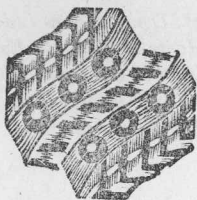


# THE ILIAD OF HOMER



TRANSLATED BY  
LORD DERBY

LONDON: J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO. INC.

## INTRODUCTION

To praise Homer is the delight of all who have ever attempted to translate him, and the despair. For in the Homeric poems at their best are united a number of excellencies that have never been found together, before or since in anything like the same degree: a union of simplicity and splendour, of a freshness that is almost naïve and a polished stateliness that could not be surpassed, of a fiery speed and passion that breathe the very spirit of battle, and a serene calm that never fails.

It is not merely because the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* contain some of the greatest poetry ever written that they are so hard to translate: it is because this particular union between the elaborate and the plain is so difficult for us to recapture, manifest, as it is, in every turn and detail of the verse. The metre itself is extraordinarily rich and varied, and yet one cannot call it intricate: in the Homeric dialect the hexameter is easy to handle, and the ease and swiftness of Homer's hexameters have been famous from all time. The diction is full of dignified formal phrases and noble decorative epithets, many of them obviously coined for their place in the line, and yet in hardly a single instance do they overload the scene, however "prosaic" it may be, or even prevent the use of what are almost colloquialisms. A form of language has been found, which, though not the language of actual speech, can deal with everything that happens in man's daily life, and yet in such a way as to make it fit for heroes.

Cowper, in the delightful Preface to his *Iliad*, says with a certain wistfulness, "The passages which will be least noticed, and possibly not at all, except by those who shall wish to find me at a fault, are those which have cost me abundantly the most labour. It is difficult to kill a sheep with dignity in a modern language, to flay and prepare it for the table, detailing every circumstance of the process. . . . Homer, who writes always to the eye, with all his sublimity and grandeur, has the minuteness of a Flemish painter."

As a translator of Homer, Cowper had many qualifications. Nothing is more characteristic of him than the sweet brightness of his inborn nature,—and nothing more touching to see under the dark cloud of melancholy that hung threatening his brain,—and this natural brightness, united as it was to perfect delicacy of touch, a delicious humour, and a quivering sensitiveness, rendered him singularly responsive at once to the clear humanity, tenderness, and depth of the Homeric feeling, and to the charm and vividness of the Homeric fancy. What he lacked was perhaps energy and fire, and hence he is not quite so successful in the battle-pieces and fierce quarrels of the *Iliad*, and more at home in the romance and humour and mystery of the *Odyssey*, in the homely comfort of the swineherd's hut, or in the sunny distant land where Nausicaa stood to greet Ulysses, or in the dim regions

“ where grow the poplar groves  
And fruitless willows wan of Proserpine.”

Not that Cowper's rendering of the great fight in the palace-hall at Ithaca could be considered tame or spiritless; while, there as elsewhere, his faithfulness alone would more than justify his modest confidence that there was room for him as a translator even after Pope.

Pope's work, indeed, will always remain a classic, for its own merits alone; and, as regards fidelity, no other translator has so well given the terse precision, or the leaping flame of rhetoric that the Homeric poetry has at its command. Take the famous couplet:—

“ If Greece must perish, we thy will obey,  
But let us perish in the light of day!”

or the splendid close of Achilles' defiance:—

“ Ye have my answer: what remains to do,  
Your king, Ulysses, may consult with you.  
What needs he the defence this arm can make?  
Has he not walls no human force can shake?  
Has he not fenced his guarded navy round  
With piles, with ramparts, and a trench profound?  
And will not these, the wonders he has done,  
Repel the rage of Priam's single son?”

But the defects of Pope's work are also notorious: the artificiality and stilted elegance that stand at the other end of the horizon from Homer's noble plainness. Prose as it

is, the almost literal sentence—"She was too shy to speak of sweet marriage to her father"—would give a better idea of the exquisite lines in the *Odyssey* than the neat couplet:

"She spake, but blushes ill-restrained betray  
Her thoughts intensitive on the bridal day."

