poured on her lids by the grey-eyed goddess Athene.



# ODYSSEY BOOK XX

**S**O in the porch of the hall did the godlike Odysseus repose him.  
First on the floor he extended an untanned hide, and above it  
Spread him a number of fleeces of sheep that the princes had slaughtered.  
Eurynomé then covered him o'er with a wrap as he lay there.  
Long did Odysseus, with heart that was brooding on ills for the suitors,  
Lie there sleepless. And out of the inner apartment the women,  
Those that had ever till now consorted in love with the suitors,  
Came forth, bandying laughter and merriment one with another.  
Then, as he heard them, aroused was the soul in the depths of his bosom.  
Many a time did he waver with doubt in his mind and his spirit  
Whether to haste in pursuit and to deal out death to the maidens,  
Every one, or to leave them alone with the arrogant suitors  
One time more and the last ; and his heart growled fiercely within him ;  
E'en as a dog, when in front of her helpless puppies she paces,  
Growls in her rage at a man that she knows not and longs to assail him,  
So it was growling within him in wrath at their infamous actions.  
Then on his bosom he smote and his heart he addressed and rebuked it :  
" Courage, my heart, and endure ! Still worse was the shame thou enduredst,  
E'en on the day when the huge irresistible monster, the Cyclops,  
Ate my heroic companions, but thou wast undaunted, till cunning  
Freed thee from out of the cave where certain appeared thy destruction."

Thus did he speak to the heart in his bosom, exhorting it sharply ;  
Yea and it heard and obeyed him, and held with a patient endurance  
Firm. But Odysseus himself kept turning to this and to that side.  
Just as a man in the front of a fire that is mightily blazing  
Holdeth a pudding of blood and of fat, and to this and to that side  
Constantly turns it, and longs for the thing to be speedily roasted,  
So was he tossing to this and to that side, musing in spirit  
How 'twere best to attempt the attack on the impudent suitors  
Single against so many.

And now drew near him Athene,  
Come from the heights of Olympus and changed to a woman in semblance.  
Standing beside him, anigh to his head, these words she addressed him :  
" Wherefore still art thou lying awake, most hapless of mortals ?  
Lo now, here is thy home ; here too is thy wife in thy homestead,  
Ay and thy son—such son as by every father is longed for."



Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
" Verily all thou hast said, O goddess, is true and befitting ;  
Still I am much in suspense and am musing in mind and in spirit  
How 'twere best to attempt the attack on the impudent suitors,  
Being but one, while here in the house they're ever in numbers.  
Also a doubt still greater is making me muse in my spirit :  
Were I to slay them by help of thyself and of Zeus the Almighty,  
Whither to flee and escape the avenger? Resolve it, I pray thee!"

Him forthwith gave answer the grey-eyed goddess Athene :  
" Slow to believe ! Why, many a man oft trusts in a comrade  
Weaker by far—in a mortal with no such counsels as mine be.  
I am the goddess who vowed to protect thee till all was accomplished,  
Yea and in every danger ; and once more plainly I tell thee,  
Even if companies fifty in number of men that be mortal  
Compassed us closely about, right eager in battle to slay us,  
All of their fat-fed flocks thou'dst capture and all of their cattle.  
Come, compose thee to slumber ! A weary vexation is watching  
All night sleepless ; and now thou art rising from out of thy troubles."  
These words uttered Athena, and poured forth sleep on his eyelids ;  
Then she departed, the beautiful goddess, and came to Olympus.

Meanwhile slumber had seized him and loosened the cares of his spirit,  
Slumber that loosens the limbs. But his true-souled wife had awakened.  
Long on her soft-strown bed she had sat and had wept and lamented,  
Till, when at length she was weary in spirit of weeping and wailing,  
Then did the fairest of women to Artemis turn in entreaty :  
" Artemis, lady divine, O daughter of Zeus the Almighty,  
Send, I beseech thee, an arrow that piercing my bosom shall slay me  
Now in a moment—or would that the hurricane blast of the storm-winds  
Seized me, and sweeping me off on the shadowy paths of the tempests  
Hurled me below, where back to the sea comes streaming the Ocean,  
E'en as the daughters of Pandareüs were seized by the storm-blast.  
Father and mother they lost by the act of the gods, and as orphans  
Sole they remained in the halls of the palace ; but Queen Aphrodite  
Fed them on curds and on honey and wine that was sweet as the honey.  
Then were given the maidens above all women by Hera  
Beauty and wisdom, and chaste Queen Artemis granted them stature,  
While from Athena they learnt the designing of exquisite handwork.  
Now when the fair Aphrodite was wending to lofty Olympus,  
There to obtain for the maidens the blissful assurance of wedlock,





FAYEN WILSON.

THE PRAYER OF PENELOPEIA







Seeking the promise of Zeus who delighteth in thunder (he knoweth  
All that to earthborn mortals is granted by Fate or denied them),  
Meantime down came sweeping the Harpies, the Spirits of Tempest,  
Snatched them, and unto the hateful Erinyes gave them as handmaids.  
Thus too sweep me away, O gods who inhabit Olympus!  
Else, O fair-tressed Artemis, smite me!—and thus, with Odysseus  
Imaged in mind, I shall go to the terrible nethermost darkness,  
Nor shall I ever rejoice the affections of one that is baser.  
Now herein is an evil endurable—namely, whenever  
One that by day sits weeping, with heart sore stricken by sorrow,  
Yieldeth at night to the power of sleep: all things he forgetteth,  
Evil as well as the good, when it once o'ershadows his eyelids,  
While for myself—some deity sends false dreams to afflict me;  
Yea and to-night one like to my husband was sleeping beside me,  
Such as he seemed when he sailed with the host; and the heart in my bosom  
Joy'd, for I thought that at last it was true—no dream, but a vision.”

Thus did she speak, and anon came Morning, the golden-enthronéd.  
Now as she wept had her voice been heard by the godlike Odysseus.  
Forthwith fell he a-musing thereat, and she seemed to his fancy  
Surely to know him already and close to his head to be standing.  
Rolling together the wraps and the fleeces wherein he had slumbered  
These on a settle he laid in the hall, then carried the oxhide  
Out to the court, and to Zeus uplifted his hands in entreaty:  
“Father, if truly thy grace and the favour of heaven hath led me  
Over the wet and the dry to my home (though sorely ye plagued me),  
Grant me, I pray, that an omen be uttered by one that is waking  
Here in the house; and without, O Zeus, send also a portent!”

Such was the prayer that he uttered, and Zeus, great Counsellor, heard him.  
Forthwith out of the radiant heights of Olympus he thundered  
Down from aloft, from the sky; and godlike Odysseus exulted.  
Also was uttered a voice by a woman that ground in an outhouse  
Nigh to him. Here were standing the mills of the prince of the people.  
These were worked by the women, a dozen in number, that toiled there  
Making the meal of the wheat and the barley, the marrow of mortals.  
All of the rest were sleeping, for ground was the whole of their wheat-grain.  
She was the weakest, and now was alone and incessantly toiling.  
Stopping her mill she exclaimed (to her master it came as an omen):  
“Father of all! Great Zeus, who art monarch of men and immortals,  
Loudly in sooth thou hast thundered from starry expanses of heaven,



*Odyssey* Nor is a cloud to be seen! It is surely a portent for some one!  
*XX* Also for me, poor wretch, accomplish the prayer that I utter:  
*114-152* O for the last and the latest of all their delightful carousings  
Here in the halls of Odysseus to-day to be held by the suitors!  
Yea, for the men have loosened my knees with this pitiless labour,  
Grinding the grain—so now let them finish their feasting for ever!"  
Then did Odysseus rejoice, for he felt that the voice was an omen,  
E'en as the thunder of Zeus, and that vengeance had come for the guilty.

