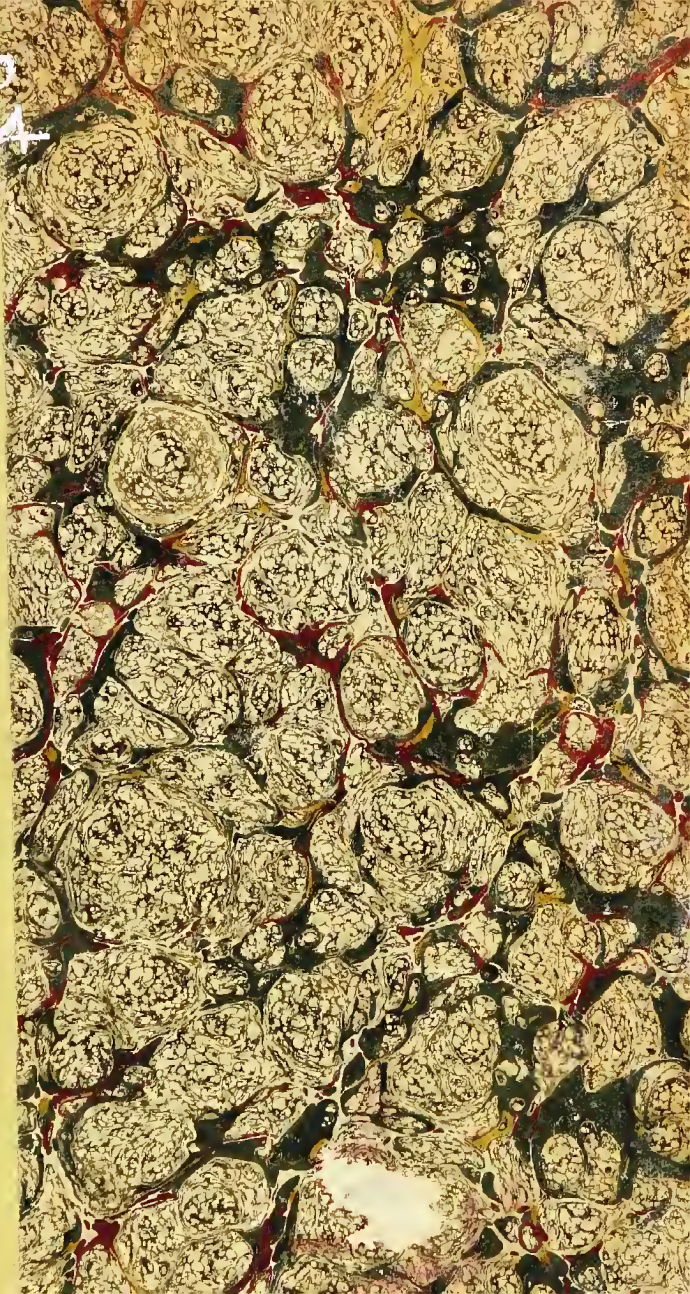
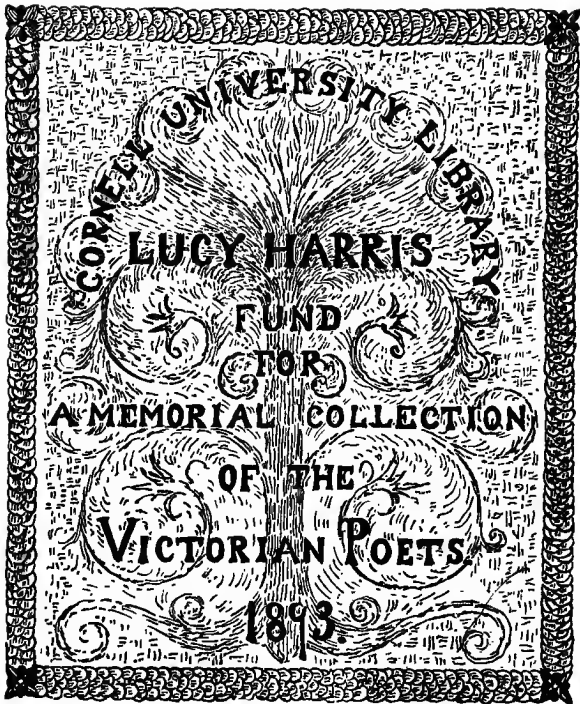


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# THERMOPYLAE

*NEWDIGATE VERSE, 1881*

BY

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OXFORD

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Ἡροδότου σκιά.

