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HOMER'S

ODYSSEY, BOOK IV.

A TRANSLATION.

BY

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1. And they came to Lacedaemon, lying in the vale with deep ravines, and then drove to the dwelling of renowned Menelaus. And him they found giving many kinsmen the marriage feast of his son and noble daughter in his house. Her on the one hand he was sending to the son of Achilles, cleaver of armed ranks: for in Troy he first had promised and covenanted that he would give her, and now the gods for them were bringing to fulfilment their marriage. Her then just now he was sending with horses and chariot to go on her way to the far-famed city of the Myrmidons, among whom Achilles’ son held rule. On the other hand he was bringing from Sparta the daughter of Alector, for his son, strong Megapentes, now grown to years, who had been born to him by a slave; but to Helen nevermore did the gods grant offspring ever since indeed she bare a lovely child, Hermione, who had the beauty of golden Aphrodite.

15. So they were feasting throughout the great high-vaulted hall, the neighbours and kinsfolk of renowned Menelaus, making merry: and amongst them was singing a divine bard, touching the lyre, and two tumblers among them as he began his song were whirling in their midst.

20. But these twain on the contrary stood at the entrance of the house, both these twain and their horses twain, the hero Telemachus and Nestor’s splendid son. And the lord Eteoneus coming forth saw them, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus; and he proceeded to go through the palace to tell the shepherd of the people, and standing near spake winged words:

OD. IV.
26. 'Here surely are two strangers of some sort, O Menelaus, reared of Zeus, two men, and they are like unto the seed of great Zeus. Come, tell me, whether shall we loose for them their swift horses, or send them onward to visit some other who will receive them with kindness?'

30. And to him in great wrath answered fair-haired Menelaus: 'A fool thou wert not indeed, Eteoneus son of Boethous, aforetime: but now at least like a child thou pratest folly. Surely indeed it was but after having eaten much hospitable cheer from other men that we twain arrived hither, if so be perchance Zeus for the time to come will ease us of our sorrow. Nay, loose the horses of the strangers, and bring the men themselves forward that they may feast.'

37. So spake he, and Eteoneus sped through the hall, and summoned other ready squires to follow with himself. And they loosed the sweating horses from beneath the yoke, and fastened them at the stalls of the horses, and beside them threw spelt, and therewith mingled white barley, and the chariot they tilted up against the shining faces of the gateway, and the men themselves they led into the divine hall; and they, beholding it, wondered throughout the palace of the king, reared of Zeus, for there was a radiance like the radiance of the sun or moon throughout the high-vaulted palace of renowned Menelaus. But when they were sated of gazing with their eyes, going into the well-polished baths, they bathed them. Now, when the handmaidens had bathed them and anointed them with oil, and then had cast about them thick woollen cloaks and doublets, they sat down on chairs by the side of Menelaus, son of Atreus. And an attendant bearing water for the hands in an ewer fair and golden, poured it forth over their hands above a silver basin, to wash withal; and to their side she drew a polished table. And a grave dame bringing food set it by their side, laying upon the board many cates, lavishing of what was by her. And the carver raised on high and set before them dishes of divers meats, and placed by them golden cups. These twain accordingly fair-haired Menelaus greeted and spake:

60. 'Both take ye of the food and be glad, and thereafter when ye have partaken of supper we shall ask you who of men
ye are; for in you at least the blood of your parents is not
lost, but ye are the seed of royal men, reared of Zeus, since
base-born men could not beget sons like you.'

65. So spake he and set before them the fat chine of an ox
roasted, taking it in his hands, which they had placed as a
token of honour before himself. And they plied their hands
to the good cheer ready set before them. But when they had
put from them the desire of meat and drink, then at length
Telemachus addressed the son of Nestor, holding his head close
to him, that the others might not hear :

71. 'Mark thou, son of Nestor, dear to my heart, the gleam
of bronze throughout the echoing halls, and the gleam of gold,
and of amber, and of silver, and of ivory. Even such, I ween,
is the court of Olympian Zeus within, for all the untold multi-
tude of things that are here; awe possesses me as I look upon
them.'

76. And as he spake fair-haired Menelaus perceived him and
opening his mouth spake unto them winged words :

78. 'Children dear, of a truth no mortal could vie with Zeus,
for everlasting are his mansions and his treasures. But of men
some one is sure to vie with me in treasures, or may be none
will. Yea, for after much suffering and much wandering have
I brought them in ships and come hither in the eighth year;
yea, having wandered o'er Cyprus, and Phœnicia, and Egypt,
I came both to the Ethiopians, and to the Sidonians, and the
Eremites, and Libya, where e'en from their birth lambs are
horned. For thrice the ewes yean within the maturing year.
There neither master nor shepherd lacketh aught of cheese or
meat or sweet milk, but ever do the ewes yield a continual store
of milk to draw. While round those regions yet I was wandern-
ing, gathering together much store of livelihood, meanwhile
another slew my brother by stealth, all unawares, by the guile
of his accursed wife. So it is not of a truth with rejoicing that
I rule over these riches. And this ye are sure to have heard
from your fathers, whosoever they may be, since full much I
have suffered, and let my house go to ruin, very fair though it
was to dwell in and holding many treasures and goodly. Would
that I lived in these halls though with but a third part of these
treasures, and that those men were safe who perished of old in
1—2
broad Troy, far from Argos, the land that breedeth horses. Yet, nevertheless, though I lament them all, and sob ofttimes as I sit in our halls—for a while I satisfy my heart with weeping, and again for a while I cease; aye, soon comes a surfeit of chill weeping; for these men, all of them, I lament not so much, though grieved, as for one only who makes me loathe food and sleep, when I think upon him, for no one of the Achæans toiled so much as Odysseus toiled and ventured. But for him troubles were doomed to come, and to me sorrow for him never to be forgotten, to think how he is so long away, nor know we at all whether he indeed be alive or hath died. Yea, I ween there weep for him both the aged Laertes and wise Penelope, and Telemachus whom he left a child new-born in his house?