Chapman, again, will always be a delight because he can "speak out loud and bold," and indeed in some scenes, such as the quarrel in *Iliad* I., he comes nearer to the right Homeric vigour than any other man; but yet in his verse, as Arnold delighted to point out, Troy must needs "shed her towers, for tears of overthrow," though Homer only said, "The day will be, when sacred Troy shall perish."

After all, one may trust there will always be many translators of Homer, each of whom will contribute some special element, until the great bard comes who will unite everything, and above all, do what no one yet has done, present the vital spirit of the characters in a worthy medium. For it is in characterisation that the chief greatness of Homer lies: and this is given by the absolute fitness of the words. It is true that the mere outline of the *Iliad* XXIV. is altogether great in itself. It touches us even to be told the bare fact that the old king Priam came, alone and unarmed, to the tent of his sworn and bitter foe, that he might ask for the body of his dead son; but when every word in that marvellous scene makes the whole thing live before us, then, and then only, can we realise why, before Shakespeare, Homer was rightly held to be the king of poets.

The prose translations of the *Odyssey* by Messrs. Butcher and Lang, and of the *Iliad* by Lang, Leaf, and Myers, are invaluable for any one who wishes, without the knowledge of Greek, to gain an accurate knowledge of the detailed matter in the poems. But, as the writers would be the first to admit, a close translation in prose of what was essentially a diction framed for poetry must always produce a certain unnaturalness of effect, and this does inevitably detract from the directness of appeal which is the supreme quality of Homer.

The version of the *Iliad* by Lord Derby, first published in 1864, and now reprinted here, has the great merits of simplicity, dignity, and sincerity, and its ease of style makes it eminently readable. Derby's work is strikingly similar to Cowper's, and in certain passages appears to be based on

it. The arguments prefixed to each Book are quoted from Cowper's own translation, and for the *Odyssey* the text follows throughout Cowper's first edition, before the freshness of his rendering had been impaired by the supposed "improvements" he made in deference to ignorant criticism. The notes at the foot of the pages are from the same edition; "F" is the initial of Fuseli the painter, "the learned and ingenious Mr. Fuseli," as Cowper calls him, who saw the poem in manuscript and made many suggestions. (The supplementary notes at the end of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, signed "F. M. S.," are by the writer of this Introduction.)

Questions concerning the date and authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are interesting to ask and hard to answer. Controversy rages over every point, and the answers that are given here can at best only be accepted as probable. It seems clear both from internal evidence, and from classical Greek tradition, that the poems existed, much in their present shape, before the sixth century B.C., when Peisistratus made his famous recension; and the absence of any apparent knowledge about the Greek colonies along the coast of Asia Minor would appear to justify us in carrying the date at least three centuries further back. How much further still can we go? Recent discoveries, especially in Crete and at Mycenae on the mainland, have brought to light traces of a high civilisation in the Ægean basin, growing up from neolithic times, a civilisation which was almost completely forgotten by classical Greece, and which is at once like and unlike that implied in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The dress of the women is markedly different, much of the armour is different, and in Crete the huge palaces with the scenes on their frescoes indicate a far more artificial life than Homer's. On the other hand, certain details in the Homeric poems are directly illustrated by the archæological finds: Nestor's cup in *Iliad* XI.; Hector's long shield in *Iliad* VI., the rim of which tapped against his heels as he walked; the inlaid pictures on the shield of Achilles; the blue frieze in the palace of Alcinous; all these find their analogues among the recent discoveries.

From this the presumption follows that the poems took their rise during some period between the bloom of the Ægean civilisation in Mycenae (which may be dated roughly from 1500-1100 B.C.), and the founding and growth

of the new Greek cities in Asia Minor. That there was a time of change and transition is suggested by many facts. The excavations have made it almost certain that something like decay fell on the great centres of the early culture. The palaces in Crete are found burnt, presumably by a victorious enemy, the beautiful pottery, made there and elsewhere, becomes debased in design and workmanship. Further, the Homeric poems themselves speak of a store of legends from a more brilliant past, removed by a sensible gap from the day and generation of the poets. Again, while bronze<sup>1</sup> is the recognised metal for the warriors' weapons, it is clear that the poets know the use of iron; and in the latest tombs of the Mycenæan period we find iron beginning to appear side by side with the earlier bronze.