*The Dorian lips are gone to dust,  
That once by the Italian sea  
Blew that Ionian strain that must  
Make musical Thermopylae  
In all men's ears and hearts to be,  
Who watch the tide of battle rolled,  
From Susa's palaces of gold,  
To break on Salamis, as thus  
They hear again the story told  
Polymnia told Herodotus.*

H. C. B.

*‘ Verè mendaces erant colles, et multitudo montium.*

## *THERMOPYLAE.*



MIDWAY between the vintage and the spring,  
The apple-flower and apple-gathering,  
When the nights lingered from the longest day,  
And wheat was ripening, and the roads were grey,  
With thirsty dust along the Phocian hills,  
And in their hollow beds the shrunken rills  
Fainted for heat of summer air aflame,  
From the Greek army at the Isthmus came  
A vanguard, sent to hold the pass whereby  
The Persian king must march from Thessaly.

For Oeta falls in precipices down  
Sheer to the sea, beside Anthela town,  
Leaving scant passage for a man to go  
Between the rocks above him, and below

Spercheius flooding all the marshy shore.  
Here after battle Heracles of yore  
Had found warm springs to bathe in : to this day  
They steam and bubble up beside the way,  
And spill themselves between the cliff and sea ;  
So that the place was called Thermopylae.

They therefore, some six thousand men in all,  
Marched to the pass, and built anew the wall,  
Built of old time by Phocians to restrain  
The wild Thessalian riders of the plain,  
Marauding through their valleys at their will  
When summer nights were cool on shore and hill.  
Here they encamped, and waited for the king ;  
Whose army, pouring with the break of spring  
Through Phrygia from its winter camp, had rolled  
Across the bridges of the ford of gold,  
Army and fleet together ; for at last  
The wheel had come full circle for the past ;  
Scamander on Spercheius flooded back,  
And Troy to Aulis on the self-same track  
Sent on thwart winds an answering tempest, driven  
Ruining on Europe out of all the heaven,

With flash and tumult, as of old the fire  
That leapt from Ida for the queen's desire,  
News of the captured city ; thus it came,  
With signal answering signal, flame with flame ;  
Thus overstriding the long ridge of sea,  
The travelling torch's splendour joyously,  
Delaying not nor overborne of sleep,  
Kindled and flashed from steep to windy steep,  
Till on the palace roof in Argos town  
Smote the broad radiance, telling Troy was down.  
So now the Eastern host, a fire of doom,  
Drew forward, wrapping all its path in gloom ;  
The strength of Asia, splendor and more  
Than those whom Datis led ten years before  
Across the sea, a tempest backward blown  
Before the Athenian spears at Marathon.  
Four years together, in revenge for these,  
The empire through its hundred provinces  
From north to south had gathered, man by man,  
Persian and Mede, Bactrian and Cissian,  
Out of all lands to battle for the king ;  
And from the sunset and the sunrising

The double tribe of Aethiopian men,  
And infantry from Egypt's populous fen,  
And Sacian axes and Sarangian spears,  
Chorasmian horse and Indian charioteers,  
And Meionian and Mariandyne,  
And all who dwelt where, swoln with floods di-  
vine,

Tigris or Oxus or Hydaspes ran  
By hill and plain through spaces Asian.

And now the innumerable army lay  
Encamped at Trachis, by the Malian bay,  
Filling the broad Spercheius-dale with light  
And sound of armour ; while within their sight,  
Silent and unconcerned, across the way  
The Greeks kept guard, and through the summer  
day

Practised with quoit and javelin on the dry  
Cliff-shaded turf, while others quietly  
Sat combing their long hair outside the wall ;  
Seeming against their strength a force so-small,  
They waited certain days, so be that they  
Might yet lose heart and leave an open way ;

Till the king wearying, in impatient scorn

Bade them sweep clear the pass the morrow morn.

That night a summer storm on sea and plain  
Swept down with wet winged feet and lashing  
rain,

That rushed and streamed through Oeta's rocky  
walls,

Till all her sides were loud with waterfalls.

The fires glowed red and lightning glimmered  
pale

Across the gulf, where, sheltered from the gale,  
Beneath the Artemisian headland lay

The Greek fleet, couched like some wild beast at  
bay,

With angry eyes across the strait of sea

Watching the Persian camp at Aphetæ.

But with the morning from the plain below

The Medes and Cissians, eager towards the foe,

Streamed forward through the vapour misty-grey,

Shot through with splendour of returning day.

For hours they fought the narrow way to win ;

But steadily the long Greek spears broke in,

*Thermopylae.*

Met them and pierced them, till, beat down and  
foiled,

Their line retreated like a snake uncoiled.