Now had the rest of the maids in the beautiful home of Odysseus  
Gathered, and soon on the hearth the unwearied flame they rekindled.  
Telemachus too rose from his bed, as a god in his beauty,  
Donned his apparel, suspended his keen-edged sword from the shoulder,  
Under his smooth-skinned feet then fastened his beautiful sandals,  
Lifted his powerful spear, with its blade sharp-pointed and bronzen,  
Went to the threshold and, there as he stood, called Eurycleia:  
"Say, dear nurse, did ye honour the guest in the house? did ye give him  
Food and a bed? or, left to himself, is he lying uncared for?  
Such is the way with my mother: although of a good understanding,  
Blindly she seemeth to value the one or the other of mortals;  
Often she honours the worse and dismisses the better unhonoured."  
Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Eurycleia:  
"Nay but, my child, no blame hath thy mother; thou needst not reproach her.  
Wine he was given, and sat there drinking as long as he listed;  
Food he refused: no longer he hungered, he said; for she asked him.  
Then, as the time was at hand to be mindful of rest and of slumber,  
Some of her maiden attendants she ordered to place him a bedstead.  
Natheless, like to a man that is utterly broken and wretched,  
Neither to sleep on a bed was he willing nor wrap him in blankets.  
Spreading the untanned hide of an ox and a couple of sheepskins,  
Out in the passage he slept; and we covered him o'er with a mantle."

Thus did she speak, and the youth fared forth by the hall of the palace  
Bearing his spear; and by two of his fleet-paced hounds he was followed.  
Then to the council he went of the well-greaved sons of Achaea,  
While to her maidens she issued her orders, that good old woman,  
Eurycleia, the daughter of Ops, who was son of Pisenor:  
"Come now, set ye to work! Some busily see to the sweeping.  
Sprinkle with water the floor of the hall, and the covers of purple  
Place on the fair-wrought chairs. Some wipe down all of the tables,  
Rubbing them clean with a sponge; then rinse out every wine-bowl,



Also the twy-cupped beakers of delicate work ; and let others  
Go to the fountain for water, and quickly return with it hither.  
Not much longer, methinks, from the hall will the suitors be absent ;  
Early the morn they will come ; 'tis for all of the people a feast-day."  
Thus did she speak, and they listened with care to her words and obeyed her :  
Twenty departed at once to the fountain of dark spring water,  
While that the others remained in the palace and skilfully toiled there.

*Odyssey*  
XX  
153 - 190

Then there entered the thralls of the noble Achaeans, and straightway  
Skilfully cleft them of wood right many a log ; and the women  
Came from the fountain ; and also the swineherd arrived, and he joined them.  
Down from the farm three hogs he had driven, the fattest and finest.  
These he permitted to feed in the beautiful palace enclosure,  
While to Odysseus he came and with words right gentle addressed him :  
" Stranger, with greater regard seem now the Achaeans to treat thee ?  
Or, as they acted before in the hall, with dishonour and insult ?"  
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
" O for the gods to avenge, Eumaeus, the scorn and the outrage  
Shown by the wanton infatuate deeds of the insolent fellows  
Here in the home of another ! Nor shame do they feel—not the smallest."

Thus did the twain stand there conversing the one with the other.  
Then came passing anigh them Melanthius master of goatherds,  
Driving his goats, prime beasts that from all of the flocks he had chosen,  
Meant for the suitors to eat ; and by herdsmen twain he was followed.  
Now when the goats he had tethered beneath the reëchoing portal,  
Up to Odysseus he came and with words of abuse he addressed him :  
" Stranger, it seems thou art fain e'en here in the house to annoy us,  
Begging from all of the men !—Go, get thee away from the palace !  
Ne'er shall we twain find means to be rid of the matter and part us  
Ere each tastes of the fists of the other. I call it indecent,  
Begging and begging ! Besides, there's feasting with other Achaeans."  
Thus did he speak ; and Odysseus replied not a word, but he stood there  
Silently shaking his head, as a man that is brooding on evil.

Now did a third draw nigh them, Philoetius, master of neatherds,  
Leading a cow that was barren and fat-fed goats for the suitors.  
Them had the ferrymen brought from the mainland (as many a mortal  
Also they ferry across, whosoever arrives at the crossing).  
These when he safely had tethered beneath the reëchoing portal,  
Up to the side of the swineherd he came and addressed him a question :



*Odyssey*  
XX  
191-230

“Swineherd, who is the stranger, I pray—this man that is newly  
Come as a guest to the house? What race doth he boast to belong to?  
Where is the place of his birth, and which is the land of his fathers?  
Hapless he seems; but in form he is like to a lord and a chieftain;  
Yea and the gods mar often a man that is driven to wander—  
Fate that can hap to a ruler himself, if they spin him misfortune.”  
Thus as he spake he approached and his right hand offered in welcome;  
Then he uplifted his voice and with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
“Welcome, father and stranger! I wish thee in future a fortune  
Happier. Now, as it seems, thou’rt holden of many an evil.  
Father of all, great Zeus! More baneful is none of immortals!  
Ne’er dost thou feel compassion for mortals although thou begett’st them,  
Making them ever to dwell with misfortune, with pain and with sorrow.  
E’en as I saw him I sweated, and tears come flooding mine eyes still  
While I remember Odysseus—for, ah, I am certain that he too  
Thus in a raiment of rags goes roaming from people to people,  
Haps it indeed that he still is alive and beholdeth the sunlight.  
Should he however be dead and gone to the mansion of Hades,  
Woe to me! Woe for Odysseus, my good dear master, who set me  
Over his kine, as a youngster among Cephalenian people!  
These are growing unspeakably many: with none of the chieftains  
Waxing and flourishing thus is the breed of the broad-browed cattle.  
Ay, but I now am commanded by others, and batten my cattle  
Only for strangers to eat. Of the heir in the palace they reckon not,  
Neither the wrath of the gods do they fear. Nought else do they long for  
Save to divide the estate of my lord, who so long is unheard of.  
Many and many a time with my heart in the depth of my bosom  
This I revolve: ’twere wrong, while liveth the son of my master,  
Taking the cows to abandon the country and make for another,  
Some far alien land; but methinks it is worse to remain here,  
Sitting and guarding my cattle for others, and suffering hardships.  
Ay and indeed long since I had found some powerful chieftain  
Whither to flee—for I vow it is scarce endurable sometimes;  
Still I am always a-thinking of him—poor master!—and dreaming  
How he shall come and shall scatter the suitors in rout from the palace.”

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
“Neatherd, seeing thou seemst not a man that is evil or foolish  
(Nay, I confess it myself, in thy thoughts much wisdom is present),  
Therefore a thing will I say, and with solemn oath will confirm it:  
First then witness it Zeus, and the table at which I am welcomed,



Yea and the hearth, to the which I am come, of the noble Odysseus,  
While thou art here in the mansion Odysseus shall come to his homestead,  
Ay and with thine own eyes, if thou willst, thou'lt surely behold him  
Slaughtering all of the suitors, who dare in his palace to lord it."

*Odyssey*  
XX  
231 - 267

Him gave answer the man who as cowherd tended the cattle:  
"Would, O stranger, that Zeus might grant to thy words a fulfilment!  
Then thou'dst learn of my strength and behold how ready my hands be."  
Likewise spake Eumaeus, and calling on all the immortals  
Prayed for Odysseus the wise to return once more to his homeland.

Now as the men stood there conversing the one with the other,  
Secretly planning the doom and death of the son of Odysseus  
Plotted the suitors—but lo, on the left came flying an eagle,  
King of the uppermost air, with a quivering dove in his talons.  
Then spake Amphinomus to the others, and thus he addressed them:  
"Friends, I am sure it will never succeed, this thing that we purpose,  
Murdering Telemachus. Let us think once more of the banquet!"  
Thus spake Amphinomus, and his words pleased all of the others.  
So they betook them at once to the palace of godlike Odysseus.  
Here, when aside they had laid on the chairs and the couches their mantles,  
Fatlings they slew of the goats and the heaviest beasts of the sheepfold;  
Also they slew fat hogs and a cow that was brought from the pasture,  
Roasted the livers and portioned the messes, and then in the wine-bowls  
Mingled the wine; and the cups were carried around by the swineherd,  
While by Philoetius, master of herdsmen, in beautiful baskets  
Bread was dispensed, and the wine poured out by the goatherd Melantheus.  
Then did they stretch forth hands to the food that was lying before them.