Now it does not seem unnatural to suppose, especially in view of the swift development in Asia Minor, that there came a time, somewhere about the tenth century, when the old centres were fast losing their actual vigour and importance, though not their prestige and glamour, and when the more active members of the same and kindred stocks, reinforced perhaps by Northern immigrants, were seeking new homes and new outlets for their energies. The *Odyssey* is full of the colonising spirit: as we see, for instance, in the description of the island off the Cyclops' cave in Book IX. And it shows us men like Ulysses and Telemachus, living a simple and hardy life themselves, yet in contact with a culture far more luxurious than their own, a culture also, as the poet may mean to suggest, that is already touched with weakness. Ulysses is welcomed by Alcinous as a man of like speech with himself, but the lavish splendour of the Phæacian palace is in marked contrast to the home in the barren island that was "a good nurse of heroes," and the fondness of the Phæacian men for the dance and the lute, for the warm bath and sleep, seems designedly set in opposition to the ways of the much-enduring hero.

That there was an element of Northern immigration cannot be taken to be established, but it is made probable by several points. Homer speaks of "the fair-haired Achæians," but the Cretans, men and women alike, are represented in the paintings as dark-haired, while the fairness of Northern races is well-known. Archæological discoveries have revealed another early civilisation along the upper Danube, the

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately translated *brass* by Cowper and Lord Derby.

remains of which show, in ornament and armature, certain similarities to Homeric fashions. Moreover, place-names and traditions, both in Homer and in classical times, seem to indicate a steady drift of tribes through Greece from the north-west to the south. There is no need to conceive the immigration as an invasion: indeed any hypothesis implying an abrupt breach in culture and language would involve us in countless difficulties. "They did not sweep down in a great invading host; they crept in, tribe by tribe, seeking not political conquest but new lands and homesteads."<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate causes that produce poetic genius lie utterly beyond our ken, but a period such as that conjectured would certainly seem stimulating to poetry. An old civilisation lay behind the writers, but there were new lands opening before them, new blood in the world, and new ideas. Did there live a blind old bard of genius "on Chios' rocky isle," as the time-honoured tradition has it, he would certainly be fitted by up-bringing and outlook to "leave great verse unto a little clan."

The question of unity of authorship is of more immediate interest to lovers of literature. Until Wolf wrote his famous *Prolegomena* at the end of the eighteenth century, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had been accepted as unities with but little question, but since his day the dispute has been prolonged and intense, especially with regard to the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey* is on a somewhat different footing, and it may be doubted whether any sober scholar would have questioned its fundamental unity, if it had not been for the controversy raised concerning the *Iliad*. It is true there can be little doubt that the work is based on earlier legends, but, save for one or two passages, it shows a harmony of conception in the characters so delicate and profound, and a structure of plot so masterly, that it is hard to imagine the old material as other than fused afresh from first to last in the alembic of one creative mind. As the case stands, however, there does exist a body of opinion which holds that at least four distinct poems can be discovered underlying our present *Odyssey*, and that their once independent existence is betrayed by certain small but significant inconsistencies. This school has been led by Kirchhoff and Wilamowitz in Germany, but it has not found much active support in England. Both here and in the *Iliad* the bulk of the

<sup>1</sup> Bury, *History of Greece*, c. I.



evidence depends on the content and matter of the poems, so that even the English reader can form a fair idea of the merits of the case. For instance, the story told by Eumæus about his boyhood may reasonably be suspected, because it breaks the Homeric rule of a narrator only telling what he knows or could easily have inferred; but it seems less reasonable to question the journey of Telemachus to Sparta because he stays there longer than he had intended.

