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# HOMER.

BY THE  
RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE,  
FORMERLY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH.

BIBLIOTECA MUNICIPAL  
"ORIGENES LESSA"

Tombo N<sup>o</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

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Those oft are stratagems which errors seem ;  
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream."—POPE.

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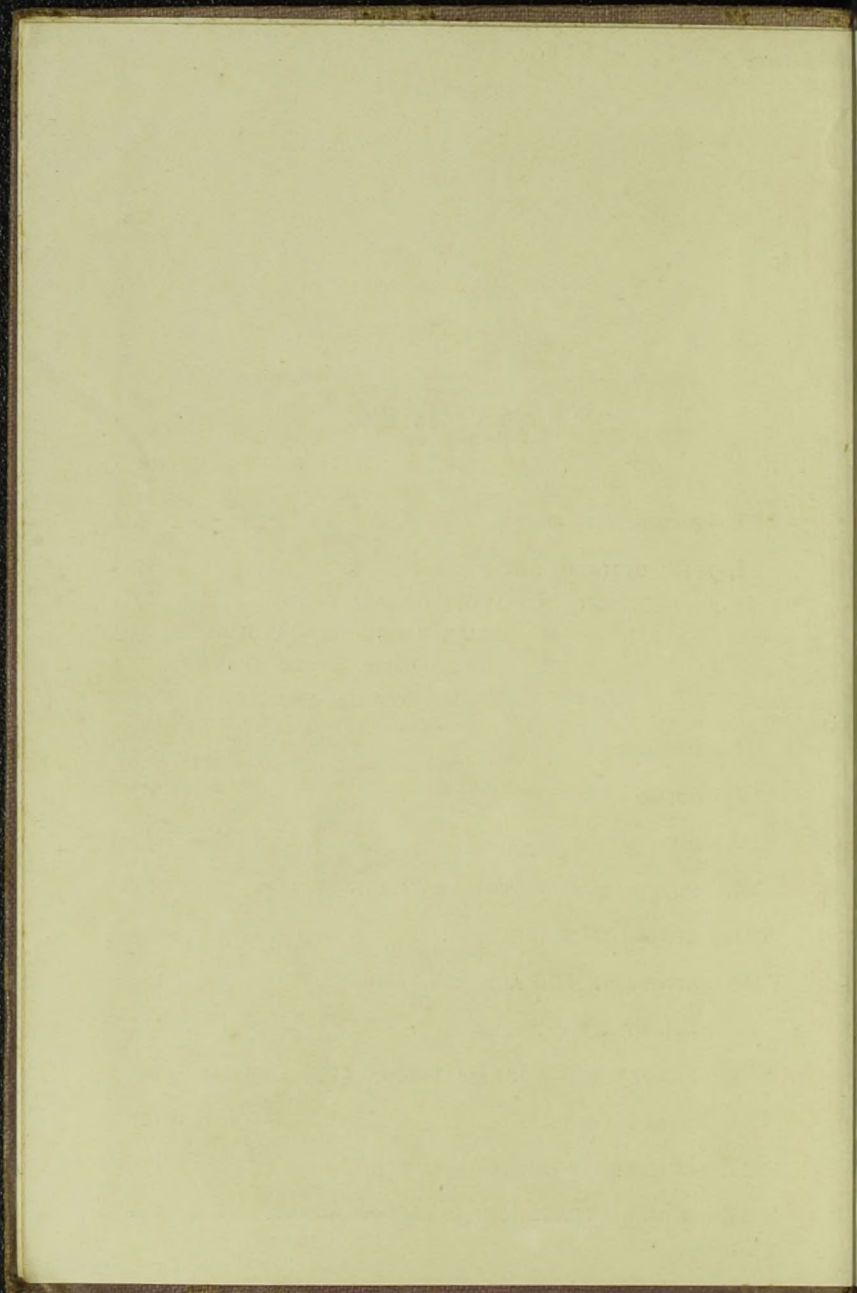
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## CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I.—HOMER THE MAN . . . . .	5
II.—THE HOMERIC QUESTION . . . . .	17
SECTION I.—PLOTS OF THE POEMS . . . . .	17
II.—AGAINST THE SEPARATORS . . . . .	29
III.—WOLF, AND THE TRANS- MISSION BY MEMORY. . . . .	38
III.—HISTORY . . . . .	46
IV.—COSMOLOGY . . . . .	54
V.—GEOGRAPHY . . . . .	57
VI.—MYTHOLOGY, OR THE OLYMPIAN SYSTEM . . . . .	65
VII.—ETHNOLOGY . . . . .	94
VIII.—ETHICS OF THE ACHAIAN TIME . . . . .	104
IX.—POLITY . . . . .	113
X.—EUROPE AND ASIA, OR TROJAN AND ACHAIAN . . . . .	121
XI.—CHARACTERS . . . . .	127
XII.—ART, AND THE ARTS . . . . .	134
XIII.—HOMER'S PLACE AND OFFICE AS A POET. . . . .	140



# H O M E R.

## CHAPTER I.

### HOMER THE MAN.

I. **Homer's Unique Position.**—The poems of Homer do not constitute merely a great item of the splendid literature of Greece ; but they have a separate position, to which none other can approach. They, and the manners they describe, constitute a world of their own ; and are severed by a sea of time, whose breadth has not been certainly measured, from the firmly-set continent of recorded tradition and continuous fact. In this sea they lie, as a great island. And in this island we find not merely details of events, but a scheme of human life and character, complete in all its parts. We are introduced to man in every relation of which he is capable ; in every one of his arts, devices, institutions ; in the entire circle of his experience. There is no other author, whose case is analogous to this, or of whom it can be said that the study of him is not a mere matter of literary criticism, but is a full study of life in every one of its departments. To rescue this circle of studies from inadequate conceptions, and to lay the ground for a true idea of them, I have proposed to term them Homerology. Of this Homerology, I shall now endeavour to present some of the first elements in their simplest form. And at the threshold, postponing for the moment our notice of the controversies involved in what is termed the Homeric question, let us see how far we can acquire an idea of the poet himself, and the conditions under which he lived.

2. **Homer his own Witness.**—When we use the word Homer, we do not mean a person historically known to us, like Pope or Milton. We mean in the main the author, whoever or whatever he was, of the wonderful poems called respectively, not by the author, but by the world, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. His name is conventional, and its sense in etymology is not very different from that which would be conveyed by our phrase, “the author.” This is a Primer of Homer. That is to say, it aims at giving elementary knowledge respecting him and the works with which his name is coupled. In such a design, it is requisite above all to let the reader understand that we know nothing either definite or certain respecting Homer, unless in so far as it can be gathered from the poems he composed. Yet they very rarely use the first person,—only once in a passage of any importance; and exclusively in invocations to the Muse (*Il.* ii. 424-93); so that they convey no direct information whatever about the bard. It does not follow that our indirect knowledge must be small or untrustworthy. Great artists may be knowable from their works; and there is a singular transparency in the mind, as there is also in the limpid language of Homer. Old as he is, the comprehensive and systematic study of him is still young. It had hardly begun before the nineteenth century. With the primary source of information found in his text, we have to combine two others: (1) the scattered notices supplied by ancient tradition, and (2) the valuable and still growing illustrations furnished by the study of language, and by the discoveries, and learned study of ancient remains.

3. **Our Earliest View of Him.**—At the first dawn of the historic period, we find the poems established in popular renown; and so prominent, that a school of minstrels takes the name of *Homeridæ* from making it their business to preserve and to recite them.



Still, the question whether the poems as we have them can be trusted, whether they present substantially the character of what may be termed original documents, is one of great but gradually diminishing difficulty. It is also of importance, because of the nature of their contents. In the first place, they give a far greater amount of information, than is to be found in any other literary production of the same compass. In the second place, that information, speaking of it generally, is to be had nowhere else. In the third place, it is information of the utmost interest, and even of great moment. It introduces to us, in the very beginnings of their experience, the most gifted people of the world, and enables us to judge how they became such as in later times we know them; how they began to be fitted to discharge the splendid part, allotted to them in shaping the destinies of the world. And this picture is exhibited with such a fulness both of particulars and of vital force, that perhaps never in any country has an age been so completely placed upon record. Finally, amidst the increase of archaic knowledge on all sides, we begin to find a multitude of points of contact between the Homeric poems and the primitive history of the world, as it is gradually revealed by records, monuments, and language; so that they are coming more and more to constitute an important factor in the formation of that history.

4. **Subsidiary Testimony.**—There are indeed traditions, and there are fragmentary remains in verse, ascribed to his brethren in art or to himself, about Homer and about the subjects of his poems. But there is not one of these which we can trace with certainty to the date of the poems, still less of the occurrences set forth in them. They are such, in amount and in consistency, as to warrant the belief that they have a solid substratum of truth; but we cannot fix precisely either their outline or their details. We

cannot trace them even orally, far less in a written form, up to, or near to, such a point as to give them anything like the character of contemporary evidence about Homer, given from without. These traditions and remains make their appearance, for the most part, as already subsisting in the first beginnings of the regular history of Greece; but Homer and Troy lie far back in the prehistoric period, the period during which men had not come to the use of certain, definite, and continuous records.

5. **Due Reserve in Judgment.**—Much of what the text contains is direct information, but much also is only suggestive. It would be inconvenient, in a work of this kind, to load every sentence with qualifications. Better that it should be understood from the outset that, in what is called the Homeric question, the propositions set forth cannot claim an historic certainty, but are given as rationally deducible from the study of the text, and from comparison with the studies which former generations have bestowed upon it. The authority of past generations, however, is not so high in a case of this kind, as in many others. For, in former times, Homer has been simply enjoyed as a great poet, rather than examined. Even now the work of extracting and methodising the contents of the poems, so far as they are capable of being viewed in the light of facts, has not been fully accomplished.

6. **The Bard of the Heroic Age.**—We learn from the poems that, even before the war of Troy, the profession of the minstrel had become an object of general interest, and had thus early taken its place in the public competitions, which were of high national importance among the later Greeks. For, in the catalogue of the Greek or Achaian army, Homer finds it convenient to mark the town of Dorion, part of the dominions of Nestor, as the place where the Muses punished Thamuris the Thracian, for having boasted that he would beat them, goddesses though

they were, if they entered the lists against him. For this offence, as he was on his way to a match of this kind, they deprived him of the gift of song. Nothing could more clearly denote the high position of the bard as such, than its having tempted Thamuris into this presumption. The representation is sustained by all the other notes in the poems. The Bard was an essential member of the courts of princes, a trusted friend and counsellor of their families. His person had even a kind of sacredness attaching to it, apparently beyond that of the seer or prophet. No priest, and no minstrel, is ever engaged in the military service of the Homeric age. His office indeed implied more than the possession of a mere human gift: he habitually sang by an inspiration from on high. It was his duty to descant upon the freshest and most interesting subjects: and the events at Troy were reckoned to have pre-eminent attractions, even at the distant court of Alkinoos, before Odusseus had reached his island home. The profession of the Bard ranked among the standing professions of the age. These collectively supplied the social wants of man; but the special, distinctive office of the bard was to give delight. In cases, again, of domestic mourning, the bards led the laments over the dead: possibly gathering for such an occasion from allied houses, for on the great celebration of the obsequies of Hector, and in this instance only, bards are historically mentioned in the plural number. It must be added that, besides supplying song, the minstrel had the humbler yet joyful office of accompanying the dance; and he appears before us in this capacity upon the Shield of Achilles.

7. **Probable Position of Homer.**—This Bard of the poems is commonly attached to a particular reigning family. In the case of Thamuris (*Il.* ii. 596) such a connection, though not named, is implied. But as we thus hear of the itinerancy of a stationary bard, so there may well have been itinerants by profession.

This appears to be the life which we may reasonably suppose Homer to have followed, on such grounds as follow: (1) Both because his works have survived the action of time and its revolutions, which have obliterated every contemporary production, and on account of the surpassing nature of the works, we must assign to their author a decided pre-eminence among the men of his class and time. This may render it questionable whether he could have been tied down as a family retainer to a narrow corner of a narrow country. (2) A connection with a particular family would almost certainly have left signs of it upon the face of the poems. But, while the poems are intensely national, they are nowhere sectional. (3) His works show an acquaintance with geography, which was evidently for the most part founded on personal inspection, and presumes his free movement over the circle of Achaian experience. And he refers specially to the effect of travel in enriching and quickening the mind.

8. **Tradition of his Blindness.**—It is supposed by many that the poet was blind. In support of this idea it is noticed that he touches with a peculiar tenderness of sympathy the case of Demodokos, the Bard of Alkinoos in the *Odyssey*; whom the Muse, loving him right well, deprived of the sense of sight, but endowed with the sweet gift of song. A tradition, perhaps true, perhaps mythical, grew up, of Homer's blindness; and it was handed on, in a passage of singular pathos, forming part of one of the Hymns, which is ascribed by Thucydides, but beyond doubt wrongly ascribed, to the author of the poems himself. What may be asserted with confidence is that Homer, if blind at all, was only blind in later life. For, as he is the most objective of all poets, so it is especially the imagery of sight, which supplies him with a chief part of his inexhaustible resources. His sense of light, of form, and of motion was beyond anything vigorous

and prolific; and though his perceptions of special colour were very indeterminate, yet even colour has supplied him with a number of effective touches, largely in excess of what other poets generally have been able to obtain from it.

9. **Itinerant, but in his Country only.**—We are then probably to conceive of Homer as of a Bard who went from place to place to earn his bread by his profession, to exercise his knowledge in his gift of song, and to enlarge it by an ever-active observation of nature, and experience of men. There is no sign, anywhere in the poems, of his having had living personal contact with foreigners, except individually, or of his having visited foreign lands. Although it is plain that he had busied himself with efforts to learn all he could about these, he seems to anticipate and realise in himself that later Hellenic spirit, which divided the world into Greeks and barbarians, and to keep an opaque curtain hung all round, or an indefinite distance interposed, between his own dear people and other races and empires, which at the time, as we now know, bore the most conspicuous parts in the drama of human history. It is plain that he lived, and practised his art, within the limits of his country. But what was his country?

10. **Was he an Asiatic Greek?**—On all hands it will be admitted that Homer sang to Greeks. Nor does any one suppose that he sang to Greeks of the Italian, or other western, colonies. It has however been extensively believed, that he was a Greek of Asia Minor. And as there were no Greeks of Asia Minor at the time of the Trojan war, nor until a wide and searching revolution in the peninsula had substituted Dorian manners for those of the earlier Achaian age, which Homer sang, this belief involves the further proposition that the poet was severed by a considerable interval of time from the subjects of his verse. The last-named opinion depends very much upon

the first ; and the first chiefly, if not wholly, upon a perfectly vague tradition, which has no pretence to an historical character.

11. **Why so Reputed.**—The manners belonging to the age of the Trojan War were swept violently out of Greece by the Dorian revolution, after a period of uncertain length, commonly taken at eighty years. Long after this revolution, civilisation had to make a new beginning in the Greek Peninsula. Homer if known there before, yet during the troubled time, and under a strong barbarising influence, must in all likelihood have been swept away by the flood. It is an acknowledged proposition that the emigrants from Greece who settled in Asia Minor, carried with them the remains of the anterior civilisation, and became for some ages, in their new seats, its main representatives. If the poems of Homer existed at the time, there can be no room for doubt that they shared the destiny of the surrounding elements of culture. From the period of the settlements in Asia civil and social progress seem to have been continuous within them. We now find ourselves upon the lines of established polity, and, after a while, of regular record. It is therefore from this era and this region, that we immediately derive our Homer : it is from thence that he was imported, or reimported, into Greece. Nothing then can be more easy than to account for the belief that Homer was an Asiatic Greek. For the Greeks of Asia were those who could produce the oldest recorded title to claim the poems as their own. It was disputed indeed, as by Athens and by Argos : but on the whole it vaguely prevailed ; and it now awaits the judgment of an age distinguished by increased care and enlarged advantages in critical inquiry.

12. **Reasons in Disproof.**—The question then has to be decided, in the absence of all really historic testimony, by the internal evidence of the poems. This evidence, I venture to say, strongly supports the

belief that Homer was an European, and if an European, then certainly also an Achaian Greek : a Greek, that is to say, of the pre-Doric period, when the Achaian name prevailed, and principally distinguished the race. Among the presumptions, which tend to show that he was not of the Doric time or the Asiatic region, are these :—

(1.) The Achaian name became insignificant in the Doric time, and never found its way into Asia ; but it may justly be called the great national name throughout the poems.

(2.) The Dorian name, if predominant in the Greek peninsula at the period when the poems were composed, would naturally find an important place in them. It is, on the contrary, but twice used, and is wholly insignificant.

(3.) A poet of Asia, or of the Dorian epoch, would probably have called the pre-Doric Greeks by the race-name of Hellenes, which must by that time have been widely spread ; but this name is hardly found in the poems, and it has not yet arrived at an established meaning.

(4.) The Ionians attained, in Asia Minor, to a very high position, and traces of this fact would surely have been found in a poet of their blood. But the Ionians of the poems are entirely in the background, and may even appear to be disparaged, as a soldiery, by the epithet "tunic-trailing," which is the only one applied to them.

(5.) At the period of the Greek migrations to Asia, the Æolian name was soon established, and became historical as a great race-name. There is no such name in the poems ; but only the name of Aiolid, a patronymic. Aiolos is, in Achaian Greece, not the eponymist of a tribe or race, but only the (real or mythical) ancestor of a family.

(6.) In the Asiatic Aiolis was included the plain of Troy. Had Homer sung in that region, to people

familiar with the local features, he would have described them with thorough accuracy. But his account of the plain, though full of characteristic points, has not as yet been reduced to a complete consistency with those features.

(7.) Athens hospitably entertained the fugitives from the Dorian conquest, and would naturally stand high with a bard belonging to their race. But the place of Athens in the action of the *Iliad* is very secondary: and the single passage, in which it is panegyricised, is one of the few widely held to be spurious.

(8.) The notes of personal and local colouring drawn from the peninsula in the Greek Catalogue, both inland and along the coast, are numerous and vivid. But, in the description of the Asiatic coast south of Troas, and reaching to Lycia, there are but three epithets belonging to natural features; these three all refer to objects on the coast, not inland, and there is only a single notice of a town or settlement. He could hardly have been a native of the country, with which he shows so inferior an acquaintance.

(9.) Mr. Wood, assuming that the Zephyros of Homer corresponds with our west wind, defends the declaration of the poet that it, with Boreas, blows from Thrace, by saying it is a westerly wind as respects Ionia. But the Zephyros of Homer is a north-west, not a west wind, and the poet (*Il.* ix. 5) is describing its effect on the Ægean Sea: he therefore requires no defence, and raises no presumption respecting Ionia.

(10.) In *Il.* iv. 52, Hera is made to suppose the possible destruction of Argos, Sparta, and Mukenai. From this passage it is argued that the poet knew of the Doric revolution, which transferred the seat of power from Mukenai to Argos. But that revolution elevated Sparta, left Argos as it was, and did not destroy, if it depressed, Mukenai.

(11.) On the other hand, it is strange indeed if a



poet, who had witnessed so vast a convulsion, composed 27,700 lines with no other or clearer allusion to it than this, which is most faint, and indeed very equivocal.

(12.) The Hymn to Apollo, cited by Thucydides, which represents Homer as dwelling in Chios, is demonstrably not the work of Homer; and only expresses that later tradition as to his birth and *habitat*, which did beyond doubt come extensively into vogue.

(13.) The twentieth *Iliad* contains a prophecy that descendants of Aineias, yet unborn, should reign over the Trojans. This is perfectly in harmony with the supposition that the poet flourished between the siege of Troy and the Dorian Revolution; and that he may have seen more than one generation after the war, born and reigning in Troas.

(14.) The traditions found in Homer, which relate to Asia Minor, are such as might easily have been gathered from report. For example, silver was found in Chalubè near the Euxine (and it is still found there); and the Phrygians, aided by Priam, had fought with the Amazons on the River Sangarios. Even so he knows the wealth of Egyptian Thebes, names for it a king and a queen, and gives an account of the trans-Egyptian Pygmæans. Compare with these slight notices the wealth of his legends from within the Greek peninsula.

(15.) In the later mythology of Greece, we find copious legends, *e.g.* those touching Kubelè and the Kabeiroi, which were derived from Phrygia. This is readily explained by the contact of the Asiatic Greeks with that country. But there is no trace of these legends in Homer. It is probable, then, that he did not share that contact.

(16.) But the argument which is the strongest, and which I cannot but deem in itself irrefragable, is one that cannot be fully appreciated except upon a close

and minute study of the poems. It is that the men, the manners, the institutions that Homer sings of with such an intimacy of living familiarity, such a prevailing sense of nearness, were essentially Achaian, ceased to exist, in their Achaian form, upon the Dorian Revolution, and could hardly have been reproduced by a poet remote from them in time, especially when there were no aids of literary and historical record. For it must be borne in mind that the poems are undoubtedly anterior to the use of writing for any of these purposes.

13. **Conclusion. His Name.**—It appears then easy to understand why Homer should have been widely (though not uniformly) supposed to belong to that Hellenic region in which he first, so to speak, set his foot on dry ground; in which, that is to say, his poems had their earliest contact with palpable and continuous history. But also not difficult to see that he was a Greek of the Achaian mould, and therefore of the Achaian period, and with his seat in the peninsula.

And, this being so, it appears not unreasonable to picture to ourselves the Father of all known poetry traversing the hills and vales of Greece, from court to court, from festival to festival, in free communion with nature, in large observation of man, and in the constant practice of the glorious art, which required hospitality with the delight of song. It should however be observed, that of his real name we have no record whatever. Like to Poietes, the Maker or Poet, as he was called, by way of homage to his paramount excellence, in later times, is Homeros, the Fitter. The word may have been suggested by the single passage of the *Odyssey*, in which we have the kindred verb *homercuein* (*Od.* xvi. 468), used to describe the meeting together of persons from a distance. There is probably no other instance of a name thus indisputably unauthentic, which is now so inextricably welded into

the mind and memory of man, that if by any accident the true name could be discovered, it would scarcely have a chance of displacing the fictive one.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE HOMERIC QUESTION.

THE controversies summed up under the name of the "Homeric Question" cannot be passed by even in an elementary work; but I shall endeavour to be as little technical as may be. They involve:—

1. The unity of authorship for the *Iliad*.
2. The unity of authorship for the *Odyssey*.
3. The unity of authorship for the two jointly.
4. The general purity and soundness of the text.

Of these the first, as distinct from the others, carries us over ground appropriate to my design; for the framework cannot be severed from the substance and merits of the work. The same may be said of the third. The second, though it falls within the scope of the sceptical argument, is so little contested that this point need not be dwelt on at much length. Under the fourth head I shall only notice the Wolfian attack, and the subject of transmission by memory, it being my purpose to give the reader as much of a living Homer himself as possible, and as little of what is only about Homer.

#### SECTION I.—PLOTS OF THE POEMS.

I. **The Title of *Iliad* a Misnomer.**—The plot of the *Iliad* is one of the capital subjects, not yet thoroughly explored, to which the attention of every student should be directed. Much criticism aimed at it has really been founded on the title, rather than on the poem. It is hardly fortunate; for it draws off

attention from the real subject, which is the Wrath of Achilles. With the beginning of this wrath it begins, and with the cessation it ends. The war is taken out of its normal course by the demand of Chrusus the priest for the restoration of his daughter; it is replaced, after the disturbance, with the close of the obsequies of Hector. The poem is properly a personal poem; but upon one stupendous character is hung a tissue of action, which gives it the necessary breadth, and stamps it as among all human productions perhaps the most intensely national.

2. **Opening of the Terrestrial Plot.**—In a division of booty, such as regularly took place on the capture of a town, Chrusis, the daughter of a priest of Apollo, has been appropriated to Agamemnon, the leader of the host. The father demands restitution, which is refused by the possessor of the prize. Vengeance is invoked, and the god sends a plague among the army. Achilles causes the general Assembly to be summoned, and appeals to Calchas the augur to declare the cause of the calamity. Calchas proclaims it to be the capture and detention of Chrusis. After a fierce debate, Agamemnon the king announces that he will restore the maid, but will appropriate Briseis, the prize of Achilles, in her stead. Achilles is warned from heaven not to lay hands on him; and the double transference takes effect. Achilles then betakes himself to his mother Thetis; and she obtains from Zeus an engagement, that the Trojans shall have the upper hand in the war until justice shall be done, and due honour paid to her son. Thus the terrestrial scheme of the poem is fairly launched.

3. **The Celestial Plot.**—But it has also a celestial scheme. A persistent controversy in the council of Olympus accompanies the struggle upon earth, in which the several deities take part, mainly according to their ethnical affinities. Poseidon, who has suffered wrong in Troy from Laomedon, Hera, the great

national divinity of the Greeks, Athenè, the personal protectress of Achilles, of Odusseus, and of Diomed (both these goddesses having also a private grudge) of themselves suffice to give a preponderance against Troy. But the cause is fundamentally righteous; and Zeus, the supreme representative of deity, cannot contravene it, although he greatly regards the known piety of Hector, leader of the Trojan forces. The gross wrong done to Achilles is artfully made use of, to place the Sire of gods and men for the time on the other side: and with him Apollo, who is the only remaining deity of the first rank, and who invariably reflects his will. Such is the point of departure for the celestial, or Olympian plot; and, to mark it sufficiently, means are at once found to introduce us to a remarkable scene, which exhibits the converse, banquet, and course of daily life among the gods.

4. **The Second Assembly and the Array.**—Agamemnon, receiving through a dream the promise that he shall now take the city, determines nevertheless to test the spirit of the army, by formally proposing to them that they shall go home. They take him at his word, and rush to the ships. They are only brought back by the decision, presence of mind, and vigorous action of Odusseus, who rallies the dispersed assembly, and warms them with the recital of a good omen. Nestor hereon advises a formal array of the army, with a view to improved discipline, now more needful in the absence of Achilles. Thus, after a solemn sacrifice, is introduced the Catalogue, or Domesday Book of Greece. Priam and Hector, hearing of this muster, undertake a like operation, and a less detailed "state" is exhibited of the Trojan host with its allies.

5. **The War in the Absence of Achilles.**—Nothing is ever placed in competition with the colossal figure of Achilles; but, as he is now absent, Homer obtains space for the exhibition of the other

principal Achaian chieftains and their feats. The whole of the Books, from the Third to the Fifteenth inclusive, are so contrived that a real superiority, both of honour and of force, is assigned all along to the national side; while, to fulfil the aim of the poem, the Trojans gain the upper hand by means of various expedients, such as divine intervention, the use of the bow, which entails no danger to the person employing it, and the interference of the heralds to save Hector, upon his combat with Aias, from utter defeat. The operations commence with a single battle between Menelaos and Paris, who owes his safety to being carried off by Aphroditè. On the issue of this combat the entire war was to depend; but Pandaros, under the crafty suggestion of Athenè, breaks the compact by treacherously wounding Menelaos with an arrow. Meanwhile Helen had come forth to see the single combat, moved without doubt by her interest in Menelaos, and anticipation of his victory: and she is made to apprise Priam of the names of several leading Achaian chieftains, who are within view from the walls.

6. **The Achaian Fortunes at the lowest Ebb.**—Homer, by the means I have named, reduces the Greeks to such a point that, in the Ninth Book, Odusseus and Aias are sent on an embassy of reparation to Achilles. He remains however sternly inexorable, and the fortune of the war continues adverse, though splendid feats of arms have been and are performed, especially by Agamemnon, by Aias, and by Diomed, who has wounded two of the Trojan deities, Arès and Aphroditè. A fosse and rampart, which the Greeks have constructed, is assailed; Sarpedon drags down the battlement, Hector breaks open the gates; Zeus restrains the action of the Hellenising divinities; at length Hector lays hold of the vessel which brought Protesilaos, and calls for fire to burn it. Aias, after long resistance, is finally exhausted. The Trojans

set fire to the ship : this supreme honour being carefully withheld from the Trojan leader.

