

With feign'd intelligence my mistress' ear;
 She welcomes all, and while she questions each
 Minutely, from her lids lets fall the tear
 Affectionate, as well beseems a wife
 Whose mate hath perish'd in a distant land. 160
 Thou could'st thyself, no doubt, my hoary friend!
 (Would any furnish thee with decent vest
 And mantle) fabricate a tale with ease;
 Yet sure it is that dogs and fowls, long since,
 His skin have stript, or fishes of the Deep
 Have eaten him, and on some distant shore
 Whelm'd in deep sands his mould'ring bones are laid.
 So hath he perish'd; whence, to all his friends,
 But chiefly to myself, sorrow of heart;
 For such another Lord, gentle as he, 170
 Wherever sought, I have no hope to find,
 Though I should wander even to the house
 Of my own father. Neither yearns my heart
 So feelingly (though that desiring too)
 To see once more my parents and my home,
 As to behold Ulysses yet again.
 Ah stranger; absent as he is, his name
 Fills me with rev'rence, for he lov'd me much,
 Cared for me much, and, though we meet no more,
 Holds still an elder brother's part in me. 180

Him answer'd, then, the Hero toil-inured.
 My friend! since his return, in thy account,
 Is an event impossible, and thy mind
 Always incredulous that hope rejects,
 I shall not slightly speak, but with an oath—
 Ulysses comes again; and I demand
 No more, than that the boon such news deserves,
 Be giv'n me soon as he shall reach his home.
 Then give me vest and mantle fit to wear,
 Which, ere that hour, much as I need them both, 190
 I neither ask, nor will accept from thee.
 For him whom poverty can force aside
 From truth—I hate him as the gates of hell.
 Be Jove, of all in heav'n, my witness first,
 Then, this thy hospitable board, and, last,
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
 Himself, Ulysses, to whose gates I go,
 That all my words shall surely be fulfill'd.

In this same year Ulysses shall arrive,
 Ere, this month closed, another month succeed, 200
 He shall return, and punish all who dare
 Insult his consort and his noble son.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Old friend! that boon thou wilt ne'er earn from me;
 Ulysses comes no more. But thou thy wine
 Drink quietly, and let us find, at length,
 Some other theme; recall not this again
 To my remembrance, for my soul is grieved
 Oft as reminded of my honour'd Lord.

Let the oath rest, and let Ulysses come 210
 Ev'n as myself, and as Penelope,
 And as his ancient father, and his son
 Godlike Telemachus, all wish he may.

Ay—there I feel again—nor cease to mourn
 His son Telemachus; who, when the Gods
 Had giv'n him growth like a young plant, and I
 Well hoped that nought inferior he should prove
 In person or in mind to his own sire,
 Hath lost, through influence human or divine,
 I know not how, his sober intellect, 220
 And after tidings of his sire is gone

To far-famed Pylus; his return, meantime,
 In ambush hidden the proud suitors wait,
 That the whole house may perish of renown'd
 Arcesias, named in Ithaca no more.
 But whether he have fallen or 'scaped, let him
 Rest also, whom Saturnian Jove protect!

But come, my ancient guest! now let me learn
 Thy own afflictions; answer me in truth.
 Who, and whence art thou? in what city born? 230
 Where dwell thy parents; in what kind of ship
 Cam'st thou? the mariners, why brought they thee
 To Ithaca? and of what land are they?

For, that on foot thou found'st us not, is sure,
 Him answer'd, then, Ulysses, ever-wise.

I will with truth resolve thee; and if here
 Within thy cottage sitting, we had wine
 And food for many a day, and business none
 But to regale at ease while others toiled,
 I could exhaust the year complete, my woes 240
 Rehearsing, nor, at last, rehearse entire

My sorrows by the will of heav'n sustained.

I boast me sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete; son of a wealthy sire,
 Who other sons train'd num'rous in his house,
 Born of his wedded wife; but he begat
 Me on his purchased concubine, whom yet
 Dear as his other sons in wedlock born
 Castor Hylacides esteem'd and lov'd,
 For him I boast my father. Him in Crete,
 While yet he liv'd, all reverenc'd as a God,
 So rich, so prosp'rous, and so blest was he
 With sons of highest praise. But death, the doom
 Of all, him bore to Pluto's drear abode,
 And his illustrious sons among themselves
 Portion'd his goods by lot; to me, indeed,
 They gave a dwelling, and but little more,
 Yet, for my virtuous qualities, I won
 A wealthy bride, for I was neither vain

250

Nor base, forlorn as thou perceiv'st me now.
 But thou canst guess, I judge, viewing the straw
 What once was in the ear. Ah! I have borne
 Much tribulation; heap'd and heavy woes.
 Courage and phalanx-breaking might had I
 From Mars and Pallas; at what time I drew,
 (Planning some dread exploit) an ambush forth
 Of our most valiant Chiefs, no boding fears
 Of death seized *me*, but foremost far of all
 I sprang to fight, and pierced the flying foe.
 Such was I once in arms. But household toils
 Sustain'd for children's sake, and carking cares
 T' enrich a family, were not for me.

260

My pleasures were the gallant bark, the din
 Of battle, the smooth spear and glitt'ring shaft,
 Objects of dread to others, but which me
 The Gods disposed to love and to enjoy.

Thus diff'rent minds are diff'rently amused;
 For ere Achaia's fleet had sailed to Troy,
 Nine times was I commander of an host
 Embark'd against a foreign foe, and found
 In all those enterprizes great success.

270

280

From the whole booty, first, what pleased me most
 Chusing, and sharing also much by lot
 I rapidly grew rich, and had thenceforth

Among the Cretans rev'rence and respect.
 But when loud-thund'ring Jove that voyage dire
 Ordain'd, which loos'd the knees of many a Greek,
 Then, to Idomeneus and me they gave
 The charge of all their fleet, which how to avoid
 We found not, so importunate the cry 290
 Of the whole host impell'd us to the task.
 There fought we nine long years, and in the tenth
 (Priam's proud city pillag'd) steer'd again
 Our galleys homeward, which the Gods dispersed.
 Then was it that deep-planning Jove devised
 For me much evil. One short month, no more,
 I gave to joys domestic, in my wife
 Happy, and in my babes, and in my wealth,
 When the desire seiz'd me with sev'ral ships
 Well-rigg'd, and furnish'd all with gallant crews, 300
 To sail for Ægypt; nine I fitted forth,
 To which stout mariners assembled fast.
 Six days the chosen partners of my voyage
 Feasted, to whom I num'rous victims gave
 For sacrifice, and for their own regale.
 Embarking on the sev'nth from spacious Crete,
 Before a clear breeze prosp'rous from the North
 We glided easily along, as down
 A river's stream; nor one of all my ships
 Damage incurr'd, but healthy and at ease 310
 We sat, while gales well-managed urged us on.
 The fifth day thence, smooth-flowing Nile we reach'd,
 And safe I moor'd in the Ægyptian stream.
 Then, charging all my mariners to keep
 Strict watch for preservation of the ships,
 I order'd spies into the hill-tops; but they
 Under the impulse of a spirit rash
 And hot for quarrel, the well-cultur'd fields
 Pillaged of the Ægyptians, captive led
 Their wives and little ones, and slew the men. 320
 Soon was the city alarm'd, and at the cry
 Down came the citizens, by dawn of day,
 With horse and foot, and with the gleam of arms
 Filling the plain. Then Jove with panic dread
 Struck all my people; none found courage more
 To stand, for mischiefs swarm'd on ev'ry side.
 There, num'rous by the glittering spear we fell

Slaughter'd, while others they conducted thence
 Alive to servitude. But Jove himself
 My bosom with this thought inspired, (I would
 That, dying, I had first fulfill'd my fate 330
 In Ægypt, for new woes were yet to come!)
 Loosing my brazen casque, and slipping off
 My buckler, there I left them on the field,
 Then cast my spear away, and seeking, next,
 The chariot of the sov'reign, clasp'd his knees,
 And kiss'd them. He, by my submission moved,
 Deliver'd me, and to his chariot-seat
 Raising, convey'd me weeping to his home.
 With many an ashen spear his warriors sought 340
 To slay me, (for they now grew fiery wroth)
 But he, through fear of hospitable Jove,
 Chief punisher of wrong, saved me alive.
 Sev'n years I there abode, and much amass'd
 Among the Ægyptians, gifted by them all;
 But, in the eighth revolving year, arrived
 A shrewd Phœnician, in all fraud adept,
 Hungry, and who had num'rous harm'd before,
 By whom I also was cajoled, and lured
 T' attend him to Phœnicia, where his house 350
 And his possessions lay; there I abode
 A year complete his inmate; but (the days
 And months accomplish'd of the rolling year,
 And the new seasons ent'ring on their course)
 To Lybia then, on board his bark, by wiles
 He won me with him, partner of the freight
 Profess'd, but destin'd secretly to sale,
 That he might profit largely by my price.
 Not unsuspecting, yet constrain'd to go,
 With this man I embark'd. A cloudless gale 360
 Propitious blowing from the North, our ship
 Ran right before it through the middle sea,
 In the offing over Crete; but adverse Jove
 Destruction plann'd for them and death the while,
 For, Crete now left afar, and other land
 Appearing none, but sky alone and sea,
 Right o'er the hollow bark Saturnian Jove
 A cloud cærulean hung, dark'ning the Deep.
 Then, thund'ring oft, he hurl'd into the bark
 His bolts; she smitten by the fires of Jove, 370

Quaked all her length; with sulphur fill'd she reek'd,
 And, o'er her sides precipitated, plunged
 Like gulls the crew, forbidden by that stroke
 Of wrath divine to hope their country more.
 But Jove himself, when I had cast away
 All hope of life, conducted to my arms
 The strong tall mast, that I might yet escape.
 Around that beam I clung, driving before
 The stormy blast. Nine days complete I drove,
 And, on the tenth dark night, the rolling flood 380
 Immense convey'd me to Thesprotia's shore.
 There me the Hero Phidon, gen'rous King
 Of the Thesprotians, freely entertained;
 For his own son discov'ring me with toil
 Exhausted and with cold, raised me, and thence
 Led me humanely to his father's house,
 Who cherish'd me, and gave me fresh attire.
 There heard I of Ulysses, whom himself
 Had entertain'd, he said, on his return
 To his own land; he shew'd me also gold, 390
 Brass, and bright steel elab'rate, whatsoe'er
 Ulysses had amass'd, a store to feed
 A less illustrious family than his
 To the tenth generation, so immense
 His treasures in the royal palace lay.
 Himself, he said, was to Dodona gone,
 There, from the tow'ring oaks of Jove to ask
 Counsel divine, if openly to land
 (After long absence) in his opulent realm
 Of Ithaca, be best, or in disguise. 400
 To me the monarch swore, in his own hall
 Pouring libation, that the ship was launch'd,
 And the crew ready for his conduct home.
 But me he first dismiss'd, for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To green Dulichium's isle. He bade the crew
 Bear me to King Acastus with all speed;
 But them far other thoughts pleased more, and thoughts
 Of harm to me, that I might yet be plunged
 In deeper gulphs of woe than I had known. 410
 For, when the billow-cleaving bark had left
 The land remote, framing, combined, a plot
 Against my liberty, they stripp'd my vest

And mantle, and this tatter'd raiment foul
 Gave me instead, which thy own eyes behold.
 At even-tide reaching the cultur'd coast
 Of Ithaca, they left me bound on board
 With tackle of the bark, and quitting ship
 Themselves, made hasty supper on the shore.
 But me, meantime, the Gods easily loos'd 420
 By their own pow'r, when, with wrapper vile
 Around my brows, sliding into the sea
 At the ship's stern, I lay'd me on the flood.
 With both hands oaring thence my course, I swam
 Till past all ken of theirs; then landing where
 Thick covert of luxuriant trees I mark'd,
 Close couchant down I lay; they mutt'ring loud,
 Paced to and fro, but deeming farther search
 Unprofitable, soon embark'd again.
 Thus baffling all their search with ease, the Gods 430
 Conceal'd and led me thence to the abode
 Of a wise man, dooming me still to live.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply,
 Alas! my most compassionate guest!
 Thou hast much moved me by this tale minute
 Of thy sad wand'rings and thy num'rous woes.
 But, speaking of Ulysses, thou hast pass'd
 All credence; I at least can give thee none.
 Why, noble as thou art, should'st thou invent 440
 Palpable falsehoods? as for the return
 Of my regretted Lord, myself I know
 That had he not been hated by the Gods
 Unanimous, he had in battle died
 At Troy, or (that long doubtful war, at last,
 Concluded,) in his people's arms at home.
 Then universal Greece had raised his tomb,
 And he had even for his son atchiev'd
 Immortal glory; but alas! by beaks
 Of harpies torn, unseemly sight, he lies.
 Here is my home the while; I never seek 450
 The city, unless summon'd by discrete
 Penelope to listen to the news
 Brought by some stranger, whencesoe'er arrived.
 Then, all, alike inquisitive, attend,
 Both who regret the absence of our King,
 And who rejoice gratuitous to gorge

His property; but as for me, no joy
 Find I in list'ning after such reports,
 Since an Ætolian cozen'd me, who found
 (After long wand'ring over various lands
 A fugitive for blood) my lone retreat. 460

Him warm I welcom'd, and with open arms
 Receiv'd, who bold affirm'd that he had seen
 My master with Idomeneus at Crete
 His ships refitting shatter'd by a storm,
 And that in summer with his godlike band
 He would return, bringing great riches home,
 Or else in autumn. And thou ancient guest
 Forlorn! since thee the Gods have hither led,
 Seek not to gratify me with untruths 470
 And to deceive me, since for no such cause
 I shall respect or love thee, but alone
 By pity influenced, and the fear of Jove.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 Thou hast, in truth, a most incredulous mind,
 Whom even with an oath I have not moved,
 Or aught persuaded. Come then—let us make
 In terms express a cov'nant, and the Gods
 Who hold Olympus, witness to us both!
 If thy own Lord at this thy house arrive, 480
 Thou shalt dismiss me decently attired
 In vest and mantle, that I may repair
 Hence to Dulichium, whither I would go.
 But, if thy Lord come not, then, gath'ring all
 Thy servants, headlong hurl me from a rock,
 That other mendicants may fear to lie.

To whom the generous swine-herd in return.
 Yes, stranger! doubtless I should high renown
 Obtain for virtue among men, both now
 And in all future times, if, having first 490
 Invited thee, and at my board regaled,
 I, next, should slay thee; then my pray'rs would mount,
 Past question, swiftly to Saturnian Jove.
 But the hour calls to supper, and, ere long,
 The partners of my toils will come prepared
 To spread the board with no unsav'ry cheer.

Thus they conferr'd. And now the swains arrived,
 Driving their charge, which fast they soon enclosed
 Within their customary pennis, and loud

The hubbub was of swine prison'd within.
 Then call'd the master to his rustic train.
 Bring ye the best, that we may set him forth
 Before my friend from foreign climes arrived,
 With whom ourselves will also feast, who find
 The bright-tusk'd multitude a painful charge,
 While others, at no cost of theirs, consume
 Day after day, the profit of our toils.

500

So saying, his wood for fuel he prepared,
 And dragging thither a well-fatted brawn
 Of the fifth year his servants held him fast
 At the hearth-side. Nor failed the master swain
 T' adore the Gods, (for wise and good was he)
 But consecration of the victim, first,
 Himself performing, cast into the fire
 The forehead bristles of the tusky boar,
 Then pray'd to all above, that, safe, at length,
 Ulysses might regain his native home.

510

Then lifting an huge shive that lay beside
 The fire, he smote the boar, and dead he fell,
 Next, piercing him, and scorching close his hair,
 They carv'd him quickly, and Eumæus spread
 Thin slices crude taken from ev'ry limb
 O'er all his fat, then other slices cast,
 Sprinkling them first with meal, into the fire.
 The rest they slash'd and scored, and roasted well,
 And placed it, heap'd together, on the board.
 Then rose the good Eumæus to his task
 Of distribution, for he understood
 The hospitable entertainer's part.

520

Sev'n-fold partition of the banquet made,
 He gave, with previous pray'r, to Maia's son ¹
 And to the nymphs one portion of the whole,
 Then served his present guests, honouring first
 Ulysses with the boar's perpetual chine;
 By that distinction just his master's heart
 He gratified, and thus the Hero spake.

530

Eumæus! be thou as belov'd of Jove
 As thou art dear to me, whom, though attired
 So coarsely, thou hast served with such respect!

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Eat, noble stranger! and refreshment take

540

¹ Mercury.

Such as thou may'st; God¹ gives, and God denies
At his own will, for He is Lord of all.

He said, and to the everlasting Gods
The firstlings sacrificed of all, then made
Libation, and the cup placed in the hands
Of city-spoiler Laertiades
Sitting beside his own allotted share.
Meantime, Mesaulius bread dispensed to all,
Whom, in the absence of his Lord, himself
Eumæus had from Taphian traders bought
With his own proper goods, at no expence
Either to old Laertes or the Queen.

550

And now, all stretch'd their hands toward the feast
Reeking before them, and when hunger none
Felt more or thirst, Mesaulius clear'd the board.
Then, fed to full satiety, in haste
Each sought his couch. Black came a moonless night,
And Jove all night descended fast in show'rs,
With howlings of the ever wat'ry West.
Ulysses, at that sound, for trial sake
Of his good host, if putting off his cloak
He would accommodate him, or require
That service for him at some other hand,
Addressing thus the family, began.

560

Hear now, Eumæus, and ye other swains
His fellow-lab'ers! I shall somewhat boast,
By wine befool'd, which forces ev'n the wise
To carol loud, to titter and to dance,
And words to utter, oft, better suppress'd.
But since I have begun, I shall proceed,
Prating my fill. Ah might those days return
With all the youth and strength that I enjoy'd,
When in close ambush, once, at Troy we lay!
Ulysses, Menelaus, and myself
Their chosen coadjutor, led the band.
Approaching to the city's lofty wall
Through the thick bushes and the reeds that gird

570

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

The bulwarks, down we lay flat in the marsh,
 Under our arms, then Boreas blowing loud,
 A rueful night came on, frosty and charged
 With snow that blanch'd us thick as morning rime,
 And ev'ry shield with ice was crystall'd o'er.
 The rest with cloaks and vests well cover'd, slept
 Beneath their bucklers; I alone my cloak,
 Improvident, had left behind, no thought
 Conceiving of a season so severe;
 Shield and belt, therefore, and nought else had I.
 The night, at last, nigh spent, and all the stars
 Declining in their course, with elbow thrust
 Against Ulysses' side I roused the Chief,
 And thus address'd him ever prompt to hear.

580

590

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 I freeze to death. Help me, or I am lost.
 No cloak have I; some evil dæmon, sure,
 Beguil'd me of all prudence, that I came
 Thus sparely clad; I shall, I must expire.

So I; he, ready as he was in arms
 And counsel both, the remedy at once
 Devised, and thus, low-whisp'ring, answer'd me.

600

Hush! lest perchance some other hear—He said,
 And leaning on his elbow, spake aloud.

My friends! all hear—a monitory dream
 Hath reach'd me, for we lie far from the ships.
 Haste, therefore, one of you, with my request
 To Agamemnon, Atreus' son, our Chief,
 That he would reinforce us from the camp.

He spake, and at the word, Andraemon's son
 Thoas arose, who, casting off his cloak,
 Ran thence toward the ships, and folded warm
 Within it, there lay I till dawn appear'd.

610

Oh for the vigour of such youth again!
 Then, some good peasant here, either for love
 Or for respect, would cloak a man like me,
 Whom, now, thus sordid in attire ye scorn.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 My ancient guest! I cannot but approve
 Thy narrative, nor hast thou utter'd aught
 Unseemly, or that needs excuse. No want
 Of raiment, therefore, or of aught beside
 Needful to solace penury like thine,

620

Shall harm thee here; yet, at the peep of dawn
Gird thy own tatters to thy loins again;
For *we* have no great store of cloaks to boast,
Or change of vests, but singly one for each.
But when Ulysses' son shall once arrive,
He will himself with vest and mantle both
Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st.

So saying, he rose, and nearer made his couch
To the hearth-side, spreading it thick with skins 630
Of sheep and goats; then lay the Hero down,
O'er whom a shaggy mantle large he threw,
Which oft-times served him with a change, when rough
The winter's blast and terrible arose.

So was Ulysses bedded, and the youths
Slept all beside him; but the master-swain
Chose not his place of rest so far remote
From his rude charge, but to the outer court
With his nocturnal furniture, repair'd,
Gladd'ning Ulysses' heart that one so true 640
In his own absence kept his rural stores.

Athwart his sturdy shoulders, first, he flung
His faulchion keen, then wrapp'd him in a cloak
Thick-woven, winter-proof; he lifted, next,
The skin of a well-thriven goat, in bulk
Surpassing others, and his javelin took
Sharp-pointed, with which dogs he drove and men.
Thus arm'd, he sought his wonted couch beneath
A hollow rock where the herd slept, secure
From the sharp current of the Northern blast. 650

BOOK XV

ARGUMENT

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

MEANTIME to Lacedæmon's spacious vale
Minerva went, that she might summon thence
Ulysses' glorious son to his own home.
Arrived, she found Telemachus reposed
And Nestor's son beneath the vestibule
Of Menelaus, mighty Chief; she saw
Pisistratus in bands of gentle sleep
Fast-bound, but not Telemachus; his mind
No rest enjoy'd, by filial cares disturb'd
Amid the silent night, when, drawing near
To his couch side, the Goddess thus began.

10

Thou canst no longer prudently remain
A wand'rer here, Telemachus! thy home
Abandon'd, and those haughty suitors left
Within thy walls; fear lest, partition made
Of thy possessions, they devour the whole,
And in the end thy voyage bootless prove.
Delay not; from brave Menelaus ask
Dismission hence, that thou may'st find at home
Thy spotless mother, whom her brethren urge
And her own father even now to wed
Eurymachus, in gifts and in amount
Of proffer'd dow'r superior to them all.
Some treasure, else, shall haply from thy house
Be taken, such as thou wilt grudge to spare.
For well thou know'st how woman is disposed;
Her whole anxiety is to increase
His substance whom she weds; no care hath she
Of her first children, or remembers more
The buried husband of her virgin choice.

20

30

Returning then, to her of all thy train
 Whom thou shalt most approve, the charge commit
 Of thy concerns domestic, till the Gods
 Themselves shall guide thee to a noble wife,
 Hear also this, and mark it. In the frith
 Samos the rude, and Ithaca between,
 The chief of all her suitors thy return
 In vigilant ambush wait, with strong desire
 To slay thee, ere thou reach thy native shore,
 But shall not, as I judge, till the earth hide
 Many a lewd reveller at thy expence. 40

Yet, steer thy galley from those isles afar,
 And voyage make by night; some guardian God
 Shall save thee, and shall send thee prosp'rous gales.
 Then, soon as thou attain'st the nearest shore
 Of Ithaca, dispatching to the town
 Thy bark with all thy people, seek at once
 The swine-herd; for Eumæus is thy friend.
 There sleep, and send him forth into the town
 With tidings to Penelope, that safe 50
 Thou art restored from Pylus home again.

She said, and sought th' Olympian heights sublime.
 Then, with his heel shaking him, he awoke
 The son of Nestor, whom he thus address'd.

Rise, Nestor's son, Pisistratus! lead forth
 The steeds, and yoke them. We must now depart.

To whom the son of Nestor thus replied.
 Telemachus! what haste soe'er we feel,
 We can by no means prudently attempt
 To drive by night, and soon it will be dawn. 60
 Stay, therefore, till the Hero, Atreus' son,
 Spear-practis'd Menelaus shall his gifts
 Place in the chariot, and with kind farewell
 Dismiss thee; for the guest in mem'ry holds
 Through life, the host who treats him as a friend.

Scarce had he spoken, when the golden dawn
 Appearing, Menelaus, from the side
 Of beauteous Helen ris'n, their bed approach'd,
 Whose coming when Telemachus perceived,
 Cloathing himself hastily in his vest 70
 Magnificent, and o'er his shoulders broad
 Casting his graceful mantle, at the door
 He met the Hero, whom he thus address'd.

Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!
Dismiss me hence to Ithaca again,
My native isle, for I desire to go.

Him answer'd Menelaus famed in arms,

Telemachus! I will not long delay
Thy wish'd return. I disapprove alike

The host whose assiduity extreme
Distresses, and whose negligence offends;

80

The middle course is best; alike we err,
Him thrusting forth whose wish is to remain,
And hind'ring the impatient to depart.

This only is true kindness—To regale

The present guest, and speed him when he would,

Yet stay, till thou shalt see my splendid gifts

Placed in thy chariot, and till I command

My women from our present stores to spread

The table with a plentiful repast.

90

For both the honour of the guest demands,

And his convenience also, that he eat

Sufficient, ent'ring on a length of road.

But if through Hellas thou wilt take thy way

And traverse Argos, I will, then, myself

Attend thee; thou shalt journey with my steeds

Beneath thy yoke, and I will be thy guide

To many a city, whence we shall not go

Ungratified, but shall in each receive

Some gift at least, tripod, or charger bright,

100

Or golden chalice, or a pair of mules.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.

Atrides, Menelaus, Chief renown'd!

I would at once depart, (for guardian none

Of my possessions have I left behind)

Lest, while I seek my father, I be lost

Myself, or lose what I should grudge to spare.

Which when the valiant Menelaus heard,

He bade his spouse and maidens spread the board

At once with remnants of the last regale.

110

Then Eteoneus came, Boetheus' son

Newly aris'n, for nigh at hand he dwelt,

Whom Menelaus bade kindle the fire

By which to dress their food, and he obey'd.

He next, himself his fragrant chamber sought,

Not sole, but by his spouse and by his son

Attended, Megapenthes. There arrived
 Where all his treasures lay, Atrides, first,
 Took forth, himself, a goblet, then consign'd
 To his son's hand an argent beaker bright. 120
 Meantime, beside her coffers Helen stood
 Where lay her variegated robes, fair works
 Of her own hand. Producing one, in size
 And in magnificence the chief, a star
 For splendour, and the lowest placed of all,
 Loveliest of her sex, she bore it thence.
 Then, all proceeding through the house, they sought
 Telemachus again, whom reaching, thus
 The Hero of the golden locks began.

May Jove the Thunderer, dread Juno's mate, 130
 Grant thee, Telemachus! such voyage home
 As thy own heart desires! accept from all
 My stores selected as the richest far
 And noblest gift for finish'd beauty—This,
 I give thee wrought elaborate a cup,
 Itself all silver, bound with lip of gold.
 It is the work of Vulcan, which to me
 The Hero Phædimus imparted, King
 Of the Sidonians, when, on my return,
 Beneath his roof I lodg'd. I make it thine. 140

So saying, the Hero, Atreus' son, the cup
 Placed in his hands, and Megapenthes set
 Before him, next, the argent beaker bright;
 But lovely Helen drawing nigh, the robe
 Presented to him, whom she thus address'd.

I also give thee, oh my son, a gift,
 Which seeing, thou shalt think on her whose hands
 Wrought it; a present on thy nuptial day
 For thy fair spouse; meantime, repose it safe
 In thy own mother's keeping. Now, farewell! 150
 Prosp'rous and happy be thy voyage home!

She ceas'd, and gave it to him, who the gift
 Accepted glad, and in the chariot-chest
 Pisistratus the Hero all disposed,
 Admiring them the while. They, following, next,
 The Hero Menelaus to his hall
 Each on his couch or on his throne reposed.
 A maiden, then, with golden ewer charged
 And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,

And spread the polish'd table, which with food 160
 Various, selected from her present stores,
 The mistress of the household charge supplied.
 Boetheus' son stood carver, and to each
 His portion gave, while Megapenthes, son
 Of glorious Menelaus, serv'd the cup.
 Then, all with outstretch'd hands the feast assail'd,
 And when nor hunger more nor thirst of wine
 They felt, Telemachus and Nestor's son
 Yoked the swift steeds, and, taking each his seat
 In the resplendent chariot, drove at once 170
 Right through the sounding portico abroad.
 But Menelaus, Hero amber-hair'd,
 A golden cup bearing with richest wine
 Replete in his right hand, follow'd them forth,
 That not without libation first perform'd
 They might depart; he stood before the steeds,
 And drinking first, thus, courteous, them bespake.

Health to you both, young friends! and from my lips
 Like greeting bear to Nestor, royal Chief,
 For he was ever as a father kind 180
 To me, while the Achaians warr'd at Troy.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
 And doubtless, so we will; at our return
 We will report to him, illustrious Prince!
 Thy ev'ry word. And oh, I would to heav'n
 That reaching Ithaca, I might at home
 Ulysses hail as sure, as I shall hence
 Depart, with all benevolence by thee
 Treated, and rich in many a noble gift.

While thus he spake, on his right hand appear'd 190
 An eagle; in his talons pounced he bore
 A white-plumed goose domestic, newly ta'en
 From the house-court. Ran females all and males
 Clamorous after him; but he the steeds
 Approaching on the right, sprang into air.
 That sight rejoicing and with hearts reviv'd
 They view'd, and thus Pisistratus his speech
 Amid them all to Menelaus turn'd.

Now, Menelaus, think, illustrious Chief!
 If us, this omen, or thyself regard. 200

While warlike Menelaus musing stood
 What answer fit to frame, Helen meantime,

His spouse long-stoled preventing him, began.

Hear me; for I will answer as the Gods
Teach me, and as I think shall come to pass.
As he, descending from his place of birth
The mountains, caught our pamper'd goose away,
So shall Ulysses, after many woes
And wand'rings to his home restored, avenge
His wrongs, or even now is at his home 210
For all those suitors sowing seeds of woe.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
Oh grant it Jove, Juno's high-thund'ring mate!
So will I, there arrived, with vow and pray'r
Thee worship, as thou wert, thyself, divine.

He said, and lash'd the coursers; fiery they
And fleet, sprang through the city to the plain.
All day the yoke on either side they shook,
Journeying swift; and now the setting sun
To gloomy evening had resign'd the roads, 220
When they to Pheræ came, and in the house
Of good Diocles slept, their lib'ral host,
Whose sire Orsilochus from Alpheus sprang.
But when Aurora, daughter of the Dawn,
Look'd rosy from the East, yoking their steeds,
They in the sumptuous chariot sat again.
Forth through the vestibule they drove, and through
The sounding portico, when Nestor's son
Plied brisk the scourge, and willing flew the steeds.
Thus whirl'd along, soon they approach'd the gates 230
Of Pylus, when Telemachus, his speech
Turning to his companion, thus began.

How, son of Nestor! shall I win from thee
Not promise only, but performance kind
Of my request? we are not bound alone
To friendship by the friendship of our sires,
But by equality of years, and this
Our journey shall unite us still the more.
Bear me not, I intreat thee, noble friend!
Beyond the ship, but drop me at her side, 240
Lest ancient Nestor, though against my will,
Detain me in his palace through desire
To feast me, for I dread the least delay.

He spake; then mused Pisistratus how best
He might effect the wishes of his friend,

And thus at length resolved; turning his steeds
 With sudden deviation to the shore
 He sought the bark, and placing in the stern
 Both gold and raiment, the illustrious gifts
 Of Menelaus, thus, in accents wing'd 250
 With ardour, urged Telemachus away.

Dispatch, embark, summon thy crew on board,
 Ere my arrival notice give of thine
 To the old King; for vehement I know
 His temper, neither will he let thee hence,
 But, hasting hither, will himself enforce
 Thy longer stay, that thou may'st not depart
 Ungifted; nought will fire his anger more.

So saying, he to the Pylian city urged
 His steeds bright-maned, and at the palace-gate 260
 Arrived of Nestor speedily; meantime
 Telemachus exhorted thus his crew.

My gallant friends! set all your tackle, climb
 The sable bark, for I would now return.

He spake; they heard him gladly, and at once
 All fill'd the benches. While his voyage he
 Thus expedited, and beside the stern
 To Pallas sacrifice perform'd and pray'd,
 A stranger, born remote, who had escaped 270
 From Argos, fugitive for blood, a seer
 And of Melampus' progeny, approach'd.
 Melampus, in old time, in Pylus dwelt,
 Mother of flocks, alike for wealth renown'd
 And the magnificence of his abode.
 He, flying from the far-famed Pylian King,
 The mighty Neleus, migrated at length
 Into another land, whose wealth, the while,
 Neleus by force possess'd a year complete.
 Meantime, Melampus in the house endured
 Of Phylacus imprisonment and woe, 280
 And burn'd with wrath for Neleus' daughter sake
 By fell Erynnis kindled in his heart.

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

But, 'scaping death, he drove the lowing beeves
 From Phylace to Pylus, well avenged
 His num'rous injuries at Neleus' hands
 Sustain'd, and gave into his brother's arms
 King Neleus' daughter fair, the promis'd bride,
 To Argos steed-renown'd he journey'd next,
 There destin'd to inhabit and to rule
 Multitudes of Achaians. In that land 290
 He married, built a palace, and became
 Father of two brave sons, Antiphates
 And Mantius; to Antiphates was born
 The brave Oicleus; from Oicleus sprang
 Amphiaräus, demagogue renown'd,
 Whom with all tenderness, and as a friend
 Alike the Thund'rer and Apollo prized;
 Yet reach'd he not the bounds of hoary age.
 But by his mercenary consort's arts ¹
 Persuaded, met his destiny at Thebes. 300
 He 'gat Alcmaëon and Amphilocus.
 Mantius was also father of two sons,
 Clytus and Polyphides. Clytus pass'd
 From earth to heav'n, and dwells among the Gods,
 Stol'n by Aurora for his beauty's sake.
 But (brave Amphiaräus once deceased)
 Phœbus exalted Polyphides far
 Above all others in the prophet's part.
 He, anger'd by his father, roam'd away
 To Hyperesia, where he dwelt renown'd 310
 Throughout all lands the oracle of all.

His son, named Theoclymenus, was he
 Who now approach'd; he found Telemachus
 Libation off'ring in his bark, and pray'r,
 And in wing'd accents ardent him address'd.

Ah, friend! since sacrificing in this place
 I find thee, by these sacred rites and those
 Whom thou ador'st, and by thy own dear life,
 And by the lives of these thy mariners
 I beg true answer; hide not what I ask. 320
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom?

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

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 I will inform thee, stranger! and will solve
 Thy questions with much truth. I am by birth
 Ithacan, and Ulysses was my sire.
 But he hath perish'd by a woeful death,
 And I, believing it, with these have plow'd
 The ocean hither, int'rested to learn
 A father's fate long absent from his home.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus. 33°
 I also am a wand'rer, having slain
 A man of my own tribe; brethren and friends
 Num'rous had he in Argos steed-renown'd,
 And pow'rful are the Achaians dwelling there.
 From them, through terrour of impending death,
 I fly, a banish'd man henceforth for ever.
 Ah save a suppliant fugitive! lest death
 O'ertake me, for I doubt not their pursuit.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete. 34°
 I shall not, be assured, since thou desir'st
 To join me, chace thee from my bark away.
 Follow me, therefore, and with us partake,
 In Ithaca, what best the land affords.