Again next day their bravest, with like fate,

Assailed afresh the unconquerable gate,

Swept back in ruin ; and when evening fell,

Thermopylae yet stood impregnable.

Up the lone gorges where Asopus born

Scatters its spray, a pathway, torrent-worn,

Climbs the stern cliffs Oetean, winding high

Through tall straight-columned pines that ridge  
the sky,

Then plunges down a long deep-cloven ravine

Through southward slopes thickset with oak woods  
green,

Till through their boughs the sea again gleams  
dim,

East of the guarded pass's eastern rim.

This way the Malian traitor up the height

Led on a column through the dead of night ;

And those who guarded the steep mountain way

Awoke to hear, while yet the east was grey,



Through the fallen leaves their heavy trampling,  
drawn

Nearer and louder in the hush of dawn ;  
And, panic-stricken, left their post and fled,  
Huddled together at the mountain head.

The great ascending column climbed and crossed,  
Descended eastward, and the pass was lost.

The army in the pass by rise of sun  
Knew all that human strength could do was done,  
Since now their mountain fortress needs must fall,  
And naught was left but fair retreat for all.

But for the Spartan soldiers no retreat  
Was left, no backward pathway for their feet.  
For Sparta through her sacred month delayed,  
And none in Greece would move when Sparta  
stayed ;

Fear numbed their spirit and unnerved their hand,  
And even the sacred guardians of the land  
Fainted with terror of ill-ominous signs  
In Dodonaean or in Delphian shrines ;  
Pale as above their belt of myrtle trees  
Glimmer all night the moonlit Phædriades.

*Thermopylae.*

Though none behind them help or hope could send,  
Hopeless, they sternly waited for the end.  
To stay was death ; but how could they return,  
A beaten army, the reproach and scorn  
Of boys and stately women and elders grey,  
In hollow Lacedaemon far away ?

Thus in the golden morning, sad at heart,  
The camp broke up, and those who should depart  
Filed down the valley, while the fated few  
Watched their long line until it sank from view.  
Then, while the July sun began to climb,  
With shortening shadows toward full-market time,  
The Persians, multitudinous and elate,  
Streamed in slow masses towards the fatal gate ;  
And these last fourteen hundred, man by man,  
Spartan, Boeotian, and Thespian,  
Alone, outworn, outnumbered, yet with face  
Calm as if gathering to the holy place  
Upon this festal morning, even as they  
Who now, white-robed and chapleted with bay,  
Walked lightly on the green Olympian plain ;  
So calmly these, for what might yet remain,

Of all their glory sealing up the sum,  
Entered the valley whence they should not come.

Through noon and afternoon the battle burned,  
As wave on wave retreated and returned,  
With heavy surge of fight that rose and tossed  
Around them, ever where the long spears crossed  
In ruinous flight borne backward, and again  
The refluent onset and upsurge of men.

Shield crashed on shield, spear shivered upon  
spear,

Hard iron broke on iron, and brass rang clear,  
Smitten and sundered with great strength of hand,  
On the low border of the fatal strand,  
Where, careless now of life, as those whose cry  
Is choked beneath deep waters, recklessly  
They charged the masses that about them swayed,  
Breaking and trampling through them, till they  
made

Such slaughter one might scarce clear-footed tread  
The meadow ground ; so thick it lay with dead.  
Themselves too dropping faster, as the day  
Waned, and their strength was slowly worn away.

The Spartan king was down, and round the king  
Their bravest, done with all their warfaring,  
Blood spattered on their faces swart and spare,  
And scarlet tunics and long golden hair.

Yet still they fought, while through the ridge of  
spears

Flashed in their eyes and sounded in their ears  
Death, and about their feet and through their breath  
Death, and above their heads the shadow of death ;  
Till forced together, when the day grew late,  
They gathered on a hillock by the gate ;  
And while the swift continuous arrow-flight  
Hailed on their armour, and to left and right  
The hot air seemed to quiver, the earth to reel,  
Under the intolerable sleet of steel,  
With dagger or bare teeth or foot and hand,  
Fiercely, so long as they had strength to stand,  
The last of those who fought that day so well,  
Fought on, till fighting to the last they fell.