**7. Patroclus fights, and dies by Contrivance.**  
—The moment has now arrived which Achilles had fixed in his mind as the last, up to which he could maintain his rigid abstention. He sends the Myrmidons, under his bosom friend Patroclus, into battle. The tide is at once turned. Sarpedon, perhaps the first warrior on the side of Troy, is slain by Patroclus. The victor is then slain himself, nominally by Hector, but only after being disabled, and in great measure disarmed by Apollo, and wounded by Euphorbos. It is a cardinal rule with Homer, that no considerable Greek chieftain is ever slain in fair fight by a Trojan. The most noteworthy Greek, who falls in battle, is Tlepolemos ; and Sarpedon, who kills him, is leader of the Lycians, a race with whom Homer betrays a peculiar sympathy. The threadbare victory of Hector is further reduced by the success of the Greeks in recovering the body of Patroclus. In the meantime Achilles is apprised of the catastrophe through Antilochos, elder son of Nestor, and a favourite of the great chief.

**8. The Manifestation of Achilles.**—The sun of the Trojan fortunes has now set. In the last eight Books of the twenty-four, the figure of Achilles towers aloft, and overshadows every other. His grief is as portentous, as his wrath. Through his mother Thetis, the celestial artificer Hephaistos is put in motion to furnish him with arms, in lieu of those which Patroclus had borne, and Hector had appropriated. The scale, so to speak, of the poem, is now raised, in order to glorify its great hero ; all the dimensions are everywhere colossal. The battle of the gods is announced. When it takes effect, the Hellenising deities have a marked superiority ; but the poet, who always honours Apollo and his mother Leto, has contrivances for keeping them out of the fray. The Trojans fall in

whole sheaves before Achilles ; no Trojan chieftain makes the smallest head against him. He slays Astero-paios, son of the River-god Axios, valiantly fighting, but in vain. His only real opponent is the River-god Scamandros, who endeavours to carry him away by virtue of the strength of his deity in flood. Even this, however, is not conclusive, until he has called in the succour of his brother Simois. Hera then obtains the aid of Hephaistos, who, as a superior god, checks the flood with fire. Achilles is thus set free, and the city is only saved from immediate capture, to follow on his entering with the fugitives, through the stratagem of Apollo, who, in the likeness of the Trojan prince Agenor, entices him away.

#### 9. Contrivances for the Battle with Hector.

We now approach the main issue; and there is nothing more artful in the poem, than the way in which Hector, who was of proved inferiority to other Achaian chiefs, is brought beamingly into action with Achilles ; in part by his over-weening self-confidence, which prevents him from taking refuge within the walls ; in part by his fear that, if now he adopt the waiting game, he will be reproached by the prudent Pouludamus, who had advised it long before ; and finally, after he has taken to flight and thrice made the circuit of the walls, by the stratagem of Athenè, who, under the figure of his brother Deiphobos, exhorts and persuades him to stand, that they may jointly contend with the terrible warrior. So it is that the fight begins. But, after the first stage of it, Hector finds that the personated Deiphobos has disappeared. Now his case is desperate; and from despair he becomes, perhaps it may be said for the first time, a hero. Zeus and Apollo, he finds, no more protect him. Destiny presses hard upon him. "Let me not then die inert and inglorious, but do a noble deed, which shall resound through all posterity" (xxii. 304).

He falls, of course, in the unequal fight. The



Achaian soldiery, gathering round his body, admire its beauty, but deface it with gashes. The fierceness, which is so powerful a constituent of the character of Achilles, is now drawn off from Agamemnon, and concentrated on the remains of Hector, as the slayer of his friend. These he ties from the ankles to his chariot, and drags along the plain to his quarters, while passionate laments are raised within the city for the champion they have lost.

10. **Reconciliation with the Living, and Honour to the Dead.**—To conclude the great drama of the Wrath, it now remains to give emphasis to the reconciliation with Agamemnon; to obtain the release of the dead Hector from dishonour; and to signalise by noble obsequies the demise of the man who, by his character and his arms, had been the main prop of Troy. The first is effected by the solemn Games, in which Achilles exhibits in its perfection the character of the liberal and courteous gentleman. For the second and more difficult purpose, the agency of his mother Thetis is employed to suppress the yet smouldering fires within his bosom, and both Iris and Hermes are at the same time despatched from the Divine Assembly to set Priam in motion, and conduct him to the camp as the suppliant of Achilles. In the interview which follows, although the great chief is still tempted towards wrath with even the aged father of the man who slew his friend, yet pity and sorrow obtain the mastery. They weep profusely together. The body of Hector is delivered and received with all pious care, a truce of eleven days is granted for the obsequies, and on them the curtain falls.

11. **The Artful Balance of the Poem.**—The nicest art is exhibited throughout the poem, in a jealous reservation to the chiefs on the Achaian side of a marked military superiority, while their opponents are maintained just at such a modified pitch of dignity

and valour, as to leave entire and unimpaired the glory, or credit, of worsting them.

12. **Sustained Parallelism of the Divine Action.**—But, together with this terrestrial action, an Olympian or celestial plot moves on parallel lines, from the exordium to the end. The sensible, though not unlimited, difference of nationality between Trojan and Achaian is accurately reflected in Olumpos. The Trojan section of the Divine Court consists in part of deities apparently not yet recognised in Greece: Arès, Aphroditè, and lastly the Sun, to whom no active share is allowed. Then there is Scamandros, a purely elemental deity, and also purely local. Their inferiority to the Hellenising deities is made up by the action of Zeus through Apollo, until the termination of the Wrath. From first to last the game is played above with the keen interest of living men, and it is made visible to our eyes at the interstices of the terrestrial action.

13. **Moral Adjustment of the Poem.**—While such is the theurgy of the poem, the main lines of its morality are strong and clear. Agamemnon, for his greed and tyranny, is wounded in his most sensitive part, namely, the feeling of a thoroughly politic general and monarch for his people, and for his power. Achilles, who is on the side of right in this quarrel, is nevertheless punished, by a protracted agony of grief over his lost friend, for the excess which he allows to deform his sense of wrong. But neither of these aims are so pursued as to neutralise that general movement in the fortunes of the war, which is demanded by the moral order of the world. The cause for which the Trojans fight is a bad cause, and receives the defeat which it deserves.

14. **National Aim and Feeling.**—Hector, though regarded for his personal qualities, fights in an evil quarrel, and dies. Next to the ethical, the national aim is with the poet the most essential; and the absence of the Protagonist from the field gives him

an opportunity of glorifying the exploits of the other chieftains, each of whom could not fail to be an object of peculiar interest in his own proper part of Greece. Moreover, these high exploits of the associated chiefs, which required space and detail for their full exhibition, not only did honour to the nation generally when measured against the Trojan performances, but formed a scaffolding, as it were, on which to build up the yet greater achievements of Achilles, and give more marked elevation and prominence to their really preterhuman scale.

15. **The Plot an Argument not against the Unity, but for it.**—If these views be correct, the plot of the *Iliad* is one of the most consummate works known to literature. The objections which have been founded on it to disprove the unity of the work are, it may be said, objections of very small stature. And not only is it not true that want of cohesion and proportion in the *Iliad* betrays a plurality of authors, but it is rather true that a structure so highly and delicately organised constitutes in itself a powerful argument, to prove its unity of conception and execution.

16. **Alleged Minor Discrepancies.**—With regard to discrepancies in the text, every effort to show them in mass may be declared to have failed. The markings of time, by division into day and night, are clear and consistent. The theory of some travellers, which placed Troy at a distance of six or eight miles from the sea, supplied a weapon against the poem, which represents backward and forward movements of the armies between the walls and the ships as repeated on the same day. But that theory has been found untenable. Moreover, the recent discoveries of Schliemann have made it appear probable, that Troy was seated on the hill of Hissarlik, at a distance from the shore, even as it now is, of less than three miles, which was probably shorter at the epoch of the poem. Almost the only real discrepancy of the text is in the

case of Pulaimenes, leader of the Paphlagones, who is slain by Menelaos in the fifth Book, but weeps among the mourners at the death of his son Harpalion in the thirteenth.

17. **The Destructive Theories.**—A more serious question is raised with reference to the general structure of the poem. Achilles is the protagonist, or hero of the poem, as Odusseus is of the *Odyssey*. In the *Odyssey*, every book either produces or stands directly related to the hero, whereas Achilles disappears from the seven Books between the first and ninth, and from the six between the ninth and the sixteenth. This is, without doubt, a very peculiar arrangement. It has tempted Grote to propound the division of the poem into an Achilleis, which should contain the Books where the great chief is active, and an Ilias, composed of the Books when he is in eclipse. But the very eminent historian has in this speculation enlisted but few disciples. And it may be observed generally, as a material, though not a decisive fact, that while the destructive criticism bestowed upon Homer has had, especially in Germany, very extensive support, no particular scheme, set up to replace that of the unity of the poems, has met with corresponding favour.

18. **Plot of the Odyssey.**—The beauties of the *Odyssey* in characters and in detail cannot be exaggerated: but there was nothing like the same amount of mental effort required for the construction of the plot. It begins with an Olympian Council, which determines that Odusseus shall be brought home from the Island of Kalupso, where he has been detained for many years. At the same Athenè designs that while the Suitors, who woo Penelopè, are engaged in riotous living at the palace, Telemachos, now come to manhood, shall pass over from Ithaca to the mainland, and make inquiries about his father. In executing this plan, he obtains much intelligence respecting the return home of the chieftains, and the lengthened

tour of Menelaos on the south-east coast of the Mediterranean. In the fifth Book, we have the release of Odusseus from Kalupso, and his return homewards as far as Scheriè, the land of shipmen; a place described by Homer apparently upon the basis of accounts, which had reference to the topography of Corfu. Here he is hospitably entertained, and a vessel is prepared to carry him to Ithaca. Before setting out he describes, in Books ix.—xii., his own extended wanderings to the coast of Africa, then into the far west and north, then to the east and the Under-world, and again, after he has made way on his journey homewards, his being again driven out into the centre of the great sea, northwards, where he became the guest, the darling, and the prisoner of Kalupso. After being deposited in Ithaca, he betakes himself first to the cottage of the trusty swineherd Eumaios. Here Telemachos meets him; and from hence, disfigured and thus disguised by Athenè, he ventures down to the city, and makes full proof of the insolent mind and purpose of the Suitors. The trial of the bow is proposed to them by Penelopè; and the person who draws it is to have the reward of her hand. They all fail. Odusseus himself performs the feat: and then comes the terrible slaughter of the guilty and reckless men. It is followed by the disclosure of himself to Penelopè, and his re-establishment in power, after a scene of recognition with his father Laertes, and a civil war in miniature against the party who adhere to the Suitors. There is a curious realism in the difficulties which beset the re-establishment of Odusseus in his dominions. It seems to bear witness to a truly historical character in the narrative.

19. **Theurgy of the Poem.**—The divine action, parallel with the human, is maintained from first to last. It may however be described as a manifestation of close providential superintendence, without the marked interpositions of the *Iliad*. There is no

division of parties in Olumpos. Only Poseidon persecutes the hero from a personal grudge; and the Sun, Helios, becomes hostile from a like cause at a particular point. On the other hand, the interests of the hero, and those of his house, are sustained by the ever-wakeful prudence and energy of Athenè.

20. **The Two Plots Compared.**—The two plots may be briefly compared. In the plot of the *Odyssey*, symmetry is obvious at first sight. In the plot of the *Iliad*, it has to be sought out; and the relevancy and proportion of the parts are only seen in full when we bring into view, together with the highly national character of the poem, the circumstances of the minstrel, itinerant among the courts, festivals, and games of Greece, and naturally led to give alternate prominence to the performances of the respective chiefs, with whose names this or that part of the country had a special connection. The plot of the *Iliad* is in reality a far more subtle, far less imitable work. Each poem hangs upon a man: the *Iliad* upon the wrath of a man. Each poem is intensely national; but the nationality of the *Iliad* is exhibited in the struggle with an alien and offending power; that of the *Odyssey* in the comparison and contrast between Achaian life on the one side, and foreign and partly fabulous scenes, manners, and institutions on the other. The *Odyssey* is more strange in adventures; but its ordinary tone within the Hellenic zone is calmer and more subdued, and tends less, except when near the crisis, to warm the blood of the reader. There is in each a parallelism between the divine and the human actions. It is but rarely, in the *Iliad*, that grandeur and rapid force give way, to allow the exhibition of domestic affection: yet this exhibition is as remarkable and unequivocal as the more splendid features of the poem. Conversely in the *Odyssey*, the family life supplies the tissue upon and into which is woven the action of the poem: yet upon occasion

it rises into a grandeur that is extraordinary. The scene of Hector and Andromachè equals the *Odyssey* in tenderness; the slow preparations, moral as well as physical, for the great Vengeance on the Suitors, in their stern sublimity, perhaps may match with anything in the *Iliad*: so that each poem, from base to summit, has a somewhat similar largeness of range. The *Iliad* is carefully finished to the end; and, if it flags at all, flags in some of the middle parts, while the great issue remains suspended: the last Book of the *Odyssey*, while it carries a sufficiency of identifying marks, exhibits a manifest decline in force, as if the mind and hand of the master were conscious that their work was done, and coveted their rest.

## SECTION II.—AGAINST THE SEPARATORS.

1. **Objections of the Separators.**—Many, who firmly hold the separate unity of each poem, decline to refer them to the same author. The controversy with these Chorizontes, or Separators, forms the gravest branch of the Homeric Question.

This school of disputants first appeared among the Alexandrian critics about two centuries B.C. The arguments, variously handled at different times, are mainly as follows:—

(1.) There has been alleged a difference of grammatical forms indicative of a later date of composition for the *Odyssey*.

(2.) Differences in the narrative.

(3.) Differences in the religious department.

(4.) Differences in the manners, the political and social picture.

2. **Reply to Objection (1).**—As to the grammatical forms, the reply has been, *a*, that the variance is insignificant; *b*, that it tends to exhibit the use of older and less expanded forms in the *Odyssey* rather

than the reverse ; *c*, that the use of such forms cannot show the *Odyssey* to be later ; *d*, that neither do they show it to be earlier, for the amplitude of the less archaic forms harmonises with, and may be accounted for by, the greater majesty of style required for the more majestic subject of the *Iliad*.

3. Reply to Objection (2).—As to the narrative, without doubt the *Odyssey* makes additions to the *Iliad*, but they relate to a period after the action of the *Iliad* closes. It is however urged that, in the *Odyssey*, there appears on the stage Neoptolemos, a full-grown son of Achilles, about whom the *Iliad*, in the ninth year of the war, is silent. It may be added that Achilles speaks of Briseis as having been at least in contemplation his wife : and that, even at this date, he belongs to the younger rather than the elder group of the Greek chieftains. But in Montenegro, men of or under thirty-five often have a son able to bear arms. On various grounds, we may assert that he had no wife living at his home. But we cannot therefore assert that he had never had one. There is however a wider question : namely whether, in assigning whole decades of years to the drama of the war, Homer proceeds as a chronicler, or conventionally for the purposes of his art. Even were there a merely chronological discrepancy, we might urge that it perhaps belongs to a field in which poetical colouring is allowed, and that in any case it affords too narrow a ground for an argument on authorship.

4. Reply to Objection (3).—As to differences in the religious department, the objection taken is twofold. First, it is held by some that the divine order exhibits in the *Odyssey* a higher morality. But in truth both poems work out strictly the divine counsel and the ends of justice ; both connect morality with piety ; both exhibit elements of corruption in the celestial hierarchy ; in both there are gods, who show signs of lust and of vindictive passion. If their mirth



is marred by their fighting in *Iliad* xxi., they have to wink in the *Odyssey* at the persistent opposition of Poseidon to the divine counsels in favour of the return of Odusseus.

It may be doubted whether the higher ethics anywhere in the *Iliad* undergo such serious disparagement as in the intrigue of Arès and Aphroditè (*Od.* viii.); in the declaration of Athenè to Odusseus in the thirteenth Book that she was in heaven, as he on earth, the person most deeply versed in guileful arts; and in the exhibition of Hermes (*Od.* xx.) as the official teacher of thieving and of perjury.

The second point of the objection is, that the composition and attributes of the divine hierarchy in the two poems do not agree. Iris is employed as the divine messenger in the *Iliad*, commonly, though not exclusively; Hermes in the *Odyssey*. The Sun is a sleeping partner in the *Iliad*, whose personality is only detected by a phrase or two; in the *Odyssey*, he is active and jealous, both as a ruler upon earth, and as a member of the Olympian court. Hephaistos is the husband of Aphroditè in the *Odyssey*, but of a somewhat ideal Charis in the *Iliad*. It might be added that the Hera of the *Iliad* shares freely in the divine government of affairs, but she has no practical part in the *Odyssey*; and that Poseidon, whose proceedings are subject to the direct control of Zeus in the *Iliad*, has a much more unchecked action in the *Odyssey*. Some minor differences will be noted elsewhere; but these are important. They would justly lead us to surmise duality of authorship, if the poet were in the two works dealing with the same scenes and races. But, in a large part of the *Odyssey*, he passes beyond the limits of the well known or Achaian world. He was perfectly aware that there were national varieties of religion; and it is to these that the foregoing differences seem to be really referable. If this be so, the mythological diversities seem to represent not diversity

of authorship, but sagacity and circumspection in the representation of manners as to both poems respectively ; and so far as these qualities are rare ones, they go to make it likely that two works, in each of which they are remarkable, proceeded from the same brain.

5. **Reply to Objection (4).**—As to differences in the political and social sphere, it is true that various details of life appear in the *Odyssey*, which are wanting in the *Iliad*. So do many details of military life currently appear in the *Iliad* and not in the *Odyssey*. It could not be otherwise. Camp life is one thing, civil life is another. No argument can be founded upon diversities, which belong to the nature of the scenes portrayed.

There is however a political variance, which does not at once fall within this explanation. The title of *Basileus*, or King, is used in the *Iliad* with the utmost restraint, and only for some eight or ten Greek persons. But in the *Odyssey* every Suitor is a *basileus*. To account for this, we must advert to the revolutionary effect, which the Troic expedition could not but tend to produce in Greece, like the Crusades at a later date in Europe. Upon the prolonged absence of the chief lord, nothing could be more natural than that the petty lords, having for the time no superior, should affect the sovereign title. But the broad principles of polity set forth in the *Odyssey* appear to be identical with those of the *Iliad*.

6. **Arguments for Unity. Improbability that there should be Two Poets of such rank.**—But those, who defend the unity of the double work, do not rest satisfied with mere replies to objections.

The positive grounds for ascribing the *Odyssey* to the author of the *Iliad* may be partially stated as follows.

Either of these poems places its author at an elevation among the poets of the entire civilisation of

the world, which is very peculiar. The judgment of the Greeks, without doubt very strong in constructive appreciation, gradually but firmly drew a broad line between these and the many competing productions, handed down from the prehistoric age, and assigned to their author a position of solitary grandeur. He long held it alone : some would say he holds it still : some would place Dante by his side, yet more would so place Shakespeare ; few in comparison would admit any other claim. That one such poet as our Homer should have arisen in an age stunted in the materials of thought, possessed of little hereditary training, an age without aids and appliances, and of manners including a large barbarous element, is marvellous. To suppose the existence of two men, each of them a supreme poet, appears to be a very daring paradox. As the aloe is said to flower once in a hundred years, so it seems to be but once in one or two thousand that nature flowers into this unrivalled product. Either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* suffices to stamp the character. It is not agreeable to analogy to suppose a personality of so transcendent a kind to have been so soon repeated, and on so limited a stage.

**7. Correspondence of the Poems in Great Outlines.**—Some minds will derive a more solid satisfaction from the positive evidence of correspondence in all the great outlines of the two poems. In cases where the conceptions of a poet are faint and shallow, such correspondence might mean little more than the mere absence of discrepancy. But in Homer every character, every idea, is sharply cut, and full of vitality. The correspondence of wooden blocks is not remarkable, the correspondence of human forms and faces often is. Now there is not a department of life or thought, in which close correspondence between the two poems is not the general rule : and the objections of opponents have been endeavours to

show particular exceptions. If we take first the mythology: the divine personages are alike intensely charged with human elements; they generally act, govern, love, and hate on the same principles: the Olympian polity, a marvellous formation, is similarly conceived and worked. If we turn to the human characters, the evidence is yet more many-sided. We see that the hand, which drew Andromachè, was the hand to draw Penelopè. We find, not always a circumstantial identity where the same personage appears in the two poems, but a new shade of colour, or modification of attitude, in just proportion to the change of position. The distressed Helen of the *Iliad* becomes the favoured Helen of the *Odyssey*, vested in a queenly calm, but still with recollections which serve to chasten pride. The impassioned Achilles of the *Iliad* reappears in all his grandeur, but beneath a veil of solemn sadness, as befits the Underworld. But in a character like that of Menelaos, where the change of circumstances is more material than moral, the delineation remains without any sensible alteration. Take again the extreme difficulty of drawing effectively a character like that of Odusseus. In one sense, much that is new in him comes out in the *Odyssey*: but what so comes out is simply the complement of the less-developed picture of the *Iliad*. For instance, his concise speech (*Od.* viii.), in reply to the insult of a prince of the Phaiakes, is, to say the least, one of the most crushing replies on record: immensely removed from the studied, artful calm of his address on the mission meant to appease Achilles. But it is in full harmony with the account given by Antenor (*Il.* iii.) of his oratory, which drove as the snow-flakes drive in winter. The passionate element of his nature, thus glanced at in the *Iliad*, is amply developed in the *Odyssey*. So the polity, the professions, the stage of advancement, both for the fine and the useful arts, the high refinement of manners,

combined with occasional signs of recent or surrounding savagery, might all be drawn out as fresh proofs of an identity of origin. But we must not fail to observe one other concord. It is found in the steady bent of mind, which, without any kind of moroseness, uniformly enlists the sympathy of those who hear or read on the side of good, and leads them, as by the hand, to the condemnation and even contempt of evil. In every single case where he portrays a character radically vicious, Homer contrives that it shall be regarded not only with disapproval, but with aversion. There are few among Christian poets, who can match him in this vital particular: and the harmony of the two poems, in a point so characteristic, again points in a marked manner to their springing from a single mind.

#### 8. Minute and Undesigned Coincidences. —

The foregoing are all great matters. But there is another chapter of evidence, on the whole not less important, yet much more difficult to follow, because made up of particulars minute in themselves, and strong only in their combination; like the threads of cotton or of wool, before and after they are combined into a cloth. Unfortunately, the force of such an argument as this must be taken upon trust, until the student of Homer has accustomed himself to watch for those nicer turns of thought and expression, which the more careless reader passes over without notice. It is not possible to give any just idea of this matter by enumeration. Sometimes, however, the correspondences are those of poetic usage, as in the very delicate and careful appropriation of epithets; or in the introduction of similes, not simply because they happen to occur to the poet, but when they are needed, and are of value to enliven the otherwise slightly flagging movement of the action. Sometimes they are to be detected in the mere force and propriety of a word. Each poem, for example, hangs essentially upon a man.

So the subject is presented in the first word of the *Odyssey*, *andra*. But the *Iliad* hangs not so much on the entire destiny, as upon the wrath, of a man; and again the first word of the *Iliad* is the cardinal word, *menin*. Once in the *Iliad* we are told how Odusseus was shorter than Menelaos. Once in the *Odyssey* Poluphemos contemptuously describes him as a little fellow. Once in the *Iliad* allusion is made to the hanging-up of votive offerings (*Il.* i. 39); once also in the *Odyssey* (iii. 274); cannibalism is mentioned with horror in the *Iliad* (iv. 35); the practice is assigned to monsters in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* ix. 289, x. 130, 134). Domestic affection is the basis of the conception of Odusseus in the *Odyssey*; in the *Iliad* he alone among the Greeks refers with a kind of fond exultation to his fatherhood (*Il.* ii. 259; iv. 353). In the *Iliad*, Hera, protectress of the Achaians, brings to its close the great day which had been preternaturally lengthened for the benefit of the Trojans. In the *Odyssey* Athenè, protectress of Odusseus, detains the Night, and stops Eòs from rising, to give more time for the converse of the returned hero with Penelopè. In each poem are found two lines, and only two, consisting exclusively of spondees. I do not know that any other Greek poet has ventured upon this peculiar and daring metrical arrangement. But it is more notable that in all the four cases alike there is a close adaptation between the sound of the verse and the sense (*Il.* ii. 544, xxiii. 221, *Od.* xv. 333, xxi. 15). These are not select, but rather random instances of the minuter harmonies; and their purpose is to suggest to the student a mode by which he may trace, in the form of undesigned coincidence, independent evidence of that close unity of thought and feeling, which has animated the composition of these great sister works.

9. **Want of such Correspondence in all other Compositions.**—The argument from agreement in the works, and consistency in the characters and

essential styles of the two poems acquires additional force, when we remember that none of these are found to be maintained, so soon as we pass beyond these two compositions to the works of other authors, whether of the classical period or before it. The other epics of the Iliac Cycle differ in their narrative from the *Iliad*. Thus the absence of such difference in the *Odyssey* becomes a topic of great weight. The great characters of Homer, especially such as Achilles, Odusseus, Helen, are in every case, when they pass into the hands of the later writers, altered and debased. From this we learn to estimate the power of the argument for unity of composition drawn from the perfect consistency of these characters in the two poems. The objector may safely be challenged to supply an answer to the question, How it could possibly happen that there should be such a closeness of similitude between the two poets in particular whom he creates for the two poems, and such a total want of it between them and all others (so far as we know) who practised the same art?

10. **The Distinction of Style and Handling.**—So far as tone and style are concerned, there is no doubt that the pulse, so to speak, of the *Odyssey* beats less vehemently than that of the *Iliad*. It would, however, be strange if this were not so, when we recollect that one is a poem of war, and the other of peace: one of the barrack, the other of the palace. It is reasonably believed, among those who oppose the *Chorizontes* or Separators, that the just proportion which exists between the subject and the style of each, suggests another proportion, not less just, between subject and style on the one hand, and time of life on the other: that the *Iliad* represents the life and genius of the poet moving upwards to the zenith, and the *Odyssey* the same life and genius in the paler tract beyond.

SECTION III. WOLF AND THE TRANSMISSION BY  
MEMORY.

1. **Belief before Wolf.**—Until the eighteenth century of our era was near its close, it may be said that all generations had believed Troy was actually Troy, and Homer in the main Homer; neither taking the one for a fable, or (quaintest of all dreams) for a symbol of solar phenomena, nor resolving the other into a multiform assemblage of successive bards, whose verses were at length pieced together by a clever literary tailor. The earliest age which can be called critical, and which had ceased to be creative, was that of the Ptolemies; and it did launch a serious opinion that there were two Homers, an author of the *Iliad*, and an author of the *Odyssey*. With this theory, one entitled to all respect, I have already dealt. Into the destructive speculations generally, the nature and limits of this work do not allow me to enter. I have thought it enough to meet them by a rapid exhibition of the structure of the poems; which must stand or fall mainly by internal evidence. But one among these theories demands a particular notice, for the interest attaching to the question which it raises, and because, acquiring from circumstances a powerful impetus, it has carried all the others along with it in its train.

2. **Wolf's Attack, and the Defence.**—After slighter premonitory movements, it was Wolf that made, by the publication of his *Prolegomena* in 1795, the serious attack. It had been too carelessly assumed, even for example by Bentley, who disallowed the original unity of the poems, that Homer wrote what he composed. Wolf maintained that available writing was not known at, or till long after, the period of their composition; and that works of such length, not intrusted to the custody of written characters, could not have been transmitted through a course of



generations with any approach to fidelity. Therefore they could only be a number of separate songs, brought together at a later date. The reply to Wolf rested on a denial of his proposition, that the resource of writing was not at the service of the composer of the poems. It was still boldly contended that they had been written; and that, being written, they were therefore capable of transmission.

3. **Mischief of the First Defence.**—It is now I believe the prevailing, and I am confident the correct, opinion that the poems were not originally written compositions, but were dependent on human memory for their being handed down. The first generation of their defenders had seemed to admit that transmission by memory was impossible; later champions allowed, that transmission by manuscript had not been the first actual vehicle. If they were not thus placed in literal conflict with one another, at any rate the practical effect was that the adversary accepted each of the two separate admissions, and that a great impulse was given to the negative speculation.