113. So he spake, and in the heart of Telemachus of a truth he stirred a desire of tears for his sire; and from his eyelids he let fall a tear unto the ground as he heard of his sire, holding up his purple cloak against his eyes with both hands. And Menelaus marked him and pondered thereat in his mind and in his heart whether he should allow him to make mention of his sire, or whether he should first question him and try him in every word.

120. While yet he was pondering these things in his mind and in his heart, forth came Helen from her sweet-scented high-vaulted chamber, like unto Artemis of the golden spindle. And for her then at once Adreste set a well-wrought couch, and Alcippe bare a rug of soft wool, and Phylo bare a silver basket which Alcandre gave to her, the wife of Polybus, who dwelt in Egyptian Thebes, where are stored up very many treasures in the halls; he gave unto Menelaus two silver baths, and two tripods and ten talents of gold. And besides that again his wife bestowed on Helen beauteous gifts; both a golden spindle and a basket on wheels all of silver she added unto her, and the rims thereon had been finished off with gold. This, then, her handmaiden Phylo bringing set beside her, stuffed full with dressed yarn; but upon it lay stretched a spindle with wool of violet blue. And Helen sat her on the couch and beneath was a stool for her feet. And forthwith in uttered words she questioned her lord of each thing:

138. 'Know we now, Menelaus, reared of Zeus, who of men
these be that claim to come to our house? Shall I dissemble, or shall I speak out the truth? Nay, my heart bids me speak, for I avow that never yet have I seen anyone so like another, nor man nor woman—awe possesses me as I look upon him—as this man is like unto the son of great-hearted Odysseus, unto Telemachus, whom that hero left a child new-born in his house, when for the sake of shameless me ye Achæans came up under Troy, planning bold war."

147. And unto her replying spake fair-haired Menelaus: 'So do I, too, lady, now mark the likeness as thou tracest it; for such were the feet of that hero and such his hands, and the glances of his eyes and the head and the hair thereon. And lo! of a truth even now I was telling of Odysseus, recalling him to mind, how many toils he went through, enduring hardships for my sake, and he let fall a bitter tear from beneath his brows, holding his purple cloak against his eyes.'

155. And to him in turn Peisistratus, son of Nestor, answering spake: 'Son of Atreus, Menelaus, reared of Zeus, leader of hosts, surely of a truth this is the son of that hero, even as thou sayest; but he is discreet, and thinketh it shame in his heart coming here in this wise for the first time to make show of much talking in the presence of thee, in whose voice we two take pleasure as in the voice of a god. Now the knight Nestor of Gerenia sent me forth to go together with him as his guide; for he longed to see thee that thou mightest suggest unto him some word or some work. For many sorrows hath a son in his halls when his father is gone thence, if he hath no others by him as his helpers; and even so now Telemachus's father is gone thence nor hath he any others who in his township will keep off from him distress.'

165. And to him answering spake fair-haired Menelaus: 'Lo now, indeed, in very truth 'tis the son of a right dear friend that has come unto my house who for my sake toiled through many hardships; and I thought to welcome him when he came before all other Argives, if far-seeing Olympian Zeus had granted us twain a return over the sea in our swift ships. And in Argos I would have given him a city to dwell in, and would have made him a house, having brought him from Ithaca with his goods and his son and all his folk, making one city desolate
of those that lie around us and are ruled o'er by myself. Then
often being here would we have held converse together: nor
would aught else have separated us twain, the welcoming and
the welcomed, ere that indeed death's dark cloud wrapped us
round. But of this, I ween, the god must himself have been
jealous, who made him hapless with no home-coming.'
183. So spake he and in them all stirred a desire of tears.
She wept, even Argive Helen, the daughter of Zeus, and Tele-
machus too wept, and Menelaus, son of Atreus, nor even did
the son of Nestor keep tearless eyes, for he remembered in his
heart the noble Antilochus whom the radiant son of the bright
Dawn had slain. He, thinking on him, spake winged words:
190. 'Son of Atreus, Nestor the old man used to avow that
thou wert wise beyond mortals, whenever we made mention of
thee in his halls and questioned one another; and now, if at all
it may be, be persuaded by me: for I on my part find no
pleasure in lamenting at supper-time: nay, but morning early-
born shall serve for that; and yet I deem it in no wise a shame
to weep for whomsoever of mortals dieth and meeteth his fate.
This, of a truth, is indeed the only honour we pay to miserable
mortals, both to cut our hair and let fall a tear from our cheeks.
For my brother too is dead, in nowise the meanest of the
Argives; and thou art sure to have known him; for I on my
part never met nor saw him; but they say beyond all others
was Antilochus exceeding swift to run and a stout warrior.'
203. And to him answering, spake fair-haired Menelaus:
'My friend, since thou hast said such things as a wise man
might say and do—yea, even one who was older than thou—for
of such a father too art thou born, wherefore also thou utterest
wise things. And easily distinguished is the son of the man for
whom Cronion weaveth prosperity both at bridal and at birth,
even as now he granted to Nestor for ever all his days that he
himself should grow old in comfort in his halls, and his sons
moreover be wise and most valiant with the spear. Nay, we
will let go by the grief which was erstwhile made, and let us
once more bethink ourselves of supper, and let them pour water
upon our hands; and again at dawn shall there be stories for
Telemachus and for me to tell one to the other even to the
end.'
216. So spake he, and Asphalion then poured water on their hands, the ready squire of renowned Menelaus, and they plied their hands to the good cheer ready spread before them.