So saying, he at the stranger's hand received
 His spear, which on the deck he lay'd, then climb'd
 Himself the bark, and, seated in the stern,
 At his own side placed Theoclymenus.
 They cast the hawsers loose; then with loud voice
 Telemachus exhorted all to hand 35°
 The tackle, whom the sailors prompt obey'd.
 The tall mast heaving, in its socket deep
 They lodg'd it, and its cordage braced secure,
 Then, straining at the halyards, hoised the sail.
 Fair wind, and blowing fresh through æther pure
 Minerva sent them, that the bark might run
 Her nimblest course through all the briny way.
 Now sank the sun, and dusky ev'ning dimm'd
 The waves, when, driven by propitious Jove,
 His bark stood right for Pheræ; thence she stretch'd
 To sacred Elis where the Epeans rule, 36°
 And through the sharp Echinades he next
 Steer'd her, uncertain whether fate ordain'd
 His life or death, surprizal or escape.

Meantime Ulysses and the swine-herd ate

Their cottage-mess, and the assistant swains
 Theirs also; and when hunger now and thirst
 Had ceased in all, Ulysses thus began,
 Proving the swine-herd, whether friendly still,
 And anxious for his good, he would intreat
 His stay, or thence hasten him to the town.

370

Eumæus, and all ye his servants, hear!
 It is my purpose, lest I wear thee out,
 Thee and thy friends, to seek at early dawn
 The city, there to beg—But give me first
 Needful instructions, and a trusty guide
 Who may conduct me thither; there my task
 Must be to roam the streets; some hand humane
 Perchance shall give me a small pittance there,
 A little bread, and a few drops to drink.

Ulysses' palace I shall also seek,
 And to discrete Penelope report

380

My tidings; neither shall I fail to mix
 With those imperious suitors, who, themselves
 Full-fed, may spare perhaps some boon to me.
 Me shall they find, in whatsoever they wish
 Their ready servitor, for (understand
 And mark me well) the herald of the skies,
 Hermes, from whom all actions of mankind
 Their grace receive and polish, is my friend,
 So that in menial offices I fear

390

No rival, whether I be called to heap
 The hearth with fuel, or dry wood to cleave,
 To roast, to carve, or to distribute wine,
 As oft the poor are wont who serve the great.

To whom, Eumæus! at those words displeas'd,
 Thou didst reply. Gods! how could such a thought
 Possess thee, stranger? surely thy resolve
 Is altogether fixt to perish there,

If thou indeed hast purpos'd with that throng
 To mix, whose riot and outrageous acts
 Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.

400

None, such as thou, serve *them*; their servitors
 Are youths well-cloak'd, well-vested; sleek their heads,
 And smug their countenances; such alone
 Are their attendants, and the polish'd boards
 Groan overcharg'd with bread, with flesh, with wine.
 Rest here content; for neither me nor these

Thou weariest aught, and when Ulysses' son
 Shall come, he will with vest and mantle fair
 Cloath thee, and send thee whither most thou would'st. 410

To whom Ulysses, toil-inured.

I wish thee, O Eumæus! dear to Jove
 As thou art dear to me, for this reprieve
 Vouchsafed me kind, from wand'ring and from woe!
 No worse condition is of mortal man
 Than his who wanders; for the poor man, driv'n
 By woe and by misfortune homeless forth,
 A thousand mis'ries, day by day, endures.
 Since thou detain'st me, then, and bidd'st me wait
 His coming, tell me if the father still

420

Of famed Ulysses live, whom, going hence,
 He left so nearly on the verge of life?
 And lives his mother? or have both deceased
 Already, and descended to the shades?

To whom the master swine-herd thus replied.

I will inform thee, and with strictest truth,
 Of all that thou hast ask'd. Laertes lives,
 But supplication off'ring to the Gods
 Ceaseless, to free him from a weary life,
 So deeply his long-absent son he mourns,
 And the dear consort of his early youth,
 Whose death is his chief sorrow, and hath brought
 Old age on him, or ere its date arrived.

430

She died of sorrow for her glorious son,
 And died deplorably; ¹ may never friend
 Of mine, or benefactor die as she!

While yet she liv'd, dejected as she was,
 I found it yet some solace to converse
 With her, who rear'd me in my childish days,
 Together with her lovely youngest-born
 The Princess Ctïmena; for side by side
 We grew, and I, scarce honour'd less than she.

440

But soon as our delightful prime we both
 Attain'd, to Samos her they sent, a bride,
 And were requited with rich dow'r; but me
 Cloath'd handsomely with tunic and with vest,
 And with fair sandals furnish'd, to the field
 She order'd forth, yet loved me still the more.
 I miss her kindness now; but gracious heav'n

¹ She is said to have hanged herself.

Prospers the work on which I here attend; 45°
 Hence have I food, and hence I drink, and hence
 Refresh, sometimes, a worthy guest like thee.
 But kindness none experience I, or can,
 From fair Penelope (my mistress now)
 In word or action, so is the house curs'd
 With that lewd throng. Glad would the servants be
 Might they approach their mistress, and receive
 Advice from her; glad too to eat and drink,
 And somewhat bear each to his rural home,
 For perquisites are ev'ry servant's joy. 460

Then answer thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Alas! good swain, Eumæus, how remote
 From friends and country wast thou forced to roam
 Ev'n in thy infancy! But tell me true.
 The city where thy parents dwelt, did foes
 Pillage it? or did else some hostile band
 Surprizing thee alone, on herd or flock
 Attendant, bear thee with them o'er the Deep,
 And sell thee at this Hero's house, who pay'd
 Doubtless for *thee* no sordid price or small? 470

To whom the master swine-herd in reply.
 Stranger! since thou art curious to be told
 My story, silent listen, and thy wine
 At leisure quaff. The nights are longest now,
 And such as time for sleep afford, and time
 For pleasant conf'rence; neither were it good
 That thou should'st to thy couch before thy hour,
 Since even sleep is hurtful, in excess.
 Whoever here is weary, and desires
 Early repose, let him depart to rest, 480
 And, at the peep of day, when he hath fed
 Sufficiently, drive forth my master's herd;
 But we with wine and a well-furnish'd board
 Supplied, will solace mutually derive
 From recollection of our sufferings past;
 For who hath much endured, and wander'd far,
 Finds the recital ev'n of sorrow sweet.

Now hear thy question satisfied; attend!
 There is an island (thou hast heard, perchance,
 Of such an isle) named Syria;¹ it is placed 490

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

Above Ortigia, and a dial owns¹
 True to the tropic changes of the year.
 No great extent she boasts, yet is she rich
 In cattle and in flocks, in wheat and wine.
 No famine knows that people, or disease
 Noisome, of all that elsewhere seize the race
 Of miserable man; but when old age
 Steals on the citizens, Apollo, arm'd
 With silver bow and bright Diana come,
 Whose gentle shafts dismiss them soon to rest. 500
 Two cities share between them all the isle,
 And both were subject to my father's sway
 Ctesius Ormenides, a godlike Chief.
 It chanced that from Phœnicia, famed for skill
 In arts marine, a vessel thither came
 By sharpers mann'd, and laden deep with toys,
 Now, in my father's family abode
 A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skill'd
 In works of elegance, whom they beguiled.
 While she wash'd linen on the beach, beside 510
 The ship, a certain mariner of those
 Seduced her; for all women, ev'n the wise
 And sober, feeble prove by love assail'd.
 Who was she, he enquired, and whence? nor she
 Scrupled to tell at once her father's home.

I am of Sidon,² famous for her works
 In brass and steel; daughter of Arybas,
 Who rolls in affluence; Taphian pirates thence
 Stole me returning from the field, from whom
 This Chief procured me at no little cost. 520

Then answer thus her paramour return'd.
 Wilt thou not hence to Sidon in our ship,
 That thou may'st once more visit the abode
 Of thy own wealthy parents, and themselves?
 For still they live, and still are wealthy deem'd.

To whom the woman. Even that might be,
 Would ye, ye seamen, by a solemn oath
 Assure me of a safe conveyance home.

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

² A principal city of Phœnicia.

Then swear the mariners as she required,
 And, when their oath was ended, thus again 53°
 The woman of Phœnicia them bespake.

Now, silence! no man, henceforth, of you all
 Accost me, though he meet me on the road,
 Or at yon fountain; lest some tattler run
 With tidings home to my old master's ear,
 Who, with suspicion touch'd, may *me* confine
 In cruel bonds, and death contrive for *you*.
 But be ye close; purchase your stores in haste;
 And when your vessel shall be freighted full,
 Quick send me notice, for I mean to bring 54°
 What gold soever opportune I find,
 And will my passage cheerfully defray
 With still another moveable. I nurse
 The good man's son, an urchin shrewd, of age
 To scamper at my side; him will I bring,
 Whom at some foreign market ye shall prove
 Saleable at what price soe'er ye will.

So saying, she to my father's house return'd.
 They, there abiding the whole year, their ship
 With purchased goods freighted of ev'ry kind, 55°
 And when, her lading now complete, she lay
 For sea prepared, their messenger arrived
 To summon down the woman to the shore.
 A mariner of theirs, subtle and shrewd,
 Then, ent'ring at my father's gate, produced
 A splendid collar, gold with amber strung.
 My mother (then at home) with all her maids
 Handling and gazing on it with delight,
 Proposed to purchase it, and he the nod
 Significant, gave unobserv'd, the while, 56°
 To the Phœnician woman, and return'd.
 She, thus informed, leading me by the hand
 Went forth, and finding in the vestibule
 The cups and tables which my father's guests
 Had used, (but they were to the forum gone
 For converse with their friends assembled there)
 Convey'd three cups into her bosom-folds,
 And bore them off, whom I a thoughtless child
 Accompanied, at the decline of day,
 When dusky evening had embrown'd the shore. 57°
 We, stepping nimbly on, soon reach'd the port

Renown'd, where that Phœnician vessel lay.
 They shipp'd us both, and all embarking cleav'd
 Their liquid road, by favourable gales,
 Jove's gift, impell'd. Six days we day and night
 Continual sailed, but when Saturnian Jove
 Now bade the sev'nth bright morn illumine the skies,
 Then, shaft-arm'd Dian struck the woman dead.
 At once she pitch'd headlong into the bilge
 Like a sea-coot, whence heaving her again,
 The seamen gave her to be fishes' food,
 And I survived to mourn her. But the winds
 And rolling billows them bore to the coast
 Of Ithaca, where with his proper goods
 Laertes bought me. By such means it chanced
 That e'er I saw the isle in which I dwell.

580

To whom Ulysses, glorious Chief, replied.
 Eumæus! thou hast moved me much, thy woes
 Enumerating thus at large. But Jove
 Hath neighbour'd all thy evil with this good,
 That after num'rous sorrows thou hast reach'd
 The house of a kind master, at whose hands
 Thy sustenance is sure, and here thou lead'st
 A tranquil life; but I have late arrived,
 City after city of the world explored.

590

Thus mutual they conferr'd, nor leisure found
 Save for short sleep, by morning soon surprized.
 Meantime the comrades of Telemachus
 Approaching land, cast loose the sail, and lower'd
 Alert the mast, then oar'd the vessel in.
 The anchors heav'd aground,¹ and hawsers tied
 Secure, themselves, forth-issuing on the shore,
 Breakfast prepared, and charged their cups with wine.
 When neither hunger now, nor thirst remained
 Unsatisfied, Telemachus began.

600

Push ye the sable bark without delay
 Home to the city. I will to the field
 Among my shepherds, and, (my rural works
 Survey'd,) at eve will to the town return.
 To-morrow will I set before you wine
 And plenteous viands, wages of your toil.

610

To whom the godlike Theoclymenus.
 Whither must I, my son? who, of the Chiefs

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

Of rugged Ithaca, shall harbour me?
Shall I to thine and to thy mother's house?

Then thus Telemachus, discrete, replied.
I would invite thee to proceed at once
To our abode, since nought should fail thee there
Of kind reception, but it were a course
Now not adviseable; for I must myself, 620
Be absent, neither would my mother's eyes
Behold thee, so unfrequent she appears
Before the suitors, shunning whom, she sits
Weaving continual at the palace-top.
But I will name to thee another Chief
Whom thou may'st seek, Eurymachus, the son
Renown'd of prudent Polybus, whom all
The people here reverence as a God.
Far noblest of them all is he, and seeks
More ardent than his rivals far, to wed 630
My mother, and to fill my father's throne.
But, He who dwells above, Jove only knows
If some disastrous day be not ordain'd
For them, or ere those nuptials shall arrive.

While thus he spake, at his right hand appear'd,
Messenger of Apollo, on full wing,
A falcon; in his pounces clench'd he bore
A dove, which rending, down he pour'd her plumes
Between the galley and Telemachus.
Then, calling him apart, the prophet lock'd 640
His hand in his, and thus explain'd the sign.

Not undirected by the Gods his flight
On our right hand, Telemachus! this hawk
Hath wing'd propitious; soon as I perceived
I knew him ominous—In all the isle
No family of a more royal note
Than yours is found, and yours shall still prevail.

Whom thus Telemachus answer'd discrete.
Grant heav'n, my guest! that this good word of thine
Fail not, and soon thou shalt such bounty share 650
And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Then, to Piræus thus, his friend approved.
Piræus, son of Clytius! (for of all
My followers to the shore of Pylus, none
More prompt than thou hath my desires perform'd)

Now also to thy own abode conduct
This stranger, whom with hospitable care
Cherish and honour till myself arrive.

To whom Piræus answer'd, spear-renown'd. 660
Telemachus! however long thy stay,
Punctual I will attend him, and no want
Of hospitality shall he find with me.

So saying, he climb'd the ship, then bade the crew
Embarking also, cast the hawsers loose,
And each, obedient, to his bench repair'd.
Meantime Telemachus his sandals bound,
And lifted from the deck his glitt'ring spear,
Then, as Telemachus had bidden them,
Son of divine Ulysses, casting loose 670
The hawsers, forth they push'd into the Deep
And sought the city, while with nimble pace
Proceeding thence, Telemachus attain'd
The cottage soon where good Eumæus slept,
The swine-herd, faithful to his num'rous charge.

BOOK XVI

ARGUMENT

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

It was the hour of dawn, when in the cot
Kindling fresh fire, Ulysses and his friend
Noble Eumæus dress'd their morning fare,
And sent the herdsmen with the swine abroad.
Seeing Telemachus, the watchful dogs
Bark'd not, but fawn'd around him. At that sight,
And at the sound of feet which now approach'd,
Ulysses in wing'd accents thus remark'd.

Eumæus! certain, either friend of thine
Is nigh at hand, or one whom well thou know'st; 10
Thy dogs bark not, but fawn on his approach
Obsequious, and the sound of feet I hear.

Scarce had he ceased, when his own son himself
Stood in the vestibule. Upsprang at once
Eumæus wonder-struck, and from his hand
Let fall the cups with which he was employ'd
Mingling rich wine; to his young Lord he ran,
His forehead kiss'd, kiss'd his bright-beaming eyes
And both his hands, weeping profuse the while,
As when a father folds in his embrace 20
Arrived from foreign lands in the tenth year
His darling son, the offspring of his age,
His only one, for whom he long hath mourn'd,
So kiss'd the noble peasant o'er and o'er
Godlike Telemachus, as from death escaped,
And in wing'd accents plaintive thus began.

Light of my eyes, thou com'st; it is thyself,
Sweetest Telemachus! I had no hope
To see thee more, once told that o'er the Deep
Thou hadst departed for the Pylian coast. 30
Enter, my precious son; that I may sooth

My soul with sight of thee from far arrived,
 For seldom thou thy feeders and thy farm
 Visitest, in the city custom'd much
 To make abode, that thou may'st witness there
 The manners of those hungry suitors proud.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 It will be so. There is great need, my friend!
 But here, for thy sake, have I now arrived,
 That I may look on thee, and from thy lips
 Learn if my mother still reside at home,
 Or have become spouse of some other Chief,
 Leaving untenanted Ulysses' bed
 To be by noisome spiders webb'd around.

To whom the master swine-herd in return.
 Not so, she, patient still as ever, dwells
 Beneath thy roof, but all her cheerless days
 Despairing wastes, and all her nights in tears.

So saying, Eumæus at his hand received
 His brazen lance, and o'er the step of stone
 Enter'd Telemachus, to whom his sire
 Relinquish'd, soon as he appear'd, his seat,
 But him Telemachus forbidding, said—

Guest, keep thy seat; our cottage will afford
 Some other, which Eumæus will provide.

He ceased, and he, returning at the word,
 Reposed again; then good Eumæus spread
 Green twigs beneath, which, cover'd with a fleece,
 Supplied Ulysses' offspring with a seat.

He, next, disposed his dishes on the board
 With relicts charged of yesterday; with bread,
 Alert, he heap'd the baskets; with rich wine
 His ivy cup replenish'd; and a seat
 Took opposite to his illustrious Lord
 Ulysses. They toward the plenteous feast
 Stretch'd forth their hands, (and hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied) Telemachus, his speech
 Addressing to their gen'rous host, began.

Whence is this guest, my father? How convey'd
 Came he to Ithaca? What country boast
 The mariners with whom he here arrived?
 For, that on foot he found us not, is sure.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 I will with truth answer thee, O my son!

40

50

60

70

He boasts him sprung from ancestry renown'd
 In spacious Crete, and hath the cities seen
 Of various lands, by fate ordain'd to roam.
 Ev'n now, from a Thesprotian ship escaped,
 He reach'd my cottage—but he is thy own;
 I yield him to thee; treat him as thou wilt;
 He is thy suppliant, and depends on thee.

80

Then thus, Telemachus, discrete, replied.

Thy words, Eumæus, pain my very soul.

For what security can I afford

To any in my house? myself am young,

Nor yet of strength sufficient to repel

An offer'd insult, and my mother's mind

In doubtful balance hangs, if, still with me

An inmate, she shall manage my concerns,

Attentive only to her absent Lord

90

And her own good report, or shall espouse

The noblest of her wooers, and the best

Entitled by the splendour of his gifts.

But I will give him, since I find him lodg'd

A guest beneath thy roof, tunic and cloak,

Sword double-edged, and sandals for his feet,

With convoy to the country of his choice.

Still, if it please thee, keep him here thy guest,

And I will send him raiment, with supplies

Of all sorts, lest he burthen thee and thine.

100

But where the suitors come, there shall not he

With my consent, nor stand exposed to pride

And petulance like theirs, lest by some sneer

They wound him, and through him, wound also me;

For little is it that the boldest can

Against so many; numbers will prevail.

Him answer'd then Ulysses toil-inured.

Oh amiable and good! since even I

Am free to answer thee, I will avow

My heart within me torn by what I hear

110

Of those injurious suitors, who the house

Infest of one noble as thou appear'st.

But say—submittest thou to their controul

Willingly, or because the people, sway'd

By some response oracular, incline

Against thee? Thou hast brothers, it may chance,

Slow to assist thee—for a brother's aid

Is of importance in whatever cause.

For oh that I had youth as I have will,
Or that renown'd Ulysses were my sire,
Or that himself might wander home again.
Whereof hope yet remains! then might I lose
My head, that moment, by an alien's hand,
If I would fail, ent'ring Ulysses' gate,
To be the bane and mischief of them all.

120

But if alone to multitudes opposed
I should perchance be foiled; nobler it were
With my own people, under my own roof
To perish, than to witness evermore
Their unexampled deeds, guests shoved aside,
Maidens dragg'd forcibly from room to room,
Casks emptied of their rich contents, and them
Indulging glutt'nous appetite day by day
Enormous, without measure, without end.

130

To whom, Telemachus, discrete, replied.

Stranger! thy questions shall from me receive

True answer. Enmity or hatred none

Subsists the people and myself between,

Nor have I brothers to accuse, whose aid

Is of importance in whatever cause,

140

For Jove hath from of old with single heirs

Our house supplied; Arcesias none begat

Except Laertes, and Laertes none

Except Ulysses, and Ulysses me

Left here his only one, and unenjoy'd.

Thence comes it that our palace swarms with foes;

For all the rulers of the neighbour isles,

Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd

Zacynthus, others also rulers here

In craggy Ithaca, my mother seek

In marriage, and my household stores consume.

But neither she those nuptial rites abhorr'd

Refuses absolute, nor yet consents

To end them; they my patrimony waste

Meantime, and will destroy me also soon,

As I expect, but heav'n disposes all.

Eumæus! haste, my father! bear with speed

News to Penelope that I am safe,

And have arrived from Pylus; I will wait

Till thou return; and well beware that none

150

160

Hear thee beside, for I have many foes.

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. But say beside,
 Shall I not also, as I go, inform
 Distress'd Laertes? who while yet he mourn'd
 Ulysses only, could o'ersee the works,
 And dieted among his menials oft
 As hunger prompted him, but now, they say,
 Since thy departure to the Pylian shore,
 He neither eats as he was wont, nor drinks,
 Nor oversees his hinds, but sighing sits
 And weeping, wasted even to the bone.

170

Him then Telemachus answer'd discrete.
 Hard though it be, yet to his tears and sighs
 Him leave we now. We cannot what we would.
 For, were the ordering of all events
 Referr'd to our own choice, our first desire
 Should be to see my father's glad return.
 But once thy tidings told, wander not thou
 In quest of Him, but hither speed again.
 Rather request my mother that she send
 Her household's governess without delay
 Privately to him; she shall best inform
 The ancient King that I have safe arrived.

180

He said, and urged him forth, who binding on
 His sandals, to the city bent his way.
 Nor went Eumæus from his home unmark'd
 By Pallas, who in semblance of a fair
 Damsel, accomplish'd in domestic arts,
 Approaching to the cottage' entrance, stood
 Opposite, by Ulysses plain discern'd,
 But to his son invisible; for the Gods
 Appear not manifest alike to all.
 The mastiffs saw her also, and with tone
 Querulous hid themselves, yet bark'd they not.
 She beckon'd him abroad. Ulysses saw
 The sign, and, issuing through the outer court,
 Approach'd her, whom the Goddess thus bespake.

190

Laertes' progeny, for wiles renown'd!
 Disclose thyself to thy own son, that, death
 Concerting and destruction to your foes,
 Ye may the royal city seek, nor long

200

Shall ye my presence there desire in vain,
For I am ardent to begin the fight.

Minerva spake, and with her rod of gold
Touch'd him; his mantle, first, and vest she made
Pure as new-blanch'd; dilating, next, his form,
She gave dimensions ampler to his limbs;
Swarthy again his manly hue became, 210
Round his full face, and black his bushy chin.
The change perform'd, Minerva disappear'd,
And the illustrious Hero turn'd again
Into the cottage; wonder at that sight
Seiz'd on Telemachus; askance he look'd,
Awe-struck, not unsuspecting of a God,
And in wing'd accents eager thus began.

Thou art no longer, whom I lately saw,
Nor are thy cloaths, nor is thy port the same.
Thou art a God, I know, and dwell'st in heav'n. 220
Oh, smile on us, that we may yield thee rites
Acceptable, and present thee golden gifts
Elaborate; ah spare us, Pow'r divine!

To whom Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.
I am no God. Why deem'st thou me divine?
I am thy father, for whose sake thou lead'st
A life of woe, by violence oppress'd.

So saying, he kiss'd his son, while from his cheeks
Tears trickled, tears till then, perforce restrained.
Telemachus, (for he believed him not 230
His father yet) thus, wond'ring, spake again.

My father, said'st thou? no. Thou art not He,
But some Divinity beguiles my soul
With mock'ries to afflict me still the more;
For never mortal man could so have wrought
By his own pow'r; some interposing God
Alone could render thee both young and old,
For old thou wast of late, and foully clad,
But wear'st the semblance, now, of those in heav'n!

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 240
Telemachus! it is not well, my son!
That thou should'st greet thy father with a face
Of wild astonishment, and stand aghast.
Ulysses, save myself, none comes, be sure.
Such as thou seest, after ten thousand woes
Which I have borne, I visit once again

My native country in the twentieth year.
 This wonder Athenæan Pallas wrought,
 She cloath'd me even with what form she would,
 For so she can. Now poor I seem and old, 250
 Now young again, and clad in fresh attire.
 The Gods who dwell in yonder heav'n, with ease
 Dignify or debase a mortal man.

So saying, he sat. Then threw Telemachus
 His arms around his father's neck, and wept.
 Desire intense of lamentation seized
 On both; soft murmurs utt'ring, each indulged
 His grief, more frequent wailing than the bird,
 (Eagle, or hook-nail'd vulture) from whose nest
 Some swain hath stol'n her yet unfeather'd young. 260
 So from their eyelids they big drops distill'd
 Of tend'rest grief, nor had the setting sun
 Cessation of their weeping seen, had not
 Telemachus his father thus address'd.

What ship convey'd thee to thy native shore,
 My father! and what country boast the crew?
 For, that on foot thou not arriv'dst, is sure.

Then thus divine Ulysses toil-inured.
 My son! I will explicit all relate. 270
 Conducted by Phæacia's maritime sons
 I came, a race accusom'd to convey
 Strangers who visit them across the Deep.
 Me, o'er the billows in a rapid bark
 Borne sleeping, on the shores of Ithaca
 They lay'd; rich gifts they gave me also, brass,
 Gold in full bags, and beautiful attire,
 Which, warn'd from heav'n, I have in caves conceal'd.
 By Pallas prompted, hither I repair'd
 That we might plan the slaughter of our foes,
 Whose numbers tell me now, that I may know 280
 How pow'rful, certainly, and who they are,
 And consultation with my dauntless heart
 May hold, if we be able to contend
 Ourselves with all, or must have aid beside.

Then, answer thus his son, discrete, return'd,
 My father! thy renown hath ever rung
 In thy son's ears, and by report thy force
 In arms, and wisdom I have oft been told.
 But terribly thou speak'st; amazement-fixt

I hear; can two a multitude oppose,
 And valiant warriors all? for neither ten
 Are they, nor twenty, but more num'rous far.
 Learn, now, their numbers. Fifty youths and two
 Came from Dulichium; they are chosen men,
 And six attendants follow in their train;
 From Samos twenty youths and four arrive,
 Zacynthus also of Achaia's sons

290

Sends twenty more, and our own island adds,
 Herself, her twelve chief rulers; Medon, too,
 Is there the herald, and the bard divine,
 With other two, intendants of the board,
 Should we within the palace, we alone,
 Assail them all, I fear lest thy revenge
 Unpleasant to thyself and deadly prove,
 Frustrating thy return. But recollect—
 Think, if thou canst, on whose confed'rate arm
 Strenuous on our behalf we may rely.

300

To him replied his patient father bold.
 I will inform thee. Mark. Weigh well my words.
 Will Pallas and the everlasting Sire
 Alone suffice? or need we other aids?

310

Then answer thus Telemachus return'd.
 Good friends indeed are they whom thou hast named,
 Though throned above the clouds; for their controul
 Is universal both in earth and heav'n.

To whom Ulysses, toil-worn Chief renown'd.
 Not long will they from battle stand aloof,
 When once, within my palace, in the strength
 Of Mars, to sharp decision we shall urge
 The suitors. But thyself at early dawn
 Our mansion seek, that thou may'st mingle there
 With that imperious throng; me in due time
 Eumæus to the city shall conduct,
 In form a miserable beggar old.

320

But should they with dishonourable scorn
 Insult me, thou unmov'd my wrongs endure,
 And should they even drag me by the feet
 Abroad, or smite me with the spear, thy wrath
 Refraining, gently counsel them to cease
 From such extravagance; but well I know
 That cease they will not, for their hour is come.
 And mark me well; treasure what now I say

330

Deep in thy soul. When Pallas shall, herself,
 Suggest the measure, then, shaking my brows,
 I will admonish thee; thou, at the sign,
 Remove what arms soever in the hall
 Remain, and in the upper palace safe
 Dispose them; should the suitors, missing them,
 Perchance interrogate thee, then reply
 Gently—I have removed them from the smoke; 340
 For they appear no more the arms which erst
 Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left,
 But smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
 This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
 Jove taught me; lest, intoxicate with wine,
 Ye should assault each other in your brawls,
 Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
 Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

Yet leave two faulchions for ourselves alone,
 Two spears, two bucklers, which with sudden force 350
 Impetuous we will seize, and Jove all-wise
 Their valour shall, and Pallas, steal away.
 This word store also in remembrance deep—
 If mine in truth thou art, and of my blood,
 Then, of Ulysses to his home returned
 Let none hear news from thee, no, not my sire
 Laertes, nor Eumæus, nor of all
 The menials any, or ev'n Penelope,
 That thou and I, alone, may search the drift
 Of our domestic women, and may prove 360
 Our serving-men, who honours and reveres
 And who contemns us both, but chiefly thee
 So gracious and so worthy to be loved.

Him then thus answer'd his illustrious son.
 Trust me, my father! thou shalt soon be taught
 That I am not of drowsy mind obtuse.
 But this I think not likely to avail
 Or thee or me; ponder it yet again;
 For tedious were the task, farm after farm
 To visit of those servants, proving each, 370
 And the proud suitors merciless devour
 Meantime thy substance, nor abstain from aught,
 Learn, if thou wilt, (and I that course myself
 Advise) who slights thee of the female train,
 And who is guiltless; but I would not try

From house to house the men, far better proved
 Hereafter, if in truth by signs from heav'n
 Inform'd, thou hast been taught the will of Jove.

Thus they conferr'd. The gallant bark, meantime,
 Reach'd Ithaca, which from the Pylian shore 380
 Had brought Telemachus with all his band.
 Within the many-fathom'd port arrived
 His lusty followers haled her far aground,
 Then carried thence their arms, but to the house
 Of Clytius the illustrious gifts convey'd.
 Next to the royal mansion they dispatch'd
 An herald charg'd with tidings to the Queen,
 That her Telemachus had reach'd the cot
 Of good Eumæus, and the bark had sent
 Home to the city; lest the matchless dame 390
 Should still deplore the absence of her son.
 They, then, the herald and the swine-herd, each
 Bearing like message to his mistress, met,
 And at the palace of the godlike Chief
 Arriving, compass'd by the female throng
 Inquisitive, the herald thus began.

Thy son, O Queen! is safe; ev'n now return'd.
 Then, drawing nigh to her, Eumæus told
 His message also from her son received,
 And, his commission punctually discharged, 400
 Leaving the palace, sought his home again.

Grief seized and anguish, at those tidings, all
 The suitors; issuing forth, on the outside
 Of the high wall they sat, before the gate,
 When Polybus' son, Eurymachus, began.

My friends! his arduous task, this voyage, deem'd
 By us impossible, in our despight
 Telemachus hath atchieved. Haste! launch we forth
 A sable bark, our best, which let us man
 With mariners expert, who, rowing forth 410
 Swiftly, shall summon our companions home.

Scarce had he said, when turning where he sat,
 Amphinomus beheld a bark arrived
 Just then in port; he saw them furling sail,
 And seated with their oars in hand; he laugh'd
 Through pleasure at that sight, and thus he spake.

Our message may be spared. Lo! they arrive.
 Either some God inform'd them, or they saw,

Themselves, the vessel of Telemachus
Too swiftly passing to be reach'd by theirs.

420

He spake; they, rising, hasted to the shore.
Alert they drew the sable bark aground,
And by his servant each his arms dispatch'd
To his own home. Then, all, to council those
Assembling, neither elder of the land
Nor youth allow'd to join them, and the rest
Eupithes' son, Antinoüs, thus bespake.

Ah! how the Gods have rescued him! all day
Perch'd on the airy mountain-top, our spies
Successive watch'd; and, when the sun declined,
We never slept on shore, but all night long
Till sacred dawn arose, plow'd the abyss,
Hoping Telemachus, that we might seize
And slay him, whom some Deity hath led,
In our despight, safe to his home again.
But frame we yet again means to destroy
Telemachus; ah—let not Him escape!

430

For end of this our task, while he survives,
None shall be found, such prudence he displays
And wisdom, neither are the people now
Unanimous our friends as heretofore.
Come, then—prevent him, ere he call the Greeks
To council; for he will not long delay,
But will be angry, doubtless, and will tell
Amid them all, how we in vain devised
His death, a deed which they will scarce applaud,
But will, perhaps, punish and drive us forth
From our own country to a distant land.—
Prevent him, therefore, quickly; in the field
Slay him, or on the road; so shall his wealth
And his possessions on ourselves devolve
Which we will share equally, but his house
Shall be the Queen's, and his whom she shall wed.
Yet, if not so inclined, ye rather chuse
That he should live and occupy entire
His patrimony, then, no longer, here
Assembled, let us revel at his cost,
But let us all with spousal gifts produced
From our respective treasures, woo the Queen,
Leaving her in full freedom to espouse
Who proffers most, and whom the fates ordain.

440

450

460

He ceased; the assembly silent sat and mute.
 Then rose Amphinomus amid them all,
 Offspring renown'd of Nisus, son, himself,
 Of King Aretias. He had thither led
 The suitor train who from the pleasant isle
 Corn-clad of green Dulichium had arrived,
 And by his speech pleased far beyond them all
 Penelope, for he was just and wise,
 And thus, well-counselling the rest, began.

47°

Not I, my friends! far be the thought from me
 To slay Telemachus! it were a deed
 Momentous, terrible, to slay a prince.
 First, therefore, let us counsel ask of heav'n,
 And if Jove's oracle that course approve,
 I will encourage you, and will myself
 Be active in his death; but if the Gods
 Forbid it, then, by my advice, forbear.

So spake Amphinomus, whom all approved.
 Arising then, into Ulysses' house
 They went, where each his splendid seat resumed.

48°

A novel purpose occupied, meantime,
 Penelope; she purposed to appear
 Before her suitors, whose design to slay
 Telemachus she had from Medon learn'd,
 The herald, for his ear had caught the sound.
 Toward the hall with her attendant train
 She moved, and when, most graceful of her sex,
 Where sat the suitors she arrived, between
 The columns standing of the stately dome,
 And covering with her white veil's lucid folds
 Her features, to Antinoüs thus she spake.

49°

Antinoüs, proud, contentious, evermore
 To mischief prone! the people deem thee wise
 Past thy compeers, and in all grace of speech
 Pre-eminent, but such wast never thou.
 Inhuman! why is it thy dark design
 To slay Telemachus? and why with scorn
 Rejectest thou the suppliant's pray'r,¹ which Jove
 Himself hath witness'd? Plots please not the Gods. 500
 Know'st not that thy own father refuge found
 Here, when he fled before the people's wrath

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

Whom he had irritated by a wrong
 Which, with a band of Taphian robbers joined,
 He offer'd to the Thesprots, our allies?
 They would have torn his heart, and would have laid
 All his delights and his possessions waste,
 But my Ulysses slaked the furious heat
 Of their revenge, whom thou requitest now
 Wasting his goods, soliciting his wife,
 Slaying his son, and filling me with woe.
 But cease, I charge thee, and bid cease the rest,

510

To whom the son of Polybus replied,
 Eurymachus.—Icarius' daughter wise!
 Take courage, fair Penelope, and chace
 These fears unreasonable from thy mind!
 The man lives not, nor shall, who while I live,
 And faculty of sight retain, shall harm
 Telemachus, thy son. For thus I say,
 And thus will I perform; his blood shall stream
 A sable current from my lance's point
 That moment; for the city-waster Chief
 Ulysses, oft, me placing on his knees,
 Hath fill'd my infant grasp with sav'ry food,
 And giv'n me ruddy wine. I, therefore, hold
 Telemachus of all men most my friend,
 Nor hath he death to fear from hand of ours.
 Yet, if the Gods shall doom him, die he must.