Telemachus with a crafty intent now seated Odysseus  
Nigh to the threshold of stone of the strong-built banqueting-chamber.  
Wretchedly poor was the chair that he placed him, and small was the table.  
Then of the liver he served him a portion, and filled him a goblet,  
Even a beaker of gold; and he spake these words and addressed him:  
"There now, sit at thy ease midst nobles, and quaff of the wine-cup.  
Violent act or abuse . . . it is I that am going to stop it,  
Spite of the suitors. We keep not a tavern for common resorters  
Here in the house; 'twas the home of Odysseus; to me he bequeathed it.  
Listen, ye suitors! I beg you to curb all spirit of brawling,  
Ay and of violent acts. No quarrel and strife shall arise here!"



Thus did he speak and the men, all biting their lips in amazement,  
Marvelled at Telemachus and the dauntless words he had uttered.  
Then spake Antinous, Eupheithes' son, and addressed them :  
"Though it is hard to submit, let us suffer, Achaeans, in silence  
Telemachus and his talk ! He is even beginning to threaten !  
Well, it was Father Cronion that stayed it—or else we had stopped him  
Chattering here in the hall, though mightily fluent his tongue be."  
Thus spake Antinous ; but the youth recked nought of his gibings.

Meantime up from the city was coming the sacred oblation  
Led by the heralds ; and soon did the long-haired sons of Achaea  
Gather them under the shadowy grove of the archer Apollo.

Now when the outside meat they had roasted and drawn from the skewers  
All they apportioned and sat them adown to a glorious banquet.  
Also in front of Odysseus a portion was set by the servants  
Like to the share that they all had received ; since so had commanded  
Telemachus, dear son of the hero godlike Odysseus.

Nowise willed it Athena to suffer the arrogant suitors  
Still to refrain from insulting contempt, for she wished the resentment  
Deeper to sink in the heart of Odysseus the son of Laertes.  
Now in the band of the suitors was one that was utterly lawless ;  
Ctesippus was his name, and he lived in the island of Samé.  
He too, trusting the wondrous extent of his wealthy possessions,  
Courtied the wife of Odysseus, the lord who so long was unheard of.  
Such was the fellow that now to the insolent suitors addressed him :  
"Listen, ye high-born suitors ! allow me to tell you of something !  
See, they've served to the stranger a portion (and well he deserves it !)  
Like to the rest. 'Twere truly a wrong and unfair to neglect him,  
Guest as he seemeth of Telemachus—like all that arrive here.  
Lo, I will give him the gift of a guest : he is free to present it  
Unto the woman that tendeth the bath, or to any he listeth,  
Any a drudge in the whole of the palace of godlike Odysseus."  
Spake, and with strong broad hand outstretched to a basket beside him  
Lifted the foot of an ox—and he hurled ; but Odysseus escaped it,  
Quietly swerving aside with the head ; and he smiled in his spirit  
Grimly enough, while smit was the strong-built wall by the ox-foot.  
Then spake Telemachus, as he turned to the man and rebuked him :  
"Verily, friend Ctesippus, thy soul had a lucky escape there !  
Missed was thy mark—for the stranger himself evaded thy missile ;  
280



Else with my sharp-edged spear had I smitten thee through in the middle.  
So had thy funeral busied thy father instead of thy wedding  
Here in my halls ; for I vow in my house so grossly and rudely  
None shall behave. I am come to discretion, and well can distinguish  
All that is good or is bad—no more I'm a child as aforetime.  
Truly before, I allow, we endured it, beholding in silence  
Slaughter of flocks and of herds, and the wine all drunk and exhausted,  
Ay and the bread. It is hard for the one to be fighting the many.  
Come now, cease from the ills that ye do and the ills ye intend me !  
Else, if already ye long with the edge of the sword to destroy me,  
Far more willing I were—yea verily better I hold it—  
Thus to be slain than for ever to see such shameful procedure,  
Guests disgracefully treated and servant-maids of the household  
Haled by the men in the halls of my beautiful home to dishonour.”

So did he speak ; and they sat all utterly silent and speechless,  
Till at the last found voice Ageláus, the son of Damastor :  
“ Listen, my friends ! When the word that is spoken is spoken with justice,  
None should surely be wroth with the speaker and answer in anger.  
Neither maltreat, I beseech you, the stranger, nor other soever,  
None of the drudges that serve in the palace of godlike Odysseus.  
Also to Telemachus and his mother I venture to offer  
Gentle advice—let them lay it to heart, both one and the other :  
While your spirit that dwells in the depths of the bosom within you  
Hoped for Odysseus the wise to return once more to his homeland,  
None could deem it a wrong that ye waited, nor suffered the suitors  
Here in the house to resort ; since thus it was certainly better,  
Should peradventure Odysseus arrive and appear at his homestead.  
Now it is plain however that never again he is coming.  
Wherefore go to thy mother and sit at her side and persuade her,  
Bidding her marry the best of the men, whose offer is greatest.  
Then thou'lt live on the wealth of thy father in peace and in gladness,  
Eating and drinking, and she will attend to the house of another.”

Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :  
“ Nay, Agelaus, I swear it by Zeus and the griefs of my father,  
Far from his Ithacan home now perished or roaming as exile,  
Not by myself is her marriage delayed—nay, rather I bid her  
Wed with the man of her choice. Great gifts will I add as her dowry.  
Still, 'twere shameless, I think, from the palace to drive her unwilling,  
Giving her orders to quit. May heaven forbid that I do so !”



*Odyssey* Thus spake Telemachus, and, excited by Pallas Athene,  
XX Laughter unquenchable rose. But she wildered the wits of the suitors.  
345-388 Strangely, as coming from alien voices, resounded the laughter.  
Dabbled with gore was the meat of the banquet. The eyes of the feasters  
Floated in tears, and the minds of the men were set upon wailing.

Then did the seer divine, Theoclymenus, speak and address them :  
“Ah, unfortunate men ! What horror is this that has happened ?  
Shrouded in night are faces and heads. To the knees it descendeth.  
Out of it flash forth wails. All cheeks are flooded with teardrops.  
Yea and the walls are spattered with blood, and the beautiful alcoves.  
See too, crowded with ghosts is the porch and crowded the courtyard,  
Hurrying down to the darkness of Erebus ! Out of the heaven  
Withered and gone is the sun, and a poisonous mist is arising.”

Thus did he speak ; but they all right merrily laughed as they heard him.  
Eurymachus then called, prince Polybus' son, to his comrades :  
“Sure he is mad, this guest that is newly arrived from a distance !  
Come now quickly, my lads, and escort him away from the palace  
Out to the square—since here he complaineth of night and of darkness !”  
Then did the seer divine, Theoclymenus, answer him saying :  
“Eurymachus, I shall need not to bid thee vouchsafe me an escort.  
Both of mine eyes I possess, and a couple of ears and of feet too,  
Also a mind in my head well furnished—nor truly a bad one.  
So I will rise and be gone, since clearly I see a disaster  
Coming ; and none of you all shall be able to shun or avert it,  
None of the suitors by whom in the house of the godlike Odysseus  
Men are treated with insult and plann'd are wicked devices.”  
These words uttered, he went from the pleasant abodes of the palace  
Unto the home of his host Peiraeus, who gladly received him.

Meantime many a suitor, exchanging a glance with another,  
Girded at Telemachus to provoke him, deriding his guest-friends,  
While from the midst would speak some insolent youth and address him :  
“Telemachus, thou art sure most luckless of men in thy guest-friends,  
Such as the nobody here thou art harbouring—gluttonous vagrant,  
Begging for ever for wine and for victuals and wholly unskilled in  
Matters of work or of war—just living on earth as a burden.  
Then, as another again, this fellow that rose as a prophet !  
Nay now, take my advice ! 'twere verily wiser and better.  
Guests like these let us ship on a well-benched vessel and send them



Unto Sicilian folk—'twould pay thee enough for the trouble."

