

THE ILIAD

Homer

Translated into blank verse by William Cullen Bryant

*With an Introduction by
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BOOK I

It is no exaggeration to say that every western and war movie ever made owes a debt to Homer's *Iliad*. All that man has thought or said about the glory and horror of the battlefield, the internal struggle of the soldier, and the inescapable nature of our mortality is contained within the pages of Homer's epic. It is here that western literature begins, here that the big questions begin to be asked, here that beauty meets truth.

The World Around

There was almost surely a real war fought between the Greeks and the Trojans, whose city of Troy was located on the north-west coast of modern day Turkey. And that war was most likely fought around 1200 BC, at the height of the Mycenaean Bronze Age.

When we speak of the Mycenaean, we speak of a loosely federated group of individual city-states spread out across Greece, but mostly located in the Peloponnese. The chief of these city-states was Mycenae, but there were others at Argos, Sparta, Pylos, Salamis, Phthia, Thebes, and Athens, not to mention the islands of Crete and Ithaca. The leader of each city-state was a king in his own right, though they all looked to Agamemnon of Mycenae as their commander-in-chief.*

* For a fascinating and accessible introduction to Homer and his world, see Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998). This is based on Wood's own excellent PBS series.

Although the Mycenaeans defeated the Trojans, they did not set up any bases in Troy; instead, they returned home with their plunder. But their glory and power was not to last much longer. By 1100, Mycenaean civilization had collapsed, plunging Greece into a three-hundred-year Dark Age during which the art of writing was lost.

In the absence of writing, an oral tradition sprang up to preserve the memory of the Golden Age of Mycenae. That oral tradition was later carried across the Aegean to the coast of modern-day Turkey, where it was systematized and perfected by a group of bards who learned the skill of reciting long tales from memory.

Homer was the last in a long line of bards. He did not invent the *Iliad*, but constructed it from the oral tradition that had been passed down to him.

About the Author

Though Homer was a Greek, he did not live in Greece but somewhere along the Asia Minor coast (modern-day Turkey). Seven cities competed for his birthplace, but he was most likely a resident of the island of Chios. Though we do not know for certain if Homer was blind, there is good reason to believe that he was—especially given the fact that he includes a blind bard in the *Odyssey* who may very well be a surrogate for himself.

The genius of Homer did not consist in his ability to “make up” stories out of his imagination, but to give shape to tales that had been handed down to him in a fragmented form. It was most likely Homer who chose to center the *Iliad* on the character of Achilles rather than, say, Agamemnon or Ajax or Diomedes. He also found creative ways to connect separate episodes both dramatically and thematically.

Though he most likely lived near the end of the eighth century BC, at a time when Greece was reclaiming her written language from the Phoenicians, Homer was almost surely illiterate. The excessive use of repetition and “descriptive epithets” clearly identifies the epic as a product of oral composition.

If Homer did indeed compose both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the full weight of ancient tradition says that he did, then

of battle, ignores Achilles' advice and is killed by Hector, who strips him of Achilles' armor and wears it himself.

Enraged, Achilles reenters the battle, swearing that he will kill Hector or die himself. With new armor forged for him by Hephaestus, Achilles mows down the Trojan army until, at last, he comes face to face with Hector, who initially runs away from the furious Achilles but then turns and faces him. Achilles kills him, strips off his armor, and drags his naked body around the walls of Troy while Hector's family looks on from the wall.

When it becomes clear that Achilles' rage and grief will never end, Zeus intervenes and helps Priam to sneak into the Greek camp to ransom the dead body of his son from Achilles. Achilles honors the plea of the broken Priam and the two weep together in a moment of shared humanity. Though the original audience of the *Iliad* knew that the Greeks would soon defeat Troy (by means of the notorious Trojan Horse) and raze the city to the ground, Homer chose to end his bloody epic with a lull in the war during which Hector is given a glorious funeral.

Worldview Analysis

It is a given, or at least *should* be a given, of the Christian worldview that human nature does not change. We are not simply products of our socioeconomic milieu, as the Marxists would have it, nor of dark subconscious forces over which we have no ultimate control, as the Freudians would have it. We are, rather, creatures who were made in God's image but are fallen. Whatever age or culture into which we have been born, we bear that dual mark of glory and depravity.

If we pay careful attention as we read Book I of the *Iliad*, we will recognize the struggle between Achilles and Agamemnon, not because we are projecting our own cultural baggage onto Homer's epic, but because we share a common humanity with Achilles, Agamemnon, and Homer. In a nutshell, the quarrel that breaks out between the commander-in-chief of the combined Greek forces and the greatest of warriors is the age-old struggle between the politician and the soldier, the administrator and the teacher, the high priest and the prophet.

The first person in each of these pairs is the bureaucrat who must maintain law and order, while the second is the charismatic loner who has little regard for the rules. The former feels threatened by the latter, while the latter feels underappreciated by the former. Think of the relationship between the paranoid King Saul and the popular David in 1 Samuel, or the suspicious, ethnocentric leaders of the Jerusalem church and the newly-converted, iconoclastic Saul of Tarsus in Acts.

If we are to grow as Christians and as human beings, we must understand the nature of this struggle, and thus of our own capacity for self-destruction. We must seek out moderation when our passions would tear us apart out of fear or rage, suspicion or egocentrism. There is a wealth of wisdom in James's admonition to "be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19; ESV).

In the episode in Book I, Nestor, empowered by the proverbial wisdom of experience, is able temporarily to calm down Agamemnon and Achilles, but the two antagonists nevertheless set in motion the actions that will lead to tragedy. Desperate to save face before his men and to show the younger Achilles he is not afraid of him, Agamemnon unjustly steals away Achilles' prize. His ego wounded, Achilles pulls out of the war and utters the prayer that will bring death to his fellow Greeks ... and to his best friend. None of us lives in a vacuum; our decisions have far wider consequences than we can imagine.

* * * * *

Like the Bible itself, the *Iliad* refuses to give us easy, black-and-white situations. Though we are clearly on the side of the Greeks, Homer presents the Trojans in a positive light. Priam and Hecuba are a good and honorable king and queen ruling over a civilized, family-centered city. Prince Hector and his wife, Andromache, are a mature and loving couple for whom all readers feel immediate sympathy. Indeed, when Hector says farewell to Andromache in the final scene of Book VI, Homer captures for all time the essence of the husband/wife, masculine/feminine relationship celebrated in Genesis 2.

Rather than brush off Andromache's request that he remain within the walls of Troy and let others fight on the battlefield, Hector gently and compassionately explains to her why he cannot do that. Hector was raised from childhood "to fight always in the foremost ranks of the Trojans, / winning for my own self great glory, and for my father" (VI.445-446).^{*} Hector is not an autonomous individual motivated only by self-interest. He exists within a web of relationships that define him as a man, a son, a prince, a husband, a father, and a general. Modern readers of this moving scene, which was written by a pagan poet some seven centuries before the birth of Christ, will find themselves drawn toward a model of the family and the human person that is, in many ways, more biblical than that found in the works of many a twenty-first century Christian writer. We pat ourselves on the back for having "liberated" women, yet the tenderness with which Hector responds to Andromache surpasses that of most husbands today. Responding to his wife's fears, Hector explains to her that he will die on the day that fate has appointed, whether or not he remains home or returns to the battlefield. Since he cannot escape his fate, let him at least be true to his calling.

He then comforts her with a complementarian vision of marriage that our modern age is quickly losing. According to that vision, he must labor to fulfill the work of his sphere while she must labor to fulfill her own: "Go therefore back to our house, and take up your own work, / the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens / ply their work also; but the men must see to the fighting, / all men who are the people of Ilion, but I beyond others" (VI.486-93). As long as the two of them take up their separate spheres, he embodying courage and devotion to duty and she embodying the virtues of the wife described so eloquently in Proverbs 31, all will be well, and they will be able to find stability in a world that is tearing itself apart.

* All quotes from Homer are taken from *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951). References are given by book and line number.



BOOK I*

O Goddess! Sing the wrath of Peleus' son, 1
Achilles; sing the deadly wrath that brought
Woes numberless upon the Greeks, and swept
To Hades many a valiant soul, and gave
Their limbs a prey to dogs and birds of air— 5
For so had Zeus appointed—from the time
When the two chiefs, Atrides, king of men.
And great Achilles, parted first as foes.
Which of the gods put strife between the chiefs,
That they should thus contend? Latona's son 10
And Zeus's. Incensed against the king, he bade
A deadly pestilence appear among
The army, and the men were perishing.
For Atreus' son with insult had received
Chryses the priest, who to the Grecian fleet 15
Came to redeem his daughter, offering
Uncounted ransom. In his hand he bore
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god,
Upon the golden scepter, and he sued
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons 20
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host:
"Ye sons of Atreus, and ye other chiefs,

* Note: this translation does not match the line numbering of the original Greek text.

Well-greaved Achaeans, may the gods who dwell
 Upon Olympus give you to o'erthrow
 The city of Priam, and in safety reach 25
 Your homes; but give me my beloved child.
 And take her ransom, honoring him who sends
 His arrows far, Apollo, son of Zeus."
 Then all the other Greeks, applauding, bade
 Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts 30
 He offered, but the counsel did not please
 Atrides Agamemnon; he dismissed
 The priest with scorn, and added threatening words:
 "Old man, let me not find thee loitering here.
 Beside the roomy ships, or coming back 35
 Hereafter, lest the fillet thou dost bear
 And scepter of thy god protect thee not.
 This maiden I release not till old age
 Shall overtake her in my Argive home.
 Far from her native country, where her hand 40
 Shall throw the shuttle and shall dress my couch.
 Go, chafe me not, if thou wouldst safely go."
 He spake; the aged man in fear obeyed
 The mandate, and in silence walked apart,
 Along the many-sounding ocean-side, 45
 And fervently he prayed the monarch-god,
 Apollo, golden-haired Latona's son:
 "Hear me, thou bearer of the silver bow.
 Who guardest Chrysa, and the holy isle
 Of Cilia, and art lord in Tenedos, 50
 O Smintheus! If I ever helped to deck
 Thy glorious temple, if I ever burned
 Upon thy altar the fat thighs of goats
 And bullocks, grant my prayer, and let thy shafts
 Avenge upon the Greeks the tears I shed." 55
 So spake he supplicating, and to him
 Phoebus Apollo hearkened. Down he came,
 Down from the summit of the Olympian mount,
 Wrathful in heart; his shoulders bore the bow
 And hollow quiver; there the arrows rang 60

Upon the shoulders of the angry god,
 As on he moved. He came as comes the night,
 And, seated from the ships aloof, sent forth
 An arrow; terrible was heard the clang
 Of that resplendent bow. At first he smote 65
 The mules and the swift dogs, and then on man
 He turned the deadly arrow. All around
 Glared evermore the frequent funeral piles.
 Nine days already had his shafts been showered
 Among the host, and now, upon the tenth, 70
 Achilles called the people of the camp
 To council. Hera, of the snow-white arms,
 Had moved his mind to this, for she beheld
 With sorrow that the men were perishing.
 And when the assembly met and now was full, 75
 Stood swift Achilles in the midst and said:
 "To me it seems, Atrides, that 't were well,
 Since now our aim is baffled, to return
 Homeward, if death o'ertake us not; for war
 And pestilence at once destroy the Greeks. 80
 But let us first consult some seer or priest.
 Or dream-interpreter—for even dreams
 Are sent by Zeus—and ask him by what cause
 Phoebus Apollo has been angered thus;
 If by neglected vows or hecatombs, 85
 And whether savor of fat bulls and goats
 May move the god to stay the pestilence."
 He spake, and took again his seat; and next
 Rose Calchas, son of Thestor, and the chief
 Of augurs, one to whom were known things past 90
 And present and to come. He, through the art
 Of divination, which Apollo gave,
 Had guided Iliumward the ships of Greece.
 With words well ordered courteously he spake:
 "Achilles, loved of Zeus, thou biddest me 95
 Explain the wrath of Phoebus, monarch-god.
 Who sends afar his arrows. Willingly
 Will I make known the cause; but covenant thou,

And swear to stand prepared, by word and hand,
 To bring me succor. For my mind misgives 100
 That he who rules the Argives, and to whom
 The Achaean race are subject, will be wroth.
 A sovereign is too strong for humbler men.
 And though he keep his choler down awhile,
 It rankles, till he sate it, in his heart. 105
 And now consider: wilt thou hold me safe?"
 Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:
 "Fear nothing, but speak boldly out whate'er
 Thou knowest, and declare the will of Heaven.
 For by Apollo, dear to Zeus, whom thou, 110
 Calchas, dost pray to, when thou givest forth
 The sacred oracles to men of Greece,
 No man, while yet I live, and see the light
 Of day, shall lay a violent hand on thee
 Among our roomy ships; no man of all 115
 The Grecian armies, though thou name the name
 Of Agamemnon, whose high boast it is
 To stand in power and rank above them all."
 Encouraged thus, the blameless seer went on:
 "'Tis not neglected vows or hecatombs 120
 That move him, but the insult shown his priest.
 Whom Agamemnon spurned, when he refused
 To set his daughter free, and to receive
 Her ransom. Therefore sends the archer-god
 These woes, and still will send them on the Greeks, 125
 Nor ever will withdraw his heavy hand
 From our destruction, till the dark-eyed maid
 Freely, and without ransom, be restored
 To her beloved father, and with her
 A sacred hecatomb to Chrysa sent. 130
 So may we haply pacify the god."
 Thus having said, the augur took his seat.
 And then the hero-son of Atreus rose,
 Wide-ruling Agamemnon, greatly chafed.
 His gloomy heart was full of wrath, his eyes 135
 Sparkled like fire; he fixed a menacing look