The question of the *Iliad* is far more complicated. There certainly seems no *prima facie* reason to doubt the possibility of so long a poem being produced by one man under the conditions supposed, and transmitted faithfully from generation to generation. It is not known yet whether writing was practised in the Homeric world or not, but oral transmission may reach a high degree of perfection. When, however, we come to look at the poem in detail, a curious problem presents itself: the general plan is magnificent, but we are met also by inconsistencies that appear much more serious than those observed in the *Odyssey*,—and by delays in the action which, far from heightening the effect, seem greatly to impair it, when the poem is taken as a whole. Many passages, no doubt, have been unjustly questioned, but there remains a large residuum. Such, for instance, is the long digression in the story after Hector has got within the Greek wall, at the end of Book XII., and before Patroclus rushes to tell Achilles of the danger. (Books XIII., XIV., XV., ll. 1-389 in the Greek; ll. 1-455 in Derby's translation.) The episodes here are quite abortive, so far as the general drift of the tale is concerned; and the description of the fighting is markedly inferior to that in Books XI. and XII. Again, it is very difficult to reconcile Achilles' contemptuous refusal of the *amende* from Agamemnon in Book IX. with his words to Patroclus in XI. and XVI., all of which, taken alone, would naturally imply that no reparation had been offered whatsoever.

On the other hand, it is equally hard to assume that the main story grew up half-unconsciously from a gradual concretion of short legends and lays, for all such that can be proposed are found to imply, directly or indirectly, the outline of the story that they are assumed to produce. The central plot must surely have been there already: either due to the inventive genius of one poet, or as an echo in tradition of something that actually occurred. The conclusion



adopted here (already in favour with various scholars), is that our *Iliad*, as it stands, is a composite work, but a work the larger part of which is due to one great poet. To the original structure were added, successively, songs by other bards, suggested by the main theme, harmonious with its general outline, but, as might well be expected, not always consistent with its details and implications.

The table that follows gives the chief passages that may be questioned, together with reasons for their omission.<sup>1</sup> The references to the Greek original and to the English translations are put side by side.

## ILIAD

HOMER.	DERBY.	
Bk. II. 484-760 816-end	Bk. II. 555-881 943-end	The Catalogues. The view given of the different Greek contingents does not correspond with their relative importance elsewhere in the Iliad.
V. 127-132 330-470 506-end	V. 151b-157 378b-538 578-end	Diomede's exploits against the Gods are inconsistent with his humble refusal in Book VI. to oppose them at all.
VI. I	VI. 1a	
VII. 8-end	VII. 9-end	The Embassy to Achilles cannot well be reconciled with his attitude in Books XI. and XVI. Books VII. and VIII. are bound up with IX.
VIII.	VIII.	
IX.	IX.	
X.	X.	A Night-raid on the Trojan camp. The episode in itself is unimportant, and it has no effect on the tale as a whole, save to delay still further the return of Achilles.
XI. 1-61	XI. 1-67a	A connecting passage designed to effect the transition to the original poem.
XII. 108-195	XII. 119-212	An abortive attack on the Greek wall. The passage bears strong signs of imitative and inferior work.

<sup>1</sup> An attempt is made to give the reasons more fully in *Homer and the Iliad*. (Dent).

## ILIAD

- |                |                 |   |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| HOMER.         | DERBY.          |   |
| Bk. XIII.      | Bk. XIII.       |   |
| XIV.           | XIV.            | A comparatively flat digression   |
| XV. 1-389      | XV. 1-455       | in marked contrast to the excitement before and after.  |
| XVII. 459-592  | XVII. 514-667   | A languid passage in a Book elsewhere full of the most spirited fighting.   |
| XIX. 140-269   | XIX. 151-297a   | Additions referring to the Em-  |
| 278-302        | 308-340         | bassy in IX.  |
| XX. 1-380      | XX. 1-429       | The Prologue, 1-84, is evidently designed for the Battle of the Gods in XXI. In the combat that ensues here between Achilles and Æneas, Achilles, who was full of fury in XIX., appears in a "bantering mood." (Leaf).                              |
| XXI. 136-521   | XXI. 151-592    | The long delay in the fight between Achilles and the River makes it difficult to explain the stress of pursuit felt by the Trojans at the close of the Book. The battle between the Gods is quite out of key with the human passion of the context. |
| XXIII. 798-883 | XXIII. 926-1021 | Additions to the Games.   |