Thus did the suitors deride : but the youth recked nought of their gibings.  
Silent he gazed at his father, for ever expecting to see him  
Suddenly stretch forth hands on the horde of the insolent suitors.

Now on the opposite side in her beautiful chair she was lying,  
Even the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelopeia ;  
Therefore to every word that was said in the hall she had listened.

Merrily thus midst laughter the men made ready the dinner,  
Dinner delightful, abundant—for many a beast they had slaughtered.  
Supper however was coming ; and ne'er was a supper unwelcome  
Such as the one by the hands of a goddess and valiant hero  
Soon to be served for the men whose wickedness made the beginning.

*Odyssey*

XX

383 - 394







# ODYSSEY BOOK XXI

**N**OW did a thought that was sent by the grey-eyed goddess Athene  
Come to the daughter of Icarius, wise Penelopeia,  
Bidding her carry the bow and the cold grey axes of iron  
Into the hall for the contest—beginning of death for the suitors.  
So by the stair that ascended aloft to her chamber she mounted.

Here with her fair strong hand she selected a well-curved door-key,  
Beautiful, bronzen ; and fitted thereon was an ivory handle.  
Then to the room of the treasure she went with her maiden attendants,  
Even the innermost room where stored was the wealth of her husband,  
Many a rich-wrought treasure of bronze and of gold and of iron.  
Here was the back-bent bow of Odysseus and here was the quiver  
Holding the shafts, full many an arrow, the bringer of anguish,  
Gifts of a friend he had met when he journeyed to fair Lacedaemon,  
Iphitus, Eurytus' son, who was like the immortals of heaven.  
Once in Messenian land they had lighted the one on the other,  
E'en at the house of the wise prince Orsilochus—for Odysseus  
Thither had come for a debt that was owing from all of the people,  
Since in their well-benched vessels Messenian robbers had carried  
Off from the Ithacan isle three hundred sheep with the shepherds.  
These to recover Odysseus had come from afar as an envoy.  
Though but a lad he was sent by his sire and the rest of the elders.  
Iphitus also was there ; he had lost, and was seeking, his horses,  
Twelve of them, mares, each one with a strong young mule at the udder.  
(These same mares proved later his bane and the cause of his murder  
While he was guest of the man who was son of Cronion, the dauntless  
Hercules—wight that was guilty of many a terrible action ;  
Yea and he slew him, although as a friend he was there in his homestead,  
Wickedly slew him despite of the wrath of the gods and the table  
Spread by his hands for a stranger ; and, after the man he had murdered,  
Also the strong-hoof'd horses he kept for himself at his palace.)  
Questing for these he had met with Odysseus, and gave him the weapon,  
Even the bow that the great prince Eurytus carried, and later  
Left to his son when he died in the high-roofed hall of his homestead.  
Him with a sharp-edged sword and a powerful lance did Odysseus  
Also present—a beginning of intimate friendship ; but neither  
Shared of the bread of the other before by the son of Cronion  
Murdered was Iphitus, Eurytus' son, who was like the immortals.  
Such was the friend who had given the bow ; but the godlike Odysseus



*Odyssey* Never, when warring he went and aboard of his black-hulled vessels,  
*XXI* Took it, but aye it remained, of his well-loved friend a remembrance,  
*89-77* Lying at home, or alone in his native country he bare it.

Now when she came to the room of the treasure, that fairest of women,  
Up to the threshold of oak she advanced, which once by the joiner  
Smoothly was planed and was cut to the line with the skill of a master  
(Posts he had fitted thereto and the glittering doors to the door-posts).  
Straightway deftly she loosened the strap that was bound to the handle;  
Then she inserted the key, and the bolt of the portal she shot back,  
Pressing with accurate aim; and as grazing alone in a meadow  
Bellows a bull, thus bellowed the doors of the beautiful portal,  
Smit by the stroke of the key; and they both flew open before her.  
Then on the high-built dais she stept, where many a coffer  
Stood, in the which were lying her treasures of fragrant apparel.  
Here outstretching her hand to the bow of Odysseus, she took it  
Off from the peg where sheathed in its glittering case it was hanging.  
Then did she seat her, and laying it down on her knees she beheld it  
Bitterly weeping, and drew from its cover the bow of her husband,  
Till, when at last she had sated her soul with her weeping and wailing,  
Back to the hall she betook her and came to the arrogant suitors  
Bearing the back-bent bow, and carrying also the quiver  
Laden with shafts—full many an arrow, the bringer of anguish.  
Maidens as well came after her bearing a basket with treasures,  
Iron and bronze, full many a prize once gained by Odysseus.

So when at last she had come to the suitors, that fairest of women  
Stood by the post of the door of the massively builded apartment,  
Holding in front of her cheeks soft folds of her glistening head-dress.  
There as she stood, with a trusty attendant on this and on that side,  
Straightway unto the suitors she spake, and thus she addressed them:  
“Listen, ye arrogant suitors incessantly haunting my homestead,  
Vexing it ever and ever again with your bouts and your banquets  
These long years that my lord was away—and never a pretext  
Other in all that ye said did ye offer (nor could ye invent one)  
Save that ye longed to possess me as wife and to force me to marry.  
Come now, suitors! Behold, since such is the prize ye compete for,  
Here is the bow of the godlike Odysseus! I lay it before you.  
Who with his hands most easily stringeth the bow of my husband,  
Should he be able to shoot clean through all twelve of the axes,  
Him will I follow as wife, and shall bid farewell to this mansion,



Beautiful, beautiful home of my girlhood, abounding in comfort,  
Home that I often in future, methinks, in my dreams shall remember."

*Odyssey*

XXI

78 - 116

Thus did she speak, and she bade Eumaeus, the good old swineherd,  
Place for the suitors the bow and the cold grey axes of iron.  
Bursting in tears Eumaeus received them and laid them in order.  
Also the cowherd lamented, beholding the bow of his master.  
Then spake Antinous and addressed them and rudely rebuked them :  
" Babies and boors, that regard but the things of the day as it passeth !  
Wherefore, you couple of blubbering fools, thus trouble the lady,  
Stirring the heart in her bosom again, when her spirit already  
Lay o'erwhelmed in its grief at the loss of her well-loved husband ?  
Nay now, sit at the feast and be silent—or, must ye be weeping,  
Get to the door and be gone !—But the bow . . ye can leave it behind you.  
Fatal, methinks, 'twill prove as a test for the suitors. I trow not  
Easy to bend and to string is the smooth-wrought bow that I see there.  
Yea, for of all of us here there's never a man that is present  
Such as of yore was Odysseus. I saw him myself and remember,  
Well I remember, although I was only a child when I saw him."  
Thus did he speak, while deep in his heart he was hoping to prove him  
First of his fellows at stringing the bow and at piercing the axes.  
Ay but as first of them all he was fated to taste of an arrow  
Sped by the hands of the noble Odysseus, whom lately he flouted,  
Sitting at meat in his hall and inciting the others against him.

Then spake Telemachus, young valiant prince, to the suitors :  
" Heavens ! it seemeth that Father Cronion has robbed me of reason !  
Here is my own dear mother, although of a good understanding,  
Saying she meaneth to follow a stranger and part from her homestead.  
Yea and I laugh and rejoice when I hear it . . as reft of my senses !  
Well now, suitors, behold ! Since such is the prize ye compete for,  
Even a lady unrivalled in all of the land of Achaea,  
Also in Pylos the fair, and in Argive land and Mycene,  
Nay on the Ithacan island itself and the dim dark mainland . .  
Ah, but ye know it yourselves, and my praise of my mother is needless.  
Come, and delay no more with excuses ! Arise, and defer not  
Longer the trial of stringing the bow ! Let us see what shall happen !  
Ay and myself were fain to attempt this bow of my father.  
Should I be able to string it and pierce with an arrow the axes,  
Then shall my mother the queen not leave me alone in my sorrow,  
Quitting her home as the wife of a stranger, nor leave me behind her,



Should I be able to win me the glorious arms of my father."