4. **The Poems certainly Unwritten.**—There appears to have been not even a colourable ground for the contention, that the poems were at the outset written compositions. The prevalence of such an opinion indeed shows how slight had been the current methods of study. Only one, or at the outside two, passages make reference in any way to cut or inscribed characters. Of these, the only passage which is clear in making such a reference (*Il.* vi. 168-73) speaks of folded and seemingly fastened tablets; from which we might conclude, apart from any other difficulty, that there was no portable material, which could be used for compositions of great length. The lack of positive evidence is not, however, the principal argument. Many lays are mentioned in the poems; but always as lays orally delivered. Many messages are

sent and received, including matter of the utmost delicacy, such as the offers to the offended Achilles, where accuracy was of the greatest consequence; but as a rule all is done by word of mouth. Such messages are set out in full on sending and on delivery, a practice which gives a practical and convenient rest to the mind of a reciting poet, but which is without sense in the case of a written composition. The same observation applies to the recurring lines, or *formulae*, with which Homer abounds. The rapid and incessant movement of the *Iliad*, and the large portion of the poem which is thrown into speeches, appear to call for, and suppose, the aids of voice and gesture. More than 2,200 lines, reaching nearly the length of two plays, are recited by Odusseus without a break. Above all, the Greek Catalogue is treated as a supreme effort of the poet, and this Catalogue is alone preceded by a formal and detailed supplication to the Muses for aid. Now there is no portion of equal length in the poem, upon which less of poetic force is expended; but it contains a long list of varied numbers, and of many hundred epithets and names. As a work of composition, no part of the poem could be easier; as a work of memory, none more difficult, than to observe the right order, and, by avoiding all omission, to satisfy the jealous fondness of the hearers all over Greece. In my view it is indisputable that the poems were not written. But, according to a well-known rule, great stress, laid upon a bad argument, brings arguments which are good into discredit; and, upon the breaking down of the untrue doctrine that the poems had been written, the enemy rushed in like a flood. Thus, of all the circumstances of the original attack, the defence proved to be the worst.

5. Were they Transmitted by Memory?— Either, then, they were transmitted by memory, or not at all. The question is, Could compositions of such length be so transmitted?

There seems to be no room for doubt, that the power of recollection would be found adequate to the office. In those early days, men took only to employments which they were fit for; and the select memories of sympathising men, professionally trained, and carrying on the work for the very practical purpose of a livelihood, would in all likelihood be able to compass the complete retention of either poem, perhaps even of both. Division of labour may have lightened the merely physical task. Long recitations, we see, were in use. When Odusseus himself recites at a breath (*Od.* ix.—xii.) 2,241 lines, it is nowhere signified that this was in any way an effort for the speaker, or for the listeners. It is likely that modern recollection has been weakened by habitual reliance upon the great labour-saving contrivances of manuscript and print. Yet Macaulay, when occupied with the engrossing pursuit of an historian, a province wholly foreign, happened to find, on a casual opportunity, that he could repeat one-half of *Paradise Lost*: and among the men of his generation there were a few, though a very few, whose capacity of recollection rivalled, or approached even that of Macaulay. Indeed, the aggregate contents of various memories at the present day must exceed the whole mass of the poems.

**6. Conservating Effect of the Public Recitations.**—This power of memory, however, would not of itself guarantee us against the creeping in of small errors in detail; which, it may be argued, might run together, and grow to serious greatness. This is so: and compounded error is very difficult to deal with. There was a principle of variance and decay continually at work for the disintegration of the poems. Nay, there were many such forces; one, namely, in the mind of each reciter. But this circumstance, which at first sight exaggerates the mischief, provided in some degree the remedy. That

probably happened then among the Rhapsodists, which has happened since among critics anxious to recast their Homers: each would be sufficiently enamoured of his own deviations from the text, but by no means as well inclined to those of others. The errors introduced by the Rhapsodists, at each and every place of recitation, might be numerous, but they could not be the same. By jealous love they would be brought into comparison, which would be conflict; and they would greatly, like plus and minus quantities, eject one another. Moreover, the rivalry of rising bards, would naturally take the form of an ambition to be preferred on the very ground of fidelity to an original, which had long proved in a conclusive manner its own superiority to rivalry. This proof had been applied by the testing hand of time; applied as impartially to great authors and small, as death knocks at the door of the palace and the cottage. As a destroying angel, he visited everywhere, but he let pass unharmed the paramount excellence of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Gradually they were severed from their companionship with all the lengthened pieces on the same group of events, called the Trojan Cycle, and these were suffered all to drop away; although shorter and later compositions, carrying the name of Homer by a vague ascription, have come down to us.

7. **State Guardianship of the Poems.**—The nature of the case excludes the contemporary testimony of literature to the poems in the first stages of their existence. But when the literary age had begun, we find notices of them in considerable numbers, and very noteworthy in their purport. I select for notice the interesting statement of Heracleides Pontikos, a pupil of Plato, that Lukourgos, the Spartan legislator, having received the poems from the descendants of Kreophulos, a reputed companion of Homer, brought them into Greece. Thus the account, which of all

others goes the farthest back, exhibits the poems to us as already receiving the regular cognisance of public authority. Other testimonies speak of them as similarly recognised in the time of Turtaios, and in the time of Solon. In later times, there were regular State-editions; and there may even be reason to suppose that there was, in the Greek peninsula at least, some approach to a standard text.

8. **The Survival of the Fittest.**—Thus there were in operation three conservative influences, which might counteract effectually the tendencies to large disintegration, and in no small degree even maintain the general purity of the text. These were, first, publicity and free competition in the recitations; secondly, the care of the State for a standing national treasure; thirdly and most of all, the internal force, the hold upon the hearts and minds of men, by which the poems had vindicated their own existence before regular polity existed, and were handed down as a singular example of triumph over external difficulties, and of what is termed “the survival of the fittest.” The force of this observation is enhanced when we remember, that neither poem is historically, though each is ideally, complete. The *Odyssey* does not bring us to the demise of Odusseus; and the *Iliad* neither begins nor ends the Siege of Troy.

9. **Fluctuations of Taste.**—However valuable the means, then, that were employed for the conservation of the works, it does not follow that the estimation of them was altogether exempt from the action of change in taste, probably brought about by change in manners. The Athenian drama of the classical age is by no means in strict conformity with the Homeric models, when it touches upon Troic events and characters; possibly because the poems did not give to Athens what she then thought her just place among the Greeks. More general causes may also have acted, as in the cases of the other greatest poets of the

attentive readers. Such are the structure of the plots, the delineation of characters, their sustained consistency, the unity and individuality of style. And these, even alone, may, I hope, be generally sufficient to obtain a tolerably assured verdict on the main issues.

### CHAPTER III.

#### HISTORY.

1. **Homeric Genealogies: their Use.**—Of chronology, the ordinary framework of history, in which the succession of its events is adjusted, Homer knows nothing. He has, however, a rude substitute for its exact measurements, in reckonings of the generations of men. Thus he describes the age of Nestor, in the *Iliad*, by saying he had passed through two generations of men, and was ruling amidst the third. His genealogies therefore, being, as they are, both numerous and remarkably accordant, supply us with a kind of historical scale, and by means of it a rough outline of what was, for him, the fore-time may be drawn.

2. **Their Nature and Length.**—The longest of these genealogies run up to a god as the first ancestor. They give the descents of princes; and they appear to indicate the first beginnings of political society, capable of action outwards, and distinct from mere village-communities. This original paternity of the gods corresponds, like so much else in Homer, with the usages of Egypt, which reckoned its earliest dynasties as dynasties of gods, and still held kings to be quasi-divine. One Homeric genealogy exceeds all the rest in its length. It is that of Dardanos. Hector, who represents the manhood of his epoch, is the seventh of his line, which sprang immediately from Zeus. It is noteworthy that this race, the oldest known to Homer, is also the most easterly, and there-

fore the nearest to the seat, from whence proceeded the first migrations westward. It appears to indicate a period of about two hundred years before the War, marking the date at which a certain race had arrived as upon the north-eastern coast of the Ægean Sea. In Greece, the earliest line we hear of is that of Aiolos. Sarpedon and Glaukos are in the sixth generation of that line. It is god-born; and the sire is evidently Poseidon. Amphimachos, an Elian commander, is the fifth in the line of Azeus, who is the highest human ancestor named. Poseidon is expressly named as the father of the line. Antilochos and his brothers are of the fifth generation in the line of Salmoneus, whose origin is probably from Poseidon. Aretè, Queen of Scheriè, is also of the fifth, in the line of Eurumedon. There is little doubt that Poseidon is to be regarded as here supplying the divine paternity, but he also intervenes in the line itself, and is the queen's great-grandfather. This is not to be regarded, however, as a Greek genealogy.

3. **Their Ethnological Value.**—These connections with a god as ancestor are not simply mythological, but ethnical, and are among the best threads of guidance upwards to the cradle of Hellenic history; and this in various ways. For example, in the Dardanian line, we learn expressly that the epoch of god-parentage is also that of the first civic settlement. It is almost certainly the same in Greece, where traditional record seems to begin with it: as with Pelops in the line of Agamemnon, and with Aiakos in the line of Achilles. These lines are about two generations shorter than the group before cited. Before these lines, there is nothing Achaian or Hellenic: they may be taken as denoting the fountain-head of the race, placed less than a century before the War of Troy.

4. **The immediately pre-Achaian Period.**—But it is evident that there was a pre-Achaian history of the peninsula, and Homer has carefully marked the

distinction by the use of race-names. The Hellenic name had not passed its first infancy at the epoch of the poems. The Achaian name, which was not only current, but dominant, is never used for facts more than two generations old. The father of Eurustheus reigned not over Achaians, but Argeians. This name we find in the poems, where it does not mean the local inhabitants of Argolis, to signify principally the commonalty.

5. **Emergence of the Achaian Name, and its Disappearance.**—The Achaians came from the north. They imprinted indeed their name on the Morea, but Homer shows them to us as an Hellenic race in Thessaly, and close to the head-quarters of original Hellenism at the ancient sanctuary of Dodona; the Murmidones, he says, were Hellenes, and were also Achaians. They came as a race, and everywhere took the lead, but they blended with the mass of the population. After the Dorian conquest, this appellation entirely lost its national character, and, as a purely local phrase, indicated only the inhabitants of the south coast of the Corinthian gulf. Homer tells us in terms that the Murmidon Achaians were Hellenes. This wider Hellenic name, not having been specially associated with the Achaian predominance, survived the great military and social revolution. It became classical; and, though superseded for a length of time through the overpowering influence of Roman sway, it is now again the national and European name of the inhabitants of Hellas.

6. **Connection of the pre-Achaian Period with Egypt.**—In the pre-Achaian period of about two generations, the tract afterwards named Bœotia was inhabited by a race of immigrants, called by Homer Kadmeians, who founded Thebes. This name, as well as other signs, connect them with the Theban or second Empire of Egypt; which, besides appropriating much of western Asia, made use of the Phœnician



navigators as its maritime arm, and established a sovereignty, as sovereignty was then understood, in Greece and the islands. This we learn from other sources. But it is in accordance with all the indications of the Homeric text. Indeed, those indications are hard to explain, except by accepting the testimony of the Egyptian monuments. Besides the Kadmeian link of connection, we find from the genealogies, various families living in the Greek peninsula, who had appeared there at a particular time ; who had too, as in the case of King Proitos, connections abroad, and who exercised sway without belonging either to the stock of previous inhabitants, or to any large body of colonists. The name of Aiolos, which heads more genealogies than one, is placed in manifestly foreign and southern association by the use of it in the *Odyssey* for the ruler of the distant island Aioliè. The Danaan name is expressly connected with the Phœnician coast and the paternity of Zeus. The name Aiolos, and others which have been referred to, attach themselves to Poseidon. Him we are on every ground to regard as an imported deity, not indigenous like Zeus. He comes over sea from the southern region.<sup>1</sup> These lines, it is to be noted, appear as the lines of single families. They are in no sense tribal. They are just what they would have been if they had sprung from the delegated governors who in these parts, remote from the centre of power, represented the Egyptian Empire. We know from other sources, that it very soon lost the power it had thus established ; and we see from Homer that, at the time of the War, all administrative connection with it had ceased.

7. **Period before that Connection.**—But among whom came these officers, if such they were, and, whatever they may have been, over whom did they rule? Doubtless over a people of sufficiently

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, p. 97.

settled life to be worth ruling over. While tradition gives us the widespread name of the Pelasgoi, covering probably many other local names, as that of the earliest settled inhabitants of the peninsula, Homer calls Thessaly, which had not like the Morea been overshadowed by a great Achaian dynasty, Pelasgic Argos; and, on the three occasions on which he mentions the race, he always gives to them a special epithet of honour. Considering the singular significance of his system of epithets, and their total want of marked qualities at the period of the War, it is difficult to account for this on any ground, except it be that they had a title to veneration as the ancient possessors of the soil, and the first founders of social life in the peninsula.

8. **Marked by Nature-Worship.**—But apart from the mere use of the name, we hear a stronger proof of the existence of a pre-Hellenic, though by no means alien population, from the presence of a peculiar element in the mythology: a strong pervading ingredient of Nature-worship, greatly out of keeping with the anthropomorphism, or, as I would rather call it, theanthropism, of the Olympian system, and manifestly older. We have abundant traces in Homer of the displaced dynasties of gods, whose lineage Hesiod has set forth for us, and who can only have had for their worshippers the population termed Pelasgian.

9. **Pelasgian, Phœnician, and Achaian Periods.**—Let us sum up what has been said. We seem then to be introduced to the Greek peninsula and islands when they were inhabited by communities, but not yet in States; and were at that stage of development which has hardy and peaceful agriculture for its only or main art of life. Over these tracts, far-aiming Egyptian power casts its net, and in establishing its sway it makes known to them, through her agents, the useful arts in general, of which Egypt and the

East were already in possession. As the route between them is maritime, and as her maritime agents are supplied by Phœnicia, it is with the Phœnician name that these arts are, in the mind of Greece, associated. When Egypt ceases to advance, she recedes; and it is naturally where the tie is weakest and least direct that self-government is first recovered; so that those, who had been the agents of a foreign power, become petty princes in the land. Meanwhile a vigorous tribe, of the same ethnical family as the old inhabitants, spreads itself from the north, and carrying with it the Achaian name, grows to be the governing and guiding power of the peninsula and its islands. This is an outline suggested by probable evidence; but it does not, in the present state of our knowledge, lay claim to certainty.

10. **Formation of a National Life.**—Now has come the time for those efforts at common action, whereby that marvellous product, the Greek nation, was to be formed. They seem at first to have taken the shape of a reaction; and among them those which aim at the rejection of foreign sway are perhaps the noblest. The district around Thebes was the only district held by a community of foreigners; and it is not difficult to trace, in the Homeric legend of the war against Thebes, the marks of a raid upon the stranger. There is also a legend in the *Odyssey* of a predatory expedition to Egypt, which probably in like manner indicates a movement of retaliation. The slight references in the poems to the voyage of the ship *Argo*, "watched by all with interest," and favoured by Hera, the deity most peculiarly national, fully agree with the suggestion that this attack on the outlying Egyptian settlement of Colchis (such it is known to have been) was a blow struck in the same sense, and with the sagacious choice, in all likelihood, of the point that was deemed the weakest.

## 11. The Pelopid and Dardan Families.—

But the curtain is about to rise upon greater events than these. The Pelopid family now rules by a primacy or suzerainty in Greece "over all Argos and the groups of islands" (*Il.* ii. 102). It is the head of Achaian power; yet it is not without foreign associations. The sceptre it had for a symbol was the special gift of Zeus. But it was a work of art made for him by Hephaistos, the metal-working god, and all high metallurgy was at this epoch foreign. The "whereabouts" of Pelops, the first ancestor, is kept obscure. This suggests his being a foreigner, for Homer never directly assigns to a foreign origin anything that has become naturalised in Greece, even if by indirect means the secret may sometimes be penetrated. There were relations too, and points of resemblance between the Pelopid and the Dardan kings. The elder branch in Greece bore the ancient and peculiar title of *anax andrōn*, lord of men, in common with a very few old houses, apparently of an extraction remotely foreign. The branch of Anchises, probably also senior, and ruling at the certainly senior seat of Dardania, while Priam held the younger, though wealthier Ilion, bore the same title. Echebolos, a son of Anchises, dwelt in Greece; Paris, the son of Priam, visited Menelaos, enjoyed his hospitality, and thus had the opportunity of carrying off to Troy his wife, the beautiful Helen.

12. Motives of the Trojan War.—Resentment for a base and cruel wrong, the lust of booty from a city famous for its wealth, and ambition to consolidate by a great national effort the power of the dynasty, alike impelled the Pelopids to undertake the War of Troy. It seems not easy to understand how the other chiefs of Greece could be organised for so great an undertaking, in which they had so slight an interest. No wonder that the business of combining them should have been a great business. Greed would have its influence; but there was more in it than greed.

There was the political instinct of union, the charm and fascination of adventure, the irrepressible force of daring in an energetic people, with ardour not yet tamed by experience, growing to be dimly but truly conscious of its destiny, and eager to reap the first-fruits of its fame. They tried first, if we may believe the poet, a mission to demand the restoration of Helen, and of the property which Paris had not forgotten to steal along with her. The robber and adulterer did not scruple to bring about a refusal by bribery in Troy. So began the expedition. It may have done much to make the nation. But the poet, who sang of it, did yet more.

13. **The Question as to its Historical Character.**—I do not here enter upon the truth of the Trojan war as history, though I see no reason to doubt it; and it appears to derive very powerful, if indirect support from recent discoveries, especially those of Dr. Schliemann at Hissarlik and *Mukenai*. But we have to deal with it in the main as poetry. Moreover, the historical character of the poems, in the inner sense of the term, is independent of what may be called their technical or formal truth. Even if the facts were freely exaggerated, or otherwise altered for the purpose of poetical effect, nay, even if invented for that purpose, the poems might still be historical in the most material respects. All those glimpses of the prior and general history of the race, which they permit rather than promise, might still be correct to the letter. The portraiture of religion, manners, institutions, arts, might be entirely trustworthy. The psychology of the poems in its largest sense might be absolutely true: the state and scale of the human mind, thought, language, and character, might be the same; just as, in the Carolingian and Arthurian romance, we never regard the truth of the manners as dependent upon the truth of the facts; and indeed in these, especially in the last-named, it is

difficult to connect the two. In the case of Homer, on the other hand, it is rather difficult to sever them. Even the Dorian Revolution, in its terrible and destructive sweep, bears an indirect witness to the fidelity of Homer. The political and social disorganisation, for which the *Iliad* prepares us by the prolonged absence of the princes and mightiest men, and which the *Odyssey* depicts in the dominions of a particular chief, are the very causes which, most of all in a young society, would effectually pave the way for a barbarising, reactionary change such as we recognise in that Revolution.

## CHAPTER IV.

### COSMOLOGY.

1. **Earth the Centre of the System.**—This earth was for the poet, as it continued to be for the civilised world through many more than two thousand years after his time, the solid centre of the Kosmos or universe, that is to say the ordered aggregate of material things; a word unknown to him, like the name by which he passes, but needful to enable us to deal with his ideas in this department as a whole.

2. **Habitable Space.** *A. Olumpos.*—His division of habitable space was fourfold:—First, the summit and upper regions of Mount Olumpos were poetically conceived as of an indefinite height, wholly beyond the reach of human eye or foot, enlarged by a like process into ample dimensions, and associated with the higher aërial region (*aither*), as the one proper for celestial movement. Here dwelt the gods in palaces, the main one certainly and the rest probably, burnished bright with copper, and constructed for them by Hephaistos, the artificer of the order, and the source and type of metallic art for men.

3. *B. The Earth-surface and solid.*—The earth-surface, and the bosom of this great teeming mother, as far as it was accessible to human toil, were given for the residence and use of the living tenants. But in the farthest tract west, or north of west, was thought to lie a happy region ever fertile, clear in atmosphere, unvexed with storms, to which at death certain preferred souls would be sent by the Immortals.

It has been thought that Homer conceived of the earth as a plane surface. But he speaks of the broad back of the sea ; and the sea, to an acute organ, does not suggest a plane. It is the sea alone which conveys to the view the notion of the curvature of the globe. His eye, in watching ships or coast elevations, had probably convinced him of the curvature on all sides of the earth's surface, which is well represented by the round shield. This figure, as derived from the human back, and more especially from the backs of animals, is appropriate to the description of a broad or large curvature, but not to what is absolutely flat. It is applied to hills ; but never to a plane surface.

4. *C. Hades.*—*a.* But the clearest proof that Homer did not conceive the earth to be flat is to be drawn from combining together the following particulars. He believed Hades, the place of the dead, to be underneath our feet, and phrases signifying downward movement into this region are habitual with him. The river Peneios was a branch or arm of Styx ; and therefore communicated with it underground. A suppliant, in addressing the god Aidoneus, embraces the ground. Tartaros, as far below Hades as the heaven stands from the earth, is in the deepest cleft or hollow of the "ground."

*b.* Yet there is nowhere a reference to any passage through the solid ground ; and, on the contrary, both Odusseus, in his visit to the Under-world, and the spirits of the Suitors also, are distinctly represented as travelling to it along the surface. At the farthest

point of this, Odusseus has to navigate, for a distance not measured, the great earth-surrounding river Okeanos ; and, on the farther side of the stream, he enters the realm of Aides and Persephonè.

c. In the sky, which Homer may have thought to be a solid, the moon and stars perform their revolutions, and the Sun travels daily from the eastern to the western horizon. Finding his way onward from his resting-place, he is again ready in the morning for his work. But he appears to pass over the tract of Hades, for he threatens the Olympian Assembly that, unless they duly support his dignity, he will cease shining for them, and will pour his light upon the region of the dead.

5. *D. Tartaros.*—The fourth division of the Kosmos is altogether special and preternatural. It is called Tartaros. Man has no concern with it ; even criminals of our race are punished in the less profound Under-world. It is “in the lowest deep a lower deep,” reserved for the wicked and rebellious Immortals ; it is the counterpart of heaven, standing to the Under-earth as the heaven stands to the Upper or inhabited world-surface.

6. *Poetical Licence.*—The poet had not the means, and probably did not care, to apply an exact mensuration to conceptions lying beyond the bounds of sense and experience, in the case either of his Heaven or his Under-world. Yet we are compelled by the foregoing facts to assume that in his mind he vaguely folded the earth-surface into a solid, and gave it a mouth or aperture beneath. This supposition is favoured by the fact that the Chaldæan cosmologists conceived the earth to be shaped spherically like an orange, but with a part sliced off the top, the flat side representing the entrance into Hades.

7. *Figure of the Earth-surface.*—As to the superficial form of the earth, we have a guide to the ideas of Homer in the famous account of the Shield



of Achilles, with its various compartments. Round the whole runs the river Okeanos. This arrangement shows that he gave to the earth-surface the form of a shield. But he has shields which are oblong and compared to a tower, as that of Aias; and also shields which are circular, and compared to the moon. Of these two forms, it does not seem quite certain which he meant to suggest. It has been common to suppose it was the round form. This best lends itself to the arrangement probably signified for the compartments, with the earth and celestial bodies in the centre; and also to the expression at the close about the mighty ocean-river flowing round about the shield.

#### 8. Conventional and Mythological Division.

—Such, as far as it can be made out, is the true physical cosmology on which the poems are based. They have however another conventional or mythological scheme, according to which the four divisions are: 1. Heaven, or the upper region, both of *aither*, or clear air, and of *aēr*, cloud or vapour. This is given to Zeus by lot. 2. Sea, given in like manner to Poseidon. 3. Hades, the third share, falls to Aïdoneus. 4. The Earth, including Olumpos, is common ground for all.

## CHAPTER V.

### GEOGRAPHY.

1. Homer's Means of Knowledge in Geography.—In order to estimate the geography of Homer, that is to say his knowledge of the several configurations upon the surface of the earth, the first requisite is to remember that, while we draw from maps accurately measured, he drew only from his own experience, and from oral report. Again, the knowledge conveyed by mere experience to an individual in topography, which is a small fragment, as it

were, broken off from geography, may be tolerably complete; but, as far as it is on a larger scale, must be vague. Distances were only measured by the eye, and by time in traversing them. The bearings of land and sea were taken with reference to the points of the compass, which he knew only in connection with the sun, rising and setting at given points, and with four winds. Between these he divided the entire circle of the horizon; so that the winds of Homer are not mere indications of points but cover large arcs. They are

1. Boreas, from N. to E. but leaning to N.
2. Zephuros, from N. to W. but leaning to W.
3. Euros, from E. to S. but leaning to E.
4. Notos, from W. to S. but leaning to S.

2. **Countries apprehended by Phœnician Report.**—Again, as to what he knew by report. Where the region was one frequented by his countrymen, he would have the opportunity of correcting error by various and repeated information. Beyond the sphere of Hellenic experience, he depended upon foreigners, that is to say, upon the great navigators of the day, called Phœnicians. The regions made known by them may be recognised by these two marks—first they are the seat of the marvellous; secondly, he (save once) never defines at all the sea-distances between two of them, but only between some one of them and some point of the Hellenic lands, to which he applies his usual measure of so many days' voyage with a favourable wind. These two spheres, of Hellenic and Phœnician experience respectively, it may be convenient to call by the names of the Inner and the Outer Geography. There is also a border-land between them, embracing especially the coasts and countries of the South-east Mediterranean, in which Menelaos travels, and which the poet treats as lands of fact, not of fiction. As to the hearsay derived from the Phœnicians, we should bear in mind that early

navigators exaggerate without fear, both to enhance the interest of their tales, and to deter inquirers from trespassing on the ground where they drive a profitable business; yet so that some features of the original can commonly be traced in the caricature.

3. **Countries Known by Experience.**—In two cases alone, those of Ithaca and of the Trojan Plain, has Homer given us indications so minute as to be properly topographical; but he had a fair general acquaintance with the island group in the north-east of the Archipelago. The only country of which he shows a passable geographical knowledge is continental Greece, including Thessaly on the east as far as Mount Pindos, but not extending on the west beyond Aitolia; and including also one or two of the islands. His description is here thickly studded with towns, inland as well as on the coast. Among the Boiotoi alone we have twenty-seven, with a rich abundance of visible characteristics; such as well-built, wealthy, beautiful, lofty.

There are no tracts to the west of Greece which we can bring within the Inner Geography; nor has the poet a single trustworthy trace of the Italian peninsula. On the north, his account of Scheriè seems to be based upon the reports of navigators about Corfu; but he evidently places it, on his brain-map, at a point much beyond the actual distance. Moreover, although he enumerates the names of certain tribes beyond the Balkans, he looks upon Pieria, immediately contiguous to Thessaly, as the limit of the land northwards, and the great northern and north-eastern mass of Europe was taken by him to be sea. He knew generally the position of the Bosporos, and had a certain amount of information on the northern, as well as on the western, coast of Asia Minor. But, in the Trojan Catalogue of the Second *Iliad*, Miletos is the only town mentioned upon the whole length of these coasts: the

mountains he names are coast mountains, and there is not a single passage indicating knowledge of the interior. Beyond Lycia he gives no particulars; but knows the general position of Phœnicia, with Sidon, of Egypt, and of a limited tract to the westward, which he terms Libya. All this country would appear to form the extreme limit of even rare Greek visits, and, in a qualified sense only, to belong to the Inner Geography, or land of fact.

4. **The Outer Geography, Eastwards.**—The Outer Geography, or wonderland, has for its exterior boundary the great river Okeanos, a noble conception, in everlasting flux and reflux, roundabout the territory given to living man. On its farther bank lies the entrance to the Under-world; and the passage, which connects the sea (*Thalassa*, or *Pontos*) with Okeanos, lies in the east: “where are the abodes of the morning-goddess, and the risings of the sun” (*Od.* xii. 3). Here, however, he makes his hero confess that he is wholly out of his bearings, and cannot well say where the sun is to set or rise (*Od.* x. 139). This bewildered state of mind may be reasonably explained. The whole northern region, of sea as he supposed it, from west to east, was known to him only by Phœnician reports. One of these told him of a Kimmerian land deprived perpetually of sun or daylight. Another of a land, also in the north, where a man, who could dispense with sleep, might earn double wages, as there was hardly any night. He probably had the first account from some sailor who had visited the northern latitudes in summer; and the second from one who had done the like in winter. They were at once true, and for him irreconcilable. So he assigned the one tale to a northern country (Kimmeriè) on the ocean-mouth eastwards, near the island of Kirkè, and the other to the land of the Lais-trugones westwards but also northern, and lying at some days distance from Aioliè; but was compelled,

by the ostensible contradiction, to throw his latitudes into something like purposed confusion.