520

So he encouraged her, who yet, himself,
 Plotted his death. She, re-ascending, sought
 Her stately chamber, and, arriving there,
 Deplored with tears her long-regretted Lord
 Till Athenæan Pallas azure-eyed
 Dews of soft slumber o'er her lids diffused.

530

And now, at even-tide, Eumæus reach'd
 Ulysses and his son. A yearling swine
 Just slain they skilfully for food prepared,
 When Pallas, drawing nigh, smote with her wand
 Ulysses, at the stroke rend'ring him old,
 And his apparel sordid as before,
 Lest, knowing him, the swain at once should seek
 Penelope, and let the secret forth.

540

Then foremost him Telemachus address'd.
 Noble Eumæus! thou art come; what news
 Bring'st from the city? Have the warrior band

Of suitors, hopeless of their ambush, reach'd
The port again, or wait they still for me?

To whom Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

No time for such enquiry, nor to range,
Curious, the streets had I, but anxious wish'd
To make my message known, and to return.

550

But, as it chanced, a nimble herald sent
From thy companions, met me on the way,
Who reach'd thy mother first. Yet this I know,

For this I saw. Passing above the town
Where they have piled a way-side hill of stones

To Mercury, I beheld a gallant bark

Ent'ring the port; a bark she was of ours,
The crew were num'rous, and I mark'd her deep-
Laden with shields and spears of double edge.

560

Theirs I conjectured her, and could no more.

He spake, and by Eumæus unperceived,
Telemachus his father eyed and smiled.

Their task accomplish'd, and the table spread,

They ate, nor any his due portion miss'd,
And hunger, now, and thirst both sated, all
To rest repair'd, and took the gift of sleep.

BOOK XVII

ARGUMENT

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

Now look'd Aurora from the East abroad,
When the illustrious offspring of divine
Ulysses bound his sandals to his feet;
He seiz'd his sturdy spear match'd to his gripe,
And to the city meditating quick
Departure now, the swine-herd thus bespake.

Father! I seek the city, to convince
My mother of my safe return, whose tears,
I judge, and lamentation shall not cease
Till her own eyes behold me. But I lay
On thee this charge. Into the city lead,
Thyself, this hapless guest, that he may beg
Provision there, a morsel and a drop
From such as may, perchance, vouchsafe the boon.
I cannot, vext and harass'd as I am,
Feed all, and should the stranger take offence,
The worse for him. Plain truth is my delight.

10

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
Nor is it my desire to be detained.
Better the mendicant in cities seeks
His dole, vouchsafe it whosoever may,
Than in the villages. I am not young,
Nor longer of an age that well accords
With rural tasks, nor could I all perform
That it might please a master to command.
Go then, and when I shall have warm'd my limbs
Before the hearth, and when the risen sun

20

Shall somewhat chase the cold, thy servant's task
 Shall be to guide me thither, as thou bidd'st,
 For this is a vile garb; the frosty air
 Of morning would benumb me thus attired,
 And, as ye say, the city is remote.

30

He ended, and Telemachus in haste
 Set forth, his thoughts all teeming as he went
 With dire revenge. Soon in the palace-courts
 Arriving, he reclined his spear against
 A column, and proceeded to the hall.
 Him Euryclea, first, his nurse, perceived,
 While on the variegated seats she spread
 Their fleecy cov'ring; swift with tearful eyes
 She flew to him, and the whole female train
 Of brave Ulysses swarm'd around his son,
 Clasp'ing him, and his forehead and his neck
 Kissing affectionate; then came, herself,
 As golden Venus or Diana fair,
 Forth from her chamber to her son's embrace,
 The chaste Penelope; with tears she threw
 Her arms around him, his bright-beaming eyes
 And forehead kiss'd, and with a murmur'd plaint
 Maternal, in wing'd accents thus began.

40

50

Thou hast return'd, light of my eyes! my son!
 My lov'd Telemachus! I had no hope
 To see thee more when once thou hadst embark'd
 For Pylus, privily, and with no consent
 From me obtain'd, news seeking of thy sire.
 But haste; unfold. Declare what thou hast seen.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Ah mother! let my sorrows rest, nor me
 From death so lately 'scaped afflict anew,
 But, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
 With all the maidens of thy train ascend
 To thy superior chamber, there to vow
 A perfect hecatomb to all the Gods,
 When Jove shall have avenged our num'rous wrongs.
 I seek the forum, there to introduce
 A guest, my follower from the Pylian shore,
 Whom sending forward with my noble band,
 I bade Piræus to his own abode
 Lead him, and with all kindness entertain
 The stranger, till I should myself arrive.

60

70

He spake, nor flew his words useless away.
 She, bathed and habited in fresh attire,
 Vow'd a full hecatomb to all the Gods,
 Would Jove but recompense her num'rous wrongs.
 Then, spear in hand, went forth her son, two dogs
 Fleet-footed following him. O'er all his form
 Pallas diffused a dignity divine,
 And ev'ry eye gazed on him as he pass'd.
 The suitors throng'd him round, joy on their lips
 And welcome, but deep mischief in their hearts,
 He, shunning all that crowd, chose to himself
 A seat, where Mentor sat, and Antiphus,
 And Halytherses, long his father's friends
 Sincere, who of his voyage much enquired.
 Then drew Piræus nigh, leading his guest
 Toward the forum; nor Telemachus
 Stood long aloof, but greeted his approach,
 And was accosted by Piræus thus.

80

Sir! send thy menial women to bring home
 The precious charge committed to my care,
 Thy gifts at Menelaus' hands received.

90

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Piræus! wait; for I not yet foresee
 The upshot. Should these haughty ones effect
 My death, clandestine, under my own roof,
 And parcel my inheritance by lot,
 I rather wish those treasures thine, than theirs.
 But should I with success plan for them all
 A bloody death, then, wing'd with joy, thyself
 Bring home those presents to thy joyful friend.

100

So saying, he led the anxious stranger thence
 Into the royal mansion, where arrived,
 Each cast his mantle on a couch or throne,
 And plung'd his feet into a polish'd bath.
 There wash'd and lubricated with smooth oils,
 From the attendant maidens each received
 Tunic and shaggy mantle. Thus attired,
 Forth from the baths they stepp'd, and sat again.
 A maiden, next, with golden ewer charged,
 And silver bowl, pour'd water on their hands,
 And spread the polish'd table, which with food
 Of all kinds, remnants of the last regale,
 The mistress of the household charge supplied,

110

Meantime, beside a column of the dome
 His mother, on a couch reclining, twirl'd
 Her slender threads. They to the furnish'd board
 Stretch'd forth their hands, and, hunger now and thirst
 Both satisfied, Penelope began.

Telemachus! I will ascend again,
 And will repose me on my woeful bed; 120
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine
 Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
 With Atreus' sons to Troy. For not a word
 Thou would'st vouchsafe me till our haughty guests
 Had occupied the house again, of all
 That thou hast heard (if aught indeed thou hast)
 Of thy long-absent father's wish'd return.

Her answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
 Mother, at thy request I will with truth 130
 Relate the whole. At Pylus shore arrived
 We Nestor found, Chief of the Pylian race.
 Receiving me in his august abode,
 He entertain'd me with such welcome kind
 As a glad father shews to his own son
 Long-lost and newly found; so Nestor me,
 And his illustrious offspring, entertain'd,
 But yet assured me that he nought had heard
 From mortal lips of my magnanimous sire,
 Whether alive or dead; with his own steeds
 He sent me, and with splendid chariot thence 140
 To spear-famed Menelaus, Atreus' son.
 There saw I Helen, by the Gods' decree
 Auth'ress of trouble both to Greece and Troy.
 The Hero Menelaus then enquired.
 What cause had urged me to the pleasant vale
 Of Lacedæmon; plainly I rehearsed
 The occasion, and the Hero thus replied.

Ye Gods! they are ambitious of the bed
 Of a brave man, however base themselves.
 But, as it chances when the hart hath laid 150
 Her fawns new-yea'n'd and sucklings yet, to rest
 In some resistless lion's den, she roams,
 Meantime, the hills, and in the grassy vales
 Feeds heedless, but the lion to his lair
 Returning soon, both her and hers destroys,
 So shall thy father, brave Ulysses, them.

Jove! Pallas! and Apollo! oh that such
 As erst in well-built Lesbos, where he strove
 With Philomelides, whom wrestling, flat
 He threw, when all Achaia's sons rejoiced,
 Ulysses, now, might mingle with his foes!
 Short life and bitter nuptials should be theirs.

160

But thy enquiries neither indirect
 Will I evade, nor give thee false reply,
 But all that from the Ancient of the Deep¹
 I have received will utter, hiding nought.
 The God declared that he had seen thy sire
 In a lone island, sorrowing, and detain'd
 An inmate in the grotto of the nymph
 Calypso, wanting also means by which
 To reach the country of his birth again,
 For neither gallant barks nor friends had he
 To speed his passage o'er the boundless waves.

170

So Menelaus spake, the spear-renown'd.
 My errand thus accomplish'd, I return'd—
 And by the Gods with gales propitious blest,
 Was wafted swiftly to my native shore.

He spake, and tumult in his mother's heart
 So speaking, raised. Consolatory, next,
 The godlike Theoclymenus began.

180

Consort revered of Laertiades!
 Little the Spartan knew, but list to me,
 For I will plainly prophesy and sure.
 Be Jove of all in heav'n my witness first,
 Then this thy hospitable board, and, last,
 The household Gods of the illustrious Chief
 Ulysses, at whose hearth I have arrived,²
 That, even now, within his native isle
 Ulysses somewhere sits, or creeps obscure,
 Witness of these enormities, and seeds
 Sowing of dire destruction for his foes;
 So sure an augury, while on the deck
 Reclining of the gallant bark, I saw,
 And with loud voice proclaim'd it to thy son.

190

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 Grant heav'n, my guest, that this good word of thine

¹ Proteus.

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

Fail not! then shalt thou soon such bounty share
 And friendship at my hands, that at first sight
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.

Thus they conferr'd. Meantime the suitors hurl'd 200
 The quoit and lance on the smooth area spread
 Before Ulysses' gate, the custom'd scene
 Of their contentions, sports, and clamours rude.
 But when the hour of supper now approach'd,
 And from the pastures on all sides the sheep
 Came with their wonted drivers, Medon then
 (For he of all the heralds pleas'd them most,
 And waited at the board) them thus address'd.

Enough of play, young princes! ent'ring now
 The house, prepare we sedulous our feast, 210
 Since in well-timed refreshment harm is none.

He spake, whose admonition pleas'd. At once
 All, rising, sought the palace; there arrived,
 Each cast his mantle off, which on his throne
 Or couch he spread, then, brisk, to slaughter fell
 Of many a victim; sheep and goats and brawns
 They slew, all fatt'd, and a pastur'd ox,
 Hast'ning the banquet; nor with less dispatch
 Ulysses and Eumæus now prepared
 To seek the town, when thus the swain began. 220

My guest! since thy fixt purpose is to seek
 This day the city as my master bade,
 Though I, in truth, much rather wish thee here
 A keeper of our herds, yet, through respect
 And rev'rence of his orders, whose reproof
 I dread, for masters seldom gently chide,
 I would be gone. Arise, let us depart,
 For day already is far-spent, and soon
 The air of even-tide will chill thee more.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 230
 It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
 To one intelligent. Let us depart,
 And lead, thyself, the way; but give me, first,
 (If thou have one already hewn) a staff
 To lean on, for ye have described the road
 Rugged, and oftentimes dang'rous to the foot.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He cast, suspended by a leathern twist,
 Eumæus gratified him with a staff,

And forth they went, leaving the cottage kept
 By dogs and swains. He city-ward his King
 Led on, in form a squalid beggar old,
 Halting, and in unseemly garb attired.

240

But when, slow-travelling the craggy way,
 They now approach'd the town, and had attain'd
 The marble fountain deep, which with its streams
 Pellucid all the citizens supplied,

(Ithacus had that fountain framed of old

With Neritus and Polyctor, over which

A grove of water-nourish'd alders hung

Circular on all sides, while cold the rill

250

Ran from the rock, on whose tall summit stood

The altar of the nymphs, by all who pass'd

With sacrifice frequented, still, and pray'r)

Melantheus, son of Dolius, at that fount

Met them; the chosen goats of ev'ry flock,

With two assistants, from the field he drove,

The suitors' supper. He, seeing them both,

In surly accent boorish, such as fired

Ulysses with resentment, thus began.

260

Ay—this is well—The villain leads the vile—

Thus evermore the Gods join like to like.

Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither would'st conduct

This morsel-hunting mendicant obscene,

Defiler base of banquets? many a post

Shall he rub smooth that props him while he begs

Lean alms, sole object of his low pursuit,

Who ne'er to sword or tripod yet aspired.

Would'st thou afford him to me for a guard

Or sweeper of my stalls, or to supply

270

My kids with leaves, he should on bulkier thewes

Supported stand, though nourish'd but with whey.

But no such useful arts hath he acquired,

Nor likes he work, but rather much to extort

From others food for his unsated maw.

But mark my prophecy, for it is true,

At famed Ulysses' house should he arrive,

His sides shall shatter many a footstool hurl'd

Against them by the offended princes there.

He spake, and drawing nigh, with his rais'd foot, 280

Insolent as he was and brutish, smote

Ulysses' haunch, yet shook not from his path

The firm-set Chief, who, doubtful, mused awhile
 Whether to rush on him, and with his staff
 To slay him, or uplifting him on high,
 Downward to dash him headlong; but his wrath
 Restraining, calm he suffer'd the affront.
 Him then Eumæus with indignant look
 Rebuking, rais'd his hands, and fervent pray'd.

290

Nymphs of the fountains, progeny of Jove!
 If e'er Ulysses on your altar burn'd
 The thighs of fatted lambs or kidlings, grant
 This my request. O let the Hero soon,
 Conducted by some Deity, return!
 So shall he quell that arrogance which safe
 Thou now indulgest, roaming day by day
 The city, while bad shepherds mar the flocks.

300

To whom the goat-herd answer thus return'd
 Melantheus. Marvellous! how rare a speech
 The subtle cur hath framed! whom I will send
 Far hence at a convenient time on board
 My bark, and sell him at no little gain.
 I would, that he who bears the silver bow
 As sure might pierce Telemachus this day
 In his own house, or that the suitors might,
 As that same wand'rer shall return no more!

310

He said, and them left pacing slow along,
 But soon, himself, at his Lord's house arrived;
 There ent'ring bold, he with the suitors sat
 Opposite to Eurymachus, for him
 He valued most. The sewers his portion placed
 Of meat before him, and the maiden, chief
 Directress of the household gave him bread.
 And now, Ulysses, with the swain his friend
 Approach'd, when, hearing the harmonious lyre,
 Both stood, for Phemius had begun his song.
 He grasp'd the swine-herd's hand, and thus he said.

320

This house, Eumæus! of Ulysses seems
 Passing magnificent, and to be known
 With ease for his among a thousand more.
 One pile supports another, and a wall
 Crested with battlements surrounds the court;
 Firm, too, the folding doors all force of man
 Defy; but num'rous guests, as I perceive,
 Now feast within; witness the sav'ry steam

Fast-fuming upward, and the sounding harp,
Divine associate of the festive board.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
Thou hast well-guess'd; no wonder, thou art quick
On ev'ry theme; but let us well forecast
This business. Wilt thou, ent'ring first, thyself,
The splendid mansion, with the suitors mix,
Me leaving here? or shall I lead the way
While thou remain'st behind? yet linger not,
Lest, seeing thee without, some servant strike
Or drive thee hence. Consider which were best.

33°

Him answer'd, then, the patient Hero bold.
It is enough. I understand. Thou speak'st
To one intelligent. Lead thou the way
Me leaving here, for neither stripes nor blows
To me are strange. Much exercised with pain
In fight and on the Deep, I have long since
Learn'd patience. Follow, next, what follow may!
But, to suppress the appetite, I deem
Impossible; the stomach is a source
Of ills to man, an avaricious gulph
Destructive, which to satiate, ships are rigg'd,
Seas travers'd, and fierce battles waged remote.

34°

Thus they discoursing stood; Argus the while,
Ulysses' dog, uplifted where he lay
His head and ears erect. Ulysses him
Had bred long since, himself, but rarely used,
Departing, first, to Ilium. Him the youths
In other days led frequent to the chace
Of wild goat, hart and hare; but now he lodg'd
A poor old cast-off, of his Lord forlorn,
Where mules and oxen had before the gate
Much ordure left, with which Ulysses' hinds
Should, in due time, manure his spacious fields.
There lay, with dog-devouring vermin foul
All over, Argus; soon as he perceived
Long-lost Ulysses nigh, down fell his ears
Clapp'd close, and with his tail glad sign he gave
Of gratulation, impotent to rise
And to approach his master as of old.
Ulysses, noting him, wiped off a tear
Unmark'd, and of Eumæus quick enquired.
I can but wonder seeing such a dog

35°

36°

Thus lodg'd, Eumæus! beautiful in form
 He is, past doubt, but whether he hath been 370
 As fleet as fair I know not; rather such
 Perchance as masters sometimes keep to grace
 Their tables, nourish'd more for shew than use.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 He is the dog of one dead far remote.
 But had he now such feat-performing strength
 As when Ulysses left him, going hence
 To Ilium, in one moment thou shouldst mark,
 Astonish'd, his agility and force.

He never in the sylvan deep recess 380
 The wild beast saw that 'scaped him, and he track'd
 Their steps infallible; but he hath now
 No comfort, for (the master dead afar)
 The heedless servants care not for his dog.
 Domestic, missing once their Lord's controul,
 Grow wilful, and refuse their proper tasks;
 For whom Jove dooms to servitude, he takes
 At once the half of that man's worth away.

He said, and, ent'ring at the portal, join'd 390
 The suitors. Then his destiny released
 Old Argus, soon as he had lived to see
 Ulysses in the twentieth year restored.

Godlike Telemachus, long ere the rest,
 Marking the swine-herd's entrance, with a nod
 Summon'd him to approach. Eumæus cast
 His eye around, and seeing vacant there
 The seat which the dispenser of the feast
 Was wont to occupy while he supplied
 The num'rous guests, planted it right before
 Telemachus, and at his table sat, 400
 On which the herald placed for him his share
 Of meat, and from the baskets gave him bread.
 Soon after *him*, Ulysses enter'd slow
 The palace, like a squalid beggar old,
 Staff-propp'd, and in loose tatters foul attired.
 Within the portal on the ashen sill
 He sat, and, seeming languid, lean'd against
 A cypress pillar by the builder's art
 Polish'd long since, and planted at the door.
 Then took Telemachus a loaf entire 410
 Forth from the elegant basket, and of flesh

A portion large as his two hands contained,
And, beck'ning close the swine-herd, charged him thus.

These to the stranger; whom advise to ask
Some dole from ev'ry suitor; bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

He spake; Eumæus went, and where he sat
Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Telemachus, oh stranger, sends thee these,
And counsels thee to importune for more
The suitors, one by one; for bashful fear
Ill suits the mendicant by want oppress'd.

420

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Jove, King of all, grant ev'ry good on earth
To kind Telemachus, and the complete
Accomplishment of all that he desires!

He said, and with both hands outspread, the mess
Receiving as he sat, on his worn bag
Disposed it at his feet. Long as the bard
Chaunted, he ate, and when he ceas'd to eat,

430

Then also ceas'd the bard divine to sing.
And now ensued loud clamour in the hall
And tumult, when Minerva, drawing nigh
To Laertiades, impell'd the Chief

Crusts to collect, or any pittance small
At ev'ry suitor's hand, for trial's sake
Of just and unjust; yet deliv'rance none
From evil she design'd for any there.

From left to right¹ his progress he began
Petitioning, with outstretch'd hands, the throng,
As one familiar with the beggar's art.

440

They, pitying, gave to him, but view'd him still
With wonder, and enquiries mutual made
Who, and whence was he? Then the goat-herd rose
Melanthius, and th' assembly thus address'd.

Hear me, ye suitors of th' illustrious Queen!
This guest, of whom ye ask, I have beheld
Else here; the swine-herd brought him; but himself
I know not, neither who nor whence he is.

So he; then thus Antinoüs stern rebuked
The swine-herd. Ah, notorious as thou art,
Why hast thou shewn this vagabond the way

450

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

Into the city? are we not enough
 Infested with these troublers of our feasts?
 Deem'st it a trifle that such numbers eat
 At thy Lord's cost, and hast thou, therefore, led
 This fellow hither, found we know not where?

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Antinoüs! though of high degree, thou speak'st
 Not wisely. What man to another's house
 Repairs to invite him to a feast, unless
 He be of those who by profession serve
 The public, prophet, healer of disease,
 Ingenious artist, or some bard divine
 Whose music may exhilarate the guests?
 These, and such only, are in ev'ry land
 Call'd to the banquet; none invites the poor,
 Who much consume, and no requital yield.
 But thou of all the suitors roughly treat'st
 Ulysses' servants most, and chiefly me;
 Yet thee I heed not, while the virtuous Queen
 Dwells in this palace, and her godlike son.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 Peace! answer not verbose a man like him.
 Antinoüs hath a tongue accusom'd much
 To tauntings, and promotes them in the rest.

Then, turning to Antinoüs, quick he said—
 Antinoüs! as a father for his son
 Takes thought, so thou for me, who bidd'st me chase
 The stranger harshly hence; but God forbid!¹
 Impart to him. I grudge not, but myself
 Exhort thee to it; neither, in this cause,
 Fear thou the Queen, or in the least regard
 Whatever menial throughout all the house
 Of famed Ulysses. Ah! within thy breast
 Dwells no such thought; thou lov'st not to impart
 To others, but to gratify thyself.

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
 High-soaring and intemp'rate in thy speech
 How hast thou said, Telemachus? Would all
 As much bestow on him, he should not seek
 Admittance here again three months to come.

So saying, he seized the stool which, banqueting,
 He press'd with his nice feet, and from beneath

¹ Here again Θεός occurs in the abstract.

The table forth advanced it into view.
 The rest all gave to him, with bread and flesh
 Filling his wallet, and Ulysses, now,
 Returning to his threshold, there to taste
 The bounty of the Greeks, paused in his way
 Beside Antinoüs, whom he thus address'd.

500

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

510

520

530

Then answer thus Antinoüs harsh return'd.
 What dæmon introduced this nuisance here,

This troubler of our feast? stand yonder, keep
 Due distance from my table, or expect
 To see an Ægypt and a Cyprus worse 54°
 Than those, bold mendicant and void of shame!
 Thou hauntest each, and, inconsiderate, each
 Gives to thee, because gifts at other's cost
 Are cheap, and, plentifully serv'd themselves,
 They squander, heedless, viands not their own.

To whom Ulysses while he slow retired.
 Gods! how illib'ral with that specious form!
 Thou wouldst not grant the poor a grain of salt
 From thy own board, who at another's fed
 So nobly, canst thou not spare a crust to me. 55°

He spake; then raged Antinoüs still the more,
 And in wing'd accents, louring, thus replied.

Take such dismissal now as thou deserv'st,
 Opprobrious! hast thou dared to scoff at me?
 So saying, he seized his stool, and on the joint
 Of his right shoulder smote him; firm as rock
 He stood, by no such force to be displaced,
 But silent shook his brows, and dreadful deeds
 Of vengeance ruminating, sought again
 His seat the threshold, where his bag full-charged 56°
 He grounded, and the suitors thus address'd.

Hear now, ye suitors of the matchless Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. Trivial is the harm,
 Scarce felt, if, fighting for his own, his sheep
 Perchance, or beeves, a man receive a blow.
 But me Antinoüs struck for that I ask'd
 Food from him merely to appease the pangs
 Of hunger, source of num'rous ills to man.
 If then the poor man have a God t' avenge
 His wrongs, I pray to him that death my seize 57°
 Antinoüs, ere his nuptial hour arrive!

To whom Antinoüs answer thus return'd.
 Son of Eupithes. Either seated there
 Or going hence, eat, stranger, and be still;
 Lest for thy insolence, by hand or foot
 We drag thee forth, and thou be flay'd alive.

He ceased, whom all indignant heard, and thus
 Ev'n his own proud companions censured him.

Antinoüs! thou didst not well to smite
 The wretched vagabond. O thou art doom'd 58°

For ever, if there be a God in heav'n;¹
 For, in similitude of strangers oft,
 The Gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
 Repair to populous cities, where they mark
 The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.

So they, for whose reproof he little cared.
 But in his heart Telemachus that blow
 Resented, anguish-torn, yet not a tear
 He shed, but silent shook his brows, and mused
 Terrible things. Penelope, meantime,
 Told of the wand'rer so abused beneath
 Her roof, among her maidens thus exclaim'd.

590

So may Apollo, glorious archer, smite
 Thee also. Then Eurynome replied,
 Oh might our pray'rs prevail, none of them all
 Should see bright-charioted Aurora more.

Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 Nurse! they are odious all, for that alike
 All teem with mischief; but Antinoüs' looks
 Remind me ever of the gloom of death.

600

A stranger hath arriv'd who, begging, roams
 The house, (for so his penury enjoins)
 The rest have giv'n him, and have fill'd his bag
 With viands, but Antinoüs hath bruised
 His shoulder with a foot-stool hurl'd at him.

While thus the Queen conversing with her train
 In her own chamber sat, Ulysses made
 Plenteous repast. Then, calling to her side
 Eumæus, thus she signified her will.

Eumæus, noble friend! bid now approach
 Yon stranger. I would speak with him, and ask
 If he has seen Ulysses, or have heard
 Tidings, perchance, of the afflicted Chief,
 For much a wand'rer by his garb he seems.

610

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.
 Were those Achaians silent, thou shouldst hear,
 O Queen! a tale that would console thy heart.

¹ *Εἰ δὲ τις ἐπουρανίος θεὸς εἴη*

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

Three nights I housed him, and within my cot
 Three days detain'd him, (for his ship he left
 A fugitive, and came direct to me) 620
 But half untold his hist'ry still remains.

As when his eye one fixes on a bard
 From heav'n instructed in such themes as charm
 The ear of mortals, ever as he sings
 The people press, insatiable, to hear,
 So, in my cottage, seated at my side,
 That stranger with his tale enchanted me.
 Laertes, he affirms, hath been his guest
 Erewhile in Crete, where Minos' race resides,
 And thence he hath arrived, after great loss, 630
 A suppliant to the very earth abased;
 He adds, that in Thesprotia's neighbour realm
 He of Ulysses heard, both that he lives,
 And that he comes laden with riches home.

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied.
 Haste; call him. I would hear, myself, his tale.
 Meantime, let these, or in the palace gate
 Sport jocular, or here; their hearts are light,
 For their possessions are secure; *their* wine
 None drinks, or eats *their* viands, save their own, 640
 While my abode, day after day, themselves
 Haunting, my beeves and sheep and fatted goats
 Slay for the banquet, and my casks exhaust
 Extravagant, whence endless waste ensues;
 For no such friend as was Ulysses once
 Have I to expel the mischief. But might he
 Revisit once his native shores again,
 Then, aided by his son, he should avenge,
 Incontinent, the wrongs which now I mourn.

Then sneezed Telemachus with sudden force, 650
 That all the palace rang; his mother laugh'd,
 And in wing'd accents thus the swain bespake.

Haste—bid him hither—hear'st thou not the sneeze
 Propitious of my son? oh might it prove
 A presage of inevitable death
 To all these revellers! may none escape!
 Now mark me well. Should the event his tale
 Confirm, at my own hands he shall receive
 Mantle and tunic both for his reward.

She spake; he went, and where Ulysses sat 660

Arriving, in wing'd accents thus began.

Penelope, my venerable friend!

Calls thee, the mother of Telemachus.

Oppress'd by num'rous troubles, she desires

To ask thee tidings of her absent Lord.

And should the event verify thy report,

Thy meed shall be (a boon which much thou need'st)

Tunic and mantle; but she gives no more;

Thy sustenance thou must, as now, obtain,¹

Begging it at their hands who chuse to give.

670

Then thus Ulysses, Hero toil-inured.

Eumæus! readily I can relate

Truth, and truth only, to the prudent Queen

Icarius' daughter; for of him I know

Much, and have suff'red sorrows like his own.

But dread I feel of this imperious throng

Perverse, whose riot and outrageous acts

Of violence echo through the vault of heav'n.

And, even now, when for no fault of mine

Yon suitor struck me as I pass'd, and fill'd

680

My flesh with pain, neither Telemachus

Nor any interposed to stay his arm.

Now, therefore, let Penelope, although

Impatient, till the sun descend postpone

Her questions; then she may enquire secure

When comes her husband, and may nearer place

My seat to the hearth-side, for thinly clad

Thou know'st I am, whose aid I first implored.

He ceas'd; at whose reply Eumæus sought

Again the Queen, but ere he yet had pass'd

690

The threshold, thus she greeted his return.

Com'st thou alone, Eumæus? why delays

The invited wand'rer? dreads he other harm?

Or sees he aught that with a bashful awe

Fills him? the bashful poor are poor indeed.

To whom, Eumæus, thou didst thus reply.

He hath well spoken; none who would decline

The rudeness of this contumelious throng

Could answer otherwise; thee he entreats

To wait till sun-set, and that course, O Queen,

700

Thou shalt thyself far more commodious find,

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

To hold thy conf'rence with the guest, alone,

Then answer thus Penelope return'd.

The stranger, I perceive, is not unwise,
Whoe'er he be, for on the earth are none
Proud, insolent, and profligate as these.

So spake the Queen. Then (all his message told)
The good Eumæus to the suitors went
Again, and with his head inclined toward
Telemachus, lest others should his words
Witness, in accents wing'd him thus address'd.

710

Friend and kind master! I return to keep
My herds, and to attend my rural charge,
Whence we are both sustain'd. Keep thou, meantime,
All here with vigilance, but chiefly watch
For thy own good, and save *thyself* from harm;
For num'rous here brood mischief, whom the Gods
Exterminate, ere yet their plots prevail!

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
So be it, father! and (thy evening-mess
Eaten) depart; to-morrow come again,
Bringing fair victims hither; I will keep,
I and the Gods, meantime, all here secure.

720

He ended; then resumed once more the swain
His polish'd seat, and, both with wine and food
Now satiate, to his charge return'd, the court
Leaving and all the palace throng'd with guests;
They (for it now was evening) all alike
Turn'd jovial to the song and to the dance.

BOOK XVIII

ARGUMENT

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

Now came a public mendicant, a man
Accustom'd, seeking alms, to roam the streets
Of Ithaca; one never sated yet
With food or drink; yet muscle had he none,
Or strength of limb, though giant-built in show.
Arnæus was the name which at his birth
His mother gave him, but the youthful band
Of suitors, whom as messenger he served,
All named him Irus. He, arriving, sought
To drive Ulysses forth from his own home,
And in rough accents rude him thus rebuked.

10

Forth from the porch, old man! lest by the foot
I drag thee quickly forth. Seest not how all
Wink on me, and by signs give me command
To drag thee hence? nor is it aught but shame
That checks me. Yet arise, lest soon with fists
Thou force me to adjust our diff'rence.

To whom Ulysses, low'ring dark, replied.
Peace, fellow! neither word nor deed of mine
Wrongs thee, nor feel I envy at the boon,
However plentiful, which thou receiv'st.
The sill may hold us both; thou dost not well
To envy others; thou appear'st like me
A vagrant; plenty is the gift of heav'n.
But urge me not to trial of our fists,
Lest thou provoke me, and I stain with blood
Thy bosom and thy lips, old as I am.

20

So, my attendance should to-morrow prove
 More tranquil here; for thou should'st leave, I judge,
 Ulysses' mansion, never to return. 30

Then answer'd Irus, kindling with disdain.
 Gods! with what volubility of speech
 The table-hunter prates, like an old hag
 Collied with chimney-smutch! but ah beware!
 For I intend thee mischief, and to dash
 With both hands ev'ry grinder from thy gums,
 As men untooth a pig pilf'ring the corn.
 Come—gird thee, that all here may view the strife—
 But how wilt thou oppose one young as I?

Thus on the threshold of the lofty gate 40
 They, wrangling, chafed each other, whose dispute
 The high-born youth Antinoüs mark'd; he laugh'd
 Delighted, and the suitors thus address'd.

Oh friends! no pastime ever yet occur'd
 Pleasant as this which, now, the Gods themselves
 Afford us. Irus and the stranger brawl
 As they would box. Haste—let us urge them on.

He said; at once loud-laughing all arose;
 The ill-clad disputants they round about
 Encompass'd, and Antinoüs thus began. 50

Attend ye noble suitors to my voice.
 Two paunches lie of goats here on the fire,
 Which fill'd with fat and blood we set apart
 For supper; he who conquers, and in force
 Superior proves, shall freely take the paunch
 Which he prefers, and shall with us thenceforth
 Feast always; neither will we here admit
 Poor man beside to beg at our repasts.

He spake, whom all approved; next, artful Chief
 Ulysses thus, dissembling, them address'd. 60

Princes! unequal is the strife between
 A young man and an old with mis'ry worn;
 But hunger, always counsellor of ill,
 Me moves to fight, that many a bruise received,
 I may be foil'd at last. Now swear ye all
 A solemn oath, that none, for Irus' sake
 Shall, interposing, smite me with his fist
 Clandestine, forcing me to yield the prize.

He ceas'd, and, as he bade, all present swore
 A solemn oath; then thus, amid them all 70

Standing, Telemachus majestic spake.

Guest! if thy courage and thy manly mind
 Prompt thee to banish this man hence, no force
 Fear thou beside, for who smites thee, shall find
 Yet other foes to cope with; I am here
 In the host's office, and the royal Chiefs
 Eurymachus and Antinoüs, alike
 Discrete, accord unanimous with me.

He ceas'd, whom all approved. Then, with his rags
 Ulysses braced for decency his loins
 Around, but gave to view his brawny thighs
 Proportion'd fair, and stripp'd his shoulders broad,
 His chest and arms robust; while, at his side,
 Dilating more the Hero's limbs and more
 Minerva stood; the assembly with fixt eyes
 Astonish'd gazed on him, and, looking full
 On his next friend, a suitor thus remark'd.

80

Irus shall be in Irus found no more.
 He hath pull'd evil on himself. What thewes
 And what a haunch the senior's tatters hid!

90

So he—meantime in Irus' heart arose
 Horrible tumult; yet, his loins by force
 Girding, the servants dragg'd him to the fight
 Pale, and his flesh all quiv'ring as he came;
 Whose terrors thus Antinoüs sharp rebuked.