E'en as he spake from his neck he unfastened his mantle of crimson,  
 Sprang to his feet, and unbuckled the sharp-edged sword from his shoulder.  
 Firstly the axes he fixed in the ground in a trench that he hollowed,  
 One long trench for them all, and straight in a line he arranged them,  
 Stamping around them the earth—And astonishment seized the beholders,  
 Seeing him set them in order, although he had learnt it from no one.  
 Then to the threshold he went and to master the bow he attempted.  
 Thrice did he make it to quiver in trying to pull it towards him,  
 Thrice did his strength give way; but he hoped nathless in his spirit  
 Still to be able to string it and pierce with an arrow the axes;  
 Yea he had strung it perhaps, for the fourth time mightily tugging,  
 Had not his eager attempt been checked by a nod from Odysseus.  
 Then did the valiant prince once more to the suitors address him:  
 "Heavens, methinks I shall prove in the end but a coward and weakling!  
 Else, maybe, I am still but a youth, nor as yet can I trust me  
 Unto the strength of my hands, should any assail me in anger.  
 Come now, ye that excel me in bodily strength and in manhood,  
 Make an essay of the bow! Let us hasten to finish the contest!"

These words spoken, the bow from his hands he surrender'd, and placed it  
 Leaning aslant on the door smooth-polished and finely compacted;  
 Also the shaft keen-pointed he propped by the beautiful bow-tip.  
 So he reseated himself on the chair from the which he had risen.

Then spake Antinous, Euepeithes' son, and addressed them:  
 "Rise now, all of my mates! From the left hand make a beginning,  
 E'en from the place at the which he beginneth that filleth the wine-cups."  
 So spake Antinous, and his words pleased all of the others.  
 First of them Oenops' son, Leiodes, rose at his bidding.  
 He was the priest and diviner, and nigh to the beautiful wine-bowl  
 Innermost ever he sat; and alone in his heart he detested  
 All the infatuate deeds of the suitors, and viewed them with anger.  
 Such was the man who was foremost to handle the bow and the arrow.  
 Up to the threshold he went, and to master the bow he attempted,  
 Nor was he able to string it, for ere it was bent he was weary  
 Straining his unworn delicate hands; and he said to the suitors:  
 "Friends, I am wholly unable to string it. I leave it to others.  
 Ay and this weapon shall rob full many a man, and a brave one,  
 Soon of his life and his spirit. Indeed far better I hold it



So to be slain than to live and for ever to fail in obtaining  
All that we vainly expected resorting incessantly hither.  
Many a man of us still has a hope in his heart and a longing  
Penelopeia to marry, the wife of the godlike Odysseus ;  
Yet I believe when he seeth the bow and essayeth to bend it  
Then 'twere wiser a wife of the long-robed maids of Achaea  
Other to seek and to win with his bride-gifts, letting the lady  
Marry the wooer that giveth the most and is destined to wed her."

These words spoken, the bow from his hands he surrender'd and placed it  
Leaning aslant on the door smooth-polished and finely compacted ;  
Also the shaft keen-pointed he propped by the beautiful bow-tip.  
So he reseated himself on the chair from the which he had risen.

Then spake Antinous and addressed him and rudely rebuked him :  
"Leiodes, what word from the door of thy lips hath escaped thee ?  
Grievous, insulting, I hold it. It rouses my anger to hear thee.  
What ! shall a bow like this rob many a man and a brave one  
Soon of his life and his spirit because thou failest to bend it ?  
Nay, at thy birth, I assure thee, the lady thy mother produced not  
One that was meant for a drawer of bows or a shooter of arrows.  
Others among the illustrious suitors will easily string it."  
Thus did he speak, and he called to Melanthius master of goatherds :  
"Ho there ! kindle a flame on the hearth of the palace, Melantheus !  
Station a good-sized settle anigh with a cover of sheepskin,  
Fetch us moreover a ball of the fat that is stored in the larder ;  
Then shall the young men melt it, and oiling the bow with the unguent  
Make an essay at the stringing and speedily finish the contest."  
Quick at the word was rekindled the restless flame by Melantheus.  
Nigh it a good-sized settle he placed with a cover of sheepskin ;  
Also he fetched them a ball of the fat that was stored in the larder.  
This did the young men melt, and they made the attempt ; but they could not  
String it. The strength for the feat was in all of them utterly wanting.  
Antinous held back and Eurymachus the heroic,  
Chief of the suitors and stronger by far than the others and braver.

Now those twain had withdrawn them, the one by the side of the other,  
Even the cowherd and also the swineherd of godlike Odysseus.  
Following after them went from the palace Odysseus the hero,  
Till, when at length they had passed outside of the gate and the courtyard,  
Then he uplifted his voice and with words right gentle addressed them :



“Cowherd, and thou, Eumaeus, a thing I am wishing to tell you.  
Or shall I hide it within me? My spirit commands me to say it.  
What is it like you'd prove in assisting Odysseus, if haply  
All of a sudden he came from afar and a deity brought him?  
Would ye decide on defending the suitors or helping Odysseus?  
Speak to me openly! Answer as heart and as spirit command you.”  
Him gave answer the man who as cowherd tended the cattle:  
“Zeus, our Father! if only thou gav'st this prayer a fulfilment:  
O for the master to come! to be brought by a deity hither!  
Then thou'dst learn of my strength and behold how ready my hands be!”  
Likewise spake Eumaeus, and calling on all the immortals  
Prayed for Odysseus the wise to return once more to his homeland.

Now when he saw that the hearts of the men were steadfastly loyal,  
Once more speaking he gave them an answer, and thus he addressed them:  
“Lo, it is I that am here in my home! Great hardships I suffered.  
Now in the twentieth year I am come to the land of my fathers.  
Yea and I know that my coming is wished for by none of the others,  
Only by you of my thralls; for I hear none other beside you  
Offering prayer to the gods to restore me again to my homeland.  
Only to you will I say what shall happen and truly disclose it.  
Should God grant it indeed that I vanquish the arrogant suitors,  
Each of you then I will give an estate, and a wife I shall give him;  
Homes near mine ye shall have new-built, and ever in future  
Even as comrades and brothers of Telemachus I shall treat you.  
Come now, also a proof I will give you infallibly certain,  
So that ye surely shall know me and feel in your hearts an assurance.  
Here is the wound which once by a boar's white tusk was inflicted  
While with the sons I was hunting of Autolycus on Parnassus.”

Spake, and withdrawing his rags from the wound's great scar he disclosed it.  
Then those twain, when they looked at it well and had marked it for certain,  
Sobbed as they fell on the neck of Odysseus the wise and embraced him,  
Lovingly kissing his head and his shoulders in token of welcome.  
So did Odysseus as well, and kissed them on hand and on forehead;  
Yea and the light of the sun were set on the long lamentation.  
Had not Odysseus himself thus bid them refrain and addressed them:  
“Cease ye from wailing and weeping, I pray, lest any perceive it  
Issuing forth from the hall, and return to the house and inform them.  
Now let us enter again, not going together, but singly,  
Firstly myself, then you; and let this be arranged and agreed to:



None, I am sure, of the others (I mean of the arrogant suitors)  
E'er will allow that the bow shall be placed in my hands, or the quiver.  
Therefore, my good Eumaeus, when bearing it round in the palace  
Manage to give me the bow in my hands; then order the women,  
Carefully barring the doors fast-closed of the inner apartment,  
There to remain; and if any shall notice a din or a groaning  
Here in the hall of the men, let her nowise venture to issue  
Forth of her chamber, but still at her task keep silently working.  
Thou, O honest Philoetius, see to the gate of the courtyard;  
Shut it and bolt it and fasten a rope right firmly about it."

These words spoken, he entered the pleasant abodes of the palace;  
There he reseated himself on the chair from the which he had risen.  
Likewise entered the twain—those thralls of the godlike Odysseus.

