Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans. Many a brave soul did it send hurrying down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures, for so were the counsels of Jove fulfilled from the day on which the son of Atreus, king of men, and great Achilles, first fell out with one another.

And which of the gods was it that set them on to quarrel? It was the son of Jove and Leto; for he was angry with the king and sent a pestilence upon the host to plague the people, because the son of Atreus had dishonoured Chryses his priest. Now Chryses had come to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and had brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of Apollo wreathed with a suppliant's wreath and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, who were their chiefs.

"Sons of Atreus," he cried, "and all other Achaeans, may the gods who dwell in Olympus grant you to sack the city of Priam, and to reach your homes in safety; but free my daughter, and accept a ransom for her, in reverence to Apollo, son of Jove."

On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. "Old man," said he, "let me not find you tarrying about our ships, nor yet coming hereafter. Your sceptre of the god and your wreath shall profit you nothing. I will not free her. She shall grow old in my house at Argos far from her own home, busying herself with her loom and visiting my couch; so go, and do not provoke me or it shall be the worse for you."

The old man feared him and obeyed. Not a word he spoke, but went by the shore of the sounding sea and prayed apart to King Apollo whom lovely Leto had borne. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla and rulest Tenedos with thy might, hear me oh thou of Sminthe. If I have ever decked your temple with garlands, or burned your thigh-bones in fat of bulls or goats, grant my prayer, and let your arrows avenge these my tears upon the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. He came down furious from the summits of Olympus, with his bow and his quiver upon his shoulder, and the arrows rattled on his back with the rage that trembled within him. He sat himself down away from the ships with a face as dark as night, and his silver bow rang death as he shot his arrow in the midst of them. First he smote
their mules and their hounds, but presently he aimed his shafts at the people themselves, and all
day long the pyres of the dead were burning.

For nine whole days he shot his arrows among the people, but upon the tenth day Achilles called
them in assembly—moved thereto by Juno, who saw the Achaeans in their death-throes and had
compassion upon them. Then, when they were got together, he rose and spoke among them.

"Son of Atreus," said he, "I deem that we should now turn roving home if we would escape
destruction, for we are being cut down by war and pestilence at once. Let us ask some priest or
prophet, or some reader of dreams (for dreams, too, are of Jove) who can tell us why Phoebus
Apollo is so angry, and say whether it is for some vow that we have broken, or hecatomb that we
have not offered, and whether he will accept the savour of lambs and goats without blemish, so
as to take away the plague from us."

With these words he sat down, and Calchas son of Thestor, wisest of augurs, who knew things
past present and to come, rose to speak. He it was who had guided the Achaeans with their fleet
to Ilius, through the prophesyings with which Phoebus Apollo had inspired him. With all
sincerity and goodwill he addressed them thus:-

"Achilles, loved of heaven, you bid me tell you about the anger of King Apollo, I will therefore
do so; but consider first and swear that you will stand by me heartily in word and deed, for I
know that I shall offend one who rules the Argives with might, to whom all the Achaeans are in
subjection. A plain man cannot stand against the anger of a king, who if he swallow his
displeasure now, will yet nurse revenge till he has wreaked it. Consider, therefore, whether or no
you will protect me."

And Achilles answered, "Fear not, but speak as it is borne in upon you from heaven, for by
Apollo, Calchas, to whom you pray, and whose oracles you reveal to us, not a Danaan at our
ships shall lay his hand upon you, while I yet live to look upon the face of the earth—no, not
though you name Agamemnon himself, who is by far the foremost of the Achaeans."

Thereon the seer spoke boldly. "The god," he said, "is angry neither about vow nor hecatomb,
but for his priest's sake, whom Agamemnon has dishonoured, in that he would not free his
daughter nor take a ransom for her; therefore has he sent these evils upon us, and will yet send
others. He will not deliver the Danaans from this pestilence till Agamemnon has restored the girl
without fee or ransom to her father, and has sent a holy hecatomb to Chryse. Thus we may
perhaps appease him."

With these words he sat down, and Agamemnon rose in anger. His heart was black with rage,
and his eyes flashed fire as he scowled on Calchas and said, "Seer of evil, you never yet
prophesied smooth things concerning me, but have ever loved to foretell that which was evil.
You have brought me neither comfort nor performance; and now you come seeing among Danaans, and saying that Apollo has plagued us because I would not take a ransom for this girl, the daughter of Chryses. I have set my heart on keeping her in my own house, for I love her better even than my own wife Clytemnestra, whose peer she is alike in form and feature, in understanding and accomplishments. Still I will give her up if I must, for I would have the people live, not die; but you must find me a prize instead, or I alone among the Argives shall be without one. This is not well; for you behold, all of you, that my prize is to go elsewhither."

And Achilles answered, "Most noble son of Atreus, covetous beyond all mankind, how shall the Achaeans find you another prize? We have no common store from which to take one. Those we took from the cities have been awarded; we cannot disallow the awards that have been made already. Give this girl, therefore, to the god, and if ever Jove grants us to sack the city of Troy we will requite you three and fourfold."