100

Now, wherefore liv'st, and why wast ever born
 Thou mountain-mass of earth! if such dismay
 Shake thee at thought of combat with a man
 Ancient as he, and worn with many woes?
 But mark, I threaten not in vain; should he
 O'ercome thee, and in force superior prove,
 To Echetus thou go'st; my sable bark
 Shall waft thee to Epirus, where he reigns
 Enemy of mankind; of nose and ears
 He shall despoil thee with his ruthless steel,
 And tearing by the roots the parts away¹
 That mark thy sex, shall cast them to the dogs.

He said; *His* limbs new terrors at that sound
 Shook under him; into the middle space
 They led him, and each raised his hands on high.

110

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

Then doubtful stood Ulysses toil-inured,
 Whether to strike him lifeless to the earth
 At once, or fell him with a managed blow.
 To smite with managed force at length he chose
 As wisest, lest, betray'd by his own strength,
 He should be known. With elevated fists
 Both stood; him Irus on the shoulder struck,
 But he his adversary on the neck
 Pash'd close beneath his ear; he split the bones,
 And blood in sable streams ran from his mouth. 120
 With many an hideous yell he dropp'd, his teeth
 Chatter'd, and with his heels he drumm'd the ground.
 The wooers, at that sight, lifting their hands
 In glad surprize, laugh'd all their breath away.
 Then, through the vestibule, and right across
 The court, Ulysses dragg'd him by the foot
 Into the portico, where propping him
 Against the wall, and giving him his staff,
 In accents wing'd he bade him thus farewell.

There seated now, dogs drive and swine away, 130
 Nor claim (thyself so base) supreme controul
 O'er other guests and mendicants, lest harm
 Reach thee, hereafter, heavier still than this.

So saying, his tatter'd wallet o'er his back
 He threw suspended by its leathern twist,
 And tow'rd the threshold turning, sat again,
 They laughing ceaseless still, the palace-door
 Re-enter'd, and him, courteous, thus bespake.

Jove, and all Jove's assessors in the skies 140
 Vouchsafe thee, stranger, whatso'er it be,
 Thy heart's desire! who hast our ears reliev'd
 From that insatiate beggar's irksome tone.
 Soon to Epirus he shall go dispatch'd
 To Echetus the King, pest of mankind.

So they, to whose propitious words the Chief
 Listen'd delighted. Then Antinoüs placed
 The paunch before him, and Amphinomus
 Two loaves, selected from the rest; he fill'd
 A goblet also, drank to him, and said,

My father, hail! O stranger, be thy lot 150
 Hereafter blest, though adverse now and hard!
 To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 To me, Amphinomus, endued thou seem'st

With much discretion, who art also son
 Of such a sire, whose fair report I know,
 Dulichian Nysus, opulent and good.
 Fame speaks thee his, and thou appear'st a man
 Judicious; hear me, therefore; mark me well.
 Earth nourishes, of all that breathe or creep,
 No creature weak as man; for while the Gods 160
 Grant him prosperity and health, no fear
 Hath he, or thought, that he shall ever mourn;
 But when the Gods with evils unforeseen
 Smite him, he bears them with a grudging mind;
 For such as the complexion of his lot
 By the appointment of the Sire of all,
 Such is the colour of the mind of man.
 I, too, have been familiar in my day
 With wealth and ease, but I was then self-will'd,
 And many wrong'd, embolden'd by the thought 170
 Of my own father's and my brethren's pow'r.
 Let no man, therefore, be unjust, but each
 Use modestly what gift soe'er of heav'n.
 So do not these. These ever bent I see
 On deeds injurious, the possessions large
 Consuming, and dishonouring the wife
 Of one, who will not, as I judge, remain
 Long absent from his home, but is, perchance,
 Ev'n at the door. Thee, therefore, may the Gods
 Steal hence in time! ah, meet not his return 180
 To his own country! for they will not part,
 (He and the suitors) without blood, I think,
 If once he enter at these gates again!
 He ended, and, libation pouring, quaff'd
 The generous juice, then in the prince's hand
 Replaced the cup; he, pensive, and his head
 Inclining low, pass'd from him; for his heart
 Forboded ill; yet 'scaped not even he,
 But in the snare of Pallas caught, his life
 To the heroic arm and spear resign'd 190
 Of brave Telemachus. Reaching, at length,
 The seat whence he had ris'n, he sat again.
 Minerva then, Goddess, cærulean-eyed,
 Prompted Icarius' daughter to appear
 Before the suitors; so to expose the more
 Their drift iniquitous, and that herself

More bright than ever in her husband's eyes
Might shine, and in her son's. Much mirth she feign'd,¹
And, bursting into laughter, thus began.

I wish, Eurynome! (who never felt
That wish till now) though I detest them all, 200
To appear before the suitors, in whose ears
I will admonish, for his good, my son,
Not to associate with that lawless crew
Too much, who speak him fair, but foul intend.

Then answer thus Eurynome return'd.
My daughter! wisely hast thou said and well.
Go! bathe thee and anoint thy face, then give
To thy dear son such counsel as thou wilt
Without reserve; but shew not there thy cheeks 210
Sullied with tears, for profit none accrues
From grief like thine, that never knows a change.
And he is now bearded, and hath attained
That age which thou wast wont with warmest pray'r
To implore the Gods that he might live to see.

Her answer'd then Penelope discrete.
Persuade not me, though studious of my good,
To bathe, Eurynome! or to anoint
My face with oil; for all my charms the Gods
Inhabitants of Olympus then destroy'd, 220
When he, embarking, left me. Go, command
Hippodamia and Autonoe
That they attend me to the hall, and wait
Beside me there; for decency forbids
That I should enter to the men, alone.

She ceas'd, and through the house the ancient dame
Hasted to summon whom she had enjoin'd.

But Pallas, Goddess of the azure eyes,
Diffused, meantime, the kindly dew of sleep
Around Icarius' daughter; on her couch 230
Reclining, soon as she reclin'd, she dozed,
And yielded to soft slumber all her frame.
Then, that the suitors might admire her more,
The glorious Goddess cloath'd her, as she lay,
With beauty of the skies; her lovely face
She with ambrosia purified, with such
As Cytherea chaplet-crown'd employs
Herself, when in the eye-ensnaring dance

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

She joins the Graces; to a statelier height
 Beneath her touch, and ampler size she grew, 240
 And fairer than the elephantine bone
 Fresh from the carver's hand. These gifts conferr'd
 Divine, the awful Deity retired.

And now, loud-prattling as they came, arrived
 Her handmaids; sleep forsook her at the sound,
 She wiped away a tear, and thus she said.

Me gentle sleep, sad mourner as I am,
 Hath here involved. O would that by a death
 As gentle chaste Diana would herself
 This moment set me free, that I might waste 250
 My life no longer in heart-felt regret
 Of a lamented husband's various worth
 And virtue, for in Greece no Peer had he!

She said, and through her chambers' stately door
 Issuing, descended; neither went she sole,
 But with those two fair menials of her train.

Arriving, most majestic of her sex,
 In presence of the num'rous guests, beneath
 The portal of the stately dome she stood
 Between her maidens, with her lucid veil 260
 Mantling her lovely cheeks. Then, ev'ry knee
 Trembled, and ev'ry heart with am'rous heat
 Dissolv'd, her charms all coveting alike,
 While to Telemachus her son she spake.

Telemachus! thou art no longer wise
 As once thou wast, and even when a child.
 For thriven as thou art, and at full size
 Arrived of man, so fair proportion'd, too,
 That ev'n a stranger, looking on thy growth
 And beauty, would pronounce thee nobly born, 270
 Yet is thy intellect still immature.

For what is this? why suffer'st thou a guest
 To be abused in thy own palace? how?
 Know'st not that if the stranger seated here
 Endure vexation, the disgrace is thine?

Her answer'd, then, Telemachus discrete.
 I blame thee not, my mother, that thou feel'st
 Thine anger moved; yet want I not a mind
 Able to mark and to discern between
 Evil and good, child as I lately was, 280
 Although I find not promptitude of thought

Sufficient always, overaw'd and check'd
 By such a multitude, all bent alike
 On mischief, of whom none takes part with me.
 But Irus and the stranger have not fought,
 Urged by the suitors, and the stranger prov'd
 Victorious; yes—heav'n knows how much I wish
 That, (in the palace some, some in the court)
 The suitors all sat vanquish'd, with their heads
 Depending low, and with enfeebled limbs,
 Even as that same Irus, while I speak,
 With chin on bosom propp'd at the hall-gate
 Sits drunkard-like, incapable to stand
 Erect, or to regain his proper home.

290

So they; and now addressing to the Queen
 His speech, Eurymachus thus interposed.

O daughter of Icarius! could all eyes
 Throughout Iasian Argos ¹ view thy charms,
 Discrete Penelope! more suitors still
 Assembling in thy courts would banquet here
 From morn to eve; for thou surpassest far
 In beauty, stature, worth, all womankind.

300

To whom replied Penelope discrete.
 The Gods, Eurymachus! reduced to nought
 My virtue, beauty, stature, when the Greeks,
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
 Could he, returning, my domestic charge
 Himself intend, far better would my fame
 Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
 But I am wretched now, such storms the Gods
 Of woe have sent me. When he left his home,
 Clasp'ing my wrist with his right hand, he said.

310

My love! for I imagine not that all
 The warrior Greeks shall safe from Troy return,
 Since fame reports the Trojans brave in fight,
 Skill'd in the spear, mighty to draw the bow,
 And nimble vaulters to the backs of steeds
 High-mettled, which to speediest issue bring
 The dreadful struggle of all-wasting war—
 I know not, therefore, whether heav'n intend
 My safe return, or I must perish there.
 But manage thou at home. Cherish, as now,
 While I am absent, or more dearly still

320

¹ From Iäsus, once King of Peloponnesus.

My parents, and what time our son thou seest
 Mature, then wed; wed even whom thou wilt,
 And hence to a new home.—Such were his words,
 All which shall full accomplishment ere long
 Receive. The day is near, when hapless I,
 Lost to all comfort by the will of Jove,
 Must meet the nuptials that my soul abhors. 33°
 But this thought now afflicts me, and my mind
 Continual haunts. Such was not heretofore
 The suitors' custom'd practice; all who chose
 To engage in competition for a wife
 Well-qualitied and well-endow'd, produced
 From their own herds and fatted flocks a feast
 For the bride's friends, and splendid presents made,
 But never ate as ye, at others' cost.

She ceased; then brave Ulysses toil-inured
 Rejoiced that, soothing them, she sought to draw 34°
 From each some gift, although on other views,
 And more important far, himself intent.

Then thus Antinoüs, Eupithes' son.
 Icarius' daughter wise! only accept
 Such gifts as we shall bring, for gifts demand
 That grace, nor can be decently refused;
 But to our rural labours, or elsewhere
 Depart not we, till first thy choice be made
 Of the Achaian, chief in thy esteem.

Antinoüs spake, whose answer all approved. 35°
 Then each dispatch'd his herald who should bring
 His master's gift. Antinoüs' herald, first
 A mantle of surpassing beauty brought,
 Wide, various, with no fewer clasps adorn'd
 Than twelve, all golden, and to ev'ry clasp
 Was fitted opposite its eye exact.

Next, to Eurymachus his herald bore
 A necklace of wrought gold, with amber rich
 Bestudded, ev'ry bead bright as a sun.
 Two servants for Eurydamas produced 36°
 Ear-pendants fashion'd with laborious art,
 Broad, triple-gemm'd, of brilliant light profuse.
 The herald of Polycctor's son, the prince
 Pisander, brought a collar to his Lord,
 A sumptuous ornament. Each Grecian gave,
 And each a gift dissimilar from all.

Then, loveliest of her sex, turning away,
 She sought her chamber, whom her maidens fair
 Attended, charged with those illustrious gifts.
 Then turn'd, they all to dance and pleasant song 370
 Joyous, expecting the approach of ev'n.
 Ere long the dusky evening came, and them
 Found sporting still. Then, placing in the hall
 Three hearths that should illumine wide the house,
 They compass'd them around with fuel-wood
 Long-season'd and new-split, mingling the sticks
 With torches. The attendant women watch'd
 And fed those fires by turns, to whom, himself,
 Their unknown Sov'reign thus his speech address'd.

Ye maidens of the long-regretted Chief 380
 Ulysses! to the inner-courts retire,
 And to your virtuous Queen, that following there
 Your sev'ral tasks, spinning and combing wool,
 Ye may amuse her; I, meantime, for these
 Will furnish light, and should they chuse to stay
 Till golden morn appear, they shall not tire
 My patience aught, for I can much endure.

He said; they, titt'ring, on each other gazed.
 But one, Melanthe with the blooming cheeks,
 Rebuked him rudely. Dolius was her sire, 390
 But by Penelope she had been reared
 With care maternal, and in infant years
 Supplied with many a toy; yet even she
 Felt not her mistress' sorrows in her heart,
 But, of Eurymachus enamour'd, oft
 His lewd embraces met; she, with sharp speech
 Reproachful, to Ulysses thus replied.

Why—what a brainsick vagabond art thou!
 Who neither wilt to the smith's forge retire
 For sleep, nor to the public portico, 400
 But here remaining, with audacious prate
 Disturb'st this num'rous company, restrain'd
 By no respect or fear; either thou art
 With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
 Art always fool, and therefore babblest now.
 Say, art thou drunk with joy that thou hast foiled
 The beggar Irus? Tremble, lest a man
 Stronger than Irus suddenly arise,
 Who on thy temples pelting thee with blows

Far heavier than his, shall drive thee hence
 With many a bruise, and foul with thy own blood. 410

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.
 Snarler! Telemachus shall be inform'd
 This moment of thy eloquent harangue,
 That he may hew thee for it, limb from limb.

So saying, he scared the women; back they flew
 Into the house, but each with falt'ring knees
 Through dread, for they believ'd his threats sincere.
 He, then illumin'd by the triple blaze,
 Watch'd close the lights, busy from hearth to hearth, 420
 But in his soul, meantime, far other thoughts
 Revolved, tremendous, not conceived in vain.

Nor Pallas (that they might exasp'rate more
 Laertes' son) permitted to abstain
 From heart-corroding bitterness of speech
 Those suitors proud, of whom Eurymachus,
 Offspring of Polybus, while thus he jeer'd
 Ulysses, set the others in a roar.

Hear me, ye suitors of the illustrious Queen!
 I shall promulge my thought. This man, methinks, 430
 Not uncondacted by the Gods, hath reach'd
 Ulysses' mansion, for to me the light
 Of yonder torches altogether seems
 His own, an emanation from his head,
 Which not the smallest growth of hair obscures.

He ended; and the city-waster Chief
 Himself accosted next. Art thou disposed
 To serve me, friend! would I afford thee hire,
 A labourer at my farm? thou shalt not want
 Sufficient wages; thou may'st there collect 440
 Stones for my fences, and may'st plant my oaks,
 For which I would supply thee all the year
 With food, and cloaths, and sandals for thy feet.
 But thou hast learn'd less creditable arts,
 Nor hast a will to work, preferring much
 By beggary from others to extort
 Wherewith to feed thy never-sated maw.

Then answer, thus, Ulysses wise return'd.
 Forbear, Eurymachus; for were we match'd
 In work against each other, thou and I, 450
 Mowing in spring-time, when the days are long,
 I with my well-bent sickle in my hand,

Thou arm'd with one as keen, for trial sake
 Of our ability to toil unfed
 Till night, grass still sufficing for the proof.—
 Or if, again, it were our task to drive
 Yoked oxen of the noblest breed, sleek-hair'd,
 Big-limb'd, both batten'd to the full with grass,
 Their age and aptitude for work the same
 Not soon to be fatigued, and were the field 460
 In size four acres, with a glebe through which
 The share might smoothly slide, then should'st thou see
 How strait my furrow should be cut and true.—
 Or should Saturnian Jove this day excite

Here, battle, or elsewhere, and were I arm'd
 With two bright spears and with a shield, and bore
 A brazen casque well-fitted to my brows,
 Me, then, thou should'st perceive mingling in fight
 Amid the foremost Chiefs, nor with the crime
 Of idle beggary should'st upbraid me more. 470

But thou art much a railer, one whose heart
 Pity moves not, and seem'st a mighty man
 And valiant to thyself, only because
 Thou herd'st with few, and those of little worth.
 But should Ulysses come, at his own isle
 Again arrived, wide as these portals are,
 To thee, at once, too narrow they should seem
 To shoot thee forth with speed enough abroad.

He ceased—then tenfold indignation fired
 Eurymachus; he furrow'd deep his brow 480
 With frowns, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Wretch, I shall roughly handle thee anon,
 Who thus with fluent prate presumptuous dar'st
 Disturb this num'rous company, restrain'd
 By no respect or fear. Either thou art
 With wine intoxicated, or, perchance,
 Art always fool, and therefore babblest now;
 Or thou art frantic haply with delight
 That thou hast foil'd yon vagabond obscure.

So saying, he seized a stool; but to the knees 490
 Ulysses flew of the Dulichian Prince
 Amphinomus, and sat, fearing incensed
 Eurymachus; he on his better hand
 Smote full the cup-bearer; on the hall-floor
 Loud rang the fallen beaker, and himself

Lay on his back clamouring in the dust.
 Strait through the dusky hall tumult ensued
 Among the suitors, of whom thus, a youth,
 With eyes directed to the next, exclaim'd.

Would that this rambling stranger had elsewhere 500
 Perish'd, or ever he had here arrived,
 Then no such uproar had he caused as this!
 This doth the beggar; he it is for whom
 We wrangle thus, and may despair of peace
 Or pleasure more; now look for strife alone.

Then in the midst Telemachus upstood
 Majestic, and the suitors thus bespake.
 Sirs! ye are mad, and can no longer eat
 Or drink in peace; some dæmon troubles you.
 But since ye all have feasted, to your homes 510
 Go now, and, at your pleasure, to your beds;
 Soonest were best, but I thrust no man hence.

He ceased; they gnawing stood their lips, aghast
 With wonder that Telemachus in his speech
 Such boldness used. Then rose Amphinomus,
 Brave son of Nisus offspring of the King
 Aretus, and the assembly thus address'd.

My friends! let none with contradiction thwart
 And rude reply words rational and just;
 Assault no more the stranger, nor of all 520
 The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
 Harm any. Come. Let the cup-bearer fill
 To all, that due libation made, to rest
 We may repair at home, leaving the Prince
 To accommodate beneath his father's roof
 The stranger, for he is the Prince's guest.

He ended, whose advice none disapproved.
 The Hero Mulus then, Dulichian-born,
 And herald of Amphinomus, the cup
 Filling, dispensed it, as he stood, to all; 530
 They, pouring forth to the Immortals, quaff'd
 The luscious bev'rage, and when each had made
 Libation, and such measure as he would
 Of wine had drunk, then all to rest retired.

BOOK XIX

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES and Telemachus remove the arms from the hall to an upper-chamber. The Hero then confers with Penelope, to whom he gives a fictitious narrative of his adventures. Euryclea, while bathing Ulysses, discovers him by a scar on his knee, but he prevents her communication of that discovery to Penelope.

THEY went, but left the noble Chief behind
In his own house, contriving by the aid
Of Pallas, the destruction of them all,
And thus, in accents wing'd, again he said.

My son! we must remove and safe dispose
All these my well-forged implements of war;
And should the suitors, missing them, enquire
Where are they? thou shalt answer smoothly thus—
I have convey'd them from the reach of smoke,
For they appear no more the same which erst
Ulysses, going hence to Ilium, left, 10
So smirch'd and sullied by the breath of fire.
This weightier reason (thou shalt also say)
Some God suggested to me,—lest, inflamed
With wine, ye wound each other in your brawls,
Shaming both feast and courtship; for the view
Itself of arms incites to their abuse.

He ceased, and, in obedience to his will,
Calling the ancient Euryclea forth,
His nurse, Telemachus enjoin'd her thus. 20

Go—shut the women in; make fast the doors
Of their apartment, while I safe dispose
Elsewhere, my father's implements of war,
Which, during his long absence, here have stood
Till smoke hath sullied them. For I have been
An infant hitherto, but, wiser grown,
Would now remove them from the breath of fire.

Then thus the gentle matron in return.
Yes truly—and I wish that now, at length,
Thou would'st assert the privilege of thy years, 30

My son, thyself assuming charge of all,
Both house and stores; but who shall bear the light?
Since they, it seems, who would, are all forbidden.

To whom Telemachus discrete replied.
This guest; for no man, from my table fed,
Come whence he may, shall be an idler here.
He ended, nor his words flew wing'd away,
But Euryclea bolted every door.

Then, starting to the task, Ulysses caught,
And his illustrious son, the weapons thence,
Helmet, and bossy shield, and pointed spear,
While Pallas from a golden lamp illumed
The dusky way before them. At that sight
Alarm'd, the Prince his father thus address'd.

40

Whence—whence is this, my father? I behold
A prodigy! the walls of the whole house,
The arches, fir-tree beams, and pillars tall
Shine in my view, as with the blaze of fire!
Some Pow'r celestial, doubtless, is within.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
Soft! ask no questions. Give no vent to thought,
Such is the custom of the Pow'r's divine.

50

Hence, thou, to bed. I stay, that I may yet
Both in thy mother and her maidens move
More curiosity; yes—she with tears
Shall question me of all that I have seen.

He ended, and the Prince, at his command,
Guided by flaming torches, sought the couch
Where he was wont to sleep, and there he slept
On that night also, waiting the approach
Of sacred dawn. Thus was Ulysses left
Alone, and planning sat in solitude,
By Pallas' aid, the slaughter of his foes.

60

At length, Diana-like, or like herself,
All golden Venus, (her apartment left)
Enter'd Penelope. Beside the hearth
Her women planted her accustom'd seat
With silver wreathed and ivory. That throne
Icmalius made, artist renown'd, and join'd
A footstool to its splendid frame beneath,
Which ever with an ample fleece they spread.
There sat discrete Penelope; then came
Her beautiful attendants from within,

70

Who cleared the litter'd bread, the board, and cups
 From which the insolent companions drank.
 They also raked the embers from the hearths
 Now dim, and with fresh billets piled them high,
 Both for illumination and for warmth.
 Then yet again Melanthro with rude speech
 Opprobrious, thus, assail'd Ulysses' ear.

80

Guest—wilt thou trouble us throughout the night
 Ranging the house? and linger'st thou a spy
 Watching the women? Hence—get thee abroad
 Glad of such fare as thou hast found, or soon
 With torches beaten we will thrust thee forth.

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied.

Petulant woman! wherefore thus incensed
 Inveigh'st thou against me? is it because
 I am not sleek? because my garb is mean?
 Because I beg? thanks to necessity—

90

I would not else. But such as I appear,
 Such all who beg and all who wander are.

I also lived the happy owner once
 Of such a stately mansion, and have giv'n
 To num'rous wand'ers, whencesoe'er they came,
 All that they needed; I was also served
 By many, and enjoy'd all that denotes
 The envied owner opulent and blest.

But Jove (for so it pleas'd him) hath reduced
 My all to nothing. Therefore well beware

100

Thou also, mistress, lest a day arrive
 When all these charms by which thou shin'st among
 Thy sister-menials, fade; fear, too, lest her
 Thou should'st perchance irritate, whom thou serv'st,
 And lest Ulysses come, of whose return
 Hope yet survives; but even though the Chief
 Have perish'd, as ye think, and comes no more,
 Consider yet his son, how bright the gifts
 Shine of Apollo in the illustrious Prince
 Telemachus; no woman, unobserved
 By him, can now commit a trespass here;
 His days of heedless infancy are past.

110

He ended, whom Penelope discrete
 O'erhearing, her attendant sharp rebuked.

Shameless, audacious woman! known to me
 Is thy great wickedness, which with thy life

Thou shalt atone; for thou wast well aware,
 (Hearing it from myself) that I design'd
 To ask this stranger of my absent Lord,
 For whose dear sake I never cease to mourn.

120

Then to her household's governess she said.
 Bring now a seat, and spread it with a fleece,
 Eurynome! that, undisturb'd, the guest
 May hear and answer all that I shall ask.

She ended. Then the matron brought in haste
 A polish'd seat, and spread it with a fleece,
 On which the toil-accustom'd Hero sat,
 And thus the chaste Penelope began.

Stranger! my first enquiry shall be this—
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom?

130

Then answer thus Ulysses, wise, return'd.
 O Queen! uncensurable by the lips
 Of mortal man! thy glory climbs the skies
 Unrivall'd, like the praise of some great King
 Who o'er a num'rous people and renown'd
 Presiding like a Deity, maintains
 Justice and truth. The earth, under his sway,
 Her produce yields abundantly; the trees
 Fruit-laden bend; the lusty flocks bring forth;
 The Ocean teems with finny swarms beneath
 His just controul, and all the land is blest.
 Me therefore, question of what else thou wilt
 In thy own palace, but forbear to ask
 From whom I sprang, and of my native land,
 Lest thou, reminding me of those sad themes,
 Augment my woes; for I have much endured;
 Nor were it seemly, in another's house,
 To pass the hours in sorrow and in tears,
 Wearisome when indulg'd with no regard
 To time or place; thy train (perchance thyself)
 Would blame me, and I should reproach incur
 As one tear-deluged through excess of wine.

140

150

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 The immortal Gods, O stranger, then destroy'd
 My form, my grace, my beauty, when the Greeks
 Whom my Ulysses follow'd, sail'd to Troy.
 Could he, returning, my domestic charge
 Himself intend, far better would my fame

Be so secured, and wider far diffused.
 But I am wretched now, such storms of woe 160
 The Gods have sent me; for as many Chiefs
 As hold dominion in the neighbour isles
 Samos, Dulichium, and the forest-crown'd
 Zacynthus; others, also, rulers here
 In pleasant Ithaca, me, loth to wed,
 Woo ceaseless, and my household stores consume.
 I therefore, neither guest nor suppliant heed,
 Nor public herald more, but with regret
 Of my Ulysses wear my soul away.
 They, meantime, press my nuptials, which by art 170
 I still procrastinate. Some God the thought
 Suggested to me, to commence a robe
 Of amplest measure and of subtlest woof,
 Laborious task; which done, I thus address'd them.
 Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief
 Ulysses is no more, enforce not now
 My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
 A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads be marr'd)
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare 180
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest.
 Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he, so wealthy, want at last a shroud.
 Such was my speech; they, unsuspecting all,
 With my request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 I wove the ample web, and, by the aid
 Of torches, ravell'd it again at night.
 Three years by artifice I thus their suit
 Eluded safe; but when the fourth arrived, 190
 And the same season after many moons
 And fleeting days return'd, passing my train
 Who had neglected to release the dogs,
 They came, surprized and reprimanded me.
 Thus, through necessity, not choice, at last
 I have perform'd it, in my own despight.
 But no escape from marriage now remains,
 Nor other subterfuge for me; meantime
 My parents urge my nuptials, and my son
 (Of age to note it) with disgust observes
 His wealth consumed; for he is now become 200
 Adult, and abler than myself to rule

The house, a Prince distinguish'd by the Gods,
 Yet, stranger, after all, speak thy descent;
 Say whence thou art; for not of fabulous birth
 Art thou, nor from the oak, nor from the rock.

Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.

O spouse revered of Laertiades!

Resolv'st thou still to learn from whom I sprang?

Learn then; but know that thou shalt much augment

My present grief, natural to a man

Who hath, like me, long exiled from his home

Through various cities of the sons of men

Wander'd remote, and num'rous woes endured.

Yet, though it pain me, I will tell thee all.

There is a land amid the sable flood

Call'd Crete; fair, fruitful, circled by the sea.

Num'rous are her inhabitants, a race

Not to be summ'd, and ninety towns she boasts.

Diverse their language is; Achaians some,

And some indigenous are; Cydonians there,

Crest-shaking Dorians, and Pelasgians dwell.

One city in extent the rest exceeds,

Cnossus; the city in which Minos reign'd,

Who, ever at a nine years' close, conferr'd

With Jove himself; from him my father sprang

The brave Deucalion; for Deucalion's sons

Were two, myself and King Idomeneus.

To Ilium he, on board his gallant barks,

Follow'd the Atridæ. I, the youngest-born,

By my illustrious name, Æthon, am known,

But he ranks foremost both in worth and years.

There I beheld Ulysses, and within

My walls receiv'd him; for a violent wind

Had driv'n him from Malea (while he sought

The shores of Troy) to Crete. The storm his barks

Bore into the Amnisus, for the cave

Of Ilythia known, a dang'rous port,

And which with difficulty he attain'd.

He, landing, instant to the city went,

Seeking Idomeneus; his friend of old,

As he affirm'd, and one whom much he lov'd.

But *he* was far remote, ten days advanced,

Perhaps eleven, on his course to Troy.

Him, therefore, I conducted to my home,

210

220

230

240

Where hospitably, and with kindest care
 I entertain'd him, (for I wanted nought)
 And for himself procured and for his band,—
 By public contribution, corn, and wine,
 And beeves for food, that all might be sufficed.
 Twelve days his noble Grecians there abode,
 Port-lock'd by Boreas blowing with a force
 Resistless even on the land, some God
 So roused his fury; but the thirteenth day
 The wind all fell, and they embark'd again.

250

With many a fiction specious, as he sat,
 He thus her ear amused; she at the sound
 Melting, with fluent tears her cheeks bedew'd;
 And as the snow by Zephyrus diffused,
 Melts on the mountain tops, when Eurus breathes,
 And fills the channels of the running streams,
 So melted she, and down her lovely cheeks
 Pour'd fast the tears, him mourning as remote
 Who sat beside her. Soft compassion touch'd
 Ulysses of his consort's silent woe;
 His eyes as they had been of steel or horn,
 Moved not, yet artful, he suppress'd his tears,
 And she, at length with overflowing grief
 Satiated, replied, and thus enquired again.

260

Now, stranger, I shall prove thee, as I judge,
 If thou, indeed, hast entertain'd in Crete
 My spouse and his brave followers, as thou say'st.
 Describe his raiment and himself; his own
 Appearance, and the appearance of his friends.

270

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 Hard is the task, O Queen! (so long a time
 Hath since elaps'd) to tell thee. Twenty years
 Have pass'd since he forsook my native isle,
 Yet, from my best remembrance, I will give
 A likeness of him, such as now I may.
 A double cloak, thick-piled, Mœonian dyed,
 The noble Chief had on; two fast'nings held
 The golden clasp, and it display'd in front
 A well-wrought pattern with much art design'd.
 An hound between his fore-feet holding fast
 A dappled fawn, gaped eager on his prey.
 All wonder'd, seeing, how in lifeless gold
 Express'd, the dog with open mouth her throat

280

Attempted still, and how the fawn with hoofs
 Thrust trembling forward, struggled to escape.
 That glorious mantle much I noticed, soft
 To touch, as the dried garlick's glossy film;
 Such was the smoothness of it, and it shone
 Sun-bright; full many a maiden, trust me, view'd
 The splendid texture with admiring eyes.

290

But mark me now; deep treasure in thy mind
 This word. I know not if Ulysses wore
 That cloak at home, or whether of his train
 Some warrior gave it to him on his way,
 Or else some host of his; for many loved
 Ulysses, and with him might few compare.
 I gave to him, myself, a brazen sword,
 A purple cloak magnificent, and vest
 Of royal length, and when he sought his bark,
 With princely pomp dismiss'd him from the shore.

300

An herald also waited on the Chief,
 Somewhat his Senior; him I next describe.
 His back was bunch'd, his visage swarthy, curl'd
 His poll, and he was named Eurybates;
 A man whom most of all his followers far
 Ulysses honour'd, for their minds were one.

310

He ceased; she recognising all the proofs
 Distinctly by Ulysses named, was moved
 Still more to weep, till with o'erflowing grief
 Satiated, at length she answer'd him again.

Henceforth, O stranger, thou who hadst before
 My pity, shalt my reverence share and love,
 I folded for him (with these hands the cloak
 Which thou describ'st, produced it when he went,
 And gave it to him; I that splendid clasp
 Attach'd to it myself, more to adorn

320

My honour'd Lord, whom to his native land
 Return'd secure I shall receive no more.
 In such an evil hour Ulysses went
 To that bad city never to be named.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Consort revered of Laertiades!

No longer let anxiety impair

Thy beauteous form, nor any grief consume

Thy spirits more for thy Ulysses' sake.

And yet I blame thee not; a wife deprived

330

Of her first mate to whom she had produced
 Fair fruit of mutual love, would mourn his loss,
 Although he were inferior far to thine,
 Whom fame affirms the semblance of the Gods.
 But cease to mourn. Hear me. I will relate
 A faithful tale, nor will from thee withhold
 Such tidings of Ulysses living still,
 And of his safe return, as I have heard
 Lately, in yon neighb'ring opulent land
 Of the Thesprotians. He returns enrich'd
 With many precious stores from those obtain'd
 Whom he hath visited; but he hath lost,
 Departing from Thrinacia's isle, his bark
 And all his lov'd companions in the Deep,
 For Jove was adverse to him, and the Sun,
 Whose beeves his followers slew. They perish'd all
 Amid the billowy flood; but Him, the keel
 Bestriding of his bark, the waves at length
 Cast forth on the Phæacian's land, a race
 Allied to heav'n, who rev'renced like a God
 Thy husband, honour'd him with num'rous gifts,
 And willing were to have convey'd him home.
 Ulysses; therefore, had attained long since
 His native shore, but that he deem'd it best
 To travel far, that he might still amass
 More wealth; so much Ulysses all mankind
 Excels in policy, and hath no peer.
 This information from Thesprotia's King
 I gain'd, from Phidon; to myself he swore,
 Libation off'ring under his own roof,
 That both the bark was launch'd, and the stout crew
 Prepared, that should conduct him to his home.
 But me he first dismiss'd; for, as it chanced,
 A ship lay there of the Thesprotians, bound
 To corn-enrich'd Dulichium. All the wealth
 He shew'd me by the Chief amass'd, a store
 To feed the house of yet another Prince
 To the tenth generation; so immense
 His treasures were within that palace lodg'd.
 Himself he said was to Dodona gone,
 Counsel to ask from the oracular oaks
 Sublime of Jove, how safest he might seek,
 After long exile thence, his native land,

34°

35°

36°

37°

If openly were best, or in disguise.
 Thus, therefore, he is safe, and at his home
 Well-nigh arrived, nor shall his country long
 Want him. I swear it with a solemn oath.
 First Jove be witness, King and Lord of all!
 Next these domestic Gods of the renown'd
 Ulysses, in whose royal house I sit, 380
 That thou shalt see my saying all fulfill'd.
 Ulysses shall this self-same year return,
 This self-same month, ere yet the next begin.