219. Then again did Helen, daughter of Zeus, turn to other thoughts. Forthwith she cast into the wine a drug whereof they drank, a drug both allaying sorrow and soothing wrath, bringing forgetfulness of all ills. Whosoever should drink thereof, when it was mixed in the cup, not for that day would he let fall a tear from his cheeks, not though both his mother and his father were dead, nor though before his face men slew his brother with the sword, or his dear son, and he saw it with his eyes. Such helpful drugs and so good had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, bestowed on her, an Egyptian woman where the grain-giving land yields herbs in greatest plenty, many helpful and many baleful mingled together. And there every man is a leech skilled beyond all men; yea, for they are of Pæeon's race. Now when she had cast in the drug, and had bidden them pour out the wine, once again making answer in words she addressed her lord:

235. 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, reared of Zeus, and lo! ye too, sons of noble men: yet spite of all now to one and now to another Zeus giveth both good and evil, for he can do all things—now verily feast ye seated in our halls and delight you with tales, for I will tell ye one suited thereto.

240. 'Now every one of them all I cannot tell nor number, so many were the toils of stout-hearted Odysseus; but what a deed was that which he, brave man, did and dared in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achæans suffered woes! For having subdued himself with unseemly stripes and having thrown about his shoulders a sorry wrap, like unto a menial, he went down into the broad-streeted city of the foemen, and disguising himself he made him like unto another man, a beggar, he who was nowise such an one at the ships of the Achæans. Like unto him he entered the city of the Trojans, and they were heedless thereof all of them; and I alone knew him, though in such guise, and kept questioning him; but by his craft he avoided me. But when at last I was washing him and anointing him with oil, and had cast about him garments and sworn a mighty oath not to reveal Odysseus among the Trojans before at least
he arrived unto the swift ships and the huts, then indeed at last
he revealed to me all the purpose of the Achaians. And having
slain many of the Trojans with his long spear, he returned to
the Argives and brought back to them much knowledge. Then
the other Trojan women wept aloud, but my heart rejoiced,
since already then my heart was turned to go back again to my
home, and I groaned in repentance of the blindness that Aphrodite
gave me when she led me away thither far from my own dear
native land, quitting both my child and my bridal chamber and
my lord, who lacked not aught either in wisdom or beauty.'

265. Then to her answering, spake fair-haired Menelaus:
'Verily of a truth, lady, all this tale hast thou told in due order.
Ere now have I heard both the counsel and the wisdom of
many heroes, and have traversed much land, but never yet have
I beheld such an one with mine eyes as was the dear mind of
stout-hearted Odysseus. What a deed was that which he, brave
man, did and dared in the well-wrought horse, wherein sat all we
chieftains of the Argives bearing death and destruction to the
Trojans! Afterwards thou camest thither, and some god must
have bidden thee, who wished to bring glory on the Trojans.
And of a truth the god-like Deiphobus accompanied thee on thy
way. Thrice didst thou go round the hollow snare, handling it
all about, and didst call by name all the chieftains of the Danai,
making thy voice like unto the voice of the wives of all the
Argives. But I, and the son of Tydeus, and godlike Odysseus,
sitting in their midst, heard thee as thou didst call; and we
two both were fain starting up, either to go out, or to answer
thee at once from within. But Odysseus kept us back and held
us, for all our longing. Then the other sons of the Achaians
were all of them silent, but Anticlus alone desired still to
answer thee with words: but Odysseus closed his mouth firmly
with his strong hands, and saved all the Achaians, and held him
for so long until Pallas Athene led thee back again.'

290. Then to him the wise Telemachus spake in reply:
'Menelaus, son of Atreus, reared of Zeus, leader of hosts, all the
harder is it! for not a whit did this courage keep from him
grievous death, not though his heart within him had been iron.
But come, convey us to rest, that forthwith in sweet sleep we
may take our joy of rest.'
296. So spake he, and Argive Helen bade the slaves set out bedsteads beneath the corridor, and cast thereon fair blankets of purple and spread above them coverlets, and lay thick mantles above all to wrap them therewith. So the maidens went forth from the hall, bearing torches in their hands, and spread the beds, and an attendant led forth the guests. They then slept there in the corridor of the house, the hero Telemachus and Nestor's radiant son, but the son of Atreus slept in the inmost chamber of the lofty house, and by him lay long-robed Helen, fairest of women.

306. But so soon as the early-born dawn shone forth, rosy-fingered, then Menelaus of the loud war-cry roused him from his couch, and he put on his garments and about his shoulders set his sharp sword, and beneath his smooth feet bound his goodly sandals, and proceeded to go forth from his chamber, like unto a god in presence, and sat by Telemachus and spake to him and called him by his name:

312. 'Wherefore hath thy need brought thee hither, hero Telemachus, unto goodly Lacedæmon, over the broad back of the sea? Is it a public matter, or a private quest? Herein tell me true.'