Then Agamemnon said, "Achilles, valiant though you be, you shall not thus outwit me. You shall not overreach and you shall not persuade me. Are you to keep your own prize, while I sit tamely under my loss and give up the girl at your bidding? Let the Achaeans find me a prize in fair exchange to my liking, or I will come and take your own, or that of Ajax or of Ulysses; and he to whomsoever I may come shall rue my coming. But of this we will take thought hereafter; for the present, let us draw a ship into the sea, and find a crew for her expressly; let us put a hecatomb on board, and let us send Chryseis also; further, let some chief man among us be in command, either Ajax, or Idomeneus, or yourself, son of Peleus, mighty warrior that you are, that we may offer sacrifice and appease the the anger of the god."

Achilles scowled at him and answered, "You are steeped in insolence and lust of gain. With what heart can any of the Achaeans do your bidding, either on foray or in open fighting? I came not warring here for any ill the Trojans had done me. I have no quarrel with them. They have not raided my cattle nor my horses, nor cut down my harvests on the rich plains of Phthia; for between me and them there is a great space, both mountain and sounding sea. We have followed you, Sir Insolence! for your pleasure, not ours- to gain satisfaction from the Trojans for your shameless self and for Menelaus. You forget this, and threaten to rob me of the prize for which I have toiled, and which the sons of the Achaeans have given me. Never when the Achaeans sack any rich city of the Trojans do I receive so good a prize as you do, though it is my hands that do the better part of the fighting. When the sharing comes, your share is far the largest, and I, forsooth, must go back to my ships, take what I can get and be thankful, when my labour of fighting is done. Now, therefore, I shall go back to Phthia; it will be much better for me to return home with my ships, for I will not stay here dishonoured to gather gold and substance for you."

And Agamemnon answered, "Fly if you will, I shall make you no prayers to stay you. I have others here who will do me honour, and above all Jove, the lord of counsel. There is no king here
so hateful to me as you are, for you are ever quarrelsome and ill affected. What though you be brave? Was it not heaven that made you so? Go home, then, with your ships and comrades to lord it over the Myrmidons. I care neither for you nor for your anger; and thus will I do: since Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis from me, I shall send her with my ship and my followers, but I shall come to your tent and take your own prize Briseis, that you may learn how much stronger I am than you are, and that another may fear to set himself up as equal or comparable with me."

The son of Peleus was furious, and his heart within his shaggy breast was divided whether to draw his sword, push the others aside, and kill the son of Atreus, or to restrain himself and check his anger. While he was thus in two minds, and was drawing his mighty sword from its scabbard, Minerva came down from heaven (for Juno had sent her in the love she bore to them both), and seized the son of Peleus by his yellow hair, visible to him alone, for of the others no man could see her. Achilles turned in amaze, and by the fire that flashed from her eyes at once knew that she was Minerva. "Why are you here," said he, "daughter of aegis-bearing Jove? To see the pride of Agamemnon, son of Atreus? Let me tell you- and it shall surely be- he shall pay for this insolence with his life."

And Minerva said, "I come from heaven, if you will hear me, to bid you stay your anger. Juno has sent me, who cares for both of you alike. Cease, then, this brawling, and do not draw your sword; rail at him if you will, and your railing will not be vain, for I tell you- and it shall surely be- that you shall hereafter receive gifts three times as splendid by reason of this present insult. Hold, therefore, and obey."

"Goddess," answered Achilles, "however angry a man may be, he must do as you two command him. This will be best, for the gods ever hear the prayers of him who has obeyed them."

He stayed his hand on the silver hilt of his sword, and thrust it back into the scabbard as Minerva bade him. Then she went back to Olympus among the other gods, and to the house of aegis-bearing Jove.

But the son of Peleus again began railing at the son of Atreus, for he was still in a rage. "Wine-bibber," he cried, "with the face of a dog and the heart of a hind, you never dare to go out with the host in fight, nor yet with our chosen men in ambuscade. You shun this as you do death itself. You had rather go round and rob his prizes from any man who contradicts you. You devour your people, for you are king over a feeble folk; otherwise, son of Atreus, henceforward you would insult no man. Therefore I say, and swear it with a great oath- nay, by this my sceptre which shall sprout neither leaf nor shoot, nor bud anew from the day on which it left its parent stem upon the mountains- for the axe stripped it of leaf and bark, and now the sons of the Achaeans bear it as judges and guardians of the decrees of heaven- so surely and solemnly do I swear that hereafter they shall look fondly for Achilles and shall not find him. In the day of your distress, when your men fall dying by the murderous hand of Hector, you shall not know how to help them, and shall rend your heart with rage for the hour when you offered insult to the bravest of the Achaeans."
With this the son of Peleus dashed his gold-bestudded sceptre on the ground and took his seat, while the son of Atreus was beginning fiercely from his place upon the other side. Then uprose smooth-tongued Nestor, the facile speaker of the Pylians, and the words fell from his lips sweeter than honey. Two generations of men born and bred in Pylos had passed away under his rule, and he was now reigning over the third. With all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus:

"Of a truth," he said, "a great sorrow has befallen the Achaean land. Surely Priam with his sons would rejoice, and the Trojans be glad at heart if they could hear this quarrel between you two, who are so excellent in fight and counsel. I am older than either of you; therefore be guided by me. Moreover I have been the familiar friend of men even greater than you are, and they did not disregard my counsels. Never again can I behold such men as Pirithous and Dryas shepherd of his people, or as Caeneus, Exadius, godlike Polyphemus, and Theseus son of Aegeus, peer of the immortals. These were the mightiest men ever born upon this earth: mightiest were they, and when they fought the fiercest tribes of mountain savages they utterly overthrew them. I came from distant Pylos, and went about among them, for they would have me come, and I fought as it was in me to do. Not a man now living could withstand them, but they heard my words, and were persuaded by them. So be it also with yourselves, for this is the more excellent way. Therefore, Agamemnon, though you be strong, take not this girl away, for the sons of the Achaeans have already given her to Achilles; and you, Achilles, strive not further with the king, for no man who by the grace of Jove wields a sceptre has like honour with Agamemnon. You are strong, and have a goddess for your mother; but Agamemnon is stronger than you, for he has more people under him. Son of Atreus, check your anger, I implore you; end this quarrel with Achilles, who in the day of battle is a tower of strength to the Achaeans."