5. **Thence Round by North and West.**—While these lands, and the island of Kalupso, seem to be his farthest northward points, we have also the island called Aioliè, from which a *Zephyros* brought him in ten days sailing within sight of Ithaca. This therefore lay between the west, and the north-west. It was, in the poet's mind, a clear open sea all the way. In the west, also, we find the Islands of the Blest, to which Menelaos has a promise of translation on his death. We then, moving southwards, come to the north coast of Africa, on which Mr. Brown has shown that we ought to place the land of the Kuklopes. After them, as we move eastwards, we reach the Lotos-Eaters. The next tract is Libya, which is inhabited by men of no unusual stamp: and at this point we have left the sphere of the Outer-world. From hence round to the Black Sea, passing east and northward, all is at least partially known: and again we are in the waters of Aiaïè, Kirkè's isle, where we entered the zone of the Outer Geography.

6. **The Inner Geography.**—The home, or Inner Geography of Homer, is limited, at the most, to the Greek Peninsula, with a few neighbouring islands, and to the line of coast which may be followed by the eye from Aitolia to the Dardanelles, and from about Sinopè to a point a little beyond Egypt to the west.

7. **Relation of the Two.**—In the outer zone, considered as a whole, we find no trace of local configuration as it actually exists; but particular traits of spots and regions are put together by the poet in his brain, and set down upon an imagined earth-surface as he best can. Unhappily many writers have insisted upon forcing the poetical unity of his brain-chart, not indeed into conformity, but into general and systematic relation to the geographical

realities, with the necessary result of breaking up the first, and yet establishing no clear or coherent connection with the second.

8. **Route of Odusseus.**—According to the view here given, the voyage of Odusseus first goes (in the reverse order to that of the outline just given) southward as far as Africa; then westward along the African coast; then northwards to Aiolie. From hence still further north, first in the west, then in the east, where day and night each in turn cover the entire circle of the twenty-four hours. From the eastward part of these regions, he visits the Under-world. He is then directed homewards by a narrow passage, near the Bosphoros, and the route of the ship Argo. He reaches accordingly Thrinakiè, the island of the Sun, and seemingly a transcript, as to form, of Sicily; but transplanted eastwards by the poet, probably from his associating together the reports of the Strait of Messina and what he had learned of the Bosphoros. Next, a tempest, beginning from (*notos*) the southwest, drives him back northwards through the narrows; he arrives at Ogugiè, the island of Kalupso, the central point of the unbounded sea. From thence a passage of more than seventeen days finally brings him to Scheriè, on the border of the known geographical sphere. But, according to the methods of interpretation which have been principally in vogue, the movements of Odusseus never embraced the east and north at all, and did not reach westwards beyond Sicily, the Lipari Islands, and the coast about Naples.

9. **Arrangement of the Catalogues.**—In the Achaian Catalogue, the poet arranges the different territories, members of the Greek unity, in the relative positions known to the historic times. At least this is true as to Southern and Middle Greece, with the Greek islands: it is more difficult to trace his Thessalian divisions, where the political divisions are less

sharply marked. He places all in contiguous groups, evidently by way of context, to assist the memory : and he appears to pursue a similar plan in the Trojan Catalogue. Even in Greece, his ideas of internal distances can be but vaguely inferred : his sea distances about the Archipelago, and as far as Egypt, are better marked.

10. **Topography of Ithaca.**—In Ithaca there is no cause to impeach his topography as far as it can be traced ; except that, mentioning its two great eminences, he gives to Mount Neritos, the southern one, a preference which it does not deserve, the two heights being nearly equal : and the greatest diameter or axis of the island is also inclined too much to the westward. Its harbour is described with pointed correctness, as is its general form, and the lower elevation of the tract towards the north. The spot now called Polis agrees with all his indications of the capital, in which the Suitors lived dissolutely, and where Odusseus had held his paternal reign. There is no other island, to which his descriptions could be made over.

11. **Topography of the Trojan Plain.**—Equally is this true of the plain in Troas, to which he has given an immortality of fame. Here the operations of two armies require a topography both comprehensive and minute. We have the limiting lines of Ida and the sea, the Scamandrian plain, near the River Scamandros, forming the north and west portion of the plain of Troy ; the Ileian plain, lying south and perhaps east from the city ; the plain mentioned generally, and the roll or shelf (*throsmos*) upon it ; the junction of the rivers Simoeis and Scamander, and yet their two separate mouths ; the ford which crosses the Xanthos. Then there is the line of ships along the shore from east to west, with the quarters of Aias and Achilles, perhaps as the strongest among the chiefs, at the two extremities.

12. **Position and Notes of the City.**—An examination of the position taken by Arès (xx. 48-53) when the Theomachy approaches, tends to show that the city was near the Simoeis. This corresponds with the belief suggested by the discoveries of Schliemann, that the hill of Hissarlik was the site of Troy. If this were the site, the movements of the chiefs and armies between the town and camp come within limits locally admissible. We have then the Skaian gates of the town, towards the shore, and the Dardanian towards the old mother-city on the roots of Ida. Near the Skaian entry is the *phēgos*, believed to be a kind of oak : near the city are also the wild fig-tree ; the tomb of king Ilos its founder, a point convenient for watch outwards ; and a waggon-road, so called probably because the lighter chariot was more free in its range over uneven ground. There is also the mound of Aisuetes northwards, and the hillock Batieia to the south. The interior of the city receives marks of individuality in the great Tower upon the wall ; the palaces of Priam, Paris, and Hector ; the temples of Apollo and Athenè on the summit.

13. **Identification and Accuracy.**—The identification of these descriptions with the country is undeniable. The most serious question raised with respect to their accuracy and coherency appears to be that suggested by the separate mouths of rivers which have by joining become one. It seems possible, however, that this junction was by a bed dry in summer, but filled at other seasons by the floods. This would well allow the separate mouths ; and it is in some degree supported by the invitation of Scamandros to his brother Simoeis in the Twenty-first Book to join him for the purpose of overwhelming the fatal Achilles with their united waters.



## CHAPTER VI.

## MYTHOLOGY; OR, THE OLYMPIAN SYSTEM.

I. **Marked Features of the Scheme.**—A great variety of causes invest the Homeric mythology, which I have called the Olympian system, with an extraordinary interest. One among these is the strong, subtle, and highly dramatic conception of many of the personages. Another is their sympathy and communion with the action of the poems throughout. A third is the principle of anthropophuism, to which they are generally made to conform, and through which they reflect the image of a peculiar magnified humanity on a very grand scale. Fourthly, the composite nature of the system, and the relations of its various members to various portions of the human family, exhibit to us the Greek or Achaian nation in process of construction through manifold influences and admixtures, and supply us with a key to much of the ethnology of the poems and the time. Fifthly, the idea of the Olympian system is closely associated with the progress and consummation of Greek Art. Sixthly, in this splendid work of Art, for such it is itself, we trace the real elements of worship and of an ethical system, deriving its strength from obligations to an unseen Power; to a plurality, which is also to a great extent an unity, and which rules the world. Lastly, while some portions of the scheme point us towards an earlier and also a ruder state, and others in the direction of a later and corrupt civilisation, a third portion reveals a primitive basis of monotheism, and ideas in connection with it, which seem to defy explanation, except when we compare them with the most ancient of the Hebrew traditions.

2. **The Zeus of Homer.**—As respects the drawing of character, I would select from the poems of Homer, as examples, his Zeus, his Hera, his Athenè, his Thetis, and his Iris. In the conception of Zeus, we find the most varied assemblage of elements. He combines, more than any other deity, the human and the theistic quality; and in his character as a god exhibits the profound moral attributes of an original monotheism. At one time he is the ideal Providence, upholding the order and the whole frame of things. At another, he is the civil governor in the skies, curbing and controuling with a true political spirit the newly-compacted society of gods over whom he rules. Here he often closely resembles Agamemnon; but by and bye he will touch also upon Falstaff. We owe to him by etymology the word jovial; and it is truly descriptive of his character on its human side. As the very size and immeasurable waist of Falstaff have to do with the character of his mind, so largeness in all things is an unfailing characteristic of Zeus. His intrigues are unbounded. His roguish joy in witnessing from Ida the struggles of an Achaian with a Trojan soldiery, may call up the recollection of the rich humour of Shakespeare's knight on the peppering of his recruits. But the same sentiment rises out of this miniature to a higher scale and level, when he comes to revel in that fierce encounter of the gods, which made Aidoneus, king below, shudder and bound from off his throne, lest the crust of earth itself should break beneath their strokes and movements, and the ever-unseen realm at length yawn visibly before mortals and immortals too. "Go ye," he says to them (xx. 22) with a strange mixture of merriment and malice, "go ye among the Achaians and the Trojans; I bide here in the bosom of Olumpus, to delight my soul as I look on." And again (xxi. 389), "His soul laughed within him, as he beheld the gods falling to in battle."

Yet, behind the complex and ever-active theotechnic machinery of the poem, with its thundering wheels and mythological *paraphernalia*, there is still the presence and operation of an august personage, who has regard to piety wherever it is found; "Even in their perishing, I care for them" (xx. 21); and who works incessantly, effectively, and without noise for the permanent ends of justice among men, which were signally wrought out by the punishment and fall of guilty Troy. That figure is no other than Zeus in his higher capacity. He loved Troy for its abundant sacrifices; but his higher character forbade his acting to avert its doom. The same ideas operate in the *Odyssey*, where (except to avenge a high profanation offered to the god Helios) he never intervenes at all until a few lines before the close. In the *Iliad* mainly, in the *Odyssey* entirely, his will is worked out by other divine agents, themselves exercising their personal freedom, but bringing about the purposes of a counsel higher and larger than their own. This counsel has its background and its ultimate root in pure deity, and for pure deity Zeus is often a synonym in Homer.

3. **His Grandeur.**—Wherever he intervenes, even though outwitted or over-persuaded on the point immediately at issue, it is invariably with grandeur. Won by Thetis, he accords to her only a symbol in the nod which shakes Olumpos, and keeps his counsel to himself. Circumvented and enticed by Hera, his indulgence is veiled in a cloud of golden beauty, to which Earth answers by a burst of fresh herbage and choice flowers. He indicates his great decrees on the issues of battle by exhibiting his balances in the skies.

4. **The Prayer of Achilles.**—Besides the solemn but shadowy figure, visible behind the general theurgy of the poems, we have a more distinct manifestation in a solemn prayer, uttered by Achilles at the critical moment, when he is sending forth his loved

Patroclus to the war. This prayer is of a kind rare in the poems, in which a human being asks anything on behalf of another human being, and not simply for himself. Though Hera and Athenè had been the deities, who interposed to prevent his going to violence with Agamemnon in the first Book, he does not pray to either of these, but to the Supreme. The god is addressed as the Zeus of Dodona, the Pelasgic Zeus of the old inhabitants; but having also the Helioi for his ministers, sires of the Hellenic race. Moreover, they are represented as serving him, not as a priestly caste with sacrifices, but as *hupophetai*, interpreters and declarers of his will. Thus he is signified as the god of wide power, the god of no single race, the god that looks for obedience, and towards whom we have the ties of moral obligation. In this prayer there is in truth a noteworthy absence of what may be termed pagan elements, and a marked exhibition of the idea of supreme and governing godhead.

5. **The Athenè of Homer.**—Less diversified in ingredients, but as to some points even more interesting, is the wonderful character of Athenè, which I at once present, because, while Hera is mythologically nearer to Zeus, his great daughter is nearer to him in the intellectual and spiritual order. As the anthropomorphic tracings are deepest upon the Zeus of Homer, so they are the least legible upon his Athenè. She is a goddess, not a god; but she has nothing of sex except the gender, nothing of the woman except the form, sublimated and made awful with fire (*glaukōpis*) flashing from the eye. She is a true impersonation of the *logos* or reason; not of abstract intuitions, but of an operative understanding, which never errs in fitting means to ends. While Zeus has the cares and weight of a general sovereignty, and wakes as the rest both of gods and men are sleeping, Athenè has a narrower sphere, but is more completely mistress in it;

shows no sign of being oppressed by her responsibilities, and never on any single occasion fails to attain her aim.

6. **Her Relation to Morality.**—Though she works in concurrence with general justice, and with the providential order, she is certainly in morals no purist, for she claims an unrivalled excellence in wile and stratagem. From the licentious elements, on the other hand, which Syrian and other Eastern communications were already forcing into the Olympian system, her nature is wholly abhorrent. So much so, that through the long ages of its progressive corruption she remains the *Virgo intemerata*, wholly untainted by it. The magnificent intellectual power, of which she is the representative, is neither degraded at any point by appetite, nor ever disturbed by passion. Sleepless and active as the merest political partisan, she is as calm as if she dwelt in the stillness of an Epicurean heaven. Most other gods, and even Zeus himself, may be greedy of sacrifice, its fume and flavour: but neither the savoury reek from earth, nor the cup of ambrosia at Olympian banquets, are ever associated with her individually as enjoying them. She moves upon an orbit of mind alone: and, whatever may have been elsewhere or before, neither in Homer, nor in the after-time, is she ever connected with a Nature-Power. Indeed, she is scarcely ever described by epithets of personal beauty. Homer has kept carefully in the background the legend of the original offence which was given by Paris to Athenè and to Hera, in awarding the prize of beauty to Aphrodite. He makes but one allusion to it, near the close of the *Iliad*. It was a Troic legend, and did not well assort with the nobleness of the picture, by which he meant to present Athenè to his countrymen. Whether her name represents the dawn in an Eastern tongue, or is inverted from the Neith of Egypt, or what else, matters little. It is not unlikely that the Apollo of

Homer's time was associated, in the religion of Troas, with the Sun ; but in the Olympian system the connection is carefully shut out by giving to the Sun a well-marked separate individuality. That system is not so exclusively Greek, as to exclude exotic personages ; but every deity, that has a ruling force within the circle of Achaian life, is strictly cast by Homer in the mould of Achaian ideas. Nowhere outside herself has she contact with material nature : she is, though in bodily form, a mental organism.

7. Her eminently Practical Character.—

But we must beware of viewing her through the rather opaque veil of the Roman and later mythology, which, recognising her as a goddess of thought, overlooks the fact that she is above all things the goddess of action. As the working reason, she moulds daily practice : influences the minds of men ; nay, darkens them penally, by obduracy of heart, in the case of the guilty Suitors of the *Odyssey*, even as in Scripture God, we are told, hardened the heart of Pharaoh. She, and she alone of the whole Olympian Court, stands in such close, inward, personal relations to the soul and spirit of the individual man, as even to recall the ideas which form the main basis of the Hebrew Psalter.

8. Her Diversified Attributes : War.—But besides being, in a peculiar and enlarged sense, the goddess of conduct, she has three other great functions : she is the goddess of War, the goddess of industrial production, and the goddess of Polity.

In the first of these three capacities she appears on the Shield of Achilles, together with Arès ; and they are the heads of the rival armies. But her superiority to him in war is unquestionable : she gives that force to the spear of Diomed which pierces his divine flesh, and sends him howling to Olumpos : she lays him prostrate with a mighty stone, when he stretches over seven (say) roods of land, his arms rattling around

him, and his hair begrimed with dust. When, with Hera, she descends in the fifth *Iliad* to assist the Greeks, she casts away her feminine mantle, puts on the tunic, assumes the gold-tasseled imperishable *aigis*, grasps the stout and mighty spear, and mounts into the chariot as the warrior-deity, while Hera is content to drive. But she represents intelligent war, Arès merely the brute work of destruction.

9. **Industry.**—Again, she is the goddess of industrial production. She instructed Penelopè, and the women of Scheriè; she inspired artificers, not only the shipbuilder and the carpenter, but the smith also, thus overlapping the province of Hephaistos, like that of Arès, by virtue of her higher place and origin. When the daughters of Pandareos receive their accomplishments from the several deities, she endows them with industrial skill. This function might perhaps be thought to belong more strictly to the attributes of the “beneficial” Hermes, who appears to be the god of gain and increase. Possibly he may be conceived as the mercantile deity of communication and exchange, she as the goddess of what we term manufacture. But his possession of the industrial attribute would, as we have seen from the case of Arès, be no obstruction to her paramount hold upon it.

10. **Polity.**—But, as the wisdom-goddess, she is also the state-goddess; for already, in the Greek idea, the State was the highest incorporation of wisdom. From this office are derived many of her epithets: people-leading, city-guarding, protectress, and the like. It is probably in this capacity, as defender of States, that she is invoked by the Trojans in their difficulty: for, in the immediate matter of the War, she was their active opponent. But State-care is only a branch of her vast and active power in the superintendence of men. And, as we have already seen her covering the mythological ground of Arès and Hephaistos, so

in her political attributes she takes up the higher aspect of the work, that pure mythology seems to assign to Themis. Her special relation to the city of Athens is indicated, but not developed.

11. **Her Rank and Birth.**—In the character of Athenè there is a very strong element of self-assertion. As a partisan of the Achaian cause, she incurs the displeasure and even the threats of Zeus: and she is exhibited as having joined in the grand conspiracy to dethrone him, which Thetis baffled. Her power is conceived of so highly, that it seems scarcely to bear a superior. Down to the time of Horace, she stood as really the second deity in estimation: and, in mere precedence, she sat by Zeus at the Olympian banquet, but probably on the left hand, with Hera on the right. In the later ages, we have the fully-developed legend that she sprang, adult and full-armed, from the head of Zeus. Of this legend some words of Homer (*Il.* v. 880) appear to convey the substance: and her exemption from the ordinary law of generation must indicate an extraordinary nearness to the chief of the gods.

12. **Source of the Homeric Conception.**—Even what has here been said must raise the question, From whence has a conception so powerful and lofty as that of the Homeric Athenè been obtained? Most of the Olympian gods, though they are all more or less costumed, so to speak, in divine attributes, yet seem to carry them as attached from without, and to want the highest basis for their character. In this sublime personage we begin to suspect that we are dealing with something profoundly divine. It would require an investigation wholly beyond the bounds of this work to show in what minute and comprehensive detail the character is developed throughout the poems. In general terms, her traits are an intellectual supremacy, a perfect exemption from infirmity, a complete detachment from the material world and the limitations of time and space, worship apparently universal,



the possession of the largest theistic attributes, unwearied activity in the work of a living Providence, uncontrolled dominion over nature and the mind.

13. **Relation to Apollo: Resemblances and Differences.**—Most of these traits she shares with Apollo, and with him only; and these two are, in certain recurring formulæ or stock-lines, associated, as enjoying superior and distinctive honour, sometimes alone, sometimes together with Zeus. The main differences are, that Apollo is less transcendent in intellect, and less active as a Providence. On the other hand, he has a special office as the minister of death; the gift of unsealing the future; and above all an unvarying conformity to the will of Zeus, to which he frequently receives a special commission to give effect. In her, there is a marked resemblance to the Hebrew tradition of the Logos. He rather corresponds with the Seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head, while the serpent bruised the woman's heel. So in Homer Apollo appears as the destroyer of rebels against deity, his mother Leto as having had violence offered her by one of them (Titus); and the god himself as signally honoured at Putho, the Delphoi of after-times, a place which tradition associates with the ancient worship of the serpent.

14. **The Hera of Homer.**—The character of Hera is less intellectual, less complex, less wakeful, less sublime; but more human, more within the manner of our understandings, than that of Athenè. As the sister and the wife of Zeus, we must understand her to enjoy precedence in Olumpos. But no more can she in importance, than in sublimity, be compared to the goddess of the flashing eye. They are however in no sense rivals, and they act in a singular harmony together.

15. **Reflected Prerogatives of Zeus.**—The grandest element in the character of Hera is her

power over nature. She conducted the ship of Jason through the perilous passage of the *Sumplegades*. She, and she only, after Zeus, commands the services of Iris, the messenger or angel-goddess. She orders the Sun to return to rest, that the long day, which was to be the last of Trojan prosperity, may reach its close; and he obeys. As she despatched Athenè to restrain the hand of Achilles in the great debate, and thus to save the life of Agamemnon, so with Athenè, when the King goes forth to fight, she thunders in his honour. It seems quite evident, that these prerogatives are as it were reflected upon her by her intimate association with Zeus: for they are not sustained by any other corresponding qualities of character or office.

16. **She is eminently National.**—She is in truth, as will have been seen from this enumeration, a great national divinity: and in Argolis, the seat of Pelopid power, she retained through after ages the paramount place, in that capacity, which the poems give her. As she stands in Homer, she is without doubt no part of an original or pure tradition, but is probably the Hellenised form into which certain other traditions, older or foreign, had been refined. Her name suggests a substantial identity with Era, as the Earth-goddess. We have accordingly no acknowledged earth-goddess in the poems: but a Gaia only, so withdrawn from action, and so dimly impersonated, as to be invisible, and wholly shut out from rivalry. Also a Demeter, who seems to have been the Earth-mother, or Mother earth, in some other old Pelasgic thearchy, and who is similarly thrown into the background. It is perhaps in accommodation to this arrangement that, in his mythological distribution of the parts of the universe, Homer has not allotted the earth to any one in particular, but leaves it to be used in common by each of the three divine brethren. Again, the epithet *boöpis*, or ox-eyed, constantly applied to Hera,

may signify a relation to the Egyptian Isis and the ox-head. From the uniform practice of Homer, we may be sure he would, in using any conceptions drawn from nature-worship or animal-worship, first pass them through the crucible of his imagination, to bring them into conformity with the anthropomorphic conditions imposed by his Olympian scheme. The strictly Achaian nationality of Hera, national as against the foreigner, and national as distinguished from Athenè's providential care of the individual, is by nothing more clearly shown, than by her entire disappearance from the action of the *Odyssey*.

17. **Lack of Special Attributes.**—Except when we regard Hera as a kind of moon to Zeus, shining by a portion of his light, her mythological attributes are not sharply marked. She has not a direct relation to child-bearing, though she can control the Eilithuiaï, who have one, probably as she controls other natural agents. In equipping the daughters of Pandareos with gifts, her share was to bestow beauty, and a quality called *pinutè*, by which, as it is used in Homer, I understand not intellectual excellence (for it is assigned to the Telamonian Aias), but good manners, or breeding; a sense of the becoming. It may excite surprise that the gift of beautiful form should not proceed from Aphroditè, who is herself (*I.* ix. 329) the selected model of it. But this deity, recognised in the Troic legend of the Judgment of Paris, and making way at the Achaian period from the east, by Cyprus and Kuthera, towards Greece, does not seem to have been yet recognised in the peninsula itself. In the *Iliad*, the circumstances give her a place on the side of Troy; but she is made odious and contemptible by her weakness and cowardice, as well as by her merely sensual character. She is a member of the Olympian Court; but one of the last in rank and efficacy. Artemis the pure is a donor to the daughters of Pandareos; she gives them stature. But Aphroditè

has only the subordinate office of making application to Zeus on the subject of their marriages.

18. **Womanhood in Hera.**—The feminine character, however, is strongly marked, and by no means on its higher side, in Hera. In the fourteenth *Iliad* we are shown its sensual aspect; but this is thoroughly subordinated to a political object in the interest of the Achaians, and she carries through her plan with all possible tact and craft. More enjoyable is the sharpness of the jealous eye, with which, in the first *Iliad*, she divines that Zeus had been holding a conversation with Thetis, and sets vigorously to work to worm it out of him. She does not quite succeed; but she well understands the art of giving herself value by making him uncomfortable. Accordingly, when he sends Iris with a very menacing message to recall her and Athenè peremptorily from the Plain, he says he will teach Glaukōpis (*I.* viii. 406) not to fight against her sire; “but as to Hera, I do not take so much account of it, or put myself in a passion, for she is always meddling, whatever I may be about.”

19. **The Thetis of Homer.**—The character of Thetis is as much more graceful than Hera, as it is less majestic. It is strongly maternal; and she even assumes a dark mourning garb, to share in the grief of Achilles for Patroklos. Yet it has not lost the archness of coquetry: and when in the first Book she carries to Zeus the important petition on which hangs the main action of the poem, and he, anticipating trouble from Hera, remains silent, she, having already embraced him by the knees with one arm and touched him under the chin with her right hand, poutingly insists that he shall say aye or nay, when she knows it must be aye; and he has to face a scolding from his Queen accordingly.

20. **Her Reconciling Office.**—But the charming picture of the silver-footed goddess, ever fresh from the sea-bosom when her aid is wanted, is still secondary

to the interest of a great mythologic drama, of which she is made the central personage. It would appear that, of all the important figures of his thearchy, this of Thetis is the one in which Homer has least been a reporter of current traditions, and which he has most largely and freely used for his bold constructive purposes. His office, it must ever be remembered, was, like that of the War he sang, a nation-making office. The first factor in the making of a nation is its religion : and he had to compound into unity the diversified contributions, which had been, and were being, brought into the country by the various streams of its population. The old mass, which has been called Pelasgic, had seemingly various cults, now embalmed but buried in the verse of Hesiod, of which the basis is Nature-worship, and which had personages like Okeanos and Kronos for their heads. If we may judge from the catalogues of names, each may have had dominion within a narrow range, and there was no conceivable tie of unity among them. But, even while their day lasted, it would appear as if the figure of the Pelasgic Zeus had towered over all other pretenders to supremacy ; and that, though probably conceived as an air- and light-god, he was alone possible as a centre of union, and as a link of connection with the purer Hellic system that enshrined his name, as well as with the progressive importations, proceeding mainly from the south and east. Of the newcomers, the chief were Poseidon, Hephaistos, Hermes, Aphrodite, Arès. None of these were so imbued with elemental character, as to be unfit to figure in his scheme of anthropophuism. But he had also to deal with the large and various groups of Nature-powers more or less in possession, such as Okeanos and Kronos, whom I have named, the Earth and Sun, whom we know to have been worshipped by those names in Troy, the old and genuine water-god Nereus, the Rivers, and many more, probably including Aïdoneus. With an infinite

ingenuity, he throws back all these personages into shadow : Okeanos is banished, but with respect ; Kronos is penally buried in Tartaros, which doubtless signifies an active struggle, and the defeat of his worship ; Aïdoneus is invested with a sovereignty, but kept mute in the Under-world. There also are the River-deities, to one of whom the spirit of Patroclos is accordingly charged with a message by Achilles.

21. **Her Place as Daughter of Nereus.**—So artful is the poet's method, that he never names Nereus, the old-elemental god of water (still called *Nero* by the Greek population). He presents this deity as "the aged father in the deep," and signifies his personal appellation only by the patronymic Nereides, used for Thetis and her sisters. Now let us see how he has employed Thetis as a link of connection between the Pelasgic and Hellenic systems. As an elemental sea-goddess, she is properly Pelasgic, and her dwelling is in the unfathomed depth. But he produces her as married to Peleus, and as the mother of Achilles, the flower and type, beyond any other chieftain, of the purest Hellenism. This is not all. He produces with her, in the eighteenth *Iliad*, a train of thirty-three sisters ; and some translators have been puzzled to know why he gives us this long list of their names, for they say nothing and do nothing, but simply emerge as companions to Thetis, and then return to the sea-palace in the shining deep, while she goes to Olumpos to obtain arms for Achilles. Now, nothing is so certain as that Homer has not produced this long train of damsels without a purpose. What is it? Notice first that the names of his deities are ordinarily not of Greek derivation. But nearly the whole of the names of these "ladies," as Lord Derby calls them, are of the purest Hellenic origin, and one of them is actually a Doris, akin to the name of an already known Hellenic tribe. It seems then that his aim is, through them, to associate the old

sea-god, and the Pelasgian fore-time, with his newly-sprung Achaian and Olympian system.

22. **Zeus and the Great Olympian Feud.**—

But the Pelasgic Zeus—and such is the epithet solemnly given him by the great national hero—had other rivals to fear, more formidable than these quiet and but half-animate members of the old Nature-system. Apollo, indeed, was his sure and fast friend. But, in shedding off the Pelasgian and assuming the Hellenic type, he seemingly had to confront other deities, with powerful traditions to support their worships; the great Athenè, Hera with one hand given seemingly to the old local Gaia, and the other to the Isis from Egypt, who had undoubted roots in the country; most of all Poseidon, of whom it is clear that he came into Greece with all those called Phœnicians, that is the foreigners, for his worshippers, and from countries over which he had been supreme. Of this fact I will now mention but one among the many Homeric traces. It is this: that in the *Odyssey* he is apparently revealed to us as paramount in the southern region of the world, as well as over the western and northern sea. He even presides in the Divine Assembly; and the hall in which it meets, on this occasion, and on this alone (*Od.* viii. 321), is called the “copper-built hall,” but without the addition that it is the hall “of Zeus.”