And the sun sank, and all the paths were  
grey ;

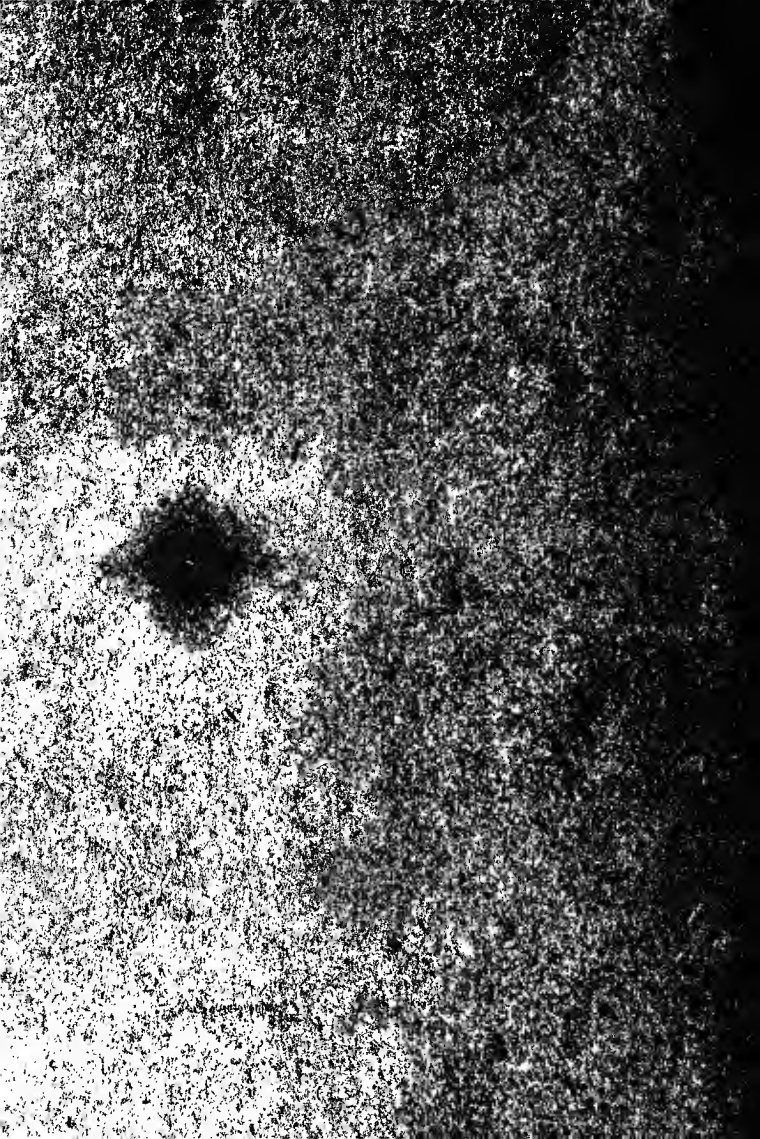
The slow mist crept along the purple bay

And veiled the heavy marshes, and the light  
Glimmered through belts of shadow into night.  
With mingled shouts and clamour of diverse speech  
The victors wound their way along the beach.  
As when in April woods aflush with spring  
Dream of the time of longer days to fling  
On green recesses and untrodden vales  
Summer, and heat, and noise of nightingales ;  
So now the conquering army seemed to be,  
Now and tomorrow more abundantly,  
Like very gods upon the slopes of heaven ;  
Nor dreamed how soon this glory should be driven  
To helpless ruin, when in two months more,  
Beside the sacred Salaminian shore,  
A thousand wrecks should crowd the autumn sea  
And Salamis avenge Thermopylae.

But now among the Eastern host for all  
This was a night of joy and festival,  
Whatever lot the jealous fates had turned.  
Bright in the central camp's pavilion burned,  
In silver censers piles of spice and gum,  
Stacte and tragacanth and galbanum,

With thin red quivering flame and drowsy scent,  
That round the soft blue Tyrian hangings went,  
Where at his royal banquet sat the king  
Amid the Persian nobles, glorying.  
And all about the camp from line to line  
Fires blazed, and silver stood abrim with wine ;  
And over all the stars looked softly down ;  
While one slow cloud grew dark on Oeta's crown,  
And from it thunder rolled, and flying fire  
Ran out and vanished, as some god in ire  
Flamed from the summit with avenging tread ;  
Whereat the Persian army, pale with dread,  
Poured from their cups libation, marvelling .  
What evil chance the coming days might bring,  
What shape of terror ; and the air grew chill  
Out of the east, and all the camp was still.







**ODYSSEUS  
IN PHAEACIA**

**(ODYSSEY VI.)**

**BY J. W. MACKAIL**



ODYSSEUS  
IN PHAECIA

BY J. W. MACKAIL

SOMETIME FELLOW OF  
BALLIOL COLLEGE  
OXFORD

LONDON

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**UT FLOS IN SEPTIS SECRETUM NASCITUR HORTIS,  
IGNOTUS PECORI, NULLO CONTUSUS ARATRO,  
QUEM MULCENT AURAE, FIRMAT SOL, EDUCAT IMBER.**



## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

(ODYSSEY VI.)