And Agamemnon answered, "Sir, all that you have said is true, but this fellow must needs become our lord and master: he must be lord of all, king of all, and captain of all, and this shall hardly be. Granted that the gods have made him a great warrior, have they also given him the right to speak with railing?"

Achilles interrupted him. "I should be a mean coward," he cried, "were I to give in to you in all things. Order other people about, not me, for I shall obey no longer. Furthermore I say- and lay my saying to your heart- I shall fight neither you nor any man about this girl, for those that take were those also that gave. But of all else that is at my ship you shall carry away nothing by force. Try, that others may see; if you do, my spear shall be reddened with your blood."

When they had quarrelled thus angrily, they rose, and broke up the assembly at the ships of the Achaeans. The son of Peleus went back to his tents and ships with the son of Menoetius and his company, while Agamemnon drew a vessel into the water and chose a crew of twenty oarsmen. He escorted Chryseis on board and sent moreover a hecatomb for the god. And Ulysses went as captain.
These, then, went on board and sailed their ways over the sea. But the son of Atreus bade the people purify themselves; so they purified themselves and cast their filth into the sea. Then they offered hecatombs of bulls and goats without blemish on the sea-shore, and the smoke with the savour of their sacrifice rose curling up towards heaven.

Thus did they busy themselves throughout the host. But Agamemnon did not forget the threat that he had made Achilles, and called his trusty messengers and squires Talthybius and Eurybates. "Go," said he, "to the tent of Achilles, son of Peleus; take Briseis by the hand and bring her hither; if he will not give her I shall come with others and take her- which will press him harder."

He charged them straightly further and dismissed them, whereon they went their way sorrowfully by the seaside, till they came to the tents and ships of the Myrmidons. They found Achilles sitting by his tent and his ships, and ill-pleased he was when he beheld them. They stood fearfully and reverently before him, and never a word did they speak, but he knew them and said, "Welcome, heralds, messengers of gods and men; draw near; my quarrel is not with you but with Agamemnon who has sent you for the girl Briseis. Therefore, Patroclus, bring her and give her to them, but let them be witnesses by the blessed gods, by mortal men, and by the fierceness of Agamemnon's anger, that if ever again there be need of me to save the people from ruin, they shall seek and they shall not find. Agamemnon is mad with rage and knows not how to look before and after that the Achaeans may fight by their ships in safety."

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had bidden him. He brought Briseis from the tent and gave her over to the heralds, who took her with them to the ships of the Achaeans and the woman was loth to go. Then Achilles went all alone by the side of the hoar sea, weeping and looking out upon the boundless waste of waters. He raised his hands in prayer to his immortal mother, "Mother," he cried, "you bore me doomed to live but for a little season; surely Jove, who thunders from Olympus, might have made that little glorious. It is not so. Agamemnon, son of Atreus, has done me dishonour, and has robbed me of my prize by force."

As he spoke he wept aloud, and his mother heard him where she was sitting in the depths of the sea hard by the old man her father. Forthwith she rose as it were a grey mist out of the waves, sat down before him as he stood weeping, caressed him with her hand, and said, "My son, why are you weeping? What is it that grieves you? Keep it not from me, but tell me, that we may know it together."

Achilles drew a deep sigh and said, "You know it; why tell you what you know well already? We went to Thebe the strong city of Eetion, sacked it, and brought hither the spoil. The sons of the Achaeans shared it duly among themselves, and chose lovely Chryseis as the meed of Agamemnon; but Chryses, priest of Apollo, came to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and brought with him a great ransom: moreover he bore in his hand the sceptre of
Apollo, wreathed with a suppliant's wreath, and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus who were their chiefs.

"On this the rest of the Achaeans with one voice were for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but not so Agamemnon, who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away. So he went back in anger, and Apollo, who loved him dearly, heard his prayer. Then the god sent a deadly dart upon the Argives, and the people died thick on one another, for the arrows went everywhither among the wide host of the Achaeans. At last a seer in the fulness of his knowledge declared to us the oracles of Apollo, and I was myself first to say that we should appease him. Whereon the son of Atreus rose in anger, and threatened that which he has since done. The Achaeans are now taking the girl in a ship to Chryse, and sending gifts of sacrifice to the god; but the heralds have just taken from my tent the daughter of Briseus, whom the Achaeans had awarded to myself.