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 Grant heav'n, my guest, that this good word of thine
 Fail not! then, soon shalt thou such bounty share
 And friendship at my hands, that, at first sight,
 Whoe'er shall meet thee shall pronounce thee blest.
 But ah! my soul forebodes how it will prove;
 Neither Ulysses will return, nor thou 390
 Receive safe conduct hence; for we have here
 None, such as once Ulysses was, to rule
 His household with authority, and to send
 With honourable convoy to his home
 The worthy guest, or to regale him here.
 Give him the bath, my maidens; spread his cotch
 With linen soft, with fleecy gaberdines¹
 And rugs of splendid hue, that he may lie
 Waiting, well-warm'd, the golden morn's return.

Attend him also at the peep of day 400
 With bath and unction, that, his seat resumed
 Here in the palace, he may be prepared
 For breakfast with Telemachus; and woe
 To him who shall presume to incommode
 Or cause him pain; that man shall be cashier'd
 Hence instant, burn his anger as it may.
 For how, my honour'd inmate! shalt thou learn
 That I in wisdom œconomic aught
 Pass other women, if unbathed, unoiled,
 Ill-clad, thou sojourn here? man's life is short, 410
 Whoso is cruel, and to cruel arts
 Addict, on him all men, while yet he lives,
 Call plagues and curses down, and after death
 Scorn and proverbial mock'ries hunt his name.

¹ A gaberdine is a shaggy cloak of coarse but warm materials. Such always make part of Homer's bed-furniture.

But men, humane themselves, and giv'n by choice
 To offices humane, from land to land
 Are rumour'd honourably by their guests,
 And ev'ry tongue is busy in their praise.

Her answer'd then, Ulysses, ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades!

420

Warm gaberdines and rugs of splendid hue
 To me have odious been, since first the sight
 Of Crete's snow-mantled mountain-tops I lost,
 Sweeping the billows with extended oars.

No; I will pass, as I am wont to pass
 The sleepless night; for on a sordid couch
 Outstretch'd, full many a night have I reposed
 Till golden-charioted Aurora dawn'd.

Nor me the foot-bath pleases more; my foot
 Shall none of all thy ministring maidens touch,
 Unless there be some ancient matron grave
 Among them, who hath pangs of heart endured
 Num'rous, and keen as I have felt myself;
 Her I refuse not. She may touch my feet.

430

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.

Dear guest! for of all trav'lers here arrived
 From distant regions, I have none received
 Discrete as thou, or whom I more have lov'd,
 So just thy matter is, and with such grace
 Express'd. I have an ancient maiden grave,
 The nurse who at my hapless husband's birth
 Receiv'd him in her arms, and with kind care
 Maternal rear'd him; she shall wash thy feet,
 Although decrepid. Euryclea, rise!

440

Wash one coeval with thy Lord; for such
 The feet and hands, it may be, are become
 Of my Ulysses now; since man beset
 With sorrow once, soon wrinkled grows and old.

She said, then Euryclea with both hands
 Cov'ring her face, in tepid tears profuse
 Dissolved, and thus in mournful strains began.

450

Alas! my son, trouble for thy dear sake
 Distracts me. Jove surely of all mankind
 Thee hated most, though ever in thy heart
 Devoutly giv'n; for never mortal man
 So many thighs of fatted victims burn'd,
 And chosen hecatombs produced as thou

To Jove the Thund'rer, him entreating still
 That he would grant thee a serene old age,
 And to instruct, thyself, thy glorious son. 460
 Yet thus the God requites thee, cutting off
 All hope of thy return—oh ancient sir!
 Him too, perchance, where'er he sits a guest
 Beneath some foreign roof, the women taunt,
 As all these shameless ones have taunted thee,
 Fearing whose mock'ry thou forbidd'st their hands
 This office, which Icarius' daughter wise
 To me enjoins, and which I, glad perform.
 Yes, I will wash thy feet; both for her sake
 And for thy own,—for sight of thee hath raised 470
 A tempest in my mind. Hear now the cause!
 Full many a guest forlorn we entertain,
 But never any have I seen, whose size,
 The fashion of whose foot and pitch of voice,
 Such likeness of Ulysses show'd, as thine.

To whom Ulysses, ever-shrewd, replied.
 Such close similitude, O ancient dame!
 As thou observ'st between thy Lord and me,
 All, who have seen us both, have ever found.
 He said; then taking the resplendent vase 480
 Allotted always to that use, she first
 Infused cold water largely, then, the warm.
 Ulysses (for beside the hearth he sat)
 Turn'd quick his face into the shade, alarm'd
 Lest, handling him, she should at once remark
 His scar, and all his stratagem unveil.
 She then, approaching, minister'd the bath
 To her own King, and at first touch discern'd
 That token, by a bright-tusk'd boar of old
 Impress'd, what time he to Parnassus went 490
 To visit there Autolycus and his sons,
 His mother's noble sire, who all mankind
 In furtive arts and fraudulent oaths excell'd.¹
 For such endowments he by gift receiv'd
 From Hermes' self, to whom the thighs of kids

¹ Homer's morals seem to allow to a good man dissimulation, and even an ambiguous oath, should they be necessary to save him from a villain. Thus in Book XX. Telemachus swears by Zeus, that he does not hinder his mother from marrying whom she pleases of the wooers, though at the same time he is plotting their destruction with his father. F.

He offer'd and of lambs, and, in return,
 The watchful Hermes never left his side.
 Autolycus arriving in the isle
 Of pleasant Ithaca, the new-born son
 Of his own daughter found, whom on his knees 500
 At close of supper Euryclea placed,
 And thus the royal visitant address'd.

Thyself, Autolycus! devise a name
 For thy own daughter's son, by num'rous pray'rs
 Of thine and fervent, from the Gods obtained.

Then answer thus Autolycus return'd.
 My daughter and my daughter's spouse! the name
 Which I shall give your boy, that let him bear.
 Since after provocation and offence
 To numbers giv'n of either sex, I come, 510
 Call him Ulysses; ¹ and when, grown mature,
 He shall Parnassus visit, the abode
 Magnificent in which his mother dwelt,
 And where my treasures lie, from my own stores
 I will enrich and send him joyful home.

Ulysses, therefore, that he might obtain
 Those princely gifts, went thither. Him arrived,
 With right-hand gratulation and with words
 Of welcome kind, Autolycus received,
 Nor less his offspring; but the mother most 520
 Of his own mother clung around his neck,
 Amphithea; she with many a fervent kiss
 His forehead press'd, and his bright-beaming eyes.
 Then bade Autolycus his noble sons
 Set forth a banquet. They, at his command,
 Led in a fatted ox of the fifth year,
 Which slaying first, they spread him carved abroad,
 Then scored his flesh, transfix'd it with the spits,
 And roasting all with culinary skill
 Exact, gave each his portion. Thus they sat 530
 Feasting all day, and till the sun declined,
 But when the sun declined, and darkness fell,
 Each sought his couch, and took the gift of sleep.
 Then, soon as day-spring's daughter rosy-palm'd
 Aurora look'd abroad, forth went the hounds,
 And, with the hounds Ulysses, and the youths,

¹ In the Greek 'ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ from the verb 'οδυσω—Irascor, I am angry.

Sons of Autolycus, to chase the boar.
 Arrived at the Parnassian mount, they climb'd
 His bushy sides, and to his airy heights
 Ere long attain'd. It was the pleasant hour 54°
 When from the gently-swelling flood profound
 The sun, emerging, first smote on the fields.
 The hunters reach'd the valley; foremost ran,
 Questing, the hounds; behind them, swift, the sons
 Came of Autolycus, with whom advanced
 The illustrious Prince Ulysses, pressing close
 The hounds, and brandishing his massy spear.
 There, hid in thickest shades, lay an huge boar.
 That covert neither rough winds blowing moist
 Could penetrate, nor could the noon-day sun 55°
 Smite through it, or fast-falling show'rs pervade,
 So thick it was, and underneath the ground
 With litter of dry foliage strew'd profuse.
 Hunters and dogs approaching him, his ear
 The sound of feet perceived; upridging high
 His bristly back and glaring fire, he sprang
 Forth from the shrubs, and in defiance stood
 Near and right opposite. Ulysses, first,
 Rush'd on him, elevating his long spear
 Ardent to wound him; but, preventing quick 56°
 His foe, the boar gash'd him above the knee.
 Much flesh, assailing him oblique, he tore
 With his rude tusk, but to the Hero's bone
 Pierced not; Ulysses *his* right shoulder reach'd;
 And with a deadly thrust impell'd the point
 Of his bright spear through him and far beyond.
 Loud yell'd the boar, sank in the dust, and died.
 Around Ulysses, then, the busy sons
 Throng'd of Autolycus; expert they braced
 The wound of the illustrious hunter bold, 57°
 With incantation staunch'd the sable blood,
 And sought in haste their father's house again,
 Whence, heal'd and gratified with splendid gifts
 They sent him soon rejoicing to his home,
 Themselves rejoicing also. Glad their son
 His parents saw again, and of the scar
 Enquired, where giv'n, and how? He told them all,
 How to Parnassus with his friends he went,
 Sons of Autolycus to hunt, and how

A boar had gash'd him with his iv'ry tusk.

580

That scar, while chafing him with open palms,
The matron knew; she left his foot to fall;
Down dropp'd his leg into the vase; the brass
Rang, and o'ertilted by the sudden shock,
Poured forth the water, flooding wide the floor.

Her spirit joy at once and sorrow seized;
Tears fill'd her eyes; her intercepted voice
Died in her throat; but to Ulysses' beard
Her hand advancing, thus, at length, she spake.

Thou art himself, Ulysses. Oh my son!
Dear to me, and my master as thou art,
I knew thee not, till I had touch'd the scar.

590

She said, and to Penelope her eyes
Directed, all impatient to declare
Her own Ulysses even then at home.
But she, nor eye nor ear for aught that pass'd
Had then, her fixt attention so entire
Minerva had engaged. Then, darting forth
His arms, the Hero with his right-hand close
Compress'd her throat, and nearer to himself
Drawing her with his left, thus caution'd her.

600

Why would'st thou ruin me? Thou gav'st me milk
Thyself from thy own breast. See me return'd
After long suff'rings, in the twentieth year,
To my own land. But since (some God the thought
Suggesting to thee) thou hast learn'd the truth,
Silence! lest others learn it from thy lips.
For this I say, nor shall the threat be vain;
If God vouchsafe to me to overcome

The haughty suitors, when I shall inflict
Death on the other women of my house,
Although my nurse, thyself shalt also die.

610

Him answer'd Euryclea then, discrete.
My son! oh how could so severe a word
Escape thy lips? my fortitude of mind
Thou know'st, and even now shalt prove me firm
As iron, secret as the stubborn rock.

But hear and mark me well. Should'st thou prevail,
Assisted by a Pow'r divine, to slay
The haughty suitors, I will then, myself,
Give thee to know of all the female train
Who have dishonour'd thee, and who respect.

620

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 My nurse, it were superfluous; spare thy tongue
 That needless task. I can distinguish well
 Myself, between them, and shall know them all;
 But hold thy peace. Hush! leave it with the Gods.

So he; then went the ancient matron forth,
 That she might serve him with a second bath,
 For the whole first was spilt. Thus, laved at length, 630
 And smooth'd with oil, Ulysses nearer pull'd
 His seat toward the glowing hearth to enjoy
 More warmth, and drew his tatters o'er the scar.
 Then, prudent, thus Penelope began.

One question, stranger, I shall yet propound,
 Though brief, for soon the hour of soft repose
 Grateful to all, and even to the sad
 Whom gentle sleep forsakes not, will arrive.
 But heav'n to me immeasurable woe 640
 Assigns,—whose sole delight is to consume

My days in sighs, while here retired I sit,
 Watching my maidens' labours and my own;
 But (night return'd, and all to bed retired)
 I press mine also, yet with deep regret
 And anguish lacerated, even there.
 As when at spring's first entrance, her sweet song
 The azure-crested nightingale renews,
 Daughter of Pandarus; within the grove's
 Thick foliage perch'd, she pours her echoing voice
 Now deep, now clear, still varying the strain 650

With which she mourns her Itylus, her son
 By royal Zethus, whom she, erring, slew,¹
 So also I, by soul-distressing doubts
 Toss'd ever, muse if I shall here remain
 A faithful guardian of my son's affairs,
 My husband's bed respecting, and not less
 My own fair fame, or whether I shall him
 Of all my suitors follow to his home
 Who noblest seems, and offers richest dow'r.
 My son while he was infant yet, and own'd 660
 An infant's mind, could never give consent

¹ She intended to slay the son of her husband's brother Amphion, incited to it by the envy of his wife, who had six children, while herself had only two, but through mistake she slew her own son Itylus, and for her punishment was transformed by Jupiter into a nightingale.

That I should wed and leave him; but at length,
 Since he hath reached the stature of a man,
 He wishes my departure hence, the waste
 Viewing indignant by the suitors made.

But I have dream'd. Hear, and expound my dream.

My geese are twenty, which within my walls
 I feed with sodden wheat; they serve to amuse
 Sometimes my sorrow. From the mountains came
 An eagle, huge, hook-beak'd, brake all their necks,
 And slew them; scatter'd on the palace-floor
 They lay, and he soar'd swift into the skies.

670

Dream only as it was, I wept aloud,
 Till all my maidens, gather'd by my voice,
 Arriving, found me weeping still, and still
 Complaining, that the eagle had at once
 Slain all my geese. But, to the palace-roof
 Stooping again, he sat, and with a voice
 Of human sound, forbad my tears, and said—

Courage! O daughter of the far-renown'd
 Icarus! no vain dream thou hast beheld,
 But, in thy sleep, a truth. The slaughter'd geese
 Denote thy suitors. I who have appear'd
 An eagle in thy sight, am yet indeed
 Thy husband, who have now, at last, return'd,
 Death, horrid death designing for them all.

680

He said; then waking at the voice, I cast
 An anxious look around, and saw my geese
 Beside their tray, all feeding as before.

Her then Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Queen! it is not possible to miss
 Thy dream's plain import, since Ulysses' self
 Hath told thee the event; thy suitors all
 Must perish; not one suitor shall escape.

690

To whom Penelope discrete replied.
 Dreams are inexplicable, O my guest!
 And oft-times mere delusions that receive
 No just accomplishment. There are two gates
 Through which the fleeting phantoms pass; of horn
 Is one, and one of ivory.¹ Such dreams

700

¹ The difference of the two substances may perhaps serve to account for the preference given in this case to the gate of horn; horn being transparent, and as such emblematical of truth, while ivory, from its whiteness, promises light, but is, in fact, opaque. F.

As through the thin-leaf'd iv'ry portal come
 Sooth, but perform not, utt'ring empty sounds;
 But such as through the polish'd horn escape,
 If, haply seen by any mortal eye,
 Prove faithful witnesses, and are fulfill'd.
 But through those gates my wond'rous dream, I think,
 Came not; thrice welcome were it else to me
 And to my son. Now mark my words; attend.
 This is the hated morn that from the house
 Removes me of Ulysses. I shall fix, 710
 This day, the rings for trial to them all
 Of archership; Ulysses' custom was
 To plant twelve spikes, all regular arranged ¹
 Like galley-props, and crested with a ring,
 Then standing far remote, true in his aim
 He with his whizzing shaft would thrid them all.
 This is the contest in which now I mean
 To prove the suitors; him, who with most ease
 Shall bend the bow, and shoot through all the rings,
 I follow, this dear mansion of my youth 720
 Leaving, so fair, so fill'd with ev'ry good,
 Though still to love it even in my dreams.

Her answer'd then Ulysses, ever-wise.
 Consort revered of Laertiades!
 Postpone not this contention, but appoint
 Forthwith the trial; for Ulysses here
 Will sure arrive, ere they, (his polish'd bow
 Long tamp'ring) shall prevail to stretch the nerve,
 And speed the arrow through the iron rings.
 To whom Penelope replied discrete. 730
 Would'st thou with thy sweet converse, O my guest!
 Here sooth me still, sleep ne'er should influence
 These eyes the while; but always to resist
 Sleep's pow'r is not for man, to whom the Gods
 Each circumstance of his condition here
 Fix universally. Myself will seek
 My own apartment at the palace-top,
 And there will lay me down on my sad couch,
 For such it hath been, and with tears of mine

¹ The translation here is somewhat pleonastic for the sake of per-spiciuity; the original is clear in itself, but not to us who have no such practice. Twelve stakes were fixt in the earth, each having a ring at the top; the order in which they stood was so exact, that an arrow sent with an even hand through the first ring, would pass them all.

Ceaseless bedew'd, e'er since Ulysses went
To that bad city, never to be named.
There will I sleep; but sleep thou here below,
Either, thyself, preparing on the ground
Thy couch, or on a couch by these prepared.

740

So saying, she to her splendid chamber thence
Retired, not sole, but by her female train
Attended; there arrived, she wept her spouse,
Her lov'd Ulysses, till Minerva dropp'd
The balm of slumber on her weary lids,

BOOK XX

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, doubting whether he shall destroy or not the women servants who commit lewdness with the suitors, resolves at length to spare them for the present. He asks an omen from Jupiter, and that he would grant him also to hear some propitious words from the lips of one in the family. His petitions are both answered. Preparation is made for the feast. Whilst the suitors sit at table, Pallas smites them with a horrid frenzy. Theoclymenus, observing the strange effects of it, prophesies their destruction, and they deride his prophecy.

BUT in the vestibule the Hero lay
On a bull's-hide undress'd, o'er which he spread
The fleece of many a sheep slain by the Greeks,
And, cover'd by the household's governess
With a wide cloak, composed himself to rest.
Yet slept he not, but meditating lay
Woe to his enemies. Meantime, the train
Of women, wonted to the suitors' arms,
Issuing all mirth and laughter, in his soul
A tempest raised of doubts, whether at once
To slay, or to permit them yet to give
Their lusty paramours one last embrace.
As growls the mastiff standing on the start
For battle, if a stranger's foot approach
Her cubs new-whelp'd—so growl'd Ulysses' heart,
While wonder fill'd him at their impious deeds.
But, smiting on his breast, thus he reproved
The mutinous inhabitant within.

10

Heart! bear it. Worse than this thou didst endure
When, uncontrollable by force of man,
The Cyclops thy illustrious friends devour'd.
Thy patience then fail'd not, till prudence found
Deliv'rance for thee on the brink of fate.

20

So disciplined the Hero his own heart,
Which, tractable, endured the rigorous curb,
And patient; yet he turn'd from side to side.
As when some hungry swain turns oft a maw

Unctuous and sav'ry on the burning coals,
 Quick expediting his desired repast,
 So he from side to side roll'd, pond'ring deep 30
 How likeliest with success he might assail
 Those shameless suitors; one to many opposed.
 Then, sudden from the skies descending, came
 Minerva in a female form; her stand
 Above his head she took, and thus she spake.

Why sleep'st thou not, unhappiest of mankind?
 Thou art at home; here dwells thy wife, and here
 Thy son; a son, whom all might wish their own.

Then her Ulysses answer'd, ever-wise.
 O Goddess! true is all that thou hast said, 40
 But, not without anxiety, I muse
 How, single as I am, I shall assail
 Those shameless suitors who frequent my courts
 Daily; and always their whole multitude.
 This weightier theme I meditate beside;
 Should I, with Jove's concurrence and with thine
 Prevail to slay them, how shall I escape,
 Myself, at last? ¹ oh Goddess, weigh it well.

Him answer'd then Pallas cærulean-eyed.
 Oh faithless man! a man will in his friend 50
 Confide, though mortal, and in valour less
 And wisdom than himself; but I who keep
 Thee in all difficulties, am divine.
 I tell thee plainly. Were we hemm'd around
 By fifty troops of shouting warriors bent
 To slay thee, thou should'st yet securely drive
 The flocks away and cattle of them all.
 But yield to sleep's soft influence; for to lie
 All night thus watchful, is, itself, distress.
 Fear not. Deliv'rance waits, not far remote. 60

So saying, she o'er Ulysses' eyes diffused
 Soft slumbers, and when sleep that soothes the mind
 And nerves the limbs afresh had seized him once,
 To the Olympian summit swift return'd.
 But his chaste spouse awoke; she weeping sat
 On her soft couch, and, noblest of her sex,
 Satiated at length with tears, her pray'r address'd
 First to Diana of the Pow'rs above.

Diana, awful progeny of Jove!

¹ That is, how shall I escape the vengeance of their kindred?

I would that with a shaft this moment sped
 Into my bosom, thou would'st here conclude
 My mournful life! or, oh that, as it flies,
 Snatching me through the pathless air, a storm
 Would whelm me deep in Ocean's restless tide!
 So, when the Gods their parents had destroy'd,
 Storms suddenly the beauteous daughters snatch'd ¹
 Of Pandarus away; them left forlorn
 Venus with curds, with honey and with wine
 Fed duly; Juno gave them to surpass
 All women in the charms of face and mind,
 With graceful stature eminent the chaste
 Diana bless'd them, and in works of art
 Illustrious, Pallas taught them to excel.
 But when the foam-sprung Goddess to the skies
 A suitress went on their behalf, to obtain
 Blest nuptials for them from the Thund'rer Jove,
 (For Jove the happiness, himself, appoints,
 And the unhappiness of all below)
 Meantime, the Harpies ravishing away
 Those virgins, gave them to the Furies Three,
 That they might serve them. O that me the Gods
 Inhabiting Olympus so would hide
 From human eyes for ever, or bright-hair'd
 Diana pierce me with a shaft, that while
 Ulysses yet engages all my thoughts,
 My days concluded, I might 'scape the pain
 Of gratifying some inferior Chief!
 This is supportable, when (all the day
 To sorrow giv'n) the mourner sleeps at night;
 For sleep, when it hath once the eyelids veil'd,
 All reminiscence blots of all alike,
 Both good and ill; but me the Gods afflict
 Not seldom ev'n in dreams, and at my side,
 This night again, one lay resembling him;
 Such as my own Ulysses when he join'd
 Achaia's warriors; my exulting heart
 No airy dream believed it, but a truth.
 While thus she spake, in orient gold enthroned
 Came forth the morn; Ulysses, as she wept,
 Heard plain her lamentation; him that sound
 Alarm'd; he thought her present, and himself

70

80

90

100

110

¹ Aëdon, Cleothera, Merope.

Known to her. Gath'ring hastily the cloak
 His cov'ring, and the fleeces, them he placed
 Together on a throne within the hall,
 But bore the bull's-hide forth into the air.
 Then, lifting high his hands to Jove, he pray'd.

Eternal Sire! if over moist and dry
 Ye have with good-will sped me to my home
 After much suff'ring, grant me from the lips
 Of some domestic now awake, to hear
 Words of propitious omen, and thyself
 Vouchsafe me still some other sign abroad.

120

Such pray'r he made, and Jove omniscient heard.
 Sudden he thunder'd from the radiant heights
 Olympian; glad, Ulysses heard the sound.

A woman, next, a labourer at the mill
 Hard by, where all the palace-mills were wrought,
 Gave him the omen of propitious sound.

Twelve maidens, day by day, toil'd at the mills,
 Meal grinding, some, of barley, some, of wheat,
 Marrow of man.¹ The rest (their portion ground)

130

All slept; she only from her task as yet
 Ceas'd not, for she was feeblest of them all;
 She rested on her mill, and thus pronounced
 The happy omen by her Lord desired.

Jove, Father, Governor of heav'n and earth!
 Loud thou hast thunder'd from the starry skies
 By no cloud veil'd; a sign propitious, giv'n
 To whom I know not; but oh grant the pray'r
 Of a poor bond-woman! appoint their feast
 This day, the last that in Ulysses' house
 The suitors shall enjoy, for whom I drudge,
 With aching heart and trembling knees their meal
 Grinding continual. Feast they here no more!

140

She ended, and the list'ning Chief received
 With equal joy both signs; for well he hoped
 That he should punish soon those guilty men.
 And now the other maidens in the hall
 Assembling, kindled on the hearth again
 Th' unwearied blaze; then, godlike from his couch
 Arose Telemachus, and, fresh-attired,
 Athwart his shoulders his bright faulchion slung,
 Bound his fair sandals to his feet, and took

150

¹ *μυελον ανδρων.*

His sturdy spear pointed with glitt'ring brass;
 Advancing to the portal, there he stood,
 And Euryclea thus, his nurse, bespake.

Nurse! have ye with respectful notice serv'd
 Our guest? or hath he found a sordid couch
 E'en where he might? for, prudent though she be,
 My mother, inattentive oft, the worse
 Treats kindly, and the better sends away. 160

Whom Euryclea answer'd, thus, discrete.
 Blame not, my son! who merits not thy blame,
 The guest sat drinking till he would no more,
 And ate, till, question'd, he replied—Enough.
 But when the hour of sleep call'd him to rest,
 She gave commandment to her female train
 To spread his couch. Yet he, like one forlorn,
 And, through despair, indiff'rent to himself,
 Both bed and rugs refused, and in the porch 170
 On skins of sheep and on an undress'd hide
 Reposed, where we threw cov'ring over him.

She ceas'd, and, grasping his bright-headed spear,
 Forth went the Prince attended, as he went,
 By his fleet hounds; to the assembled Greeks
 In council with majestic gait he moved,
 And Euryclea, daughter wise of Ops,
 Pisenor's son, call'd to the serving-maids.

Haste ye! be diligent! sweep the palace-floor
 And sprinkle it; then give the sumptuous seats 180
 Their purple coverings. Let others cleanse
 With sponges all the tables, wash and rince
 The beakers well, and goblets rich-emboss'd;
 Run others to the fountain, and bring thence
 Water with speed. The suitors will not long
 Be absent, but will early come to-day,
 For this day is a public festival.¹

So she; whom all, obedient, heard; forth went
 Together, twenty to the crystal fount,
 While in their sev'ral provinces the rest 190
 Bestirr'd them brisk at home. Then enter'd all
 The suitors, and began cleaving the wood.
 Meantime, the women from the fountain came,
 Whom soon the swine-herd follow'd, driving three
 His fattest brawns; them in the spacious court

¹ The new moon.

He feeding left, and to Ulysses' side
Approaching, courteously bespake the Chief.

Guest! look the Grecians on thee with respect
At length, or still disdainful as before?

Then, answer thus Ulysses wise return'd. 200
Yes—and I would that vengeance from the Gods
Might pay their insolence, who in a house
Not theirs, dominion exercise, and plan
Unseemly projects, shameless as they are!

Thus they conferr'd; and now Melanthius came
The goat-herd, driving, with the aid of two
His fellow-swains, the fattest of his goats
To feast the suitors. In the sounding porch
The goats he tied, then, drawing near, in terms
Reproachful thus assail'd Ulysses' ear. 210

How, stranger? persever'st thou, begging, still
To vex the suitors? wilt thou not depart?
Scarce shall we settle this dispute, I judge,
Till we have tasted each the other's fist;
Thou art unreasonable thus to beg
Here always—have the Greeks no feasts beside?

He spake, to whom Ulysses answer none
Return'd, but shook his brows, and, silent, framed
Terrible purposes. Then, third, approach'd
Chief o'er the herds, Philœtius; fatted goats 220
He for the suitors brought, with which he drove
An heifer; (ferry-men had pass'd them o'er,
Carriers of all who on their coast arrive)
He tied them in the sounding porch, then stood
Beside the swine-herd, to whom thus he said.

Who is this guest, Eumæus, here arrived
So lately? from what nation hath he come?
What parentage and country boasts the man?
I pity him, whose figure seems to speak
Royalty in him. Heav'n will surely plunge 230
The race of common wand'ers deep in woe,
If thus it destine even Kings to mourn.

He ceas'd; and, with his right hand, drawing nigh,
Welcom'd Ulysses, whom he thus bespake.

Hail venerable guest! and be thy lot
Prosp'rous at least hereafter, who art held
At present in the bonds of num'rous ills.
Thou, Jupiter, of all the Gods, art most

Severe, and spar'st not to inflict distress
Even on creatures from thyself derived.¹ 240

I had no sooner mark'd thee, than my eyes
Swam, and the sweat gush'd from me at the thought
Of dear Ulysses; for if yet he live
And see the sun, such tatters, I suppose,
He wears, a wand'rer among human-kind.
But if already with the dead he dwell
In Pluto's drear abode, oh then, alas
For kind Ulysses! who consign'd to me,
While yet a boy, his Cephallenian herds,
And they have now encreas'd to such a store 250
Innumerable of broad-fronted beeves,
As only care like mine could have produced.

These, by command of others, I transport
For their regale, who neither heed his son,
Nor tremble at the anger of the Gods,
But long have wish'd ardently to divide
And share the substance of our absent Lord.
Me, therefore, this thought occupies, and haunts
My mind not seldom; while the heir survives
It were no small offence to drive his herds 260
Afar, and migrate to a foreign land;

Yet here to dwell, suff'ring oppressive wrongs
While I attend another's beeves, appears
Still less supportable; and I had fled,
And I had served some other mighty Chief
Long since, (for patience fails me to endure
My present lot) but that I cherish still
Some hope of my ill-fated Lord's return,
To rid his palace of those lawless guests.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 270
Herdsman! since neither void of sense thou seem'st,
Nor yet dishonest, but myself am sure
That thou art owner of a mind discrete,
Hear therefore, for I swear! bold I attest
Jove and this hospitable board, and these
The Lares² of the noble Chief, whose hearth
Protects me now, that, ere thy going hence,
Ulysses surely shall have reach'd his home,
And thou shalt see him, if thou wilt, thyself,

¹ He is often called—*πατηρ ανδρων τε θεων τε*.

² Household Gods who presided over the hearth.

Slaying the suitors who now lord it here. 280

Him answer'd then the keeper of his beeves.
Oh stranger! would but the Saturnian King
Perform that word, thou should'st be taught (thyself
Eye-witness of it) what an arm is mine.

Eumæus also ev'ry power of heav'n
Entreated, that Ulysses might possess
His home again. Thus mutual they conferr'd.

Meantime, in conf'rence close the suitors plann'd
Death for Telemachus; but while they sat
Consulting, on their left the bird of Jove 290
An eagle soar'd, grasping a tim'rous dove.
Then, thus, Amphinomus the rest bespake.

Oh friends! our consultation how to slay
Telemachus, will never smoothly run
To its effect; but let us to the feast.

So spake Amphinomus, whose counsel pleased.
Then, all into the royal house repaired,
And on the thrones and couches throwing off
Their mantles, slew the fatted goats, the brawns,
The sheep full-sized, and heifer of the herd. 300

The roasted entrails first they shared, then fill'd
The beakers, and the swine-herd placed the cups,
Philœtius, chief intendant of the beeves,
Served all with baskets elegant of bread,
While all their cups Melanthius charged with wine,
And they assail'd at once the ready feast.

Meantime Telemachus, with forecast shrewd,
Fast by the marble threshold, but within
The spacious hall his father placed, to whom
A sordid seat he gave and scanty board. 310
A portion of the entrails, next, he set
Before him, fill'd a golden goblet high,
And thus, in presence of them all, began.

There seated now, drink as the suitors drink.
I will, myself, their biting taunts forbid,
And violence. This edifice is mine,
Not public property; my father first
Possess'd it, and my right from him descends.
Suitors! controul your tongues, nor with your hands
Offend, lest contest fierce and war ensue. 320

He ceas'd: they gnawing, sat, their lips, aghast
With wonder that Telemachus in his speech

Such boldness used. Then spake Eupithes' son,
Antinoüs, and the assembly thus address'd.

Let pass, ye Greeks! the language of the Prince,
Harsh as it is, and big with threats to us.
Had Jove permitted, his orations here,
Although thus eloquent, ere now had ceased.

So spake Antinoüs, whom Ulysses' son
Heard unconcern'd. And now the heralds came
In solemn pomp, conducting through the streets
A sacred hecatomb, when in the grove
Umbrageous of Apollo, King shaft-arm'd,
The assembled Grecians met. The sav'ry roast
Finish'd, and from the spits withdrawn, each shared
His portion of the noble feast, and such
As they enjoy'd themselves the attendants placed
Before Ulysses, for the Hero's son
Himself, Telemachus, had so enjoined.

330

But Pallas (that they might exasp'rate more
Ulysses) suffer'd not the suitor Chiefs
To banquet, guiltless of heart-piercing scoffs
Malign. There was a certain suitor named
Ctesippus, born in Samos; base of mind
Was he and profligate, but, in the wealth
Confiding of his father, woo'd the wife
Of long-exiled Ulysses. From his seat
The haughty suitors thus that man address'd.

340

Ye noble suitors, I would speak; attend!
The guest is served; he hath already shared
Equal with us; nor less the laws demand
Of hospitality; for neither just
It were nor decent, that a guest, received
Here by Telemachus, should be denied
His portion of the feast. Come then—myself
Will give to him, that he may also give
To her who laved him in the bath, or else
To whatsoever menial here he will.

350

So saying, he from a basket near at hand
Heav'd an ox-foot, and with a vig'rous arm
Hurl'd it. Ulysses gently bow'd his head,
Shunning the blow, but gratified his just
Resentment with a broad sardonic smile¹
Of dread significance. He smote the wall.

360

¹ A smile of displeasure.

Then thus Telemachus rebuked the deed.

Ctesippus, thou art fortunate; the bone
 Struck not the stranger, for he shunn'd the blow;
 Else, I had surely thrust my glitt'ring lance
 Right through thee; then, no hymenæal rites
 Of thine should have employ'd thy father here, 370
 But thy funereal. No man therefore treat
 Me with indignity within these walls,
 For though of late a child, I can discern
 Now, and distinguish between good and ill.
 Suffice it that we patiently endure
 To be spectators daily of our sheep
 Slaughter'd, our bread consumed, our stores of wine
 Wasted; for what can one to all opposed?
 Come then—persist no longer in offence
 And hostile hate of me; or if ye wish 380
 To slay me, pause not. It were better far
 To die, and I had rather much be slain,
 Than thus to witness your atrocious deeds
 Day after day; to see our guests abused,
 With blows insulted, and the women dragg'd
 With a licentious violence obscene
 From side to side of all this fair abode.

He said, and all sat silent, till at length
 Thus Agelaüs spake, Diastor's son.

My friends! let none with contradiction thwart 390
 And rude reply, words rational and just;
 Assault no more the stranger, nor of all
 The servants of renown'd Ulysses here
 Harm any. My advice, both to the Queen
 And to Telemachus, shall gentle be,
 May it but please them. While the hope survived
 Within your bosoms of the safe return
 Of wise Ulysses to his native isle,
 So long good reason was that she should use
 Delay, and hold our wooing in suspence; 400
 For had Ulysses come, that course had proved
 Wisest and best; but that he comes no more
 Appears, now, manifest. Thou, therefore, Prince!
 Seeking thy mother, counsel her to wed
 The noblest, and who offers richest dow'r,
 That thou, for thy peculiar, may'st enjoy
 Thy own inheritance in peace and ease,

And she, departing, find another home.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.

I swear by Jove, and by my father's woes,

410

Who either hath deceased far from his home,

Or lives a wand'rer, that I interpose

No hindrance to her nuptials. Let her wed

Who offers most, and even whom she will.

But to dismiss her rudely were a deed

Unfilial—That I dare not—God forbid!