23. **Interposition of Thetis.**—There appears, then, to have been, consequent on the Phœnician and Hellic immigrations, a conflict between the worships of the new and the old inhabitants, which was requisite to clear the ground for the formation of the Olympian scheme. Such conflicts are indicated, in particular cases, as disputes between particular deities for the possession of particular towns: as Poseidon and Athenè at Athens, Poseidon and Apollo at Corinth. In such merely local conflicts,

Zeus does not appear. But this was on a larger scale ; a pervading change in the headship of the territorial religion. This great transition it appears to be, which the poet has figured to us in the first *Iliad*, under the form of an Olympian legend. It runs to the effect that Athenè, with Hera and Poseidon, conspired to put Zeus in chains. They were about to effect their purpose, when Thetis summoned the great Aigaiōn with the hundred hands, child of Poseidon, but mightier than his sire. He came to Olumpos, and placed himself, in full self-confidence, by the side of Zeus ; whereupon they desisted from their purpose. This seems to indicate a compromise, under which the new anthropomorphic ideas and the Hellic traditions became the ruling factors of the religion, but the worships come from abroad were fully recognised, and the old Nature-worship, perhaps symbolised by Aigaiōn, was found too strong to be cast out, and continued locally as a kind of Pagan or village cult, while it is of little note in the literature and educated thought of the country. Of all this the Thetis of Homer is the clever and appropriate agent. In a particular case, she had saved Hephaistos in his youth from being hidden, or made away with ; and, conjointly with a daughter of Okeanos, she had nursed and reared him down in the sea-bosom, where the lame but active child, amidst the music of the murmuring waters, produced the first-fruits of his art. She is in truth the great mediating goddess of the *Iliad* ; by whom, both in her wifely and in her divine capacity, the old Pelasgian agencies are made to serve the purposes of religious peace, and both the races and the worships are brought into reconciliation. It is no wonder, then, that when she is sent for to the Olympian Court in the twenty-fourth *Iliad*, although she is no member of it, and is therefore of a rank (xx. 106) inferior to that of Aphroditè, she is treated with an immense respect, for she sits down by Zeus, Athenè yielding the place.



In all this we see the wonderful intertwining of the celestial and terrestrial spheres in the poems, and their truly historic aims.

24. **The Iris of Homer.**—While this noteworthy Thetis is by extraction a Nature-power, localised in the country, the Iris of Homer is, like her, confined to the *Iliad*, and has no place in the *Odyssey*, though he does not present her as a Nature-power at all, and she has no local relations whatever. Her tie to the *Iliad* is ethnical. She has not a world-wide office, like Zeus, Apollo, or Athenè. On her, as on Thetis, the imagination of the poet has worked powerfully and freely, but in a form widely different. Thetis avowedly retains her lineage as daughter of the greybeard of the sea. But whatever relation Iris has to the rainbow is carefully and jealously concealed. The names, indeed, are identical. But *iris* the rainbow always has, as might be expected, epithets of colour; Iris the goddess never. And on one occasion, when she carries a message to the Winds, at their banquet held in the house of Zephuros as their primate, and they welcome her with an eagerness, which may be due to traditional relationship as well as to gallantry, she declines to sit down with them, and pleads want of time. But the cause of her haste is notable. It is that she may go to share with the other gods a banquet, which was entirely for the Olympian Court, on the sacrifices of the Aithiopes by the Ocean-shore. Thus she marks her own position as a goddess not of the Nature-family, but of the purely Olympian order.

But how did Iris rise so high? Certainly not by her having a root in a natural phenomenon. She is, on the contrary, a genuine anthropomorphic conception, drawn with infinite grace and tenderness, and endowed with singular sense and tact in the execution of her office as envoy; so that, when she has to carry to Poseidon a message of rebuke and prohibition, he is so pleased with her manner of doing it that he

says (xv. 207), "Well is it, when a messenger knows his business." Everywhere she is contrasted with the Nature-powers. Unlike them, she holds her place in the literature of the country; and, unlike them again, she has no place in its local worships. Neither a temple nor a statue of her is mentioned by Pausanias.

25. **Apparent Key to the Conception.**—Her function is simply that of a messenger; but, as messenger when writing was not in use, she is also envoy and agent. She is such at the bidding of Zeus only, or of Hera in her derivative possession of some of his prerogatives. She officiates between god and god, or between god and man. She does not act like Hermes for the Olympian Court, but for the supreme god individually. The ground idea of her character as messenger is proved by this; that the burly beggar Antaios of the *Odyssey*, because he goes from place to place, and like her, acts as a go-between, is called Iros.

In the book of *Genesis* (ix. 11-17) the rainbow is declared to be from that time forward a messenger between God and man, for it is to declare to man the will of the Almighty with regard to the fixed order of the seasons. If this idea had been traditionally conveyed from the original source to the Achaian period and region, we can at once understand how Homer found the tradition, though originally founded on a natural phenomenon, admirably suited for that ethereal creation, which he has presented to us in the buoyant and brilliant form of his Iris. The rainbow, as a natural power, was in no proper sense a messenger, so that he did not learn his lesson from the old Pelasgian cult; there is strong evidence that it did not come from the bright dry countries of the southern east, in the exclusion of Iris from the Outer world of the *Odyssey*. But every feature of her character and position tends to ally her with what I have termed the Hellic tradition.

26. **Her Properties as Messenger - Goddess.**—Although she is but a sketch, she is one of those sketches, in which the touch of the incomparable master is as clearly seen as in any work of the most complete development. Only the hand, that drew Nausicaa on earth, could have drawn Iris in the skies. She seems lighter than the air itself upon her golden wings, and the poet always employs the full resources of pure dactylic verse to signify the elastic bound, with which she starts upon her missions. But with all her lightness, she plunges “like lead” through the waters of the deep, because her swiftness is even more essential to her even than her lightness. In full keeping with these, so to speak, physical qualities, is her ready, nimble mind, her incessant labour for some purpose of good, not of ill, and the total absence of every dark or gross or malicious feature from the really sweet delineation; although, when Zeus has intimated that he rather wishes his inhibition to Pallas to be rough, she, as his faithful organ, shows that she too keeps a tongue in her head.

27. **Glance round the Olympian Court.**—I have thought it better to present with some fulness these five remarkable specimens of the Homeric thearchy, than to dwell more briefly and with less freedom upon each of his Olympian and preternatural personages; in the hope of thus showing something of the poet himself, in a sphere where he is hardly less wonderful or less interesting, than in his dealing with human agents and affairs. In handling these five, I have touched by the way on the offices of Apollo, Hephaistos, Hermes, Aphroditè, and even Poseidon; I will refer more slightly still to others.

The Homeric sketch of Artemis is very beautiful and pure, but slight: with the moon she has no association whatever; it is difficult to trace her origin; her share in the action is insignificant; she is sorely belaboured, in the Theomachy, by the strong arm of

Hera ; but she shares many offices and prerogatives of Apollo, and seems to reflect him weakly, as Hera reflected Zeus. The Sun is powerful in the East, but is wholly exotic, so that the crew of Odusseus endeavour to propitiate him by promising to build for him a temple in Ithaca, that is, to introduce his worship into the island. Aidoneus exactly fulfils a definition of M. Thiers ; he reigns, but does not govern, below ; where his spouse, Persephonè, the awful, is the actual ruler. She has no stated relation to Demeter, and the origin of Homer's conception is not easily to be traced. The black poplar (*aigeiros*) is evidently sacred to one or both, and the connection of this tree with death and grief may be traced in the later mythology ; while it probably has its root, like most of the arrangements of the Homeric Under-world, in Egyptian tradition. Of this, however, it is a pale reflection, for the future life did not occupy in the Achaian mind a place of that vast relative importance, which it had obtained in Egypt. Leto is a personage chiefly significant in her relation to Apollo. She has no mythological attribute. She has been explained as the darkness, out of whose womb the light arises. This will assort with a motherhood of the Sun, when such a tradition can be discovered ; but it has no relation at all to the Homeric Apollo of the Olympian system. The poet always pays her an extraordinary veneration, for which there is no basis in legend ; but it is at once explained, if the Apollo of the poems is really founded on the Hebrew tradition, that there should be a woman, whose Seed was to redeem the world. Arès is especially the Thracian god. He wavers before taking his part in the *Iliad*. It thereby appears that he must have had sway in a country, which was divided in sentiment between Greek and Trojan. There is in him a strong animal element, and no feature of high interest. We have Hebe the cup-bearer ; and Themis the summoner of assemblies, whose character has

a relation to political society. Dionè dwells in Olumpos as a wife of Zeus, and there is some slight reason for connecting her with him in his Pelasgic character as the Zeus of Dodona. Dionusos, afterwards so famous, has in Homer hardly made his way to deity; certainly he has not reached the Olympian Court.

28. **Notice of Poseidon.**—Of all the divinities, from whose characters the higher elements are absent, Poseidon is the most remarkable. Lustful, vengeful, headstrong, self-assertive, yet ever shrewd, he is not under complete control even from Zeus himself, and bears plain traces of having enjoyed elsewhere that supremacy, the full retention of which by him was incompatible with the Olympian scheme. He does not scruple to claim, though not in Zeus's presence, equality with Zeus: and only retires from the field of battle under his injunction, when Iris reminded him of the right of the senior brother, under that law of family order, which even he did not dare to disallow. He has a very great importance in the poems, as a key to their ethnology; and we are enabled to trace his connection with the south in a great degree through his relation to the horse, over which he is, beyond all others, the presiding deity.

29. **Approximate Number of the Olympian Court.**—When Thetis visits Hephaistos in his Olympian workshop, she finds him busied in preparing twenty self-moving chairs for the meetings of the gods. It seems probable that Homer intended, roughly at least, to indicate this as the number of his higher gods, who composed the Court; apart from the mob (so to speak) of Nature-powers and others, who were only summoned to the great assemblies for special occasions. Eighteen have been already indicated. Demeter, and Paieon, the healer, may possibly fill up the number. The suggestion of that number he may have derived from Egypt, where the gods were

arranged in three orders, with eight in the first, and twelve in the second ; while the third was made up of a rather promiscuous crowd.

30. **The Orders of Supernatural Beings in Homer.**—The Olympian Court is the masterpiece of the whole theurgy of Homer. But the classes of supernatural beings are with him very many, and we find at certain points imagination and tradition, invention and history, competing for the ground. We may consider as purely traditional in Homer, the greater and the smaller Nature-powers ; both those belonging to ancient deposed dynasties, and those which had “a local habitation and a name,” still acknowledged in the land. Then there is the minor mythology of the Outer or Phœnician zone : to which belong Atlas, Kalupso, Kirkè, Proteus, Leukothoè, and others. Next, we see darkly looming below ground, the rebellious powers : the giants, the Titans, and some more ; punished beyond the few human criminals of Hades, but yet supernatural beings, not to be confounded with them. Then we have men on the road to deification : such as Herakles, Castor, Poludeukes : such perhaps is Dionusos. We have also the creatures of pure imagination, such as Strife, Fear, Panic, Rumour. Others again, like Prayer, with limping feet, and the Graces, and Sleep and Dream, that hang on the border land between embodied and (so to speak) disembodied invention. There remains the very grand conception of the Ministers of doom. Atè, the seducer, is ever bewildering men into offences, which, when they grow into habit, and harden into defiance, become *atasthaliai*. This noteworthy Homeric word conveys very powerfully what comes near the Christian idea of sin ; and I believe that it has no corresponding representative in the language of classical Greece. Destiny, expressed by various words, partakes of the nature both of a mere force, and of a moral law. The former is principally expressed by *Moirà*, the second by *Aisa*. The silent

and strong operation of this dumb agent, against, and sometimes over, both gods and men, is not so crudely set forth in Homer as in some later systems. It never appears as the single over-ruling force: and the two great ideas of the divine will, and of the Ought, or duty, are the principal factors in the government of our human world from above or from without. Against fate either god or man may struggle; nay, it is sometimes intimated, as to a hero, that he is on the point of overcoming it. Further, we have the Harpuiai, or ravishers, who may be considered as a kind of executioners, but not judges, of Doom. They only once appear, carrying off the daughter of Pandareos, probably on account of some ancestral sin. The really grand figures in this department of the Homeric supernaturalism are the Erinuës, afterwards called the Furies in a degenerated tradition, but more truly the vindicatresses of nature and the moral order. In some cases, the Erinuës appear to act penally, but commonly their office is to preserve or to repair. The thought of the Erinuës causes Poseidon to accept the monition of Zeus as his elder brother. They arrest the speaking of the horse Xanthos, who for the moment had invaded the province of "articulating men." If Telemachos dismisses his mother from his home, her Erinuës will come upon him. The disguised Odusseus invokes, against the Suitor Antinoos, the gods and Erinuës of the poor. When Arès is laid prostrate in the Theomachy, Athenè tells him it is due to the Erinuës of his mother, from whose party he had deserted. Later times understood them as "The Furies", but we might more properly render them "The Sanctions." In one obscure instance the Erinuës seem to be mentioned (*Od.* xv. 232-4) âs suggesting a grave folly: but this, unless there is an explanation in some circumstances of the case unknown to us, is certainly out of keeping with their general action in Homer.

31. **The Homeric Theanthropism.** — The Olympian system of Homer has for its most marked characteristic the combination of the divine idea with the essential conditions of our humanity. Every divine person is conceived of as vested in a human figure ; and the head, hands, feet, or chin of a deity are the expression of an ingenuous literalism. These bodies are indefinitely glorious, but still human. Being human, they afforded a proper subject for Greek art, a stepping-stone upwards ; being indefinitely glorious, they invited and compelled the artist to labour ever more and more for “the highest” ; for an unseen perfection ; and thus supplied him with the talisman of his unrivalled excellence. The whole apparatus of the mind, too, was laid out on the human model ; but the human construction was in the higher deities attached not as a limitation of the divine idea, only as its vehicle. As to the appetitive part of humanity, wherein lies, as in the weak part of a fortification, the easiest access of the foe, it adheres to the Olympian gods in infinite diversity of degree. In Athenè and Apollo, we have no palpable trace of it. In Zeus, it lodges even to redundancy, side by side with genuine affections, such as those which make him weep for Sarpedon ; with administrative responsibilities which he keenly feels ; and, above all, with that rather more abstract capacity, in which he represents the higher motive power of theism. In Arès, Aphroditè, and Poseidon, this tyranny of lower elements over higher is almost wholly unchecked. The motherly sentiment for the wounded Aineias in Aphroditè, though no higher than the instinct of a bird, almost surprises us as the solitary manifestation of a redeeming quality. It is not difficult to see how this refined association of the divine with the human nature may have supplied a preparatory school, in which the Greek mind was trained for the reception, “in the fulness of time,” of the Christian dogma.



32. **The Theanthropic Family.**—This introduction of human forms into divine life was not confined to the representations of individual deity. As on earth men are constituted in the double association of the Family and the State, so it is in Olumpos. As regards the family, Homer had the first elements of it ready to his hand in the traditions, both foreign and aboriginal, which distributed deity according to sex and generation. Nothing could better answer the purpose of the poet. But he wanted to give a greater power and scope to the domestic principle for his larger theanthropic purpose: he required a large family, not merely an Osiris and an Isis, with Horos for their son. He had also to deal with the case of other deities, like Poseidon or Aidoneus, with their respective claims to supremacy. Of this business he acquits himself by going back to a common sire in the deposed and penally engulfed Kronos, and by dividing among the three Brothers the air, sea, and Under-world, with earth common to them all. In this manner he also finds scope for the Trinitarian idea, which had come down to him, as it had also appeared elsewhere in other forms: yet of which it may be observed, that we do not find it in the old Pelagic thearchies, nor apparently in those eastern and southern systems, which had made contributions to the Achaian mythology. But it is remarkable that, in the construction of the Olympian family, the moral standard has to descend much below that of the Greek part of the world it ruled. No Greek ideas are more firmly stamped upon the mind of Homer than the practice of monogamy, and the abhorrence of incest: but Hera is the sister of Zeus, her husband, and in her conjugal capacity she is little better than, like Hecabè, the queen of a harem. And so live his gods, in perpetual feasting, with frequent wrangles; in splendid palaces, and with the refined accompaniment of the lyre and song.

33. **The Polity, or State.**—As in the Family, so the divine order was likewise organised after the manner of a State. It was something of a free state ; for all subjects were debated, remonstrance was allowed, there was a public opinion, and resolutions were taken in the name of all. The Theomachy was in the nature of a civil war. The Olympian State was for the previously disorganised and conflicting worship (if the comparison be not too far-fetched,) something like what the Treaty of Westphalia was for Central Europe. In that State there was the King, who ordinarily sat with his Boulè, the council, or smaller assembly, and a greater or universal one for special occasions ; just as on earth below we have Agamemnon, then the Kings around him, these together being the ordinary instrument of government, while the assembly of the army, or people, is in reserve for cases of breadth and emergency.

34. **Exclusion of Grosser Elements.**—This anthropomorphic, or, as I should prefer to call it, theanthropic, polity already contained elements of gross corruption, which grew with a pestilent fertility in later times ; until at length the severe judgment of the Apostle, though he recognises in the mythology (Acts xvii. 28) a true theistic element, yet treats it as inviting men to the worship of demons (1 Cor. x. 20, 21). But it was, in itself, a marvellous formation ; and so far (we can hardly tell with exactness how far) as it is due to the genius of a man, it is a stroke of genius unsurpassed. For let us consider in the first place that it rather annexed humanity to deity, than, in its first inception, submitted deity to humanity. In the next place, to clear the ground for the gorgeous edifice, it thrust unsparingly away the dark and cruel systems of the old Nature-worship, the debasing cult of animals, and the filth and vileness of those bestial lusts, of which we have the deplorable record in the Old Testament, as to those very

countries from which Greece derived the arts of life. It is therefore almost certain that nascent Hellenism must have been subjected to the temptation ; nay, that this was presented (as it were) with authority by its social instructors, and yet that it manfully spurned and drove back the foul invasion. Its offerings to its gods were in singular accordance with those which the patriarchs of the East had practised, and which Moses prescribed on Divine authority. But we look in vain, in the Homeric system, for a Jephtha's daughter : the terrible abuse of human sacrifice to the gods is entirely foreign to the Olympian scheme, and the offering of Iphigeneia is either an invention of later date, or it is a tradition which the mind and feeling of Greece in the heroic time, as expressed by Homer, did not consent to accept. How much, then, of what was disparaging to the intellectual dignity, or debasing to the moral sense, of man was put away by the maker or makers of the Olympian system !

35. **Its Centrality and Durability.**—Not that that system expressed the religion of a country, as it has been expressed in Christian times by the Christian Creed. It was a central, not a local religion : for many persons, in many of its parts, from the first, it was conventional. It would appear that a great variety of local worships, of this deity or that, prevailed throughout the land. But the Olympian was the intellectual form which acted upon the thought of Greece, and which determined its literature and art, so far as these were product of religion. It lost progressively, and perhaps rapidly, its moral hold ; it had the aid neither of a wealthy or influential priesthood, nor of sacred books ; it was the most purely literary religion that ever existed ; but, resting on this narrow basis, and possessed of no external supports, it occupied the ground of the most civilised countries of the world without a rival for near 1500 years. and did not

finally give way, except after a stout resistance, to the victorious energy of the Gospel.

36. **Its Ethnographical Relations.**—Of the morality which, though it hardly sprang from, yet at least subsisted under this religion, I shall speak presently. Its ethnographical relations seem to be as follows :—

(1.) The Nature-powers in general are to be considered as Pelasgian or indigenous. So may Aïdoneus, Demeter, perhaps Persephonè, and even Hera, who, however, undergoes a very complete transfiguration to fit her for her great position in the new thearchy.

(2.) From Phœnicia, Syria, Egypt, Libya are imported Poseidon, Hephaistos, Hermes, Aphroditè.

(3.) In Zeus we have a factor representing the supreme theistic element of all the religions, which contributed to make up the system ; and, as the Zeus of the Helloi, he appears to be in a particular degree a representative of an old monotheism which merges into supremacy in a polytheistic system.

(4.) In Athenè and Apollo, and in their degrees in Leto, Iris, and perhaps others, we have clear indications of an order of traditions which, like the monotheistic element in the Zeus of the Helloi, had run through cleaner channels than those either of the Pelasgian Nature-cult, or of the licentious East. Some slight positive, and some very strong negative indications point to the Helloi of the poems as the probable vehicle of these traditions : while their notes of kin to the written records and oral reports of the Hebrews appear to be as conspicuous, as is the want of anything which could associate them with another source. At the same time there is no reason to doubt that figures more or less corresponding to Homer's Apollo and Athenè were found in foreign systems, though we are unable, from want of records, to know whether they bore upon them any similar marks of a pure and lofty origin.

37. **Sacrifice and Priesthood.**—The poems appear to indicate, that sacrifices performed in a manner substantially accordant with that of the Hebrews, prevailed not only in the Achaian world, but among contemporary nations. As a rule, whatever was eaten was also sacrificed; so that to slaughter cattle for food was described by the word (*hiereuein*), which also signified “to sacrifice.” The same principle is applied to drink as to food, by the institute of libation: and this is so established, that when the ship’s company of Odusseus had not wine in Thrinakiè to complete the rite, they made libation with water. But, when we come to the question of the person ministering, we strike upon a remarkable ethnical difference. Priesthood was plainly a Trojan, and apparently a Pelasgic, institution. But it appears not to have been Achaian or Hellic. Not only is there no priest with the Greek army in Troas, but there is no priest in Ithaca, where the whole social life of the race is so distinctly laid open to us. The priest is not named in the list of professions. And the Helloi of Dodonaian Zeus are not his priests, but his prophets or seers. Once only we hear of priests in the peninsula, not as contemporary, but in the legend of Meleagros. They are mentioned plurally, which nowhere else occurs, and in connection with elders (*gerontes*), so that probably the two are synonymous. In this view it would not be the professional priest who is intended, but the elder or house-father, who was the original sacrificer; like Abraham or Noah in Genesis, like Agamemnon, Nestor, and indeed Priam, in the poems. This remarkable distinction may be traced down to the historic period; for the priests of ancient Greece do not seem at any time to have weighed greatly in the political or social scale.

## CHAPTER VII.

## ETHNOLOGY.

1. **Related to Mythology.**—The ethnology of the poems stands in close connection with their mythology. That mythology fell into three groups; (*a*) the old Nature-powers of the country; (*b*) matter imported by the immigrants from the south and east; and (*c*) a group of higher stamp, broadly distinguished from the others; especially from the first, by loftier intelligence, from the second by a loftier moral standard. There is nothing systematic in the ethnology of the poems; nor is there in any other branch of the instruction which they afford, and which is only to be fully attained by a careful gathering and comparison of details. As to tracing particular races in Greece, we have this particular difficulty to confront; that the aim of our poet in the heroic age was to consolidate the inward unity of the nation, so that indications of a foreign origin for any of its branches might have tended to mar the design. Accordingly Homer discloses to us nothing of any Egyptian, Phœnician, or even Achaian settlements. He does not tell us from whence came settlers like Kadmos, or heads of dynasties like Pelops, or Aiakos, or Portheus. Perhaps the only exceptions are to be found in that speech of Zeus, where he recounts his loves. Here he incidentally shows us that Minos, the source of the Cretan royalty, was associated with a Phœnician extraction; and, in making Perseus the child of Danaë, he supplies us with two names, of which the first, from evidence afforded by the poet in the names of Persè and Persephonè, and the latter by the light of Phœnician history, suggest foreign associations. Besides the indirect disclosures of the

poet, we have the aid of philology, which tells us, for example, that Kadmos signifies a foreigner, and which discovers the root of the names of some among the Nature-powers in the existing Albanian tongue; and of archæology, which, by disclosing and explaining ancient monuments, has thrown great light upon the connection between Homeric knowledge and foreign sources.

2. **The Phoinikes of Homer.**—Every reader of these poems must be struck by the recurrence and the importance of the Phœnician name; most of all by its predominance in all over-sea navigation to foreign lands, and its nearly exclusive association with works of art. We must carefully bear in mind that it is not, apparently, a name assumed by any race or people; but only a name given them by Homer and his countrymen, whose destiny it was, long afterwards, to bear the name of Greeks, given them by the Romans. Of the city of Tyre we do not yet hear: Sidon is the Phœnician centre or capital. The Taphians are taken to be a Phœnician colony; and the Phaiakes of Scheriè appear to be an identical rendering of the Phoinikes proper, from the resemblance of the names, and more especially from their paramount prerogatives in navigation, and their great advancement in works of art. We see, indeed, the same splendid metallic ornamentation in the palace of Menelaos, as in the palace of Alkinoos; but then Menelaos has been visiting the land of the Phoinikes. We find Odusseus himself a producer (the only one in Greece) of a work of art; but a number of marks suggest for this chief a Phœnician extraction. Whenever advanced building-work is mentioned, there is always some foreign, that is Phœnician, trace to be discovered. The Games in Scheriè are given at length, probably because they were the prototype of the Games of Greece. But there is no chariot race in those Games; and no horse is

mentioned anywhere in connection with the Phaiakes, from which we may perceive that they were probably the Phoinikes proper, worshippers of Poseidon, and a navigating people, but whose land was not one to be reckoned among horse-breeding countries.

3. Compare the Frankish Name of later times.—It appears that the Phœnician name in Homer stands to a great extent for that of foreigner in general. If, as I suppose, at the Troic time, or shortly before it, Phœnicia formed a part of the great Egyptian Empire which had then its capital at Thebes, Phœnician ships supplied the means, seemingly the exclusive means, of carrying on its communications with its transmarine possessions, in which Greece and her islands were included. Under these circumstances, the Phœnician name would very naturally signify in Greece all that was Egyptian and Eastern, which is nearly equivalent to saying, all that was foreign : as, in the Levant, the name of Frank long served for all the Western peoples, in consequence of the prominence of the French nation in the long series of the Crusades.

4. Notes of Foreign Connection.—There is in Homer a very general and pervading association between a group of marks, of which a portion are Phœnicianism, the god Poseidon, the use and special training of the horse, a share of the comparative advancement in the arts, and finally the use of the archaic title *anax andrōn*. In this title, the use of the genitive is significant. The phrase may fairly be said to bear on it a foreign and hereditary stamp. The word *anax* in Homer carries with it an idea of absolutism or ownership ; and such a lordship of men, that is of free men, would hardly be an Achaian idea. Whenever *anax* expresses sovereignty, the noun governed is in the dative ; except in two instances : one where Sleep (whose power is absolute) is the *anax* of gods and men ; another where it is joined with *laōn* (*Il.* ix. 97), but this is applied to Agamemnon an *anax andrōn*.



*Basileus*, not *anax*, was the national expression of the highest title in relation to a free Achaian community. Homer often speaks of *basilēes Achaïōn*, never of *anactes Achaïōn*. Again, the title of *anax andrōn* seems to have belonged to senior branches only. It is therefore borne by Anchises and Aineias, but not by Priam or any of his sons. Agamemnon the elder brother, has it; Menelaos, the younger, has not. Again, all these have horses specially named or indicated as belonging to them. Two other persons, Augeias and Eumelos have the title; and of these Augeias presides over the chariot-races of Elis, while Eumelos has the finest mortal horses of the army. Only one other person is named in a single passage as *anax andrōn*, and he is king of Ephurè, a town-name which, by various signs, is connected with Phœnician or southern associations. Poseidon is peculiarly the god of the horse; and possibly became the Greek or Olympian sea-god, because the horse came into Greece by sea. He is unquestionably associated with the south, by his special connection with the Aithiopes, and by various other notes. The use of the horse, which was unknown to the Memphian or first Egyptian empire, was introduced under the second, apparently from Libya or Upper Egypt, or both. The tests for tracing foreign origin, which I have pointed out, are a portion only of those which the poems supply. Another is the name of Aiolos. Bellerophon the Aiolid can be shown from the text to be descended from Poseidon, and this is declaring in other words his foreign extraction.