315. And to him in turn wise Telemachus made reply: 'Menelaus, son of Atreus, reared of Zeus, leader of hosts, I have come if so be thou mightest tell me some tidings of my father. My dwelling is being devoured, and my fat lands have gone to ruin, and of unfriendly men is my house full who ever slaughter my close-thronging flocks and my kine with trailing feet and crumpled horns—even the wooers of my mother, with arrogance beyond measure. Wherefore now am I come hither to thy knees, if so be thou art willing to tell me of his grievous death, if perchance thou didst see it with thine own eyes, or hast heard the tale from another wanderer; for to be wretched exceedingly did his mother bear him. And speak me not honeyed words, in ruth or pity, nay but tell me frankly how thou didst get sight of him. I beseech thee, if ever my father the goodly Odysseus having made promise of any word or work did bring it to pass for thee in the land of the Trojans, where ye Achæans suffered woes, remember these things now, I pray, and speak me true.'
332. And to him fair-haired Menelaus, sore vexed, made reply: 'Fie! fie! for shame! truly in the bed of a strong-hearted man were they fain to lie, being themselves but cowards! Even as when a hind, having laid to rest her newborn fawns unweaned in the lair of a mighty lion, searcheth out then the mountain-shoulders and grassy dells seeking pasture, and afterward the lion cometh back to his bed, and letteth loose unsightly doom upon both dam and fawns, even so upon these men shall Odysseus let loose unsightly doom. Ah, would that, O father Zeus, and Athene, and Apollo, being even such as once he was in well-stablished Lesbos, when in a match he wrestled with Philomeleides standing up to him and threw him mightily, and all the Achaeans rejoiced, ay, being even such, Odysseus might encounter the wooers; all of them then would find a swift fate and a bitter wedlock! But as for that of which thou askest and entreatest me, I indeed would not tell thee aught swerving from the truth, nor will I deceive thee, but what the old man of the sea told me, who speaketh true, of this not a word, mark me, will I conceal nor hide from thee.

351. 'In the river Ægyptus the gods still held me back (though fain was I to come on hither), for that I had not offered unto them acceptable hecatombs; and the gods ever wished that men should remember their commandments. Now there is an island in the midst of the loud-surging waves right against Ægyptus, and men call it Pharos, as far off as a hollow ship makes in one day when the shrill blast bloweth behind her. And therein is a harbour with goodly anchorage whence they launch the well-rounded ships into the sea, when they have drawn the deep dark water. There the gods held me back twenty days, nor ever did the salt sea-breezes come with their breath, they that are the escorters of ships over the broad back of the sea. And now all our food would have been spent and the strength of our men, if one of the gods had not taken pity on me and saved me, the daughter of mighty Proteus, the old man of the sea, Eidothë; for her heart most of all indeed did I move, who met me wandering alone apart from my comrades; for ever did they roaming round the island, fish with bent hooks, and hunger gnawed their belly. And she, standing near me, uttered her voice and spake: "Art thou so utterly a fool,
stranger, and spiritless, or art thou wilfully reckless and hast pleasure in suffering sorrow? So long time indeed art thou kept back in the island, nor even canst find any escape, and the heart of thy comrades is fainting." So she spake, but I answering addressed her: "I will of a truth tell thee, whosoever of the goddesses thou art, how that in no wise willingly am I kept back here, but surely I must have sinned against the deathless gods, who hold the wide heaven. But do thou now tell me—and the gods know all things—who of the deathless gods chains me here and hath hindered me from my way; and tell me of my returning, how I may go over the fish-teeming deep." So I spake and straightway she replied, fairest of goddesses: "Yea, in very truth, stranger, I will tell thee full plainly. Hither resorteth that old man of the sea, who speaketh true, the deathless Egyptian Proteus, who knoweth the depths of every sea, Poseidon's underling, and they say that he is both my father and begat me. He, if perchance thou canst catch him, laying a snare for him, will surely tell thee of thy way, and of the measure of thy path, and of thy return, how thou may'st go over the fish-teeming deep. And he will tell thee, O thou reared of Zeus, if thou art fain, what both good and evil hath been wrought in thy halls, while thou wert away on thy long and grievous journey." So she spake, and I answering addressed her: "Do thou thyself devise now the snare for that old man divine, lest by chance catching sight of me first, or knowing of my coming, he escape me; for a god is hard indeed for mortal man to subdue." So I spake, and straightway she answered, fairest of goddesses: "Yea, in very truth, stranger, I will tell full plainly. Whenssoever the sun reacheth mid-heaven, then indeed will the old man of the sea, who speaketh true, come forth from the sea, before the breath of Zephyrus, hidden by the dark ripple of the sea; and coming forth he lies down to sleep in the hollow caves. And around him the seals, the brood of the fair daughter of the brine, sleep all together, coming up from the hoary brine, breathing forth a bitter scent of the sea with its many depths. There will I, leading thee with the dawning of the day, lay you all to rest in order; so do thou choose out three comrades who are the best in thy well-benched ships. And I will tell thee all the magic arts of that old man.
The seals first of all he will count over and go his round; but when he has numbered and seen them all, then will he lie down in their midst, like a shepherd amidst his flock of sheep. Now as soon as ever ye see him couched, then indeed mind ye of both your might and your valour, and hold him there, though he be fain and eager to escape. And he will do his endeavour by changing into all living creatures that are made to creep upon the earth, and into water and fierce fire. But do ye hold him strongly and press him still the more. And when at length he questions thee in words in his own shape, even as he was when ye saw him couched, then indeed, hero, cease from thy violence, and let the old man go free, and ask him who of the gods causeth thee hardship, and ask of thy returning, how thou shalt go over the fish-teeming deep." So having spoken she dived beneath the seething main. But I went to the ships where they stood in the sand, and o'er many things my heart brooded darkly within me as I went. But when I had come to the ship and to the sea, and we made ready our supper and immortal night had come on, then indeed did we lay us down to sleep by the breakers of the sea. But soon as early-born Dawn appeared, rosy-fingered, then verily did I walk by the shore of the wide-wayed sea, praying much to the gods: and I took with me three of my comrades, in whom I had most confidence for every enterprise.