"Help your brave son, therefore, if you are able. Go to Olympus, and if you have ever done him service in word or deed, implore the aid of Jove. Ofttimes in my father's house have I heard you glory in that you alone of the immortals saved the son of Saturn from ruin, when the others, with Juno, Neptune, and Pallas Minerva would have put him in bonds. It was you, goddess, who delivered him by calling to Olympus the hundred-handed monster whom gods call Briareus, but men Aegaeon, for he is stronger even than his father; when therefore he took his seat all-glorious beside the son of Saturn, the other gods were afraid, and did not bind him. Go, then, to him, remind him of all this, clasp his knees, and bid him give succour to the Trojans. Let the Achaeans be hemmed in at the sterns of their ships, and perish on the sea-shore, that they may reap what joy they may of their king, and that Agamemnon may rue his blindness in offering insult to the foremost of the Achaeans."

Thetis wept and answered, "My son, woe is me that I should have borne or suckled you. Would indeed that you had lived your span free from all sorrow at your ships, for it is all too brief; alas, that you should be at once short of life and long of sorrow above your peers: woe, therefore, was the hour in which I bore you; nevertheless I will go to the snowy heights of Olympus, and tell this tale to Jove, if he will hear our prayer: meanwhile stay where you are with your ships, nurse your anger against the Achaeans, and hold aloof from fight. For Jove went yesterday to Oceanus, to a feast among the Ethiopians, and the other gods went with him. He will return to Olympus twelve days hence; I will then go to his mansion paved with bronze and will beseech him; nor do I doubt that I shall be able to persuade him."

On this she left him, still furious at the loss of her that had been taken from him. Meanwhile Ulysses reached Chryse with the hecatomb. When they had come inside the harbour they furled the sails and laid them in the ship's hold; they slackened the forestays, lowered the mast into its place, and rowed the ship to the place where they would have her lie; there they cast out their
mooring-stones and made fast the hawsers. They then got out upon the sea-shore and landed the hecatomb for Apollo; Chryseis also left the ship, and Ulysses led her to the altar to deliver her into the hands of her father. "Chryses," said he, "King Agamemnon has sent me to bring you back your child, and to offer sacrifice to Apollo on behalf of the Danaans, that we may propitiate the god, who has now brought sorrow upon the Argives."

So saying he gave the girl over to her father, who received her gladly, and they ranged the holy hecatomb all orderly round the altar of the god. They washed their hands and took up the barley-meal to sprinkle over the victims, while Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud on their behalf. "Hear me," he cried, "O god of the silver bow, that protectest Chryse and holy Cilla, and rulest Tenedos with thy might. Even as thou didst hear me aforetime when I prayed, and didst press hardly upon the Achaeans, so hear me yet again, and stay this fearful pestilence from the Danaans."

Thus did he pray, and Apollo heard his prayer. When they had done praying and sprinkling the barley-meal, they drew back the heads of the victims and killed and flayed them. They cut out the thigh-bones, wrapped them round in two layers of fat, set some pieces of raw meat on the top of them, and then Chryses laid them on the wood fire and poured wine over them, while the young men stood near him with five-pronged spits in their hands. When the thigh-bones were burned and they had tasted the inward meats, they cut the rest up small, put the pieces upon the spits, roasted them till they were done, and drew them off; then, when they had finished their work and the feast was ready, they ate it, and every man had his full share, so that all were satisfied. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink, pages filled the mixing-bowl with wine and water and handed it round, after giving every man his drink-offering.

Thus all day long the young men worshipped the god with song, hymning him and chaunting the joyous paean, and the god took pleasure in their voices; but when the sun went down, and it came on dark, they laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship, and when the child of morning, rosy-fingered Dawn, appeared they again set sail for the host of the Achaeans. Apollo sent them a fair wind, so they raised their mast and hoisted their white sails aloft. As the sail bellied with the wind the ship flew through the deep blue water, and the foam hissed against her bows as she sped onward. When they reached the wide-stretching host of the Achaeans, they drew the vessel ashore, high and dry upon the sands, set her strong props beneath her, and went their ways to their own tents and ships.

But Achilles abode at his ships and nursed his anger. He went not to the honourable assembly, and sallied not forth to fight, but gnawed at his own heart, pining for battle and the war-cry.

Now after twelve days the immortal gods came back in a body to Olympus, and Jove led the way. Thetis was not unmindful of the charge her son had laid upon her, so she rose from under the sea and went through great heaven with early morning to Olympus, where she found the mighty son of Saturn sitting all alone upon its topmost ridges. She sat herself down before him,
and with her left hand seized his knees, while with her right she caught him under the chin, and
besought him, saying-

"Father Jove, if I ever did you service in word or deed among the immortals, hear my prayer, and
do honour to my son, whose life is to be cut short so early. King Agamemnon has dishonoured
him by taking his prize and keeping her. Honour him then yourself, Olympian lord of counsel,
and grant victory to the Trojans, till the Achaeans give my son his due and load him with riches
in requital."

Jove sat for a while silent, and without a word, but Thetis still kept firm hold of his knees, and
besought him a second time. "Incline your head," said she, "and promise me surely, or else deny
me- for you have nothing to fear- that I may learn how greatly you disdain me."

At this Jove was much troubled and answered, "I shall have trouble if you set me quarrelling
with Juno, for she will provoke me with her taunting speeches; even now she is always railing at
me before the other gods and accusing me of giving aid to the Trojans. Go back now, lest she
should find out. I will consider the matter, and will bring it about as wish. See, I incline my head
that you believe me. This is the most solemn that I can give to any god. I never recall my word,
or deceive, or fail to do what I say, when I have nodded my head."