So spake Telemachus. Then Pallas struck

The suitors with delirium; wide they stretch'd

Their jaws with unspontaneous laughter loud;

Their meat dripp'd blood; tears fill'd their eyes, and dire

421

Presages of approaching woe, their hearts.

Then thus the prophet Theoclymenus.¹

Ah miserable men! what curse is this

That takes you now? night wraps itself around

Your faces, bodies, limbs; the palace shakes

With peals of groans—and oh, what floods ye weep!

I see the walls and arches dappled thick

With gore; the vestibule is throng'd, the court

On all sides throng'd with apparitions grim

430

Of slaughter'd men sinking into the gloom

Of Erebus; the sun is blotted out

From heav'n, and midnight whelms you premature.

He said, they, hearing, laugh'd; and thus the son

Of Polybus, Eurymachus replied.

This wand'rer from a distant shore hath left

His wits behind. Ho! there! conduct him hence

Into the forum; since he dreams it night

Already, teach him there that it is day.

Then answer'd godlike Theoclymenus.

I have no need, Eurymachus, of guides

440

To lead me hence, for I have eyes and ears,

The use of both my feet, and of a mind

In no respect irrational or wild.

These shall conduct me forth, for well I know

That evil threatens you, such, too, as none

Shall 'scape of all the suitors, whose delight

Is to insult the unoffending guest

Received beneath this hospitable roof.

¹ Who had sought refuge in the ship of Telemachus when he left Sparta, and came with him to Ithaca.

He said, and, issuing from the palace, sought
 Piræus' house, who gladly welcom'd him. 450
 Then all the suitors on each other cast
 A look significant, and, to provoke
 Telemachus the more, fleer'd at his guests.
 Of whom a youth thus, insolent began.

No living wight, Telemachus, had e'er
 Guests such as thine. Witness, we know not who,
 This hungry vagabond, whose means of life
 Are none, and who hath neither skill nor force
 To earn them, a mere burthen on the ground.
 Witness the other also, who upstarts 460
 A prophet suddenly. Take my advice;
 I counsel wisely; send them both on board
 Some gallant bark to Sicily for sale;
 Thus shall they somewhat profit thee at last.

So spake the suitors, whom Telemachus
 Heard unconcern'd, and, silent, look'd and look'd
 Toward his father, watching still the time
 When he should punish that licentious throng.
 Meantime, Icarius' daughter, who had placed
 Her splendid seat opposite, heard distinct 470
 Their taunting speeches. They, with noisy mirth,
 Feasted deliciously, for they had slain
 Many a fat victim; but a sadder feast
 Than, soon, the Goddess and the warrior Chief
 Should furnish for them, none shall ever share.
 Of which their crimes had furnish'd first the cause.

BOOK XXI

ARGUMENT

PENELOPE proposes to the suitors a contest with the bow, herself the prize. They prove unable to bend the bow; when Ulysses having with some difficulty possessed himself of it, manages it with the utmost ease, and dispatches his arrow through twelve rings erected for the trial.

MINERVA now, Goddess cærulean-eyed,
Prompted Icarius' daughter, the discrete
Penelope, with bow and rings to prove
Her suitors in Ulysses' courts, a game
Terrible in conclusion to them all.
First, taking in her hand the brazen key
Well-forged, and fitted with an iv'ry grasp,
Attended by the women of her train
She sought her inmost chamber, the recess
In which she kept the treasures of her Lord, 10
His brass, his gold, and steel elaborate.
Here lay his stubborn bow, and quiver fill'd
With num'rous shafts, a fatal store. That bow
He had received and quiver from the hand
Of godlike Iphitus Eurytides,
Whom, in Messenia,¹ in the house he met
Of brave Orsilochus. Ulysses came
Demanding payment of arrearage due
From all that land; for a Messenian fleet
Had borne from Ithaca three hundred sheep, 20
With all their shepherds; for which cause, ere yet
Adult, he voyaged to that distant shore,
Deputed by his sire, and by the Chiefs
Of Ithaca, to make the just demand.
But Iphitus had thither come to seek
Twelve mares and twelve mule colts which he had lost,
A search that cost him soon a bloody death.
For, coming to the house of Hercules
The valiant task-performing son of Jove,

¹ A province of Laconia.

He perish'd there, slain by his cruel host 30
 Who, heedless of heav'n's wrath, and of the rights
 Of his own board, first fed, then slaughter'd him;
 For in *his* house the mares and colts were hidden.
 He, therefore, occupied in that concern,
 Meeting Ulysses there, gave him the bow
 Which, erst, huge Eurytus had borne, and which
 Himself had from his dying sire received.
 Ulysses, in return, on him bestowed
 A spear and sword, pledges of future love
 And hospitality; but never more 40
 They met each other at the friendly board,
 For, ere that hour arrived, the son of Jove
 Slew his own guest, the godlike Iphitus.
 Thus came the bow into Ulysses' hands,
 Which, never in his gallant barks he bore
 To battle with him, (though he used it oft
 In times of peace) but left it safely stored
 At home, a dear memorial of his friend.

Soon as, divinest of her sex, arrived 50
 At that same chamber, with her foot she press'd
 The oaken threshold bright, on which the hand
 Of no mean architect had stretch'd the line,
 Who had erected also on each side
 The posts on which the splendid portals hung,
 She loos'd the ring and brace, then introduced
 The key, and aiming at them from without,¹
 Struck back the bolts. The portals, at that stroke,
 Sent forth a tone deep as the pastur'd bull's,
 And flew wide open. She, ascending, next,
 The elevated floor on which the chests 60
 That held her own fragrant apparel stood,
 With lifted hand aloft took down the bow
 In its embroider'd bow-case safe enclosed.
 Then, sitting there, she lay'd it on her knees,
 Weeping aloud, and drew it from the case.
 Thus weeping over it long time she sat,
 Till satiate, at the last, with grief and tears,
 Descending by the palace steps she sought
 Again the haughty suitors, with the bow

¹ The reader will of course observe, that the whole of this process implies a sort of mechanism very different from that with which we are acquainted.—The translation, I believe, is exact.

Elastic, and the quiver in her hand
 Replete with pointed shafts, a deadly store,
 Her maidens, as she went, bore after her
 A coffer fill'd with prizes by her Lord,
 Much brass and steel; and when at length she came,
 Loveliest of women, where the suitors sat,
 Between the pillars of the stately dome
 Pausing, before her beauteous face she held
 Her lucid veil, and by two matrons chaste
 Supported, the assembly thus address'd.

70

Ye noble suitors hear, who rudely haunt
 This palace of a Chief long absent hence,
 Whose substance ye have now long time consumed,
 Nor palliative have yet contrived, or could,
 Save your ambition to make me a bride—
 Attend this game to which I call you forth.
 Now suitors! prove yourselves with this huge bow
 Of wide-renown'd Ulysses; he who draws
 Easiest the bow, and who his arrow sends
 Through twice six rings, he takes me to his home,
 And I must leave this mansion of my youth
 Plenteous, magnificent, which, doubtless, oft
 I shall remember even in my dreams.

80

90

So saying, she bade Eumæus lay the bow
 Before them, and the twice six rings of steel.
 He wept, received them, and obey'd; nor wept
 The herdsman less, seeing the bow which erst
 His Lord had occupied; when at their tears
 Indignant, thus, Antinoüs began.

Ye rural drones, whose purblind eyes see not
 Beyond the present hour, egregious fools!
 Why weeping trouble ye the Queen, too much
 Before afflicted for her husband lost?
 Either partake the banquet silently,
 Or else go weep abroad, leaving the bow,
 That stubborn test, to us; for none, I judge,
 None here shall bend this polish'd bow with ease,
 Since in this whole assembly I discern
 None like Ulysses, whom myself have seen
 And recollect, though I was then a boy.

100

He said, but in his heart, meantime, the hope
 Cherish'd, that he should bend, himself, the bow,
 And pass the rings; yet was he destin'd first

110

Of all that company to taste the steel
 Of brave Ulysses' shaft, whom in that house
 He had so oft dishonour'd, and had urged
 So oft all others to the like offence.
 Amidst them, then, the sacred might arose
 Of young Telemachus, who thus began.

Saturnian Jove questionless hath deprived

Me of all reason. My own mother, fam'd

120

For wisdom as she is, makes known to all

Her purpose to abandon this abode

And follow a new mate, while, heedless, I

Trifle and laugh as I were still a child.

But come, ye suitors! since the prize is such,

A woman like to whom none can be found

This day in all Achaia; on the shores

Of sacred Pylus; in the cities proud

Of Argos or Mycenæ; or even here

In Ithaca; or yet within the walls

130

Of black Epirus; and since this yourselves

Know also, wherefore should I speak her praise?

Come then, delay not, waste not time in vain

Excuses, turn not from the proof, but bend

The bow, that thus the issue may be known.

I also will, myself, that task essay;

And should I bend the bow, and pass the rings,

Then shall not my illustrious mother leave

Her son forlorn, forsaking this abode

To follow a new spouse, while I remain

140

Disconsolate, although of age to bear,

Successful as my sire, the prize away.

So saying, he started from his seat, cast off

His purple cloak, and lay'd his sword aside,

Then fix'd, himself, the rings, furrowing the earth

By line, and op'ning one long trench for all,

And stamping close the glebe. Amazement seized

All present, seeing with how prompt a skill

He executed, though untaught, his task.

Then, hasting to the portal, there he stood.

150

Thrice, struggling, he essay'd to bend the bow,

And thrice desisted, hoping still to draw

The bow-string home, and shoot through all the rings.¹

¹ This first attempt of Telemachus and the suitors was not an attempt to shoot, but to lodge the bow-string on the opposite horn, the bow having been released at one end, and slackened while it was laid by.

And now the fourth time striving with full force
 He had prevail'd to string it, but his sire
 Forbad his eager efforts by a sign.

Then thus the royal youth to all around—

Gods! either I shall prove of little force

Hereafter, and for manly feats unapt,

Or I am yet too young, and have not strength

160

To quell the aggressor's contumely. But come—

(For ye have strength surpassing mine) try ye

The bow, and bring this contest to an end.

He ceas'd, and set the bow down on the floor,

Reclining it against the shaven pannels smooth

That lined the wall; the arrow next he placed,

Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn,

And to the seat, whence he had ris'n, return'd.

Then thus Eupithes' son, Antinoüs spake.

My friends! come forth successive from the right,¹ 170

Where he who ministers the cup begins.

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.

Then, first, Leiodes, Cœnop's son, arose.

He was their soothsayer, and ever sat

Beside the beaker, inmost of them all.

To him alone, of all, licentious deeds

Were odious, and, with indignation fired,

He witness'd the excesses of the rest.

He then took foremost up the shaft and bow,

And, station'd at the portal, strove to bend

180

But bent it not, fatiguing, first, his hands

Delicate and uncustom'd to the toil.

He ceased, and the assembly thus bespake.

My friends, I speed not; let another try;

For many Princes shall this bow of life

Bereave, since death more eligible seems,

Far more, than loss of her, for whom we meet

Continual here, expecting still the prize.

Some suitor, haply, at this moment, hopes

That he shall wed whom long he hath desired,

190

Ulysses' wife, Penelope; let him

Essay the bow, and, trial made, address

His spousal offers to some other fair

Among the long-stoled Princesses of Greece,

¹ Antinoüs prescribes to them this manner of rising to the trial for the good omen's sake, the left-hand being held unpropitious.

This Princess leaving his, whose proffer'd gifts
Shall please her most, and whom the Fates ordain.

He said, and set the bow down on the floor,
Reclining it against the shaven pannels smooth
That lined the wall; the arrow, next, he placed,
Leaning against the bow's bright-polish'd horn, 200
And to the seat whence he had ris'n return'd.
Then him Antinoüs, angry, thus reproved.

What word, Leiodes, grating to our ears
Hath scap'd thy lips? I hear it with disdain.
Shall this bow fatal prove to many a Prince,
Because thou hast, thyself, too feeble proved
To bend it? no. Thou wast not born to bend
The unpliant bow, or to direct the shaft,
But here are nobler who shall soon prevail.

He said, and to Melanthius gave command, 210
The goat-herd. Hence, Melanthius, kindle fire;
Beside it place, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; from within procure
A large round cake of suet next, with which
When we have chafed and suppled the tough bow
Before the fire, we will again essay
To bend it, and decide the doubtful strife.

He ended, and Melanthius, kindling fire
Beside it placed, with fleeces spread, a form
Of length commodious; next, he brought a cake 220
Ample and round of suet from within,
With which they chafed the bow, then tried again
To bend, but bent it not; superior strength
To theirs that task required. Yet two, the rest
In force surpassing, made no trial yet,
Antinoüs, and Eurymachus the brave.

Then went the herdsman and the swine-herd forth
Together; after whom, the glorious Chief
Himself the house left also, and when all
Without the court had met, with gentle speech 230
Ulysses, then, the faithful pair address'd.

Herdsmen! and thou, Eumæus! shall I keep
A certain secret close, or shall I speak
Outright? my spirit prompts me, and I will.
What welcome should Ulysses at your hands
Receive, arriving suddenly at home,
Some God his guide; would ye the suitors aid,

Or would ye aid Ulysses? answer true.

Then thus the chief intendant of his herds.
 Would Jove but grant me my desire, to see 240
 Once more the Hero, and would some kind Pow'r,
 Restore him, I would shew thee soon an arm
 Strenuous to serve him, and a dauntless heart.

Eumæus, also, fervently implored
 The Gods in pray'r, that they would render back
 Ulysses to his home. He, then, convinced
 Of their unfeigning honesty, began.

Behold him! I am he myself, arrived
 After long suff'rings in the twentieth year!
 I know how welcome to yourselves alone 250
 Of all my train I come, for I have heard
 None others praying for my safe return.

I therefore tell you truth; should heav'n subdue
 The suitors under me, ye shall receive
 Each at my hands a bride, with lands and house
 Near to my own, and ye shall be thenceforth
 Dear friends and brothers of the Prince my son.
 Lo! also this indisputable proof
 That ye may know and trust me. View it here.
 It is the scar which in Parnassus erst 260
 (Where with the sons I hunted of renown'd
 Autolycus) I from a boar received.

So saying, he stripp'd his tatters, and unveil'd
 The whole broad scar; then, soon as they had seen
 And surely recognized the mark, each cast
 His arms around Ulysses, wept, embraced
 And press'd him to his bosom, kissing oft
 His brows and shoulders, who as oft their hands
 And foreheads kiss'd, nor had the setting sun
 Beheld them satisfied, but that himself 270
 Ulysses thus admonished them, and said.

Cease now from tears, lest any, coming forth,
 Mark and report them to our foes within.
 Now, to the hall again, but one by one,
 Not all at once, I foremost, then yourselves,
 And this shall be the sign. Full well I know
 That, all unanimous, they will oppose
 Deliv'ry of the bow and shafts to me;
 But thou, (proceeding with it to my seat)
 Eumæus, noble friend! shalt give the bow 280

Into my grasp; then bid the women close
 The massy doors, and should they hear a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none set step abroad,
 But all work silent. Be the palace-door
 Thy charge, my good Philæteus! key it fast
 Without a moment's pause, and fix the brace.¹

He ended, and, returning to the hall,
 Resumed his seat; nor stay'd his servants long
 Without, but follow'd their illustrious Lord.

290

Eurymachus was busily employ'd
 Turning the bow, and chafing it before
 The sprightly blaze, but, after all, could find
 No pow'r to bend it. Disappointment wrung
 A groan from his proud heart, and thus he said.

Alas! not only for myself I grieve,
 But grieve for all. Nor, though I mourn the loss
 Of such a bride, mourn I that loss alone,
 (For lovely Grecians may be found no few
 In Ithaca, and in the neighbour isles)

300

But should we so inferior prove at last
 To brave Ulysses, that no force of ours
 Can bend his bow, we are for ever sham'd.

To whom Antinoüs, thus, Eupithes' son.
 Not so; (as even thou art well-assured
 Thyself, Eurymachus!) but Phœbus claims
 This day his own. Who then, on such a day,
 Would strive to bend it? Let it rather rest.

310

And should we leave the rings where now they stand,
 I trust that none ent'ring Ulysses' house
 Will dare displace them. Cup-bearer, attend!
 Serve all with wine, that, first, libation made,
 We may religiously lay down the bow.

Command ye too Melanthius, that he drive
 Hither the fairest goats of all his flocks
 At dawn of day, that burning first, the thighs
 To the ethereal archer, we may make
 New trial, and decide, at length, the strife.

320

So spake Antinoüs, and his counsel pleased.
 The heralds, then, pour'd water on their hands,
 While youths crown'd high the goblets which they bore

¹ The *δεσμός* seems to have been a strap designed to close the only aperture by which the bolt could be displaced, and the door opened.

From right to left, distributing to all.
 When each had made libation, and had drunk
 Till well sufficed, then, artful to effect
 His shrewd designs, Ulysses thus began.

Hear, O ye suitors of the illustrious Queen,
 My bosom's dictates. But I shall entreat
 Chiefly Eurymachus and the godlike youth
 Antinoüs, whose advice is wisely giv'n.

Tamper no longer with the bow, but leave 330
 The matter with the Gods, who shall decide
 The strife to-morrow, fav'ring whom they will.
 Meantime, grant *me* the polish'd bow, that I
 May trial make among you of my force,
 If I retain it still in like degree
 As erst, or whether wand'ring and defect
 Of nourishment have worn it all away.

He said, whom they with indignation heard
 Extreme, alarm'd lest he should bend the bow,
 And sternly thus Antinoüs replied. 340

Desperate vagabond! ah wretch deprived
 Of reason utterly! art not content?
 Esteem'st it not distinction proud enough
 To feast with us the nobles of the land?
 None robs thee of thy share, thou witnessest
 Our whole discourse, which, save thyself alone,
 No needy vagrant is allow'd to hear.
 Thou art befool'd by wine, as many have been,
 Wide-throated drinkers, unrestrain'd by rule.

Wine in the mansion of the mighty Chief 350
 Pirithoüs, made the valiant Centaur mad
 Eurytion, at the Lapithæan feast.¹

He drank to drunkenness, and being drunk,
 Committed great enormities beneath
 Pirithoüs' roof, and such as fill'd with rage
 The Hero-guests, who therefore by his feet
 Dragg'd him right through the vestibule, amerced
 Of nose and ears, and he departed thence
 Provoked to frenzy by that foul disgrace,
 Whence war between the human kind arose 360

¹ When Pirithoüs, one of the Lapithæ, married Hippodamia, daughter of Adrastus, he invited the Centaurs to the wedding. The Centaurs, intoxicated with wine, attempted to ravish the wives of the Lapithæ, who in resentment of that insult, slew them.

And the bold Centaurs—but he first incurred
 By his ebriety that mulct severe.
 Great evil, also, if thou bend the bow,
 To thee I prophesy; for thou shalt find
 Advocate or protector none in all
 This people, but we will dispatch thee hence
 Incontinent on board a sable bark
 To Echetus, the scourge of human kind,
 From whom is no escape. Drink then in peace,
 And contest shun with younger men than thou.

370

Him answer'd, then, Penelope discrete.
 Antinoüs! neither seemly were the deed
 Nor just, to maim or harm whatever guest
 Whom here arrived Telemachus receives.
 Canst thou expect, that should he even prove
 Stronger than ye, and bend the massy bow,
 He will conduct me hence to his own home,
 And make me his own bride? No such design
 His heart conceives, or hope; nor let a dread
 So vain the mind of any overcloud
 Who banquets here, since it dishonours me.

380

So she; to whom Eurymachus reply'd,
 Offspring of Polybus. O matchless Queen!
 Icarus' prudent daughter! none suspects
 That thou wilt wed with him; a mate so mean
 Should ill become thee; but we fear the tongues
 Of either sex, lest some Achaian say
 Hereafter, (one inferior far to us)
 Ah! how unworthy are they to compare
 With him whose wife they seek! to bend his bow
 Pass'd all their pow'r, yet this poor vagabond,
 Arriving from what country none can tell,
 Bent it with ease, and shot through all the rings.
 So will they speak, and so shall we be shamed.

390

Then answer, thus, Penelope return'd.
 No fair report, Eurymachus, attends
 Their names or can, who, riotous as ye,
 The house dishonour, and consume the wealth
 Of such a Chief. Why shame ye thus *yourselves*?
 The guest is of athletic frame, well form'd,
 And large of limb; he boasts him also sprung
 From noble ancestry. Come then—consent—
 Give him the bow, that we may see the proof;

400

For thus I say, and thus will I perform;
 Sure as he bends it, and Apollo gives
 To him that glory, tunic fair and cloak
 Shall be his meed from me, a javelin keen
 To guard him against men and dogs, a sword
 Of double edge, and sandals for his feet,
 And I will send him whither most he would.

410

Her answer'd then prudent Telemachus.
 Mother—the bow is mine; and, save myself,
 No Greek hath right to give it, or refuse.
 None who in rock-bound Ithaca possess
 Dominion, none in the steed-pastured isles
 Of Elis, if I chose to make the bow
 His own for ever, should that choice controul,
 But thou into the house repairing, ply
 Spindle and loom, thy province, and enjoin
 Diligence to thy maidens; for the bow
 Is man's concern alone, and shall be mine
 Especially, since I am master here.

420

She heard astonish'd, and the prudent speech
 Reposing of her son deep in her heart,
 Withdrew; then mounting with her female train
 To her superior chamber, there she wept
 Her lost Ulysses, till Minerva bathed
 With balmy dews of sleep her weary lids.
 And now the noble swine-herd bore the bow
 Toward Ulysses, but with one voice all
 The suitors, clamorous, reprov'd the deed,
 Of whom a youth, thus, insolent exclaim'd.

430

Thou clumsy swine-herd, whither bear'st the bow,
 Delirious wretch? the hounds that thou hast train'd
 Shall eat thee at thy solitary home
 Ere long, let but Apollo prove, at last,
 Propitious to us, and the Pow'rs of heav'n.

So they, whom hearing he replaced the bow
 Where erst it stood, terrified at the sound
 Of such loud menaces; on the other side
 Telemachus as loud assail'd his ear.

440

Friend! forward with the bow; or soon repent
 That thou obey'dst the many. I will else
 With huge stones drive thee, younger as I am,
 Back to the field. My strength surpasses thine.
 I would to heav'n that I in force excell'd

As far, and prowess, every suitor here!
 So would I soon give rude dismissal hence
 To some, who live but to imagine harm.

He ceased, whose words the suitors laughing heard. 450
 And, for their sake, in part their wrath resign'd
 Against Telemachus; then through the hall
 Eumæus bore, and to Ulysses' hand
 Consign'd the bow; next, summoning abroad
 The ancient nurse, he gave her thus in charge.

It is the pleasure of Telemachus,
 Sage Euryclea! that thou key secure
 The doors; and should you hear, perchance, a groan
 Or other noise made by the Princes shut
 Within the hall, let none look, curious, forth, 460
 But each in quietness pursue her work.

So he; nor flew his words useless away,
 But she, incontinent, shut fast the doors.
 Then, noiseless, sprang Philœtius forth, who closed
 The portals also of the palace-court.
 A ship-rope of Ægyptian reed, it chanced,
 Lay in the vestibule; with that he braced
 The doors securely, and re-entring fill'd
 Again his seat, but watchful, eyed his Lord.
 He, now, assaying with his hand the bow, 470
 Made curious trial of it ev'ry way,
 And turn'd it on all sides, lest haply worms
 Had in its master's absence drill'd the horn.
 Then thus a suitor to his next remark'd.

He hath an eye, methinks, exactly skill'd
 In bows, and steals them; or perhaps, at home,
 Hath such himself, or feels a strong desire
 To make them; so inquisitive the rogue
 Adept in mischief, shifts it to and fro!

To whom another, insolent, replied. 480
 I wish him like prosperity in all
 His efforts, as attends his effort made
 On this same bow, which he shall never bend.

So they; but when the wary Hero wise
 Had made his hand familiar with the bow
 Poising it and examining—at once—
 As when in harp and song adept, a bard
 Unlab'ring strains the chord to a new lyre,
 The twisted entrails of a sheep below

With fingers nice inserting, and above, 490
 With such facility Ulysses bent
 His own huge bow, and with his right hand play'd
 The nerve, which in its quick vibration sang
 Clear as the swallow's voice. Keen anguish seized
 The suitors, wan grew ev'ry cheek, and Jove
 Gave him his rolling thunder for a sign.
 That omen, granted to him by the son
 Of wily Saturn, with delight he heard.
 He took a shaft that at the table-side
 Lay ready drawn; but in his quiver's womb 500
 The rest yet slept, by those Achaians proud
 To be, ere long, experienced. True he lodg'd
 The arrow on the centre of the bow,
 And, occupying still his seat, drew home
 Nerve and notch'd arrow-head; with stedfast sight
 He aimed and sent it; right through all the rings
 From first to last the steel-charged weapon flew
 Issuing beyond, and to his son he spake.

Thou need'st not blush, young Prince, to have received
 A guest like me; neither my arrow swerved, 510
 Nor labour'd I long time to draw the bow;
 My strength is unimpair'd, not such as these
 In scorn affirm it. But the waning day
 Calls us to supper, after which succeeds¹
 Jocund variety, the song, the harp,
 With all that heightens and adorns the feast.

He said, and with his brows gave him the sign.
 At once the son of the illustrious Chief
 Slung his keen faulchion, grasp'd his spear, and stood
 Arm'd bright for battle at his father's side. 520

¹ This is an instance of the *Σαρδανιον μαλα τοιον* mentioned in Book XX.; such as, perhaps, could not be easily paralleled. I question if there be a passage, either in ancient or modern tragedy, so truly terrible as this seeming levity of Ulysses, in the moment when he was going to begin the slaughter.

BOOK XXII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES, with some little assistance from Telemachus, Eumæus and Philætius, slays all the suitors, and twelve of the female servants who had allowed themselves an illicit intercourse with them, are hanged. Melanthius also is punished with miserable mutilation.

THEN, girding up his rags, Ulysses sprang
With bow and full-charged quiver to the door;
Loose on the broad stone at his feet he pour'd
His arrows, and the suitors, thus, bespake.

This prize, though difficult, hath been atchieved.
Now for another mark which never man
Struck yet, but I will strike it if I may,
And if Apollo make that glory mine.

He said, and at Antinoüs aimed direct
A bitter shaft; he, purposing to drink, 10
Both hands advanced toward the golden cup
Twin-ear'd, nor aught suspected death so nigh.
For who, at the full banquet, could suspect
That any single guest, however brave,
Should plan his death, and execute the blow?
Yet him Ulysses with an arrow pierced
Full in the throat, and through his neck behind
Started the glitt'ring point. Aslant he droop'd;
Down fell the goblet, through his nostrils flew
The spouted blood, and spurning with his foot 20
The board, he spread his viands in the dust.
Confusion, when they saw Antinoüs fall'n,
Seized all the suitors; from the thrones they sprang,
Flew ev'ry way, and on all sides explored
The palace-walls, but neither sturdy lance
As erst, nor buckler could they there discern,
Then, furious, to Ulysses thus they spake.

Thy arrow, stranger, was ill-aimed; a man
Is no just mark. Thou never shalt dispute
Prize more. Inevitable death is thine. 30
For thou hast slain a Prince noblest of all

In Ithaca, and shalt be vultures' food.

Various their judgments were, but none believed
That he had slain him wittingly, nor saw
Th' infatuate men fate hov'ring o'er them all.
Then thus Ulysses, louting dark, replied.

O dogs! not fearing aught my safe return
From Ilium, ye have shorn my substance close,
Lain with my women forcibly, and sought,
While yet I lived, to make my consort yours,
Heedless of the inhabitants of heav'n
Alike, and of the just revenge of man.

40

But death is on the wing; death for you all.

He said; their cheeks all faded at the sound,
And each with sharpen'd eyes search'd ev'ry nook
For an escape from his impending doom,
Till thus, alone, Eurymachus replied.

If thou indeed art he, the mighty Chief
Of Ithaca return'd, thou hast rehears'd
With truth the crimes committed by the Greeks
Frequent, both in thy house and in thy field.

50

But he, already, who was cause of all,
Lies slain, Antinoüs; he thy palace fill'd
With outrage, not solicitous so much
To win the fair Penelope, but thoughts
Far diff'rent framing, which Saturnian Jove
Hath baffled all; to rule, himself, supreme
In noble Ithaca, when he had kill'd
By an insidious stratagem thy son.

But he is slain. Now therefore, spare thy own,
Thy people; public reparation due
Shall sure be thine, and to appease thy wrath
For all the waste that, eating, drinking here
We have committed, we will yield thee, each,
Full twenty beeves, gold paying thee beside
And brass, till joy shall fill thee at the sight,
However just thine anger was before.

60

To whom Ulysses, frowning stern, replied,
Eurymachus, would ye contribute each
His whole inheritance, and other sums
Still add beside, ye should not, even so,
These hands of mine bribe to abstain from blood,
Till ev'ry suitor suffer for his wrong.

70

Ye have your choice. Fight with me, or escape

(Whoever may) the terrours of his fate,
But ye all perish, if my thought be true.

He ended, they with trembling knees and hearts
All heard, whom thus Eurymachus address'd.

To your defence, my friends! for respite none
Will he to his victorious hands afford, 80
But, arm'd with bow and quiver, will dispatch
Shafts from the door till he have slain us all.
Therefore to arms—draw each his sword—oppose
The tables to his shafts, and all at once
Rush on him; that, dislodging him at least
From portal and from threshold, we may give
The city on all sides a loud alarm,
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

Thus saying, he drew his brazen faulchion keen
Of double edge, and with a dreadful cry 90
Sprang on him; but Ulysses with a shaft
In that same moment through his bosom driv'n
Transfix'd his liver, and down dropp'd his sword.
He, staggering around his table, fell
Convolv'd in agonies, and overturn'd
Both food and wine; his forehead smote the floor;
Woe fill'd his heart, and spurning with his heels
His vacant seat, he shook it till he died.

Then, with his faulchion drawn, Amphinomus
Advanced to drive Ulysses from the door, 100
And fierce was his assault; but, from behind,
Telemachus between his shoulders fix'd
A brazen lance, and urged it through his breast.
Full on his front, with hideous sound, he fell.
Leaving the weapon planted in his spine
Back flew Telemachus, lest, had he stood
Drawing it forth, some enemy, perchance,
Should either pierce him with a sudden thrust
Oblique, or hew him with a downright edge.
Swift, therefore, to his father's side he ran, 110
Whom reaching, in wing'd accents thus he said.

My father! I will now bring thee a shield,
An helmet, and two spears; I will enclose
Myself in armour also, and will give
Both to the herdsmen and Eumæus arms
Expedient now, and needful for us all.

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.

Run; fetch them, while I yet have arrows left,
Lest, single, I be justled from the door.

He said, and, at his word, forth went the Prince, 120
Seeking the chamber where he had secured
The armour. Thence he took four shields, eight spears,
With four hair-crested helmets, charged with which
He hasted to his father's side again,
And, arming first himself, furnish'd with arms
His two attendants. Then, all clad alike
In splendid brass, beside the dauntless Chief
Ulysses, his auxiliars firm they stood.
He, while a single arrow unemploy'd
Lay at his foot, right-aiming, ever pierced 130
Some suitor through, and heaps on heaps they fell.
But when his arrows fail'd the royal Chief,
His bow reclining at the portal's side
Against the palace-wall, he slung, himself,
A four-fold buckler on his arm, he fix'd
A casque whose crest wav'd awful o'er his brows
On his illustrious head, and fill'd his gripe
With two stout spears, well-headed, both, with brass.

There was a certain postern in the wall¹
At the gate-side, the customary pass 140
Into a narrow street, but barr'd secure.
Ulysses bade his faithful swine-herd watch
That egress, station'd near it, for it own'd
One sole approach; then Agelaüs loud
Exhorting all the suitors, thus exclaim'd.

Oh friends, will none, ascending to the door
Of yonder postern, summon to our aid
The populace, and spread a wide alarm?
So shall this archer soon have shot his last.

To whom the keeper of the goats replied 150
Melanthius. Agelaüs! Prince renown'd!
That may not be. The postern and the gate²
Neighbour too near each other, and to force
The narrow egress were a vain attempt;

¹ If the ancients found it difficult to ascertain clearly the situation of this *οπηθυρη*, well may we. The Translator has given it the position which to him appeared most probable.—There seem to have been two of these posterns, one leading to a part from which the town might be alarmed, the other to the chamber to which Telemachus went for armour. There was one, perhaps, on each side of the portal, and they appear to have been at some height above the floor.

² At which Ulysses stood.

One valiant man might thence repulse us all.
 But come—myself will furnish you with arms
 Fetch'd from above; for there, as I suppose,
 (And not elsewhere) Ulysses and his son
 Have hidden them, and there they shall be found.

So spake Melanthius, and, ascending, sought 160
 Ulysses' chambers through the winding stairs
 And gall'ries of the house. Twelve bucklers thence
 He took, as many spears, and helmets bright
 As many, shagg'd with hair, then swift return'd
 And gave them to his friends. Trembled the heart
 Of brave Ulysses, and his knees, at sight
 Of his opposers putting armour on,
 And shaking each his spear; arduous indeed
 Now seem'd his task, and in wing'd accents brief
 Thus to his son Telemachus he spake. 170

Either some woman of our train contrives
 Hard battle for us, furnishing with arms
 The suitors, or Melanthius arms them all.

Him answer'd then Telemachus discrete.
 Father, this fault was mine, and be it charged
 On none beside; I left the chamber-door
 Unbarr'd, which, more attentive than myself,
 Their spy perceived. But haste, Eumæus, shut
 The chamber-door, observing well, the while,
 If any women of our train have done 180
 This deed, or whether, as I more suspect,
 Melanthius, Dolius' son, have giv'n them arms.

Thus mutual they conferr'd; meantime, again
 Melanthius to the chamber flew in quest
 Of other arms. Eumæus, as he went,
 Mark'd him, and to Ulysses' thus he spake.

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
 Behold, the traytor, whom ourselves supposed,
 Seeks yet again the chamber! Tell me plain,
 Shall I, should I superior prove in force, 190
 Slay him, or shall I drag him thence to thee,
 That he may suffer at thy hands the doom
 Due to his treasons perpetrated oft
 Against thee, here, even in thy own house?

Then answer thus Ulysses shrewd return'd.
 I, with Telemachus, will here immew
 The lordly suitors close, rage as they may.

Ye two, the while, bind fast Melanthius' hands
 And feet behind his back, then cast him bound
 Into the chamber, and (the door secured) 200
 Pass underneath his arms a double chain,
 And by a pillar's top weigh him aloft
 Till he approach the rafters, there to endure,
 Living long time, the mis'ries he hath earned.