Now it was Eurymachus that was trying the bow, and on all sides  
Warming it, holding it close to the heat of the flame; but to string it  
E'en thus wholly he failed; and he groaned in his valiant spirit  
Sorely enraged, and aloud to the others he called and addressed them:  
"Heavens! I truly am grieved—for myself and for all of you others.  
Not for my marriage so much I lament, though great is my sorrow;  
Many a woman is yet to be found of the race of Achaea  
Here in the sea-girt Ithacan isle and in many a city.  
Rather I grieve that in strength we're wholly unable to vie with  
Godlike Odysseus; for here is his bow, and we have not the power  
Even to string it—a thing that with men unborn will disgrace us."

Then spake Antinous, Eupheithes' son, and addressed him:  
"No, no, Eurymachus! it shall never be thus—and thou know'st it.  
Even to-day in the land is the feast of the Archer Apollo,  
Festival solemn, on which none bendeth a bow. Let us calmly  
Lay it aside; and the axes . . . methinks 'twere better to leave them  
Just so standing, for none, I am sure, will be likely to steal them,  
Venturing nigh to the house of Odysseus the son of Laertes.  
Come, let the bearer of wine now prime us the cups for libation.  
After the wine we will stow us the well-crooked bow, and will order  
Early the morrow Melanthius master of goatherds to bring us  
Goats, prime beasts, from the whole of his flock as the fattest selected.  
So we shall offer the meat of the thighs to the Archer Apollo,  
Then once more of the bow make trial and finish the contest."  
Thus spake Antinous, and his words pleased all of the others.



Forthwith water was poured on the hands of the guests by the henchmen ;  
Then did the pages, upwreathing on high with the liquor the wine-bowls,  
Bear it around to them all, first priming the cups for libation.

Now when at last they had poured and had drunk to their souls' satisfaction,  
Thus with a crafty design deep-plotting Odysseus addressed them :  
" List to my words, O suitors of far-famed Penelopeia,  
So that I utter a thing that the heart in my bosom commands me.  
Chiefly to Eurymachus and to Antinous the heroic  
Now I direct my request, for in this he has spoken with reason,  
Bidding you cease the essay of the bow and to leave it to heaven ;  
God will to-morrow the victory grant to the man that he chooseth.  
Give me however the weapon—the smooth-wrought bow. I will test me  
Here in your presence my hands and my strength, if I still am possessed of  
Power as once in the supple and well-knit limbs of my body,  
Or if a wanderer's life with its beggarly fare hath destroyed it."

Thus did he speak ; and they all were filled with unspeakable anger,  
Fearing the smooth-wrought bow might haply be strung by the stranger.  
Then spake Antinous and addressed him and loudly rebuked him :  
" Wretched ridiculous stranger ! thy wits seem utterly wanting.  
Art not content to be sitting at ease midst nobles and princes  
Here at the banquet and share in the feast ? Wilt also be spying,  
Listing to all that we say and converse ? None other beside thee,  
Being a stranger and beggar as thou, e'er ventured to listen.  
Wine honey-sweet hath infected thy senses, as many a mortal  
Often it harms if he drains it in greedy immoderate potions.  
Wine was the bane that distracted the wits of the Centaur, the famous  
Eurytion, in the palace of Peirithöus great-hearted,  
While in the Lapithan land ; for when wine had confounded his senses  
Roused to a fury he wrought foul deeds in the house of the monarch.  
Wrath then fell on the band of the heroes : rising in anger  
Out of the house by the portal they dragged him, his ears and his nostrils  
Shorn by the pitiless steel ; and with wits distracted he wandered  
Bearing the load of his sin with a mind that was weakened by madness.  
Hence the beginning was made of the quarrel of men with the Centaurs ;  
Yea and he first on himself brought ruin when maddened by drinking.  
Also for thee great woe I predict if thou haply accomplish  
Stringing the bow ; for of none thou shalt gain thee protection and kindness  
Here in the land, but anon in a black-hulled ship we shall send thee  
Over to Echetus, king of the mainland and maimer of mortals,



Whence thou shalt never escape with thy life. So quietly sit there!  
Drink an thou wilt, but incite not a quarrel with men that be younger!"

*Odyssey*

XXI

309-345

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:  
"Antinous, 'twere truly a wrong and unfair to refuse him,  
Being the guest of my son, like others that come to the palace.  
Weenst thou perhaps, if the stranger in stringing the bow of Odysseus  
Were to succeed, on his hands and his strength not vainly relying,  
Me he shall lead to his home and shall make me his consort? I trow not!  
Neither, methinks, doth he hope it himself in the depth of his bosom.  
Wherefore none of you fret at the thought nor be troubled in spirit  
While at the banquet ye sit. 'Twere possible never and nowise!"

Then spake Polybus' son, prince Eurymachus, and addressed her:  
"Daughter of Icarius, O wise-souled Penelopeia,  
Ne'er did we think of his leading thee home—may heaven forbend it!  
Only we dreaded the talk and the tattle of men and of women,  
Lest it be said some day by an evilly-minded Achaean,  
'Lo these fellows a-wooing the wife of a man that excels them  
Greatly—for even his bow . . . they're wholly unable to string it,  
While that a stranger that came to the palace, a beggarly vagrant,  
Easily strung it and pierced with an arrow the axes of iron.'  
Thus will they speak, and for us such words would prove a dishonour."

Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:  
"Eurymachus, fair fame in the land would never be given  
Unto the men that, affronting the chief of the people as ye do,  
Ruin his home. Then why do ye deem such words a dishonour?  
Lo, this stranger is tall; well built is his body and stalwart;  
Also he claims as his father a man that was brave and was upright.  
Give him the smooth-wrought bow! Nay, give! Let us see what will happen.  
This one thing will I say—it will certainly find a fulfilment:  
Should he be able to string it and win such fame of Apollo,  
Then I shall clothe him in beautiful raiment, in mantle and tunic,  
Give him moreover a lance that from men and from dogs shall protect him,  
Ay and a two-edged sword, and shall also provide him with sandals.  
Then I shall send him wherever his heart and his spirit shall call him."

Her sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
"Mother, of all the Achaeans is none entitled as I be  
Either to offer the bow to a man as I wish or refuse it.



*Odyssey*  
*XXI*  
*346-384*

No one—neither the chiefs that in rockbound Ithaca lord it,  
Nor in the isles off Elian land, which pastureth horses—  
None of them, none, shall compel me unwilling if even I purpose  
Once and for all to bestow on the stranger the bow as a present.  
Now to thy chamber return and attend to thy own occupation,  
Even the loom and the distaff, and order thy maiden attendants  
Keep to their tasks; we men will attend to the bow and the shooting,  
All of us—chiefly myself; it is I that am lord of the household.”  
Full of amazement she turned her to go to the women’s apartment,  
Hiding the masterful words of her son deep down in her bosom.  
So, to her upper apartment ascending with maiden attendants,  
Here she lamented Odysseus, her well-loved husband, till gently  
Slumber was poured on her lids by the grey-eyed goddess Athene.

Now when the good old swineherd had taken the bow to convey it  
Unto the stranger a tumult was raised in the hall by the suitors,  
Many an insolent youth in the midst of them loudly exclaiming :  
“Where art thou taking the bow, thou detestable wretch of a swineherd ?  
Vagabond ! Soon shall the dogs thou hast bred as a guard of thy pig-sties  
Tear thee in pieces afar from the dwellings of man, if Apollo  
Showeth us favour, as well as the other immortals in heaven.”  
Thus did they speak, and at once did the swineherd who carried it lay it  
Down in alarm, since many with clamour assailed him ; but straightway  
Telemachus, who was standing apart, spake threatening loudly :  
“Come, dad, bring it along ! Thou’lt find it unpleasant obeying  
Every master that calls. Take care, or I surely shall chase thee  
Out to the fields and shall pelt thee with stones. I am younger and stronger.  
Ay and I would ’twere so with the suitors frequenting my homestead !  
Would I excelled them as much in the strength of my arm and in manhood.  
Soon were many a one sent forth on a road that he likes not  
Out of my palace, for nought they imagine but evil against me.”