## ODYSSEY

- |                 |                 |  |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| HOMER           | COWPER.         |  |
| Bk. XI. 565-627 | Bk. XI. 696-768 | According to the rest of the Book, Ulysses does not go further than the asphodel meadow, waiting for the ghosts to gather round him. Here he suddenly appears wandering through all the varied scenes of the Under-world, before the judgment-seat of Minos, by the lake of Tantalus, the hill of Sisyphus, etc., with no explanation as to how he came there. |
| XV.             | XV. 461-595     | Inconsistent with Homeric principles of narration.   |

It is not possible to decide the further question whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are by the same man. It is usually held that they are not: but scholars are still at variance as to whether the language and metre show a change greater than could be expected of the same author; composing on a fresh subject at a later period of his life. What differences can be discovered in the sentiment of the poems and the civilisation they assume are admittedly slight, and the rare and peculiar greatness of the two works seems to make on the whole for the old belief in unity of authorship.

Besides the books already mentioned, the following may be recommended, especially as a stimulus to further study:

*Homer*, Jebb.

*On translating Homer*, Matthew Arnold.

*Homer and the Study of Greek in Essays in Little*, A. Lang.

*Homer and the Epic*, A. Lang.

*Companion to the Iliad*, Leaf.

*Rise of the Greek Epic*, Murray.

*Schliemann's Excavations*, Schuchhardt, translated by E. Sellers.

*The Discoveries in Crete*, Burrows.

*The Early Age of Greece*, Ridgeway.

F. MELIAN STAWELL.

#### *Some Translations of the Iliad*

##### *With Odyssey, in Verse*

George Chapman 1612, Alexander Pope 1715,

William Cullen Bryant 1870, A. T. Murray 1924.

##### *In Prose*

Samuel Butler 1898.

##### *Iliad Alone, in Verse*

P. S. Worsley and J. Conington 1868, A. S. Way 1886.

##### *Iliad Alone, in Prose*

Lang, Leaf and Myers 1883, John Purves 1891.

## PREFACE

IN the spring of 1862 I was induced, at the request of some personal friends, to print, for private circulation only, a small volume of *Translations of Poems Ancient and Modern*, in which was included the First Book of the *Iliad*. The opinions expressed by some competent judges of the degree of success which had attended this "attempt to infuse into an almost literal English version something of the spirit, as well as the simplicity, of the great original,"<sup>1</sup> were sufficiently favourable to encourage me to continue the work which I had begun. It has afforded me, in the intervals of more urgent business, an unfailing, and constantly increasing source of interest; and it is not without a feeling of regret at the completion of my task, and a sincere diffidence as to its success, that I venture to submit the result of my labours to the ordeal of public criticism.

Various causes, irrespective of any demerits of the work itself, forbid me to anticipate for this translation any extensive popularity. First, I fear that the taste for, and appreciation of, Classical Literature are greatly on the decline; next, those who have kept up their classical studies, and are able to read and enjoy the original, will hardly take an interest in a mere translation; while the English reader, unacquainted with Greek, will naturally prefer the harmonious versification and polished brilliancy of Pope's translation; with which, as a happy adaptation of the Homeric story to the spirit of English poetry, I have not the presumption to enter into competition. But, admirable as it is, Pope's *Iliad* can hardly be said to be Homer's *Iliad*; and there may be some who, having lost the familiarity with the original language which they once possessed, may, if I have at all succeeded in my attempt, have recalled to their minds a faint echo of the strains which delighted their earlier days, and may recognise some slight trace of the original perfume.

Numerous as have been the translators of the *Iliad*, or of parts of it, the metres which have been selected have

<sup>1</sup> Introduction to unpublished volume.

been almost as various: the ordinary couplet in rhyme, the Spenserian stanza, the Trochaic or Ballad metre, all have had their partisans, even to that "pestilent heresy" of the so-called English Hexameter; a metre wholly repugnant to the genius of our language; which can only be pressed into the service by a violation of every rule of prosody; and of which, notwithstanding my respect for the eminent men who have attempted to naturalise it, I could never read ten lines without being irresistibly reminded of Canning's

"Dactyls call'st thou them? God help thee, silly one!"