Full on the augur Calchas, and began:
 "Prophet of evil! never hadst thou yet
 A cheerful word for me. To mark the signs
 Of coming mischief is thy great delight. 140
 Good dost thou ne'er foretell nor bring to pass.
 And now thou pratest, in thine auguries,
 Before the Greeks, how that the archer-god
 Afflicts us thus, because I would not take
 The costly ransom offered to redeem 145
 The virgin child of Chryses. 'Twas my choice
 To keep her with me, for I prize her more
 Than Clytemnestra, bride of my young years.
 And deem her not less nobly graced than she,
 In form and feature, mind and pleasing arts. 150
 Yet will I give her back, if that be best;
 For gladly would I see my people saved
 From this destruction. Let meet recompense,
 Meantime, be ready, that I be not left.
 Alone of all the Greeks, without my prize. 155
 That were not seemly. All of you perceive
 That now my share of spoil has passed from me."
 To him the great Achilles, swift of foot,
 Replied: "Renowned Atrides, greediest
 Of men, where wilt thou that our noble Greeks 160
 Find other spoil for thee, since none is set
 Apart, a common store. The trophies brought
 From towns which we have sacked have all been shared
 Among us, and we could not without shame
 Bid every warrior bring his portion back. 165
 Yield, then, the maiden to the god, and we.
 The Achaeans, freely will appoint for thee
 Threefold and fourfold recompense, should Zeus
 Give up to sack this well-defended Troy."
 Then the king Agamemnon answered thus: 170
 "Nay, use no craft, all valiant as thou art.
 Godlike Achilles; thou hast not the power
 To circumvent nor to persuade me thus.
 Think'st thou that, while thou keepest safe thy prize,

I shall sit idly down, deprived of mine? 175
 Thou bid'st me give the maiden back. 'Tis well,
 If to my hands the noble Greeks shall bring
 The worth of what I lose, and in a shape
 That pleases me. Else will I come myself,
 And seize and bear away thy prize, or that 180
 Of Ajax or Odysseus, leaving him
 From whom I take his share with cause for rage.
 Another time we will confer of this.
 Now come, and forth into the great salt sea
 Launch a black ship, and muster on the deck 185
 Men skilled to row, and put a hecatomb
 On board, and let the fair-cheeked maid embark,
 Chryseis. Send a prince to bear command—
 Ajax, Idomeneus, or the divine
 Odysseus—or thyself, Pelides, thou 190
 Most terrible of men, that with due rites
 Thou soothe the anger of the archer-sod.”
 Achilles the swift-footed, with stern look,
 Thus answered; “Ha, thou mailed in impudence
 And bent on lucre! Who of all the Greeks 195
 Can willingly obey thee, on the march,
 Or bravely battling with the enemy?
 I came not to this war because of wrong
 Done to me by the valiant sons of Troy.
 No feud had I with them; they never took 200
 My beeves or horses, nor, in Phthia's realm.
 Deep-soiled and populous, spoiled my harvest fields.
 For many a shadowy mount between us lies,
 And waters of the wide-resounding sea.
 Man unabashed! we follow thee that thou 205
 Mayst glory in avenging upon Troy
 The grudge of Menelaus and thy own.
 Thou shameless one! and yet thou hast for this
 Nor thanks nor care. Thou threatenest now to take
 From me the prize for which I bore long toils 210
 In battle; and the Greeks decreed it mine.
 I never take an equal share with thee

Of booty when the Grecian host has sacked
 Some populous Trojan town. My hands perform
 The harder labors of the field in all 215
 The tumult of the fight; but when the spoil
 Is shared, the largest share of all is thine,
 While I, content with little, seek my ships,
 Weary with combat. I shall now go home
 To Phthia; better were it to return 220
 With my beaked ships; but here, where I am held
 In little honor, thou wilt fail, I think,
 To gather, in large measure, spoil and wealth.”
 Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:
 “Desert, then, if thou wilt; I ask thee not 225
 To stay for me; there will be others left
 To do me honor yet, and, best of all,
 The all-providing Zeus is with me still.
 Thee I detest the most of all the men
 Ordained by him to govern; thy delight 230
 Is in contention, war, and bloody frays.
 If thou art brave, some deity, no doubt,
 Hath thus endowed thee. Hence, then, to thy home,
 With all thy ships and men! there domineer
 Over thy Myrmidons; I heed thee not, 235
 Nor care I for thy fury. Thus, in turn,
 I threaten thee; since Phoebus takes away
 Chryseis, I will send her in my ship
 And with my friends, and, coming to thy tent.
 Will bear away the fair-cheeked maid, thy prize, 240
 Briseis, that thou learn how far I stand
 Above thee, and that other chiefs may fear
 To measure strength with me, and brave my power.”
 The rage of Peleus’ son, as thus he spake
 Grew fiercer; in that shaggy breast his heart 245
 Took counsel, whether from his thigh to draw
 The trenchant sword, and, thrusting back the rest,
 Smite down Atrides, or subdue his wrath
 And master his own spirit. While he thus
 Debated with himself, and half unsheathed 250

The ponderous blade, Pallas Athene came,
 Sent from on high by Hera, the white-armed,
 Who loved both warriors and made both her care.
 She came behind him, seen by him alone.
 And plucked his yellow hair. The hero turned 255
 In wonder, and at once he knew the look
 Of Pallas and the awful-gleaming eye.
 And thus accosted her with winged words:
 "Why com'st thou hither, daughter of the god
 Who bears the aegis? Art thou here to see 260
 The insolence of Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus? Let me tell thee what I deem
 Will be the event. That man may lose his life.
 And quickly too, for arrogance like this."
 Then thus the goddess, blue-eyed Pallas, spake: 265
 "I came from heaven to pacify thy wrath,
 If thou wilt heed my counsel. I am sent
 By Hera the white-armed, to whom ye both
 Are dear, who ever watches o'er you both.
 Refrain from violence; let not thy hand 270
 Unsheathe the sword, but utter with thy tongue
 Reproaches, as occasion may arise.
 For I declare what time shall bring to pass;
 Threefold amends shall yet be offered thee.
 In gifts of princely cost, for this day's wrong. 275
 Now calm thy angry spirit, and obey."
 Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:
 "O goddess, be the word thou bring'st obeyed,
 However fierce my anger; for to him
 Who hearkens to the gods, the gods give ear." 280
 So speaking, on the silver hilt he stayed
 His strong right hand, and back into its sheath
 Thrust his good sword, obeying. She, meantime,
 Returned to heaven, where aegis-bearing Zeus
 Dwells with the other gods. And now again 285
 Pelides, with opprobrious words, bespake
 The son of Atreus, venting thus his wrath:
 "Wine-bibber, with the forehead of a dog

And a deer's heart! Thou never yet hast dared
 To arm thyself for battle with the rest, 290
 Nor join the other chiefs prepared to lie
 In ambush—such thy craven fear of death.
 Better it suits thee, midst the mighty host
 Of Greeks, to rob some warrior of his prize
 Who dares withstand thee. King thou art, and yet 295
 Devourer of thy people. Thou dost rule
 A spiritless race, else this day's insolence,
 Atrides, were thy last. And now I say,
 And bind my saying with a mighty oath:
 By this my scepter, which can never bear 300
 A leaf or twig, since first it left its stem
 Among the mountains—for the steel has pared
 Its boughs and bark away, to sprout no more—
 And now the Achaean judges bear it—they
 Who guard the laws received from Zeus— 305
 Such is my oath—the time shall come when all
 The Greeks shall long to see Achilles back.
 While multitudes are perishing by the hand
 Of Hector, the man-queller; thou, meanwhile,
 Though thou lament, shalt have no power to help, 310
 And thou shalt rage against thyself to think
 That thou hast scorned the bravest of the Greeks.
 As thus he spake, Pelides to the ground
 Flung the gold-studded wand, and took his seat
 Fiercely Atrides raged; but now up rose 315
 Nestor, the master of persuasive speech,
 The clear-toned Pylian orator, whose tongue
 Dropped words more sweet than honey. He had seen
 Two generations that grew up and lived
 With him on sacred Pylos pass away, 320
 And now he ruled the third. With prudent words
 He thus addressed the assembly of the chiefs:
 “Ye gods! what new misfortunes threaten Greece!
 How Priam would exult and Priam's sons.
 And how would all the Trojan race rejoice, 325
 Were they to know how furiously ye strive—

Ye who in council and in fight surpass
 The other Greeks. Now hearken to my words—
 Ye who are younger than myself—for I
 Have lived with braver men than you, and yet 330
 They held me not in light esteem. Such men
 I never saw, nor shall I see again—
 Men like Pirithous and like Druas, lord
 Of nations, Casneus and Exadius,
 And the great Polypheme, and Theseus, son 335
 Of Aegeus, likest to the immortal gods.
 Strongest of all the earth-born race they fought
 The strongest with the strongest of their time—
 With Centaurs, the wild dwellers of the hills,
 And fearfully destroyed them. With these men 340
 Did I hold converse, coming to their camp
 From Pylos in a distant land. They sent
 To bid me join the war, and by their side
 I fought my best, but no man living now
 On the wide earth would dare to fight with them. 345
 Great as they were, they listened to my words
 And took my counsel. Hearken also ye.
 And let my words persuade you for the best.
 Thou, powerful as thou art, take not from him
 The maiden; suffer him to keep the prize 350
 Decreed him by the sons of Greece; and thou,
 Pelides, strive no longer with the king,
 Since never Zeus on sceptered prince bestowed
 Like eminence to his. Though braver thou,
 And goddess-born, yet hath he greater power 355
 And wider sway. Atrides, calm thy wrath—
 ‘Tis I who ask—against the chief who stands
 The bulwark of the Greeks in this fierce war.”
 To him the sovereign Agamemnon said:
 “The things which thou hast uttered, aged chief, 360
 Are fitly spoken; but this man would stand
 Above all others; he aspires to be
 The master, over all to domineer.
 And to direct in all things; yet, I think,

There may be one who will not suffer this. 365
For if by favor of the immortal gods
He was made brave, have they for such a cause
Given him the liberty of insolent speech?"
Hereat the great Achilles, breaking in,
Answered: "Yea, well might I deserve the name 370
Of coward and of wretch, should I submit
In all things to thy bidding. Such commands
Lay thou on others, not on me; nor think
I shall obey thee longer. This I say—
And bear it well in mind—I shall not lift 375
My hand to keep the maiden whom ye gave
And now take from me; but whatever else
May be on board that swift black ship of mine.
Beware thou carry not away the least
Without my leave. Come, make the trial now, 380
That these may see thy black blood bathe my spear."
Then, rising from that strife of words, the twain
Dissolved the assembly at the Grecian fleet.
Pelides to his tents and well-manned ships
Went with Patroclus and his warrior friends, 385
While Agamemnon bade upon the sea
Launch a swift bark with twenty chosen men
To ply the oar, and put a hecatomb
Upon it for the god. He thither led
The fair-cheeked maid Chryseis; the command 390
He gave to wise Odysseus; forth they went,
Leader and crew, upon their watery path.
Meanwhile, he bade the camp be purified;
And straight the warriors purified the camp,
And, casting the pollutions to the waves, 395
They burned to Phoebus chosen hecatombs
Of bulls and goats beside the barren main,
From which the savor rose in smoke to heaven.
So was the host employed. But not the less
Did Agamemnon persevere to urge 400
His quarrel with Pelides; and he thus
Addressed Talthybius and Eurybates,

His heralds and his faithful ministers:
 "Go ye to where Achilles holds his tent,
 And take the fair Briseis by the hand, 405
 And bring her hither. If he yield her not,
 I shall come forth to claim her with a band
 Of warriors, and it shall be worse for him."
 He spake, and sent them forth with added words
 Of menace. With unwilling steps they went 410
 Beside the barren deep, until they reached
 The tents and vessels of the Myrmidons,
 And found Achilles seated by his tent
 And his black ship; their coming pleased him not.
 They, moved by fear and reverence of the king, 415
 Stopped, and bespake him not, nor signified
 Their errand; he perceived their thought and said:
 "Hail, heralds, messengers of Zeus and men!
 Draw near; I blame you not. I only blame
 Atrides, who hath sent you for the maid. 420
 Noble Patroclus! bring the damsel forth,
 And let them lead her hence. My witnesses
 Are ye, before the blessed deities.
 And mortal men, and this remorseless king,
 If ever he shall need me to avert 425
 The doom of utter ruin from his host
 Most sure it is, he madly yields himself
 To fatal counsels, thoughtless of the past
 And of the future, nor forecasting how
 The Greeks may fight, unvanquished, by their fleet." 430
 He spake. Meantime Patroclus had obeyed
 The word of his beloved friend. He brought
 The fair-cheeked maid Briseis from the tent,
 And she was led away. The messengers
 Returned to where their barks were moored, and she 435
 Unwillingly went with them. Then in tears
 Achilles, from his friends withdrawing, sat
 Beside the hoary ocean-marge, and gazed
 On the black deep beyond, and stretched his hands,
 And prayed to his dear mother, earnestly: 440

“Mother! since thou didst bring me forth to dwell
Brief space on earth, Olympian Zeus,
Who thunders in the highest, should have filled
That space with honors, but he grants them not.
Wide-ruling Agamemnon takes and holds 445
The prize I won, and thus dishonors me.”
Thus, shedding tears, he spake. His mother heard,
Sitting within the ocean deeps, beside
Her aged father. Swiftly from the waves
Of the gray deep emerging like a cloud, 450
She sat before him as he wept, and smoothed
His brow with her soft hand, and kindly said:
“My child, why weepest thou? What grief is this?
Speak, and hide nothing, so that both may know.”
Achilles, swift of foot, sighed heavily, 455
And said: “Thou know’st already. Why relate
These things to thee, who art apprised of all?
“To Thebe, to Eetion’s sacred town.
We marched, and plundered it, and hither brought
The booty, which was fairly shared among 460
The sons of Greece, and Agamemnon took
The fair-cheeked maid Chryseis as his prize.
But Chryses, priest of Phoebus, to the fleet
Of the Achaean warriors, brazen-mailed,
Came, to redeem his daughter, offering 465
Ransom uncounted. In his hand he bore
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god.
Upon the golden scepter, and he sued
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host. 470
Then all the other chiefs, applauding, bade
Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts
He offered; but the counsel did not please
Atrides Agamemnon: he dismissed
The priest with scorn, and added threatening words. 475
The aged man indignantly withdrew;
And Phoebus—for the priest was dear to him—
Granted his prayer and sent among the Greeks