So slept he there, with toil and slumber spent,  
Weary Odysseus. But Athena went  
To the Phaeacian people's land and town,  
Who dwelt of old beside the turbulent

Cyclopes, where the upland lawns lie spread  
In Hypereia, and were hard bestead  
Before their overmastering might; till thence  
Divine Nausithoüs drew them forth and led,

And set in Scheria, far off the rout  
Of merchant-venturers, and walled about  
A town, and built houses and temples there,  
And ploughlands to the people parcelled out.

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

But he to the Dark Realm, laid low by doom,  
Was gone, and wise Alcinoüs in his room  
Reigned by the grace of God : and counselling  
That brave Odysseus might find convoy home,

Grey-eyed Athena sought his house that day,  
And to the carven chamber took her way,  
Wherein a maiden fair as Goddesses,  
Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinoüs, lay.

Two comely maids lay by her on the floor  
Across the doorway ; and the glittering door  
Was shut ; but through it, like a puff of wind,  
She passed, and to the bed right on she bore ;

And standing at her head, the guise put on  
Of the girl's best-loved girl-companion,  
Daughter of Dymas, the famed sea-captain :  
Even in her likeness spoke the Grey-eyed One :

‘ Nausicaa, you idle child ! here lie  
Your bright clothes, all unheeded : yet is nigh  
Your wedding day, when fair attire you need  
Both for yourself and those who lead you by.



## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEOACIA

‘ For thence comes praise of men to be your meed,  
And makes my lord and lady glad indeed.  
Let us go washing with the peep of dawn ;  
And I will be your workmate for good speed.

‘ Not long shall you be maiden. Even to-day  
The princeliest in your own Phaeacia  
From all the land come wooing you. Arise !  
Speak to your father, while the dawn is grey,

‘ To yoke a mule-cart that may carry down  
Bright-coloured coverlet and sash and gown.  
Nay, even yourself could scarce go well afoot ;  
So far the washing-pools are off the town.’

So saying, grey-eyed Athena went her way  
Up to Olympus ; where the Gods, they say,  
Dwell in an ageless seat inviolable,  
That no wind shakes and no rain wets for aye,

Nor snowflake touches it : but very bright  
It stretches, all unclouded, and a white  
Splendour swims over it ; and all their days  
The blessed Gods therein take their delight.

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

Thither, her word said to the girl, was gone  
The Grey-eyed One : and on her shining throne  
Dawn clomb, and woke fair-gowned Nausicaa ;  
And at her dream she mused awhile alone.

Then hastily she sought the palace round,  
To tell her parents. Both within she found.  
By the hall-hearth among her handmaidens  
Her mother sat, and off her spindle wound

The twisted threads, dim-coloured like the sea.  
But him she met as to the council he  
Passed forth, whereto his lords were calling him ;  
And, standing close, she spoke thus lovingly :

‘ Papa dear, would you let me have the high  
Wheeled cart, to take my dainty clothes, that lie  
Soiled in the house, down to the watermead,  
And wash them where the running stream goes by ?

‘ And even for you yourself it is most fit  
That when the councillors in council sit,  
Among the princes with clean raiment on  
You go. And in the palace, born in it,

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ Five sons are yours : two wedded now, but three  
Are lusty bachelors, who endlessly  
Want clothes fresh from the wash that they may go  
To dances : all this charge is laid on me.’

So spoke she ; for the word of marriage wrought  
So strangely in her, she could not speak her thought  
To her own father. But he understood,  
And answered, ‘ Go, my child ; I grudge you nought,

‘ Mules or what else you need your will to do.  
The thralls shall yoke the high wheeled cart for you,  
And fix the tilt on it.’ He spoke, and called  
The thralls, and bade them. Forthwith out they drew

The easy-running mule-cart as he bade,  
And yoked the mules thereunder : then the maid  
Forth of the inner room the shining clothes  
Carried, and in the smooth-planed wagon laid.

And in the box good food and dainties fine  
Her mother laid, and filled a skin with wine,  
And gave her a gold flask of liquid oil  
For bathing when her maids and she would dine.