435. "But meanwhile she having dived beneath the broad bosom of the sea, brought up from out the deep the skins of four seals, and they were all newly-flayed; she was planning a snare for her father. And having scooped out lairs in the sea sand she sat awaiting us: and we came very near her, and she laid us all down in order and threw a skin over each. Then would our ambush have been very grievous; for the very deadly stench from the sea-bred seals distressed us sorely. Who would lay him down by a monster of the sea? But herself she saved us, and devised a great boon; for bringing ambrosia of a very sweet savour, she set it underneath the nostrils of each man, and did away with the stench of the monsters. And all the morning we waited with enduring heart; and the seals came out of the sea all together, and then they laid them to rest in order by the edge of the breakers of
the sea; and at noon the old man came forth from the sea and found the seals all plump, and then went o'er them all and counted their number, and first among the monsters he reckoned us, and nowise deemed in his heart that there was a snare; and afterwards he too himself laid him down.

454. 'Then we shouting rushed upon him and cast our hands about him; nor did the old man forget his guileful skill. But lo! first of all he became a lion of goodly beard, then afterwards a snake, and a leopard, and a mighty boar; and he changed him to running water and a tall flowering tree. But we held him firmly with enduring heart. And when at last the old man, who knew magic arts, grew weary, then indeed questioning me in words he spake: "Who of the gods, prithee, was it, son of Atreus, that gave thee counsel, so that thou mightest take me against my will, laying for me a snare? What needest thou?" So spake he, and I answering him said: "Thou knowest, old man; why dost thou speak thus, seeking to lead me astray? For truly I am kept back long time in this isle, nor can I find any remedy, and my heart faileth within me. But do thou tell me—and the gods know all things—which of the deathless gods chains me here and hath hindered me from my way, and tell me of my returning, how I may go over the fish-teeming deep." So spake I, and straightway replying he addressed me: "Nay surely thou should'st have offered goodly sacrifices both to Zeus and to the other gods, and then embarked so that most speedily thou mightest have come to thine own country over the wine-dark deep. For it is not thy fate erst both to see thy friends and come to thy well-stablished house, and to thy fatherland, ere at least that thou come yet again to the water of the Ægyptus, the heaven-fed stream, and do sacrifice of holy hecatombs to the deathless gods who hold the wide heaven; then also will the gods grant thee the path for which thou yearnest." So spake he, but my dear heart within me was broken, for that he bade me once again to go unto Ægyptus over the murky deep, a long journey and grievous. But even so answering him in words I spake: "These things even thus, old man, will I perform, as thou commandest. But come, tell me this and speak it out downright: Have all the Achæans returned unscathed with their ships, whom Nestor and
I left when we went from Troy, or has any one of them perished by a bitter doom on board his own ship or in the arms of his friends when he had wound up the clew of war?” So spake I, and straightway answering me he said:

492. “Son of Atreus, why questionest thou me of this? Nay, it behoveth thee not to know or to learn all my mind: and I avow that thou shalt not long be tearless when thou dost hear it all aright. For many of these men were slain, and many left; but two only of the leaders of the mail-coated Achæans perished in their return—and at the battle thou thyself wast present—and one, I ween, still alive is kept far from home on the broad sea. Ajax in truth was slain amidst his long-oared ships. At first Poseidon brought him nigh to Gyrae, to the mighty rocks, and saved him from the sea; and so would he have escaped his fate, even though hated by Athene, if he had not let fall an overweening word, and been sorely blinded with presumption. He said that in the gods’ despite he had escaped the mighty depths of the sea. And Poseidon heard him loudly boasting; then straightway taking his trident in his mighty hands, he smote the Gyraeian rock and clave it asunder. And one part there remained in its place, but the other fell into the sea, the broken mass whereon Ajax, seated at the first, had been blinded with presumption. And him it carried down through the vast seething main. So there he then died when he had drunk the briny water. But thy brother verily escaped the fates and avoided them in his hollow ships: and lady Here saved him. But when at length he was speedily about to come to the steep mount of Malea, then did the storm-wind snatching him up bear him loudly moaning over the fish-teeming deep to the borders of the country where of yore Thyestes dwelt, but at that time Ægisthus, son of Thyestes, dwelt there. But when at length thence too there gleamed forth a vision of a safe return, and the gods changed back the breeze to fair, and they had reached home, verily of a truth with joy set he foot upon his own native-land and kissed his native-land, as he touched it; and many hot tears fell from his eyes, for with gladness did he look upon his country. But from his watch-tower there saw him the spy whom crafty Ægisthus bringing had set there, and promised him a reward, two talents
of gold; and he kept watch for a year lest Agamemnon should escape unnoticed as he passed him, and should remember his impetuous valour. So he proceeded to go to the palace to tell the tidings to the shepherd of the people. And forthwith Ægisthus devised a crafty snare. Choosing twenty of the best men in the township, he placed an ambush, and at the other side of the hall bade them prepare a feast. Meantime he went with chariots and horses to bid to the feast Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, pondering cruel thoughts. And he brought him up, all ignorant of his doom, and having feasted him, slew him, as one slayeth an ox at the stall. Nor was there one left of the comrades of Ætides who followed with him, nor e'en one of the comrades of Ægisthus, but they were slain in the halls.” So spake he, but my heart within me was broken, and I wept seated on the sand, nor truly was my heart fain to live any longer and to behold the light of the sun. But when I was sated both of weeping and of grovelling in the sand, then indeed the old man of the sea, who speaketh true, addressed me: “No longer, son of Atreus, mourn so long time unceasingly, since thereby we find no end; but with all speed make trial, that so thou mayest come to thine own father-land. For either thou wilt find the murderer still alive, or else Orestes will have slain him coming before thee: and thou wilt chance upon his funeral feast.” So spake he, and my heart and lordly soul were warmed within me, even grieved as I was; and altering my voice I spake to him winged words: “Of these then I know; but do thou tell me of a third man, who being still alive is held back from home on the vast deep, or dead perchance; and fain am I to hear, even grieved though I be.” So spake I, and straightway he answering addressed me: “It is the son of Laertes, having his home in Ithaca; and him I saw in an island shedding big tears in the halls of the nymph Calypso, who keepeth him there by force; and he cannot go to his own native land, for he has not by him ships with oars and comrades who might speed him over the broad back of the sea. But for thee it is not ordained, Menelaus, reared of Zeus, to die and meet thy fate in Argos, the land that breedeth horses. But the deathless gods will send thee to the Elysian plain and the end of the world, where is fair-haired Rhadamantus, where indeed
is life most easy for men. There is no snow, nor yet any mighty storm, nor even rain, but continually Ocean sendeth forth the breezes of the shrill-blowing zephyr to refresh men: for that thou hast Helen to wife and art in their eyes the son-in-law of Zeus." So speaking he dived beneath the seething main.