As he spoke the son of Saturn bowed his dark brows, and the ambrosial locks swayed on his
immortal head, till vast Olympus reeled.

When the pair had thus laid their plans, they parted- Jove to his house, while the goddess quitted
the splendour of Olympus, and plunged into the depths of the sea. The gods rose from their seats,
before the coming of their sire. Not one of them dared to remain sitting, but all stood up as he
came among them. There, then, he took his seat. But Juno, when she saw him, knew that he and
the old merman's daughter, silver-footed Thetis, had been hatching mischief, so she at once
began to upbraid him. "Trickster," she cried, "which of the gods have you been taking into your
counsels now? You are always settling matters in secret behind my back, and have never yet told
me, if you could help it, one word of your intentions."

"Juno," replied the sire of gods and men, "you must not expect to be informed of all my counsels.
You are my wife, but you would find it hard to understand them. When it is proper for you to
hear, there is no one, god or man, who will be told sooner, but when I mean to keep a matter to
myself, you must not pry nor ask questions."

"Dread son of Saturn," answered Juno, "what are you talking about? I? Pry and ask questions?
Never. I let you have your own way in everything. Still, I have a strong misgiving that the old
merman's daughter Thetis has been talking you over, for she was with you and had hold of your
knees this self-same morning. I believe, therefore, that you have been promising her to give glory
to Achilles, and to kill much people at the ships of the Achaeans."
"Wife," said Jove, "I can do nothing but you suspect me and find it out. You will take nothing by it, for I shall only dislike you the more, and it will go harder with you. Granted that it is as you say; I mean to have it so; sit down and hold your tongue as I bid you for if I once begin to lay my hands about you, though all heaven were on your side it would profit you nothing."

On this Juno was frightened, so she curbed her stubborn will and sat down in silence. But the heavenly beings were disquieted throughout the house of Jove, till the cunning workman Vulcan began to try and pacify his mother Juno. "It will be intolerable," said he, "if you two fall to wrangling and setting heaven in an uproar about a pack of mortals. If such ill counsels are to prevail, we shall have no pleasure at our banquet. Let me then advise my mother- and she must herself know that it will be better- to make friends with my dear father Jove, lest he again scold her and disturb our feast. If the Olympian Thunderer wants to hurl us all from our seats, he can do so, for he is far the strongest, so give him fair words, and he will then soon be in a good humour with us."

As he spoke, he took a double cup of nectar, and placed it in his mother's hand. "Cheer up, my dear mother," said he, "and make the best of it. I love you dearly, and should be very sorry to see you get a thrashing; however grieved I might be, I could not help for there is no standing against Jove. Once before when I was trying to help you, he caught me by the foot and flung me from the heavenly threshold. All day long from morn till eve, was I falling, till at sunset I came to ground in the island of Lemnos, and there I lay, with very little life left in me, till the Sintians came and tended me."

Juno smiled at this, and as she smiled she took the cup from her son's hands. Then Vulcan drew sweet nectar from the mixing-bowl, and served it round among the gods, going from left to right; and the blessed gods laughed out a loud applause as they saw him ing bustling about the heavenly mansion.

Thus through the livelong day to the going down of the sun they feasted, and every one had his full share, so that all were satisfied. Apollo struck his lyre, and the Muses lifted up their sweet voices, calling and answering one another. But when the sun's glorious light had faded, they went home to bed, each in his own abode, which lame Vulcan with his consummate skill had fashioned for them. So Jove, the Olympian Lord of Thunder, hied him to the bed in which he always slept; and when he had got on to it he went to sleep, with Juno of the golden throne by his side.

Book III

When the companies were thus arrayed, each under its own captain, the Trojans advanced as a
flight of wild fowl or cranes that scream overhead when rain and winter drive them over the flowing waters of Oceanus to bring death and destruction on the Pygmies, and they wrangle in the air as they fly; but the Achaeans marched silently, in high heart, and minded to stand by one another.

As when the south wind spreads a curtain of mist upon the mountain tops, bad for shepherds but better than night for thieves, and a man can see no further than he can throw a stone, even so rose the dust from under their feet as they made all speed over the plain.

When they were close up with one another, Alexandrus came forward as champion on the Trojan side. On his shoulders he bore the skin of a panther, his bow, and his sword, and he brandished two spears shod with bronze as a challenge to the bravest of the Achaeans to meet him in single fight. Menelaus saw him thus stride out before the ranks, and was glad as a hungry lion that lights on the carcase of some goat or horned stag, and devours it there and then, though dogs and youths set upon him. Even thus was Menelaus glad when his eyes caught sight of Alexandrus, for he deemed that now he should be revenged. He sprang, therefore, from his chariot, clad in his suit of armour.

Alexandrus quailed as he saw Menelaus come forward, and shrank in fear of his life under cover of his men. As one who starts back affrighted, trembling and pale, when he comes suddenly upon a serpent in some mountain glade, even so did Alexandrus plunge into the throng of Trojan warriors, terror-stricken at the sight of the son Atreus.