A deadly shaft. The people of the camp
 Were perishing in heaps. His arrows flew 480
 Among the Grecian army, far and wide.
 A seer expert in oracles revealed
 The will of Phoebus, and I was the first
 To counsel that the god should be appeased.
 But Agamemnon rose in sudden wrath, 485
 Uttering a threat, which he has since fulfilled.
 And now the dark-eyed Greeks are taking back
 His child to Chryses, and with her they bear
 Gifts to the monarch-god; while to my tent
 Heralds have come, and borne away the maid 490
 Briseis, given me by the sons of Greece.
 But succor thou thy son, if thou hast power;
 Ascend to heaven and bring thy prayer to Zeus,
 If e'er by word or act thou gav'st him aid.
 For I remember, in my father's halls 495
 I often heard thee, glorying, tell how thou,
 Alone of all the gods, didst interpose
 To save the cloud-compeller, Cronus's son,
 From shameful overthrow, when all the rest
 Who dwell upon Olympus had conspired 500
 To bind him—Hera, Poseidon, and with them
 Pallas Athene. Thou didst come and loose
 His bonds, and call up to the Olympian heights
 The hundred-handed, whom the immortal gods
 Have named Briareus, but the sons of men 505
 Aegeon, mightier than his sire in strength;
 And he, rejoicing in the honor, took
 His seat by Zeus, and all the immortals shrank
 Aghast before him, and let fall the chains.
 Remind him of all this, and, sitting down, 510
 Embrace his knees, and pray him to befriend
 The Trojans, that the Greeks, hemmed in and slain
 Beside their ships and by the shore, may learn
 To glory in their king, and even he,
 Wide-ruling Agamemnon, may perceive 515
 How grievous was his folly when he dared

To treat with scorn the bravest of the Greeks."
 And Thetis answered, weeping as she spake:
 "Alas, my son, why did I rear thee, born
 To sorrow as thou wert? O would that thou 520
 Unwronged, and with no cause for tears, couldst dwell
 Beside thy ships, since thou must die so soon.
 I brought thee forth in an unhappy hour,
 Short-lived and wronged beyond all other men.
 Yet will I climb the Olympian height among 525
 Its snows and make my suit to Zeus
 The Thunderer, if haply he may yield
 To my entreaties. Thou, meanwhile, abide
 By thy swift ships, incensed against the Greeks,
 And take no part in all their battles more. 530
 But yesterday did Zeus depart to hold
 A banquet far in Ocean's realm, among
 The blameless Ethiopians, and with him
 Went all the train of gods. Twelve days must pass
 Ere he return to heaven, and I will then 535
 Enter his brazen palace, clasp his knees,
 And hope to move his purpose by my prayers."
 So saying, she departed, leaving him
 In anger for the shapely damsel's sake,
 Whom forcibly they took away. Meantime 540
 Odysseus, with the sacred hecatomb,
 Arrived at Chrysa. Entering the deep port.
 They folded up the sails and laid them down
 In the black ship, and lowering the mast,
 With all its shrouds, they brought it to its place. 545
 Then to the shore they urged the bark with oars,
 And cast the anchors and secured the prow
 With fastenings. Next, they disembarked and stood
 Upon the beach and placed the hecatomb
 In sight of Phoebus, the great archer. Last 550
 Chryseis left the deck, and, leading her
 Up to the altar, wise Odysseus gave
 The maid to her dear father, speaking thus:
 "O Chryses! Agamemnon, king of men,

Sends me in haste to bring this maid to thee 555
 And offer up this hallowed hecatomb
 To Phoebus, for the Greeks; that so the god.
 Whose wrath afflicts us sore, may be appeased.
 So speaking, to her father's hands he gave
 The maiden; joyfully the priest received 560
 The child he loved. Then did the Greeks array
 The noble hecatomb in order round
 The sculptured altar, and with washed hands
 They took the salted meal, while Chryses stood
 And spread abroad his hands and prayed aloud: 565
 "Hear me, thou bearer of the glittering bow.
 Who guardest Chrysa and the pleasant isle
 Of Cilia and art lord in Tenedos!
 Already hast thou listened to my prayer
 And honored me, and terribly hast scourged 570
 The Achaean people. Hear me yet again,
 And cause the plague that wastes the Greeks to cease."
 So spake he, supplicating, and to him
 Phoebus Apollo hearkened. When the prayers
 Were ended, and the salted meal was flung, 575
 Backward they turned the necks of the fat beeves,
 And cut their throats, and flayed the carcasses.
 And hewed away the thighs, and covered them
 With caul in double folds; and over this
 They laid raw fragments of the other parts. 580
 O'er all the aged priest poured dark red wine,
 And burned them on dry wood. A band of youths
 With five-pronged spits, beside him, thrust these through
 The entrails, which they laid among the flames.
 And when the thighs were all consumed, and next 585
 The entrails tasted, all the rest was carved
 Into small portions and transfixed with spits
 And roasted with nice care and then withdrawn
 From the hot coals. This task performed, they made
 The banquet ready. All became its guests 590
 And all were welcome to the equal feast.
 And when their thirst and hunger were allayed.

Boys crowned the ample urns with wreaths, and served
The wine to all, and poured libations forth.
Meantime the Argive youths, that whole day long, 595
Sang to appease the god; they chanted forth
High anthems to the archer of the skies.
He listened to the strain, and his stern mood
Was softened. When, at length, the sun went down
And darkness fell, they gave themselves to sleep 600
Beside the fastenings of their ships, and when
Appeared the rosy-fingered Dawn, the child
Of Morning, they returned to the great host
Of the Achaeans. Phoebus deigned to send
A favoring breeze; at once they reared the mast 605
And opened the white sails; the canvas swelled
Before the wind, and hoarsely round the keel
The dark waves murmured as the ship flew on.
So ran she, cutting through the sea her way.
But when they reached the great Achaean host, 610
They drew their vessel high upon the shore
Among the sands, and underneath its sides of
They laid long beams to prop the keel, and straight
Dispersed themselves among the tents and ships.
The goddess-born Achilles, swift of foot, 615
Beside his ships still brooded o'er his wrath,
Nor came to council with the illustrious chiefs.
Nor to the war, but suffered idleness
To eat his heart away; for well he loved
Clamor and combat. But when now, at length, 620
The twelfth day came, the ever-living gods
Returned together to the Olympian mount
With Zeus, their leader. Thetis kept in mind
Her son's desire, and, with the early morn,
Emerging from the depths of ocean, climbed 625
To the great heaven and the high mount, and found
All-seeing Zeus, who, from the rest apart.
Was seated on the loftiest pinnacle
Of many-peaked Olympus. She sat down
Before the son of Cronus, clasped his knees 630

With her left arm, and lifted up her right
 In supplication to the Sovereign One:
 "O Zeus, my father, if among the
 The immortals I have ever given thee aid
 By word or act, deny not my request. 635
 Honor my son, whose life is doomed to end
 So soon; for Agamemnon, king of men,
 Hath done him shameful wrong: he takes from him
 And keeps the prize he won in war. But thou,
 Olympian Zeus, supremely wise, 640
 Honor him thou, and give the Trojan host
 The victory, until the humbled Greeks
 Heap large increase of honors on my son."
 She spake, but cloud-compelling Zeus
 Answered her not; in silence long he sat. 645
 But Thetis, who had clasped his knees at first,
 Clung to them still, and prayed him yet again:
 "O promise me, and grant my suit; or else
 Deny it—for thou need'st not fear—and I
 Shall know how far below the other gods 650
 Thou boldest me in honor." As she spake,
 The Cloud-compeller, sighing heavily,
 Answered her thus: "Hard things dost thou require,
 And thou wilt force me into new disputes
 With Hera, who will anger me again 655
 With contumelious words; for ever thus,
 In presence of the immortals, doth she seek
 Cause of contention, charging that I aid
 The Trojans in their battles. Now depart,
 And let her not perceive thee. Leave the rest 660
 To be by me accomplished; and that thou
 Mayst be assured, behold, I give the nod;
 For this, with me, the immortals know, portends
 The highest certainty: no word of mine
 Which once my nod confirms can be revoked, 665
 Or prove untrue, or fail to be fulfilled."
 As thus he spake, the son of Cronus gave
 The nod with his dark brows. The ambrosial curls

Upon the Sovereign One's immortal head
Were shaken, and with them the mighty mount 670
Olympus trembled. Then they parted, she
Plunging from bright Olympus to the deep,
And Zeus returning to his palace home;
Where all the gods, uprising from their thrones,
At sight of the Great Father, waited not 675
For his approach, but met him as he came.
And now upon his throne the Godhead took
His seat, but Hera knew—for she had seen—
That Thetis of the silver feet, and child
Of the gray Ancient of the Deep, had held 680
Close council with her consort. Therefore she
Bespake the son of Cronus harshly, thus:
“O crafty one, with whom, among the gods,
Plottest thou now? Thus hath it ever been
Thy pleasure to devise, apart from me, 685
Thy plans in secret; never willingly
Dost thou reveal to me thy purposes.”
Then thus replied the Father of the gods
And mortals: “Hera, do not think to know
All my designs, for thou wilt find the task 690
Too hard for thee, although thou be my spouse.
What fitting is to be revealed, no one
Of all the immortals or of men shall know
Sooner than thou; but when I form designs
Apart from all the gods, presume thou not 695
To question me or pry into my plans.”
Hera, the large-eyed and august, rejoined:
“What words, stern son of Cronus, hast thou said!
It never was my wont to question thee
Or pry into thy plans, and thou art left 700
To form them as thou wilt; yet now I fear
The silver-footed Thetis has contrived—
That daughter of the Ancient of the Deep—
To o'erpersuade thee, for, at early prime,
She sat before thee and embraced thy knees; 705
And thou hast promised her, I cannot doubt,

To give Achilles honor and to cause
 Myriads of Greeks to perish by their fleet."
 Then Zeus, the cloud-compeller, spake again:
 "Harsh-tongued! thou ever dost suspect me thus, 710
 Nor can I act unwatched; and yet all this?"
 Profits thee nothing, for it only serves
 To breed dislike, and is the worse for thee.
 But were it as thou deemest, 'tis enough
 That such has been my pleasure. Sit thou down 715
 In silence, and obey, lest all the gods
 Upon Olympus, when I come and lay
 These potent hands on thee, protect thee not."
 He spake, and Hera, large-eyed and august,
 O'erawed, and curbing her high spirit, sat 720
 In silence; meanwhile all the gods of heaven
 Within the halls of Zeus were inly grieved.
 But Hephaestus, the renowned artificer,
 Sought to console his mother in her grief—
 The white-armed Hera—and thus interposed: 725
 "Great will the evil be and hard to bear,
 If, for the sake of mortals, ye are moved
 To such contention and the assembled gods
 Disturbed with discord. Even the pleasant feast
 Will lose its flavor when embittered thus. 730
 And let me warn my mother while I speak.
 Wise as she is, that she defer to Zeus,
 Lest the All-Father angrily again
 Reply, and spoil the banquet of the day.
 The Thunderer of Olympus, if he choose 735
 To make a wreck of all things, wields a power
 Far greater than we all. Accost him thou
 With gentle speeches, and the Lord of heaven
 Will then regard us in a kindly mood."
 As thus he spake, he gave into the hands 740
 Of his beloved mother the round cup
 Of double form, and thus he spake again:
 "Mother, be patient and submit, although
 In sadness, lest these eyes behold thee yet

Beaten with stripes, and though I hold thee dear 745
And grieve for thee, I cannot bring thee help;
For hard it is to strive with Zeus.
Already once, when I took part with thee,
He seized me by the foot and flung me o'er
The battlements of heaven. All day I fell, 750
And with the setting sun I struck the earth
In Lemnos. Little life was left in me.
What time the Sintians took me from the ground.”
He spake, and Hera, the white-shouldered, smiled,
And smiling took the cup her son had brought; 755
And next he poured to all the other gods
Sweet nectar from the jar, beginning first
With those at the right hand. As they beheld
Lame Hephaestus laboring o'er the palace-floor.
An inextinguishable laughter broke 760
From all the blessed gods. So feasted they
All day till sunset. From that equal feast
None stood aloof, nor from the pleasant sound
Of harp, which Phoebus touched, nor from the voice
Of Muses singing sweetly in their turn. 765
But when the sun's all-glorious light was down,
Each to his sleeping-place betook himself;
For Hephaestus, the lame god, with marvelous art,
Had framed for each the chamber of his rest.
And Zeus, the Olympian Thunderer, 770
Went also to his couch, where 'twas his wont,
When slumber overtook him, to recline.
And there, beside him, slept the white-armed queen
Juno, the mistress of the golden throne.



BOOK II

All other deities, all mortal men, 1
Tamers of war-steeds, slept the whole night through;
But no sweet slumber came to Jove; his thoughts
Were ever busy with the anxious care
To crown with honor Peleus' son, and cause 5
Myriads to perish at the Grecian fleet.
At last, this counsel seemed the best—to send
A treacherous dream to Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus. Then he called a Dream, and thus
Addressing it with winged words, he said: 10
“Go, fatal Vision, to the Grecian fleet,
And, entering Agamemnon's tent, declare
Faithfully what I bid thee. Give command
That now he arm, with all the array of war,
The long-haired Greeks, for lo, the hour is come 15
That gives into his hands the city of Troy
With all its spacious streets. The powers who dwell
In the celestial mansions are no more
At variance; Hera's prayers have moved them all,
And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom. 20
So spake the God; the Vision heard, and went
At once to where the Grecian barks were moored,
And entered Agamemnon's tent and found
The king reposing, with the balm of sleep
Poured all around him. At his head the Dream 25

Took station in the form of Neleus' son,
Nestor, whom Agamemnon honored most
Of all the aged men. In such a shape
The heaven-sent Dream to Agamemnon spake:
"O warrior-son of Atreus, sleepest thou? 30
Tamer of steeds! It ill becomes a chief,
Who has the charge of nations and sustains
Such mighty cares, to sleep the livelong night.
Give earnest heed to me, for I am come
A messenger from Jove, who, though far off, 35
Takes part in thy concerns and pities thee.
He bids thee arm, with all the array of war,
The long-haired Greeks, for now the hour is come
Which gives into thy hands the city of Troy
With all its spacious streets. The powers that dwell 40
In the celestial mansions are no more
At variance; Hera's prayers have moved them all,
And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom,
Decreed by Jove. Bear what I say in mind,
And when thy sleep departs forget it not." 45
He spake, and, disappearing, left the king
Musing on things that never were to be;
For on that very day he thought to take
The city of Priam. Fool! who little knew
What Zeus designed should come to pass, 50
And little thought by his own act to bring
Great woe and grief on Greeks and Trojans both
In hard-fought battles. From his sleep he woke.
The heavenly voice still sounding in his ears,
And sat upright, and put his tunic on, 55
Soft, fair, and new, and over that he cast
His ample cloak, and round his shapely feet
Laced the becoming sandals. Next, he hung
Upon his shoulders and his side the sword
With silver studs, and took into his hand 60
The ancestral scepter, old, but undecayed.
And with it turned his footsteps toward the fleet
Of the Achaean warriors brazen-mailed.