571. 'But I went with my god-like comrades to the ships, and o'er many things my heart brooded darkly within me as I went. But when we had come to the ship and to the sea, and made ready the supper, and immortal night had come on, then indeed did we lay us down to sleep by the breakers of the sea. And so soon as early-born Dawn shone forth, rosy-fingered, first of all we drew down our ships to the shining sea, and set therein masts and sails in the rounded ships, and the men too going on board sat them on the benches; and sitting in order they smote the gray sea-water with their oars. And back to the waters of the Ægyptus, heaven-fed river, did I bring my ships, and did acceptable hecatombs. Then when I had appeased the wrath of the gods who live for aye, I heaped a mound for Agamemnon, so that his fame might never be quenched. And when I had done these things I set sail, and they gave me a favouring breeze, the deathless gods who wafted meswiftly to mine own dear land. But come now, abide in my halls till the eleventh or twelfth day hence shall come on, and then will I duly speed thee forth, and I will give thee a splendid gift, three horses and a well-polished chariot; and moreover I will give thee a goodly cup that thou mayest pour forth libations to the deathless gods, being mindful of me all thy days.'

593. And to him in his turn wise Telemachus made reply: 'Son of Atreus, hold me not for a long time here. Yea, even for a year's space would I endure to sit by thee, nor even would the desire of home or parents come upon me: for vastly am I delighted by thy tales and talk as I listen. But already my comrades are distressed for me in goodly Pylos, and yet thou holdest me here for a long time. And as for the gift, whatsoever thou mayest give me, let it be a thing to treasure: horses I will not take to Ithaca, but here will I leave them for a joy to thyself; for thou rulest over a wide plain wherein is much clover, and galingale therewith, and wheat, and rye, and white
barley broad in the ear. In Ithaca are no broad courses nor meadow-land at all. Browsed by goats is it, and fairer than a land that pastureth horses. For no one of the islands which lean upon the sea is fit for the driving of horses nor possessed of fair meadows: and even so is Ithaca beyond all others.'

609. So spake he, and Menelaus of the loud war-cry smiled and with his hand fondled him and spake, and called him by name:

611. 'Thou art of noble blood, my dear child, such words dost thou speak; therefore I will change thee these presents, for I can. And of the gifts, as many treasures as are stored in my house, I will give thee the fairest and the one of greatest price. I will give thee a well-wrought bowl: and it is all of silver, and the rims thereof are finished off with gold, and it is the work of Hephaestus: and the hero Phædimus gave it to me, the king of the Sidonians, when his house sheltered me as I was returning thither: and to thee now am I fain to give it.'

620. Thus they spake such words to one another, while the guests were coming to the palace of the god-like king. And they drove sheep and brought wine that gladdeneth the heart; and their wives with fair wimples sent them bread. So they were busy about a feast in the halls.

625. But the wooers in front of the hall of Odysseus made merry, casting quoits and spears in a levelled place, just where they had cast before, being wanton. And Antinous was seated there, and god-like Eurymachus, the chief men of the wooers, and in valour they were excellent beyond the rest. And coming near them Noemon, the son of Phronios, questioning Antinous, addressed him in words:

632. 'Antinous, know we at all in our hearts or perchance know we not, when Telemachus will return from sandy Pylos? He hath gone, taking a ship from me: and I have need thereof to go across into broad-spaced Elis, where I have twelve mares, and hardy mules unbroken at the teat: and of these I would fain drive off one and tame him.'

638. So spake he, and they were astonied in their heart, for they deemed not that he had gone to Neleian Pylos, but that he was somewhere at home on his lands with his flocks or with the swineherd.
641. And to him in turn spake Antinous, son of Eupeithes:
‘Tell me true, when went he away and what noble youths
followed with him? were they picked men of Ithaca, or thralls
and servants of his own? even that could he accomplish. And
tell me this truly, that I may know it aright, whether did he
take away from thee thy dark ship by force against thy will, or
didst thou grant it him willingly, when he entreated thee with
prayers?’