But in the progress of this work, I have been more and more confirmed in the opinion which I expressed at its commencement, that (whatever may be the extent of my own individual failure) "if justice is ever to be done to the easy flow and majestic simplicity of the grand old Poet, it can only be in the Heroic blank verse." I have seen isolated passages admirably rendered in other metres; and there are many instances in which a translation line for line and couplet for couplet naturally suggests itself, and in which it is sometimes difficult to avoid an involuntary rhyme; but the blank verse appears to me the only metre capable of adapting itself to all the gradations, if I may use the term, of the Homeric style; from the finished poetry of the numerous similes, in which every touch is nature, and nothing is overcoloured or exaggerated, down to the simple, almost homely, style of some portions of the narrative. Least of all can any other metre do full justice to the spirit and freedom of the various speeches, in which the old warriors give utterance, without disguise or restraint, to all their strong and genuine emotions. To subject these to the trammels of couplet and rhyme would be as destructive of their chief characteristics, as the application of a similar process to the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, or the tragedies of Shakespeare; the effect indeed may be seen by comparing, with some of the noblest speeches of the latter, the few couplets which he seems to have considered himself bound by custom to tack on to their close, at the end of a scene or an act.

I have adopted, not without hesitation, the Latin, rather than the Greek, nomenclature for the Heathen Deities. I have been induced to do so from the manifest incongruity of confounding the two; and from the fact that though English

readers may be familiar with the names of Zeus, or Aphrodite, or even Poseidon, those of Hera, or Ares, or Hephæstus, or Leto, would hardly convey to them a definite signification.

It has been my aim throughout to produce a translation, and not a paraphrase; not indeed such a translation as would satisfy, with regard to each word, the rigid requirements of accurate scholarship; but such as would fairly and honestly give the sense and spirit of every passage, and of every line; omitting nothing, and expanding nothing; and adhering, as closely as our language will allow, even to every epithet which is capable of being translated, and which has, in the particular passage, anything of a special and distinctive character. Of the many deficiencies in my execution of this intention, I am but too conscious; whether I have been in any degree successful, must be left to the impartial decision of such of the Public as may honour this work with their perusal.

D.

KNOWSLEY, *Oct.* 1864.

# HOMER'S ILIAD

## BOOK I

### ARGUMENT

THE book opens with an account of a pestilence that prevailed in the Grecian camp, and the cause of it is assigned. A council is called, in which fierce altercation takes place between Agamemnon and Achilles. The latter solemnly renounces the field. Agamemnon by his heralds demands Briseis, and Achilles resigns her. He makes his complaint to Thetis, who undertakes to plead his cause with Jupiter. She pleads it, and prevails. The book concludes with an account of what passed in Heaven on that occasion.

The English reader will be pleased to observe, that by Achaians, Argives, Danaï, are signified Grecians. Homer himself having found these various appellatives both graceful and convenient, it seemed unreasonable that a Translator of him should be denied the same advantage.

OF Peleus' son, Achilles, sing, O Muse,  
The vengeance, deep and deadly; whence to Greece  
Unnumber'd ills arose; which many a soul  
Of mighty warriors to the viewless shades  
Untimely sent; they on the battle plain  
Unburied lay, a prey to rav'ning dogs,  
And carrion birds; but so had Jove decreed,  
From that sad day when first in wordy war,  
The mighty Agamemnon, King of men,  
Confronted stood by Peleus' godlike son.

10

Say then, what God the fatal strife provok'd?  
Jove's and Latona's son; he, fill'd with wrath  
Against the King, with deadly pestilence  
The camp afflicted,—and the people died,—  
For Chryses' sake, his priest, whom Atreus' son  
With scorn dismiss'd, when to the Grecian ships  
He came, his captive daughter to redeem,  
With costly ransom charg'd; and in his hand  
The sacred fillet of his God he bore,



And golden staff; to all he sued, but chief  
To Atreus' sons, twin captains of the host: 20  
"Ye sons of Atreus, and ye well-greav'd Greeks,  
May the great Gods, who on Olympus dwell,  
Grant you yon hostile city to destroy,  
And home return in safety; but my child  
Restore, I pray; her proffer'd ransom take,  
And in his priest, the Lord of light revere."