Thus did he speak, but the whole of the suitors as soon as they heard him  
Merrily laughed, and allayed was the grievous wrath that their bosoms  
Harboured for Telemachus ; and the swineherd approaching anigh him  
Unto Odysseus the wise gave over the bow and the arrows.  
Then did he call forth Eurycleia the nurse and address her :  
“Telemachus commandeth thee, wise-souled Eurycleia,  
Carefully barring the doors fast-closed of the inner apartment,  
There to remain ; and if any shall notice a din and a groaning  
Here in the hall of the men, let her nowise venture to issue





THE STRINGING OF THE BOW







Forth of the chamber, but still at her task keep silently working."  
Thus did he speak, and the words that he uttered abode with her wingless.  
Firmly she bolted the doors of the fair-built women's apartment.

Then right stealthily out of the mansion Philoetius hastened;  
Firmly he bolted the gate of the well-fenced palace enclosure.  
Under the portal was lying a rope of a twy-beaked galley  
Made of papyrus; with this when the gates he had lashed he re-entered;  
Here he reseated himself on the chair from the which he had risen,  
Gazing intent at Odysseus, for now with the bow he was busy,  
Turning it hither and thither, to test it on this and on that side,  
Lest in his absence the worms peradventure had eaten the horn-tips.  
Meantime many a suitor was muttering thus to his neighbour:  
"Truly a judge of a bow and a cunning adept he appeareth!  
Either perhaps he possesses a weapon as this in his homestead,  
Else he intendeth to make him the like. How deftly he holds it,  
Turning it hither and thither, the knowing and mischievous vagrant!"  
Then would others again of the insolent youths make answer:  
"O for this fellow to gain from the gods all profit and glory  
Just in the selfsame measure wherein he succeeds with the stringing!"

Such words uttered the suitors. But now deep-plotting Odysseus,  
After with care he had handled the great strong bow and had viewed it,  
E'en as a man that is skilled with the lute and is practised in singing  
Easily stretches the string on a new-made peg of his phorminx,  
After attaching the ends of the chord tight-twisted of sheepgut,  
Thus with the great strong bow did Odysseus, and easily strung it.  
Then with his right hand seizing it firmly he tested the bowstring.  
Under his touch full sweetly it sang, as the voice of a swallow.

Now fell mighty confusion and rage on the suitors: their visage  
Changed; while Zeus from the sky crashed terribly, giving a warning.  
Greatly exulting thereat long-suffering godlike Odysseus,  
Knowing the signal was sent by the all-wise Father Cronion,  
Seized on the keen-edged arrow that lay on the table beside him  
Bare (in the hollow quiver anigh lay all of the others,  
Ready—and soon it was fated for many Achaeans to taste them).  
Laying the shaft on the bridge and pulling the notch with the bowstring,  
E'en from the chair on the which he was sitting he shot, and the arrow  
Sped with an accurate aim, and it pierced through all of the axes  
Right from the first of the helves—straight through them; & out of the last one



*Odyssey*  
*XXI*  
*428 - 434*

Issued the bronze-tipped bolt ; and to Telemachus he addressed him :  
"Telemachus, thou art nowise shamed by the guest that is sitting  
Here in thy palace. I missed not the mark that was set me and laboured  
Little at stringing the bow, for my strength is as sound as aforetime,  
Not as the suitors assert with a scornful despite, to insult me.  
Now is the moment at hand ! Let us serve the Achaeans their supper  
While it is day !—and when supper is done find other amusement,  
Singing and dancing—for these are ever the crown of a banquet."

Speaking, he nodded. At once, with his sharp sword girded about him,  
Telemachus, dear son of the godlike hero Odysseus,  
Laying his hand on a spear, sprang forth to the side of his father ;  
There by a chair on the threshold he stood with his glittering weapons.



# ODYSSEY BOOK XXII

**C**ASTING his beggarly raiment aside, deep-plotting Odysseus  
Leapt on the threshold of stone, still holding the bow and the quiver  
Laden with bolts; and before him the swift-winged arrows he poured out  
Close to his feet on the floor; and he spake, addressing the suitors:  
“Lo, this fatal, calamitous contest is done—it is finished!  
Now for a mark far other—a mark ne'er smit by a Bowman!  
This will I choose me, and see if renown shall be sent by Apollo.”

Spake, and at Antinous directed the sharp-fanged arrow,  
Just as he paused at the moment of lifting a beautiful goblet,  
Golden, with handles at both of its sides; and already he held it,  
Meaning to drink of the wine; and of death no thought or suspicion  
Troubled his mind. (Would any believe in the midst of a banquet  
One man, single among so many, however audacious,  
Thus might compass his doom and plunge him in death and in darkness?)  
Steadily aimed was the bolt of Odysseus: it struck on the gullet.  
Pierced was the delicate neck right through by the point of the arrow.  
Over he lurched; from his hand dropt crashing the cup, and he lay there  
Mortally struck, while jetted a thick red stream of his life-blood  
Out of his nostrils. His foot, convulsively striking the table,  
Spurned it afar and upset it. Defiled lay all of the viands,  
Spilt on the ground, roast flesh with the bread. Then clamour and tumult  
Rose in the hall when the suitors beheld their comrade was fallen.  
Up from the seats at the table they leaped in a panic of terror,  
Eagerly peering around at the well-built walls to discover  
Either a shield or a spear strong-shafted; but nothing they found there.  
Then on Odysseus they turned and with angry reviling assailed him:  
“Stranger, in sooth thou'lt suffer for shooting at men! In a contest  
Never again shalt thou share. Death certain and sudden awaits thee.  
Lo, thou hast murdered a man who was foremost of all of the princes  
Here in the Ithacan land—so Ithacan vultures shall eat thee.”  
Thus spake all, for they deemed of a truth that the stranger had killed him  
Not with intent. Ah, fools! yea, foolish and blind, for they saw not  
Over the heads of them all impending the toils of destruction.

Glaring askance at the men, deep-plotting Odysseus addressed them:  
“Dogs! ye imagined me never returning again to my homestead  
Back from the land of the Trojans—and so laid waste my possessions,



Won by compulsion to lustful embraces the women, my servants,  
Yea and with guile came wooing my wife while still I was living,  
Neither afraid of the gods who inhabit the infinite heaven  
Nor that the vengeance of man could smite you hereafter. Behold now  
Over the heads of you all impending the toils of destruction !”  
Thus did he speak. Forthwith pale dread seized all of the suitors,  
Each one peering to 'scape from the doom that was swiftly approaching.  
Eurymachus was the one that alone found voice, and he answered :  
“Art thou Odysseus the Ithacan, come once more to thy homeland,  
Truly thou speakest with right. Such things have wrought the Achaeans,  
Many and many infatuate deeds in thy palace and farmsteads.  
Lo now, he that was guilty of all here lieth before us,  
Antinous. It is he that alone these crimes hath incited.  
Not so much that he needed to wed or was longing for marriage ;  
No, his intent was another—but heaven refused to fulfil it—  
E'en to install as the king of the flourishing Ithacan people  
None but himself, and, catching thy son in an ambush, to slay him.  
Now he is dead, as he richly deserved. So spare us, thy people,  
Even thy own ! We will go each one to his tribe, and hereafter  
Each shall requite thee for all he has eaten and drunk in thy palace,  
Each one make an atonement of five score oxen in value.  
Also with bronze and with gold will we offer requital and soften  
Fully thy heart. Till then for thy wrath none truly can blame thee.”