648. And to him the son of Phronios, Noemon, made reply:
‘I myself willingly gave it him: what could even another man
do, when such an one entreated it with troubles in his heart?
’twere difficult to refuse the gift. And the noble youths who
after us are noblest in the township, they followed with him
and I marked their leader step on board, Mentor, or a god who
in all things resembled the man himself. But at this do I
marvel. I saw the goodly Mentor here yesterday just before
the dawn. But then he went on board the ship to Pylos.’

657. So having spoken, he went away to the house of his
father, and the haughty spirit of these twain was angered.
And they made the wooers sit down together and stayed them
from their sports. Then to them spake Antinous, son of
Eupeithes, raging: and his darkened heart was mightily filled
with wrath, and his eyes were like glowing fire:

663. ‘Out upon him, truly a great deed hath been wrought
o’erweeningly by Telemachus, even this journey: and we
declared that it was not being brought to pass by him. This
lad, as ye see, is clean gone in spite of so many of us here,
hauling down his ship and choosing out the best men in the
township. He will get the start of us to be our ruin. But
may Zens destroy his force, ere he bring to pass a bane for us!
But come, give me a swift ship and twenty comrades, that I
may lay an ambush for him on his coming, and keep watch in
the straits of Ithaca and rock-bound Samos, so that he may sail
with woe full bitter in search of his father.’

673. So spake he, and they all agreed and urged him on;
them rising up forthwith they went into the house of
Odysseus.

675. Nor indeed was Penelope for long time unaware of the
plans which the wooers had brooded over deep down in their
hearts; for the henchman Medon told her thereof, who had heard their counsel, being without the court: and they within were weaving their guile. And he proceeded to go through the house to tell the tidings to Penelope. And as he stepped down from the threshold Penelope said unto him:

681. 'Henchman, and wherefore have the noble wooers sent thee here? whether to tell the hand-maidens of god-like Odysseus to cease from their work and prepare themselves a feast? Would that they had never wooed me nor met me here or elsewhere, but might now here sup for their last and latest time! ye who thronging ofttimes devour much livelihood, the wealth of the prudent Telemachus! Nor did ye ever in any wise nor in days gone by hear from your sires, when ye were boys, what manner of man Odysseus was among your parents, ne'er doing nor saying aught unrighteous in the township: and this is the custom of god-like kings. One man a king is like to hate, another he may love. But he did never aught reckless unto any man. Nay, but your spirit and shameful deeds are plain, nor is there any gratitude remaining with you for acts of kindness shown.'

696. And to her in turn answered Medon, sage in thought: 'O queen, would indeed that this were the greatest evil! But another far greater and more grievous are the wooers devising, which may Cronion ne'er bring to pass! Eager are they to slay Telemachus with the sharp sword on his homeward return, for he went for tidings of his father to goodly Pylos and to fair Lacedæmon.'

703. So spake he, and there upon the spot her knees were loosened and her dear heart, and for a long time speechlessness held her. And her eyes twain were filled with tears, and the flow of her voice was stayed. But at length indeed, answering in words, she addressed him:

707. 'Henchman, and wherefore hath my son gone? No need in any wise was there for him to mount on board the swift-sailing ships, which are unto men as horses on the deep sea, and traverse the wide waters. Is it that even his own name should not be left among mortals?'

711. And then Medon, sage in thought, answered her: 'I know not whether some god constrained him, or whether
perchance his own spirit was eager to go unto Pylos, that so he may hear either of his father's return, or what fate he had met.'

715. Having then thus spoken he departed through the house of Odysseus, but about her there was shed a soul-consuming grief. Nor indeed could she any longer endure to sit upon a chair, though there were full many in the house, but there she crouched on the threshold of the well-fashioned chamber, lamenting piteously, and round about her hand-maidens wailed, all of them, as many as were in the house, young and old. And to them spake Penelope, having wept her fill:

722. 'Hearken, my friends: for to me the Olympian sire hath given griefs above all other women who were born and bred together with me, who erstwhile lost a noble husband of lion heart, equipped with all virtues among the Danai, a noble husband whose fame is spread wide throughout Hellas and mid Argos. And now again the storm-winds have snatched away my well-loved son without tidings from the halls, nor did I hear of him as he went away. Ah, cruel women, ye did not even have this thought in your minds, each of you, to rouse me up from my bed when he went away to his hollow black ship, though ye knew of it full well in your hearts! For had I known that he was purposing this journey, verily either should he have tarried here, though full eager for the way, or have left me dead in the halls! But let some one speedily summon the aged Dolius, my slave whom my father gave me when I was yet coming hither, and who keepeth my garden, filled with trees, so that with all speed, seated by Laertes, he may tell him all these things, if so be perchance Laertes may weave some counsel in his heart, and coming forth make his lament to the people who are fain to destroy his seed, and the seed of god-like Odysseus.'