5. **Foreign, or Phœnician Element in the Greek Nation.**—It is not possible in the brief compass of these pages to draw out and connect in their varied groups the particulars of proof, but even what has been said may serve to suggest the presence, at the Troic era, of an element in the Greek nation originally foreign, but now domesticated. This element

is everywhere associated with an advanced condition as to the arts of life, and it supplies Greece with many of its ruling houses. It seems allowable to suggest by way of conjecture, that the founders of these houses may have been persons who themselves, or whose ancestors, had first come into the country as the local representatives of the Egyptian power. I will finally point out that we have one clear instance of this immigration from the south-east in the case of Kadmos and the settlers he brought into Bœotia; against whom, under the name of Kadmeians, the Achaians made war one generation before the war of Troy. Generally, however, we trace rather the appearance of single families in this connection, than of settlers in bodies; we have Aiolids in Homer, but Aiolians as a tribe or race (who however continued in the historic time to be specially connected with the Poseidon-worship) are not found there, and seem to belong to the Dorian, not the Achaian period. This Phœnician element of the Greek nation was non-Aryan; it was numerically weak, but was powerful in station, wealth, intelligence, and social advancement.

6. **Hair as an Index of Race.**—One of the curious notes attached to nationality in Homer is the colour of the hair. Dark hair is a note of the foreigner, and of southern extraction. There is great personal beauty in the royal family of Troy: but no auburn or light hair is ever found there. Poseidon is, among other modes, marked for a southern deity by his carrying the name of "the dark-haired," not merely as an epithet, but as a distinctive title. Zeus had dark eye-brows, but is nowhere stated to have dark hair. Nor have the Greek chieftains. Achilles and Menelaos have the colour of their hair mentioned, and it is auburn. Pelops may have been a foreigner; if so, there is little doubt that the use of this epithet for Menelaos is meant to mark the

complete naturalisation of the family. Odusseus, too, had auburn hair; though his beard was dark (*Od.* xiii. 397, xvi. 176). I have been assured that, in the Greece of to-day, light hair is still held as indicating the purest Hellenic blood.

**7. Two other Elements in the Greek Nation.**—In the non-Phœnician mass of the Greek people, it is not difficult to trace a plain dualism of race. The two great factors of the nation, thus indicated, it will perhaps be well to call respectively the Achaian and Pelasgian factors. Universal tradition makes the Pelasgians the first and pre-Hellenic inhabitants of the country. The Arcadians of Homer are marked as bearing specially this aboriginal character. They dwelt in the central hill country of Peloponnesos, while the dominant race remained in the plains and the more accessible country near the sea. They had no maritime pursuits. They sailed to Troy in ships provided by Agamemnon, and probably as part of his contingent.

**8. The Achaian Element.**—A broader indication may be found by examining the incidents which attach to the three national appellatives of the poems, namely, Danaan, Argeian, and Achaian. The Danaan name is never attached to the people historically or politically: but in the army only. Its epithets are martial, and the use of the word appears to be altogether archaic and poetic. The Achaian name is the true national name of the period: and it is used more frequently than the Danaan and the Argeian names taken together. As used in the army, it has a very perceptible leaning towards the chiefs and the upper class. As employed historically and beyond the camp, it has sometimes a local force. So it is applied in the Catalogue to the people of Aigina and Mases, and in the *Odyssey* to a part of Crete; indicating points, probably, at which the race had first settled down after its southward movement. It is

more remarkably applied to the followers of Achilles ; for here it is, as has been already shown, immediately coupled with the Hellenic name ; and the name Hellene, itself derivative from Helloi and akin to Hellas, is associated with those first ancestors of the stock by the prayer of Achilles to the Dodonaian Zeus of his neighbourhood, the god who had these Helloi for his ministers. But the name of Achaians is used in Ithaca, where the tribal sub-name of the inhabitants was Kephallenes, evidently because it was the current national name ; and it is commonly so employed in Homer. Further, the poems indicate to us the time when the Achaian name began to be thus employed, and what name it supplanted. Its application is limited to the Pelopid period upwards. The army which marched against Thebes, one generation before the war, is an Achaian army. There were Achaians, too, in the youth of Nestor. But, in the nineteenth *Iliad*, we have a legend of the births of Eurustheus and of Heracles in the previous or Perseid period. Here the name given to the population, over whom the nascent babe was to reign, is not Achaians, but Argeians. Proitos, nearly at the same epoch, was a ruler over "Argeians." Thus we see the Achaians take their place as a conquering, or at any rate a ruling, race over and among a pre-existing population. In them we have the second great factor of the Greek people. With them comes the first rise of the Hellenic stock, to which they belonged, and which, with Agamemnon for its political head, had Achilles for its typical and ideal example. It is evident that this race did not bring with them the arts into Greece, but found them there : found them among the old population, as to settled social life ; among the Phœnician immigrants, as to advance and culture. What they seem to have brought with them was the true political spirit ; the faculty of nation-making ; the power, will, and fitness to fill the highest place ; the capacity to receive every

lesson in art and culture that the children of the East could convey, and to open and develop it to a point beyond what the East had dreamed of.

9. **Use of the Argeian Name in Homer.**—

Who, then, were these Argeians, whose name was supplanted by the name of a more imperial stock? First let us look at the epithets applied in the *Iliad*, where this appellation is used: for in the *Odyssey* it has practically disappeared. It is employed in the singular, as in the "Argeian Helen:" but here the name is purely local; it meant what is commonly called Argive, and has its propriety from her being an Argive domiciled in Troy. In the plural, it sometimes means the soldiery of the army, sometimes the inhabitants of North-eastern Peloponnesos. When applied to the soldiery, it very rarely carries a descriptive epithet; widely differing herein from the Danaan and Achaian names, which abound in epithets descriptive of high qualities. This prepares us for another characteristic; it is never applied distinctively to the chiefs, but seems plainly to indicate the inferior mass.

10. **Its Probable Meaning.**—When we look to the word itself, there is great reason to believe that it means field-tiller, or cultivator; in which way it would most appropriately designate those who had first established settled agriculture in the peninsula of Greece. On the one side it is related to *ergon*, which, in the old Greek of the Peloponnesos, was always, or sometimes, written *argon*, and which in its application to man (for women it means tissues, and the like) signifies primarily the labours of agriculture. On the other side it is related to *agros*, which in Homer's time meant the country as distinct from the town. It is, further, akin to the epithet *argos*, which appears to have for its ground-meaning the idea of strenuous or laborious. There is some reason to believe that at one time *argeios* came to have the meaning of the Latin word *agrestis*, as opposed to *urbanus*, or rustic,

in the sense of rude. Enough has perhaps now been said to indicate the presence in Greece of a pervading rural population, who had established family life, and village communities somewhat after the manner of those among the present Slavonians. It appears also that they had towns, if they were the population largely embraced under the name of Pelasgians. For the Pelasgians of the second *Iliad* had a *Larissa*; and *Larissa* is a name referred by Strabo to Pelasgic origin, and signifying a citadel or place of security. But, in truth, the distinction of city and village, as to size, was slight: the place of refuge and defence was as such necessarily confined. It need not surprise us were it to be proved that the hill of Hissarlik, if it were the actual Troy, did not allow for that city of deathless and world-wide renown a space much or at all exceeding three acres.

II. *The Pelasgian Element.*—In the Argeian population we may recognise what I have called the Pelasgian character. At any rate we find, apart from this or that name, more or less conventional, the industrial and rural quality, which marks them as probably the third, and numerically most important, factor of the nation.

The character, which has here been ascribed to the Argeian or Pelasgian population, can be traced in the *Iliad* by the industrial names given to the undistinguished soldiery. In their case, as in the remarkable case of the Scherian sea-farers, and of the Nereid nymphs, Homer avails himself of proper names to tell the story of the persons themselves by means of etymology. This observation applies also to those whom he calls Ionians; and to the Trojan soldiery, who are not at all exhibited in that marked inferiority to the Greek mass, which is found in the chieftains. Among the Greek chiefs we never find these industrial names; but, where we can trace the roots, many appellations descriptive of high qualities, such as Thrasumedes

Peisistratos, Menelaos, Agamemnon, Sthenelos, Protesilaos. No names of this kind will be found among the Attic or Ionian persons mentioned in *Il.* xiii. 690, 1, xv. 332, 7, 8; only one among thirteen Trojans of the common order despatched in the fifth Book; only three among seventeen ordinary Greeks slain by Hektor and Arès in the fifth and eleventh Books; a very large proportion among the Lycians (of *Il.* v. 677, 8), whom the poet recognises as having a strongly Hellenic character; and a large proportion also among the Suitors of the *Odyssey*. In opposition to the tunic-trailing Iaones, these Lycians are *amitrochitōnes*; they wear the short tunic, not requiring a girdle, which is suited to an active and martial race.

12. **Iaones. Javan. The Mythical Hellen.**  
—It thus appears that the Ionians in Homer rank rather with the industrial, than the imperial, element of the population in Greece. It is another question what light can be thrown upon their history from other quarters. It is held, says Professor Rawlinson in his *Origin of Nations*, that these Iaones, for such is their Homeric name, represent the Javan of that great ethnographic document, chap. x. of the Book of Genesis: and that the Greeks generally were known in the East under the name of Javan. But the student cannot be too careful, in approaching the ethnology of Homer, to dismiss wholly from his mind the post-Homeric verses, which describe a Hellen as the father of the Greek race, with Doros, Aiolos, and Xouthos for his sons, and Xouthos again with two sons, Ion and Achaios. This misleading composition is much later than Homer: it belongs to a time when Hellenes had been established as the common name of all Greeks; when, among the particular races, the Dorians had the pre-eminence; when the Aiolians were a race, and not the family of a (real or mythical) person; when the Achaians had shrunk into insignificance; and when the Ionians of Athens had come into a forward place.

Every item of this enumeration is in conflict with the text of Homer, and betrays a different and later age.

There are many other race-names in Homer; but none which throw any general light, either on the poems, or on the formation of the Greek nation.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ETHICS OF THE ACHAIAN TIME.

1. **Relation of Morals to Religion.**—The ethics, or morals, of the Achaian time are connected with its religion, not universally, as in the Christian ages, but *sub modo*. The morality of the Homeric man is founded on duty, not to the particular personages of the Olympian system, but to the divinity, *theos*, or the gods in general, *theoi*. Sometimes to Zeus; not, however, as the mere head of the Olympian Court, but as heir-general to the fragments and relics of the old monotheistic traditions. One of the greatest branches, and props, of morality for the heroic age lay in the care of the stranger and the poor; and of this law Zeus was the peculiar guardian, as he was (*Od.* xiii. 213) of the moral law at large. The current of these moral ideas runs through the poems in a great degree separately from the mythology, yet by the side of it, like rivers in certain cases, whose waters can be distinguished after their junction. Of the whole supernatural apparatus, perhaps the most ethical part is to be found in the Erinuës, and in that ingredient of the idea of Destiny which is represented by the word *Aisa*.

2. **To Ritual.**—But the morality of the period is also connected with, and really, if partially, sustained by its ritual. Sacrifice could not be substituted for duty, nor could prayer. Such, upon the abduction of Chryseis, was the reply of Calchas the Seer: nothing



would avail but restitution ; and this not the restitution of the maid for a price, as it was originally asked and refused, but restitution without any compensation. It is true, that the gods among themselves speak more of the sacrifices which men offer as a title to divine favour, than of their performance of duty. But this seems to be an exhibition of their own theanthropic nature on the appetitive side, rather than an indication of the heroic morals. Some facts at any rate are plain : first, that the men, whose liberality in sacrifice they commend, are good men, such as Hektor, Eumaios, and Odusseus ; secondly, the bad men, such as Paris and the Suitors, are not mentioned as habitually liberal offerers. The only case, in which a great sinner shows bounty in sacrifice, is that of Aigisthos, after he has corrupted Klutaimnestra. But he had been ordered beforehand by the gods not to commit the crimes, and his efforts at sacrificial bribery did not prevent them from ordaining (*Od.* i. 40) a terrible retribution. Thirdly, in the description of character, piety to the gods is commonly united with, not disjoined from, the discharge of relative duty ; as in *Od.* vi. 120, where the question is asked, "Are they insolent, fierce, and unrighteous, or are they good to strangers, and pious towards the gods?" The bad men, notably such as Poluphemos and the Kuklopes, who despise duty to man, are also contemners of the gods. Thus then the morality of the poems is in principle a religious morality, a chain binding earth to heaven.

3. **The Beginnings of Corruption.**—It was flecked, however, with spots of nascent corruption, which were sure to spread ; and unhappily the taint came with the mythology itself. Hermes, a deity of Phœnician importation, grants to men the endowments of perjury and theft. Athenè exults in her own tricks and those of Odusseus, which, however, stand in clear contradiction to the indignant truthfulness of Achilles.

Lust was mythologically exhibited to the Greek eye in various forms, especially in the characters of Zeus and of Aphroditè ; and the episode of the Eighth *Odyssey* recited in Scheriè, shows us what vile examples the East was already setting, in the glorification of shameless adultery, to the Achaian race. The character of Heracles, as it is given in the poems, is marked with lawless violence ; and his shade is in the Under-world, but he himself (*autos*) has joined the banquets of the gods. These were, however, perilous yet recent exceptions. They had not become the rule. As a general law, the man who did his duty was the man who well served the gods, and who was accepted by them.

4. **It was in some respects a Reform.**—When we take note of moral defects in the Olympian system, we must bear in mind, that it repudiated the worship of inanimate bodies and animals ; that at least it greatly retrenched the iniquities, with which Asia had already polluted its religion ; and that it expelled altogether the very basest of those elements, which it was left for later and more polished times to reintroduce.

5. **The Law of Duty.**—The law of duty, as between man and man, thus on the whole sustained by religion, was undoubtedly real, if imperfect. The most striking proof of this reality is to be found in the remarkable fidelity and consistency with which the poet uses his command over the sympathies of the hearers, so as to direct them towards good persons and good ends, and to estrange them from the bad. In the very groundwork both of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the cause of Greece and the cause of Odusseus, which gain the upper hand, are each the cause of right, justice, and the family order. Not only is this so, but in each particular case we are impelled or led in such a way by the master, that we like and dislike as we ought to like and dislike ; and, again, not only as to the main distinction between good and bad ; but even

as to the shades of each. In the *Iliad*, Paris, Aphrodite, and Thersites, in the *Odyssey* the Suitors and the paramour Melanthe, are made odious to us. There is no tampering with the greatest moral laws; as far as Homer knows right, he works it out loyally into the tissue of his poems. The splendid gifts of Achilles and Odusseus do not inspire an indiscriminating admiration: we feel free to censure the savage element in the retribution administered to the gross offence of Agamemnon, and to question the terrible sternness, in some points, of the tragedy in the Ithacan palace. The splendid beauty, and even the gracious penitential humility, of Helen do not bewitch us into a forgetfulness that she had erred. Our unmixed sympathy is reserved for characters such as the grand Penelope, the affectionate Andromache; for Nausicaa, the flower of maidenhood; for Eumaios, the picture of an intelligent, sound-hearted, and devoted dependent. No small proportion of writers in the Christian period fail to carry our instincts of approval and disapproval to their proper aims with the unfailing rectitude of Homer.

6. **Slavery.**—Two of the testing questions for the Achaian ethics are, the institution of slavery, and the estimate and position of woman. The blot of slavery is there; and that is all. As far as the poems inform us, it was domestic, and not predial slavery: connected, in all cases, with the supply of the household, or with personal attendance on its heads. The slave could hold property. We hear of no exceptional laws concerning him beyond the essential one that, receiving his food, raiment, and domicile, he laboured generally for another, yet apparently not with the rigid exclusion of all acquisition for himself. Arms are given to the slaves of Odusseus, and are used by them, as if there was nothing unusual in it. They were not of inferior races: they seem to have been usually captives, who would often be of birth and rearing higher than the

commonalty. Reasoning from the *Odyssey*, we need not suppose that slaves were excluded from the army before Troy. In fact the presence of a few names among the common soldiery, such as Agelaos and Aisumnos, which have affinity to the higher class, leads to the conjecture that there were slaves serving in the army, who had been born to a better station. But, even though a mild slavery, it must have been attended with a sense of depression and disappointment, and abatement of the higher energies. It did not, however, like modern slavery, pervert the public opinion of the community with regard to its own nature, if, as is probable, Homer was in harmony with his hearers when he sang that on the day when the freeman became a slave, he lost, by the ordinance of Zeus, one half his manhood (*Od.* xvii. 322).

7. **Estimate and Position of Woman.**— Much better than this can the Achaian age bear the application of the test drawn from the estimate of woman. Here again there can be no stronger evidence, than the stamp which Homer has set on his female characters. The most notable of them compare advantageously with those commended to us in the Old Testament: while Achaian Jezebels are nowhere found. There is a certain authority of the man over the woman; but it does not destroy freedom, or imply the absence either of respect, or of a close mental and moral fellowship. Not only the relation of Odusseus to Penelopè and of Hector to Andromachè, but those of Achilles to Briseis, and of Menelaos to the returned Helen, are full of dignity and attachment. Briseis was but a captive, yet Achilles viewed her as in expectation a wife, called her so, avowed his love for her, and laid it down that not he only, but every man must love his wife, if he had sense and virtue. Among the Achaian Greeks, monogamy is invariable; divorce unknown: incest abhorred. The sin of the father of Phoinix with a loose woman is recorded as

a gross dishonour to his mother. Aigisthos, having committed a crime in the murder of Agamemnon, commits another crime (*Od.* i. 39) by marrying his widow. Only in one case have we any trace of what may be termed professional or promiscuous lust. The sad institution which, in Saint Augustine's time, was viewed by him as saving the world from yet worse evil, is unknown or unrecorded. Concubinage prevails in the camp before Troy, but only single concubinage. Some of the women, attendants in the Ithacan palace, were corrupted by the evil-minded Suitors; but some were not. It should perhaps be noted as a token of the respect paid to the position of the woman, that these very bad men are not represented as ever having included in their plans the idea of offering violence to Penelopè. The noblest note, however, of the Homeric woman remains this, that she shares the thought and heart of the husband: as in the fine utterance of Penelopè, she prays that rather she may be torn away by the Harpies than remain "to glad the spirit of a meaner man" (*Od.* xx. 82) than her great husband, still away from her.

8. **Fundamental Merits and Defects.**—If we go over the forms of vice and virtue in detail, it will appear upon the whole, that natural law was profoundly revered, while conventional law hardly yet existed; that there was a deep and even delicate sense of the dignity of man, and a total absence of the extreme forms of wickedness, with which later ages have been familiar; but a low estimate of the value of life, which we now measure somewhat more justly, and an apparent licentiousness as to property, the law of *meum* and *tuum*, which when examined opens out into a defect of wider range; an incapacity, namely, or indisposition, to acknowledge in foreign communities, and their members individually, the possession of that general human right (*themis* and *themistes*), which were an elementary idea as between the members of the

Greek civil society, the rulers and the ruled. We never hear of a Greek slave: but the best men did not scruple to purchase the kidnapped victims whom Phœnician vessels brought from abroad to their shores. When Odusseus says (*Od.* xxiii. 357) he will repair the live-stock the Sutors had wasted partly by plunder, partly by the free gifts of Achaians, it would appear that the plunder in view must have been foreign, for he could hardly look for voluntary offerings from a class whose property he meant to lay waste. In this view, the question, commonly put to strangers on their arrival, is not without interest, "Who are you, and from whom; where are your city and your ancestors?" This is no mere curiosity: it is rather an inquiry whether the new-comers are possessed of a presumptive title to hospitality as Greeks, so as to be *xenoi*, or to have had the xenian tie formed by earlier intercourse; or whether they are buccaneers, who scour the seas at the hazard of their lives, and carry with them woe, but to whom? not to neighbours, nor to men at large, but to *allodapoi* (*Od.* iii. 74), the foreigners or strangers proper, with whom they have no social bond of union.

9. **View of Homicide.**—Homicide in these circumstances was lightly regarded; and Odusseus, when feigning himself a Cretan, does not scruple to say, even while he is making a plea for himself as a stranger in Ithaca, that he deliberately took the life of one who had only deprived, or sought to deprive, him of his due share in the spoils of Troy. Commonly the man-slayer of the poems has acted in passion, and he flies after the act, because the relations are entitled to retaliate. But, when he has escaped, he loses none of the general titles to hospitality enjoyed by the stranger. He may become indeed a suppliant (*hiketês*), but Zeus guards the rights of suppliants as well as of other wanderers and poor (*Od.* xiii. 213, xvi. 422.) These ideas must have been most deeply

rooted; for down to our own time they have been found to subsist and operate in the Greek peninsula.

10. **Family Life.**—The obligations of family life were very strongly felt in paternal, filial, and fraternal, as well as in conjugal relations. Phoinix in youth becomes exasperated against his father for gross wrong to his mother, aggravated by what follows with himself: he feels tempted to parricide, but flies his country to avoid the infamy sure to follow upon the sin. Brother is attached to brother, as Deiphobos to Hector; and Agamemnon, though a selfish character, to Menelaos. In Sarpedon and Glaukos, we see the warm love of cousins. The mother of Odusseus pines away and dies, from yearning for her absent son. The grief of old Laertes at the fiction of his death, his passionate and seemingly dangerous joy when assured that he really sees him, have more than all the freshness of affection in its prime. The last adjuration of Hector to Achilles is in the name of his parents; and the line, in which Priam beseeches the tremendous warrior to remember Peleus, is one of the most famous in all literature. The young are tenderly cared for. The rights of the old to authority and reverence are strongly felt. They exercise the offices of the judge, the priest, the counsellor. But here, as elsewhere, we observe a profound good sense in the Achaian time and race, which pushes no claim to extremes. Laertes, when he has lost the full possession of his powers, goes into retirement; and it even appears from a line in the *Iliad* (v. 92) as if sovereignty was most usually exercised by those only who had reached, but had not passed, the maturity of their corporal and mental powers.

11. **Particular Virtues and Failings.**—Let us conclude with a few notes on particulars. Wine was sociably enjoyed, but drunkenness was abhorred, and is always followed by calamity; it partakes of brutal excess, dishonours nature, and therefore is much

more than merely disapproved. Sexual frailty exists among Achaians, only in narrow measure. A certain element of boastfulness is discoverable even in so gallant a chief as Diomed. Nor is he ashamed to take an advantage of Glaukos in the friendly exchange of arms, copper against gilded, nine oxens' worth for the value of one hundred. The tender affections are most freely exercised, in kissing on the side of joy, tears on the side of sorrow, and by none more freely than by the great Protagonists, Achilles and Odusseus. On one important and characteristic subject, the exposure of the person to view, the men of that time had a peculiar and fastidious delicacy. The self-possession and self-command of every Greek are perfect. These qualities may be traced even in Thersites. In whatever state the Greek may be, he is never bewildered: his soul never rocks upon its pedestal. Only in the Suitors is there a loss of presence of mind: and this is by a divine judgment. Free in taking, Greeks are liberal in giving. Greed rests as a reproach upon the character of Agamemnon, solitary in this respect. There is little mercy to enemies, little pity, but no cruelty: life is taken for cause, never gratuitously or in sport; torture is unheard of. The rapacious and profligate Suitors, exhibit to us the lowest form of Achaian immorality. Of the more bitter and base depravities, whether in institutions or individuals, we do not find a trace.

12. **The Quality of *Aidōs*.**—The noblest of all the ethical indications of the poems is perhaps to be found in the notable and comprehensive word *aidōs*. It refuses to be translated by any single term of the English, or perhaps of any other modern language; indeed I doubt whether it had not abated much of its force in the classical age of Greece. It means shame, but never false shame; it means honour, but never the base-born thing in these last times called *prestige*. It means duty, but duty shaped



with a peculiar grace. It means reverence, and this without doubt is its chief element. It means chivalry; and, though this word cannot be given as a good technical translation, it is perhaps nearer, in pith and marrow, to the Homeric *aidōs* than any other word we know. But *aidōs* excels it, as expressing the faculty of the mental eye turned ever inwards. *Aidōs* is based upon a true self-respect, upon an ever-living consciousness of the nature that we bear, and of the obligation that we owe its laws. There is no sin, that a human being can commit, without sinning against *aidōs*.

## CHAPTER IX.

### POLITY.

1. **Ground Ideas of Achaian Polity.**—The polity of the Achaian time and people was simple. This may best be signified by stating that the word law is not found in Homer, but only the word common-right, *themis*, or in the plural *themistes*: the material lying in our nature, which is gradually drawn forth and, upon experience, shaped into laws. But, simple as were the forms of the Homeric polity, it nevertheless is the department in which, as to every fundamental point, the Homeric Greeks were most advanced. It was pervaded by publicity. It was worked mainly by persuasion, with force only as the last resort. It was founded in reciprocal duty and reciprocal benefit. The absurd idea that the nation exists for the rulers, and not the rulers for the nation, finds no countenance in the Homeric poems. The ruler enjoys, but he also works. The community obeys without any note of servitude, but yet in the spirit of a religious veneration. All the first

fundamental lessons of political science may be learned, particularly by Englishmen, in studying the Achaian politics.

2. **Its Religious Sanction.**—This simple polity is founded under a sanction distinctly divine. It is Zeus, who gives to the ruling office the power that it enjoys. His wrath descends upon the men who pervert justice. We find in Homer the idea expressed, so prominent in the Old Testament, that the sin of the ruler brings suffering on the country. This however is not accompanied with the fiction of passive obedience, or with exclusion of the community from the question who shall rule. In the *Odyssey*, when the return of Odusseus and the slaughter of the Suitors are made known, the people meet to decide that very question.

3. **Monarchy was its Form.**—It is government under a single head, which, growing out of the original and probably remembered constitution of men in families, forms the rule of general practice: though we have in the army instances of a plurality of leaders, and in some of the cases there is no indication of a chief authority. The heads of the most considerable communities, and likewise the chiefs peculiarly distinguished in any manner, such as Telamonian Aias, and Odusseus, appear in the army as having the place of a king (*basileus*); and this title is also fully recognised in the rulers of foreign lands. The word is used largely of the Suitors in the *Odyssey*, who were probably upstarts in the absence of the true king. Minor chiefs have no special title, unless perhaps *hegetōr*, or in the Army *hegemōn*. The name of *anax* appears to belong rather to a class than an office. The good king is mild and gentle as a father. The vice mentioned as marking evil rulers is delivering crooked judgments, and thus putting force in the place of right. Corruption, not violence, is what appears to be imputed to Agamemnon as *demoboros*. He practised violence

against Achilles; but the great chief would have resorted summarily to force in return, unless he had been restrained by a divine injunction.

4. **Functions of the King.**—The king's office was hereditary, and he held it by primogeniture. The office had four branches, and he also appears before us in a fifth capacity. (*a.*) He already performs the duty which elsewhere, and in Greece afterwards, devolved upon the priest, of offering sacrifice. For examples, we have Nestor in Pulos, Agamemnon on the plain of Troy. (*b.*) He is the general, and leads the people to war. The responsibilities of command are vividly exhibited in Agamemnon, whose mind sometimes appears on the point of giving way under the pressure, and who from this cause bursts into a profusion of tears under difficulty. (*c.*) He is the judge; and this is the duty which may be considered primary, for it is the one which Achilles describes as belonging to the possession of the *skeptron*, or royal staff. (*d.*) Fourthly, he is the Head of the Assembly: he summons and presides in it, but apparently without any other defined power. Telemachos, acting as king in Ithaca, is said to call the assembly (*Od.* i. 90); Achilles, (*Il.* i. 54), apparently to procure the calling of it. The ruling office had already begun to gather incidental emoluments. The king received, without objection, gifts from traders for permission to exercise their traffic: so in the Seventh *Iliad* (470) and Seventh *Odyssey* (8-11); and so in the Book of Genesis (xliii. 11). The two talents, mentioned in the trial-scene on the Shield, were, according to some, a fee payable on the administration of justice, and if so, they are to be reckoned as in the nature of royal revenues, since we must regard the judges as his delegates. Further, it would seem that he presided over, and to a great extent regulated, the division of the booty in war. In honour his position was higher still: the titles Zeus-born and Zeus-nurtured appertained to his office.