Glaring askance at the man, thus spake deep-plotting Odysseus :  
“Eurymachus, if ye give me the whole of the wealth of your fathers,  
All ye at present possess and all ye shall add to it later,  
Not e'en thus shall my hands be restrained nor shall cease from the slaughter  
Till I shall wreak my revenge to the full on the sins of the suitors.  
Now there lieth before you to fight, or to flee—if by fighting  
Any shall hope, or by fleeing, to save him from doom and destruction.  
Nay but I trow not a man shall escape from his utter perdition.”  
Thus as he spake were loosened the knees and the hearts of the suitors.  
Then spake Eurymachus once more as he turned to his comrades :  
“Friends, it is vain ! The invincible might of his hands he will check not.  
Now he has got in his power the smooth-wrought bow and the quiver,  
Down from the threshold of stone he will shoot us, until he has slain us  
All, to a man. Let us turn our minds to the fury of battle.  
Draw ye ! and hold ye the tables before you to shield you as bucklers,  
Quenching his bolts so fatal and swift. Then, rushing upon him  
All in a body, attempt from the threshold and portal to drive him !



So let us get to the city and quickly arouse the alarm there !  
Then shall the shaft that the fellow has shot be the last of his lifetime."

*Odyssey*  
XXII  
77-115

These words loudly he uttered, and drawing his sword from the scabbard,  
Bronzen and sharpened on both of the edges, he leaped on Odysseus  
Terribly shouting ; but just at the moment the godlike Odysseus  
Loosened a bolt from the bow, and smiting his breast by the nipple  
Into the liver was driven the swift-winged shaft ; and his sword dropt  
Out of his hand to the ground ; then, staggering, over a table,  
All entangled around it, he fell and scattered the dishes  
On to the floor with the food and a twy-cupped bowl ; and his forehead  
Smote on the earth as he writhed in his agony, spurning the armchair  
Sharply with both of his feet. On his eyes then darkness descended.  
Amphinomus now rushed at Odysseus, the glorious hero,  
Charging him straight from the front with his sharp sword drawn from the scabbard,  
Hoping to drive him away from the portal ; but ere he had reached him  
Telemachus from behind with a bronze-shod javelin smote him  
Right in the midst of the back ; and out of his breast it protruded.  
Crashing he fell, and he struck on the ground with the whole of his forehead.  
Telemachus sprang back, but his long-stemmed spear he had left there  
Planted in Amphinomus, for he feared lest one of the nobles  
While he was drawing it forth might suddenly rush to assail him,  
Giving a stab with a sword or a downward stroke of his weapon.  
Then to his well-loved father he ran, and reaching him quickly  
Stood at his side, and in haste these swift-winged words he addressed him :  
" Father, at once I will fetch thee a shield and a couple of lances,  
Also a helm all bronze with a visor to cover the temples.  
Then I will go and will clothe me in armour, and give to the swineherd  
Other, and also the cowherd. 'Tis better in arms to equip us."  
Forthwith answering spake these words deep-plotting Odysseus :  
" Run for them ! run !—while yet I have arrows enough to defend me !  
Lest thus single I fail to resist and be thrust from the doorway."

Thus did he speak, and the youth, as his well-loved father commanded,  
Ran to the chamber in which were lying the glorious weapons.  
Out of them eight good lances and four of the shields he selected ;  
Four bronze helmets he chose him with horse-tails heavily crested,  
Carrying which he returned full quickly and came to his father.  
Firstly himself in a harness of bronze he invested ; and likewise  
Also the thralls, those twain, encased them in beautiful armour.  
Then at the side of the wise and wary Odysseus they placed them.



He however, as long as the arrows sufficed to defend him,  
Aye at the suitors—at one or the other—entrapped in his mansion  
Aimed; and they fell as he smote them, the one by the side of the other.  
Then, when the shafts had deserted their lord and had failed him in shooting,  
Nigh to the post of the door of the massively builded apartment  
Propping the bow, on the face of the inside glistening house-wall,  
Over his shoulders he hung him a fourfold target of oxhide;  
Also a well-wrought helm on his stalwart head he adjusted,  
Plumed with the tail of a horse, which terribly nodded above it.  
Then two weapons he chose, bronze-bladed and powerful lances.

Now in the well-built wall was a high-raised postern inserted  
Flush with the slab of the threshold, and here from the hall was an outlet  
Through to a passage by doors well-fitting and double defended.  
This had Odysseus commanded the good old swineherd to look to  
Standing anigh it; for here was the only approach to the passage.  
Then from the midst of the suitors, addressing them, spake Agelaus:  
“Friends, is a man to be found who will mount by the postern and quickly  
Bring a report to the men of the city and rouse an alarm there?  
Then shall the shafts that the fellow has shot be the last of his lifetime.”  
Him forthwith gave answer Melanthius master of goatherds:  
“’Twere not possible, prince Agelaus, for terribly near it  
Opens the beautiful door of the court, and the mouth of the passage  
Offers a peril, for one strong man might hinder a thousand.  
Nay, let me fetch you, to arm you withal, both weapons and hauberks  
Out of the chamber in which (for I trow it was there and not elsewhere)  
All were stowed by this fine prince Telemachus and his father.”  
These words spoken, he clambered—Melanthius master of goatherds—  
Up by the loophole lights of the hall to the rooms of Odysseus.  
Thence twelve targets he took and a dozen of lances, and also  
Twelve bronze helmets he chose him with horse-tails heavily crested.  
Then he returned, and he brought them and gave them in haste to the suitors.

Now did the knee-joints quake and the inmost heart of Odysseus  
While he perceived them equipping themselves in the armour and shaking  
Long-stemmed spears in their hands; and he felt that his task was a great one.  
Quickly he turned to his son and with swift-winged words he addressed him:  
“Telemachus, is it one of the maids in the women’s apartment  
Plying this treacherous game—or else peradventure Melantheus?”  
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer:  
“Father, the fault is my own that it happened, and guilty is no one



Other, for after I opened the fast-closed door of the chamber  
Wholly forgetting I left it, and some one cleverer spied it.  
Go now, good Eumaeus, and closing the door of the chamber  
Watch and discover if one of the women is doing this mischief;  
Else it is Dolius' son, I am certain, the goatherd Melantheus."  
Thus did the men hold converse and counsel the one with the other.

*Odyssey*  
XXII  
155 - 198

Then once more to the chamber Melanthius master of goatherds  
Went for the beautiful arms; and the good old swineherd, who saw it,  
Hastily called to Odysseus, who stood full near, and addressed him:  
"Zeus-born son of Laertes, thou wise and wary Odysseus,  
Yea it is even the fellow we thought, that impudent goatherd!  
See, he is going again to the room! Come, tell me exactly:  
Should I be able to master the man, were't better to slay him,  
Or shall I bring him to thee for his punishment, so that he pay for  
All of the many transgressions his malice devised in thy homestead?"  
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:  
"I and my son will be able to cope with the insolent suitors,  
Holding them penned in the hall of the palace in spite of their fury.  
Ye two, twisting the hands and the feet of the fellow behind him,  
Drag him within. To his back then lashing a panel of boarding,  
Firmly attach to his body a rope strong-stranded, and haul him  
Up by a pillar aloft till he dangle anigh to the roof-beam,  
So that he live right long while suffering terrible torture."

Thus did he speak, and they listened attent to his words and obeyed them.  
Unto the chamber they went, and they saw him within; but he wist not;  
Right at the innermost end of the room he was searching for armour.  
So at the door they remained, each one by the side of a door-post.  
Soon came crossing the threshold Melanthius master of goatherds,  
Laden with arms: in the one of his hands was a beautiful helmet,  
While in the other he carried a buckler—a broad and an old one  
Spotted with mould (as a youngster the hero Laertes had borne it;  
Here long years it had lain, and the seams were loose of the oxhide).  
Suddenly leaping upon him they seized him, and into the chamber  
Dragged by the hair he was flung on the floor, and groaning he lay there,  
While with a bond right grievous they girded his hands and his ankles,  
Twisting the limbs well back and securely, as bid by the master,  
Even Laertes' son, long-suffering godlike Odysseus.  
Then to his body attaching a rope strong-stranded they hauled him  
Up by a pillar aloft till he dangled anigh to the roof-beam.