Then Hector upbraided him. "Paris," said he, "evil-hearted Paris, fair to see, but woman-mad, and false of tongue, would that you had never been born, or that you had died unwed. Better so, than live to be disgraced and looked askance at. Will not the Achaeans mock at us and say that we have sent one to champion us who is fair to see but who has neither wit nor courage? Did you not, such as you are, get your following together and sail beyond the seas? Did you not from your far country carry off a lovely woman wedded among a people of warriors- to bring sorrow upon your father, your city, and your whole country, but joy to your enemies, and hang-dog shamefacedness to yourself? And now can you not dare face Menelaus and learn what manner of man he is whose wife you have stolen? Where indeed would be your lyre and your love-tricks, your comely locks and your fair favour, when you were lying in the dust before him? The Trojans are a weak-kneed people, or ere this you would have had a shirt of stones for the wrongs you have done them."

And Alexandrus answered, "Hector, your rebuke is just. You are hard as the axe which a shipwright wields at his work, and cleaves the timber to his liking. As the axe in his hand, so keen is the edge of your scorn. Still, taunt me not with the gifts that golden Venus has given me; they are precious; let not a man disdain them, for the gods give them where they are minded, and
none can have them for the asking. If you would have me do battle with Menelaus, bid the Trojans and Achaeans take their seats, while he and I fight in their midst for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby you Trojans shall stay here in Troy, while the others go home to Argos and the land of the Achaeans."

When Hector heard this he was glad, and went about among the Trojan ranks holding his spear by the middle to keep them back, and they all sat down at his bidding: but the Achaeans still aimed at him with stones and arrows, till Agamemnon shouted to them saying, "Hold, Argives, shoot not, sons of the Achaeans; Hector desires to speak."

They ceased taking aim and were still, whereon Hector spoke. "Hear from my mouth," said he, "Trojans and Achaeans, the saying of Alexandrus, through whom this quarrel has come about. He bids the Trojans and Achaeans lay their armour upon the ground, while he and Menelaus fight in the midst of you for Helen and all her wealth. Let him who shall be victorious and prove to be the better man take the woman and all she has, to bear them to his own home, but let the rest swear to a solemn covenant of peace."

Thus he spoke, and they all held their peace, till Menelaus of the loud battle-cry addressed them. "And now," he said, "hear me too, for it is I who am the most aggrieved. I deem that the parting of Achaeans and Trojans is at hand, as well it may be, seeing how much have suffered for my quarrel with Alexandrus and the wrong he did me. Let him who shall die, die, and let the others fight no more. Bring, then, two lambs, a white ram and a black ewe, for Earth and Sun, and we will bring a third for Jove. Moreover, you shall bid Priam come, that he may swear to the covenant himself; for his sons are high-handed and ill to trust, and the oaths of Jove must not be transgressed or taken in vain. Young men's minds are light as air, but when an old man comes he looks before and after, deeming that which shall be fairest upon both sides."

The Trojans and Achaeans were glad when they heard this, for they thought that they should now have rest. They backed their chariots toward the ranks, got out of them, and put off their armour, laying it down upon the ground; and the hosts were near to one another with a little space between them. Hector sent two messengers to the city to bring the lambs and to bid Priam come, while Agamemnon told Talthybius to fetch the other lamb from the ships, and he did as Agamemnon had said.

Meanwhile Iris went to Helen in the form of her sister-in-law, wife of the son of Antenor, for Heliccaon, son of Antenor, had married Laodice, the fairest of Priam's daughters. She found her in her own room, working at a great web of purple linen, on which she was embroidering the battles between Trojans and Achaeans, that Mars had made them fight for her sake. Iris then came close
up to her and said, "Come hither, child, and see the strange doings of the Trojans and Achaeans
till now they have been warring upon the plain, mad with lust of battle, but now they have left
off fighting, and are leaning upon their shields, sitting still with their spears planted beside them.
Alexandrus and Menelaus are going to fight about yourself, and you are to the the wife of him
who is the victor."

Thus spoke the goddess, and Helen's heart yearned after her former husband, her city, and her
parents. She threw a white mantle over her head, and hurried from her room, weeping as she
went, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids, Aethrae, daughter of Pittheus, and
Clymene. And straightway they were at the Scaean gates.

The two sages, Ucalegon and Antenor, elders of the people, were seated by the Scaean gates,
with Priam, Panthous, Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius, and Hiketaon of the race of Mars. These
were too old to fight, but they were fluent orators, and sat on the tower like cicales that chirrup
delicately from the boughs of some high tree in a wood. When they saw Helen coming towards
the tower, they said softly to one another, "Small wonder that Trojans and Achaeans should
endure so much and so long, for the sake of a woman so marvellously and divinely lovely. Still,
fair though she be, let them take her and go, or she will breed sorrow for us and for our children
after us."

But Priam bade her draw nigh. "My child," said he, "take your seat in front of me that you may
see your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends. I lay no blame upon you, it is the gods,
not you who are to blame. It is they that have brought about this terrible war with the Achaeans.
Tell me, then, who is yonder huge hero so great and goodly? I have seen men taller by a head,
but none so comely and so royal. Surely he must be a king."

"Sir," answered Helen, "father of my husband, dear and reverend in my eyes, would that I had
chosen death rather than to have come here with your son, far from my bridal chamber, my
friends, my darling daughter, and all the companions of my girlhood. But it was not to be, and
my lot is one of tears and sorrow. As for your question, the hero of whom you ask is
Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a good king and a brave soldier, brother-in-law as surely as that he
lives, to my abhorred and miserable self."

The old man marvelled at him and said, "Happy son of Atreus, child of good fortune. I see that
the Achaeans are subject to you in great multitudes. When I was in Phrygia I saw much
horsemen, the people of Otreus and of Mygdon, who were camping upon the banks of the river
Sangarius; I was their ally, and with them when the Amazons, peers of men, came up against
them, but even they were not so many as the Achaeans."

The old man next looked upon Ulysses; "Tell me," he said, "who is that other, shorter by a head
than Agamemnon, but broader across the chest and shoulders? His armour is laid upon the ground, and he stalks in front of the ranks as it were some great woolly ram ordering his ewes."

And Helen answered, "He is Ulysses, a man of great craft, son of Laertes. He was born in rugged Ithaca, and excels in all manner of stratagems and subtle cunning."

On this Antenor said, "Madam, you have spoken truly. Ulysses once came here as envoy about yourself, and Menelaus with him. I received them in my own house, and therefore know both of them by sight and conversation. When they stood up in presence of the assembled Trojans, Menelaus was the broader shouldered, but when both were seated Ulysses had the more royal presence. After a time they delivered their message, and the speech of Menelaus ran trippingly on the tongue; he did not say much, for he was a man of few words, but he spoke very clearly and to the point, though he was the younger man of the two; Ulysses, on the other hand, when he rose to speak, was at first silent and kept his eyes fixed upon the ground. There was no play nor graceful movement of his sceptre; he kept it straight and stiff like a man unpractised in oratory—one might have taken him for a mere churl or simpleton; but when he raised his voice, and the words came driving from his deep chest like winter snow before the wind, then there was none to touch him, and no man thought further of what he looked like."

Priam then caught sight of Ajax and asked, "Who is that great and goodly warrior whose head and broad shoulders tower above the rest of the Argives?"

"That," answered Helen, "is huge Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, and on the other side of him, among the Cretans, stands Idomeneus looking like a god, and with the captains of the Cretans round him. Often did Menelaus receive him as a guest in our house when he came visiting us from Crete. I see, moreover, many other Achaeans whose names I could tell you, but there are two whom I can nowhere find, Castor, breaker of horses, and Pollux the mighty boxer; they are children of my mother, and own brothers to myself. Either they have not left Lacedaemon, or else, though they have brought their ships, they will not show themselves in battle for the shame and disgrace that I have brought upon them."

She knew not that both these heroes were already lying under the earth in their own land of Lacedaemon.

Meanwhile the heralds were bringing the holy oath-offerings through the city—two lambs and a goatskin of wine, the gift of earth; and Idaeus brought the mixing bowl and the cups of gold. He went up to Priam and said, "Son of Laomedon, the princes of the Trojans and Achaeans bid you come down on to the plain and swear to a solemn covenant. Alexandrus and Menelaus are to fight for Helen in single combat, that she and all her wealth may go with him who is the victor. We are to swear to a solemn covenant of peace whereby we others shall dwell here in Troy,
while the Achaeans return to Argos and the land of the Achaeans."

The old man trembled as he heard, but bade his followers yoke the horses, and they made all haste to do so. He mounted the chariot, gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor took his seat beside him; they then drove through the Scaean gates on to the plain. When they reached the ranks of the Trojans and Achaeans they left the chariot, and with measured pace advanced into the space between the hosts.

Agamemnon and Ulysses both rose to meet them. The attendants brought on the oath-offerings and mixed the wine in the mixing-bowls; they poured water over the hands of the chieftains, and the son of Atreus drew the dagger that hung by his sword, and cut wool from the lambs' heads; this the men-servants gave about among the Trojan and Achaean princes, and the son of Atreus lifted up his hands in prayer. "Father Jove," he cried, "that rulest in Ida, most glorious in power, and thou oh Sun, that seest and givest ear to all things, Earth and Rivers, and ye who in the realms below chastise the soul of him that has broken his oath, witness these rites and guard them, that they be not vain. If Alexandrus kills Menelaus, let him keep Helen and all her wealth, while we sail home with our ships; but if Menelaus kills Alexandrus, let the Trojans give back Helen and all that she has; let them moreover pay such fine to the Achaeans as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among those that shall be born hereafter. Aid if Priam and his sons refuse such fine when Alexandrus has fallen, then will I stay here and fight on till I have got satisfaction."

As he spoke he drew his knife across the throats of the victims, and laid them down gasping and dying upon the ground, for the knife had reft them of their strength. Then they poured wine from the mixing-bowl into the cups, and prayed to the everlasting gods, saying, Trojans and Achaeans among one another, "Jove, most great and glorious, and ye other everlasting gods, grant that the brains of them who shall first sin against their oaths- of them and their children- may be shed upon the ground even as this wine, and let their wives become the slaves of strangers."

Thus they prayed, but not as yet would Jove grant them their prayer. Then Priam, descendant of Dardanus, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans and Achaeans, I will now go back to the wind-beaten city of Ilius: I dare not with my own eyes witness this fight between my son and Menelaus, for Jove and the other immortals alone know which shall fall."

On this he laid the two lambs on his chariot and took his seat. He gathered the reins in his hand, and Antenor sat beside him; the two then went back to Ilius. Hector and Ulysses measured the ground, and cast lots from a helmet of bronze to see which should take aim first. Meanwhile the two hosts lifted up their hands and prayed saying, "Father Jove, that rulest from Ida, most glorious in power, grant that he who first brought about this war between us may die, and enter the house of Hades, while we others remain at peace and abide by our oaths."
Great Hector now turned his head aside while he shook the helmet, and the lot of Paris flew out first. The others took their several stations, each by his horses and the place where his arms were lying, while Alexandrus, husband of lovely Helen, put on his goodly armour. First he greaved his legs with greaves of good make and fitted with ancle-clasps of silver; after this he donned the cuirass of his brother Lycaon, and fitted it to his own body; he hung his silver-studded sword of bronze about his shoulders, and then his mighty shield. On his comely head he set his helmet, well-wrought, with a crest of horse-hair that nodded menacingly above it, and he grasped a redoubtable spear that suited his hands. In like fashion Menelaus also put on his armour.

When they had thus armed, each amid his own people, they strode fierce of aspect into the open space, and both Trojans and Achaeans were struck with awe as they beheld them. They stood near one another on the measured ground, brandishing their spears, and each furious against the other. Alexandrus aimed first, and struck the round shield of the son of Atreus, but the spear did not pierce it, for the shield turned its point. Menelaus next took aim, praying to Father Jove as he did so. "King Jove," he said, "grant me revenge on Alexandrus who has wronged me; subdue him under my hand that in ages yet to come a man may shrink from doing ill deeds in the house of his host."

He poised his spear as he spoke, and hurled it at the shield of Alexandrus. Through shield and cuirass it went, and tore the shirt by his flank, but Alexandrus swerved aside, and thus saved his life. Then the son of Atreus drew his sword, and drove at the projecting part of his helmet, but the sword fell shivered in three or four pieces from his hand, and he cried, looking towards Heaven, "Father Jove, of all gods thou art the most despiteful; I made sure of my revenge, but the sword has broken in my hand, my spear has been hurled in vain, and I have not killed him."

With this he flew at Alexandrus, caught him by the horsehair plume of his helmet, and began dragging him towards the Achaeans. The strap of the helmet that went under his chin was choking him, and Menelaus would have dragged him off to his own great glory had not Jove's daughter Venus been quick to mark and to break the strap of oxhide, so that the empty helmet came away in his hand. This he flung to his comrades among the Achaeans, and was again springing upon Alexandrus to run him through with a spear, but Venus snatched him up in a moment (as a god can do), hid him under a cloud of darkness, and conveyed him to his own bedchamber.

Then she went to call Helen, and found her on a high tower with the Trojan women crowding round her. She took the form of an old woman who used to dress wool for her when she was still in Lacedaemon, and of whom she was very fond. Thus disguised she plucked her by perfumed robe and said, "Come hither; Alexandrus says you are to go to the house; he is on his bed in his own room, radiant with beauty and dressed in gorgeous apparel. No one would think he had just
come from fighting, but rather that he was going to a dance, or had done dancing and was sitting down."

With these words she moved the heart of Helen to anger. When she marked the beautiful neck of the goddess, her lovely bosom, and sparkling eyes, she marvelled at her and said, "Goddess, why do you thus beguile me? Are you going to send me afield still further to some man whom you have taken up in Phrygia or fair Meonia? Menelaus has just vanquished Alexandrus, and is to take my hateful self back with him. You are come here to betray me. Go sit with Alexandrus yourself; henceforth be goddess no longer; never let your feet carry you back to Olympus; worry about him and look after him till he make you his wife, or, for the matter of that, his slave- but me? I shall not go; I can garnish his bed no longer; I should be a by-word among all the women of Troy. Besides, I have trouble on my mind."

Venus was very angry, and said, "Bold hussy, do not provoke me; if you do, I shall leave you to your fate and hate you as much as I have loved you. I will stir up fierce hatred between Trojans and Achaeans, and you shall come to a bad end."

At this Helen was frightened. She wrapped her mantle about her and went in silence, following the goddess and unnoticed by the Trojan women.

When they came to the house of Alexandrus the maid-servants set about their work, but Helen went into her own room, and the laughter-loving goddess took a seat and set it for her facing Alexandrus. On this Helen, daughter of aegis-bearing Jove, sat down, and with eyes askance began to upbraid her husband.

"So you are come from the fight," said she; "would that you had fallen rather by the hand of that brave man who was my husband. You used to brag that you were a better man with hands and spear than Menelaus. go, but I then, an challenge him again- but I should advise you not to do so, for if you are foolish enough to meet him in single combat, you will soon all by his spear."

And Paris answered, "Wife, do not vex me with your reproaches. This time, with the help of Minerva, Menelaus has vanquished me; another time I may myself be victor, for I too have gods that will stand by me. Come, let us lie down together and make friends. Never yet was I so passionately enamoured of you as at this moment- not even when I first carried you off from Lacedaemon and sailed away with you- not even when I had converse with you upon the couch of love in the island of Cranae was I so enthralled by desire of you as now." On this he led her towards the bed, and his wife went with him.

Thus they laid themselves on the bed together; but the son of Atreus strode among the throng, looking everywhere for Alexandrus, and no man, neither of the Trojans nor of the allies, could
find him. If they had seen him they were in no mind to hide him, for they all of them hated him as they did death itself. Then Agamemnon, king of men, spoke, saying, "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. The victory has been with Menelaus; therefore give back Helen with all her wealth, and pay such fine as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among them that shall be born hereafter."

Thus spoke the son of Atreus, and the Achaeans shouted in applause.