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

Then the girl, climbing to the wagon-seat,  
Took whip and reins in hand. With clattering feet  
The mules went as she lashed them to a run ;  
And clothes and girl went swinging up the street,

Her handmaidens behind her following fast ;  
Till to the lovely riverside at last  
They came, where all the year abundantly  
Bright water bubbled in and fleeted past

From pool to pool, all soil to wash away.  
Then they unyoked, and turned the mules to stray  
Loose by the eddying river, there at will  
To graze the couchgrass honeysweet : but they

Carried the clothes by armfuls where the unlit  
Water lay dark, and trod them down in it,  
Along the conduits, in contending haste,  
Till of their soilure was not left a whit ;

And on the seashore spread them each by each,  
Where the waves cleanest washed the pebble-beach.  
Then bathing and anointing them with oil,  
In the strong sun they left the clothes to bleach,

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

And took their dinner by the riverside.  
But when the girls with food were satisfied,  
Their kerchiefs they undid and cast away,  
To play at ball ; and in the song they plied

White-armed Nausicaa led them : even so  
Artemis the Archer down the steep might go  
Of Erymanthus, or Taygetus'  
Long ridge, rejoicing, while before her bow

Wild boars and fleet-foot deer flee fast away,  
And round her path the nymphs of the wildwood play,  
Daughters of Zeus, the Lord of thunderclouds,  
And Leto joys at heart : for fair are they,

Yet fairest her own child where all are fair ;  
And over all her brows and crown of hair  
Rise, easily known among them : so among  
Her maidens shone the mateless maiden there.

But when the time drew nigh that she was fain  
To fold the fair clothes up, and yoke the wain,  
And turn her homeward, then the Grey-eyed One,  
Divine Athena, counselled yet again

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

To wake Odysseus, so that he might see  
The lovely maiden who his guide should be  
To the Phaeacian city. Thereupon  
The princess at a maid flung suddenly

The ball, but missed her. In the pool hard by  
It fell; and all cried out; and at the cry  
He woke, and sat up, thinking inwardly,  
'O me! whose land is this, and where am I?

'Are these fierce lawless men of savage blood,  
Or hospitable and of godly mood?  
And the shrill voices as of womenkind  
That echo round me now, are these the brood

'Of the nymph-maidens who by river-well  
And mountain-peak and grassy meadow dwell?  
Or am I among folk of human speech?  
Well, I must take the risk, that I may tell.'

So saying, lord Odysseus from his lair  
In the bushes crept, and from the forest fair  
A leafy bough to hide his nakedness  
Broke off, and like a mountain-lion there

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

Strode forth, that through the raining blowing night,  
Fearless in strength, with eyeballs fiery-bright,  
Goes after the wild woodland deer, or sheep,  
Or oxen, hunting ; for his hunger's might

Even the barred homestead where the flocks are pent  
Bids him adventure : so Odysseus went  
Among the fair-tressed girls to cast himself,  
Though naked ; for his need was imminent.

Dreadful to them the sea-stained form drew nigh ;  
And up and down they ran dispersedly  
Along the sandspits, terror-struck : alone  
The daughter of Alcinoüs did not fly ;

Such courage put Athena in her mood ;  
But with unfaltering limbs straight up she stood.  
Whereat Odysseus hung in doubt awhile  
Whether to clasp her knees in prayer were good,

Or from afar with supplicating speech  
Even where he stood her mercy to beseech.  
Yet to his thinking with soft words it seemed  
Best from afar the lovely maid to reach ;

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAECIA

Lest, if he touched her knees, she wrathfully  
Might turn away : then subtle and soft spoke he :  
' I kneel to you, Protectress ! God are you  
Or mortal ? if a God indeed you be,

' Such as wide heaven inhabit, then I wis  
He who should deem you very Artemis,  
The daughter of high Zeus, so fair you are  
And tall and beautiful, were least amiss.

' But if a mortal, such as dwell on earth,  
Thrice-fortunate are they who gave you birth,  
Father and mother, and thrice-fortunate  
Your brothers : surely evermore great mirth

' They all make over you, with hearts elate  
To see a thing so lovely-delicate  
Treading a measure in the dance. But yet  
Far and away is he most fortunate

' Beyond the rest, who one day, wooing well,  
Laden with gifts shall take you home to dwell :  
For never mortal man nor woman yet  
My eyes have looked on so adorable.



## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ In Delos thus indeed a young palm-tree  
Once it befell me growing up to see  
Beside Apollo’s altar—for there too  
I voyaged, and much people followed me,

‘ When upon that ill-omened road I went,  
That brought me woe—and in astonishment  
I gazed upon it long ; for from no tree  
A shaft so stately up from earth is sent.