5. **His Crown Lands, and Duties.**—Lastly, the king is a proprietor. He holds a *temenos*, or public estate. This might be civil, or might be given to the worship of a deity, and probably the support of his priest. The *temenos* of a king appears on the Shield of Achilles; and he watches with pleasure the operations of his reapers. On the other hand the property, on which Laertes lives in retirement, is called *agros*, and not *temenos*; it was acquired by himself, seemingly out of his savings. With these honours, and these possessions, the king was expected to exercise a large hospitality. After his fight with Hector, Aias repairs to the quarters of Agamemnon and to the banquet there, as if it were a matter of right and of course (vii. 313). Alkinoos, when Odusseus arrives in Scheriè, is entertaining his brother kings. Some among the friends of Odusseus, as well as others his enemies perhaps in greater number, appear to have feasted at his palace in his absence. But besides this tax upon his resources, a heavier obligation lay upon him; and it is expressed in the noble speech (*Il.* xii. 310) of Sarpedon to his cousin Glaukos: “Why have we place and preference at feasts? why are we looked upon as gods? why have we that broad estate by Xanthos? That we may stand in the foremost of the Lycian ranks, and court the burning battle.” Finally, to the kings of Homer personal beauty is largely accorded: and they were eminently refined in manners.

6. **The Council.**—As around Zeus in the Olympian Court, so around Agamemnon in the camp, there was a small body of at least eight principal chieftains, also called kings, who formed the Boulè, or Council. These were Menelaos, Nestor, Odusseus, Achilles, Diomed, Idomeneus, Aias the Telamonian, and Aias the Oilean. They bear the general appellation of *gerontes*, elders, as well as kings. The term is official, for some were very young, and only two beyond

middle life. This Council, of course without Achilles, is called together by Agamemnon in the Second *Iliad*, after he has at his own discretion summoned the assembly, but before it meets, and in order to consider what proposition should be made to it. The chiefs meet again before the solemn sacrifice and Array: and again, in the ninth Book, they send the Embassy to Achilles. It was an institution of peace as well as of war. In disorganised Ithaca it does not, indeed, appear in action, but, in the place of assembly, seats were set apart for it; in his youth Odusseus had been sent on a mission by Laertes and his Council; and Nausicaa in Scheriè meets the King Alkinoos on his way to the Council. In this consultative and executive body, discussion is quite free, and it guides Agamemnon quite as much as it is guided by him.

7. **The Assembly.**—So far we have dealt with those of noble birth. It is more remarkable to find, in this early time, that the people at large met together in a place of assembly (*agorè*) appointed for the purpose, and usually near the temples of the gods and the palace of the king. When any great and cardinal matter is to be decided, the Assembly is called. In the camp, we see the political as well as military picture of a nation: and we find the fate of the expedition submitted to the mass of the soldiery. The fictive advice of Agamemnon to return home is taken in good earnest, and all rush in tumultuous joy to give it effect, when Odusseus, by an extraordinary exercise of vigour, rallies them, with a word of persuasion for the chief men, and of reproof, not omitting a blow of his staff, for the noisiest of the mob. Thersites, the blackguard of the army, renews the idea, and is severely beaten by Odusseus; but not until after he has addressed him in a speech, probably meant to feel the pulse of the Assembly. Thersites is thus put down, undoubtedly, by force; but the act of Odusseus is emphatically approved by the people. In

the ninth Book, Agamemnon again proposes the abandonment of the enterprise; Diomed, after a pause, rises and condemns him outright, declaring for his part that he and Sthenelos will fight to the last. Of this, in the teeth of Agamemnon, the Assembly approve in their usual manner, by acclamation. The real weight and importance of the Assembly are made clear in the first Book, when Achilles, instead of going to Agamemnon or the chiefs, chooses it as the arena on which to raise his great controversy concerning the cause of the Plague. But the Assembly could meet even in times of disorder, and in the absence of any executive authority. Accordingly, the people of Ithaca gathered spontaneously upon finding that the Suitors, the actual heads of society, were slaughtered, and that Odusseus, after his long absence, had returned. They proceed to consider what part they shall take for the settlement of the country. There are no majorities and minorities formally stated; but "more than half" determined to offer no opposition to the returned king, while the remainder resisted him; and, after being worsted, obtained, in consequence of a sign from heaven, terms of accommodation.

8. **Publicity and Persuasion.**—It was thus in the light of day, and with the knowledge of all, that great public affairs were carried on. This in itself is an indispensable note of freedom, and one of its main guarantees. But the speeches, made in these assemblies, are as full of strong and serious reasoning as those addressed to the few members of the *Boulè*, or those which pass, before five persons only, in the barrack of Achilles. In this last case, where we should have expected only a conversation, we have the most elaborate of all the Orations found in the poems. But, in all the three descriptions of debate, we have an uniformity of tone and of style, which of itself would assure us that, in the large as well as the small

meeting, there was one and the same object in view, namely, to effect persuasion.

9. **Oratory in Homer.**—It is, however, material to consider the defined place given by the Achaian Greeks to this instrument of persuasion. The art of speech was in truth at this period what may be termed their only fine art; and they had carried it, at a stroke, to its perfection. In this matter Homer is no unconscious agent. In Scherière his Odusseus describes beauty and excellence of speech as the two great gifts of the gods; but, with speech, mind is inseparably bound up. "In your infancy," says Phoinix to Achilles, "you knew nothing either of battle or of the assembly." And then Peleus appointed him to give Achilles his proper equipment as a man, by teaching him both to be "a speaker of speeches, and a performer of exploits." (*Il.* ix. 443.) And so in a remarkable epithet, reserved for these two agencies alone, he recognises nothing but the battle and the *agorè* as able to give glory to a man (*kudianeira*).

10. **The *Tis*, or Public Opinion.**—He has completed our view of this great spring of political life by an ingenious contrivance, used to show that the ordinary Achaian mind worked and passed judgment upon all sorts of matters that were presented to the people in mass. His agent is the *Tis*, or Somebody; the common thought, the embodied sense, of the lookers on. The declarations of *Tis*, introduced with the formula, "But thus observed somebody, looking to his neighbour beside him," are invariably brief and pithy, and they are likewise always right. Where there is a common interest of the Achaians and Trojans, the *Tis* appears as both Trojan and Achaian. There is a *Tis* of Olumpos, and a *Tis* even of the dissolute Suitors, and he speaks exactly what, though in itself wrong, is apt from their point of view. Moreover this case is of interest, because it shows how deeply Homer was imbued with the idea of a

common mind working in every community, so that his men were not stones or dolls, but men in very deed.

11. **Orders of Society.**—Round the king we see a landed aristocracy. A middle class can only be said to exist in a sense ill-defined on either side; but to it we may refer bards, priests, prophets, surgeons or healers of hurts (who approached as nearly to the physician as the surgeon), and skilled artificers, who, like the rest, exercised a gift distinctly divine. All these may be called the *deimoergoi*, or professional men, of the time. Those who tended animals, and tilled the soil, probably formed the bulk of the community. There is no evidence that slaves were numerous. A class of *thetes*, or hired workmen, had come into existence, but there is no reason to suppose it extensive. Probably these, together with slaves, made up the households of the lords, and furnished the needful strength for tillage and herding on their lands. All seem to have joined in military service, except the Priests and the Bards, from neither of which classes have we an instance.

12. **Exchanges.**—Natural shrewdness was the guide of the people in the business of exchanges. They had no abstract knowledge of political economy; yet they had a far better name for it, *oikophelia*, the business of increasing the house property, than our very misguiding phrase. Money did not exist. The nearest approach to it was in the two half talents, deposited "in court," so to speak, for the civil action represented on the Shield. Oxen in some degree supplied a standard of value; bought slaves were estimated in them; and it is curious to observe how cheap they are stated to have been on the Plain of Troy, as we might expect, compared with the price in Ithaca. Stored wealth consisted in the metals; but no store is mentioned either of tin, or lead, or *kuanos*, which I take to be bronze.



## CHAPTER X.

## EUROPE AND ASIA, OR TROYAN AND ACHAIAN.

I. General Relation.—Troy appears, from the genealogy of Dardanos, to exhibit a polity and society somewhat older than those of Greece, with no very marked severance of race, but with a perceptible, and even in some respects decided, difference of manners, institutions, and tendencies. There was a friendly relation between the Dardanid and the Pelopid houses: possibly this gave an opening for the base act of Paris. A son of Anchises presented the mare Aithè to Agamemnon, and probably lived under him in Greece. The Karians of the Trojan army are called *barbarophonoi*, speakers of an outlandish tongue. Mixture of language is stated to pervade that army. But the Trojan people are nowhere described as barbarous, or as *allothrooi*, speakers of a foreign tongue. There is no sign of a very different stage of arts, or constitution of society. The main social difference is in the strict monogamy of the Greeks compared with the polygamy of Priam; but, if this were the only case, it touches the royal house only, and not the people. The general effect of the *Iliad* is to leave an impression, that there was no national animosity between Greek and Trojan. We are told expressly, that only by bribed agency did Paris avert a public judgment or movement against him. The chiefs exhibit a marked inferiority to their rivals on the Achaian side, but not so the soldiery. Had there been a broad ethnical distinction, it would have been every way agreeable to the strong national spirit of the poet to declare it in a decisive manner. It seems probable that, in the same general way in which we

apply the Pelasgian name to the popular mass in Greece, we might also apply it in Troas. The most marked lines of difference between the Greeks and the Trojans of Homer lie in the two broad fields of religion and polity. But these differences are consistent with, and tend to support, the views which we have derived from the general evidence of the poems, that the old agricultural settlers of the Greek peninsula learned polity in its truest sense from the Achaians, and that they had professed, before the advent of that race, a different and lower variety of religion.

2. **Difference in Religion.**—The difference of religion between the Achaian army and the people whom they invaded, is indicated in the clearest manner on the occasion of the Pact made with a view to peace, when the Greek sacrifice is offered to Zeus, but, and this on the proposal of Menelaos, that of the Trojans to the Earth and the Sun. Agamemnon performs the office of priest for the two jointly; and he invokes not only the Sun and the Earth, but the Rivers, and with these the Powers of the Under-world, who after death inflict punishment on the perjured. When we analyse this invocation, we perceive that, together with the address to Zeus, the appeal to the subterranean powers was entirely within the compass of Greek ideas, which attached the utmost value to the Oath as a bond of society, both human and divine. But the rest is the Trojan share. The Rivers are added to the first suggestion of Menelaos in entire harmony with the sequel of the poem; for the Scamandros fights obstinately with Achilles on behalf of Troy, and calls his brother Simois to his aid. Eōs, another Nature-power, is made known to us as the bride of the Trojan prince, Tithonos; and the Sun is reluctant to set, when he does it at the command of Hera, for the purpose of bringing to its close the last day of adverse fortune to the Greeks. It

appears also that the Trojans were in close relation with those other parts of the Olympian scheme, which I have described as Phœnician. Troy itself had offended Poseidon, but he remained in relations of peculiar amity with the Dardanian branch, and accordingly he saves Aineias from Achilles. Aphroditè is the paramour of Anchises, and appears in Troy to Helen. Hephaistos had a priest in Troas. The employment of Hermes to conduct Priam to the camp, and his final revelation of himself, probably indicate his being worshipped in Troas. There is, indeed, no part of the Olympian system, which we can positively affirm to have been excluded from the country; still, there is plainly a closeness of relation between that region and Nature-worship, such as we do not find among the Achaians, but have found reason to ascribe to the older and Pelasgian inhabitants of Greece.

3. **Difference in its Development.**—It is probable that wherever we find a *temenos*, or estate dedicated to a deity, there was a priest to live upon it. There is no *temenos* in Ithaca: the mere grove (*alsos*) was a different thing. There is none in Greece, except for Spercheios and Demeter, two of the Nature-powers; and we have no contemporary Greek priest. In Troas we have the *temenos* (and of course the priest) of Zeus; the priest of Apollo at Chrusè; the priest of Hephaistos; the priest (*arêtēr*, literally pray-er) of Scamandros; lastly, Theano, the high-born priestess of Athenè. Seers or prophets were common to both countries. Against this ritual development, so to call it, in Troas, we may set the rich imaginative development of spiritual existences above the order of Nature-agents, which have been noticed in the chapter on the Olympian scheme. We hear of no statue in Greece, corresponding to the statue of Athenè or Pergamos; but this may be accident.

4. **Its Application to Conduct.**—In the duty of sacrifice, Priam and Hector were eminently punctual,

and we never hear of any defect amongst the Trojans. They besought the aid of Athenè; but in doing this they never thought of the unredeemed wrong of the abduction of Helen. Among the Achaians, on the other hand, when Calchas was asked whether Apollo's wrath was for lack of sacrifice, the answer was, "Neither prayer nor hecatomb, but restitution is the one thing needful." The Greeks are comparatively neglectful in the matter. There are three great cases of omission recorded; that of Menelaos in Egypt, and those of the Army before constructing the rampart, and before undertaking the final return. But, if we look to relative morality, it is rather with the Greeks. Plainly so in the main cause of quarrel. Indeed, we can hardly conceive such an act as that of Paris done by one of the Achaians. The same may be said of the perjury of Pandareos, which breaks the truce, and again lets loose the war. There was a base plot to slay Menelaos when he came, before the war, to reclaim his wife. Euphorbos wounded Patroclos in the back. No similar acts are recorded on the Greek side. The polygamy of Priam is another unfavourable note. Even the best of the Trojan characters have broad veins of weakness.

5. Differences in Polity.—The Succession.—Externally, the form of polity is the same. We see a King, a Council or company of the old, and an Assembly of the people, meeting by the doors of the royal palace. But we may perceive a real difference in the spirit and movement of these institutions. Hector is the working sovereign, while Priam retains the dignity. We may perhaps contrast this arrangement with the case of Laertes. Again, was Hector the eldest son? In Greece we find maintained the birth-right of the first-born; though the case of Menelaos would seem to show that it had not the exaggerated form, in which no share is left to the younger. But polygamy is very adverse to the rule of hereditary succession. Achilles taunts Aineias with being a candi-

date for the throne of Troy after the death of Priam. Again, it is remarkable that Hector's son was called Astuanax, not, as might be supposed, by his father's birthright, but because Hector was the best champion of the city. Again, Paris is called by the supreme name of *Basileus*, which is never given to Hector. Though an indifferent combatant, who does nothing but with the bow, he takes the next rank to Hector in the field, and commands the second division. Although in character contemptible, he is the only prince, besides Hector, who has a palace of his own. Again, the word *hebe*, which means early rather than advanced manhood, is applied to Hector; but not to Paris, who, according to the poems, had carried off Helen nearly twenty, or at least very many, years before. Hector is called young in the lament of Andromachè, whose grandfather had been alive during the war; no such indication occurs as to Paris, though he is of a splendid presence. It is probable, then, on the whole, that Paris was the senior, and that the rule of succession was somewhat variable.

**6. Council and Assembly.**—Among the Achaians, the forms of their institutions had become, in some degree, definite. In Troas they were much otherwise. The Trojan elders hung round Priam with the title of *demogerontes*; but we have no proof of their regular action or debate as a Council. The Achaian assemblies were in general regularly summoned by the heralds, and there was a separate place for the elders. We cannot trace these arrangements in Troy. Indeed we are told that they met all together, young and old. Their assemblies have the air of a chance gathering (*agoras agoreuon*, *Il.* ii. 788). They seem to have been more unruly (*vii.* 346). The speeches are shorter, and are announcements rather than reasonings. The Assembly dealt with business as in Greece; but not with the same deliberation. When Pouludamas spoke in a way Hector did not like, he was wont to reply

that a stranger ought not to disturb the public mind. The restoration of Helen had been debated in assembly. But the mental process was not the same, and Homer marks the difference in the very form of assent. The Achaians unanimously shouted it (*epiachon*). The Trojans tumultuously clattered it (*kela-dēsan*). At the burial of their dead, both armies were silent; the Achaians spontaneously, the Trojans because Priam forbade a noise. The Achaians marched in silence, too, to battle; but the Trojans with a loud buzz. A finer sense, a higher intelligence, a firmer and more masculine tissue of character, were the basis of distinctions in polity, which were then Achaian and Trojan only, but have since, through long ages of history, been in no small measure European and Asiatic respectively.

7. **Partiality of the Witness.**—It is true that Homer may have been biased by his intense nationality, so as to do the Trojans less than justice; and that a poet of their own might have given a different complexion to the picture as well as the tale of Troy. But, if we assume the historic basis in the abduction of Helen, much of the rest follows in natural sequel: and many of the traits which have been noticed, minute separately, and only important when combined, have all the appearance of having been touches given naturally and accurately to the painting, without any malicious intention to disparage.

## CHAPTER XI.

## CHARACTERS.

1. **Plan of the Chapter.**—A full account of the Homeric characters would furnish the material of a separate treatise. They supply, too, for the self-prompted observation of commencing students, one of the most appropriate fields. On both grounds, I shall attempt in this limited work no exhaustive survey, but shall attempt, after a few general observations, to deal with a very few, especially with the two Protagonists, Achilles and Odusseus. I may refer here to what will presently be said (Chapter xiii.) on the differences between those of the characters who fall generally into the same category. Mure, in his *History of Greek Literature*, has been very happy in dealing with some of those which he has touched.

2. **General Manner of Treatment.**—In characters, Homer never repeats himself. No two personages of the poems offer to us the same figure under the dress of an altered name. This is true, and it is rather peculiar to the poet, of classes of characters. The Greek characters of the *Odyssey* have a different tone from those of the *Iliad*: we view them as if through another atmosphere. In the same way, the Greek characters of the *Iliad* have a different tone from the Trojans. The same is true of the Lycian cousins as compared not only with the Trojans, but with the Greeks, to whose model they fundamentally conform. They have a shade of sadness, as of men fighting in a cause, and by the side of comrades, without an entire sympathy. If, on the other hand, we take the foreign characters of the Outer Zone, Kirkè and Kalupso, the Laistru-gones and the Kuklopes, we do not find, the same

incisive handling. The traits are more generalised. The poet is dealing not with what he has seen, but with what he knows only by report. When he gets back to the border-land of Scherîè, he is more at home; he draws upon a background supplied by the Phœnician element in Greece, which seems not to have lost all its distinctive marks. Besides having variety and originality, Homer's characters are true in a peculiar degree—(a) probably because he is describing an age he personally knew; (b) because certainly that age is more truthful, both in its evil and its good, than the gradual elaboration of modern manners and society permits. While it knew largely of self-respect, it hardly knew at all of self-consciousness. There is no word in Homer meaning mere shyness. What is right and what is wrong is stated with the same *naïveté*. Perhaps the highest of all the titles of Homer to a superlative excellence in the drawing of characters is to be found in the inability of the after-poets to maintain them at the level on which he had placed them. The Achilles, the Odusseus, the Helen, in later hands are no more than comparatively feeble, yet gross, caricatures of the great originals.

3. **Intensity of Achilles.**—The character of Achilles has for its most marked characteristics grandeur and intensity. It is colossal in scale, and ranges in some respects over a wider compass than that of any other hero of poetry or romance. Yet with all this its parts are so accurately graduated, and so nicely interwoven, that it is in perfect keeping throughout. Its self-government is indeed only partial. But any degree of self-government is a wonder, when exercised over such volcanic forces. It is a constantly recurring effort at rule over a constantly recurring rebellion, beginning with an inward conflict during the first assembly, and ending with one in the closing scene with Priam. Self-command, always



in danger, is never wholly lost ; and there is a noble contrast between the strain put upon his strength to suppress his own passion, and the masterful ease with which he prostrates every enemy. But he often allows the tide of emotion to flow on, yet forbids it to overflow its banks.

4. **His Ferocity.**—Ferocity is an element in his character, but is not, as has been sometimes supposed, its base. Indulged against the Greeks, it is an exaggerated reaction, such as may be found in very fine natures, against a foul injustice heightened with a number of surrounding aggravations. Indulged against Hector, it is the counterpart of his profound inconsolable affection for the dead Patroclus. In his overbearing wrath he utters the wish, “ Would I could bring myself to devour thee ! ” and after his death he drags him thrice round the tomb of Patroclus ; but the mangling of his body, when he has fallen, is left to the common soldiery.

5. **Largeness of Range.**—The scope of this character is like the sweep of an organ over the whole gamut, from the lowest bass to the highest treble, with every diversity of tone and force as well as pitch. From the fury of the first assembly, he calms down to receive with graceful courtesy the pursuivants who fetch Briseis. Before the stern excitement of the debate with the Envoys, he has been enjoying the gentle pleasure of the lyre, and chanting the deeds of heroes. From his rage against Hector, he passes to tears with Priam. When the heaven-sent arms clash on the floor of his barrack, he kindles into fierce joy ; but the hero did not disdain to deck himself with gold ornaments of Nastes the Karian, which in him suggest effeminacy, but in Achilles seem only a tribute to the magnificence of his manhood. Marked as are these contrasts, they are thoroughly harmonised, not simply by art in the transition, but by the largeness of the scale.

6. **Odusseus compared with Achilles.**—Since Achilles seems everywhere to tread upon the bounds of the preterhuman, it might seem impossible to produce another Protagonist, who must as such be more or less his rival. But the Odusseus is limned with such incomparable art, that at no one point does he appear like an inferior Achilles. Achilles always, Odusseus never, touches on the superhuman. He is always thoroughly human. Colossal grandeur is the basis of the one character: a boundless diversity and many-sidedness, is the spell that gives the other its fascinating power. The adjective *polus*, many or manifold, is the basis of nearly all the characteristic words appropriated to Odusseus: it is curious that no single epithet containing that word is ever applied to Achilles. The variety of Achilles was in a magnificent and profuse display of gifts, whether of taste, fancy, intellect or emotion. In Odusseus an equally powerful and more versatile intellect works with the strictest reference to a practical end, and works in the precise way best fitted to attain it. The splendour of the reply of Achilles to the Envoys could not be meant to convert them: the stinging and compressed oration of Odusseus in Scheriè (viii. 165), so marvellous in force and so exact in justice, utterly extinguishes his adversary, who afterwards makes his apology and reparation. The vast power of Achilles runs to waste in punishing his countrymen, by his withdrawal, for a sin, which at worst they only tolerated. The power of Odusseus never runs to waste, never fails to reach its mark. Largeness of range marks each alike; but while Achilles exults in arms and in ornaments, Odusseus unites to the highest qualities of a statesman and a warrior not only extraordinary excellence in the race, the quoit, the boxing and the wrestling-match, but he is ready to mow, or to plough a field, against a leader of the Suitors. The character of Achilles is rich as a museum; that of Odusseus as a toolshop. There are

contrasts at every point between Achilles and Odusseus. Perhaps it is to mark such a contrast that Homer has made Odusseus shorter in stature than the average. Yet it will be found not only that they have a common basis of character in manhood, intellect, and common tone, but that neither of them is ashamed of tender emotion in its proper place ; they weep as freely as they think loftily and fight bravely.

7. **His Personal Qualities.**—The subject of the *Odyssey* gives Homer the opportunity of setting forth the domestic character of Odusseus, in his profound attachment to wife, child, and home, in such a way as to adorn not only the hero, but his age and race. To personal beauty he does not lay a special claim, and he is denounced by Poluphemos as a poor creature to look at ; but, when he sate, he was more majestic than Menelaos. A combination of daring with prudence, with an infinite diversity of application, forms the staple of his action. But Homer is the master, not the slave, of his own ideas, and does not exhibit them in a pedantic, unreal uniformity. The Greek, in general, not excluding Achilles, was with him what we term “ a man of business.” Odusseus was a little more. His prudence, so commended by Athenè, leans towards craft, though not so as to impair his general integrity of aim. It is also once disturbed by curiosity, when he insists on remaining in the cave of Poluphemos to see what happens ; once even by foolhardiness, when, after re-embarking, he exasperates the monster with his pungent addresses. There is here undoubtedly a fault, yet it is not all fault : it is also the irresistible aspiration of genius to measure itself with danger, and to plunge boldly into the unknown.

8. **Female Characters : Nausicæa and Penelopè.** — Among the feminine characters of Homer, passing by Andromachè, the model

“ Of perfect wifehood and pure womanhood,”

there are three, which display beyond the rest the supreme skill of the master: Penelopè, Nausicæa, and Helen. It may almost be questioned whether anywhere in literature there is to be found a conception of the maiden so perfect as Nausicæa in grace, tenderness, and delicacy. The sense and tact, which are combined with them, are as practical as those of any man. I think that modern genius, which has effected a like union in Portia, has not perhaps exhibited so consummate a harmony of what, as human nature is constituted, are more or less rival qualities. Penelopè is scarcely a less formidable competitor with all later attempts to delineate the queenly matron. The grace, which in Nausicæa was so young and tender, has in Penelopè blossomed into a perfect dignity. Within the rich circle of her endowments as a woman, her great intellect has been constituted on the scale of an Elizabeth, not without reference to the companionship essential for such a husband. Transplant that intellect into the nature of a man, and it might develop into another Odusseus. But where it is, it lies in the same harmony with the fully-developed woman, as the young powers of Nausicæa with her maiden freshness.

9. **Helen.**—Lastly, I come to Helen. There are more powerful pictures in Homer; Penelopè is one of them; but there is none more noteworthy, none that presents bolder combinations. Her story is not fully told. But we are obliged by it to suppose, that her great calamity was also, in some not exactly measured degree, her guilt. She is not, like those we have last had in view, an ideal object; but a mixed portraiture. Her original offence is not aggravated by her apparent transfer to Deiphobos after the death of Paris: even Penelopè had such a transfer to expect, and could only delay it to the uttermost. But she came down to the Horse, and imitated the voice of Argive women she had formerly known; ostensibly,

though the stratagem was strangely shallow, to draw forth the husbands suspected to be within. Here again the suggestion is, that she had weakly yielded to pressure; for, we are told, Deiphobos was behind her as she went. On the other hand, it is irrational to regard her as a type of a depraved character. The original act is described not as a flight, but as an abduction, from her husband. Though the occasion of so much woe to the Trojans, and carped at by some of the family of Priam, she was ever treated tenderly by Hector. She regards Aphroditè with horror, and Paris with scarcely concealed aversion and contempt. She is spoken of in the poems generally, by all persons, without disrespect. In the *Odyssey* she reappears full of queenly dignity, and perfectly restored to the love and confidence of Menelaos, though the gods mark her offence by giving her no children to add to the beautiful Hermionè. With "beauty such as never woman wore," and with the infirmity of purpose which chequered her career, she unites not only grace and kindness, but a deep humility, and a peculiar self-condemnation, which come nearer to the grace of Christian repentance than anything, in my knowledge, that has come down to us with the ancient learning.

10. **Other Characters.**—Very many other characters will repay a careful study: the politic valour of Agamemnon; the modest valour of Menelaos; the brilliant valour of Diomed; the sturdy valour of the greater Aias. But Agamemnon, though strong in policy, is the least Achaian of all the chieftains: tainted with selfishness and greed of gain, and without the bravery in council, which he shows on the field. On the Trojan side, Hector has been unduly exalted by Roman favour; and the error was of necessity repeated by Italian writers in the middle ages. In the *Iliad* he compares poorly with Sarpedon and Glaukos, but very advantageously with the worthless

Paris. His courage is far from perfect, and there are in him veins both of vainglory and of rashness. But he is pious towards the gods, affectionate and beloved in his domestic relations, a laborious and unselfish patriot, laden perhaps with more responsibility than he well can bear. At the latest moment, driven to bay, he recovers a perfect manhood, and dies the hero's death.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ART, AND THE ARTS.

1. **State of Art in Greece.**—Fine art, as distinguished from the arts in general, is known to Homer, but hardly as practised by the Greeks. They used articles of bronze, but we never hear of tin as a commodity among them. They fused metal into moulds, but there is no trace of their mixing metals together. The gold-worker (*chrusochoos*) was a gold-beater; his tools were the anvil, the hammer, and the pincers; and his work in that capacity was, to plate a portion of gold on the horns of an animal for sacrifice. But in the performance of this very work he is also called the *chalkeus*, or copper-smith; and the gold was supplied to him by Nestor, so that even this simple operation would seem not to have implied a regular trade. The practice is carried a little further in a simile, where we are told of the rare artificer, instructed by Hephaistos and Athenè, who plates gold upon silver, and so produces beautiful works. This probably represents the summit of Greek contemporary art; but it will be observed that it includes no reproduction by imitation from nature, either vegetable or animal. No worker in metals is mentioned among the professional classes in the Seventeenth *Odyssey*. Iron was scarce; it was

carried past Ithaca, from what point we know not, to exchange for copper. Homer was acquainted with the practice of hardening it, in the axe or adze, by plunging it, when hot, into cold water. From the purposes to which copper was applied, there must also have been the means of hardening this metal; but they are not specified. Of anything like Art, except in metal, the poems give no sign. A statue of Athenè appears to be implied by *Il.* vi. 303; but, had it been a work of art, it would have been more distinctly noticed. It was probably wooden. There is no mention of art-work in stone; but stone pillars are erected over graves; once ivory is wrought.

2. **The Shield of Achilles.**—The chief and most splendid work of art in the poems is the Shield of Achilles. It is so large and elaborate a production, and the power of the poet has been so freely spent in giving expression to its excellence, that it may be said to stand in some degree of contrast, as well as comparison, with the other products of art. Some, therefore, have thought this magnificent conception the fruit of a later age. Others, conceiving that Homer must have seen something of the kind, bring down his date to the period of the largely-figured shields, which explorers have discovered. But why may not the poet compound as well as the artist? Why should not Homer, by combining particulars which he had seen in severance, have supplied a groundwork for these very shields, as some of Dante's descriptions of supernatural scenes are known to have provided them for the mediæval painters? The arms of Agamemnon carried serpents in relief, with figures of Gorgo, Fear, and Panic. The compartment of the dance on the great Shield was like a work that Daidalos had wrought for Ariadnè; showing that the poet had heard of or seen some such work. A signet ring of prehistoric antiquity has been found by Schliemann at Mukenai, which has signs of a combination very like that of the

first and most remarkable compartment on the Shield. This Shield is the work of a god : it therefore represents the summit of art. That god is Hephaistos, a deity secured for Greece only by the mediating action of Thetis, and marked with all the signs of foreign and eastern origin.

3. **Other Works of Art in the Poems.**—For, as the god Hephaistos is notably linked to objects of art in the poems, so they are frequently by name associated with Sidon, the Phoinikes, and the East. They are numerous : I will name a selection. The first that meets us is the sceptre of Agamemnon, which was a work of Hephaistos, presented by him to Zeus, and by Zeus, through Hermes, to Pelops. The baldric of Heracles, with its hunts and battles, stands very high in the poet's estimation ; as did the golden clasp of the mantle of Odusseus. In this the dog is throttling the fawn, whose feet quiver in its gripe. Here we have, in each case, living objects from nature. In a range more purely ornamental, there is the necklace of gold and amber, brought by the Phoinikes. Earrings of gold were familiar ; they have been found in numbers at Hissarlik. The head-dress of Andromachè is elaborately described in the *Iliad*. Our translators had been unable to render the passage with precision ; but it has become quite intelligible on being compared with two rather complex ornaments of gold<sup>1</sup> for the head, which Schliemann discovered at the same place. Ivory is stained for ornament by Maionian and Karian women. A bowl shaped in silver, the finest in the world, was the work of the Sidonians. Another, of silver with a rim of gold, was the work of Hephaistos, presented by the Sidonian king. A Thracian sword was "beautiful ;" but this may have been only for its metal. Agamemnon, and he alone, had a sword with golden studs, set apparently upon a sheath of wood.

<sup>1</sup> Now at South Kensington Museum (May, 1878).



One instance only occurs of a work of art, which is stated to have been wrought in Greece. It is the elaborate bedstead the handiwork of Odusseus, the universal genius, to whom spear, sword, bow, plough, and axe, with every fine tool, were all alike; and who carries many marks of Phœnician connection. Utility, in the sense of purpose, is associated with all the Homeric works that have beauty of design.

4. **The Useful Arts.**—When, therefore, we speak of the useful arts in Homer, we mean those in regard in which beauty is not prominent, or specifically mentioned. Among these useful arts, the great art was agriculture, with its ploughmen, sowers, reapers; its cowherds, goatherds, shepherds, swineherds. There are no grooms: the care of the horse would seem—while even Hera does not disdain to handle the animal in Olumpos—to have been reserved on earth for a higher order; even for princesses, like Andromachè. There are some signs of advance in the Homeric agriculture. We have the profession of the *ochetegos*, the drainer or channel-digger, already named. Mules had begun to be substituted for oxen, and were thought by the poet preferable. The woodman's art was known and esteemed; for, says Homer, it is by skill, not strength, that he rightly fells the tree. Building in hewn stone is commonly a sign of foreign, or as it may be called Phœnician, agency. The waggon was known, and was drawn by mules: there was also a waggon road.

5. **Instruments of War.**—The chariot, on the other hand, an instrument of war, was sometimes highly decorated, and had coverings of cloth thrown over it when not in use. To draw it was, we may say, the exclusive work of the horse. To mere draught he was too noble to be submitted. Apart from a single casual instance in the Tenth *Iliad*, riding (*κελητίζειν*) would appear to have been a rare and singular exhibition, or the half-foreign accomplishment

of the Kentauroi. The defensive weapons were the shield, circular or oblong, and with a belt for carrying it; the helmet, the breast plate, and the greaves from knee to ankle: there being no provision for the upper leg, nor for the back; for how could an Achaian back be turned? Among offensive weapons, the bow was little in use with the Achaian army; much with the Trojans, who make great play at a distance. In this there may be something of national pride; when at home in Ithaca, Homer exhibits Odusseus as a supreme master of the bow. And his descriptions show how well he himself knew the proper manner of shooting with it. It is not excluded from the funeral Games; but it is left to secondary heroes. The offensive weapons of the Greek warriors are the sword (with its belt), the spear, the javelin, the axe, and the half-axe, or axe with one edge; nor must the hurling of large stones by the most powerful heroes be left out of view. *Machaira*, the knife or dagger, is used not in actual fight, but by the surgeon or the sacrificer.

6. **Works of Artisans.**—The potter's wheel is known and appears (in a simile) on the Shield: but he himself is mentioned only there, and productions in pottery hardly appear in the poems. We cannot infer that they did not exist, or the same inference would hold as to stone implements, of which we have I think none portable, but only the millstone. I infer, rather, that in neither kind did the utensils made attain to much beauty or high excellence. Copper utensils, as well as arms, prevail: and the copper-smith is a pretty familiar personage. The wood-worker is known both as carpenter and ship-builder: he has a tool for boring, and he uses the plummet to give accuracy to his work. The house and the ship, or even the chariot, of Homer, I could not here attempt to describe.

7. **Food.**—The business of the butcher, and that of the cook, were absorbed in the office of the

sacrificer and his assistants. The preparation of bread and cakes doubtless fell, as well as the grinding of corn into flour, to women. Beef and mutton were freely used. When we come to large consumption of pork, as in Ithaca, or in Scheriè, it seems to be a note of foreign connection. There is general mention of considerable variety in bread or vegetable food; but meat was all roasted. Cheese was in use. Fish, like birds, was little esteemed as an article of food: we hear, however, of the fisherman and his net, as well as of the ferryman plying between Ithaca and Cefalonia.

8. **Employments of Women, and Household Offices.**—Women were employed as housekeepers and as nurses, and they discharged most of the indoor duties of the household. Their standing occupation was in spinning and weaving the material of flax or wool into garments, carpets or rugs, coverlets, and other bedclothes. Softness and beauty in these works are mentioned: but embroidery commonly stands in connection with foreign workers, or foreign relationship or instruction: as does the mention of drugs. Men are employed in the office of carving, and the general conduct of the banquets of the Suitors: but the women begin their household work in the morning, about the palace in Ithaca, with an air of routine resembling the like operations of the housemaid in our own age.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HOMER'S PLACE AND OFFICE AS A POET.

I. *The Greek Mind and Work.*—The place and office of the Greeks in regard to letters, and to the culture of the human mind throughout all time, have been admirably described in the opening section of Mr. Jebb's *Primer of Greek Literature*. It is quite idle for modern theorists to suppose that we can dispense with their aid, or shake off what some would call a thralldom. This could only be done by going back to a state which, whatever its equipments in certain respects, would be, in essential points, one nearer to barbarism than that which we now hold. The work of the Greeks has been done once for all, and for all mankind. Regarding more closely their office in the great design of Providence for the education of man, we may say at large that it was to supply a special school, in which the whole intellect of the individual man was to be trained. Their literature, says Mr. Jebb, has the unity not of a library, but of a living body. It is based in conformity to nature, in close mutual relation of parts; in harmony between sound and sense, between thought and language; in solidity, balance, and measure. In every one of these qualities Homer led the way, and supplied a standard for his countrymen; and it may be truly said that the criticisms and estimates formed at other periods, which treat him as limited, or fitful, or abounding more in invention than in judgment, betray a superficial acquaintance with his text. Our own age, less creative perhaps than some others, possesses increasingly the lower but yet valuable prerogative of a systematic and earnest criticism; and

far more has been done within the last century to work the rich mine of his poems, than in the eighteen hundred years preceding. Very much, however, yet remains to reward the labourers of the future.

2. **Homer's Relation to it.**—The qualities that mark Greek letters in general are pre-eminently found in Homer: such as force, purpose, measure, fitness, directness, clearness, and completeness. To these he adds a richness and variety, a comprehensive universality, which is given only to the highest genius. The force, which marks a full and healthy development in mind and body, is in Homer, as in the Greeks generally, not thrown idly about, but addressed to an aim. The thought is in strict proportion to the subject, and the language is fitted exactly to the thought. It goes to its end by the straightest road. The clearness of Homer is unrivalled in literature. The passages, in which his meaning is open to the smallest shade of doubt, either as to thought or language, might perhaps be counted on the fingers. Such a clearness could hardly survive the advent of philosophy. It was the privilege of the childhood of the race, a true though an Herculean childhood. Lastly; the assertion may create greater surprise in some, but it is true, that Homer's forms of expression are in a very high degree complete, as a statue shaped and polished to the finger-nail was in the Roman proverb complete; not merely in their main outlines, but in refined and subtle detail. The whole of these eminently Greek qualities may be summed up in one phrase—poetic truth.

3. **His Characteristic Style.**—Besides his general prerogative as an universal genius, and besides the properties in which Homer is followed, and as it were reproduced, in his countrymen, he has other particular gifts of his own. For example, he is probably the most characteristic of all poets. Traits personal to himself inhere in his whole work, and perpetually reappear upon the surface. Sir Walter

Scott has admirably described the fine style of Swift as the style which puts the right words in the right places. No more just sentence could have been written on the style of Homer. But the merit thus described is essentially general. Homer has also the special quality, that all he produces carries the maker's mark. But the maker's mark, when too prominent, constitutes what is called mannerism. With Homer the maker's mark never obtrudes the maker, or places him between the reader and the theme. It never interferes with the aim and matter of the poem. Only it is there, ready when wanted. If we look for it, we find it. We then discover that in him what we call style, while he has the simplest of all styles, is also, setting aside the class of mannerists, perhaps the most peculiar to the individual. It would be hardly possible to quote five lines from him, which must not at once by internal evidence be recognised as his. Even in the smallest shred of the painting, the painter's touch is seen. So that though imitated often, in form and in material, the imitations of him are known by their trick and effort, not by their likeness.

4. **His suppression of Himself.**—And while his coin in one sense bears his image, Homer, like Shakespeare, is remarkable for the suppression of himself. The harmonious laws of his mind are everywhere visibly at work, but the *ego*—the mere personality—is nowhere to be traced. The pronoun itself only occurs in some few invocations to the Muse. In the exordium of the *Iliad* he says not, like Virgil and Tasso, "I sing," not even "Teach me to sing;" but "Sing, O Goddess." In the *Odyssey*, "Tell me, O Muse, of the man;" where the personal pronoun is a mere grammatical necessity. The only passage, in which we seem for a moment to see the figure of the minstrel is the prelude, in the Second *Iliad*, to the long detail of the Greek Catalogue. This Catalogue

was not, like the Poem at large, a tissue woven with continuity of thought, but rather a heap of details without a natural tie. The effort of memory was arduous. Hence the special appeal for aid from the inspiring deities.

5. **His Adaptation of Sound to Sense.**—Homer is wonderful in his adaptation of sound to sense. This is a property of his great rivals, Shakespeare and Dante. But he had an instrument for the purpose in the Greek hexameter, such as they did not possess, and such as I take to be perhaps unrivalled in all the world. The time of each verse may be termed uniform, and is made up of twelve standard units; but there are five of these units which may be broken into halves at will, with a short syllable assigned to each half; so that the syllables of the verse may vary between twelve and seventeen. The distinction between long and short syllables, is thus the key to the extraordinary elasticity of his system. By the addition of syllables we lay more weight upon our lines; he takes it away. There are other subtle diversities of law, all tending to enlarge his poetic freedom: one the variety of *cæsure*, or principal break of words in the line, and another a sovereign licence in changing occasionally the form of the word so as to alter the time (as from *Achilles* to *Achiles*), or in reversing the quantity, as in *dia* or *Ares*, “at his own sweet will,” by a process which seems to belong to a very early stage in the life of a language, and by a prerogative which it would not be safe for any but a sovereign poet to assume. The general result is, that he moves almost without restraint, in the full freedom of Nature. The clothing does not confine, while it sets off, the limbs of Thought. He varies incessantly the velocity of his movement, and the weight of his tread, in due proportion to the subject he is exhibiting. The Italian vocabulary for regulating a musical performance finds full expression in the method of his verse.

6. **Examples of this Adaptation.**—By way of exemplifying the operation of this most elastic prosody, I may observe that, when he has to describe the rapid motion of the flying chariots, when the horse Xanthos has to assure Achilles that it was by no tardiness of steeds that Patroclus became a victim, or when he tells of the light velocity of the mares that had Boreas for their sire, the rapid, that is to say the short, syllables of each verse are increased to eight and even ten. Here the short syllables actually outnumber the long, and the verse seems to gallop. When, on the other hand, he has to describe hard, heavy blows, or the massive constituents of an abundant banquet on the tables, and on two other similar occasions, he goes so far as to exclude short syllables altogether by what are termed spondaic lines. Virgil, who is certainly of the greatest masters of versification in the world, imitates this method of Homer's, but cannot match him. Again, to learn how very far it is from easy to make words bound, as Homer does, let the reader turn to Pope, one among our most famous adepts. It is in one among his very best renderings of sound that he gives us the wind-born mares (Pope's *Il.* xx. 270):—

“These lightly skimming, when they swept the plain,  
Nor plied the grass, nor bend the tender grain;  
And when along the level seas they flew,  
Scarce on the surface curled the briny dew.”

But he surely fails to convey the idea of lightness when he describes, after Virgil, in a lengthened and loaded verse, the similar movement of Camilla, who

“Skims the unbending corn, and flies along the main.”

Again, when Iris, the “beautiful and swift,” sets out upon her messages, or when the horse is at full speed, Homer uses the dactylic line of seventeen syllables. This adaptation he carries, without violence, into detail. For example, the speech of the horse Xanthos



to Achilles is mournfully predictive, and therefore requires a fair share of spondees ; but when he pleads that it was through no want of speed that Patroclus perished, he does it in a dactylic line. When Achilles is weeping before Priam, two lines (xxiv. 511, 512) have together five spondees ; when he puts away his grief and rises up (513-515), three lines have only four. With the command he possessed over his verse, he did not need to use the ignoble artifice of filling it with unmeaning words. His expressions seem to have flowed, rather than fallen, into their places with spontaneous ease. I doubt whether he knew, even as much as Shakespeare had to know, what we common men mean by effort. Others besides Homer wrote in the hexameter, both Greek and Latin, with the same laws ; but not even Virgil, a supreme master of versification, has been able to make it do the work, which Homer obtained from it in the ever-varying adaptation of language to thought, of sound to sense.

7. **Use of Particles.**—In another matter, Homer was supremely happy in his instrument ; for the Greek tongue in his hands lent itself by its particles to slight and delicate shadings of the sense, which it is impossible for us to follow, since we have no terms to express the fine touches they convey, without, at the same time, expressing a great deal more, and thus deranging the artful balance both of thought and of expression. This is felt either less, or not at all, in translating other Greek writers : but the particles of Homer are the despair of his translators. Periphrasis is found intolerable ; and there is no refuge but omission. It is remarkable, that the simple life of the Greeks should have been equipped in language with a nicety that modern times and tongues have lost, and likewise that that nicety should have been most fully developed in the earliest and most artless period of Greek letters.

8. **Use of Epithets.**—It is more easy for us to trace this exact and delicate modelling of thought in

the use of epithets, which is certainly one of Homer's most marked peculiarities. What shading does for the painter, epithets, together with particles, appear to effect for Homer; and this, as to both, in a greater degree than, so far as I know, for any other author. I doubt the opinion sometimes held, that there abound in Homer idle or "otiose" epithets, which do not add to the sense. Take the case of the "hollow ships." Certainly, hollowness is implied in the ship, as brightness is in the fire or the sun. But poetry, especially recited poetry, and most of all the poetry of Homer, is a perpetual presentation of images; and the epithet hollow assists to raise the image for the mental eye of the hearer. By developing the sense intended, it adds to the sense received.

9. **For the Horse.**—Homer has a most refined use of epithets, even for animals. He employs nearly eighty for the horse: an astonishing number, many of which, as might be expected, express fire or speed. But he distributes them with a finer discrimination than will be readily observed elsewhere. He never applies to the horse an epithet of rapidity, or fire, on occasions when the animal is engaged otherwise than in rapid, energetic movement. Not less than six elaborate passages might be cited from which such phrases are wholly excluded: among them the descriptions of the horses of Achilles weeping upon the death of Patroclus, and of the mares of Erichthonios feeding. That is, he avoids giving a general trait, which would not be in harmony with the particular situation. When he describes the animal generally, the epithets of swiftness reappear: as in the cases of Eumelos, ii. 763; Zeus, viii. 41; Rhesos, x. 436.

10. **For Men.**—So much for animals. But the help, refreshment, and guidance to the mind, which epithets can convey, and the part they can play in the delineation of character, is nowhere to be seen as it is to be minutely traced in the epithets of Homer, for all his

great characters, divine and human. For example, he only gives the epithet (*thrasūs*), rash, to Hector when there is something in the actual situation that brings out his rashness. Three times he is admonished, in the sense of caution, by the circumspect Pouludamas. On these three occasions, the line which introduces the speech notes him as "the rash Hector": but on these three only. Again, the epithets of Homer are made to do what other poets have effected by lengthened descriptions. It may be said, indeed, with nearly literal truth, that in Homer there are no descriptions at all. The whole purpose of the poet is wrought out in actions and in speeches. But his epithets stand instead of descriptions. By the epithets given to the Danaan, Argeian, and Achaian appellatives, we can perceive the true meaning of the names. We see that he did not think highly of the Ionians; for he calls them tunic-trailing, while his Achaians are copper-tunicked, or mailed. In the case of Odusseus, especially, all the wealth and resource of his mind is peculiarly expressed by epithets. In the case of Achilles, the epithets are comparatively commonplace; without doubt because his character is so amply expressed in strong and vehement action. Homer pursues more, and far more successfully than any other poet, the method of giving efficacy to these epithets by exclusive appropriation. Among those given to Odusseus, there are eight most characteristic of his mind and disposition; they are *Dii metin atalantos*, *tlemōn*, *polumetis*, *poluphrōn*, *polutlas*, *polutropos*, *polumechanos*, *poikilometis*: not one of them is ever applied to any other person. Two other epithets he shares only with his great brother-protagonist, Achilles, among *living* men: these are *theios*, divine, and *ptoliporthos*, city-sacker. Even in his own family, where all are prudent, the distinctions are carefully maintained. Noble Penelope is *periphron*, the reflective. Telemachos is *pepnumenos*, the sensible.

But these epithets are never exchanged; neither the wife nor the son ever have any of the characteristic epithets of the father, nor has he theirs.

II. *Shadings of the Characters.*—I may now proceed to bring towards a close what I have to say on the very refined qualities of Homer, by passing from these epithets of human character to his more general exhibition of its more subtle distinctions. The minute distinctions of character are best seen, where characters are apparently allied. Thus the Trojans, taken generically, are not cowards; but in the groundwork even of Trojan courage, in the tissue of the mind, there is a weakness that stands in marked contrast to the masculine tone of the Greek. The seeming exceptions are, the Lycian Sarpedon and his cousin Glaukos; but the picture of the Lycians in Homer includes the descent of these heroes from Bellerophon, and constantly shows that he regarded that people as ethnical relatives of the Greeks. Achilles, Aias, Diomed are paramount in bravery: but endurance marks the bravery of Aias, as brilliancy that of Diomed, while Achilles is in all things on the borders of the preterhuman. Of the two it is Diomed, not Aias, who is in some sort of compètion with Achilles; accordingly it is Aias, not Diomed, who is sent as co-envoy with Odusseus in the embassy of the ninth Book. Behind these three lie what may be called the political courage of Agamemnon, only put forth in emergency; and the prudent courage of Odusseus, which is always forthcoming in exact proportion to the occasion, and filling the place that no other is found to fill. The wisdom, again, of Nestor is amusingly accompanied with self-complacent reflection; that of the great Odusseus is entirely spent upon its end, and never once in either poem, though even he cannot always repress the hardihood of curiosity, does he indulge in the slightest egoism. Phoenix is of the standing of Nestor, and has the same retrospective

habit of mind ; but is effectually marked off by this, that his entire heart and thought are in the welfare of Achilles. The Nestor of the *Odyssey* is carefully differentiated from the Nestor of the *Iliad*, yet in just proportion to the altered circumstances of his rather fidgety character. Like Helen, without any infringement of identity, he has received an accession of dignity and calm. There is a great resemblance between Penelopè and Andromachè, each the normal exhibition of the wife and mother under heavy strain : but, again, it is the Greek who wins the day with Homer, for Penelopè only of the two has the depth and scope, which fit her to be the soul-sharing partner of the great Odusseus, and which would have been thrown away upon the smaller scale of mind exhibited in Troy. Again, Telemachos is not, and will not be if he grows for a century, an Odusseus. The prudence and rectitude are there, as in the father's son : but the ready initiative, the prompt presence of mind, the supple strength, the unbending purpose, the rich resource, are gone ; and, while the lineage is obvious, poetry has returned to prose.

12. **Sense of Beauty ; Number ; Colour.**—The very keen perception of beauty in form, in order, and in movement, which is found everywhere in the poems, conveys the idea that, in this organ too Homer was, even to an unusual degree, finely strung. Even where he has to condemn its adjuncts, he does not fail to pay it a due homage. Nireus, for his beauty, has a splendid passage given him in the Catalogue, though it winds up by blasting him as a poor creature (*alapadnos*), with small following. To Euphorbos on his death, a warrior of no marked distinction, he has devoted some of his tenderest and most graceful lines, for no other reason, as it seems, than that he was of remarkable beauty. In a few instances, we trace an indefiniteness of language, which suggests that the faculty in him had not yet profited by the great advantage derivable

by us from what has been termed of late heredity. His idea of number, when it becomes large, grows, as with a child, very loose; hundreds float somewhat vaguely before him; thousands are as billions or quadrillions. So, also, he knew but little and vaguely of the differences of colour, except as approximations to the opposite ideas of light and darkness, both of which he grasped firmly, and turned very largely to poetic use. He never gives an epithet of colour to a flower; never calls the skies blue; and there is no word in the poems which would justify an assertion, that he had any approach to a distinct perception either of green or of blue. Yet so well did he employ his comparatively scanty materials, that his visual imagery is both abundant and highly imposing.

13. **Similes of Homer; Rhymes; the Pun.**—The developed similes of Homer, without counting those more slightly stated, exceed two hundred and thirty, of which only about forty are in the *Odyssey*. They are employed to relieve the action where it flags, or where, as in the details of war, it wants variety. They are therefore very unequally distributed. The first Book of the *Iliad*, where the action is very animated as well as diversified, has none. The sixteenth and seventeenth, where the action is wholly martial, have between them thirty-seven. They are usually from three to five lines in length, and are supplied by very varied observation of the scenes of life and the operations of war. As we pass from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey*, in proportion to the change of subject, similes from the chase and storm, which had been very frequent, become rare, and domestic or still life predominates. The elements of rhyme may also be largely detected in the poems by the observant reader: in a few instances they are so prominent—for example in the two closing lines of the magnificent description of the Shield of Achilles—that they can hardly be overlooked. The *parono-*

*masia*, or pun, if it has no older parent, may contentedly claim the parentage of Homer. He has given it a marked sanction in the *Outis* of the *Odyssey*, and not less than a dozen instances may be found.

14. **His Relation to Greek Poetry in its several Branches.**—Passing from these fragmentary remarks, I add a few words on Homer's more direct contributions to the literature of his country, and indeed of the world. From him has been drawn the epic, which I suppose contests with the drama the title to supremacy among the kinds of poetry. It seems to me, however, that Homer stands in a nearer relation, than has commonly been perceived, to the theatre of his country. And this, not only on account of the remarkable degree in which he conducts the action of his poems through the medium of the speeches. In its earliest acknowledged stage the Greek drama shows us but a single actor or reciter, together with a Chorus chanting odes in honour of Dionusos: upon which Chorus there certainly devolved the office of passing judgments, according to right and truth, upon the action of the piece. Now Homer, reciting his own poems, was himself an actor, using a musical accompaniment: and he introduces from time to time, under the name of *τῆς* (*tis*), a personage extrinsic to the action, who performs the part of a judicious observer, and is the organ, like the Chorus, of a sound public opinion.

The poetry of Homer appears to have supplied the basis of the hymns which are untruly associated with his name as their composer; and it is easy to perceive how the elegy might find food from his laments (*threnos*) over the dead, and the war-song of Turtaios derive its inspiration from the whole strain of the *Iliad*. In the view of Aristophanes, he seems to have been properly the poet of war. The triumphal hymn of praise, or *paian*, is commemorated in the *Iliad*, as already established in use.

15. **To Oratory.**—There is one noble branch of Greek literature, which we cannot but refer markedly to Homer, namely, its political oratory. For the oratory of argument and sarcasm, we turn to the embassy of the Ninth *Iliad* in the barrack of Achilles: for the oratory of passion and withering invective to the debate in the Assembly of the First Book, or to the wonderful speech of Odusseus in reply to the insolence of the Scherian Prince, given in the Eighth *Odyssey*. I know not where to find grander models; and I cannot think Achilles in any way inferior to Demosthenes. Nor was this a bye-blow of the poet's genius. We have seen that the subject of public speech had a large and well-defined place in his mind; and one of the very few passages in his poems, that can be called properly descriptive (introduced however in a speech), will be found in the eight splendid lines of the Third *Iliad* (216-23), which celebrate the eloquence of Odusseus.

16. **To History.**—Less direct than the relation of Homer to the oratory of Greece, but still sufficiently perceptible, is the manner in which his poems supply the first suggestion of the great work of the historians. Apart from the mere incidents of the war of Troy, or from whatever nucleus of truth there may be in the adventures of Odusseus, Homer is the historian of their age in the picture he has given us of its mind, its institutions, and its manners. Nor does it seem possible to account for the large number of important pre-Troic legends that he has introduced, especially into the *Iliad*, upon any other ground than this, that the bard of the heroic age, making use of the only vehicle it afforded, worked with positive historic aims.

17. **Philosophy a marked Exception.**—But if Homer can thus be exhibited as the father of Greek letters in most of their branches, there is one great exception, which belongs to a later development.



That exception was the philosophy of Greece; which seems to have owed its first inception to the Asiatic contact established after the great eastern migration. The absence of all abstract or metaphysical ideas from Homer is truly remarkable. Of all poets he is the most objective, and the least speculative. Of the impersonated Unseen no poet has made such effective employment; of the Unseen, except as connected with impersonation, he never I think makes use, unless on two occasions; one (vol. vii. 36) where the ships of the Phaiakes are as swift as a wing, or as a thought; and the other when he compares the agitated mind of Hera with the quickened intelligence of a man stimulated and informed by much travel (*II.* xv. 30). The nearest approach to these cases is perhaps to be found in such passages as the reflection of Achilles on the mixed dispensation of life, and its prepondering sadness. But this is incorporated thought. Two caskets are on the floor of heaven: the contents are respectively good and evil. From them Zeus dispenses the mixed fortunes of some, and the unmixed misery of others. Homer was not an optimist. But neither did he multiply gratuitous perplexities. The controversies of materialism were unknown to him. All the world, all life, all experience, filled his magazine; for him mind and matter had suffered no breach of harmony. Human life had an aspect mostly sad: but the universe, as to its general constitution, was still in tune.

THE END.

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