742. And to her answered in her turn her dear nurse Eurycleia: 'Lady dear, do thou then slay me with the pitiless sword, or else leave me in the halls: yet will I not conceal the tale from thee. I knew all this, and gave him as many things as he bade me, bread and sweet wine; and he took a great oath of me not to tell thee till the twelfth day at least therefrom was come, or till thou thyself shouldest miss him and hear of him that he was speeding on his way, so that thou mightest not by weeping mar thy fair skin. Nay, now, having laved thee and
taken for thy skin clean raiment, go thou up to thy upper chamber with thy attendant maidens, and pray to Athene, the daughter of Ægis-bearing Zeus; for so she may yet save him even from death. And trouble not an old man in his troubles: for I deem not that the race of Arcesius is altogether hateful to the blessed gods, but I ween some one will still remain to possess the high-vaulted halls and far away the rich fields.'

758. So she spake, and lulled her lady's grief and stayed her eyes from grief. And she, having laved her and taken for her skin clean raiment, went up to the upper chamber with her attendant maidens, and there she placed barley-groats in a basket, and prayed to Athene:

762. 'Hear me, daughter of Ægis-bearing Zeus, unwearied maiden, if ever Odysseus of many wiles in these halls have burnt for thee fat thighs of oxen or of sheep, remember now these things, I pray thee, and save me my dear son, and ward from him the wooers in their wicked pride.'

767. So speaking, she cried aloud, and the goddess heard her prayer. And the wooers clamoured throughout the shadowy halls: and thus would some one of the proud youths say:

770. 'Lo, of a truth, the much-wooed queen prepareth for us marriage, and knoweth not a whit how that death hath been ordained for her son.'

772. Thus then would one of them say, but they knew not these things, how they were ordained. And to them Antinous made harangue and spake:

774. 'Ye reckless men, shun all o'erweening words alike, lest perchance some one should tell them even in the house. But come, arising in silence let us accomplish that plan whereof we spake, inasmuch as it pleased us all in our hearts.'

778. So speaking, he chose out twenty men, the best of all, and they proceeded to go to the swift ship and the shore of the sea. And first of all they drew the ship down to the deep water, and therewith placed in the dark ship both a mast and sails, and fitted the oars in leathern loops all in due order, and spread out the white sails. And proud squires bare their arms for them. And high out in the shore water they moored her, and themselves disembarked; and then they took supper and waited for evening to come on.
787. But the wise Penelope for her part lay in her upper chamber fasting, tasting nor meat nor drink, pondering whether her noble son would escape death, or whether he would be slain by the o'erweening wooers. And like as a lion broods in the press of men, fearing when they draw the ensnaring ring around him, as she lay pondering even like unto him, upon her came deep sleep. And sinking back, she slept, and all her limbs were loosed.

795. Then again did the goddess, gray-eyed Athene, mark other thoughts. She made a phantom, and in shape she likened it unto a woman, Iphthime, the daughter of great-hearted Icarius, whom Eumelus, having his home in Phere, took to wife. And she sent it to the house of god-like Odysseus, that it might stay Penelope, as she wailed and grieved, from her mourning and her tearful grief. And it entered into the chamber by the strap of the bolt, and stood over her head, and spake to her these words:

804. 'Sleepest thou, Penelope, smitten in thy dear heart? Nay, the gods living at ease suffer thee not to weep nor to be afflicted, since thy son will yet return: for he is nowise a sinner in the eyes of the gods.'

808. And to her again wise Penelope made answer, as she slumbered full sweetly at the gates of dreams:

810. 'Wherefore, sister, hast thou come hither? Not indeed erstwhile wast thou wont at all to come, for thou dwellest in thy home exceeding far away: and thou biddest me to cease from my sorrows and many pains, which torture me in my heart and in my soul, me who erstwhile lost a noble husband of lion heart, equipped with all virtues among the Danai, a noble husband, whose fame is spread wide throughout Hellas and mid Argos. And now again my well-loved son has gone away on a hollow ship, poor boy, knowing naught aright of toils nor of the gatherings of men. And for him then I mourn e'en more than for that other. And I tremble for him, and fear lest he should suffer aught, either in the township of these where he is gone, or on the deep, for many foemen are contriving plots against him, longing to slay him ere he comes to his own native land.'

824. And to her replying, the phantom dim made answer:
'Take heart, nor fear at all too much within thine heart, for such an escort goes with him as even others have prayed for to stand by them—for she is mighty—even Pallas Athene. And she pitieth thee as thou weepest, and even now sent me hither to speak these things unto thee.'

830. And to her again spake wise Penelope: 'If in good sooth thou art a god, and didst hearken to the voice of a god, come, I pray thee, tell me tidings of that ill-fated man, whether perchance he still lives and sees the light of the sun, or whether he is already dead, and in the house of Hades.'

835. And to her replying, the phantom dim made answer: 'Verily I will not indeed tell thee plainly of him whether he in truth be alive or dead: 'tis ill to speak light words.'

838. So speaking the phantom slipped away by the bolt of the door-post, into the breath of the wind: and she leapt up from her sleep, even the daughter of Icarius, and her heart within her was gladdened, so clear was the vision that sped toward her in the murk of night.

842. But the wooers, having embarked, were sailing over the dank paths, planning in their hearts sheer death for Telemachus. Now there is a rocky island in the midst of the sea midway 'twixt Ithaca and rugged Samos, Asteris, a little island: and a harbour there is therein with a double entrance with anchorage for ships: there the Achæans awaited him, lying in ambush.
November, 1890.

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**CONTENTS.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>London Matriculation Examination</th>
<th>Special subjects for 1891</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; Inter. Arts</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; Special Subjects for 1891</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot;</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; Special Subjects for 1891</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; Inter. Sc. &amp; Prel. Sci. Examination</td>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Catalogue—**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classics—Latin</th>
<th>Roman History</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Grecian History</th>
<th>Classical Questions</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Directories and Examination Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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