‘ So wondering, so admiring now once more  
I stand, afraid to clasp your knees, though sore  
My grief is, lady ; for but yesternight  
Out of the purple deep I reached the shore,

‘ The twentieth day : so long across the sea  
From the Far Isle the sharp squalls hurried me  
Incessant ; and now heaven has flung me here,  
Doubtless for more misfortunes yet to be :

‘ For not yet can I deem my labour done,  
Till the Gods perfect what they have begun.  
Pity me then, Protectress ! for to you  
Out of woes manifold I first have won ;

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ And beside you nought else I understand  
Nor know what folk possess this city and land.  
Then guide me to the town, and give to me,  
From such clothes-wrappings as you have at hand,

‘ A rag for covering : so what you require  
May the Gods grant you to your heart’s desire ;  
Husband and house, and in your household ways  
Fair concord : since no height of bliss is higher

‘ Than when in concord man and wife repose,  
Holding the house between them : to their foes  
Great grief it gives, and to their well-wishers  
Joy : but their own heart best its happiness knows.’

Thereat white-armed Nausicaa, in his face  
Looking, made answer, ‘ Stranger, nowise base  
Nor witless seem you : but Olympian Zeus  
Himself allots weal to the human race,

‘ After his pleasure, be they good or ill.  
This lot is yours, and you must bear it still.  
Yet now, since to our city and land you come,  
You shall not lack for clothes or what you will,

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘Such as a suppliant in his need might claim  
From far-off people to whose hands he came.  
And I myself will guide you to the town,  
And tell you what the people have for name.

‘Phaeacians are the dwellers in this land  
And city; and I, who here before you stand,  
Am daughter of Alcinoüs, who holds  
Phaeacia’s might and force within his hand.’

She spoke, and to her fair-tressed maidens thus  
Cried out, ‘Stand still, girls! why so timorous  
At sight of a strange face? you do not think  
This man is here with ill intent to us?’

‘That living mortal is not, nor shall be,  
Who to Phaeacia bearing enmity  
May come: for very dear to heaven we are,  
And dwell apart amid the surging sea,

‘At the world’s end, where never foot draws near  
Of other mortals. But this wanderer here  
We must treat kindly in his misery.  
Strangers and beggars all to God are dear.

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘How small soe’er, the grace to these we show  
Is precious. With this stranger be it so.  
Give him to eat and drink, and make him bathe  
Down in the sheltered stream, where no winds blow.’

So spoke Nausicaa; and from hand to hand  
Her women passed along the sign to stand,  
And set Odysseus in a sheltered place,  
As great Alcinoüs’ daughter gave command.

And there beside the running river they  
Laid down a shirt and cloak for his array,  
And gave him a gold flask of liquid oil,  
And bade him wash the soil of the sea away.

Then to the girls Odysseus made reply,  
‘Stand apart yonder, women, until I  
Wash the brine off my shoulders, and rub oil  
All over me: the day is long gone by

‘Since last oil of anointing touched my skin.  
But in your presence I will not begin  
To bathe; for shame it were in any place  
To strip, if fair-tressed maids I found therein.’

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

But they drew backward as Odysseus said,  
And told the girl: then in the river-bed  
He wiped away the brine that caked his back  
And shoulders broad, and rubbed from out his head

The barren salt-sea scurf, and every limb  
Washed clean, and with the oil-flask made him trim.  
And when thereafter he did on the clothes  
The mateless maiden had bestowed on him,

The child of Zeus, Athena, in their sight  
Gave to his form an ampler breadth and height,  
And made the long hair cluster on his head  
Tight-curling, as a hyacinth-flower curls tight.

Even as a cunning craftsman, in his trade  
By Pallas or Hephaestus perfect made,  
With manifold device of workmanship,  
Lays gold-leaf upon silver: so she laid

Grace on his head and shoulders. On the beach,  
Shining in splendour, just within their reach  
He sat; and gazing upon him, the girl  
Thus to her fair-tressed maidens uttered speech:

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘Listen, O white-armed girls, to what I say.  
Not surely against the will of them whose sway  
Is over wide Olympus, does this man  
Reach the divine Phaeacian land to-day.

‘Uncomely at first he seemed ; but now I see  
The heavenly gods are not more fair than he.  
Would that even such an one were called my lord,  
Mine, and it pleased him always thus to be,

‘Abiding with us here—ah women ! yet  
Give him such meat and drink as strangers get.’  
So spoke she ; and they heard her and obeyed,  
And by Odysseus meat and drink they set.

Then ravenously he ate of what they brought,  
And drank ; for long his fast had been, since aught  
Weary Odysseus’ lips had passed. But now  
White-armed Nausicaa yet again took thought.