He spake; they prompt obey'd; together both
 They sought the chamber, whom the wretch within
 Heard not, exploring ev'ry nook for arms.
 They watching stood the door, from which, at length,
 Forth came Melanthius, bearing in one hand
 A casque, and in the other a broad shield 210
 Time-worn and chapp'd with drought, which in his youth
 Warlike Laertes had been wont to bear.
 Long time neglected it had lain, till age
 Had loosed the sutures of its bands. At once
 Both, springing on him, seized and drew him in
 Forcibly by his locks, then cast him down
 Prone on the pavement, trembling at his fate.
 With painful stricture of the cord his hands
 They bound and feet together at his back,
 As their illustrious master had enjoined, 220
 Then weigh'd him with a double chain aloft
 By a tall pillar to the palace-roof,
 And thus, deriding him, Eumæus spake.

Now, good Melanthius, on that fleecy bed
 Reclined, as well befits thee, thou wilt watch
 All night, nor when the golden dawn forsakes
 The ocean stream, will she escape thine eye,
 But thou wilt duly to the palace drive
 The fattest goats, a banquet for thy friends.

So saying, he left him in his dreadful sling. 230
 Then, arming both, and barring fast the door,
 They sought brave Laertiades again.
 And now, courageous at the portal stood
 Those four, by numbers in the interior house
 Opposed of adversaries fierce in arms,
 When Pallas, in the form and with the voice
 Approach'd of Mentor, whom Laertes' son
 Beheld, and joyful at the sight, exclaim'd.

Help, Mentor! help—now recollect a friend
 And benefactor, born when thou wast born. 240

So he, not unsuspecting that he saw
 Pallas, the heroine of heav'n. Meantime
 The suitors fill'd with menaces the dome,
 And Agelaüs, first, Damastor's son,
 In accents harsh rebuked the Goddess thus.

Beware, oh Mentor! that he lure thee not
 To oppose the suitors and to aid himself,
 For thus will we. Ulysses and his son
 Both slain, in vengeance of thy purpos'd deeds
 Against us, we will slay *thee* next, and thou
 With thy own head shalt satisfy the wrong. 250
 Your force thus quell'd in battle, all thy wealth
 Whether in house or field, mingled with his,
 We will confiscate, neither will we leave
 Or son of thine, or daughter in thy house
 Alive, nor shall thy virtuous consort more
 Within the walls of Ithaca be seen.

He ended, and his words with wrath inflamed
 Minerva's heart the more; incensed, she turn'd
 Towards Ulysses, whom she thus reproved. 260

Thou neither own'st the courage nor the force,
 Ulysses, now, which nine whole years thou showd'st
 At Ilium, waging battle obstinate
 For high-born Helen, and in horrid fight
 Destroying multitudes, till thy advice
 At last lay'd Priam's bulwark'd city low.
 Why, in possession of thy proper home
 And substance, mourn'st thou want of pow'r t'oppose
 The suitors? Stand beside me, mark my deeds,
 And thou shalt own Mentor Alcimides 270
 A valiant friend, and mindful of thy love.

She spake; nor made she victory as yet
 Entire his own, proving the valour, first,
 Both of the sire and of his glorious son,
 But, springing in a swallow's form aloft,
 Perch'd on a rafter of the splendid roof.

Then, Agelaüs animated loud
 The suitors, whom Eurynomus also roused,
 Amphimedon, and Demoptolemus,
 And Polyctorides, Pisander named, 280
 And Polybus the brave; for noblest far
 Of all the suitor-chiefs who now survived
 And fought for life were these. The bow had quell'd

And shafts, in quick succession sent, the rest.
Then Agelaüs, thus, harangued them all.

We soon shall tame, O friends, this warrior's might,
Whom Mentor, after all his airy vaunts
Hath left, and at the portal now remain
Themselves alone. Dismiss not therefore, all,
Your spears together, but with six alone 290
Assail them first; Jove willing, we shall pierce
Ulysses, and subduing him, shall slay
With ease the rest; their force is safely scorn'd.

He ceas'd; and, as he bade, six hurl'd the spear
Together; but Minerva gave them all
A devious flight; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third¹
Flung right his ashen beam pond'rous with brass
Against the wall. Then (ev'ry suitor's spear
Eluded) thus Ulysses gave the word— 300

Now friends! I counsel you that ye dismiss
Your spears at *them*, who, not content with past
Enormities, thirst also for our blood.

He said, and with unerring aim, all threw
Their glitt'ring spears. Ulysses on the ground
Stretch'd Demoptolemus; Euryades
Fell by Telemachus; the swine-herd slew
Elätus; and the keeper of the beeves
Pisander; in one moment all alike
Lay grinding with their teeth the dusty floor. 310
Back flew the suitors to the farthest wall,
On whom those valiant four advancing, each
Recover'd, quick, his weapon from the dead.
Then hurl'd the desp'rate suitors yet again
Their glitt'ring spears, but Pallas gave to each
A frustrate course; one struck a column, one
The planks of the broad portal, and a third
Flung full his ashen beam against the wall.
Yet pierced Amphimedon the Prince's wrist,
But slightly, a skin-wound, and o'er his shield 320
Ctesippus reach'd the shoulder of the good
Eumæus, but his glancing weapon swift
O'erflew the mark, and fell. And now the four,
Ulysses, dauntless Hero, and his friends

¹ The deviation of three only is described, which must be understood, therefore, as instances of the ill success of all.

All hurl'd their spears together in return,
Himself Ulysses, city-waster Chief,
Wounded Eurydamas; Ulysses' son
Amphimedon; the swine-herd Polybus;
And in his breast the keeper of the beeves
Ctesippus, glorying over whom, he cried.

330

Oh son of Polytherses! whose delight
Hath been to taunt and jeer, never again
Boast foolishly, but to the Gods commit
Thy tongue, since they are mightier far than thou.
Take this—a compensation for thy pledge
Of hospitality, the huge ox-hoof,
Which while he roam'd the palace, begging alms,
Ulysses at thy bounteous hand received.

So gloried he; then, grasping still his spear,
Ulysses pierced Damastor's son, and, next,
Telemachus, enforcing his long beam
Sheer through his bowels and his back, transpierced
Leiocritus; he prostrate smote the floor.
Then, Pallas from the lofty roof held forth
Her host-confounding Ægis o'er their heads,
With'ring their souls with fear. They through the hall
Fled, scatter'd as an herd, which rapid-wing'd
The gad-fly dissipates, infester fell

340

Of beeves, when vernal suns shine hot and long.
But, as when bow-beak'd vultures crooked-claw'd¹
Stoop from the mountains on the smaller fowl;
Terrified at the toils that spread the plain
The flocks take wing, they, darting from above,
Strike, seize, and slay, resistance or escape
Is none, the fowler's heart leaps with delight,
So they, pursuing through the spacious hall
The suitors, smote them on all sides, their heads
Sounded beneath the sword, with hideous groans
The palace rang, and the floor foamed with blood.
Then flew Leiodes to Ulysses' knees,
Which clasping, in wing'd accents thus he cried.

350

360

¹ In this simile we seem to have a curious account of the ancient manner of fowling. The nets (for *νεφεια* is used in that sense by Aristophanes) were spread on a plain; on an adjoining rising ground were stationed they who had charge of the vultures (such Homer calls them) which were trained to the sport. The alarm being given to the birds below, the vultures were loosed, when if any of them escaped their talons, the nets were ready to enclose them. See Eustathius Dacier. Clarke.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me! Never have I word
 Injurious spoken, or injurious deed
 Attempted 'gainst the women of thy house,
 But others, so transgressing, oft forbad.
 Yet they abstain'd not, and a dreadful fate
 Due to their wickedness have, therefore, found.
 But I, their soothsayer alone, must fall,
 Though unoffending; such is the return
 By mortals made for benefits received!

370

To whom Ulysses, louring dark, replied.
 Is that thy boast? Hast thou indeed for these
 The seer's high office fill'd? Then, doubtless, oft
 Thy pray'r hath been that distant far might prove
 The day delectable of my return,
 And that my consort might thy own become
 To bear thee children; wherefore thee I doom
 To a dire death which thou shalt not avoid.

So saying, he caught the faulchion from the floor
 Which Agelaüs had let fall, and smote
 Leiodes, while he kneel'd, athwart his neck
 So suddenly, that ere his tongue had ceased
 To plead for life, his head was in the dust.
 But Phemius, son of Terpius, bard divine,
 Who, through compulsion, with his song regaled
 The suitors, a like dreadful death escaped.
 Fast by the postern, harp in hand, he stood,
 Doubtful if, issuing, he should take his seat
 Beside the altar of Hercæan Jove,¹

380

390

Where oft Ulysses offer'd, and his sire,
 Fat thighs of beeves, or whether he should haste,
 An earnest suppliant, to embrace his knees.
 That course, at length, most pleased him; then, between
 The beaker and an argent-studded throne
 He grounded his sweet lyre, and seizing fast
 The Hero's knees, him, suppliant, thus address'd.

I clasp thy knees, Ulysses! oh respect
 My suit, and spare me. Thou shalt not escape
 Regret thyself hereafter, if thou slay
 Me, charmer of the woes of Gods and men.
 Self-taught am I, and treasure in my mind

400

¹ So called because he was worshipped within the *'Epkos* or wall that surrounded the court.

Themes of all argument from heav'n inspired,
 And I can sing to thee as to a God.
 Ah, then, behead me not. Put ev'n the wish
 Far from thee! for thy own beloved son
 Can witness, that not drawn by choice, or driv'n
 By stress of want, resorting to thine house
 I have regaled these revellers so oft,
 But under force of mightier far than I.

410

So he; whose words soon as the sacred might
 Heard of Telemachus, approaching quick
 His father, thus, humane, he interposed.

Hold, harm not with the vengeful faulchion's edge
 This blameless man; and we will also spare
 Medon the herald, who hath ever been
 A watchful guardian of my boyish years,
 Unless Philœtius have already slain him,
 Or else Eumæus, or thyself, perchance,
 Unconscious, in the tumult of our foes.

420

He spake, whom Medon hearing (for he lay
 Beneath a throne, and in a new-stript hide
 Enfolded, trembling with the dread of death)
 Sprang from his hiding-place, and casting off
 The skin, flew to Telemachus, embraced
 His knees, and in wing'd accents thus exclaim'd,

Prince! I am here—oh, pity me! repress
 Thine own, and pacify thy father's wrath,
 That he destroy not me, through fierce revenge
 Of their iniquities who have consumed
 His wealth, and, in their folly scorn'd his son.

430

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied,
 Smiling complacent. Fear not; my own son
 Hath pleaded for thee. Therefore (taught thyself
 That truth) teach others the superior worth
 Of benefits with injuries compared.
 But go ye forth, thou and the sacred bard,
 That ye may sit distant in yonder court
 From all this carnage, while I give command,
 Myself, concerning it, to those within.

440

He ceas'd; they going forth, took each his seat
 Beside Jove's altar, but with careful looks
 Suspicious, dreading without cease the sword.
 Meantime Ulysses search'd his hall, in quest
 Of living foes, if any still survived

Unpunish'd; but he found them all alike
 Welt'ring in dust and blood; num'rous they lay
 Like fishes when they strew the sinuous shore
 Of Ocean, from the grey gulph drawn aground
 In nets of many a mesh; they on the sands
 Lie spread, athirst for the salt wave, till hot
 The gazing sun dries all their life away;
 So lay the suitors heap'd, and thus at length
 The prudent Chief gave order to his son.

450

Telemachus! bid Euryclea come
 Quickly, the nurse, to whom I would impart
 The purpose which now occupies me most.

He said; obedient to his sire, the Prince
 Smote on the door, and summon'd loud the nurse.

Arise thou ancient governess of all
 Our female menials, and come forth; attend
 My father; he hath somewhat for thine ear.

460

So he; nor flew his words useless away,
 For, throwing wide the portal, forth she came,
 And, by Telemachus conducted, found
 Ere long Ulysses amid all the slain,
 With blood defiled and dust; dread he appear'd
 As from the pastur'd ox newly-devoured
 The lion stalking back; his ample chest
 With gory drops and his broad cheeks are hung,
 Tremendous spectacle! such seem'd the Chief,
 Blood-stain'd all over. She, the carnage spread
 On all sides seeing, and the pools of blood,
 Felt impulse forcible to publish loud
 That wond'rous triumph; but her Lord repress'd
 The shout of rapture ere it burst abroad,
 And in wing'd accents thus his will enforced.

470

Silent exult, O ancient matron dear!
 Shout not, be still. Unholy is the voice
 Of loud thanksgiving over slaughter'd men.
 Their own atrocious deeds and the Gods' will
 Have slain all these; for whether noble guest
 Arrived or base, they scoff'd at all alike,
 And for their wickedness have, therefore, died.
 But say; of my domestic women, who
 Have scorn'd me, and whom find'st thou innocent?

480

To whom good Euryclea thus replied.
 My son! I will declare the truth; thou keep'st

Female domestics fifty in thy house,
 Whom we have made intelligent to comb 490
 The fleece, and to perform whatever task.
 Of these, twice six have overpass'd the bounds
 Of modesty, respecting neither me,
 Nor yet the Queen; and thy own son, adult
 So lately, no permission had from her
 To regulate the women of her train.
 But I am gone, I fly with what hath pass'd
 To the Queen's ear, who nought suspects, so sound
 She sleeps, by some divinity composed.

Then answer, thus, Ulysses wise returned. 500
 Hush, and disturb her not. Go. Summon first
 Those wantons, who have long deserved to die.

He ceas'd; then issued forth the ancient dame
 To summon those bad women, and, meantime,
 Calling his son, Philœtius, and Eumæus,
 Ulysses in wing'd accents thus began.

Bestir ye, and remove the dead; command
 Those women also to your help; then cleanse
 With bibulous sponges and with water all
 The seats and tables; when ye shall have thus 510
 Set all in order, lead those women forth,
 And in the centre of the spacious court,
 Between the scull'ry and the outer-wall
 Smite them with your broad faulchions till they lose
 In death the mem'ry of their secret loves
 Indulged with wretches lawless as themselves.

He ended, and the damsels came at once
 All forth, lamenting, and with tepid tears
 Show'ring the ground; with mutual labour, first,
 Bearing the bodies forth into the court, 520
 They lodged them in the portico; meantime
 Ulysses, stern, enjoin'd them haste, and, urged
 By sad necessity, they bore all out.

With sponges and with water, next, they cleansed
 The thrones and tables, while Telemachus
 Beesom'd the floor, Eumæus in that work
 Aiding him and the keeper of the beeves,
 And those twelve damsels bearing forth the soil.
 Thus, order giv'n to all within, they, next,
 Led forth the women, whom they shut between 530
 The scull'ry and the outer-wall in close

Durance, from which no pris'ner could escape,
And thus Telemachus discrete began.

An honourable death is not for these
By my advice, who have so often heap'd
Reproach on mine and on my mother's head,
And held lewd commerce with the suitor-train.

He said, and noosing a strong galley-rope
To an huge column, led the cord around
The spacious dome, suspended so aloft
That none with quiv'ring feet might reach the floor. 54°
As when a flight of doves ent'ring the copse,
Or broad-wing'd thrushes, strike against the net
Within, ill rest, entangled, there they find,
So they, suspended by the neck, expired
All in one line together. Death abhorr'd!
With restless feet awhile they beat the air,
Then ceas'd. And now through vestibule and hall
They led Melanthius forth. With ruthless steel
They pared away his ears and nose, pluck'd forth 55°
His parts of shame, destin'd to feed the dogs,
And, still indignant, lopp'd his hands and feet.
Then, laving each his feet and hands, they sought
Again Ulysses; all their work was done,
And thus the Chief to Euryclea spake.

Bring blast-averting sulphur, nurse, bring fire!
That I may fumigate my walls; then bid
Penelope with her attendants down,
And summon all the women of her train.

But Euryclea, thus, his nurse, replied. 56°
My son! thou hast well said; yet will I first
Serve thee with vest and mantle. Stand not here
In thy own palace cloath'd with tatters foul
And beggarly—she will abhor the sight.

Then answer thus Ulysses wise return'd.
Not so. Bring fire for fumigation first.

He said; nor Euryclea his lov'd nurse
Longer delay'd, but sulphur brought and fire,
When he with purifying steams, himself,
Visited ev'ry part, the banquet-room, 57°
The vestibule, the court. Ranging meantime
His house magnificent, the matron call'd
The women to attend their Lord in haste,
And they attended, bearing each a torch.

Then gather'd they around him all, sincere
Welcoming his return; with close embrace
Enfolding him, each kiss'd his brows, and each
His shoulders, and his hands lock'd fast in hers.
He, irresistible the impulse felt
To sigh and weep, well recognizing all.

BOOK XXIII

ARGUMENT

ULYSSES with some difficulty, convinces Penelope of his identity, who at length, overcome by force of evidence, receives him to her arms with transport. He entertains her with a recital of his adventures, and in his narration the principal events of the poem are recapitulated. In the morning, Ulysses, Telemachus, the herdsman and the swine-herd depart into the country.

AND now, with exultation loud the nurse
Again ascended, eager to apprise
The Queen of her Ulysses' safe return;
Joy braced her knees, with nimbleness of youth
She stepp'd, and at her ear, her thus bespake.
Arise, Penelope! dear daughter, see
With thy own eyes thy daily wish fulfill'd.
Ulysses is arrived; hath reach'd at last
His native home, and all those suitors proud
Hath slaughter'd, who his family distress'd,
His substance wasted, and controul'd his son. 10
To whom Penelope discrete replied.
Dear nurse! the Gods have surely ta'en away
Thy judgment; they transform the wise to fools,
And fools conduct to wisdom, and have marr'd
Thy intellect, who wast discrete before.
Why wilt thou mock me, wretched as I am,
With tales extravagant? and why disturb
Those slumbers sweet that seal'd so fast mine eyes?
For such sweet slumbers have I never known 20
Since my Ulysses on his voyage sail'd
To that bad city never to be named.
Down instant to thy place again—begone—
For had another of my maidens dared
Disturb my sleep with tidings wild as these,
I had dismiss'd her down into the house
More roughly; but thine age excuses *thee*.
To whom the venerable matron thus.
I mock thee not, my child; no—he is come—
Himself, Ulysses, even as I say, 30

That stranger, object of the scorn of all.
 Telemachus well knew his sire arrived,
 But prudently conceal'd the tidings, so
 To insure the more the suitors' punishment.

So Euryclea she transported heard,
 And springing from the bed, wrapp'd in her arms
 The ancient woman shedding tears of joy,
 And in wing'd accents ardent thus replied.

Ah then, dear nurse inform me! tell me true!

Hath he indeed arriv'd as thou declar'st?

40

How dared he to assail alone that band
 Of shameless ones, for ever swarming here?

Then Euryclea, thus, matron belov'd.

I nothing saw or knew; but only heard
 Groans of the wounded; in th' interior house
 We trembling sat, and ev'ry door was fast.

Thus all remain'd till by his father sent,

Thy own son call'd me forth. Going, I found

Ulysses compass'd by the slaughter'd dead.

They cover'd wide the pavement, heaps on heaps.

50

It would have cheer'd thy heart to have beheld

Thy husband lion-like with crimson stains

Of slaughter and of dust all dappled o'er,

Heap'd in the portal, at this moment, lie

Their bodies, and he fumigates, meantime,

The house with sulphur and with flames of fire,

And hath, himself, sent me to bid thee down.

Follow me, then, that ye may give your hearts

To gladness, both, for ye have much endured;

But the event, so long your soul's desire,

60

Is come; himself hath to his household Gods

Alive return'd, thee and his son he finds

Unharm'd and at your home, nor hath he left

Unpunish'd one of all his enemies.

Her answer'd, then, Penelope discrete.

Ah dearest nurse! indulge not to excess

This dang'rous triumph. Thou art well apprized

How welcome his appearance here would prove

To all, but chief, to me, and to his son,

Fruit of our love. But these things are not so;

70

Some God, resentful of their evil deeds,

And of their biting contumely severe,

Hath slain those proud; for whether noble guest

Arrived or base, alike they scoff'd at all,
 And for their wickedness have therefore died.
 But my Ulysses distant far, I know,
 From Greece hath perish'd, and returns no more.

To whom thus Euryclea, nurse belov'd.
 What word my daughter had escaped thy lips,
 Who thus affirm'st thy husband, now within 80
 And at his own hearth-side, for ever lost?
 Canst thou be thus incredulous? Hear again—
 I give thee yet proof past dispute, his scar
 Imprinted by a wild-boar's iv'ry tusk.
 Laving him I remark'd it, and desired,
 Myself, to tell thee, but he, ever-wise,
 Compressing with both hands my lips, forbad.
 Come, follow me. My life shall be the pledge.
 If I deceive thee, kill me as thou wilt.

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied. 90
 Ah, dearest nurse, sagacious as thou art,
 Thou little know'st to scan the counsels wise
 Of the eternal Gods. But let us seek
 My son, however, that I may behold
 The suitors dead, and him by whom they died.

So saying, she left her chamber, musing much
 In her descent, whether to interrogate
 Her Lord apart, or whether to imprint,
 At once, his hands with kisses and his brows.
 O'erpassing light the portal-step of stone 100
 She enter'd. He sat opposite, illumed
 By the hearth's sprightly blaze, and close before
 A pillar of the dome, waiting with eyes
 Downcast, till viewing him, his noble spouse
 Should speak to him; but she sat silent long,
 Her faculties in mute amazement held.
 By turns she riveted her eyes on his,
 And, seeing him so foul attired, by turns
 She recognized him not; then spake her son
 Telemachus, and her silence thus reprov'd. 110

My mother! ah my hapless and my most
 Obdurate mother! wherefore thus aloof
 Shunn'st thou my father, neither at his side
 Sitting affectionate, nor utt'ring word?
 Another wife lives not who could endure
 Such distance from her husband new-return'd

To his own country in the twentieth year,
 After much hardship; but thy heart is still
 As ever, less impressible than stone,

To whom Penelope, discrete, replied.

120

I am all wonder, O my son; my soul
 Is stunn'd within me; pow'r to speak to him
 Or to interrogate him have I none,
 Or ev'n to look on him; but if indeed
 He be Ulysses, and have reach'd his home,
 I shall believe it soon, by proof convinced
 Of signs known only to himself and me.

She said; then smiled the Hero toil-inured,
 And in wing'd accents thus spake to his son.

Leave thou, Telemachus, thy mother here
 To sift and prove me; she will know me soon
 More certainly; she sees me ill-attired
 And squalid now; therefore she shews me scorn,
 And no belief hath yet that I am he.

130

But we have need, thou and myself, of deep
 Deliberation. If a man have slain
 One only citizen, who leaves behind
 Few interested to avenge his death,
 Yet, flying, he forsakes both friends and home;
 But we have slain the noblest Princes far
 Of Ithaca, on whom our city most
 Depended; therefore, I advise thee, think!

140

Him, prudent, then answer'd Telemachus.

Be that thy care, my father! for report
 Proclaims *thee* shrewdest of mankind, with whom
 In ingenuity may none compare.

Lead thou; to follow thee shall be our part
 With prompt alacrity; nor shall, I judge,
 Courage be wanting to our utmost force.

Thus then replied Ulysses, ever-wise.

150

To me the safest counsel and the best
 Seems this. First wash yourselves, and put ye on
 Your tunics; bid ye, next, the maidens take
 Their best attire, and let the bard divine
 Harping melodious play a sportive dance,
 That, whether passenger or neighbour near,
 All may imagine nuptials held within.
 So shall not loud report that we have slain
 All those, alarm the city, till we gain

Our woods and fields, where, once arriv'd, such plans 160
We will devise, as Jove shall deign to inspire.

He spake, and all, obedient, in the bath
First laved themselves, then put their tunics on;
The damsels also dress'd, and the sweet bard,
Harping melodious, kindled strong desire
In all, of jocund song and graceful dance.

The palace under all its vaulted roof
Remurmur'd to the feet of sportive youths
And cinctured maidens, while no few abroad,
Hearing such revelry within, remark'd—

170

The Queen with many wooers, weds at last.
Ah fickle and unworthy fair! too frail
Always to keep inviolate the house
Of her first Lord, and wait for his return.

So spake the people; but they little knew
What had befall'n. Eurynome, meantime,
With bath and unction serv'd the illustrious Chief
Ulysses, and he saw himself attired
Royally once again in his own house.

180

Then, Pallas over all his features shed
Superior beauty, dignified his form
With added amplitude, and pour'd his curls
Like hyacinthine flow'rs down from his brows.

As when some artist by Minerva made
And Vulcan, wise to execute all tasks
Ingenious, borders silver with a wreath
Of gold, accomplishing a graceful work,
Such grace the Goddess o'er his ample chest
Copious diffused, and o'er his manly brows.

He, godlike, stepping from the bath, resumed
His former seat magnificent, and sat
Opposite to the Queen, to whom he said.

190

Penelope! the Gods to thee have giv'n
Of all thy sex, the most obdurate heart.
Another wife lives not who could endure
Such distance from her husband new-return'd
To his own country in the twentieth year,
After such hardship. But prepare me, nurse,
A bed, for solitary I must sleep,
Since she is iron, and feels not for me.

200

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
I neither magnify thee, sir! nor yet

Depreciate thee, nor is my wonder such
 As hurries me at once into thy arms,
 Though my remembrance perfectly retains,
 Such as he was, Ulysses, when he sail'd
 On board his bark from Ithaca—Go, nurse,
 Prepare his bed, but not within the walls
 Of his own chamber built with his own bands.
 Spread it without, and spread it well with warm
 Mantles, with fleeces, and with richest rugs. 210

So spake she, proving him,¹ and not untouch'd
 With anger at that word, thus he replied.

Penelope, that order grates my ear.

Who hath displaced my bed? The task were hard
 E'en to an artist; other than a God
 None might with ease remove it; as for man,
 It might defy the stoutest in his prime
 Of youth, to heave it to a different spot.

For in that bed elaborate, a sign,
 A special sign consists; I was myself
 The artificer; I fashion'd it alone. 220

Within the court a leafy olive grew
 Lofty, luxuriant, pillar-like in girth.
 Around this tree I built, with massy stones
 Cemented close, my chamber, roof'd it o'er,
 And hung the glutinated portals on.
 I lopp'd the ample foliage and the boughs,
 And sev'ring near the root its solid bole,
 Smooth'd all the rugged stump with skilful hand, 230

And wrought it to a pedestal well squared
 And modell'd by the line. I wimbled, next,
 The frame throughout, and from the olive-stump
 Beginning, fashion'd the whole bed above
 Till all was finish'd, plated o'er with gold,
 With silver, and with ivory, and beneath
 Close interlaced with purple cordage strong.
 Such sign I give thee. But if still it stand
 Unmoved, or if some other, sev'ring sheer
 The olive from its bottom, have displaced
 My bed—that matter is best known to thee. 240

¹ The proof consisted in this—that the bed being attached to the stump of an olive tree still rooted, was immovable, and Ulysses having made it himself, no person present, he must needs be apprized of the impossibility of her orders, if he were indeed Ulysses; accordingly, this demonstration of his identity satisfies all her scruples.

He ceas'd; she, conscious of the sign so plain
 Giv'n by Ulysses, heard with flutt'ring heart
 And fault'ring knees that proof. Weeping she ran
 Direct toward him, threw her arms around
 The Hero, kiss'd his forehead, and replied.

Ah my Ulysses! pardon me—frown not—
 Thou, who at other times hast ever shewn
 Superior wisdom! all our griefs have flow'd
 From the Gods' will; they envied us the bliss 250
 Of undivided union sweet enjoy'd

Through life, from early youth to latest age.

No. Be not angry now; pardon the fault
 That I embraced thee not as soon as seen,
 For horror hath not ceased to overwhelm
 My soul, lest some false alien should, perchance,
 Beguile me, for our house draws num'rous such.

Jove's daughter, Argive Helen, ne'er had given
 Free entertainment to a stranger's love,
 Had she foreknown that the heroic sons 260
 Of Greece would bring her to her home again.

But heav'n incited her to that offence,
 Who never, else, had even in her thought
 Harbour'd the foul enormity, from which
 Originatèd even our distress.

But now, since evident thou hast described
 Our bed, which never mortal yet beheld,
 Ourselves except and Actoris my own
 Attendant, giv'n me when I left my home
 By good Icarus, and who kept the door, 270
 Though hard to be convinced, at last I yield.

So saying, she awaken'd in his soul
 Pity and grief; and folding in his arms
 His blameless consort beautiful, he wept.
 Welcome as land appears to those who swim,
 Whose gallant bark Neptune with rolling waves
 And stormy winds hath sunk in the wide sea,
 A mariner or two, perchance, escape
 The foamy flood, and, swimming, reach the land,
 Weary indeed, and with incrustèd brine 280

All rough, but oh, how glad to climb the coast!
 So welcome in her eyes Ulysses seem'd,
 Around whose neck winding her snowy arms,
 She clung as she would loose him never more.

Thus had they wept till rosy-finger'd morn
 Had found them weeping, but Minerva check'd
 Night's almost finish'd course, and held, meantime,
 The golden dawn close pris'ner in the Deep,
 Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
 Lampus and Phaëton that furnish light 290
 To all the earth, and join them to the yoke.
 Then thus, Ulysses to Penelope.

My love; we have not yet attain'd the close
 Of all our sufferings, but unmeasured toil
 Arduous remains, which I must still atchieve.
 For so the spirit of the Theban seer
 Inform'd me, on that day, when to enquire
 Of mine and of my people's safe return
 I journey'd down to Pluto's drear abode.
 But let us hence to bed, there to enjoy 300
 Tranquil repose. My love, make no delay.

Him answer'd then prudent Penelope.
 Thou shalt to bed at whatsoever time
 Thy soul desires, since the immortal Gods
 Give thee to me and to thy home again.
 But, thou hast spoken from the seer of Thebes
 Of arduous toils yet unperform'd; declare
 What toils? Thou wilt disclose them, as I judge,
 Hereafter, and why not disclose them now?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied. 310
 Ah conversant with woe! why would'st thou learn
 That tale? but I will tell it thee at large.
 Thou wilt not hear with joy, nor shall myself
 With joy rehearse it; for he bade me seek
 City after city, bearing, as I go,
 A shapely oar, till I shall find, at length,
 A people who the sea know not, nor eat
 Food salted; they trim galley crimson-prow'd
 Have ne'er beheld, nor yet smooth-shaven oar
 With which the vessel wing'd scuds o'er the waves. 320
 He gave me also this authentic sign,
 Which I will tell thee. In what place so'er
 I chance to meet a trav'ler who shall name
 The oar on my broad shoulder borne, a van;¹
 He bade me, planting it on the same spot,
 Worship the King of Ocean with a bull,

¹ See the note on the same passage, Book XI.

A ram, and a lascivious boar, then seek
 My home again, and sacrifice at home
 An hecatomb to the immortal Gods
 Inhabitants of the expanse above. 33°
 So shall I die, at length, the gentlest death
 Remote from Ocean; it shall find me late,
 In soft serenity of age, the Chief
 Of a blest people.—Thus he prophesied.

Him answer'd then Penelope discrete.
 If heav'n appoint thee in old age a lot
 More tranquil, hope thence springs of thy escape
 Some future day from all thy threaten'd woes.

Such was their mutual conf'rence sweet; meantime
 Eurynome and Euryclea dress'd 34°

Their bed by light of the clear torch, and when
 Dispatchful they had spread it broad and deep,
 The ancient nurse to her own bed retired.

Then came Eurynome, to whom in trust
 The chambers appertain'd, and with a torch
 Conducted them to rest; she introduced
 The happy pair, and went; transported they
 To rites connubial intermitted long,
 And now recover'd, gave themselves again.¹

Meantime, the Prince, the herdsman, and the good 35°
 Eumæus, giving rest each to his feet,
 Ceased from the dance; they made the women cease
 Also, and to their sev'ral chambers all
 Within the twilight edifice repair'd.

At length, with conjugal endearment both
 Satiated, Ulysses tasted and his spouse
 The sweets of mutual converse. She rehearsed,
 Noblest of women, all her num'rous woes
 Beneath that roof sustain'd, while she beheld
 The profligacy of the suitor-throng, 36°
 Who in their wooing had consumed his herds
 And fatted flocks, and drawn his vessels dry;
 While brave Ulysses, in his turn, to her
 Related his successes and escapes,
 And his afflictions also; he told her all;

¹ Aristophanes the grammarian and Aristarchus chose that the Odyssey should end here; but the story is not properly concluded till the tumult occasioned by the slaughter of so many Princes being composed, Ulysses finds himself once more in peaceful possession of his country.

She listen'd charm'd, nor slumber on his eyes
Fell once, or ere he had rehearsed the whole.
Beginning, he discoursed, how, at the first
He conquer'd in Ciconia, and thence reach'd
The fruitful shores of the Lotophagi; 370
The Cyclops' deeds he told her next, and how
He well avenged on him his slaughter'd friends
Whom, pitiless, the monster had devour'd.
How to the isle of Æolus he came,
Who welcom'd him and safe dismiss'd him thence,
Although not destin'd to regain so soon
His native land; for o'er the fishy deep
Loud tempests snatch'd him sighing back again.
How, also at Telepylus he arrived,
Town of the Læstrygonians, who destroyed 380
His ships with all their mariners, his own
Except, who in his sable bark escaped.
Of guileful Circe too he spake, deep-skill'd
In various artifice, and how he reach'd
With sails and oars the squalid realms of death,
Desirous to consult the prophet there
Theban Tiresias, and how there he view'd
All his companions, and the mother bland
Who bare him, nourisher of his infant years.
How, next he heard the Sirens in one strain 390
All chiming sweet, and how he reach'd the rocks
Erratic, Scylla and Charybdis dire,
Which none secure from injury may pass.
Then, how the partners of his voyage slew
The Sun's own beeves, and how the Thund'rer Jove
Hurl'd down his smoky bolts into his bark,
Depriving him at once of all his crew,
Whose dreadful fate he yet, himself, escaped.
How to Ogygia's isle he came, where dwelt
The nymph Calypso, who, enamour'd, wish'd 400
To espouse him, and within her spacious grot
Detain'd, and fed, and promis'd him a life
Exempt for ever from the sap of age,
But him moved not. How, also, he arrived
After much toil, on the Phæacian coast,
Where ev'ry heart revered him as a God,
And whence, enriching him with brass and gold,
And costly raiment first, they sent him home.

At this last word, oblivious slumber sweet
Fell on him, dissipating all his cares. 410

Meantime, Minerva, Goddess azure-eyed,
On other thoughts intent, soon as she deem'd
Ulysses with connubial joys sufficed,
And with sweet sleep, at once from Ocean rous'd
The golden-axled chariot of the morn
To illumine earth. Then from his fleecy couch
The Hero sprang, and thus his spouse enjoined.

Oh consort dear! already we have striv'n
Against our lot, till wearied with the toil,
My painful absence, thou with ceaseless tears 420
Deploring, and myself in deep distress
Withheld reluctant from my native shores
By Jove and by the other pow'rs of heav'n.
But since we have in this delightful bed
Met once again, watch thou and keep secure
All my domestic treasures, and ere long
I will replace my num'rous sheep destroy'd
By those imperious suitors, and the Greeks
Shall add yet others till my folds be fill'd.