Now Dawn, the goddess, climbed the Olympian height,
 Foretelling Day to Zeus and all 65
 The immortal gods, when Agamemnon bade
 The shrill-voiced heralds call the long-haired Greeks
 Together; they proclaimed his will, and straight
 The warriors came in throngs. But first he bade
 A council of large-minded elders meet 70
 On Pylion Nestor's royal bark, and there
 Laid his well-pondered thought before them thus:
 "My friends, give ear: a Vision from above
 Came to me sleeping in the balmy night;
 Most like to noble Nestor was its look— 75
 Its face, its stature, and its garb. It stood
 Beside me at my head, and thus it spake:
 "O warrior-son of Atreus, sleepest thou?
 Tamer of steeds! It ill becomes a chief.
 Who has the charge of nations and sustains 80
 Such mighty cares, to sleep the livelong night.
 Give earnest heed to me, for I am come
 A messenger from Zeus, who, though far off,
 Takes part in thy concerns and pities thee.
 He bids thee arm, with all the array of war, 85
 The long-haired Greeks, for now the hour is come
 Which gives into thy hands the city of Troy
 With all its spacious streets. The powers who dwell
 In the celestial mansions are no more
 At variance; Hera's prayers have moved them all, 90
 And o'er the Trojans hangs a fearful doom,
 Decreed by Zeus. Bear what I say in mind.'
 It spake and passed away, and with it fled
 My slumbers. Now must we devise a way
 To bring into the field the sons of Greece. 95
 I first will try, as best I may, with words,
 And counsel flight from Troy with all our ships.
 Ye each, with different counsels, do your part."
 He spake, and took his seat, and after him
 Nestor, the king of sandy Pylus, rose, 100
 With well-considered words. "O friends," he said,

“Leaders and princes of the Grecian race,
 Had any other of the Argive host
 Related such a dream, we should have said
 The tale is false, and spumed the counsel given. 105
 But he has seen it who in rank and power
 Transcends us all, and ours it is to see
 How we may arm for war the sons of Greece.”
 He spake, and left the council, and the rest,
 All sceptered kings, arose, prepared to obey 110
 The shepherd of the people. All the Greeks
 Meanwhile came thronging to the appointed place.
 As, swarming forth from cells within the rock.
 Coming and coming still, the tribe of bees
 Fly in a cluster o’er the flowers of spring, 115
 And some are darting out to right and left.
 So from the ships and tents a multitude
 Along the spacious beach, in mighty throngs,
 Moved toward the assembly. Rumor went with them,
 The messenger of Zeus, and urged them on. 120
 And now, when they were met, the place was stunned
 With clamor; earth, as the great crowd sat down.
 Groaned under them; a din of mingled cries
 Arose; nine shouting heralds strove to hush
 The noisy crowd to silence, that at length 125
 The heaven-descended monarchs might be heard.
 And when the crowd was seated and had paused
 From clamor, Agamemnon rose. He held
 The scepter; Hephaestus’s skill had fashioned it,
 And Hephaestus gave it to Cronus-son Zeus, 130
 And Zeus bestowed it on his messenger,
 The Argus-queller Hermes. He in turn
 Gave it to Pelops, great in horsemanship;
 And Pelops passed the gift to Atreus next,
 The people’s shepherd. Atreus, when he died, 135
 Bequeathed it to Thyestes, rich in flocks;
 And last, Thyestes left it to be borne
 By Agamemnon, symbol of his rule
 O’er many isles and all the Argive realm.

Leaning on this, he spake these winged words: 140
 "Friends, Grecian heroes, ministers of Ares,
 Cronus-son Zeus hath in an evil net
 Entangled me most cruelly. He gave
 His promise and his nod, that, having razed
 Troy with her strong defenses, I should see 145
 My home again; but now he meditates
 To wrong me, and commands me to return,
 With lessened glory and much people lost,
 To Argos, Thus hath it seemed good to Zeus
 The mighty, who hath overthrown the towers 150
 Of many a city, and will yet o'erthrow.
 The ages yet to come will hear with shame
 That such a mighty army of the Greeks
 Have waged a fruitless war, and fought in vain
 A foe less numerous; yet no end appears 155
 To this long strife. Should Greeks and Trojans make
 A treaty, faithfully to number each.
 And should the Trojans count their citizens,
 And we the Greeks, disposed in rows of tens.
 Should call the Trojans singly to pour out 160
 The wine for us, full many a company
 Of ten would lack its cup-bearer; so far,
 I judge, the sons of Greece outnumber those
 Who dwell in Troy. But they have yet allies
 From many a city, men who wield the spear, 165
 Withstanding my attempt to overthrow
 That populous town. Nine years of mighty Zeus
 Have passed already, and the planks that form
 Our barks are moldering, and the cables drop
 In pieces, and our wives within their homes, 170
 With their young children, sit expecting us;
 Yet is the enterprise for which we came
 Still unperformed. Now let us all obey
 The mandate I reveal, and hasten hence.
 With all our fleet, to our beloved homes; 175
 For Troy with her broad streets we cannot take."
 He spake, and in the bosoms of the crowd

Stirred every heart; even those who heard him not
 Were moved: the assembly wavered to and fro
 Like the long billows of the Icarian Sea, 180
 Roused by the East wind and the South, that rush
 Forth from the cloudy seat of Father Zeus;
 Or like the harvest-field, When west winds stoop
 Suddenly from above, and toss the wheat.
 So was the whole assembly swayed; they ran 185
 With tumult to the ships; beneath their feet
 Rose clouds of dust, and each exhorted each
 To seize the ships and drag them to the deep.
 They cleared the channels mid the clamorous cries
 Of multitudes, who hastened to return, 190
 And drew the props from underneath their barks.
 Then had the Greeks returned before their time
 If Hera had not to Athena said:
 "Unconquerable child of Zeus! What change
 Is this? Shall then the Argive army thus 195
 Flee to their homes across the deep and leave
 Glory to Priam, and to Ilium's sons
 The Argive Helen, for whose sake have died
 So many Greeks upon the Trojan strand,
 Far from the land they loved? But hasten thou 200
 To the host of Argive warriors mailed in brass,
 And with persuasive words restrain their men.
 Nor let them launch their barks upon the sea."
 She spake; nor did the blue-eyed Pallas fail
 To heed the mandate, but with quick descent 205
 She left the Olympian height and suddenly
 Stood by the swift ships of the Grecian host.
 She found Odysseus there, the man endowed
 With wisdom like to Zeus's; he had not touched
 His well-appointed bark, for grief had seized 210
 The hero's heart. The blue-eyed goddess took
 Her place beside him, and addressed him thus:
 "Son of Laertes, nobly born and sage
 Odysseus, will ye, entering your good ships,
 Return in flight to your own land and leave 215

Glory to Priam, and to Ilium's sons
 The Argive Helen, for whose sake have died
 So many Greeks upon the Trojan strand.
 Far from the land they loved? Go thou at once
 And seek the Argive warriors and restrain 220
 With thy persuasive words the impatient men,
 Nor let them launch their well-appointed ships."
 She spake; Odysseus knew the heavenly voice,
 And hastened back, and as he ran cast by
 His cloak. Eurybates of Ithaca, 225
 The herald, caught it as he followed him.
 And now before Atrides, king of men.
 The warrior stood, and from his hand received
 The ancestral scepter, old, but undecayed;
 And bearing this, he went among the ships 230
 Which brought the Achaean army, mailed in brass;
 And whomsoe'er he met upon his way,
 Monarch or eminent among the host,
 He stopped him, and addressed him gently, thus—
 "Good friend, this eager haste as if from fear 235
 Befits thee not. Sit down, and cause the rest
 To sit. What Agamemnon's will may be
 Thou canst not yet be certain; he intends
 To try the Greeks, and soon will punish those
 Who act amiss. We cannot all have heard 240
 What he has said; beware, then, lest his wrath
 Fall heavily upon the sons of Greece.
 The monarch, foster-child of Zeus,
 Is terrible enraged. Authority
 Is given by Zeus, all-wise, who loves the king." 245
 But when he found one of the lower sort
 Shouting and brawling, with the royal wand
 He smote him, and reprov'd him sharply, thus:
 "Friend, take thy seat in quiet, and attend
 To what thy betters say; thou art not strong 250
 Nor valiant, and thou art of mean repute
 In combat and in council. We, the Greeks,
 Cannot be all supreme in power. The rule

Of the many is not well. One must be chief
 In war, and one the king, to whom the son 255
 Of Cronus gives the scepter, making him
 The lawgiver, that he may rule the rest.”
 Thus did he act the chief, and make the host
 Obey his word; they to the council ground
 Came rushing back from all the ships and tents 260
 With tumult, as, on the long-stretching shore
 Of ocean many-voiced, his billows fling
 Themselves in fury, and the deep resounds.
 All others took their seats and kept their place;
 Thersites only, clamorous of tongue, 265
 Kept brawling. He, with many insolent words,
 Was wont to seek unseemly strife with kings.
 Uttering whate'er it seemed to him might move
 The Greeks to laughter. Of the multitude
 Who came to Ilium, none so base as he— 270
 Squint-eyed, with one lame foot, and on his back
 A lump, and shoulders curving towards the chest;
 His head was sharp, and over it the hairs
 Were thinly scattered. Hateful to the chiefs
 Achilles and Odysseus, he would oft 275
 Revile them. He to Agamemnon now
 Called with shrill voice and taunting words. The Greeks
 Heard him impatiently, with strong disgust
 And vehement anger, yet he shouted still
 To Agamemnon, and kept railing on: 280
 “Of what dost thou complain; what wouldst thou more,
 Atrides? In thy tents are heaps of gold;
 Thy tents are full of chosen damsels, given
 To thee before all others, by the Greeks,
 Whene'er we take a city. Dost thou yet 285
 Hanker for gold, brought by some Trojan knight,
 A ransom for his son, whom I shall lead—
 I, or some other Greek—a captive bound?
 Or dost thou wish, for thy more idle hours,
 Some maiden, whom thou mayst detain apart? 290
 Ill it beseems a prince like thee to lead

The sons of Greece, for such a cause as this.
 Into new perils. O ye coward race!
 Ye abject Greeklings, Greeks no longer, haste
 Homeward with all the fleet, and let us leave 295
 This man at Troy to win his trophies here.
 That he may learn whether the aid we give
 Avails him aught or not, since he insults
 Achilles, a far braver man than he.
 And takes from him by force and holds his prize. 300
 And yet, Achilles is not moved by this
 To anger: he is spiritless, or else,
 Atrides, this injustice were thy last.”
 Taunting the shepherd of the people thus,
 Thersites shouted to the king of men. 305
 But great Odysseus, coming quickly up,
 Rebuked him with a frown: “Thou garrulous wretch!
 Glib as thou art of tongue, Thersites, cease,
 Nor singly dare to seek dispute with kings.
 There came, I deem, no viler wretch than thou 310
 To Troy with Agamemnon. Prate no more
 Of kings, reviling them, and keeping watch
 For pretexts to return. We know not yet
 Whether to go or to remain were best.
 Thou railest at the shepherd of the host, 315
 Atrides Agamemnon, for thou seest
 The Grecian heroes load him with rewards.
 While thou insultest him with scurrilous words.
 I tell thee now—and I shall keep my word—
 If e'er again I find thee railing on, 320
 As now thou dost, then let Odysseus wear
 His head no longer, let me not be called
 The father of Telemachus, if I
 Shall fail to seize thee, and to strip thee bare
 Of cloak and tunic, and whatever else 325
 Covers thy carcass, and to send thee forth.
 Howling, to our swift barks upon the shore,
 Scourged from the council with a storm of blows.”
 He spake, and with his scepter smote the back

And shoulders of the scoffer, who crouched low 330
 And shed a shower of tears. A bloody welk
 Rose where the golden scepter fell. He took
 His seat, dismayed, and still in pain wiped off
 The tears from his smutched face. The multitude
 Around him, though in anxious mood, were moved 335
 To smiles, and one addressed his neighbor thus:
 "Strange that Odysseus does a thousand things
 So well—so wise in council, and in war
 So brave; and for the Grecian army now
 He does the best of all, in silencing 340
 The chatter of this saucy slanderer.
 Whose acrid temper will not soon again
 Move him to rail with insolent speech at kings."
 So talked the multitude. Odysseus then,
 Holding the scepter, rose, and by his side 345
 The blue-eyed Pallas, in a herald's form,
 Commanded silence, that the Argive host—
 The mightiest and the meanest—might attend
 To what should now be said, and calmly weigh
 The counsel given them. With a prudent art 350
 Odysseus framed his speech, and thus he spake:
 "The Greeks, O Atreus' son, would bring on thee
 Dishonor in the eyes and speech of men.
 Breaking the promise made when first they came
 From Argos, famed for steeds, that, having spoiled 355
 This well-defended Troy, thou shouldst return
 A conqueror. And now, like tender boys
 Or widowed women, all give way to grief
 And languish to return. 'Twere hard to bear
 If, after all our sufferings and our toils, 360
 We go back now. And yet, whoe'er remains
 A single month away from wife and home
 Chafes if the winter storms and angry sea
 Detain him still on board his well-oared bark;
 And we have seen the ninth full year roll round 365
 Since we came hither. Therefore blame I not
 The Greeks if they in their beaked ships repine

At this delay. But then it were disgrace
 To linger here so long and journey home
 With empty hands. Bear with us yet, and wait 370
 Till it be certain whether Calchas speaks
 Truly or not. For we remember well,
 And all of you whom cruel death has spared
 Are witnesses with me, that when the ships
 Of Greece—it seems as if but yesterday— 375
 Mustered in Aulis on their way to bring
 Woe upon Priam and the town of Troy,
 And we, beside a fountain, offered up
 On sacred altars chosen hecatombs,
 Under a shapely plane-tree, from whose root 380
 Flowed the clear water, there appeared to us
 A wondrous sign. A frightful serpent, marked
 With crimson spots, which Zeus sent forth
 To daylight from beneath the altar-stone.
 Came swiftly gliding toward the tree, whereon 385
 A sparrow had her young—eight unfledged birds—
 Upon the topmost bough and screened by leaves;
 The mother was the ninth. The serpent seized
 The helpless brood and midst their piteous cries
 Devoured them, while the mother fluttered round, 390
 Lamenting, till he caught her by the wing;
 And when he had destroyed the parent bird
 And all her brood, the god who sent him forth
 Made him a greater marvel still. The son
 Of crafty Cronus changed the snake to stone; 395
 And we who stood around were sore amazed.
 Such was the awful portent which the gods
 Showed at that sacrifice. But Calchas thus
 Instantly spake, interpreting the sign:
 “O long-haired Greeks,” he said, “why stand ye thus 400
 In silence? All-foreseeing Zeus
 Hath sent this mighty omen; late it comes
 And late will be fulfilled, yet gloriously,
 And with a fame that never shall decay.
 For as the snake devoured the sparrow’s brood, 405

Eight nestlings, and the mother-bird the ninth—
 So many years the war shall last; the tenth
 Shall give into our hands the stately Troy.”
 So spake the seer; thus far his words are true.
 Bide ye then here, ye well-greaved sons of Greece, 410
 Until the city of Priam shall be ours.”
 He spake, and loud applause thereon ensued
 From all the Greeks, and fearfully the ships
 Rang with the clamorous voices uttering
 The praises of Odysseus and his words. 415
 Then Nestor, the Gerenian knight, arose
 And thus addressed them: “Strangely ye behave,
 Like boys unwonted to the tasks of war.
 Where now are all your promises and oaths?
 Shall all our councillings and all our cares, 420
 Leagues made with wine, religiously outpoured,
 And plightings of the strong right hand, be cast
 Into the flames? Idly we keep alive
 A strife of words, which serves no end though long
 We loiter here! But thou, Atrides, firm 425
 Of purpose, give command that now the Greeks
 Move to the war, and leave to meet their fate
 Those—one or more—who, parting from our host,
 Meditate—but I deem in vain—to flee
 Homeward to Argos ere they are assured 430
 Whether the word of Zeus omnipotent
 Be false or true. For when the Greeks embarked
 In their swift ships, to carry death and fate
 To Ilium’s sons, almighty Zeus
 Flung down his lightnings on the right and gave 435
 Propitious omens. Therefore let no Greek
 Go home till he possess a Trojan wife
 And ye have signally avenged the wrongs
 And griefs of Helen. Yet, if one be here
 Who longs to go, let him but lay his hand 440
 On his black ship, prepared to cross the deep,
 And he shall die before the rest. But thou,
 O king, be wisely counseled, lend an ear

To others, nor neglect what I propose.
 Marshal the Greeks by tribes and brotherhoods, 445
 That tribe may stand by tribe, and brotherhoods
 Succor each other; if thou thus command
 And they obey, thou shalt discern which chief
 Or soldier is faint-hearted, which is brave,
 For each will fight his best, and thou shalt know 450
 Whether through favor of the gods to Troy,
 Or our own cowardice and shameful lack
 Of skill in war, the town is not o'erthrown."
 In turn the monarch Agamemnon spake:
 "O aged warrior, thou excellest all 455
 The Greeks in council. Would to Zeus,
 To Pallas and Apollo, that with me
 There were but ten such comrades. Priam's town
 Would quickly fall before us and be made
 A desolation. But the god who bears 460
 The aegis, Cronus's son, hath cast on me
 Much grief, entangling me in idle strifes
 And angry broils. Achilles and myself
 Have quarreled for a maid with bitter words.
 And I was first incensed. But if again 465
 We meet and act as friends, the overthrow
 That threatens Ilium will not be delayed—
 Not for an hour. Now all to your repast I
 And then prepare for battle. First let each
 See that his spear be sharp, and put his shield 470
 In order, give to his swift-footed steeds
 Their ample forage, and o'erlook his car
 That it be strong for war; for all the day
 Shall we maintain the stubborn fight, nor cease
 Even for a moment, till the night come down 475
 To part the wrathful combatants. The band
 Of each broad buckler shall be moist with sweat
 On every breast, and weary every arm
 That wields the spear, and every horse that drags
 The polished chariot o'er the field shall smoke 480
 With sweat. But whosoever shall be found

By the beaked ships and skulking from the fray
 Shall be the feast of birds of prey and dogs!"
 He spake; the Argives raised a mighty shout,
 Loud as when billows lash the beetling shore, 485
 Rolled by the south-wind toward some jutting rock
 On which the waves, whatever wind may blow,
 Beat ceaselessly. In haste the people rose
 And went among the ships, and kindled fires
 Within their tents and took their meal. And one 490
 Made offerings to one god; another paid
 Vows to another of the immortal race;
 And all implored deliverance from death
 And danger. Agamemnon, king of men,
 Offered a fatted ox of five years old 495
 To Zeus Almighty, summoning
 The elder princes of the Grecian host—
 Nestor the first, the king Idomeneus,
 And then the warriors Ajax and the son
 Of Tydeus, with Odysseus, like to Zeus 500
 In council, sixth and last. Unbidden came
 The valiant Menelaus, for he knew
 The cares that weighed upon his brother's heart.
 Then, as they stood around the fatted ox
 And took in hand the salted barley-meal, 505
 King Agamemnon in the circle prayed:
 "O Zeus, most great and glorious! who dost rule
 The tempest—dweller of the ethereal space!
 Let not the sun go down and night come on
 Ere I shall lay the halls of Priam waste 510
 With fire, and give their portals to the flames,
 And hew away the coat of mail that shields
 The breast of Hector, splitting it with steel.
 And may his fellow-warriors, many a one,
 Fall round him to the earth and bite the dust." 515
 He spake; the son of Cronus hearkened not.
 But took the sacrifice and made more hard
 The toils of war. And now when they had prayed,
 And strown the salted meal, they drew the neck

Of the victim back and cut the throat and flayed 520
 The carcass, hewed away the thighs and laid
 The fat upon them in a double fold.
 On which they placed raw strips of flesh, and these
 They burned with leafless billets. Then they fixed
 The entrails on the spits and held them forth 525
 Above the flames, and when the thighs were burned
 And entrails tasted, all the rest was carved
 Into small portions and transfixed with spits
 And roasted carefully and drawn away.
 And when these tasks were finished and the board 530
 Was spread, they feasted; from that equal feast
 None went unsated. When they had appeased
 Their thirst and hunger, the Gerenian knight
 Nestor stood forth and spake: "Most glorious son
 Of Atreus, Agamemnon, king of men! 535
 Waste we no time in prattle, nor delay
 The work appointed by the gods, but send
 The heralds of the Achaeans, brazen-mailed,
 To call the people to the fleet, while we
 Pass in a body through their vast array 540
 And wake the martial spirit in their breasts."
 He spake, and Agamemnon, king of men,
 Followed the counsel. Instantly he bade
 The loud-voiced herald summon to the war
 The long-haired Argives. At the call they came, 545
 Quickly they came together, and the kings,
 Nurslings of Zeus, who stood beside
 Atrides, hastened through the crowd to form
 The army into ranks. Among them walked
 The blue-eyed Pallas, bearing on her arm 550
 The priceless aegis, ever fair and new.
 And undecaying; from its edge there hung
 A hundred golden fringes, fairly wrought.
 And every fringe might buy a hecatomb.
 With this and fierce, defiant looks she passed 555
 Through all the Achaean host, and made their hearts
 Impatient for the march and strong to endure

The combat without pause—for now the war
 Seemed to them dearer than the wished return,
 In their good galleys, to the land they loved. 560
 As when a forest on the mountain-top
 Is in a blaze with the devouring flame
 And shines afar, so, while the warriors marched.
 The brightness of their burnished weapons flashed
 On every side and upward to the sky. 565
 And as when water-fowl of many tribes—
 Geese, cranes, and long-necked swans—disport themselves
 In Asia's fields beside Cayster's streams,
 And to and fro they fly with screams, and light,
 Flock after flock, and all the fields resound; 570
 So poured, from ships and tents, the swarming tribes
 Into Scamander's plain, where fearfully
 Earth echoed to the tramp of steeds and men;
 And there they mustered on the river's side.
 Numberless as the flowers and leaves of spring. 575
 And as when flies in swarming myriads haunt
 The herdsman's stalls in spring-time, when new milk
 Has filled the pails—in such vast multitudes
 Mustered the long-haired Greeks upon the plain,
 Impatient to destroy the Trojan race. 580
 Then, as the goatherds, when their mingled flocks
 Are in the pastures, know and set apart
 Each his own scattered charge, so did the chiefs,
 Moving among them, marshal each his men.
 There walked King Agamemnon, like to Zeus 585
 In eye and forehead, with the loins of Ares,
 And ample chest like him who rules the sea.
 And as a bull amid the horned herd
 Stands eminent and nobler than the rest,
 So Zeus to Agamemnon on that day 590
 Gave to surpass the chiefs in port and mien.
 O Muses, goddesses who dwell on high.
 Tell me—for all things ye behold and know,
 While we know nothing and may only hear
 The random tales of rumor—tell me who 595

Were chiefs and princes of the Greeks; for I
 Should fail to number and to name them all—
 Had I ten tongues, ten throats, a voice unapt
 To weary, uttered from a heart of brass—
 Unless the Muses aided me. I now 600
 Will sing of the commanders and the ships.
 Peneleus, Prothoenor, Leitus,
 And Clonius, and Arcesilaus led
 The warriors of Boeotia, all who dwelt
 In Hyria and in rocky Aulis, all 605
 From Schcenus and from Scolus and the hill
 Of Eteonus and Thespeia's fields,
 And Graia and the Mycalesian plain,
 All who from Herma and Ilesius came,
 And Erythrae, and those who had their homes 610
 In Eleon, Hyla, and Ocalea,
 And Peteona, and the stately streets
 Of Medeon, Copae, Thisbe full of doves,
 And those whose dwelling-place was Eutresis,
 And Coronaea, and the grassy lawns 615
 Of Haliartus, all the men who held
 Plataea, or in Glissa tilled the soil.
 Or dwelt in Hypothebae nobly built,
 Or in Onchestus with its temple-walls
 Sacred to Poseidon, or inhabited 620
 Arne with fruitful vineyards, Midea
 And Nyssa the divine, and Anthedon
 The distant—fifty were their barks, and each
 Held sixscore youths of the Boeotian race.
 Next, over those who came from Aspledon 625
 And from Orchomenus in Minyas
 Ascalaphus ruled with his brother chief
 Ialmenus—two sons of mighty Ares.
 These, in the halls of Actor, Azis' son,
 Astyoche bore to the god of war, 630
 Who met by stealth the bashful maid, as once
 She sought the upper palace-rooms. Their ships
 Were thirty, ranged in order on the shore.

Then Schedius and Epistrophus, two chiefs
 Born to Iphitus, son of Naubolus 635
 The large of soul, led the Phocæan host.
 Those who in Cyparissus had their homes,
 In Panope and Crissa the divine
 And Daulis, or about Hyampolis
 Anemorea, and upon the banks 640
 Of broad Cephissus, and with them the race
 Who held Lilæa by Cephissus' springs.
 With these came forty ships. Their leaders went
 Among them, ranging them in due array
 And close to the Boeotians on the left. 645
 Ajax the swift of foot, Oileus' son,
 Was leader of the Locrians—less in limb
 And stature than the other Ajax—nay,
 Much smaller than that son of Telamon,
 Wearing a linen corpselet; but to wield 650
 The spear he far excelled all other men
 Of Hellas and Achaia. Those who dwelt
 In Cynus, Opus, Bessa, and the fields
 Of Calliarus, Scarpha, and the green
 Augeia, Tarpha, and the meadows where 655
 Boagrius waters Thronium, followed him
 With forty dark-hulled Locrian barks, that came
 From coasts beyond Euboea's sacred isle.
 The Euboeans breathing valor, they who held
 Chalcis, Eretria, and the vineyard slopes 660
 Of Histiaea, and the lofty walls
 Of Diium and Cerinthus by the sea,
 And Styra, and Earystus; these obeyed
 Elphenor of the line of Ares, and son
 Of the large-souled Chalcodon ruler o'er 665
 The Abantes. Him with loosely-flowing locks
 The Abantes followed, swift of foot and fierce
 In combat, and expert to break the mail
 Upon the enemies' breasts with ashen spears;
 With forty dark-hulled barks they followed him. 670
 Next they who came from Athens nobly built,

The city of Erechtheus, great of soul,
 Son of the teeming Earth, whom Pallas reared,
 That daughter of the Highest, and within
 Her sumptuous temple placed him, where the sons
 Of Athens, with the circling year's return, 675
 Paid worship at her altars, bringing bulls
 And lambs to lay upon them; these obeyed
 Menestheus, son of Peteus, whom no chief
 On earth could equal in the art to place 680
 Squadrons of men and horse in due array
 For battle. Nestor only sought to share
 This praise, but Nestor was the elder chief.
 Fifty dark galleys with Menestheus came.
 Ajax had brought twelve ships from Salamis, 685
 And these he stationed near the Athenian host.
 But they who dwelt in Argos, or within
 The strong-walled Tiryns, or Hermione
 And Asine with their deep, sheltering bays,
 Troezen and Eionae, and hills 690
 Of Epidaurus planted o'er with vines.
 And they who tilled Aegina and the coast
 Of Mases—Grecian warriors—over these
 Brave Diomed bore sway, with Sthenelus,
 Beloved son of far-famed Campaneus, 695
 And, third in rule, Euryalus, who seemed
 Like to a god, Mecisteus' royal son
 Who sprung from Talaus; yet the chief command
 Was given to Diomed, the great in war.
 A fleet of eighty galleys came with them. 700
 The dwellers of Mycenae nobly built,
 Of Corinth famed for riches, and the town
 Of beautiful Cleonie, they who tilled
 Omeia, Araethyrea's pleasant land.
 And Sicyon, where of yore Adrastus reigned, 705
 And Hyperesia and the airy heights
 Of Gonoessa, and Pellenè's fields,
 And they who came from Aegium and the shores
 Around it, and broad lands of Helicè—

These had a hundred barks, and over them 710
 Atrides Agamemnon bore command;
 And with him came the largest train of troops
 And bravest. He was cased in gleaming mail,
 And his heart gloried when he thought how high
 He stood among the heroes—mightier far 715
 In power, and leader of a mightier host.
 Then they who dwelt within the hollow vale
 Of queenly Lacedaemon, they who held
 Phare and Sparta, Messa full of doves,
 Bryseiae, and Augeia's rich domain, 720
 Amyclae and the town of Helos, built
 Close to the sea, and those who had their homes
 In Laas and the fields of Qitylus;
 All these obeyed the brother of the king,
 The valiant Menelaus. Sixty ships 725
 They brought, but these he ranged apart from those
 Of Agamemnon. Through the ranks he went.
 And, trusting in his valor, quickened theirs
 For battle; for his heart within him burned
 To avenge the wrongs of Helen and her tears. 730
 Then came the men who tilled the Pylean coast
 And sweet Arenè, Thrya at the fords
 Of Alpheus, and the stately palace homes
 Of Aepy, or in Cyparissus dwelt.
 Or in Amphigeneia, Pteleum, 735
 Helos and Dorium, where the Muses once
 Met, journeying from Oecalian Eurytus,
 The Thracian Thamyras, and took from him
 His power of voice. For he had made his boast
 To overcome in song the daughters nine 740
 Of Zeus the aegis-bearer. They in wrath
 Smote him with blindness, took the heavenly gift
 Of song away, and made his hand forget
 Its cunning with the harp. All those were led
 By Nestor, the Gerenian knight, who came 745
 To war on Troy with fourscore ships and ten.
 The Arcadians, dwelling by the lofty mount

Cyllene, near the tomb of Epytus,
 Warriors who combat hand to hand, and they
 Who tilled the fields of Pheneus and possessed 750
 Orchomenus with all its flocks, or dwelt
 In Ripa and in Stratia, and the bleak
 Enispe, beaten with perpetual winds,
 And in Tegea, and the lovely land
 Of Mantinea, and in Stymphalus 755
 And in Parrhasia, came in sixty ships
 To Troy, with Agapenor for their chief,
 Son of Ancaeus. Every ship was thronged
 With warriors of Arcadia, for the king
 Of men, Atrides, gave them well-oared barks 760
 To cross the dark blue deep, since not to them
 Pertained the cares and labors of the sea.
 Then from Buprasium and the sacred coast
 Of Elis, from Hyrmine and remote
 Myrsinus and the Olenian precipice, 765
 And from Alisium came, with chieftains four,
 The warriors, ten swift galleys following
 Each chieftain, crowded with Epean troops.
 And part obeyed Amphimacus, the son
 Of Cteatus, and part with Thalpius came, 770
 The son of Eurytus Actorides,
 And part with brave Diores, of the line
 Of Amarynceus. Last, Polyxenus,
 The godlike offspring of Agasthenes,
 Whose father was Augeias, led the rest. 775
 They from Dulichium and the Echinades,
 Those holy isles descried from Elis o'er
 The waters, had for leader Megas, brave
 As Ares—the son of Phyleus, dearly loved
 By Zeus. He left his father's house in wrath 780
 And dwelt within Dulichium. With the troops
 Of Megas came a fleet of forty ships.
 Odysseus led the Cephallenian men.
 Who dwelt in Ithaca, or whose abode
 Was leafy Neritus, and those who came 785

From Crocyleia, and from Aegilips
 The craggy, and Zacynthus, and the isle
 Of Samos, and Epirus, and from all
 The bordering lands. O'er these Odysseus ruled,
 A chief like Zeus in council, and with him 790
 There came twelve galleys with their scarlet prows.
 Then with the Aetolians came Andraemon's son
 Thoas, their leader. With him were the men
 Of Pleuron and Pylene, Olenus,
 And Chalcis on the sea-coast and the rocks 795
 Of Calydon; for now no more the sons
 Of large-souled Oeneus were alive on earth,
 Nor lived the chief himself, and in his tomb
 Was Meleager of the golden hair;
 And thus the Aetolian rule to Thoas came. 800
 A fleet of fourscore galleys followed him.
 Idomeneus, expert to wield the spear,
 Commanded those of Crete, the men who dwelt
 In Cnosus or Gortyna, strongly walled
 Lyctus, Miletus, and the glimmering 805
 Lycastus, Phaestus, Rhytium's populous town,
 And all the warrior train inhabiting
 The hundred towns of Crete. Idomeneus
 The mighty spearman, and Meriones,
 Fierce as the god of war, commanded these, 810
 And came to Troy with eighty dark-ribbed barks.
 Tlepolemus, a warrior of the stock
 Of Hercules, was leader of the troops
 Of Rhodes, and brought nine vessels to the war,
 Manned with the haughty Rhodians. These were ranged 815
 In threefold order: those of Lindus, those
 Who dwell in white Camirus, lastly those
 Of Ialassa. These Tlepolemus,
 The valiant spearman, ruled. Astyoche
 Bore him to mighty Hercules, who led 820
 The maid from Ephyra, upon the banks
 Of Selleis, to be his wife, what time
 His valor had o'erthrown and made a spoil

Of many a city full of noble youths.
 Tlepolemus, when in the palace-halls 825
 He grew to manhood, slew an aged man,
 An uncle of his father, whom he loved,
 Lycimnius, of the line of Ares, and straight
 He rigged a fleet of ships and led on board
 A numerous host and fled across the sea. 830
 For fearful were the threats of other sons
 And grandsons of the mighty Hercules.
 In Rhodes they landed after wanderings long
 And many hardships. There they dwelt in tribes—
 Three tribes—and were beloved of Zeus, 835
 The ruler over gods and men, who poured
 Abundant riches on their new abode.
 Nireus with three good ships from Syma came—
 Nireus, Aglaia's son by Charopus
 The monarch—Nireus who in comeliness 840
 Surpassed all Greeks that came to Ilium, save
 The faultless son of Peleus. Yet was he
 Unwarlike and few people followed him.
 The dwellers of Nisyros, Crapathus,
 And Cos, the city of Eurypylus, 845
 Casus, and the Calydnian isles, obeyed
 Phidippus and his brother Antiphus,
 Sons of the monarch Thessalus, who sprang
 From Hercules. With thirty ships they came.
 But those who held Pelasgian Argos, those 850
 Who dwelt in Alos, Trachys, Alope,
 Phthia, and Hellas full of lovely dames—
 Named Myrmidons, Achaeans, Hellenes—
 Achilles led their fifty ships; but they
 Now heeded not the summons to the war, 855
 For there was none to form their ranks for fight.
 The great Achilles, swift of foot, remained
 Within his ships, indignant for the sake
 Of the fair-haired Briseis, whom he brought
 A captive from Lyrnessus after toils 860
 And dangers many. He had sacked and spoiled

Lyrnessus, and o'erthrown the walls of Thebes
 And smitten Mynes and Epistrophus,
 The warlike sons of King Evenus, sprung
 From old Selapius. For this cause he kept 865
 Within his ships, full soon to issue forth.
 The men of Phylace, of Pyrasus—
 Sacred to Ceres and o'erspread with flowers,
 And of Itona, mother of white flocks,
 Antrona on the sea, and Ptelem green 870
 With herbage—over these while yet he lived
 The brave Protesilaus ruled; but now
 The dark earth covered him, and for his sake
 His consort, desolate in Phylace,
 Tore her fair cheeks, and all unfinished stood 875
 His palace, for a Dardan warrior slew
 Her husband as he leaped upon the land,
 The foremost of the Achaeans. Yet his troops
 Were not without a leader, though they mourned
 Their brave old chief. Podarces, loved by Ares— 880
 Son of Iphiclus, rich in flocks, who sprang
 From Phylacus—led them and formed their ranks.
 A younger brother of the slain was he.
 The slain was braver. Though the warriors grieved
 To lose their glorious chief, they did not lack 885
 A general. Forty dark ships followed him.
 Then they who dwelt in Pherge, by the lake
 Boebeis, and in Bcebe, Glaphyrse,
 And nobly built Iolchos, came to Troy,
 Filling eleven galleys, and obeyed 890
 Eumelus, whom Alcestis the divine
 Bore to Admetus—fairest, she, of all
 The house of Pelias and of womankind.
 Those from Methone and Olizon's rocks,
 And Meliboea and Thaumacia, filled 895
 Seven ships, with Philoctetes for their chief,
 A warrior skilled to bend the bow. Each bark
 Held fifty rowers, bowmen all, and armed
 For stubborn battle. But their leader lay

Far in an island, suffering grievous pangs— 900
 The hallowed isle of Lemnos. There the Greeks
 Left him, in torture from a venomed wound
 Made by a serpent's fangs. He lay and pined.
 Yet was the moment near when they who thus
 Forsook their king should think of him again. 905
 Meantime his troops were not without a chief;
 Though greatly they desired their ancient lord.
 For now the base-born Medon marshaled them,
 Son of Oileus. Rhene brought him forth
 To that destroyer of strong fortresses. 910
 The men of Tricca and Ithome's hills.
 And they who held Oechalia and the town
 Of Eurytus the Oechalian, had for chiefs
 Two sons of Aesculapius, healers both,
 And skillful—Podalirius one, and one 915
 Machaon. Thirty hollow barks were theirs.
 The dwellers of Ormenium, they whose homes
 Were by the Hyperian fount, and they
 Who held Asterium and the snowy peaks
 Of Titanus, obeyed Eurypylus, 920
 Evaemon's son, and far renowned. A fleet
 Of forty dark-ribbed vessels followed him.
 Those who possessed Argissa, those who held
 Gyrtonè, Orthè, and Helonè, those
 Who dwelt in Oloosson with white walls, 925
 The sturdy warrior Polypoetes led,
 Son of Pirithous, who derived his birth
 From deathless Zeus. Hippodameia bore
 The warrior to Pirithous on the day
 When he took vengeance on the shaggy brood 930
 Of Centaurs, and from Pelion drove them forth
 To Aethicae. Yet not alone in rule
 Was Polypoetes, for Leonteus, sprung
 From the large-souled Coronus, Caneus' son.
 Shared with him the command. With them a fleet 935
 Of forty dark-hulled vessels came to Troy.
 Then Guneus came, with two and twenty ships

From Cythus. Under his command he held
The Enicnes, and that sturdy race,
The Periboean warriors, and the men 940
Who built on cold Dodona, or who tilled
The fields where pleasant Titaresius flows
And into Peneus pours his gentle stream,
Yet with its silver eddies mingles not,
But floats upon the current's face like oil— 945
A Stygian stream by which the immortals swear.
With Prothous, Tenthredon's son, there came
The warriors of Magnesia, who abode
By Peneus, and by Pelion hung with woods;
Swift-footed Prothous led these. They came 950
With forty dark-hulled galleys to the war.
These were the chiefs and princes of the Greeks.
Say, Muse, who most excelled among the kings.
And which the noblest steeds, of all that came
With the two sons of Atreus to the war? 955
The noblest steeds were those in Pherae bred,
That, guided by Eumelus, flew like birds—
Alike in hue and age; the plummet showed
Their height the same, and both were mares, and, reared
By Phoebus of the silver bow among 960
The meadows of Pieria, they became
The terror of the bloody battle-field.
The mightiest of the chiefs, while yet in wrath
Achilles kept aloof, was Ajax, son
Of Telamon; yet was Pelides far 965
The greater warrior, and the steeds which bore
That perfect hero were of noblest breed.
In his beaked galleys, swift to cut the sea,
Achilles lay, meanwhile, and nursed the wrath
He bore to Agamemnon, Atreus' son, 970
The shepherd of the people. On the beach
His warriors took their sport with javelins
And quoits and bows, while near the chariots tied
The horses, standing, browsed on lotus-leaves
And parsley from the marshes. But beneath 975

The tents the closely covered chariots stood,
 While idly through the camp the charioteers,
 Hither and thither sauntering, missed the sight
 Of their brave lord and went not to the field.
 The army swept the earth as when a fire 980
 Devours the herbage of the plains. The ground
 Groaned under them as when the Thunderer Zeus
 In anger with his lightnings smites the earth
 About Typhoeus—where they say he lies—
 In Arimi. So fearfully the ground 985
 Groaned under that swift army as it moved.
 Now to the Trojans the swift Iris came
 A messenger from aegis-bearing Zeus,
 Tidings of bale she brought. They all had met—
 Old men and youths—in council at the gates 990
 Of Priam's mansion. There did Iris take
 Her station near the multitude, and spake.
 In voice and gesture like Polites, son
 Of Priam, who, confiding in his speed,
 Had stood a watcher for the sons of Troy 905
 On aged Aesyeta's lofty tomb,
 To give them warning when the Achaean host
 Should issue from their galleys. Thus disguised,
 Swift Iris spake her message from the skies:
 "Father! thou art delighted with much speech, 1000
 As once in time of peace, but now 'tis war,
 Inevitable war, and close at hand.
 I have seen many battles, yet have ne'er
 Beheld such armies, and so vast as these—
 In number like the sands and summer leaves. 1005
 They march across the plain, prepared to give
 Battle beneath the city walls. To thee,
 O Hector, it belongs to heed my voice
 And counsel. Many are the allies within
 The walls of this great town of Priam, men 1010
 Of diverse race and speech. Let every chief
 Of these array his countrymen for war,
 And give them orders for the coming fight."

She spake, and Hector heeded and obeyed
 The counsel of the goddess; he dismissed 1015
 The assembly; all the Trojans rushed to arms,
 And all the gates were opened. Horse and foot
 Poured forth together in tumultuous haste.
 In the great plain before the city stands
 A mound of steep ascent on every side; 1020
 Men named it Batiea, but the gods
 Called it the swift Myrinna's tomb; and here
 Mustered the sons of Troy and their allies.
 Great Hector of the beamy helm, the son
 Of Priam, led the Trojan race. The host 1025
 Of greatest multitude was marshaled there.
 And there the bravest, mighty with the spear.
 Aeneas marshaled the Dardanian troops—
 The brave son of Anchises. Venus bore
 The warrior to Anchises on the heights 1030
 Of Ida, where the mortal lover met
 The goddess. Yet he ruled them not alone;
 Two chiefs, Antenor's sons Archelochus
 And Acamas, were with him in command.
 Expert in all the many arts of war. 1035
 The Trojans from Zeleia, opulent men.
 Who drank the dark Aesepus—over these
 Ruled Pandarus, Lycaon's valiant son,
 To whom the god Apollo gave his bow.
 The troops from Adrasteia, they who dwelt 1040
 Within Apaisus' walls, or tilled the soil
 Of Pityeia and Tereia's heights,
 Were led by Amphius andAdrastus, clad
 In linen corpselets for the war, the sons
 Of Merops the Percosian, skilled beyond 1045
 All other men in the diviner's art.
 Nor would he that his sons should seek the field
 Of slaughter. They obeyed him not; the fates
 Decreed their early death and urged them on.
 The dwellers of Percote, Practium, 1050
 And Sestus, and Abydus, and divine

Arisba, followed Asius, great among
 The heroes and the son of Hyrtacus—
 Asius, who came with strong and fiery steeds,
 Borne from Arisba and from Selleis' banks. 1055
 Hippothous over the Pelasgian tribes—
 Skilled spearman, who abode among the fields
 Of the deep-soiled Larissa—bore command—
 Hippothous with Pylaeus, who derived
 Their race from Ares, and for their father claimed 1060
 Pelasgian Lethus, son of Teutamus.
 And Acamas, and Peirous, valiant chief,
 Were captains of the Thracian men, whose fields
 Were bounded by the rushing Hellespont.
 Euphemus led the Cicones, expert 1065
 To wield the spear in fight. The nobly-born
 Troezenus was his father. Ceas' son
 Pyraechmes with Paeonia's archers came
 From the broad Axius in far Amydon—
 Axius, the fairest river of the earth. 1070
 Pylaemenes, a chief of fearless heart,
 Led from the region of the Eneti,
 Where first the stubborn race of mules was bred.
 The Paphlagonian warriors, they who held
 Cytorus, Sesamus, and fair abodes 1075
 Built where Parthenius wanders on, and those
 Who dwelt in Cromna and Aegialus.
 And on the lofty Erythinian heights.
 And Hodius and Epistrophus led on
 The Halezonians from the distant land 1080
 Of Alyba, where ores of silver lie.
 And Chromis and the augur Ennomus
 Were leaders of the Mysians; but his skill
 Saved not the augur from the doom of death,
 Slain by the swift of foot, Aeacides, 1085
 With other men of Troy where Xanthus flows.
 And Phorcys and Ascanius, who was like
 A god in beauty, led the Phrygian troops
 From far Ascania, eager for the fray.

And Antiphus and Mesthles were the chiefs 1090
Of the Maeonian warriors, reared beside
The ships of Tmolus. There Gygaea's lake
Brought forth both chieftains to Pytemenes.
Nastes was leader of the Carian troops,
Who spake in barbarous accents and possessed 1095
Miletus and the leafy mountain heights
Where dwell the Phthirians, and Maeander's stream,
And airy peaks of Mycalè. O'er these
Amphimachus and Nastes held command—
Amphimachus and Nastes, far renowned 1100
Sons of Nomion, him who, madly vain,
Went to the battle pranked like a young girl
In golden ornaments. They spared him not
The bitter doom of death; he fell beneath
The hand of swift Aeacides within 1105
The river's channel. There the great in war,
Achilles, spoiled Nomion of his gold.
Sarpedon and the noble Glaucus bore
Rule o'er the Lycians coming from afar,
Where eddying Xanthus runs through Lycia's meads. 1110



BOOK III

Now when both armies were arrayed for war,
Each with its chiefs, the Trojan host moved on
With shouts and clang of arms, as when the cry
Of cranes is in the air, that, flying south
From winter and its mighty breadth of rain, 5
Wing their way over ocean, and at dawn
Bring fearful battle to the pygmy race.
Bloodshed and death. But silently the Greeks
Went forward, breathing valor, mindful still
To aid each other in the coming fray. 10
As when the south wind shrouds a mountain-top
In vapors that awake the shepherd's fear—
A surer covert for the thief than night—
And round him one can only see as far
As one can hurl a stone—such was the cloud 15
Of dust that from the warriors' trampling feet
Rose round their rapid march and filled the air.
Now drew they near each other, face to face.
And Paris in the Trojan van pressed on.
In presence like a god. A leopard's hide 20
Was thrown across his shoulders, and he bore
A crooked bow and falchion. Brandishing
Two brazen-pointed javelins, he defied
To mortal fight the bravest of the Greeks.
Him, Menelaus, loved of Ares, beheld 25

Advancing with large strides before the rest;
 And as a hungry lion who has made
 A prey of some large beast—a horned stag
 Or mountain goat—rejoices, and with speed
 Devours it, though swift hounds and sturdy youths 30
 Press on his flank, so Menelaus felt
 Great joy when Paris, of the godlike form.
 Appeared in sight, for now he thought to wreak
 His vengeance on the guilty one, and straight
 Sprang from his car to earth with all his arms. 35
 But when the graceful Paris saw the chief
 Come toward him from the foremost ranks, his heart
 Was troubled, and he turned and passed among
 His fellow-warriors and avoided death.
 As one, who meets within a mountain glade 40
 A serpent, starts aside with sudden fright,
 And takes the backward way with trembling limbs
 And cheeks all white—the graceful Paris thus
 Before the son of Atreus shrank in fear,
 And mingled with the high-souled sons of Troy. 45
 Hector beheld and thus upbraided him
 Harshly: "O luckless Paris, nobly formed,
 Yet woman-follower and seducer! Thou
 Shouldst never have been born, or else at best
 Have died unwedded; better were it far, 50
 Than thus to be a scandal and a scorn
 To all who look on thee. The long-haired Greeks,
 How they will laugh, who for thy gallant looks
 Deemed thee a hero, when there dwells in thee
 No spirit and no courage? Wast thou such 55
 When, crossing the great deep in thy stanch ships
 With chosen comrades, thou didst make thy way
 Among a stranger-people and bear off
 A beautiful woman from that distant land,
 Allied by marriage-ties to warrior-men— 60
 A mischief to thy father and to us
 And all the people, to our foes a joy,
 And a disgrace to thee? Why couldst thou not

Await Atrides? Then hadst thou been taught
 From what a valiant warrior thou didst take 65
 His blooming spouse. Thy harp will not avail,
 Nor all the gifts of Venus, nor thy locks.
 Nor thy fair form, when thou art laid in dust.
 Surely the sons of Troy are faint of heart,
 Else hadst thou, for the evil thou hast wrought, 70
 Been laid beneath a coverlet of stone.”
 Then Paris, of the godlike presence, spake
 In answer: “Hector, thy rebuke is just;
 Thou dost not wrong me. Dauntless is thy heart;
 ‘Tis like an ax when, wielded by the hand 75
 That hews the shipwright’s plank, it cuts right through,
 Doubling the wielder’s force. Such tameless heart
 Dwells in thy bosom. Yet reproach me not
 With the fair gifts which golden Venus gave.
 Whatever in their grace the gods bestow 80
 Is not to be rejected: ‘tis not ours
 To choose what they shall give us. But if thou
 Desirest to behold my prowess shown
 In combat, cause the Trojans and the Greeks
 To pause from battle, while, between the hosts, 85
 I and the warlike Menelaus strive
 In single fight for Helen and her wealth.
 Whoever shall prevail and prove himself
 The better warrior, let him take with him
 The treasure and the woman, and depart; 90
 “While all the other Trojans, having made
 A faithful league of amity, shall dwell
 On Ilium’s fertile plain, and all the Greeks
 Return to Argos, famed for noble steeds,
 And to Achaea, famed for lovely dames.” 95
 He spake, and Hector, hearing him, rejoiced.
 And went between the hosts, and with his spear,
 Held by the middle, pressed the phalanxes
 Of Trojans back, and made them all sit down.
 The long-haired Greeks meanwhile, with bended bows, 100
 Took aim against him, just about to send

Arrows and stones; but Agamemnon, king
 Of men, beheld, and thus he cried aloud:
 "Restrain yourselves, ye Argives; let not fly
 Your arrows, ye Achaeans; Hector asks— 105
 He of the beamy helmet asks to speak."
 He spake, and they refrained, and all, at once,
 Were silent. Hector then stood forth and said:
 "Hearken, ye Trojans and ye nobly-armed
 Achaeans, to what Paris says by me. 110
 He bids the Trojans and the Greeks lay down
 Their shining arms upon the teeming earth,
 And he and Menelaus, loved of Ares,
 Will strive in single combat, on the ground
 Between the hosts, for Helen and her wealth; 115
 And he who shall o'ercome, and prove himself
 The better warrior, to his home shall bear
 The treasure and the woman, while the rest
 Shall frame a solemn covenant of peace."
 He spake, and both the hosts in silence heard, 120
 Then Menelaus, great in battle, said:
 "Now hear me also—me whose spirit feels
 The wrong most keenly. I propose that now
 The Greeks and Trojans separate reconciled,
 For greatly have ye suffered for the sake 125
 Of this my quarrel, and the original fault
 Of Paris. Whomsoever fate ordains
 To perish, let him die; but let the rest
 Be from this moment reconciled, and part.
 And bring an offering of two lambs—one white, 130
 The other black—to Earth and to the Sun,
 And we ourselves will offer one to Zeus.
 And be the mighty Priam here, that he
 May sanction this our compact—for his sons
 Are arrogant and faithless—lest some hand 135
 Wickedly break the covenant of Zeus.
 The younger men are of a fickle mood;
 But when an elder shares the act he looks
 Both to the past and future; and provides

What is most fitting and the best for all.” 140
 He spake, and both the Greeks and Trojans heard
 His words with joy, and hoped the hour was come
 To end the hard-fought war. They reined their steeds
 Back to the ranks, alighted, and put off
 Their armor, which they laid upon the ground 145
 Near them in piles, with little space between.
 Then Hector sent two heralds forth with speed
 Into the town, to bring the lambs and call
 King Priam. Meanwhile Agamemnon bade
 Talthibius seek the hollow ships and find 150
 A lamb for the altar. He obeyed the words
 Of noble Agamemnon, king of men.
 Meanwhile to white-armed Helen Iris came
 A messenger. She took a form that seemed
 Laodice, the sister of Paris, whom 155
 Antenor’s son, King Helicaon, wed—
 Fairest of Priam’s daughters. She drew near
 To Helen, in the palace, weaving there
 An ample web, a shining double-robe.
 Whereon were many conflicts fairly wrought, 160
 Endured by the horse-taming sons of Troy
 And brazen-mailed Achaeans for her sake
 Upon the field of Ares. Beside her stood
 Swift-footed Iris, and addressed her thus:
 “Dear lady, come and see the Trojan knights! 165
 And brazen-mailed Achaeans doing things
 To wonder at. They who, in this sad war,
 Eager to slay each other, lately met
 In murderous combat on the field, are now
 Seated in silence, and the war hath ceased. 170
 They lean upon their shields, their massive spears
 Are near them, planted in the ground upright.
 Paris, and Menelaus, loved of Ares,
 With their long lances will contend for thee,
 And thou wilt be declared the victor’s spouse.” 175
 She said, and in the heart of Helen woke
 Dear recollections of her former spouse

And of her home and kindred. Instantly
 She left her chamber, robed and veiled in white,
 And shedding tender tears; yet not alone, 180
 For with her went two maidens—Aethra, child
 Of Pitheus, and the large-eyed Clymene.
 Straight to the Scaean gates they walked, by which
 Panthous, Priam, and Thymoetes sat,
 Lampus and Clytius, Hicetaon sprung 185
 From Ares, Antenor and Ucalegon,
 Two sages—elders of the people all.
 Beside the gates they sat, unapt, through age,
 For tasks of war, but men of fluent speech.
 Like the cicadas that within the wood 190
 Sit on the trees and utter delicate sounds.
 Such were the nobles of the Trojan race
 Who sat upon the tower. But when they marked
 The approach of Helen, to each other thus
 With winged words, but in low tones, they said: 195
 “Small blame is theirs, if both the Trojan knights
 And brazen-mailed Achaeans have endured
 So long so many evils for the sake
 Of that one woman. She is wholly like
 In feature to the deathless goddesses. 200
 So be it: let her, peerless as she is,
 Return on board the fleet, nor stay to bring
 Disaster upon us and all our race.”
 So spake the elders. Priam meantime called
 To Helen: “Come, dear daughter, sit by me, 205
 Thou canst behold thy former husband hence.
 Thy kindred and thy friends. I blame thee not;
 The blame is with the immortals who have sent
 These pestilent Greeks against me. Sit and name
 For me this mighty man, the Grecian chief, 210
 Gallant and tall. True, there are taller men;
 But of such noble form and dignity
 I never saw: in truth, a kingly man.”
 And Helen, fairest among women, thus
 Answered: “Dear second father, whom at once 215

I fear and honor, would that cruel death
 Had overtaken me before I left,
 To wander with thy son, my marriage-bed.
 And my dear daughter, and the company
 Of friends I loved. But that was not to be; 220
 And now I pine and weep. Yet will I tell
 What thou dost ask. The hero whom thou seest
 Is the wide-ruling Agamemnon, son
 Of Atreus, and is both a gracious king
 And a most dreaded warrior. He was once 225
 Brother-in-law to me, if I may speak—
 Lost as I am to shame—of such a tie.”
 She said, the aged man admired, and then
 He spake again: “O son of Atreus, born
 Under a happy fate, and fortunate 330
 Among the sons of men! A mighty host
 Of Grecian youths obey thy rule. I went
 To Phrygia once—that land of vines—and there
 Saw many Phrygians, heroes on fleet steeds,
 The troops of Otreus, and of Mygdon, shaped 235
 Like one of the immortals. They encamped
 By the Sangarius. I was an ally;
 My troops were ranked with theirs upon the day
 When came the unsexed Amazons to war.
 Yet even there I saw not such a host 240
 As this of black-eyed Greeks who muster here.”
 Then Priam saw Odysseus, and inquired:
 “Dear daughter, tell me also who is that.
 Less tall than Agamemnon, yet more broad
 In chest and shoulders. On the teeming earth 245
 His armor lies, but he, from place to place,
 Walks round among the ranks of soldiery.
 As when the thick-fleeced father of the flocks
 Moves through the multitude of his white sheep.”
 And Zeus-descended Helen answered thus: 250
 “That is Odysseus, man of many arts,
 Son of Laertes, reared in Ithaca,
 That rugged isle, and skilled in every form

Of shrewd device and action wisely planned.”
 Then spake the sage Antenor: “Thou hast said 255
 The truth, O lady. This Odysseus once
 Came on an embassy, concerning thee,
 To Troy with Menelaus, great in war;
 And I received them as my guests, and they
 Were lodged within my palace, and I learned 260
 The temper and the qualities of both.
 When both were standing ‘mid the men of Troy,
 I marked that Menelaus’s broad chest
 Made him the more conspicuous, but when both
 Were seated, greater was the dignity 265
 Seen in Odysseus. When they both addressed
 The council. Menelaus briefly spake
 In pleasing tones, though with few words—as one
 Not given to loose and wandering speech—although
 The younger. When the wise Odysseus rose, 270
 He stood with eyes cast down, and fixed on earth,
 And neither swayed his scepter to the right
 Nor to the left, but held it motionless,
 Like one unused to public speech. He seemed
 An idiot out of humor. But when forth 275
 He sent from his full lungs his mighty voice.
 And words came like a fall of winter snow,
 No mortal then would dare to strive with him
 For mastery in speech. We less admired
 The aspect of Odysseus than his words.” 280
 Beholding Ajax then, the aged king
 Asked yet again: “Who is that other chief
 Of the Achaeans, tall, and large of limb—
 Taller and broader-chested than the rest?”
 Helen, the beautiful and richly-robed, 285
 Answered: “Thou seest the mighty Ajax there,
 The bulwark of the Greeks. On the other side,
 Among his Cretans, stands Idomeneus,
 Of godlike aspect, near to whom are grouped
 The leaders of the Cretans. Oftentimes 290
 The warlike Menelaus welcomed him

Within our palace, when he came from Crete.
 I could point out and name the other chiefs
 Of the dark-eyed Achaeans. Two alone.
 Princes among their people, are not seen— 295
 Castor the fearless horseman, and the skilled
 In boxing, Pollux—twins; one mother bore
 Both them and me. Came they not with the rest
 From pleasant Lacedaemon to the war?
 Or, having crossed the deep in their good ships, 300
 Shun they to fight among the valiant ones
 Of Greece, because of my reproach and shame?”
 She spake; but they already lay in earth
 In Lacedaemon, their dear native land.
 And now the heralds through the city bore 305
 The sacred pledges of the gods—two lambs,
 And joyous wine, the fruit of Earth, within
 A goat-skin. One of them—Idaeus—brought
 A glistening vase and golden drinking-cups.
 And summoned, in these words, the aged king: 310
 “Son of Laomedon, arise! The chiefs
 Who lead the Trojan knights and brazen-mailed
 Achaeans pray thee to descend at once
 Into the plain, that thou mayst ratify
 A faithful compact. Alexander now 315
 And warlike Menelaus will contend
 With their long spears for Helen. She and all
 Her treasures are to be the conqueror’s prize;
 While all the other Trojans, having made
 A faithful league of amity, shall dwell 320
 On Ilium’s fertile plain, and all the Greeks
 Return to Argos, famed for noble steeds,
 And to Achaea, famed for lovely dames.”
 He spake, and Priam, shuddering, heard and bade
 The attendants yoke the horses to his car. 325
 Soon were they yoked; he mounted first and drew
 The reins; Antenor took a place within
 The sumptuous car, and through the Scaean gates
 They guided the fleet coursers toward the field.

Now when the twain had come where lay the hosts 330
Of Trojans and Achaeans, down they stepped
Upon the teeming earth, and went among
The assembled armies. Quickly, as they came,
Rose Agamemnon, king of men, and next
Up rose the wise Odysseus. To the spot 335
The illustrious heralds brought the sacred things
That bind a treaty, and with mingled wine
They filled a chalice, and upon the hands
Of all the kings poured water. Then the son
Of Atreus drew a dagger which he wore 340
Hung by his sword's huge sheath, and clipped away
The forelocks of the lambs, and parted them
Among the Trojan and Achaean chiefs,
And stood with lifted hands and prayed aloud:
"O Father Zeus, who rulest all 345
From Ida, mightiest, most august! and thou,
O all-beholding and all-hearing Sun!
Ye Rivers, and thou Earth, and ye who dwell
Beneath the earth and punish after death
Those who have sworn false oaths, bear witness ye, 350
And keep unbroken this day's promises.
If Alexander in the combat slay
My brother Menelaus, he shall keep
Helen and all her wealth, while we return
Homeward in our good ships. If, otherwise, 355
The bright-haired Menelaus take the life
Of Alexander, Helen and her wealth
Shall be restored, and they of Troy shall pay
Such fine as may be meet, and may be long
Remembered in the ages yet to come. 360
And then if, after Alexander's fall,
Priam and Priam's sons refuse the fine,
I shall make war for it, and keep my place
By Troy until I gain the end I seek."
So spake the king, and with the cruel steel 365
Cut the lambs' throats, and laid them on the ground.
Panting and powerless, for the dagger took

Their lives away. Then over them they poured
 Wine from the chalice, drawn in golden cups,
 And prayed to the ever-living gods; and thus 370
 Were Trojans and Achaeans heard to say:
 "O Zeus most mighty and august!
 Whoever first shall break these solemn oaths,
 So may their brains flow down upon the earth—
 Theirs and their children's—like the wine we pour, 375
 And be their wives the wives of other men."
 Such was the people's vow. Cronus-son Zeus
 Confirmed it not. Then Priam, of the line
 Of Dardanus, addressed the armies thus:
 "Hear me, ye Trojans, and ye well-greaved Greeks! 380
 For me I must return to wind-swept Troy.
 I cannot bear, with these old eyes, to look
 On my dear son engaged in desperate fight
 With Menelaus, the beloved of Ares.
 Zeus and the ever-living gods alone 385
 Know which of them shall meet the doom of death."
 So spake the godlike man, and placed the lambs
 Within his chariot, mounted, and drew up
 The reins. Antenor by him took his place
 Within the sumptuous chariot. Then they turned 390
 The horses and retraced their way to Troy.
 But Hector, son of Priam, and the great
 Odysseus measured off a fitting space,
 And in a brazen helmet, to decide
 Which warrior first should hurl the brazen spear. 400
 They shook the lots, while all the people round
 Lifted their hands to heaven and prayed the gods;
 And thus the Trojans and Achaeans said:
 "O Father Zeus, who rulest from the top
 Of Ida, mightiest one and most august! 400
 Whichever of these twain has done the wrong,
 Grant that he pass to Hades's dwelling, slain,
 While friendship and a faithful league are ours."
 So spake they. Hector of the beamy helm
 Looked back and shook the lots. Forth leaped at once 405

The lot of Paris. Then they took their seats
In ranks beside their rapid steeds, and where
Lay their rich armor. Paris the divine.
Husband of bright-haired Helen, there put on
His shining panoply—upon his legs 410
Fair greaves, with silver clasps, and on his breast
His brother's mail, Lycaon's, fitting well
His form. Around his shoulders then he hung
His silver-studded sword, and stout, broad shield.
And gave his glorious brows the dreadful helm, 415
Dark with its horse-hair plume. A massive spear
Filled his right hand. Meantime the warlike son
Of Atreus clad himself in like array.
And now when both were armed for fight, and each
Had left his host, and, coming forward, walked 420
Between the Trojans and the Greeks, and frowned
Upon the other, a mute wonder held
The Trojan cavaliers and well-greaved Greeks.
There near each other in the measured space
They stood in wrathful mood with lifted spears. 425
First Paris hurled his massive spear; it smote
The round shield of Atrides, but the brass
Broke not beneath the blow; the weapon's point
Was bent on that strong shield. The next assault
Atrides Menelaus made, but first 430
Offered this prayer to Father Zeus:
"O sovereign Zeus! vouchsafe that I avenge
On guilty Paris wrongs which he was first
To offer; let him fall beneath my hand,
That men may dread hereafter to requite 435
The friendship of a host with injury."
He spake, and flung his brandished spear; it smote
The round shield of Priamides; right through
The shining buckler went the rapid steel,
And, cutting the soft tunic near the flank, 440
Stood fixed in the fair corpselet. Paris bent
Sideways before it and escaped his death.
Atrides drew his silver-studded sword.

Lifted it high and smote his enemy's crest
 The weapon, shattered to four fragments, fell. 445
 He looked to the broad heaven, and thus exclaimed:
 "O Father Zeus! thou art of all the gods
 The most unfriendly. I had hoped to avenge
 The wrong by Paris done me, but my sword
 Is broken in my grasp, and from my hand 450
 The spear was vainly flung and gave no wound."
 He spake, and, rushing forward, seized the helm
 Of Paris by its horsehair crest, and turned
 And dragged him toward the well-armed Greeks. Beneath
 His tender throat the embroidered band that held 455
 The helmet to the chin was choking him.
 And now had Menelaus dragged him thence,
 And earned great glory, if the child of Zeus,
 Venus, had not perceived his plight in time.
 She broke the ox-hide band; an empty helm 460
 Followed the powerful hand; the hero saw.
 Swung it aloft and hurled it toward the Greeks,
 And there his comrades seized it. He again
 Rushed with his brazen spear to slay his foe.
 But Venus—for a goddess easily 465
 Can work such marvels—rescued him, and, wrapped
 In a thick shadow, bore him from the field
 And placed him in his chamber, where the air
 Was sweet with perfumes. Then she took her way
 To summon Helen. On the lofty tower 470
 She found her, midst a throng of Trojan dames,
 And plucked her perfumed robe. She took the form
 And features of a spinner of the fleece,
 An aged dame, who used to comb for her
 The fair white wool in Lacedaemon's halls, 475
 And loved her much. In such an humble guise
 The goddess Venus thus to Helen spake:
 "Come hither, Alexander sends for thee;
 He now is in his chamber and at rest
 On his carved couch; in beauty and attire 480
 Resplendent, not like one who just returns

From combat with a hero, but like one
 Who goes to mingle in the choral dance,
 Or, when the dance is ended, takes his seat.”
 She spake, and Helen heard her, deeply moved; 485
 Yet when she marked the goddess's fair neck,
 Beautiful bosom, and soft, lustrous eyes.
 Her heart was touched with awe, and thus she said:
 “Strange being! why wilt thou delude me still?
 Wouldst thou decoy me further on among 490
 The populous Phrygian towns, or those that stud
 Pleasant Maonia, where there haply dwells
 Some one of mortal race whom thou dost deign
 To make thy favorite. Hast thou seen, perhaps,
 That Menelaus, having overpowered 495
 The noble Alexander, seeks to bear
 Me, hated as I must be, to his home?
 And hast thou therefore fallen on this device?
 Go to him, sit by him, renounce for him
 The company of gods, and never more 500
 Return to heaven, but suffer with him; watch
 Beside him till he take thee for his wife
 Or handmaid. Thither I shall never go,
 To adorn his couch and to disgrace myself.
 The Trojan dames would taunt me. O, the griefs 505
 That press upon my soul are infinite!”
 Displeased, the goddess Venus answered: “Wretch,
 Incense me not, lest I abandon thee
 In anger, and detest thee with a zeal
 As great as is my love, and lest I cause 510
 Trojans and Greeks to hate thee, so that thou
 Shalt miserably perish.” Thus she spake;
 And Helen, Zeus-begotten, struck with awe,
 Wrapped in a robe of shining white, went forth
 In silence from amidst the Trojan dames, 515
 Unheeded, for the goddess led the way.
 When now they stood beneath the sumptuous roof
 Of Alexander, straightway did the maids
 Turn to their wonted tasks, while she went up,

Fairest of women, to her chamber. There 520
 The laughing Venus brought and placed a seat
 Right opposite to Paris. Helen sat,
 Daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, with eyes
 Averted, and reproached her husband thus:
 "Com'st thou from battle? Rather would that thou 525
 Hadst perished by the mighty hand of him
 Who was my husband. It was once, I know,
 Thy boast that thou wert more than peer in strength
 And power of hand, and practice with the spear.
 To warlike Menelaus. Go then now, 530
 Defy him to the combat once again.
 And yet I counsel thee to stand aloof,
 Nor rashly seek a combat, hand to hand,
 With fair-haired Menelaus, lest perchance
 He smite thee with his spear and thou be slain." 535
 Then Paris answered: "Woman, chide me not
 Thus harshly. True it is, that, with the aid
 Of Pallas, Menelaus hath obtained
 The victory; but I may vanquish him
 In turn, for we have also gods with us. 540
 Give we the hour to dalliance; never yet
 Have I so strongly proved the power of love—
 Not even when I bore thee from thy home
 In pleasant Lacedaemon, traversing
 The deep in my good ships, and in the isle 545
 Of Cranae made thee mine—such glow of love
 Possesses me, and sweetness of desire."
 He spake, and to the couch went up; his wife
 Followed, and that fair couch received them both.
 Meantime Atrides, like a beast of prey, 550
 Went fiercely ranging through the crowd in search
 Of godlike Alexander. None of all
 The Trojans, or of their renowned allies,
 Could point him out to Menelaus, loved
 Of Mars; and had they known his lurking-place 555
 They would not for his sake have kept him hid,
 For like black death they hated him. Then stood

Among them Agamemnon, king of men,
And spake: "Ye Trojans and Achaeans, hear,
And ye allies. The victory belongs 560
To warlike Menelaus. Ye will then
Restore the Argive Helen and her wealth.
And pay the fitting fine, which shall remain
A memory to men in future times."
Thus spake the son of Atreus, and the rest 565
Of the Achaean host approved his words.



BOOK IV

Meantime the immortal gods with Zeus
Upon his golden pavement sat and held
A council. Hebe, honored of them all,
Ministered nectar, and from cups of gold
They pledged each other, looking down on Troy, 5
When, purposely to kindle Hera's mood
To anger, Cronus's son, with biting words
That well betrayed his covert meaning, spake:
"Two goddesses—the Argive Hera one,
The other Pallas, her invincible friend— 10
Take part with Menelaus, yet they sit
Aloof, content with looking on, while still
Venus, the laughter-loving one, protects
Her Paris, ever near him, warding off
The stroke of fate. Just now she rescued him 15
When he was near his death. The victory
Belongs to Menelaus, loved of Ares.
Now let us all consider what shall be
The issue—whether we allow the war,
With all its waste of life, to be renewed, 20
Or cause the warring nations to sit down
In amity. If haply it shall be
The pleasure and the will of all the gods,
Let Priam's city keep its dwellers still,
And Menelaus lead his Helen home." 25