Folding the clothes, she laid them on the wain,  
And harnessed up the strong-hoofed mules again ;  
Then climbing to her seat, she turned to him  
With counselling words, and spoke out straight and  
plain :

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ Rise now, O guest, and hasten to the town,  
That I may be your guide, and speed you down  
To my sage father’s house, where you shall see,  
I promise, all Phaeacia’s flower and crown.

‘ Then—for I think you wise—do even so :  
While by the fields and works of men we go,  
Follow apace behind the mules and cart,  
Beside the maids ; and I the way will show.

‘ But when we reach the city, round it stand  
High battlements, and upon either hand  
Lies a fair haven, and between the two  
You enter by a narrow spit of land.

‘ Along the road the curving galleys fair,  
Each in a separate yard, lie beached ; and there,  
On both sides of the beautifully built  
Shrine of Poseidon, is the market-square ;

‘ With massy and deep-sunken stones fenced in  
All round ; and busily the folk therein  
Work at the rigging of their black-hulled ships,  
Cables and cordage, and cut oarblades thin.

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ Since not with bow nor quiver here do we  
Deem in Phaeacia our concern to be ;  
But masts and oars, and balanced ships, wherein  
Rejoicingly we cross the foam-flecked sea.

‘ And bitter speech from them I fain would shun,  
Hereafter flung in scorn at this I have done.  
Proud are the common folk : and meeting us  
Together, thus might say some baser one :

*‘ And who is this, the stranger tall and gay  
That our Nausicaa brings behind her, pray ?  
And where may she have found him ? Ay, no doubt  
She leads a husband back with her to-day !*

*‘ Is he some wanderer from across the foam—  
Since no men near our island have their home—  
Lured hither from his ship ? or has some God,  
Long prayed for, heard her prayer at last and come,*

*‘ Out of the skies descending amorous,  
To have her all her life-days ? Better thus :  
Though she must go herself to fetch him in,  
This outland lord ! for she despises us,*



## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

*'The people of her own Phaeacian name,  
Where many men and good to woo her came.*  
So will they say ; and this will bring on me  
Shame, even as I myself would think it shame

*'If any other girl in suchlike way,  
With parents of her own alive, should stray,  
Heedless of them, in company with men,  
Nor wait for marriage in the face of day.*

*'Now, guest, mark well my words ; and they are these :  
So at my father's hands you may with ease  
Find convoy and home-coming. You will note  
Athena's goodly grove of poplar-trees,*

*'By the roadside : therein a spring wells out ;  
And the king's close and croft lie round about,  
In the rich meadow, as far off the town  
As a man's voice will carry if he shout.*

*'There, while the rest pass on, sit down and wait  
Some while, till we have reached the palace gate.  
But when you reckon we are there, go on  
Into the town, and ask where holds his state*

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

‘ My father, great Alcinoüs : and this  
Is known most easily ; even a child I wis  
Might be your guide ; for no Phaeacian house  
Is built as prince Alcinoüs’ palace is.

‘ But when you cross the forecourt, and the tall  
House covers you, pass swiftly up the hall,  
Straight to my mother. In the firelight she  
Sits by the hearth, and off her spindle fall

‘ The twisted threads, dim-coloured like the sea,  
Marvellous : leaning on the hall-pillar she  
Sits there, her slaves behind her ; and by hers  
My father’s seat is set, where drinking he

‘ Sits like a deathless god. Yet do not stay  
By him, but clasp our mother’s knees, and pray :  
So shall the day of glad return for you  
Dawn swiftly, though your home be far away.’

Even on the word her shining whip she plied ;  
And the mules quickly left the riverside,  
And trotted well, and well swung out and in  
Their feet, while wisely she, their pace to guide,

## ODYSSEUS IN PHAEACIA

Laid on the lash, so that but little space  
Behind, Odysseus and the maids kept pace.  
And the sun sank as to the stately grove  
They drew anigh, Athena's holy place.

There lord Odysseus stayed, and turned to bow  
To great Zeus' daughter, praying, 'Hearken thou!  
Daughter of Zeus, the Lord of thunderclouds,  
Maiden Unweariable, hear me now ;

'Though once before thou heardst me not, when he,  
The mighty Shaker of Earth, was breaking me,  
And I was broken : grant me here to find  
Friendship and pity !' So he prayed ; and she

Heard, but as yet apparent vision none  
Vouchsafed him : for she feared her father's son ;  
And he against divine Odysseus raged  
In furious wise, ere yet his land he won.

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