But to the woodlands go I now—to see 430
My noble father, who for my sake mourns
Continual; as for thee, my love, although
I know thee wise, I give thee thus in charge.
The sun no sooner shall ascend, than fame
Shall wide divulge the deed that I have done,
Slaying the suitors under my own roof.
Thou, therefore, with thy maidens, sit retired
In thy own chamber at the palace-top,
Nor question ask, nor, curious, look abroad.

He said, and cov'ring with his radiant arms 440
His shoulders, called Telemachus; he roused
Eumæus and the herdsman too, and bade
All take their martial weapons in their hands,
Not disobedient they, as he enjoin'd,
Put armour on, and issued from the gates
Ulysses at their head. The earth was now
Enlighten'd, but Minerva them in haste
Led forth into the fields, unseen by all.

BOOK XXIV

ARGUMENT

MERCURY conducts the souls of the suitors down to Ades. Ulysses discovers himself to Laertes, and quells, by the aid of Minerva, an insurrection of the people resenting the death of the suitors.

AND now Cyllenian Hermes summon'd forth
 The spirits of the suitors; waving wide
 The golden wand of pow'r to seal all eyes
 In slumber, and to ope them wide again,
 He drove them gibb'ring down into the shades,¹
 As when the bats within some hallow'd cave
 Flit squeaking all around, for if but one
 Fall from the rock, the rest all follow him,
 In such connexion mutual they adhere,
 So, after bounteous Mercury, the ghosts,
 Troop'd downward gibb'ring all the dreary way.¹ 10
 The Ocean's flood and the Leucadian rock,
 The Sun's gate also and the land of Dreams
 They pass'd, whence, next, into the meads they came
 Of Asphodel, by shadowy forms possess'd,
 Simulars of the dead. They found the souls
 Of brave Pelides there, and of his friend
 Patroclus, of Antilochus renown'd,
 And of the mightier Ajax, for his form
 And bulk (Achilles sole except) of all 20
 The sons of the Achaians most admired.
 These waited on Achilles. Then, appear'd
 The mournful ghost of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus, compass'd by the ghosts of all
 Who shared his fate beneath Ægisthus' roof,
 And him the ghost of Peleus' son bespake.
 Atrides! of all Heroes we esteem'd
 Thee dearest to the Gods, for that thy sway

¹ Τριζύσαι—τερριγύλαι—the ghosts

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.

SHAKSPEARE.

Extended over such a glorious host
 At Ilium, scene of sorrow to the Greeks. 30
 But Fate, whose ruthless force none may escape
 Of all who breathe, pursued thee from the first.
 Thou should'st have perish'd full of honour, full
 Of royalty, at Troy; so all the Greeks
 Had rais'd thy tomb, and thou hadst then bequeath'd
 Great glory to thy son; but Fate ordain'd
 A death, oh how deplorable! for thee.

To whom Atrides' spirit thus replied.
 Blest son of Peleus, semblance of the Gods,
 At Ilium, far from Argos, fall'n! for whom 40
 Contending, many a Trojan, many a Chief
 Of Greece died also, while in eddies whelm'd
 Of dust thy vastness spread the plain,¹ nor thee
 The chariot aught or steed could int'rest more!
 All day we waged the battle, nor at last
 Desisted, but for tempests sent from Jove.
 At length we bore into the Grecian fleet
 Thy body from the field; there, first, we cleansed
 With tepid baths and oil'd thy shapely corse,
 Then placed thee on thy bier, while many a Greek 50
 Around thee wept, and shore his locks for thee.
 Thy mother, also, hearing of thy death
 With her immortal nymphs from the abyss
 Arose and came; terrible was the sound
 On the salt flood; a panic seized the Greeks,
 And ev'ry warrior had return'd on board
 That moment, had not Nestor, ancient Chief,
 Illumed by long experience, interposed,
 His counsels, ever wisest, wisest proved
 Then also, and he thus address'd the host. 60

Sons of Achaia; fly not; stay, ye Greeks!
 Thetis arrives with her immortal nymphs
 From the abyss, to visit her dead son.

So he; and, by his admonition stay'd,
 The Greeks fled not. Then, all around thee stood
 The daughters of the Ancient of the Deep,
 Mourning disconsolate; with heav'nly robes
 They clothed thy corse, and all the Muses nine
 Deplored thee in full choir with sweetest tones

¹ —Behemoth, biggest born of earth,
 Upheav'd his vastness.

Responsive, nor one Grecian hadst thou seen 70
 Dry-eyed, such grief the Muses moved in all.
 Full sev'nteen days we, day and night, deplored
 Thy death, both Gods in heav'n and men below,
 But, on the eighteenth day, we gave thy corse
 Its burning, and fat sheep around thee slew
 Num'rous, with many a pastur'd ox moon-horn'd.
 We burn'd thee clothed in vesture of the Gods,
 With honey and with oil feeding the flames
 Abundant, while Achaia's Heroes arm'd, 80
 Both horse and foot, encompassing thy pile,
 Clash'd on their shields, and deaf'ning was the din.
 But when the fires of Vulcan had at length
 Consumed thee, at the dawn we stored thy bones
 In unguent and in undiluted wine;
 For Thetis gave to us a golden vase
 Twin-ear'd, which she profess'd to have received
 From Bacchus, work divine of Vulcan's hand.
 Within that vase, Achilles, treasured lie
 Thine and the bones of thy departed friend
 Patroclus, but a sep'rate urn we gave 90
 To those of brave Antilochus, who most
 Of all thy friends at Ilium shared thy love
 And thy respect, thy friend Patroclus slain.
 Around both urns we piled a noble tomb,
 (We warriors of the sacred Argive host)
 On a tall promontory shooting far
 Into the spacious Hellespont, that all
 Who live, and who shall yet be born, may view
 Thy record, even from the distant waves.
 Then, by permission from the Gods obtain'd, 100
 To the Achaian Chiefs in circus met
 Thetis appointed games. I have beheld
 The burial rites of many an Hero bold,
 When, on the death of some great Chief, the youths
 Girding their loins anticipate the prize,
 But sight of those with wonder fill'd me most,
 So glorious past all others were the games
 By silver-footed Thetis giv'n for thee,
 For thou wast ever favour'd of the Gods.
 Thus, hast thou not, Achilles! although dead, 110
 Foregone thy glory, but thy fair report
 Is universal among all mankind;

But, as for me, what recompense had I,
My warfare closed? for whom, at my return,
Jove framed such dire destruction by the hands
Of fell Ægisthus and my murth'ress wife.

Thus, mutual, they conferr'd; meantime approach'd,
Swift messenger of heav'n, the Argicide,
Conducting thither all the shades of those
Slain by Ulysses. At that sight amazed 120
Both moved toward them. Agamemnon's shade
Knew well Amphimedon, for he had been
Erewhile his father's guest in Ithaca,
And thus the spirit of Atreus' son began.

Amphimedon! by what disastrous chance,
Coœvals as ye seem, and of an air
Distinguish'd all, descend ye to the Deeps?
For not the chosen youths of a whole town
Should form a nobler band. Perish'd ye sunk 130
Amid vast billows and rude tempests raised
By Neptune's pow'r? or on dry land through force
Of hostile multitudes, while cutting off
Beeves from the herd, or driving flocks away?
Or fighting for your city and your wives?
Resolve me? I was once a guest of yours.
Remember'st not what time at your abode
With godlike Menelaus I arrived,
That we might win Ulysses with his fleet
To follow us to Troy? scarce we prevail'd
At last to gain the city-waster Chief, 140
And, after all, consumed a whole month more
The wide sea traversing from side to side.

To whom the spirit of Amphimedon.
Illustrious Agamemnon, King of men!
All this I bear in mind, and will rehearse
The manner of our most disastrous end.
Believing brave Ulysses lost, we woo'd
Meantime his wife; she our detested suit
Would neither ratify nor yet refuse, 150
But, planning for us a tremendous death,
This novel stratagem, at last, devised.
Beginning, in her own recess, a web
Of slend'rest thread, and of a length and breadth
Unusual, thus the suitors she address'd.

Princes, my suitors! since the noble Chief

Ulysses is no more, enforce not yet
 My nuptials; wait till I shall finish first
 A fun'ral robe (lest all my threads decay)
 Which for the ancient Hero I prepare,
 Laertes, looking for the mournful hour
 When fate shall snatch him to eternal rest;
 Else, I the censure dread of all my sex,
 Should he so wealthy, want at last a shroud.

160

So spake the Queen; we, unsuspecting all,
 With her request complied. Thenceforth, all day
 She wove the ample web, and by the aid
 Of torches ravell'd it again at night.
 Three years she thus by artifice our suit
 Eluded safe, but when the fourth arrived,
 And the same season, after many moons
 And fleeting days, return'd, a damsel then
 Of her attendants, conscious of the fraud,
 Reveal'd it, and we found her pulling loose
 The splendid web. Thus, through constraint, at length,
 She finish'd it, and in her own despatch.

170

But when the Queen produced, at length, her work
 Finish'd, new-blanch'd, bright as the sun or moon,
 Then came Ulysses, by some adverse God
 Conducted, to a cottage on the verge
 Of his own fields, in which his swine-herd dwells;

180

There also the illustrious Hero's son
 Arrived soon after, in his sable bark
 From sandy Pylus borne; they, plotting both
 A dreadful death for all the suitors, sought
 Our glorious city, but Ulysses last,
 And first Telemachus. The father came
 Conducted by his swine-herd, and attired
 In tatters foul; a mendicant he seem'd,
 Time-worn, and halted on a staff. So clad,
 And ent'ring on the sudden, he escaped
 All knowledge even of our eldest there,
 And we reviled and smote him; he although
 Beneath his own roof smitten and reproach'd,
 With patience suffer'd it awhile, but roused
 By inspiration of Jove Ægis-arm'd
 At length, in concert with his son convey'd
 To his own chamber his resplendent arms,
 There lodg'd them safe, and barr'd the massy doors

190

Then, in his subtlety he bade the Queen
 A contest institute with bow and rings 200
 Between the hapless suitors, whence ensued
 Slaughter to all. No suitor there had pow'r
 To overcome the stubborn bow that mock'd
 All our attempts; and when the weapon huge
 At length was offer'd to Ulysses' hands,
 With clamour'd menaces we bade the swain
 Withhold it from him, plead he as he might;
 Telemachus alone with loud command,
 Bade give it him, and the illustrious Chief
 Receiving in his hand the bow, with ease 210
 Bent it, and sped a shaft through all the rings.
 Then, springing to the portal steps, he pour'd
 The arrows forth, peer'd terrible around,
 Pierced King Antinoüs, and, aiming sure
 His deadly darts, pierced others after him,
 Till in one common carnage heap'd we lay.
 Some God, as plain appear'd, vouchsafed them aid,
 Such ardour urged them, and with such dispatch
 They slew us on all sides; hideous were heard
 The groans of dying men fell'd to the earth 220
 With head-strokes rude, and the floor swam with blood.
 Such, royal Agamemnon! was the fate
 By which we perish'd, all whose bodies lie
 Unburied still, and in Ulysses' house,
 For tidings none have yet our friends alarm'd
 And kindred, who might cleanse from sable gore
 Our clotted wounds, and mourn us on the bier,
 Which are the rightful privilege of the dead.
 Him answer'd, then, the shade of Atreus' son.
 Oh happy offspring of Laertes! shrewd 230
 Ulysses! matchless valour thou hast shewn
 Recov'ring thus thy wife; nor less appears
 The virtue of Icarius' daughter wise,
 The chaste Penelope, so faithful found
 To her Ulysses, husband of her youth.
 His glory, by superior merit earn'd,
 Shall never die, and the immortal Gods
 Shall make Penelope a theme of song
 Delightful in the ears of all mankind.
 Not such was Clytemnestra, daughter vile 240
 Of Tyndarus; she shed her husband's blood,

And shall be chronicled in song a wife
Of hateful memory, by whose offence
Even the virtuous of her sex are shamed.

Thus they, beneath the vaulted roof obscure
Of Pluto's house, conferring mutual stood.

Meantime, descending from the city-gates,
Ulysses, by his son and by his swains
Follow'd, arrived at the delightful farm
Which old Laertes had with strenuous toil
Himself long since acquired. There stood his house
Encompass'd by a bow'r in which the hinds
Who served and pleased him, ate, and sat, and slept.
An ancient woman, a Sicilian, dwelt
There also, who in that sequester'd spot
Attended diligent her aged Lord.

250

Then thus Ulysses to his followers spake.
Haste now, and, ent'ring, slay ye of the swine
The best for our regale; myself, the while,
Will prove my father, if his eye hath still
Discernment of me, or if absence long
Have worn the knowledge of me from his mind.

260

He said, and gave into his servants' care
His arms; they swift proceeded to the house,
And to the fruitful grove himself as swift
To prove his father. Down he went at once
Into the spacious garden-plot, but found
Nor Dolius there, nor any of his sons
Or servants; they were occupied elsewhere,
And, with the ancient hind himself, employ'd
Collecting thorns with which to fence the grove.
In that umbrageous spot he found alone
Laertes, with his hoe clearing a plant;

270

Sordid his tunic was, with many a patch
Mended unseemly; leathern were his greaves,
Thong-tied and also patch'd, a frail defence
Against sharp thorns, while gloves secured his hands
From briar-points, and on his head he bore
A goat-skin casque, nourishing hopeless woe.
No sooner then the Hero toil-inured

280

Saw him age-worn and wretched, than he paused
Beneath a lofty pear-tree's shade to weep.
There standing much he mused, whether, at once,
Kissing and clasping in his arms his sire,

To tell him all, by what means he had reach'd
 His native country, or to prove him first.
 At length, he chose as his best course, with words
 Of seeming strangeness to accost his ear,
 And, with that purpose, moved direct toward him.
 He, stooping low, loosen'd the earth around
 A garden-plant, when his illustrious son
 Now, standing close beside him, thus began.

Old sir! thou art no novice in these toils
 Of culture, but thy garden thrives; I mark
 In all thy ground no plant, fig, olive, vine,
 Pear-tree or flow'r-bed suff'ring through neglect.
 But let it not offend thee if I say
 That thou neglect'st thyself, at the same time
 Oppress'd with age, sun-parch'd and ill-attired.
 Not for thy inactivity, methinks,

Thy master slights thee thus, nor speaks thy form
 Or thy surpassing stature servile aught
 In thee, but thou resemblest more a King.
 Yes—thou resemblest one who, bathed and fed,
 Should softly sleep; such is the claim of age.
 But tell me true—for whom labourest thou,
 And whose this garden? answer me beside,
 For I would learn; have I indeed arrived
 In Ithaca, as one whom here I met
 Ev'n now assured me, but who seem'd a man
 Not otherwise, refusing both to hear
 My questions, and to answer when I ask'd
 Concerning one in other days my guest
 And friend, if he have still his being here,
 Or have deceas'd and journey'd to the shades.
 For I will tell thee; therefore mark. Long since
 A stranger reach'd my house in my own land,
 Whom I with hospitality receiv'd,
 Nor ever sojourn'd foreigner with me
 Whom I lov'd more. He was by birth, he said,
 Ithacan, and Laertes claim'd his sire,

Son of Arcesias. Introducing him
 Beneath my roof, I entertain'd him well,
 And proved by gifts his welcome at my board.
 I gave him seven talents of wrought gold,
 A goblet, argent all, with flow'rs emboss'd,
 Twelve single cloaks, twelve carpets, mantles twelve

Of brightest lustre, with as many vests,
 And added four fair damsels, whom he chose
 Himself, well born and well accomplish'd all. 33°

Then thus his ancient sire weeping replied.
 Stranger! thou hast in truth attain'd the isle
 Of thy enquiry, but it is possess'd
 By a rude race, and lawless. Vain, alas!
 Were all thy num'rous gifts; yet hadst thou found
 Him living here in Ithaca, with gifts
 Reciprocated he had sent thee hence,
 Requiting honourably in his turn
 Thy hospitality. But give me quick
 Answer and true. How many have been the years 34°

Since thy reception of that hapless guest
 My son? for mine, my own dear son was he.
 But him, far distant both from friends and home,
 Either the fishes of the unknown Deep
 Have eaten, or wild beasts and fowls of prey,
 Nor I, or she who bare him, was ordain'd
 To bathe his shrouded body with our tears,
 Nor his chaste wife, well-dow'r'd Penelope
 To close her husband's eyes, and to deplore
 His doom, which is the privilege of the dead. 35°
 But tell me also thou, for I would learn,
 Who art thou? whence? where born? and sprung from
 whom?

The bark in which thou and thy godlike friends
 Arrived, where is she anchor'd on our coast?
 Or cam'st thou only passenger on board
 Another's bark, who landed thee and went?

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 I will with all simplicity relate
 What thou hast ask'd. Of Alybas am I,
 Where in much state I dwell, son of the rich 36°
 Apheidas royal Polypemon's son,
 And I am named Eperitus; by storms
 Driven from Sicily I have arrived,
 And yonder, on the margin of the field
 That skirts your city, I have moor'd my bark.
 Five years have pass'd since thy Ulysses left,
 Unhappy Chief! my country; yet the birds
 At his departure hovered on the right,
 And in that sign rejoicing, I dismiss'd

Him thence rejoicing also, for we hoped
To mix in social intercourse again,
And to exchange once more pledges of love.

370

He spake; then sorrow as a sable cloud
Involved Laertes; gath'ring with both hands
The dust, he pour'd it on his rev'rend head
With many a piteous groan. Ulysses' heart
Commotion felt, and his stretch'd nostrils throb'd
With agony close-pent, while fixt he eyed
His father; with a sudden force he sprang
Toward him, clasp'd, and kiss'd him, and exclaim'd.

380

My father! I am he. Thou seest thy son
Absent these twenty years at last return'd.
But bid thy sorrow cease; suspend henceforth
All lamentation; for I tell thee true,
(And the occasion bids me briefly tell thee)
I have slain all the suitors at my home,
And all their taunts and injuries avenged.

Then answer thus Laertes quick return'd,
If thou hast come again, and art indeed
My son Ulysses, give me then the proof
Indubitable, that I may believe.

390

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
View, first, the scar which with his iv'ry tusk
A wild boar gave me, when at thy command
And at my mother's, to Autolycus
Her father, on Parnassus, I repair'd
Seeking the gifts which, while a guest of yours,
He promis'd should be mine. Accept beside
This proof. I will enum'rate all the trees
Which, walking with thee in this cultured spot
(Boy then) I begg'd, and thou confirm'dst my own.
We paced between them, and thou mad'st me learn
The name of each. Thou gav'st me thirteen pears,¹
Ten apples,¹ thirty figs,¹ and fifty ranks
Didst promise me of vines, their alleys all
Corn-cropp'd between. There, oft as sent from Jove
The influences of the year descend,
Grapes of all hues and flavours clust'ring hang.

400

He said; Laertes, conscious of the proofs

¹ The fruit is here used for the tree that bore it, as it is in the Greek; the Latins used the same mode of expression, neither is it uncommon in our own language.

Indubitable by Ulysses giv'n,
 With fault'ring knees and fault'ring heart both arms
 Around him threw. The Hero toil-inured
 Drew to his bosom close his fainting sire,
 Who, breath recov'ring, and his scatter'd pow'rs
 Of intellect, at length thus spake aloud.

410

Ye Gods! oh then your residence is still
 On the Olympian heights, if punishment
 At last hath seized on those flagitious men.
 But terrour shakes me, lest, incensed, ere long
 All Ithaca flock hither, and dispatch
 Swift messengers with these dread tidings charged
 To ev'ry Cephallenian state around.

420

Him answer'd then Ulysses ever-wise.
 Courage! fear nought, but let us to the house
 Beside the garden, whither I have sent
 Telemachus, the herdsman, and the good
 Eumæus to prepare us quick repast.

So they conferr'd, and to Laertes' house
 Pass'd on together; there arrived, they found
 Those three preparing now their plenteous feast,
 And mingling sable wine; then, by the hands
 Of his Sicilian matron, the old King
 Was bathed, anointed, and attired afresh,
 And Pallas, drawing nigh, dilated more
 His limbs, and gave his whole majestic form
 Encrease of amplitude. He left the bath.
 His son, amazed as he had seen a God
 Alighted newly from the skies, exclaim'd.

430

My father! doubtless some immortal Pow'r
 Hath clothed thy form with dignity divine.

440

Then thus replied his venerable sire.
 Jove! Pallas! Phœbus! oh that I possess'd
 Such vigour now, as when in arms I took
 Nericus, continental city fair,
 With my brave Cephallenians! oh that such
 And arm'd as then, I yesterday had stood
 Beside thee in thy palace, combating
 Those suitors proud, then had I strew'd the floor
 With num'rous slain, to thy exceeding joy.

Such was their conference; and now, the task
 Of preparation ended, and the feast
 Set forth, on couches and on thrones they sat,

450

And, ranged in order due, took each his share.
 Then, ancient Dolius, and with him, his sons
 Arrived toil-worn, by the Sicilian dame
 Summon'd, their cat'ress, and their father's kind
 Attendant ever in his eve of life.

They, seeing and recalling soon to mind
 Ulysses, in the middle mansion stood
 Wond'ring, when thus Ulysses with a voice
 Of some reproof, but gentle, them bespake.

460

Old servant, sit and eat, banishing fear
 And mute amazement; for, although provoked
 By appetite, we have long time abstain'd,
 Expecting ev'ry moment thy return.

He said; then Dolius with expanded arms
 Sprang right toward Ulysses, seized his hand,
 Kiss'd it, and in wing'd accents thus replied.

Oh master ever dear! since thee the Gods
 Themselves in answer to our warm desires,
 Have, unexpectedly, at length restored,
 Hail, and be happy, and heav'n make thee such!
 But say, and truly; knows the prudent Queen
 Already thy return, or shall we send
 Ourselves an herald with the joyful news?

470

To whom Ulysses, ever-wise, replied.
 My ancient friend, thou may'st release thy mind
 From that solicitude; she knows it well.

So he; then Dolius to his glossy seat
 Return'd, and all his sons gath'ring around
 Ulysses, welcom'd him and grasp'd his hand,
 Then sat beside their father; thus beneath
 Laertes' roof they, joyful, took repast.

480

But Fame with rapid haste the city roam'd
 In ev'ry part, promulging in all ears
 The suitors' horrid fate. No sooner heard
 The multitude that tale, than one and all
 Groaning they met and murmuring before
 Ulysses' gates. Bringing the bodies forth,
 They buried each his friend, but gave the dead
 Of other cities to be ferried home
 By fishermen on board their rapid barks.

490

All hasted then to council; sorrow wrung
 Their hearts, and, the assembly now convened,
 Arising first Eupithes spake, for grief

Sat heavy on his soul, grief for the loss
Of his Antinoüs by Ulysses slain
Foremost of all, whom mourning, thus he said.

My friends! no trivial fruits the Grecians reap
Of this man's doings. *Those* he took with him 500
On board his barks, a num'rous train and bold,
Then lost his barks, lost all his num'rous train,
And *these*, our noblest, slew at his return.

Come therefore—ere he yet escape by flight
To Pylus or to noble Elis, realm
Of the Epeans, follow him; else shame
Attends us and indelible reproach.

If we avenge not on these men the blood
Of our own sons and brothers, farewell then 510
All that makes life desirable; my wish
Henceforth shall be to mingle with the shades.
Oh then pursue and seize them ere they fly.

Thus he with tears, and pity moved in all.
Then, Medon and the sacred bard whom sleep
Had lately left, arriving from the house
Of Laertiades, approach'd; amid
The throng they stood; all wonder'd seeing them,
And Medon, prudent senior, thus began.

Hear me, my countrymen! Ulysses plann'd 520
With no disapprobation of the Gods
The deed that ye deplore. I saw, myself,
A Pow'r immortal at the Hero's side,
In semblance just of Mentor; now the God,
In front apparent, led him on, and now,
From side to side of all the palace, urged
To flight the suitors; heaps on heaps they fell.

He said; then terrour wan seiz'd ev'ry cheek,
And Halitherses, Hero old, the son
Of Mastor, who alone among them all
Knew past, and future, prudent, thus began. 530

Now, O ye men of Ithaca! my words
Attentive hear! by your own fault, my friends,
This deed hath been perform'd; for when myself
And noble Mentor counsell'd you to check
The sin and folly of your sons, ye would not.
Great was their wickedness, and flagrant wrong
They wrought, the wealth devouring and the wife
Dishonouring of an illustrious Chief

Whom they deem'd destined never to return.
But hear my counsel. Go not, lest ye draw
Disaster down and woe on your own heads.

54°

He ended; then with boist'rous roar (although
Part kept their seats) upsprang the multitude,
For Halitherses pleased them not, they chose
Eupithes' counsel rather; all at once
To arms they flew, and clad in dazzling brass,
Before the city form'd their dense array,
Leader infatuate at their head appear'd
Eupithes, hoping to avenge his son
Antinoüs, but was himself ordain'd
To meet his doom, and to return no more.
Then thus Minerva to Saturnian Jove.

55°

Oh father! son of Saturn! Jove supreme!
Declare the purpose hidden in thy breast.
Wilt thou that this hostility proceed,
Or wilt thou grant them amity again?

To whom the cloud-assembler God replied.
Why asks my daughter? didst thou not design
Thyself, that brave Ulysses coming home
Should slay those profligates? act as thou wilt,
But thus I counsel, since the noble Chief
Hath slain the suitors, now let peace ensue
Oath-bound, and reign Ulysses evermore!
The slaughter of their brethren and their sons
To strike from their remembrance, shall be ours.
Let mutual amity, as at the first,
Unite them, and let wealth and peace abound.

56°

So saying, he animated to her task
Minerva prompt before, and from the heights
Olympian down to Ithaca she flew.
Meantime Ulysses (for their hunger now
And thirst were sated) thus address'd his hinds.

57°

Look ye abroad, lest haply they approach.
He said, and at his word, forth went a son
Of Dolius; at the gate he stood, and thence
Beholding all that multitude at hand,
In accents wing'd thus to Ulysses spake.

They come—they are already arrived—arm all!
Then, all arising, put their armour on,
Ulysses with his three, and the six sons
Of Dolius; Dolius also with the rest,

58°

Arm'd and Laertes, although silver-hair'd,
 Warriors perform. When all were clad alike
 In radiant armour, throwing wide the gates
 They sallied, and Ulysses led the way.
 Then Jove's own daughter Pallas, in the form
 And with the voice of Mentor, came in view,
 Whom seeing Laertiades rejoiced,
 And thus Telemachus, his son, bespake.

590

Now, oh my son! thou shalt observe, untold
 By me, where fight the bravest. Oh shame not
 Thine ancestry, who have in all the earth
 Proof given of valour in all ages past.

To whom Telemachus, discrete, replied.
 My father! if thou wish that spectacle,
 Thou shalt behold thy son, as thou hast said,
 In nought dishonouring his noble race.

Then was Laertes joyful, and exclaim'd,
 What sun hath ris'n to-day? ¹ oh blessed Gods!
 My son and grandson emulous dispute
 The prize of glory, and my soul exults.

600

He ended, and Minerva drawing nigh
 To the old King, thus counsell'd him. Oh friend
 Whom most I love, son of Arcesias! pray'r
 Preferring to the virgin azure-eyed,
 And to her father Jove, delay not, shake
 Thy lance in air, and give it instant flight.

So saying, the Goddess nerved his arm anew.
 He sought in pray'r the daughter dread of Jove,
 And, brandishing it, hurl'd his lance; it struck
 Eupithes, pierced his helmet brazen-cheek'd
 That stay'd it not, but forth it sprang beyond,
 And with loud clangor of his arms he fell.

610

Then flew Ulysses and his noble son
 With faulchion and with spear of double edge
 To the assault, and of them all had left
 None living, none had to his home return'd,
 But that Jove's virgin daughter with a voice
 Of loud authority thus quell'd them all.
 Peace, O ye men of Ithaca! while yet
 The field remains undeluged with your blood.

620

So she, and fear at once paled ev'ry cheek.

¹ Τις νύ μοι ἡμέρη ἦδε;—So Cicero, who seems to translate it—Proh dii immortales! Quis hic illuxit dies! See Clarke in loco.

All trembled at the voice divine; their arms
Escaping from the grasp fell to the earth,
And, covetous of longer life, each fled
Back to the city. Then Ulysses sent
His voice abroad, and with an eagle's force
Sprang on the people; but Saturnian Jove,
Cast down, incontinent, his smouldring bolt
At Pallas' feet, and thus the Goddess spake.

630

Laertes' noble son, for wiles renown'd!
Forbear; abstain from slaughter; lest thyself
Incur the anger of high thund'ring Jove.

So Pallas, whom Ulysses, glad, obey'd.
Then faithful covenants of peace between
Both sides ensued, ratified in the sight
Of Pallas progeny of Jove, who seem'd,
In voice and form, the Mentor known to all.

END OF THE ODYSSEY

NOTES

NOTE I.

Bk. x. l. 101-106 (Hom. x. l. 81-86).—It is held now that this passage should be explained by the supposition that the Homeric bards had heard tales of northern latitudes, where, in summer-time, the darkness was so short that evening was followed almost at once by morning. Thus the herdsman coming home in the twilight at one day's close might meet and hail the shepherd who was starting betimes for the next day's work.

Line 86 in the Greek ought probably to be translated, "For the paths of night and day are close together," *i.e.*, the entrance of day follows hard on the entrance of night.

NOTE II.

Bk. xi. l. 162, 163 (Hom. xi. l. 134, 135).—

θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἀλὸς αὐτῶ
ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται.

Others translate, "And from the sea shall thy own death come," suggesting that Ulysses after all was lost at sea. This is the rendering followed by Tennyson in his poem "Ulysses" (and see Dante, *Inferno*, Canto xxvi.). It is a more natural translation of the Greek, and gives a far more wonderful vista for the close of the Wanderer's life.

NOTE III.

Bk. xix. l. 712 (Hom. xix. l. 573).—The word *πελέκεας*, for which Cowper gives as a paraphrase "spikes, crested with a ring," elsewhere means *axes*, and ought so to be translated here. For since Cowper's day an axe-head of the Mycenaean period has been discovered *with the blade pierced* so as to form a hole through which an arrow could pass. (See Tsountas and Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age*.) Axes of this type were not known to Cowper, and hence the hypothesis in his text. He realised correctly the essential conditions of the feat proposed: the axes must have been set up, one behind the other, in the way he suggested for his ringed stakes.

NOTE IV.

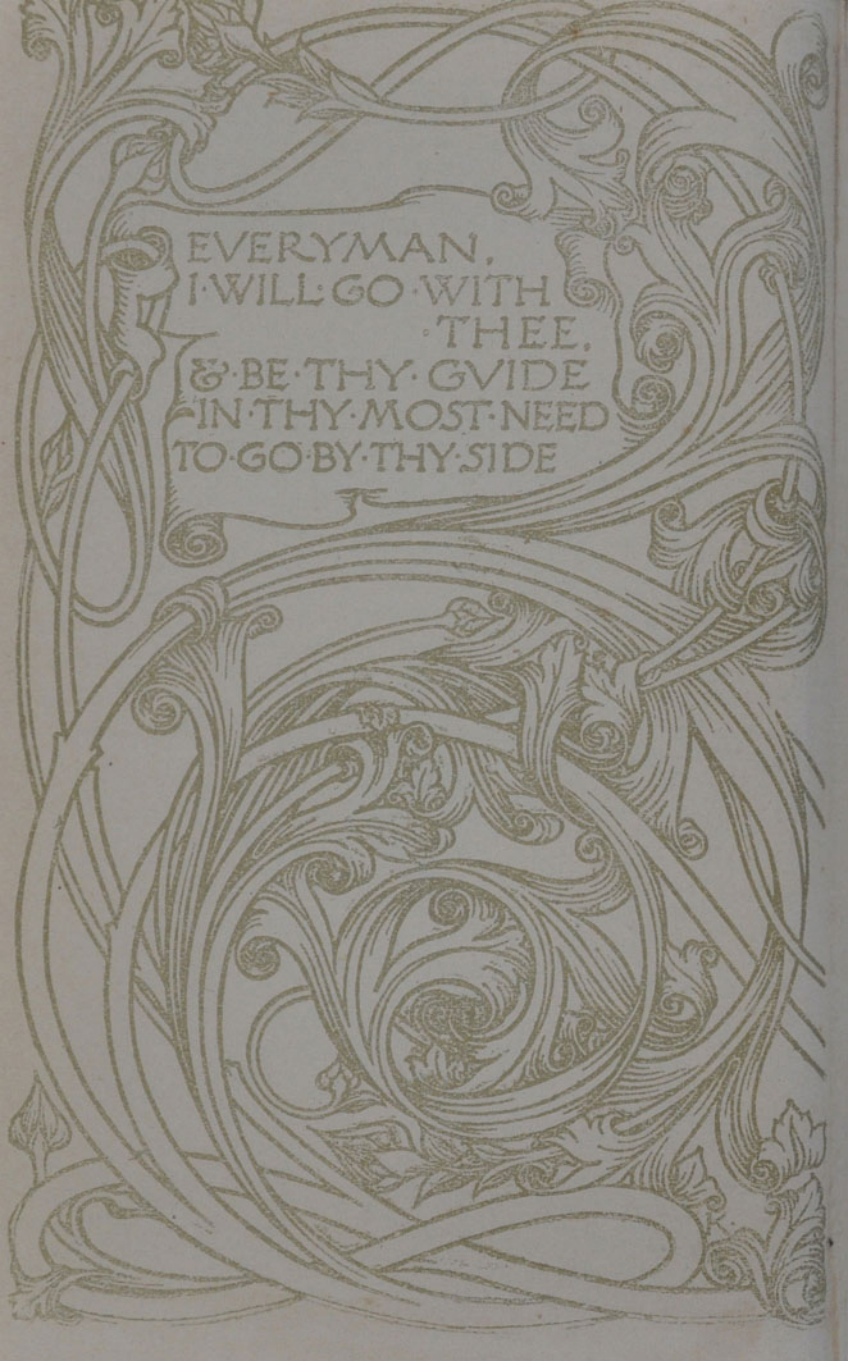
Bk. xxii. l. 139-162 (Hom. xxii. l. 126-143).—How Melanthius got out of the hall remains a puzzle. Cowper assumes a second postern, but there is no evidence for this, and l. 139 ff. (l. 126 ff. in the Greek)

suggest rather strongly that there was only *one*. Unfortunately the crucial word *παῖτες* which occurs in the line describing Melanthius' exit is not found elsewhere. "He went up," the poet says, "through the *παῖτες* of the hall." Merry suggests that "he scrambled up to the loopholes that were pierced in the wall." Others suppose that there was a ladder at the inner end of the hall leading to the upper story, and on through passages to the armoury.

In l. 141 (l. 128 in the Greek) the word translated "street" by Cowper is usually rendered "corridor."

F. M. S.





EVERYMAN,
I WILL GO WITH
THEE,
& BE THY GUIDE
IN THY MOST NEED
TO GO BY THY SIDE



RK
1905