Then through the ranks assenting murmurs ran,  
The priest to rev'rence, and the ransom take:  
Not so Atrides; he, with haughty mien, 30  
And bitter speech, the trembling sire address'd:  
"Old man, I warn thee, that beside our ships  
I find thee not, or ling'ring now, or back  
Returning; lest thou prove of small avail  
Thy golden staff, and fillet of thy God.  
Her I release not, till her youth be fled;  
Within my walls, in Argos, far from home,  
Her lot is cast, domestic cares to ply,  
And share a master's bed. For thee, begone!  
Incense me not, lest ill betide thee now." 40

He said: the old man trembled, and obey'd;  
Beside the many-dashing Ocean's shore  
Silent he pass'd; and all apart, he pray'd  
To great Apollo, fair Latona's son:  
"Hear me, God of the silver bow! whose care  
Chrysa surrounds, and Cilla's lovely vale;  
Whose sov'reign sway o'er Tenedos extends;  
O Smintheus, hear! if e'er my offer'd gifts  
Found favour in thy sight; if e'er to thee  
I burn'd the fat of bulls and choicest goats, 50  
Grant me this boon—upon the Grecian host  
Let thine unerring darts avenge my tears."

Thus as he pray'd, his pray'r Apollo heard:  
Along Olympus' heights he pass'd, his heart  
Burning with wrath; behind his shoulders hung  
His bow, and ample quiver; at his back  
Rattled the fateful arrows as he mov'd;  
Like the night-cloud he pass'd; and from afar  
He bent against the ships, and sped the bolt;  
And fierce and deadly twang'd the silver bow. 60  
First on the mules and dogs, on man the last,  
Was pour'd the arrowy storm; and through the camp,

Constant and num'rous, blaz'd the fun'ral fires.

Nine days the heav'nly Archer on the troops  
Hurl'd his dread shafts; the tenth, th' assembled Greek  
Achilles call'd to council; so inspir'd

By Juno, white-arm'd Goddess, who beheld  
With pitying eyes the wasting hosts of Greece.  
When all were met, and closely throng'd around,  
Rose the swift-footed chief, and thus began:

70

"Ye sons of Atreus, to my mind there seems,  
If we would 'scape from death, one only course,  
Home to retrace our steps: since here at once  
By war and pestilence our forces waste.

But seek we first some prophet, or some priest,  
Or some wise vision-seer (since visions too  
From Jove proceed), who may the cause explain,  
Which with such deadly wrath Apollo fires:

If for neglected hecatombs or pray'rs

He blame us; or if fat of lambs and goats

80

May soothe his anger and the plague assuage."

This said, he sat; and Thestor's son arose,  
Calchas, the chief of seers, to whom were known  
The present, and the future, and the past;  
Who, by his mystic art, Apollo's gift,  
Guided to Ilium's shore the Grecian fleet.

Who thus with cautious speech replied, and said:

"Achilles, lov'd of Heav'n, thou bidd'st me say

Why thus incens'd the far-destroying King:

Therefore I speak; but promise thou, and swear,

90

By word and hand, to bear me harmless through.

For well I know my speech must one offend,

One mighty chief, whom all our hosts obey;

And terrible to men of low estate

The anger of a King; for though awhile

He veil his wrath, yet in his bosom pent

It still is nurs'd, until the time arrive;

Say, then, wilt thou protect me, if I speak?"

Him answer'd thus Achilles, swift of foot:

"Speak boldly out whate'er thine art can tell;

100

For by Apollo's self I swear, whom thou,

O Calchas, serv'st, and who thy words inspires,

That, while I live, and see the light of Heav'n,

Not one of all the Greeks shall dare on thee,

Beside our ships, injurious hands to lay: