On Translating Homer

Last Words a Lecture Given at Oxford



MATTHEW ARNOLD

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Title: On Translating Homer

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Release date: May 19, 2021 [eBook #65381]
Most recently updated: October 18, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/65381

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ON TRANSLATING HOMER

ON TRANSLATING HOMER

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

With F. W. Newman's 'Homeric Translation'
and Arnold's 'Last Words'

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LIMITED
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

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... Nunquamne reponam?

I

It has more than once been suggested to me that I should translate Homer. That is a task for which I have neither the time nor the courage; but the suggestion led me to regard yet more closely a poet whom I had already long studied, and for one or two years the works of Homer were seldom out of my hands. The study of classical literature is probably on the decline; but, whatever may be the fate of this study in general, it is certain that, as instruction spreads and the number of readers increases, attention will be more and more directed to the poetry of Homer, not indeed as part of a classical course, but as the most important poetical monument existing. Even within the last ten years two fresh translations of the *Iliad* have appeared in England: one by a man of great ability and genuine learning, Professor Newman; the other by Mr Wright, the conscientious and painstaking translator of Dante. It may safely be asserted that neither of these works will take rank as the standard translation of Homer; that the task of rendering him will still be attempted by other translators. It may perhaps be possible to render to these some service, to save them some loss of labour, by pointing out rocks on which their predecessors have split, and the right objects on which a translator of Homer should fix his attention.

It is disputed what aim a translator should propose to himself in dealing with his original. Even this preliminary is not yet settled. On one side it is said that the translation ought to be such 'that the reader should, if possible, forget that it is a translation at all, and be lulled into the illusion that he is reading an original work—something original' (if the translation be English), 'from an English hand'. The real original is in this case, it is said, 'taken as a basis on which to rear a poem that shall affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers'. On the other hand, Mr Newman, who states the foregoing doctrine only to condemn it, declares that he 'aims at precisely the opposite: to retain every peculiarity of the original, so far as he is able, *with the greater care the more foreign it may happen to be*'; so that it may 'never be forgotten that he is imitating, and imitating in a different material'. The translator's 'first duty', says Mr Newman 'is a historical one, to be *faithful*'. Probably both sides would agree that the translator's 'first duty is to be faithful'; but the question at issue between them is, in what faithfulness consists.

My one object is to give practical advice to a translator; and I shall not the least concern myself with theories of translation as such. But I advise the translator not to try 'to rear on the basis of the *Iliad*, a poem that shall affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers'; and for this simple reason, that we cannot possibly tell *how* the *Iliad* 'affected its natural hearers'. It is probably meant merely that he should try to affect Englishmen powerfully, as Homer affected Greeks powerfully; but this direction is not enough, and can give no real guidance. For all great poets affect their hearers powerfully, but the effect of

one poet is one thing, that of another poet another thing: it is our translator's business to reproduce the effect of Homer, and the most powerful emotion of the unlearned English reader can never assure him whether he has *re*produced this, or whether he has produced something else. So, again, he may follow Mr Newman's directions, he may try to be 'faithful', he may 'retain every peculiarity of his original'; but who is to assure him, who is to assure Mr Newman himself, that, when he has done this, he has done that for which Mr Newman enjoins this to be done, 'adhered closely to Homer's manner and habit of thought'? Evidently the translator needs some more practical directions than these. No one can tell him how Homer affected the Greeks; but there are those who can tell him how Homer affects *them*. These are scholars; who possess, at the same time with knowledge of Greek, adequate poetical taste and feeling. No translation will seem to them of much worth compared with the original; but they alone can say whether the translation produces more or less the same effect upon them as the original. They are the only competent tribunal in this matter: the Greeks are dead; the unlearned Englishman has not the data for judging; and no man can safely confide in his own single judgment of his own work. Let not the translator, then, trust to his notions of what the ancient Greeks would have thought of him; he will lose himself in the vague. Let him not trust to what the ordinary English reader thinks of him; he will be taking the blind for his guide. Let him not trust to his own judgment of his own work; he may be misled by individual caprices. Let him ask how his work affects those who both know Greek and can appreciate poetry; whether to read it gives the Provost of Eton, or Professor Thompson at Cambridge, or Professor

Jowett here in Oxford, at all the same feeling which to read the original gives them. I consider that when Bentley said of Pope's translation, 'It was a pretty poem, but must not be called Homer', the work, in spite of all its power and attractiveness, was judged.

Ὡς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν, 'as the judicious would determine', that is a test to which everyone professes himself willing to submit his works. Unhappily, in most cases, no two persons agree as to who 'the judicious' are. In the present case, the ambiguity is removed: I suppose the translator at one with me as to the tribunal to which alone he should look for judgment; and he has thus obtained a practical test by which to estimate the real success of his work. How is he to proceed, in order that his work, tried by this test, may be found most successful?

First of all, there are certain negative counsels which I will give him. Homer has occupied men's minds so much, such a literature has arisen about him, that every one who approaches him should resolve strictly to limit himself to that which may directly serve the object for which he approaches him. I advise the translator to have nothing to do with the questions, whether Homer ever existed; whether the poet of the *Iliad* be one or many; whether the *Iliad* be one poem or an *Achilleis* and an *Iliad* stuck together; whether the Christian doctrine of the Atonement is shadowed forth in the Homeric mythology; whether the Goddess Latona in any way prefigures the Virgin Mary, and so on. These are questions which have been discussed with learning, with ingenuity, nay, with genius; but they have two inconveniences,—one general for all who approach them, one particular for the translator. The general inconvenience is that there really exist no data for determining them. The

particular inconvenience is that their solution by the translator, even were it possible, could be of no benefit to his translation.

I advise him, again, not to trouble himself with constructing a special vocabulary for his use in translation; with excluding a certain class of English words, and with confining himself to another class, in obedience to any theory about the peculiar qualities of Homer's style. Mr Newman says that 'the entire dialect of Homer being essentially archaic, that of a translator ought to be as much Saxo-Norman as possible, and owe as little as possible to the elements thrown into our language by classical learning'. Mr Newman is unfortunate in the observance of his own theory; for I continually find in his translation words of Latin origin, which seem to me quite alien to the simplicity of Homer, —'responsive', for instance, which is a favourite word of Mr Newman, to represent the Homeric ἀμειβόμενος:

> Great Hector of the motley helm thus spake to her
> *responsive*.
> But thus *responsively* to him spake godlike Alexander.

And the word 'celestial' again, in the grand address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles,

> You, who are born *celestial*, from Eld and Death
> exempted!

seems to me in that place exactly to jar upon the feeling as too bookish. But, apart from the question of Mr Newman's fidelity to his own theory, such a theory seems to me both dangerous for a translator and false in itself. Dangerous for a translator; because, wherever one finds such a theory

announced (and one finds it pretty often), it is generally followed by an explosion of pedantry; and pedantry is of all things in the world the most un-Homeric. False in itself; because, in fact, we owe to the Latin element in our language most of that very rapidity and clear decisiveness by which it is contradistinguished from the German, and in sympathy with the languages of Greece and Rome: so that to limit an English translator of Homer to words of Saxon origin is to deprive him of one of his special advantages for translating Homer. In Voss's well-known translation of Homer, it is precisely the qualities of his German language itself, something heavy and trailing both in the structure of its sentences and in the words of which it is composed, which prevent his translation, in spite of the hexameters, in spite of the fidelity, from creating in us the impression created by the Greek. Mr Newman's prescription, if followed, would just strip the English translator of the advantage which he has over Voss.

The frame of mind in which we approach an author influences our correctness of appreciation of him; and Homer should be approached by a translator in the simplest frame of mind possible. Modern sentiment tries to make the ancient not less than the modern world its own; but against modern sentiment in its applications to Homer the translator, if he would feel Homer truly—and unless he feels him truly, how can he render him truly?—cannot be too much on his guard. For example: the writer of an interesting article on English translations of Homer, in the last number of the *National Review*, quotes, I see, with admiration, a criticism of Mr Ruskin on the use of the epithet φυσίζοος, 'life-giving', in that beautiful passage in the third book of the *Iliad*, which

follows Helen's mention of her brothers Castor and Pollux as alive, though they were in truth dead:

> ὣς φάτο· τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
> ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.[1]

'The poet', says Mr Ruskin, 'has to speak of the earth in sadness; but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thought of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still,—fruitful, life-giving'. This is a just specimen of that sort of application of modern sentiment to the ancients, against which a student, who wishes to feel the ancients truly, cannot too resolutely defend himself. It reminds one, as, alas! so much of Mr Ruskin's writing reminds one, of those words of the most delicate of living critics: "Comme tout genre de composition a son écueil particulier, *celui du genre romanesque, c'est le faux*". The reader may feel moved as he reads it; but it is not the less an example of 'le faux' in criticism; it is false. It is not true, as to that particular passage, that Homer called the earth φυσίζοος because, 'though he had to speak of the earth in sadness, he would not let that sadness change or affect his thought of it', but consoled himself by considering that 'the earth is our mother still,—fruitful, life-giving'. It is not true, as a matter of general criticism, that this kind of sentimentality, eminently modern, inspires Homer at all. 'From Homer and Polygnotus I every day learn more clearly', says Goethe, 'that in our life here above ground we have, properly speaking, to enact Hell'[2]: —if the student must absolutely have a keynote to the *Iliad*, let him take this of Goethe, and see what he can do with it; it will not, at any rate, like the tender pantheism of Mr Ruskin, falsify for him the whole strain of Homer.

These are negative counsels; I come to the positive. When I say, the translator of Homer should above all be penetrated by a sense of four qualities of his author;—that he is eminently rapid; that he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and, finally that he is eminently noble;—I probably seem to be saying what is too general to be of much service to anybody. Yet it is strictly true that, for want of duly penetrating themselves with the first-named quality of Homer, his rapidity, Cowper and Mr Wright have failed in rendering him; that, for want of duly appreciating the second-named quality, his plainness and directness of style and dictation, Pope and Mr Sotheby have failed in rendering him; that for want of appreciating the third, his plainness and directness of ideas, Chapman has failed in rendering him; while for want of appreciating the fourth, his nobleness, Mr Newman, who has clearly seen some of the faults of his predecessors, has yet failed more conspicuously than any of them.

Coleridge says, in his strange language, speaking of the union of the human soul with the divine essence, that this takes place

> Whene’er the mist, which stands ’twixt God and thee,
> Defecates to a pure transparency;

and so, too, it may be said of that union of the translator with his original, which alone can produce a good translation, that it takes place when the mist which stands between them—the mist of alien modes

of thinking, speaking, and feeling on the translator's part—'defecates to a pure transparency', and disappears. But between Cowper and Homer—(Mr Wright repeats in the main Cowper's manner, as Mr Sotheby repeats Pope's manner, and neither Mr Wright's translation nor Mr Sotheby's has, I must be forgiven for saying, any proper reason for existing)—between Cowper and Homer there is interposed the mist of Cowper's elaborate Miltonic manner, entirely alien to the flowing rapidity of Homer; between Pope and Homer there is interposed the mist of Pope's literary artificial manner, entirely alien to the plain naturalness of Homer's manner; between Chapman and Homer there is interposed the mist of the fancifulness of the Elizabethan age, entirely alien to the plain directness of Homer's thought and feeling; while between Mr Newman and Homer is interposed a cloud of more than Egyptian thickness,—namely, a manner, in Mr Newman's version, eminently ignoble, while Homer's manner is eminently noble.

I do not despair of making all these propositions clear to a student who approaches Homer with a free mind. First, Homer is eminently rapid, and to this rapidity the elaborate movement of Miltonic blank verse is alien. The reputation of Cowper, that most interesting man and excellent poet, does not depend on his translation of Homer; and in his preface to the second edition, he himself tells us that he felt,—he had too much poetical taste not to feel,—on returning to his own version after six or seven years, 'more dissatisfied with it himself than the most difficult to be pleased of all his judges'. And he was dissatisfied with it for the right reason,—that 'it seemed to him deficient *in the grace of ease*'. Yet he seems to have originally misconceived the manner of Homer so much, that it is no wonder he rendered

him amiss. ‘The similitude of Milton’s manner to that of Homer is such’, he says, ‘that no person familiar with both can read either without being reminded of the other; and it is in those breaks and pauses to which the numbers of the English poet are so much indebted, both for their dignity and variety, that he chiefly copies the Grecian’. It would be more true to say: ‘The unlikeness of Milton’s manner to that of Homer is such, that no person familiar with both can read either without being struck with his difference from the other; and it is in his breaks and pauses that the English poet is most unlike the Grecian’.

The inversion and pregnant conciseness of Milton or Dante are, doubtless, most impressive qualities of style; but they are the very opposites of the directness and flowingness of Homer, which he keeps alike in passages of the simplest narrative, and in those of the deepest emotion. Not only, for example, are these lines of Cowper un-Homeric:

> So numerous seemed those fires the banks between
> Of Xanthus, blazing, and the fleet of Greece
> In prospect all of Troy;

where the position of the word ‘blazing’ gives an entirely un-Homeric movement to this simple passage, describing the fires of the Trojan camp outside of Troy; but the following lines, in that very highly-wrought passage where the horse of Achilles answers his master’s reproaches for having left Patroclus on the field of battle, are equally un-Homeric:

> For not through sloth or tardiness on us
> Aught chargeable, have Ilium’s sons thine arms
> Stript from Patroclus’ shoulders; but a God
> Matchless in battle, offspring of bright-haired

Latona, him contending in the van
Slew, for the glory of the chief of Troy.

Here even the first inversion, ‘have Ilium’s sons thine arms Stript from Patroclus’ shoulders’, gives the reader a sense of a movement not Homeric; and the second inversion, ‘a God him contending in the van Slew’, gives this sense ten times stronger. Instead of moving on without check, as in reading the original, the reader twice finds himself, in reading the translation, brought up and checked. Homer moves with the same simplicity and rapidity in the highly-wrought as in the simple passage.

It is in vain that Cowper insists on his fidelity: ‘my chief boast is that I have adhered closely to my original’:—‘the matter found in me, whether the reader like it or not, is found also in Homer; and the matter not found in me, how much soever the reader may admire it, is found only in Mr Pope’. To suppose that it is *fidelity* to an original to give its matter, unless you at the same time give its manner; or, rather, to suppose that you can really give its matter at all, unless you can give its manner, is just the mistake of our pre-Raphaelite school of painters, who do not understand that the peculiar effect of nature resides in the whole and not in the parts. So the peculiar effect of a poet resides in his manner and movement, not in his words taken separately. It is well known how conscientiously literal is Cowper in his translation of Homer. It is well known how extravagantly free is Pope.

So let it be!
Portents and prodigies are lost on me;

that is Pope’s rendering of the words,

Ξάνθε, τί μοι θάνατον μαντεύεαι; οὐδέ τί σε χρή·[3]

Xanthus, why prophesiest thou my death to me?
thou needest not at all:

yet, on the whole, Pope's translation of the *Iliad* is more Homeric than Cowper's, for it is more rapid.

Pope's movement, however, though rapid, is not of the same kind as Homer's; and here I come to the real objection to rhyme in a translation of Homer. It is commonly said that rhyme is to be abandoned in a translation of Homer, because 'the exigencies of rhyme', to quote Mr Newman, 'positively forbid faithfulness'; because 'a just translation of any ancient poet in rhyme', to quote Cowper, 'is impossible'. This, however, is merely an accidental objection to rhyme. If this were all, it might be supposed, that if rhymes were more abundant Homer could be adequately translated in rhyme. But this is not so; there is a deeper, a substantial objection to rhyme in a translation of Homer. It is, that rhyme inevitably tends to pair lines which in the original are independent, and thus the movement of the poem is changed. In these lines of Chapman, for instance, from Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus, in the twelfth book of the *Iliad*:

O friend, if keeping back
Would keep back age from us, and death, and that
we might not wrack
In this life's human sea at all, but that deferring now
We shunned death ever,—nor would I half this vain
valor show,
Nor glorify a folly so, to wish thee to advance;
But since we *must* go, though not here, and that
besides the chance
Proposed now, there are infinite fates, etc.

Here the necessity of making the line,

Nor glorify a folly so, to wish thee to advance,

rhyme with the line which follows it, entirely changes and spoils the movement of the passage.

οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην,
οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν·[4]

Neither would I myself go forth to fight with the foremost,
Nor would I urge thee on to enter the glorious battle,

says Homer; there he stops, and begins an opposed movement:

νῦν δ'—ἔμπης γὰρ Κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο—

But—for a thousand fates of death stand close to us always—

This line, in which Homer wishes to go away with the most marked rapidity from the line before, Chapman is forced, by the necessity of rhyming, intimately to connect with the line before.

But since we *must* go, though not here, and that besides the chance.

The moment the word *chance* strikes our ear, we are irresistibly carried back to *advance* and to the whole previous line, which, according to Homer's own feeling, we ought to have left behind us entirely, and to be moving farther and farther away from.

Rhyme certainly, by intensifying antithesis, can intensify separation, and this is precisely what Pope does; but this balanced rhetorical antithesis, though

very effective, is entirely un-Homeric. And this is what I mean by saying that Pope fails to render Homer, because he does not render his plainness and directness of style and diction. Where Homer marks separation by moving away, Pope marks it by antithesis. No passage could show this better than the passage I have just quoted, on which I will pause for a moment.

Robert Wood, whose *Essay on the Genius of Homer* is mentioned by Goethe as one of the books which fell into his hands when his powers were first developing themselves, and strongly interested him, relates of this passage a striking story. He says that in 1762, at the end of the Seven Years' War, being then Under-Secretary of State, he was directed to wait upon the President of the Council, Lord Granville, a few days before he died, with the preliminary articles of the Treaty of Paris. 'I found him', he continues, 'so languid, that I proposed postponing my business for another time; but he insisted that I should stay, saying, it could not prolong his life to neglect his duty; and repeating the following passage out of Sarpedon's speech, he dwelled with particular emphasis on the third line, which recalled to his mind the distinguishing part he had taken in public affairs:

> ὦ πέπον, εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε,
> αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε
> ἔσσεσθ', οὔτε κεν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ πρώτοισι μαχοίμην,[5]
> οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν·
> νῦν δ'—ἔμπης γὰρ Κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο
> μυρίαι, ἃς οὐκ ἔστι φυγεῖν βρότον, οὐδ' ὑπαλύξαι
> —
> ἴομεν.

His Lordship repeated the last word several times

with a calm and determinate resignation; and, after a serious pause of some minutes, he desired to hear the Treaty read, to which he listened with great attention, and recovered spirits enough to declare the approbation of a dying statesman (I use his own words) “on the most glorious war, and most honourable peace, this nation ever saw”’[6].

I quote this story, first, because it is interesting as exhibiting the English aristocracy at its very height of culture, lofty spirit, and greatness, towards the middle of the 18th century. I quote it, secondly, because it seems to me to illustrate Goethe’s saying which I mentioned, that our life, in Homer’s view of it, represents a conflict and a hell; and it brings out, too, what there is tonic and fortifying in this doctrine. I quote it, lastly, because it shows that the passage is just one of those in translating which Pope will be at his best, a passage of strong emotion and oratorical movement, not of simple narrative or description.

Pope translates the passage thus:

> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave,
> For lust of fame I should not vainly dare
> In fighting fields, nor urge thy soul to war:
> But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
> Disease, and death’s inexorable doom;
> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame what we to nature owe.

Nothing could better exhibit Pope’s prodigious talent; and nothing, too, could be better in its own way. But, as Bentley said, ‘You must not call it Homer’. One feels that Homer’s thought has passed through a literary and rhetorical crucible, and come

out highly intellectualised; come out in a form which strongly impresses us, indeed, but which no longer impresses us in the same way as when it was uttered by Homer. The antithesis of the last two lines—

> The life which others pay, let us bestow,
> And give to fame what we to nature owe

is excellent, and is just suited to Pope's heroic couplet; but neither the antithesis itself, nor the couplet which conveys it, is suited to the feeling or to the movement of the Homeric ἴομεν.

A literary and intellectualised language is, however, in its own way well suited to grand matters; and Pope, with a language of this kind and his own admirable talent, comes off well enough as long as he has passion, or oratory, or a great crisis to deal with. Even here, as I have been pointing out, he does not render Homer; but he and his style are in themselves strong. It is when he comes to level passages, passages of narrative or description, that he and his style are sorely tried, and prove themselves weak. A perfectly plain direct style can of course convey the simplest matter as naturally as the grandest; indeed, it must be harder for it, one would say, to convey a grand matter worthily and nobly, than to convey a common matter, as alone such a matter should be conveyed, plainly and simply. But the style of Rasselas is incomparably better fitted to describe a sage philosophising than a soldier lighting his camp-fire. The style of Pope is not the style of Rasselas; but it is equally a literary style, equally unfitted to describe a simple matter with the plain naturalness of Homer.

Everyone knows the passage at the end of the eighth book of the *Iliad*, where the fires of the Trojan

encampment are likened to the stars. It is very far from my wish to hold Pope up to ridicule, so I shall not quote the commencement of the passage, which in the original is of great and celebrated beauty, and in translating which Pope has been singularly and notoriously fortunate. But the latter part of the passage, where Homer leaves the stars, and comes to the Trojan fires, treats of the plainest, most matter-of-fact subject possible, and deals with this, as Homer always deals with every subject, in the plainest and most straightforward style. ‘So many in number, between the ships and the streams of Xanthus, shone forth in front of Troy the fires kindled by the Trojans. There were kindled a thousand fires in the plain; and by each one there sat fifty men in the light of the blazing fire. And the horses, munching white barley and rye, and standing by the chariots, waited for the bright-throned Morning[7]’.

In Pope’s translation, this plain story becomes the following:

> So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
> And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
> The long reflections of the distant fires
> Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
> A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
> And shoot a shady lustre o’er the field.
> Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
> Whose umbered arms, by fits, thick flashes send;
> Loud neigh the coursers o’er their heaps of corn,
> And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

It is for passages of this sort, which, after all, form the bulk of a narrative poem, that Pope’s style is so bad. In elevated passages he is powerful, as Homer is powerful, though not in the same way; but in plain

narrative, where Homer is still powerful and delightful, Pope, by the inherent fault of his style, is ineffective and out of taste. Wordsworth says somewhere, that wherever Virgil seems to have composed ‘with his eye on the object’, Dryden fails to render him. Homer invariably composes ‘with his eye on the object’, whether the object be a moral or a material one: Pope composes with his eye on his style, into which he translates his object, whatever it is. That, therefore, which Homer conveys to us immediately, Pope conveys to us through a medium. He aims at turning Homer’s sentiments pointedly and rhetorically; at investing Homer’s description with ornament and dignity. A sentiment may be changed by being put into a pointed and oratorical form, yet may still be very effective in that form; but a description, the moment it takes its eyes off that which it is to describe, and begins to think of ornamenting itself, is worthless.

Therefore, I say, the translator of Homer should penetrate himself with a sense of the plainness and directness of Homer’s style; of the simplicity with which Homer’s thought is evolved and expressed. He has Pope’s fate before his eyes, to show him what a divorce may be created even between the most gifted translator and Homer by an artificial evolution of thought and a literary cast of style.

Chapman’s style is not artificial and literary like Pope’s nor his movement elaborate and self-retarding like the Miltonic movement of Cowper. He is plain-spoken, fresh, vigorous, and, to a certain degree, rapid; and all these are Homeric qualities. I cannot say that I think the movement of his fourteen-syllable line, which has been so much commended, Homeric; but on this point I shall have more to say

by and by, when I come to speak of Mr Newman's metrical exploits. But it is not distinctly anti-Homeric, like the movement of Milton's blank verse; and it has a rapidity of its own. Chapman's diction, too, is generally good, that is, appropriate to Homer; above all, the syntactical character of his style is appropriate. With these merits, what prevents his translation from being a satisfactory version of Homer? Is it merely the want of literal faithfulness to his original, imposed upon him, it is said, by the exigencies of rhyme? Has this celebrated version, which has so many advantages, no other and deeper defect than that? Its author is a poet, and a poet, too, of the Elizabethan age; the golden age of English literature as it is called, and on the whole truly called; for, whatever be the defects of Elizabethan literature (and they are great), we have no development of our literature to compare with it for vigour and richness. This age, too, showed what it could do in translating, by producing a master-piece, its version of the Bible.

Chapman's translation has often been praised as eminently Homeric. Keats's fine sonnet in its honour everyone knows; but Keats could not read the original, and therefore could not really judge the translation. Coleridge, in praising Chapman's version, says at the same time, 'It will give you small idea of Homer'. But the grave authority of Mr Hallum pronounces this translation to be 'often exceedingly Homeric'; and its latest editor boldly declares that by what, with a deplorable style, he calls 'his own innative Homeric genius', Chapman 'has thoroughly identified himself with Homer'; and that 'we pardon him even for his digressions, for they are such as we feel Homer himself would have written'.

I confess that I can never read twenty lines of Chapman's version without recurring to Bentley's cry, 'This is not Homer!' and that from a deeper cause than any unfaithfulness occasioned by the fetters of rhyme.

I said that there were four things which eminently distinguished Homer, and with a sense of which Homer's translator should penetrate himself as fully as possible. One of these four things was, the plainness and directness of Homer's ideas. I have just been speaking of the plainness and directness of his style; but the plainness and directness of the contents of his style, of his ideas themselves, is not less remarkable. But as eminently as Homer is plain, so eminently is the Elizabethan literature in general, and Chapman in particular, fanciful. Steeped in humours and fantasticality up to its very lips, the Elizabethan age, newly arrived at the free use of the human faculties after their long term of bondage, and delighting to exercise them freely, suffers from its own extravagance in this first exercise of them, can hardly bring itself to see an object quietly or to describe it temperately. Happily, in the translation of the Bible, the sacred character of their original inspired the translators with such respect that they did not dare to give the rein to their own fancies in dealing with it. But, in dealing with works of profane literature, in dealing with poetical works above all, which highly stimulated them, one may say that the minds of the Elizabethan translators were *too* active; that they could not forbear importing so much of their own, and this of a most peculiar and Elizabethan character, into their original, that they effaced the character of the original itself.

Take merely the opening pages to Chapman's

translation, the introductory verses, and the dedications. You will find:

> An Anagram of the name of our Dread Prince,
> My most gracious and sacred Mæcenas,
> Henry, Prince of Wales,
> Our Sunn, Heyr, Peace, Life,

Henry, son of James the First, to whom the work is dedicated. Then comes an address,

> To the sacred Fountain of Princes,
> Sole Empress of Beauty and Virtue, Anne, Queen
> Of England, etc.

All the Middle Age, with its grotesqueness, its conceits, its irrationality, is still in these opening pages; they by themselves are sufficient to indicate to us what a gulf divides Chapman from the 'clearest-souled' of poets, from Homer, almost as great a gulf as that which divides him from Voltaire. Pope has been sneered at for saying that Chapman writes 'somewhat as one might imagine Homer himself to have written before he arrived at years of discretion'. But the remark is excellent: Homer expresses himself like a man of adult reason, Chapman like a man whose reason has not yet cleared itself. For instance, if Homer had had to say of a poet, that he hoped his merit was now about to be fully established in the opinion of good judges, he was as incapable of saying this as Chapman says it,—'Though truth in her very nakedness sits in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora, and Ganges, few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm that the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun',—I say, Homer was as

incapable of saying this in that manner, as Voltaire himself would have been. Homer, indeed, has actually an affinity with Voltaire in the unrivalled clearness and straightforwardness of his thinking; in the way in which he keeps to one thought at a time, and puts that thought forth in its complete natural plainness, instead of being led away from it by some fancy striking him in connection with it, and being beguiled to wander off with this fancy till his original thought, in its natural reality, knows him no more. What could better show us how gifted a race was this Greek race? The same member of it has not only the power of profoundly touching that natural heart of humanity which it is Voltaire's weakness that he cannot reach, but can also address the understanding with all Voltaire's admirable simplicity and rationality.

My limits will not allow me to do more than shortly illustrate, from Chapman's version of the *Iliad*, what I mean when I speak of this vital difference between Homer and an Elizabethan poet in the quality of their thought; between the plain simplicity of the thought of the one, and the curious complexity of the thought of the other. As in Pope's case, I carefully abstain from choosing passages for the express purpose of making Chapman appear ridiculous; Chapman, like Pope, merits in himself all respect, though he too, like Pope, fails to render Homer.

In that tonic speech of Sarpedon, of which I have said so much, Homer, you may remember, has:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε,
> αἰεὶ δὴ μέλλοιμεν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε
> ἔσσεσθ'—
>
> if indeed, but once *this* battle avoided,

> We were for ever to live without growing old and
> immortal—

Chapman cannot be satisfied with this, but must add a fancy to it:

> if keeping back
> Would keep back age from us, and death, and *that*
> *we might not wrack*
> *In this life's human sea at all*;

and so on. Again; in another passage which I have before quoted, where Zeus says to the horses of Peleus,

> τί σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἀνάκτι
> θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε.[8]

> Why gave we you to royal Peleus, to a mortal?
> but ye are without old age, and immortal.

Chapman sophisticates this into:

> Why gave we you t' a mortal king, when immortality
> And *incapacity of age so dignifies your states*?

Again; in the speech of Achilles to his horses, where Achilles, according to Homer, says simply 'Take heed that ye bring your master safe back to the host of the Danaans, in some other sort than the last time, when the battle is ended', Chapman sophisticates this into:

> *When with blood, for this day's fast observed, revenge*
> *shall yield*
> *Our heart satiety*, bring us off.

In Hector's famous speech, again, at his parting from Andromache, Homer makes him say: 'Nor does my own heart so bid me' (to keep safe behind the walls),

‘since I have learned to be staunch always, and to fight among the foremost of the Trojans, busy on behalf of my father’s great glory, and my own[9]’. In Chapman’s hands this becomes:

> The spirit I first did breathe
> Did never teach me that; much less, since the contempt of death
> Was settled in me, *and my mind knew what a worthy was,*
> *Whose office is to lead in fight, and give no danger pass*
> *Without improvement. In this fire must Hector’s trial shine:*
> *Here must his country, father, friends, be in him made divine.*

You see how ingeniously Homer’s plain thought is *tormented*, as the French would say, here. Homer goes on: ‘For well I know this in my mind and in my heart, the day will be, when sacred Troy shall perish’—

> ἔσσεται ἦμαρ, ὅτ’ ἄν ποτ’ ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρή.

Chapman makes this:

> And such a *stormy* day shall come, in mind and soul I know,
> When sacred Troy *shall shed her towers, for tears of overthrow*.

I might go on for ever, but I could not give you a better illustration than this last, of what I mean by saying that the Elizabethan poet fails to render Homer because he cannot forbear to interpose a play of thought between his object and its expression. Chapman translates his object into Elizabethan, as Pope translates it into the Augustan of Queen Anne;

both convey it to us through a medium. Homer, on the other hand, sees his object and conveys it to us immediately.

And yet, in spite of this perfect plainness and directness of Homer's style, in spite of this perfect plainness and directness of his ideas, he is eminently *noble*; he works as entirely in the grand style, he is as grandiose, as Phidias, or Dante, or Michael Angelo. This is what makes his translators despair. 'To give relief', says Cowper, 'to prosaic subjects' (such as dressing, eating, drinking, harnessing, travelling, going to bed), that is to treat such subjects nobly, in the grand style, 'without seeming unreasonably tumid, is extremely difficult'. It *is* difficult, but Homer has done it. Homer is precisely the incomparable poet he is, because he has done it. His translator must not be tumid, must not be artificial, must not be literary; true: but then also he must not be commonplace, must not be ignoble. I have shown you how translators of Homer fail by wanting rapidity, by wanting simplicity of style, by wanting plainness of thought: in a second lecture I will show you how a translator fails by wanting nobility.

II

I must repeat what I said in beginning, that the translator of Homer ought steadily to keep in mind where lies the real test of the success of his translation, what judges he is to try to satisfy. He is to try to satisfy *scholars*, because scholars alone have the means of really judging him. A scholar may be a pedant, it is true, and then his judgment will be worthless; but a scholar may also have poetical feeling, and then he can judge him truly; whereas all the poetical feeling in the world will not enable a man who is not a scholar to judge him truly. For the translator is to reproduce Homer, and the scholar alone has the means of knowing that Homer who is to be reproduced. He knows him but imperfectly, for he is separated from him by time, race, and language; but he alone knows him at all. Yet people speak as if there were two real tribunals in this matter,—the scholar's tribunal, and that of the general public. They speak as if the scholar's judgment was one thing, and the general public's judgment another; both with their shortcomings, both with their liability to error; but both to be regarded by the translator. The translator who makes verbal literalness his chief care 'will', says a writer in the *National Review* whom I have already quoted, 'be appreciated by the scholar accustomed to test a translation rigidly by comparison with the original,

to look perhaps with excessive care to finish in detail rather than boldness and general effect, and find pardon even for a version that seems bare and bold, so it be scholastic and faithful'. But, if the scholar in judging a translation looks to detail rather than to general effect, he judges it pedantically and ill. The appeal, however, lies not from the pedantic scholar to the general public, which can only like or dislike Chapman's version, or Pope's, or Mr Newman's, but cannot *judge* them; it lies from the pedantic scholar to the scholar who is not pedantic, who knows that Homer is Homer by his general effect, and not by his single words, and who demands but one thing in a translation,—that it shall, as nearly as possible, reproduce for him the *general effect* of Homer. This, then, remains the one proper aim of the translator: to reproduce on the intelligent scholar, as nearly as possible, the general effect of Homer. Except so far as he reproduces this, he loses his labour, even though he may make a spirited *Iliad* of his own, like Pope, or translate Homer's *Iliad* word for word, like Mr Newman. If his proper aim were to stimulate in any manner possible the general public, he might be right in following Pope's example; if his proper aim were to help schoolboys to construe Homer, he might be right in following Mr Newman's. But it is not: his proper aim is, I repeat it yet once more, to reproduce on the intelligent scholar, as nearly as he can, the general effect of Homer.

When, therefore, Cowper says, 'My chief boast is that I have adhered closely to my original'; when Mr Newman says, 'My aim is to retain every peculiarity of the original, to be *faithful*, exactly as is the case with the draughtsman of the Elgin marbles'; their real judge only replies: 'It may be so: reproduce then upon us, reproduce the effect of Homer, as a good

copy reproduces the effect of the Elgin marbles'.

When, again, Mr Newman tells us that 'by an exhaustive process of argument and experiment' he has found a metre which is at once the metre of 'the modern Greek epic', and a metre 'like in moral genius' to Homer's metre, his judge has still but the same answer for him: 'It may be so: reproduce then on our ear something of the effect produced by the movement of Homer'.

But what is the general effect which Homer produces on Mr Newman himself? because, when we know this, we shall know whether he and his judges are agreed at the outset, whether we may expect him, if he can reproduce the effect he feels, if his hand does not betray him in the execution, to satisfy his judges and to succeed. If, however, Mr Newman's impression from Homer is something quite different from that of his judges, then it can hardly be expected that any amount of labour or talent will enable him to reproduce for them *their* Homer.

Mr Newman does not leave us in doubt as to the general effect which Homer makes upon him. As I have told you what is the general effect which Homer makes upon me,—that of a most rapidly moving poet, that of a poet most plain and direct in his style, that of a poet most plain and direct in his ideas, that of a poet eminently noble,—so Mr Newman tells us his general impression of Homer. 'Homer's style', he says, 'is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous'. Again: 'Homer rises and sinks with his subject, is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean'.

I lay my finger on four words in these two sentences of Mr Newman, and I say that the man who could apply those words to Homer can never render Homer

truly. The four words are these: *quaint*, *garrulous*, *prosaic*, *low*. Search the English language for a word which does not apply to Homer, and you could not fix on a better than *quaint*, unless perhaps you fixed on one of the other three.

Again; 'to translate Homer suitably', says Mr Newman, 'we need a diction sufficiently antiquated to obtain pardon of the reader for its frequent homeliness'. 'I am concerned', he says again, 'with the artistic problem of attaining a plausible aspect of moderate antiquity, while remaining easily intelligible'. And again, he speaks of 'the more antiquated style suited to this subject'. Quaint! antiquated!—but to whom? Sir Thomas Browne is quaint, and the diction of Chaucer is antiquated: does Mr Newman suppose that Homer seemed quaint to Sophocles, when he read him, as Sir Thomas Browne seems quaint to us, when we read him? or that Homer's diction seemed antiquated to Sophocles, as Chaucer's diction seems antiquated to us? But we cannot really know, I confess, how Homer seemed to Sophocles: well then, to those who can tell us how he seems to them, to the living scholar, to our only present witness on this matter,—does Homer make on the Provost of Eton, when he reads him, the impression of a poet quaint and antiquated? does he make this impression on Professor Thompson or Professor Jowett. When Shakspeare says, 'The princes *orgulous*', meaning 'the proud princes', we say, 'This is antiquated'; when he says of the Trojan gates, that they

> With massy staples
> And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts
> *Sperr* up the sons of Troy,

we say, ‘This is both quaint and antiquated’. But does Homer ever compose in a language which produces on the scholar at all the same impression as this language which I have quoted from Shakspeare? Never once. Shakspeare is quaint and antiquated in the lines which I have just quoted; but Shakspeare—need I say it?—can compose, when he likes, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible; in a language which, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part its author from us, stops us or surprises us as little as the language of a contemporary. And Homer has not Shakspeare’s variations: Homer always composes as Shakspeare composes at his best; Homer is always simple and intelligible, as Shakspeare is often; Homer is never quaint and antiquated, as Shakspeare is sometimes.

When Mr Newman says that Homer is garrulous, he seems, perhaps, to depart less widely from the common opinion than when he calls him quaint; for is there not Horace’s authority for asserting that ‘the good Homer sometimes nods’, *bonus dormitat Homerus*? and a great many people have come, from the currency of this well-known criticism, to represent Homer to themselves as a diffuse old man, with the full-stocked mind, but also with the occasional slips and weaknesses of old age. Horace has said better things than his ‘bonus dormitat Homerus’; but he never meant by this, as I need not remind anyone who knows the passage, that Homer was garrulous, or anything of the kind. Instead, however, of either discussing what Horace meant, or discussing Homer’s garrulity as a general question, I prefer to bring to my mind some style which is garrulous, and to ask myself, to ask you, whether anything at all of the impression made by that style

is ever made by the style of Homer. The mediæval romancers, for instance, are garrulous; the following, to take out of a thousand instances the first which comes to hand, is in a garrulous manner. It is from the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion.

> Of my tale be not a-wondered!
> The French says he slew an hundred
> (Whereof is made this English saw)
> Or he rested him any thraw.
> Him followed many an English knight
> That eagerly holp him for to fight

and so on. Now the manner of that composition I call garrulous; everyone will feel it to be garrulous; everyone will understand what is meant when it is called garrulous. Then I ask the scholar,—does Homer's manner ever make upon you, I do not say, the same impression of its garrulity as that passage, but does it make, ever for one moment, an impression in the slightest way resembling, in the remotest degree akin to, the impression made by that passage of the mediæval poet? I have no fear of the answer.

I follow the same method with Mr Newman's two other epithets, *prosaic* and *low*. 'Homer rises and sinks with his subject', says Mr Newman; 'is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean'. First I say, Homer is never, in any sense, to be with truth called prosaic; he is never to be called low. He does not rise and sink with his subject; on the contrary, his manner invests his subject, whatever his subject be, with nobleness. Then I look for an author of whom it may with truth be said, that he 'rises and sinks with his subject, is prosaic when it is tame, is low when it is mean'. Defoe is eminently such an author; of

Defoe's manner it may with perfect precision be said, that it follows his matter; his lifelike composition takes its character from the facts which it conveys, not from the nobleness of the composer. In *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*, Defoe is undoubtedly prosaic when his subject is tame, low when his subject is mean. Does Homer's manner in the *Iliad*, I ask the scholar, ever make upon him an impression at all like the impression made by Defoe's manner in *Moll Flanders* and *Colonel Jack*? Does it not, on the contrary, leave him with an impression of nobleness, even when it deals with Thersites or with Irus?

Well then, Homer is neither quaint, nor garrulous, nor prosaic, nor mean: and Mr Newman, in seeing him so, sees him differently from those who are to judge Mr Newman's rendering of him. By pointing out how a wrong conception of Homer affects Mr Newman's translation, I hope to place in still clearer light those four cardinal truths which I pronounce essential for him who would have a right conception of Homer: that Homer is rapid, that he is plain and direct in word and style, that he is plain and direct in his ideas, and that he is noble.

Mr Newman says that in fixing on a style for suitably rendering Homer, as he conceives him, he 'alights on the delicate line which separates the *quaint* from the *grotesque*'. 'I ought to be quaint', he says, 'I ought not to be grotesque'. This is a most unfortunate sentence. Mr Newman is grotesque, which he himself says he ought not to be; and he ought not to be quaint, which he himself says he ought to be.

'No two persons will agree', says Mr Newman, 'as to where the quaint ends and the grotesque begins'; and perhaps this is true. But, in order to avoid all ambiguity in the use of the two words, it is enough

to say, that most persons would call an expression which produced on them a very strong sense of its incongruity, and which violently surprised them, *grotesque*; and an expression, which produced on them a slighter sense of its incongruity, and which more gently surprised them, *quaint*. Using the two words in this manner, I say, that when Mr Newman translates Helen's words to Hector in the sixth book,

> Δᾶερ ἐμεῖο, κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, ὀκρυοέσσης[10],
>
> O, brother thou of me, who am a mischief-working vixen,
> A numbing horror,

he is grotesque; that is, he expresses himself in a manner which produces on us a very strong sense of its incongruity, and which violently surprises us. I say, again, that when Mr Newman translates the common line,

> Τὴν δ' ἠμείβετ' ἔπειτα μέγας κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ,
>
> Great Hector of the motley helm then spake to her responsive,

or the common expression, ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί, 'dapper-greaved Achaians', he is quaint; that is, he expresses himself in a manner which produces on us a slighter sense of incongruity, and which more gently surprises us. But violent and gentle surprise are alike far from the scholar's spirit when he reads in Homer κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, or κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ, or, ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί. These expressions no more seem odd to him than the simplest expressions in English. He is not more checked by any feeling of strangeness, strong or weak, when he reads them, than when he reads in an English book

'the painted savage', or, 'the phlegmatic Dutchman'. Mr Newman's renderings of them must, therefore, be wrong expressions in a translation of Homer, because they excite in the scholar, their only competent judge, a feeling quite alien to that excited in him by what they profess to render.

Mr Newman, by expressions of this kind, is false to his original in two ways. He is false to him inasmuch as he is ignoble; for a noble air, and a grotesque air, the air of the address,

> Δᾶερ ἐμεῖο, κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, ὀκρυοέσσης,

and the air of the address,

> O, brother thou of me, who am a mischief-working
> vixen,
> A numbing horror,

are just contrary the one to the other: and he is false to him inasmuch as he is odd; for an odd diction like Mr Newman's, and a perfectly plain natural diction like Homer's,—'dapper-greaved Achaians' and ἐϋκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί,—are also just contrary the one to the other. Where, indeed, Mr Newman got his diction, with whom he can have lived, what can be his test of antiquity and rarity for words, are questions which I ask myself with bewilderment. He has prefixed to his translation a list of what he calls 'the more antiquated or rarer words' which he has used. In this list appear, on the one hand, such words as *doughty*, *grisly*, *lusty*, *noisome*, *ravin*, which are familiar, one would think, to all the world; on the other hand such words as *bragly*, meaning, Mr Newman tells us, 'proudly fine'; *bulkin*, 'a calf'; *plump*, a 'mass'; and so on. 'I am concerned', says Mr Newman, 'with the artistic problem of attaining a

plausible aspect of moderate antiquity, while remaining easily intelligible'. But it seems to me that *lusty* is not antiquated: and that *bragly* is not a word readily understood. That this word, indeed, and *bulkin*, may have 'a plausible aspect of moderate antiquity', I admit; but that they are 'easily intelligible', I deny.

Mr Newman's syntax has, I say it with pleasure, a much more Homeric cast than his vocabulary; his syntax, the mode in which his thought is evolved, although not the actual words in which it is expressed, seems to me right in its general character, and the best feature of his version. It is not artificial or rhetorical like Cowper's syntax or Pope's: it is simple, direct, and natural, and so far it is like Homer's. It fails, however, just where, from the inherent fault of Mr Newman's conception of Homer, one might expect it to fail,—it fails in nobleness. It presents the thought in a way which is something more than unconstrained,—over-familiar; something more than easy,—free and easy. In this respect it is like the movement of Mr Newman's version, like his rhythm, for this, too, fails, in spite of some qualities, by not being noble enough; this, while it avoids the faults of being slow and elaborate, falls into a fault in the opposite direction, and is slip-shod. Homer presents his thought naturally; but when Mr Newman has,

> A thousand fires along the plain, *I say*, that night
> were burning,

he presents his thought familiarly; in a style which may be the genuine style of ballad-poetry, but which is not the style of Homer. Homer moves freely; but when Mr Newman has,

> Infatuate! O that thou wert lord to some other
> army[11],

he gives himself too much freedom; he leaves us too much to do for his rhythm ourselves, instead of giving to us a rhythm like Homer's, easy indeed, but mastering our ear with a fulness of power which is irresistible.

I said that a certain style might be the genuine style of ballad-poetry, but yet not the style of Homer. The analogy of the ballad is ever present to Mr Newman's thoughts in considering Homer; and perhaps nothing has more caused his faults than this analogy,—this popular, but, it is time to say, this erroneous analogy. 'The moral qualities of Homer's style', says Mr Newman, 'being like to those of the English ballad, we need a metre of the same genius. Only those metres, which by the very possession of these qualities are liable to degenerate into *doggerel*, are suitable to reproduce the ancient epic'. 'The style of Homer', he says, in a passage which I have before quoted, 'is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous: in all these respects it is similar to the old English ballad'. Mr Newman, I need not say, is by no means alone in this opinion. 'The most really and truly Homeric of all the creations of the English muse is', says Mr Newman's critic in the *National Review*, 'the ballad-poetry of ancient times; and the association between metre and subject is one that it would be true wisdom to preserve'. 'It is confessed', says Chapman's last editor, Mr Hooper, 'that the fourteen-syllable verse' (that is, a ballad-verse) 'is peculiarly fitting for Homeric translation'. And the editor of Dr Maginn's clever and popular *Homeric Ballads* assumes it as one of his author's greatest and most undisputable merits, that he was 'the first who

consciously realised to himself the truth that Greek ballads can be really represented in English only by a similar measure'.

This proposition that Homer's poetry is *ballad-poetry*, analogous to the well-known ballad-poetry of the English and other nations, has a certain small portion of truth in it, and at one time probably served a useful purpose, when it was employed to discredit the artificial and literary manner in which Pope and his school rendered Homer. But it has been so extravagantly over-used, the mistake which it was useful in combating has so entirely lost the public favour, that it is now much more important to insist on the large part of error contained in it, than to extol its small part of truth. It is time to say plainly that, whatever the admirers of our old ballads may think, the supreme form of epic poetry, the genuine Homeric mould, is not the form of the Ballad of Lord Bateman. I have myself shown the broad difference between Milton's manner and Homer's; but, after a course of Mr Newman and Dr Maginn, I turn round in desperation upon them and upon the balladists who have misled them, and I exclaim: 'Compared with you, Milton is Homer's double; there is, whatever you may think, ten thousand times more of the real strain of Homer in

> Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides,
> And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old,

than in

> Now Christ thee save, thou proud portèr,
> Now Christ thee save and see[12],

or in

While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine[13].

For Homer is not only rapid in movement, simple in style, plain in language, natural in thought; he is also, and above all, *noble*. I have advised the translator not to go into the vexed question of Homer's identity. Yet I will just remind him that the grand argument—or rather, not argument, for the matter affords no data for arguing, but the grand source from which conviction, as we read the *Iliad*, keeps pressing in upon us, that there is one poet of the *Iliad*, one Homer—is precisely this nobleness of the poet, this grand manner; we feel that the analogy drawn from other joint compositions does not hold good here, because those works do not bear, like the *Iliad*, the magic stamp of a master; and the moment you have *anything* less than a masterwork, the co-operation or consolidation of several poets becomes possible, for talent is not uncommon; the moment you have *much* less than a masterwork, they become easy, for mediocrity is everywhere. I can imagine fifty Bradies joined with as many Tates to make the New Version of the Psalms. I can imagine several poets having contributed to any one of the old English ballads in Percy's collection. I can imagine several poets, possessing, like Chapman, the Elizabethan vigour and the Elizabethan mannerism, united with Chapman to produce his version of the *Iliad*. I can imagine several poets, with the literary knack of the twelfth century, united to produce the *Nibelungen Lay* in the form in which we have it,—a work which the Germans, in their joy at discovering a national epic of their own, have rated vastly higher than it deserves. And lastly, though Mr Newman's translation of Homer bears the strong mark of his own idiosyncrasy, yet I can imagine Mr Newman and

a school of adepts trained by him in his art of poetry, jointly producing that work, so that Aristarchus himself should have difficulty in pronouncing which line was the master's, and which a pupil's. But I cannot imagine several poets, or one poet, joined with Dante in the composition of his *Inferno*, though many poets have taken for their subject a descent into Hell. Many artists, again, have represented Moses; but there is only one Moses of Michael Angelo. So the insurmountable obstacle to believing the *Iliad* a consolidated work of several poets is this: that the work of great masters is unique; and the *Iliad* has a great master's genuine stamp, and that stamp is *the grand style*.

Poets who cannot work in the grand style instinctively seek a style in which their comparative inferiority may feel itself at ease, a manner which may be, so to speak, indulgent to their inequalities. The ballad-style offers to an epic poet, quite unable to fill the canvas of Homer, or Dante, or Milton, a canvas which he is capable of filling. The ballad-measure is quite able to give due effect to the vigour and spirit which its employer, when at his very best, may be able to exhibit; and, when he is not at his best, when he is a little trivial, or a little dull, it will not betray him, it will not bring out his weakness into broad relief. This is a convenience; but it is a convenience which the ballad-style purchases by resigning all pretensions to the highest, to the grand manner. It is true of its movement, as it is *not* true of Homer's, that it is 'liable to degenerate into doggerel'. It is true of its 'moral qualities', as it is *not* true of Homer's, that 'quaintness' and 'garrulity' are among them. It is true of its employers, as it is *not* true of Homer, that they 'rise and sink with their subject, are prosaic when it is tame, are low when it

is mean'. For this reason the ballad-style and the ballad-measure are eminently *in*appropriate to render Homer. Homer's manner and movement are always both noble and powerful: the ballad-manner and movement are often either jaunty and smart, so not noble; or jog-trot and hum-drum, so not powerful.

The *Nibelungen Lay* affords a good illustration of the qualities of the ballad-manner. Based on grand traditions, which had found expression in a grand lyric poetry, the German epic poem of the *Nibelungen Lay*, though it is interesting, and though it has good passages, is itself anything rather than a grand poem. It is a poem of which the composer is, to speak the truth, a very ordinary mortal, and often, therefore, like other ordinary mortals, very prosy. It is in a measure which eminently adapts itself to this commonplace personality of its composer, which has much the movement of the well-known measures of Tate and Brady, and can jog on, for hundreds of lines at a time, with a level ease which reminds one of Sheridan's saying that easy writing may be often such hard reading. But, instead of occupying myself with the *Nibelungen Lay*, I prefer to look at the ballad-style as directly applied to Homer, in Chapman's version and Mr Newman's, and in the *Homeric Ballads* of Dr. Maginn.

First I take Chapman. I have already shown that Chapman's conceits are un-Homeric, and that his rhyme is un-Homeric; I will now show how his manner and movement are un-Homeric. Chapman's diction, I have said, is generally good; but it must be called good with this reserve, that, though it has Homer's plainness and directness, it often offends him who knows Homer, by wanting Homer's nobleness. In a passage which I have already quoted,

the address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles, where Homer has,

> ἆ δειλώ, τι σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἄνακτι
> θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε!
> ἦ ἵνα δυστήνοισι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλγε' ἔχητον[14];

Chapman has,

> *Poor wretched beasts*, said he,
> Why gave we you to a mortal king, when
> immortality
> And incapacity of age so dignifies your states?
> Was it to haste[15] the miseries poured out on human
> fates?

There are many faults in this rendering of Chapman's, but what I particularly wish to notice in it is the expression 'Poor wretched beasts' for ἆ δειλώ. This expression just illustrates the difference between the ballad-manner and Homer's. The ballad-manner—Chapman's manner—is, I say, pitched sensibly lower than Homer's. The ballad-manner requires that an expression shall be plain and natural, and then it asks no more. Homer's manner requires that an expression shall be plain and natural, but it also requires that it shall be noble. Ἆ δειλώ is as plain, as simple as 'Poor wretched beasts'; but it is also noble, which 'Poor wretched beasts' is not. 'Poor wretched beasts' is, in truth, a little over-familiar, but this is no objection to it for the ballad-manner; it is good enough for the old English ballad, good enough for the *Nibelungen Lay*, good enough for Chapman's *Iliad*, good enough for Mr Newman's *Iliad*, good enough for Dr Maginn's *Homeric Ballads*; but it is not good enough for Homer.

To feel that Chapman's measure, though natural, is

not Homeric; that, though tolerably rapid, it has not Homer's rapidity; that it has a jogging rapidity rather than a flowing rapidity; and a movement familiar rather than nobly easy, one has only, I think, to read half a dozen lines in any part of his version. I prefer to keep as much as possible to passages which I have already noticed, so I will quote the conclusion of the nineteenth book, where Achilles answers his horse Xanthus, who has prophesied his death to him[16].

> Achilles, far in rage,
> Thus answered him:—It fits not thee thus proudly to presage
> My overthrow. I know myself it is my fate to fall
> Thus far from Phthia; yet that fate shall fail to vent her gall
> Till mine vent thousands.—These words said, he fell to horrid deeds,
> Gave dreadful signal, and forthright made fly his one-hoofed steeds.

For what regards the manner of this passage, the words 'Achilles Thus answered him', and 'I know myself it is my fate to fall Thus far from Phthia', are in Homer's manner, and all the rest is out of it. But for what regards its movement, who, after being jolted by Chapman through such verse as this,

> These words said, he fell to horrid deeds,
> Gave dreadful signal, and forthright made fly his one-hoofed steeds,

who does not feel the vital difference of the movement of Homer,

> ἦ ῥα, καὶ ἐν πρώτοις ἰάχων ἔχε μώνυχας ἵππο υς?

To pass from Chapman to Dr Maginn. His *Homeric*

Ballads are vigorous and genuine poems in their own way; they are not one continual falsetto, like the pinch-beck *Roman Ballads* of Lord Macaulay; but just because they are ballads in their manner and movement, just because, to use the words of his applauding editor, Dr Maginn has 'consciously realised to himself the truth that Greek ballads can be really represented in English only by a similar manner',—just for this very reason they are not at all Homeric, they have not the least in the world the manner of Homer. There is a celebrated incident in the nineteenth book of the *Odyssey*, the recognition by the old nurse Eurycleia of a scar on the leg of her master Ulysses, who has entered his own hall as an unknown wanderer, and whose feet she has been set to wash. 'Then she came near', says Homer, 'and began to wash her master; and straightway she recognised a scar which he had got in former days from the white tusk of a wild boar, when he went to Parnassus unto Autolycus and the sons of Autolycus, his mother's father and brethren'[17]. This, 'really represented' by Dr Maginn, in 'a measure similar' to Homer's, becomes:

> And scarcely had she begun to wash
> Ere she was aware of the grisly gash
> Above his knee that lay.
> It was a wound from a wild boar's tooth,
> All on Parnassus' slope,
> Where he went to hunt in the days of his youth
> With his mother's sire,

and so on. That is the true ballad-manner, no one can deny; 'all on Parnassus' slope' is, I was going to say, the true ballad-slang; but never again shall I be able to read

νίζε δ’ ἄῤ ἆσσον ἴουσα ἄναχθ’ ἐόν· αὐτίκα δ’ ἔγνω
οὐλήν,

without having the destestable dance of Dr Maginn’s

And scarcely had she begun to wash
Ere she was aware of the grisly gash,

jigging in my ears, to spoil the effect of Homer, and to torture me. To apply that manner and that rhythm to Homer’s incidents, is not to imitate Homer, but to travesty him.

Lastly I come to Mr Newman. His rhythm, like Chapman’s and Dr Maginn’s, is a ballad-rhythm, but with a modification of his own. ‘Holding it’, he tells us, ‘as an axiom, that rhyme must be abandoned’, he found, on abandoning it, ‘an unpleasant void until he gave a double ending to the verse’. In short, instead of saying

Good people all with one accord
Give ear unto my *tale*,

Mr Newman would say

Good people all with one accord
Give ear unto my *story*.

A recent American writer[18] gravely observes that for his countrymen this rhythm has a disadvantage in being like the rhythm of the American national air *Yankee Doodle*, and thus provoking ludicrous associations. *Yankee Doodle* is not our national air: for us Mr Newman’s rhythm has not this disadvantage. He himself gives us several plausible reasons why this rhythm of his really ought to be successful: let us examine how far it *is* successful.

Mr Newman joins to a bad rhythm so bad a diction that it is difficult to distinguish exactly whether in any given passage it is his words or his measure which produces a total impression of such an unpleasant kind. But with a little attention we may analyse our total impression, and find the share which each element has in producing it. To take the passage which I have so often mentioned, Sarpedon's speech to Glaucus. Mr Newman translates this as follows:

> O gentle friend! if thou and I, from this encounter
> 'scaping,
> Hereafter might for ever be from Eld and Death
> exempted
> As heavenly gods, not I in sooth would fight among
> the foremost,
> Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling
> battle.
> Now,—sith ten thousand shapes of Death do any-gait
> pursue us
> Which never mortal may evade, though sly of foot
> and nimble;—
> Onward! and glory let us earn, or glory yield to
> someone.
>
> Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims no less the fearful than the brave.

I am not going to quote Pope's version over again, but I must remark in passing, how much more, with all Pope's radical difference of manner from Homer, it gives us of the real effect of

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ, πόλεμον περὶ τόνδε φυγόντε

than Mr Newman's lines. And now, why are Mr Newman's lines faulty? They are faulty, first,

because, as a matter of diction, the expressions ‘O gentle friend’, ‘eld’, ‘in sooth’, ‘liefly’, ‘advance’, ‘man-ennobling’, ‘sith’, ‘any-gait’, and ‘sly of foot’, are all bad; some of them worse than others, but all bad: that is, they all of them as here used excite in the scholar, their sole judge,—excite, I will boldly affirm, in Professor Thompson or Professor Jowett,—a feeling totally different from that excited in them by the words of Homer which these expressions profess to render. The lines are faulty, secondly, because, as a matter of rhythm, any and every line among them has to the ear of the same judges (I affirm it with equal boldness) a movement as unlike Homer’s movement in the corresponding line as the single words are unlike Homer’s words. Οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμαι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειρν,—‘Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling battle’;—for whose ears do those two rhythms produce impressions of, to use Mr Newman’s own words, ‘similar moral genius’?

I will by no means make search in Mr Newman’s version for passages likely to raise a laugh; that search, alas! would be far too easy. I will quote but one other passage from him, and that a passage where the diction is comparatively inoffensive, in order that disapproval of the words may not unfairly heighten disapproval of the rhythm. The end of the nineteenth book, the answer of Achilles to his horse Xanthus, Mr Newman gives thus:

> Chestnut! why bodest death to me? from thee this
> was not needed.
> Myself right surely know alsó, that ’t is my doom to
> perish,
> From mother and from father dear apart, in Troy;
> but never

> Pause will I make of war, until the Trojans be glutted.
> He spake, and yelling, held afront the single-hoofed horses.

Here Mr Newman calls Xanthus *Chestnut*, indeed, as he calls Balius *Spotted*, and Podarga *Spry-foot*; which is as if a Frenchman were to call Miss Nightingale *Mdlle. Rossignol*, or Mr Bright *M. Clair*. And several other expressions, too, 'yelling', 'held afront', 'single-hoofed',—leave, to say the very least, much to be desired. Still, for Mr Newman, the diction of this passage is pure. All the more clearly appears the profound vice of a rhythm, which, with comparatively few faults of words, can leave a sense of such incurable alienation from Homer's manner as, 'Myself right surely know also that 'tis my doom to perish compared with the εὖ νύ τοι οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς, ὅ μοι μόρος ἐνθάδ' ὀλέσθαι of Homer.

But so deeply seated is the difference between the ballad-manner and Homer's, that even a man of the highest powers, even a man of the greatest vigour of spirit and of true genius—the Coryphæus of balladists, Sir Walter Scott—fails with a manner of this kind to produce an effect at all like the effect of Homer. 'I am not so rash', declares Mr Newman, 'as to say that if *freedom* be given to rhyme as in Walter Scott's poetry',—'Walter Scott, by far the most Homeric of our poets', as in another place he calls him,—'a genius may not arise who will translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*'. 'The *truly* classical and *truly* romantic', says Dr Maginn, 'are one; the moss-trooping Nestor reappears in the moss-trooping heroes of Percy's *Reliques*'; and a description by Scott, which he quotes, he calls 'graphic, and therefore Homeric'. He forgets our fourth axiom,—

that Homer is not *only* graphic; he is also noble, and has the grand style. Human nature under like circumstances is probably in all stages much the same; and so far it may be said that 'the truly classical and the truly romantic are one'; but it is of little use to tell us this, because we know the human nature of other ages only through the representations of them which have come down to us, and the classical and the romantic modes of representation are so far from being 'one', that they remain eternally distinct, and have created for us a separation between the two worlds which they respectively represent. Therefore to call Nestor the 'moss-trooping Nestor' is absurd, because, though Nestor may possibly have been much the same sort of man as many a moss-trooper, he has yet come to us through a mode of representation so unlike that of Percy's *Reliques*, that instead of 'reappearing in the moss-trooping heroes' of these poems, he exists in our imagination as something utterly unlike them, and as belonging to another world. So the Greeks in Shakspeare's *Troilus and Cressida* are no longer the Greeks whom we have known in Homer, because they come to us through a mode of representation of the romantic world. But I must not forget Scott.

I suppose that when Scott is in what may be called full ballad swing, no one will hesitate to pronounce his manner neither Homeric nor the grand manner. When he says, for instance,

> I do not rhyme to that dull elf
> Who cannot image to himself[19],

and so on, any scholar will feel that *this* is not Homer's manner. But let us take Scott's poetry at its best; and when it is at its best, it is undoubtedly very

good indeed:

> Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
> His life-blood stains the spotless shield;
> Edmund is down,—my life is reft,—
> The Admiral alone is left.
> Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
> With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
> Full upon Scotland's central host,
> Or victory and England's lost[20].

That is, no doubt, as vigorous as possible, as spirited as possible; it is exceedingly fine poetry. And still I say, it is not in the grand manner, and therefore it is not like Homer's poetry. Now, how shall I make him who doubts this feel that I say true; that these lines of Scott are essentially neither in Homer's style nor in the grand style? I may point out to him that the movement of Scott's lines, while it is rapid, is also at the same time what the French call *saccadé*, its rapidity is 'jerky'; whereas Homer's rapidity is a flowing rapidity. But this is something external and material; it is but the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual diversity. I may discuss what, in the abstract, constitutes the grand style; but that sort of general discussion never much helps our judgment of particular instances. I may say that the presence or absence of the grand style can only be spiritually discerned; and this is true, but to plead this looks like evading the difficulty. My best way is to take eminent specimens of the grand style, and to put them side by side with this of Scott. For example, when Homer says:

> ἀλλά, φίλος, θάνε καὶ σύ· τίη ὀλυφύρεαι οὕτως;
> κάθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σέο πολλὸν
> ἀμείνων[21],

that is in the grand style. When Virgil says:

> Disce, puer, virtutem ex me verumque laborem,
> Fortunam ex aliis[22],

that is in the grand style. When Dante says:

> Lascio lo fele, et vo pei dolci pomi
> Promessi a me per lo verace Duca;
> Ma fino al centro pria convien ch' io tomi[23],

that is in the grand style. When Milton says:

> His form had yet not lost
> All her original brightness, nor appeared
> Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
> Of glory obscured[24],

that, finally, is in the grand style. Now let anyone after repeating to himself these four passages, repeat again the passage of Scott, and he will perceive that there is something in style which the four first have in common, and which the last is without; and this something is precisely the grand manner. It is no disrespect to Scott to say that he does not attain to this manner in his poetry; to say so, is merely to say that he is not among the five or six supreme poets of the world. Among these he is not; but, being a man of far greater powers than the ballad-poets, he has tried to give to their instrument a compass and an elevation which it does not naturally possess, in order to enable him to come nearer to the effect of the instrument used by the great epic poets—an instrument which he felt he could not truly use,—and in this attempt he has but imperfectly succeeded. The poetic style of Scott is—(it becomes necessary to say so when it is proposed to 'translate Homer into the melodies of *Marmion*')—it is, tried by the highest

standard, a bastard epic style; and that is why, out of his own powerful hands, it has had so little success. It is a less natural, and therefore a less good style, than the original ballad-style; while it shares with the ballad-style the inherent incapacity of rising into the grand style, of adequately rendering Homer. Scott is certainly at his best in his battles. Of Homer you could not say this; he is not better in his battles than elsewhere; but even between the battle-pieces of the two there exists all the difference which there is between an able work and a masterpiece.

> Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
> His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
> Edmund is down,—my life is reft—
> The Admiral alone is left.

—'For not in the hands of Diomede the son of Tydeus rages the spear, to ward off destruction from the Danaans; neither as yet have I heard the voice of the son of Atreus, shouting out of his hated mouth; but the voice of Hector the slayer of men bursts round me, as he cheers on the Trojans; and they with their yellings fill all the plain, overcoming the Achaians in the battle'.—I protest that, to my feeling, Homer's performance, even through that pale and far-off shadow of a prose translation, still has a hundred times more of the grand manner about it, than the original poetry of Scott.

Well, then, the ballad-manner and the ballad-measure, whether in the hands of the old ballad-poets, or arranged by Chapman, or arranged by Mr Newman, or, even, arranged by Sir Walter Scott, cannot worthily render Homer. And for one reason: Homer is plain, so are they; Homer is natural, so are they; Homer is spirited, so are they; but Homer is

sustainedly noble, and they are not. Homer and they are both of them natural, and therefore touching and stirring; but the grand style, which is Homer's, is something more than touching and stirring; it can form the character, it is edifying. The old English balladist may stir Sir Philip Sidney's heart like a trumpet, and this is much: but Homer, but the few artists in the grand style, can do more; they can refine the raw natural man, they can transmute him. So it is not without cause that I say, and say again, to the translator of Homer: 'Never for a moment suffer yourself to forget our fourth fundamental proposition, *Homer is noble*'. For it is seen how large a share this nobleness has in producing that general effect of his, which it is the main business of a translator to *re*produce.

I shall have to try your patience yet once more upon this subject, and then my task will be completed. I have shown what the four axioms respecting Homer which I have laid down, exclude, what they bid a translator not to do; I have still to show what they supply, what positive help they can give to the translator in his work. I will even, with their aid, myself try my fortune with some of those passages of Homer which I have already noticed; not indeed with any confidence that I more than others can succeed in adequately rendering Homer, but in the hope of satisfying competent judges, in the hope of making it clear to the future translator, that I at any rate follow a right method, and that, in coming short, I come short from weakness of execution, not from original vice of design. This is why I have so long occupied myself with Mr Newman's version; that, apart from all faults of execution, his original design was wrong, and that he has done us the good service of declaring that design in its naked wrongness. To bad practice

he has prefixed the bad theory which made the practice bad; he has given us a false theory in his preface, and he has exemplified the bad effects of that false theory in his translation. It is because his starting-point is so bad that he runs so badly; and to save others from taking so false a starting-point, may be to save them from running so futile a course.

Mr Newman, indeed, says in his preface, that if anyone dislikes his translation, 'he has his easy remedy; to keep aloof from it'. But Mr Newman is a writer of considerable and deserved reputation; he is also a Professor of the University of London, an institution which by its position and by its merits acquires every year greater importance. It would be a very grave thing if the authority of so eminent a Professor led his students to misconceive entirely the chief work of the Greek world; that work which, whatever the other works of classical antiquity have to give us, gives it more abundantly than they all. The eccentricity too, the arbitrariness, of which Mr Newman's conception of Homer offers so signal an example, are not a peculiar failing of Mr Newman's own; in varying degrees they are the great defect of English intellect the great blemish of English literature. Our literature of the eighteenth century, the literature of the school of Dryden, Addison, Pope, Johnson, is a long reaction against this eccentricity, this arbitrariness; that reaction perished by its own faults, and its enemies are left once more masters of the field. It is much more likely that any new English version of Homer will have Mr Newman's faults than Pope's. Our present literature, which is very far, certainly, from having the spirit and power of Elizabethan genius, yet has in its own way these faults, eccentricity, and arbitrariness, quite as much as the Elizabethan literature ever had. They are the

cause that, while upon none, perhaps, of the modern literatures has so great a sum of force been expended as upon the English literature, at the present hour this literature, regarded not as an object of mere literary interest but as a living intellectual instrument, ranks only third in European effect and importance among the literatures of Europe; it ranks after the literatures of France and Germany. Of these two literatures, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a *critical* effort; the endeavour, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science,—to see the object as in itself it really is. But, owing to the presence in English literature of this eccentric and arbitrary spirit, owing to the strong tendency of English writers to bring to the consideration of their object some individual fancy, almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires—*criticism*. It is useful to notice any signal manifestation of those faults, which thus limit and impair the action of our literature. And therefore I have pointed out how widely, in translating Homer, a man even of real ability and learning may go astray, unless he brings to the study of this clearest of poets one quality in which our English authors, with all their great gifts, are apt to be somewhat wanting—simple lucidity of mind.

III

Homer is rapid in his movement, Homer is plain in his words and style, Homer is simple in his ideas, Homer is noble in his manner. Cowper renders him ill because he is slow in his movement, and elaborate in his style; Pope renders him ill because he is artificial both in his style and in his words; Chapman renders him ill because he is fantastic in his ideas; Mr Newman renders him ill because he is odd in his words and ignoble in his manner. All four translators diverge from their original at other points besides those named; but it is at the points thus named that their divergence is greatest. For instance, Cowper's diction is not as Homer's diction, nor his nobleness as Homer's nobleness; but it is in movement and grammatical style that he is most unlike Homer. Pope's rapidity is not of the same sort as Homer's rapidity, nor are his plainness of ideas and his nobleness as Homer's plainness of ideas and nobleness: but it is in the artificial character of his style and diction that he is most unlike Homer. Chapman's movement, words, style, and manner, are often far enough from resembling Homer's movement, words, style, and manner; but it is the fantasticality of his ideas which puts him farthest from resembling Homer. Mr Newman's movement, grammatical style, and ideas, are a thousand times in strong contrast with Homer's; still it is by the

oddness of his diction and the ignobleness of his manner that he contrasts with Homer the most violently.

Therefore the translator must not say to himself: ‘Cowper is noble, Pope is rapid, Chapman has a good diction, Mr Newman has a good cast of sentence; I will avoid Cowper’s slowness, Pope’s artificiality, Chapman’s conceits, Mr Newman’s oddity; I will take Cowper’s dignified manner, Pope’s impetuous movement, Chapman’s vocabulary, Mr Newman’s syntax, and so make a perfect translation of Homer’. Undoubtedly in certain points the versions of Chapman, Cowper, Pope, and Mr Newman, all of them have merit; some of them very high merit, others a lower merit; but even in these points they have none of them precisely the same kind of merit as Homer, and therefore the new translator, even if he can imitate them in their good points, will still not satisfy his judge, the scholar, who asks him for Homer and Homer’s kind of merit, or, at least, for as much of them as it is possible to give.

So the translator really has no good model before him for any part of his work, and has to invent everything for himself. He is to be rapid in movement, plain in speech, simple in thought, and noble; and *how* he is to be either rapid, or plain, or simple, or noble, no one yet has shown him. I shall try to-day to establish some practical suggestions which may help the translator of Homer’s poetry to comply with the four grand requirements which we make of him.

His version is to be rapid; and of course, to make a man’s poetry rapid, as to make it noble, nothing can serve him so much as to have, in his own nature, rapidity and nobleness. *It is the spirit that quickeneth*;

and no one will so well render Homer's swift-flowing movement as he who has himself something of the swift-moving spirit of Homer. Yet even this is not quite enough. Pope certainly had a quick and darting spirit, as he had, also, real nobleness; yet Pope does not render the movement of Homer. To render this the translator must have, besides his natural qualifications, an appropriate metre.

I have sufficiently shown why I think all forms of our ballad-metre unsuited to Homer. It seems to me to be beyond question that, for epic poetry, only three metres can seriously claim to be accounted capable of the grand style. Two of these will at once occur to everyone,—the ten-syllable, or so-called *heroic*, couplet, and blank verse. I do not add to these the Spenserian stanza, although Dr Maginn, whose metrical eccentricities I have already criticised, pronounces this stanza the one right measure for a translation of Homer. It is enough to observe that if Pope's couplet, with the simple system of correspondences that its rhymes introduce, changes the movement of Homer, in which no such correspondences are found, and is therefore a bad measure for a translator of Homer to employ, Spenser's stanza, with its far more intricate system of correspondences, must change Homer's movement far more profoundly, and must therefore be for the translator a far worse measure than the couplet of Pope. Yet I will say, at the same time, that the verse of Spenser is more fluid, slips more easily and quickly along, than the verse of almost any other English poet.

> By this the northern wagoner had set
> His seven-fold team behind the steadfast star
> That was in ocean waves yet never wet,

> But firm is fixt, and sendeth light from far
> To all that in the wide deep wandering are[25].

One cannot but feel that English verse has not often moved with the fluidity and sweet ease of these lines. It is possible that it may have been this quality of Spenser's poetry which made Dr Maginn think that the stanza of *The Faery Queen* must be a good measure for rendering Homer. This it is not: Spenser's verse is fluid and rapid, no doubt, but there are more ways than one of being fluid and rapid, and Homer is fluid and rapid in quite another way than Spenser. Spenser's manner is no more Homeric than is the manner of the one modern inheritor of Spenser's beautiful gift,—the poet, who evidently caught from Spenser his sweet and easy-slipping movement, and who has exquisitely employed it; a Spenserian genius, nay, a genius by natural endowment richer probably than even Spenser; that light which shines so unexpectedly and without fellow in our century, an Elizabethan born too late, the early lost and admirably gifted Keats.

I say then that there are really but three metres,—the ten-syllable couplet, blank verse, and a third metre which I will not yet name, but which is neither the Spenserian stanza nor any form of ballad-verse,—between which, as vehicles for Homer's poetry, the translator has to make his choice. Everyone will at once remember a thousand passages in which both the ten-syllable couplet and blank verse prove themselves to have nobleness. Undoubtedly the movement and manner of this,

> Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
> But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice,

are noble. Undoubtedly, the movement and manner

of this:

> High on a throne of royal state, which far
> Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,

are noble also. But the first is in a rhymed metre; and the unfitness of a rhymed metre for rendering Homer I have already shown. I will observe too, that the fine couplet which I have quoted comes out of a satire, a didactic poem; and that it is in didactic poetry that the ten-syllable couplet has most successfully essayed the grand style. In narrative poetry this metre has succeeded best when it essayed a sensibly lower style, the style of Chaucer, for instance; whose narrative manner, though a very good and sound manner, is certainly neither the grand manner nor the manner of Homer.

The rhymed ten-syllable couplet being thus excluded, blank verse offers itself for the translator's use. The first kind of blank verse which naturally occurs to us is the blank verse of Milton, which has been employed, with more or less modification, by Mr Cary in translating Dante, by Cowper, and by Mr Wright in translating Homer. How noble this metre is in Milton's hands, how completely it shows itself capable of the grand, nay, of the grandest, style, I need not say. To this metre, as used in the *Paradise Lost*, our country owes the glory of having produced one of the only two poetical works in the grand style which are to be found in the modern languages; the *Divine Comedy* of Dante is the other. England and Italy here stand alone; Spain, France, and Germany, have produced great poets, but neither Calderon, nor Corneille, nor Schiller, nor even Goethe, has produced a body of poetry in the true grand style, in the sense in which the style of the body of Homer's

poetry, or Pindar's, or Sophocles's, is grand. But Dante has, and so has Milton; and in this respect Milton possesses a distinction which even Shakspeare, undoubtedly the supreme poetical power in our literature, does not share with him. Not a tragedy of Shakspeare but contains passages in the worst of all styles, the affected style; and the grand style, although it may be harsh, or obscure, or cumbrous, or over-laboured, is never affected. In spite, therefore, of objections which may justly be urged against the plan and treatment of the *Paradise Lost*, in spite of its possessing, certainly, a far less enthralling force of interest to attract and to carry forward the reader than the *Iliad* or the *Divine Comedy*, it fully deserves, it can never lose, its immense reputation; for, like the *Iliad* and the *Divine Comedy*, nay, in some respects to a higher degree than either of them, it is in the grand style.

But the grandeur of Milton is one thing, and the grandeur of Homer is another. Homer's movement, I have said again and again, is a flowing, a rapid movement; Milton's, on the other hand, is a laboured, a self-retarding movement. In each case, the movement, the metrical cast, corresponds with the mode of evolution of the thought, with the syntactical cast, and is indeed determined by it. Milton charges himself so full with thought, imagination, knowledge, that his style will hardly contain them. He is too full-stored to show us in much detail one conception, one piece of knowledge; he just shows it to us in a pregnant allusive way, and then he presses on to another; and all this fulness, this pressure, this condensation, this self-constraint, enters into his movement, and makes it what it is,—noble, but difficult and austere. Homer is quite different; he says a thing, and says it to the end, and

then begins another, while Milton is trying to press a thousand things into one. So that whereas, in reading Milton, you never lose the sense of laborious and condensed fulness, in reading Homer you never lose the sense of flowing and abounding ease. With Milton line runs into line, and all is straitly bound together: with Homer line runs off from line, and all hurries away onward. Homer begins, Μῆνιν ἄειδε, Θεά,—at the second word announcing the proposed action: Milton begins:

> Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
> Sing, heavenly muse.

So chary of a sentence is he, so resolute not to let it escape him till he has crowded into it all he can, that it is not till the thirty-ninth word in the sentence that he will give us the key to it, the word of action, the verb. Milton says:

> O for that warning voice, which he, who saw
> The Apocalypse, heard cry in heaven aloud.

He is not satisfied, unless he can tell us, all in one sentence, and without permitting himself to actually mention the name, that the man who had the warning voice was the same man who saw the Apocalypse. Homer would have said, 'O for that warning voice, which *John* heard'—and if it had suited him to say that John also saw the Apocalypse, he would have given us that in another sentence. The effect of this allusive and compressed manner of Milton is, I need not say, often very powerful; and it

is an effect which other great poets have often sought to obtain much in the same way: Dante is full of it, Horace is full of it; but wherever it exists, it is always an un-Homeric effect. 'The losses of the heavens', says Horace, 'fresh moons speedily repair; we, when we have gone down where the pious Æneas, where the rich Tullus and Ancus are,—*pulvis et umbra sumus*[26]'. He never actually says *where* we go to; he only indicates it by saying that it is that place where Æneas, Tullus, and Ancus are. But Homer, when he has to speak of going down to the grave, says, definitely, ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδιον—ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν[27],—'The immortals shall send thee *to the Elysian plain*'; and it is not till after he has definitely said this, that he adds, that it is there that the abode of departed worthies is placed: ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς—'Where the yellow-haired Rhadamanthus is'. Again; Horace, having to say that punishment sooner or later overtakes crime, says it thus:

> Raro antecedentem scelestum
> Deseruit pede Pœna claudo[28].

The thought itself of these lines is familiar enough to Homer and Hesiod; but neither Homer nor Hesiod, in expressing it, could possibly have so complicated its expression as Horace complicates it, and purposely complicates it, by his use of the word *deseruit*. I say that this complicated evolution of the thought necessarily complicates the movement and rhythm of a poet; and that the Miltonic blank verse, of course the first model of blank verse which suggests itself to an English translator of Homer, bears the strongest marks of such complication, and is therefore entirely unfit to render Homer.

If blank verse is used in translating Homer, it must be a blank verse of which English poetry, naturally swayed much by Milton's treatment of this metre, offers at present hardly any examples. It must not be Cowper's blank verse, who has studied Milton's pregnant manner with such effect, that, having to say of Mr Throckmorton that he spares his avenue, although it is the fashion with other people to cut down theirs, he says that Benevolus 'reprieves the obsolete prolixity of shade'. It must not be Mr Tennyson's blank verse.

> For all experience is an arch, wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose distance fades
> For ever and for ever, as we gaze.

It is no blame to the thought of those lines, which belongs to another order of ideas than Homer's, but it is true, that Homer would certainly have said of them, 'It is to consider too curiously to consider so'. It is no blame to their rhythm, which belongs to another order of movement than Homer's, but it is true that these three lines by themselves take up nearly as much time as a whole book of the *Iliad*. No; the blank verse used in rendering Homer must be a blank verse of which perhaps the best specimens are to be found in some of the most rapid passages of Shakspeare's plays,—a blank verse which does not dovetail its lines into one another, and which habitually ends its lines with monosyllables. Such a blank verse might no doubt be very rapid in its movement, and might perfectly adapt itself to a thought plainly and directly evolved; and it would be interesting to see it well applied to Homer. But the translator who determines to use it, must not conceal from himself that in order to pour Homer into the mould of this metre, he will have entirely to break

him up and melt him down, with the hope of then successfully composing him afresh; and this is a process which is full of risks. It may, no doubt, be the real Homer that issues new from it; it is not certain beforehand that it cannot be the real Homer, as it is certain that from the mould of Pope's couplet or Cowper's Miltonic verse it cannot be the real Homer that will issue; still, the chances of disappointment are great. The result of such an attempt to renovate the old poet may be an *Æ*son; but it may also, and more probably will be a Pelias.

When I say this, I point to the metre which seems to me to give the translator the best chance of preserving the general effect of Homer,—that third metre which I have not yet expressly named, the hexameter. I know all that is said against the use of hexameters in English poetry; but it comes only to this, that, among us, they have not yet been used on any considerable scale with success. *Solvitur ambulando*: this is an objection which can best be met by *producing* good English hexameters. And there is no reason in the nature of the English language why it should not adapt itself to hexameters as well as the German language does; nay, the English language, from its greater rapidity, is in itself better suited than the German for them. The hexameter, whether alone or with the pentameter, possesses a movement, an expression, which no metre hitherto in common use amongst us possesses, and which I am convinced English poetry, as our mental wants multiply, will not always be content to forgo. Applied to Homer, this metre affords to the translator the immense support of keeping him more nearly than any other metre to Homer's movement; and, since a poet's movement makes so large a part of his general effect, and to reproduce this general effect is

at once the translator's indispensable business and so difficult for him, it is a great thing to have this part of your model's general effect already given you in your metre, instead of having to get it entirely for yourself.

These are general considerations; but there are also one or two particular considerations which confirm me in the opinion that for translating Homer into English verse the hexameter should be used. The most successful attempt hitherto made at rendering Homer into English, the attempt in which Homer's general effect has been best retained, is an attempt made in the hexameter measure. It is a version of the famous lines in the third book of the *Iliad*, which end with that mention of Castor and Pollux from which Mr Ruskin extracts the sentimental consolation already noticed by me. The author is the accomplished Provost of Eton, Dr Hawtrey; and this performance of his must be my excuse for having taken the liberty to single him out for mention, as one of the natural judges of a translation of Homer, along with Professor Thompson and Professor Jowett, whose connection with Greek literature is official. The passage is short[29]; and Dr Hawtrey's version of it is suffused with a pensive grace which is, perhaps, rather more Virgilian than Homeric; still it is the one version of any part of the *Iliad* which in some degree reproduces for me the original effect of Homer: it is the best, and it is in hexameters.

This is one of the particular considerations that incline me to prefer the hexameter, for translating Homer, to our established metres. There is another. Most of you, probably, have some knowledge of a poem by Mr Clough, *The Bothie of Toper-na-fuosich*, a long-vacation pastoral, in hexameters. The general

merits of that poem I am not going to discuss: it is a serio-comic poem, and, therefore, of essentially different nature from the *Iliad*. Still in two things it is, more than any other English poem which I can call to mind, like the *Iliad*: in the rapidity of its movement, and the plainness and directness of its style. The thought of this poem is often curious and subtle, and that is not Homeric; the diction is often grotesque, and that is not Homeric. Still by its rapidity of movement, and plain and direct manner of presenting the thought however curious in itself, this poem, which, being as I say a serio-comic poem, has a right to be grotesque, is grotesque *truly*, not, like Mr Newman's version of the *Iliad*, *falsely*. Mr Clough's odd epithets, 'The grave man nicknamed Adam', 'The hairy Aldrich', and so on, grow vitally and appear naturally in their place; while Mr Newman's 'dapper-greaved Achaians', and 'motley-helmed Hector', have all the air of being mechanically elaborated and artificially stuck in. Mr Clough's hexameters are excessively, needlessly rough; still owing to the native rapidity of this measure, and to the directness of style which so well allies itself with it, his composition produces a sense in the reader which Homer's composition also produces, and which Homer's translator ought to *re*-produce,—the sense of having, within short limits of time, a large portion of human life presented to him, instead of a small portion.

Mr Clough's hexameters are, as I have just said, too rough and irregular; and indeed a good model, on any considerable scale, of this metre, the English translator will nowhere find. He must not follow the model offered by Mr Longfellow in his pleasing and popular poem of *Evangeline*; for the merit of the manner and movement of *Evangeline*, when they are

at their best, is to be tenderly elegant; and their fault, when they are at their worst, is to be lumbering; but Homer's defect is not lumberingness, neither is tender elegance his excellence. The lumbering effect of most English hexameters is caused by their being much too dactylic[30]; the translator must learn to use spondees freely. Mr Clough has done this, but he has not sufficiently observed another rule which the translator cannot follow too strictly; and that is, to have no lines which will not, as it is familiarly said, *read themselves*. This is of the last importance for rhythms with which the ear of the English public is not thoroughly acquainted. Lord Redesdale, in two papers on the subject of Greek and Roman metres, has some good remarks on the outrageous disregard of quantity in which English verse, trusting to its force of accent, is apt to indulge itself. The predominance of accent in our language is so great, that it would be pedantic not to avail oneself of it; and Lord Redesdale suggests rules which might easily be pushed too far. Still, it is undeniable that in English hexameters we generally force the quantity far too much; we rely on justification by accent with a security which is excessive. But not only do we abuse accent by shortening long syllables and lengthening short ones; we perpetually commit a far worse fault, by requiring the removal of the accent from its natural place to an unnatural one, in order to make our line scan. This is a fault, even when our metre is one which every English reader knows, and when we can see what we want and can correct the rhythm according to our wish; although it is a fault which a great master may sometimes commit knowingly to produce a desired effect, as Milton changes the natural accent on the word *Tiresias* in the line:

> And Tíresias and Phineus, prophets old;

and then it ceases to be a fault, and becomes a beauty. But it is a real fault, when Chapman has:

> By him the golden-throned Queen slept, the Queen
> of Deities;

for in this line, to make it scan, you have to take away the accent from the word *Queen*, on which it naturally falls, and to place it on *throned*, which would naturally be unaccented; and yet, after all, you get no peculiar effect or beauty of cadence to reward you. It is a real fault, when Mr Newman has:

> Infatuate! O that thou wert lord to some other army
> —

for here again the reader is required, not for any special advantage to himself, but simply to save Mr Newman trouble, to place the accent on the insignificant word *wert*, where it has no business whatever. But it is still a greater fault, when Spenser has (to take a striking instance):

> Wot ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his
> face?

for a hexameter; because here not only is the reader causelessly required to make havoc with the natural accentuation of the line in order to get it to run as a hexameter; but also he, in nine cases out of ten, will be utterly at a loss how to perform the process required, and the line will remain a mere monster for him. I repeat, it is advisable to construct *all* verses so that by reading them naturally—that is, according to the sense and legitimate accent,—the reader gets the right rhythm; but, for English hexameters, that they

be so constructed is indispensable.

If the hexameter best helps the translator to the Homeric rapidity, what style may best help him to the Homeric plainness and directness? It is the merit of a metre appropriate to your subject, that it in some degree suggests and carries with itself a style appropriate to the subject; the elaborate and self-retarding style, which comes so naturally when your metre is the Miltonic blank verse, does not come naturally with the hexameter; is, indeed, alien to it. On the other hand, the hexameter has a natural dignity which repels both the jaunty style and the jog-trot style, to both of which the ballad-measure so easily lends itself. These are great advantages; and, perhaps, it is nearly enough to say to the translator who uses the hexameter that he cannot too religiously follow, in style, the inspiration of his metre. He will find that a loose and idiomatic grammar—a grammar which follows the essential rather than the formal logic of the thought—allies itself excellently with the hexameter; and that, while this sort of grammar ensures plainness and naturalness, it by no means comes short in nobleness. It is difficult to pronounce, certainly, what is idiomatic in the ancient literature of a language which, though still spoken, has long since entirely adopted, as modern Greek has adopted, modern idioms. Still one may, I think, clearly perceive that Homer's grammatical style is idiomatic,—that it may even be called, not improperly, a loose grammatical style[31]. Examples, however, of what I mean by a loose grammatical style, will be of more use to the translator if taken from English poetry than if taken from Homer. I call it, then, a loose and idiomatic grammar which Shakspeare uses in the last line of the following three:

> He's here in double trust:
> First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
> *Strong both against the deed*;

or in this:—

> Wit, *whither wilt*?

What Shakspeare means is perfectly clear, clearer, probably, than if he had said it in a more formal and regular manner; but his grammar is loose and idiomatic, because he leaves out the subject of the verb 'wilt' in the second passage quoted, and because, in the first, a prodigious addition to the sentence has to be, as we used to say in our old Latin grammar days, *understood*, before the word 'both' can be properly parsed. So, again, Chapman's grammar is loose and idiomatic where he says,

> Even share hath he that keeps his tent, and *he to field*
> doth go,

because he leaves out, in the second clause, the relative which in formal writing would be required. But Chapman here does not lose dignity by this idiomatic way of expressing himself, any more than Shakspeare loses it by neglecting to confer on 'both' the blessings of a regular government: neither loses dignity, but each gives that impression of a plain, direct, and natural mode of speaking, which Homer, too, gives, and which it is so important, as I say, that Homer's translator should succeed in giving. Cowper calls blank verse 'a style further removed than rhyme from the vernacular idiom, both in the language itself and in the arrangement of it'; and just in proportion as blank verse is removed from the vernacular idiom, from that idiomatic style which is

of all styles the plainest and most natural, blank verse is unsuited to render Homer.

Shakspeare is not only idiomatic in his grammar or style, he is also idiomatic in his words or diction; and here too, his example is valuable for the translator of Homer. The translator must not, indeed, allow himself all the liberty that Shakspeare allows himself; for Shakspeare sometimes uses expressions which pass perfectly well as he uses them, because Shakspeare thinks so fast and so powerfully, that in reading him we are borne over single words as by a mighty current; but, if our mind were less excited,—and who may rely on exciting our mind like Shakspeare?—they would check us. 'To grunt and sweat under a weary load';—that does perfectly well where it comes in Shakspeare; but if the translator of Homer, who will hardly have wound our minds up to the pitch at which these words of Hamlet find them, were to employ, when he has to speak of one of Homer's heroes under the load of calamity, this figure of 'grunting' and 'sweating' we should say, *He Newmanises*, and his diction would offend us. For he is to be noble; and no plea of wishing to be plain and natural can get him excused from being this: only, as he is to be also, like Homer, perfectly simple and free from artificiality, and as the use of idiomatic expressions undoubtedly gives this effect[32], he should be as idiomatic as he can be without ceasing to be noble. Therefore the idiomatic language of Shakspeare—such language as, 'prate of his *whereabout*'; '*jump* the life to come'; 'the damnation of his *taking-off*'; 'his *quietus make* with a bare *bodkin*'—should be carefully observed by the translator of Homer, although in every case he will have to decide for himself whether the use, by him, of Shakspeare's liberty, will or will not clash with his

indispensable duty of nobleness. He will find one English book and one only, where, as in the *Iliad* itself, perfect plainness of speech is allied with perfect nobleness; and that book is the Bible. No one could see this more clearly than Pope saw it: 'This pure and noble simplicity', he says, 'is nowhere in such perfection as in the Scripture and Homer': yet even with Pope a woman is a 'fair', a father is a 'sire' and an old man a 'reverend sage', and so on through all the phrases of that pseudo-Augustan, and most unbiblical, vocabulary. The Bible, however, is undoubtedly the grand mine of diction for the translator of Homer; and, if he knows how to discriminate truly between what will suit him and what will not, the Bible may afford him also invaluable lessons of style.

I said that Homer, besides being plain in style and diction, was plain in the quality of his thought. It is possible that a thought may be expressed with idiomatic plainness, and yet not be in itself a plain thought. For example, in Mr Clough's poem, already mentioned, the style and diction is almost always idiomatic and plain, but the thought itself is often of a quality which is not plain; it is *curious*. But the grand instance of the union of idiomatic expression with curious or difficult thought is in Shakspeare's poetry. Such, indeed, is the force and power of Shakspeare's idiomatic expression, that it gives an effect of clearness and vividness even to a thought which is imperfect and incoherent; for instance, when Hamlet says,

> To take arms against a sea of troubles,

the figure there is undoubtedly most faulty, it by no means runs on four legs; but the thing is said so

freely and idiomatically, that it passes. This, however, is not a point to which I now want to call your attention; I want you to remark, in Shakspeare and others, only that which we may directly apply to Homer. I say, then, that in Shakspeare the thought is often, while most idiomatically uttered, nay, while good and sound in itself, yet of a quality which is curious and difficult; and that this quality of thought is something entirely un-Homeric. For example, when Lady Macbeth says:

> Memory, the warder of the brain,
> Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
> A limbeck only,

this figure is a perfectly sound and correct figure, no doubt; Mr Knight even calls it a 'happy' figure; but it is a *difficult* figure: Homer would not have used it. Again, when Lady Macbeth says,

> When you durst do it, then you were a man;
> And, to be more than what you were, you would
> Be so much more the man,

the thought in the two last of these lines is, when you seize it, a perfectly clear thought, and a fine thought; but it is a *curious* thought: Homer would not have used it. These are favourable instances of the union of plain style and words with a thought not plain in quality; but take stronger instances of this union,—let the thought be not only not plain in quality, but highly fanciful: and you have the Elizabethan conceits; you have, in spite of idiomatic style and idiomatic diction, everything which is most un-Homeric; you have such atrocities as this of Chapman:

> Fate shall fail to vent her gall

Till mine vent thousands.

I say, the poets of a nation which has produced such conceit as that, must purify themselves seven times in the fire before they can hope to render Homer. They must expel their nature with a fork, and keep crying to one another night and day: 'Homer not only moves rapidly, not only speaks idiomatically; he is, also, *free from fancifulness*'.

So essentially characteristic of Homer is his plainness and naturalness of thought, that to the preservation of this in his own version the translator must without scruple sacrifice, where it is necessary, verbal fidelity to his original, rather than run any risk of producing, by literalness, an odd and unnatural effect. The double epithets so constantly occurring in Homer must be dealt with according to this rule; these epithets come quite naturally in Homer's poetry; in English poetry they, in nine cases out of ten, come, when literally rendered, quite unnaturally. I will not now discuss why this is so, I assume it as an indisputable fact that it is so; that Homer's μερόπων ἀνθρώπων comes to the reader as something perfectly natural, while Mr Newman's 'voice-dividing mortals' comes to him as something perfectly unnatural. Well then, as it is Homer's general effect which we are to reproduce, it is to be false to Homer to be so verbally faithful to him as that we lose this effect: and by the English translator Homer's double epithets must be, in many places, renounced altogether; in all places where they are rendered, rendered by equivalents which come naturally. Instead of rendering θέτι τανύπεπλε by Mr Newman's 'Thetis trailing-robed', which brings to one's mind long petticoats sweeping a dirty pavement, the translator must render the Greek by

English words which come as naturally to us as Milton's words when he says, 'Let gorgeous Tragedy With sceptred pall come sweeping by'. Instead of rendering μώνυχας ἵππους by Chapman's 'one-hoofed steeds', or Mr Newman's 'single-hoofed horses', he must speak of horses in a way which surprises us as little as Shakspeare surprises when he says, 'Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds'. Instead of rendering μελιηδέα θυμόν by 'life as honey pleasant', he must characterise life with the simple pathos of Gray's 'warm precincts of the cheerful day'. Instead of converting ποῖόν σε ἔπος φύγεν ἕρκος ὀδόντων; into the portentous remonstrance, 'Betwixt the outwork of thy teeth what word hath split'? he must remonstrate in English as straightforward as this of St Peter, 'Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee'; or as this of the disciples, 'What is this that he saith, a little while? we cannot tell what he saith'. Homer's Greek, in each of the places quoted, reads as naturally as any of those English passages: the expression no more calls away the attention from the sense in the Greek than in the English. But when, in order to render literally in English one of Homer's double epithets, a strange unfamiliar adjective is invented,—such as 'voice-dividing' for μέρψς,—an improper share of the reader's attention is necessarily diverted to this ancillary word, to this word which Homer never intended should receive so much notice; and a total effect quite different from Homer's is thus produced. Therefore Mr Newman, though he does not purposely import, like Chapman, conceits of his own into the *Iliad*, does actually import them; for the result of his singular diction is to raise ideas, and odd ideas, not raised by the corresponding diction in Homer; and Chapman himself does no more. Cowper

says: ‘I have cautiously avoided all terms of new invention, with an abundance of which persons of more ingenuity than judgment have not enriched our language but encumbered it’; and this criticism so exactly hits the diction of Mr Newman that one is irresistibly led to imagine his present appearance in the flesh to be at least his second.

A translator cannot well have a Homeric rapidity, style, diction, and quality of thought, without at the same time having what is the result of these in Homer,—nobleness. Therefore I do not attempt to lay down any rules for obtaining this effect of nobleness, —the effect, too, of all others the most impalpable, the most irreducible to rule, and which most depends on the individual personality of the artist. So I proceed at once to give you, in conclusion, one or two passages in which I have tried to follow those principles of Homeric translation which I have laid down. I give them, it must be remembered, not as specimens of perfect translation, but as specimens of an attempt to translate Homer on certain principles; specimens which may very aptly illustrate those principles by falling short as well as by succeeding.

I take first a passage of which I have already spoken, the comparison of the Trojan fires to the stars. The first part of that passage is, I have said, of splendid beauty; and to begin with a lame version of that would be the height of imprudence in me. It is the last and more level part with which I shall concern myself. I have already quoted Cowper’s version of this part in order to show you how unlike his stiff and Miltonic manner of telling a plain story is to Homer’s easy and rapid manner:

> So numerous seemed those fires the bank between
> Of Xanthus, blazing, and the fleet of Greece,

In prospect all of Troy—

I need not continue to the end. I have also quoted Pope's version of it, to show you how unlike his ornate and artificial manner is to Homer's plain and natural manner:

So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And brighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires,

and much more of the same kind. I want to show you that it is possible, in a plain passage of this sort, to keep Homer's simplicity without being heavy and dull; and to keep his dignity without bringing in pomp and ornament. 'As numerous as are the stars on a clear night', says Homer,

So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of Xanthus,
Between that and the ships, the Trojans' numerous fires.
In the plain there were kindled a thousand fires: by each one
There sat fifty men, in the ruddy light of the fire:
By their chariots stood the steeds, and champed the white barley
While their masters sat by the fire, and waited for Morning.

Here, in order to keep Homer's effect of perfect plainness and directness, I repeat the word 'fires' as he repeats πυρά without scruple; although in a more elaborate and literary style of poetry this recurrence of the same word would be a fault to be avoided. I omit the epithet of Morning, and whereas Homer says that the steeds 'waited for Morning', I prefer to

attribute this expectation of Morning to the master and not to the horse. Very likely in this particular, as in any other single particular, I may be wrong: what I wish you to remark is my endeavour after absolute plainness of speech, my care to avoid anything which may the least check or surprise the reader, whom Homer does not check or surprise. Homer's lively personal familiarity with war, and with the war-horse as his master's companion, is such that, as it seems to me, his attributing to the one the other's feelings comes to us quite naturally; but, from a poet without this familiarity, the attribution strikes as a little unnatural; and therefore, as everything the least unnatural is un-Homeric, I avoid it.

Again, in the address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles, Cowper has:

> Jove saw their grief with pity, and his brows
> Shaking, within himself thus, pensive, said.
> 'Ah hapless pair! wherefore by gift divine
> Were ye to Peleus given, a mortal king,
> Yourselves immortal and from age exempt?'

There is no want of dignity here, as in the versions of Chapman and Mr Newman, which I have already quoted: but the whole effect is much too slow. Take Pope:

> Nor Jove disdained to cast a pitying look
> While thus relenting to the steeds he spoke.
> 'Unhappy coursers of immortal strain!
> Exempt from age and deathless now in vain;
> Did we your race on mortal man bestow
> Only, alas! to share in mortal woe?'

Here there is no want either of dignity or rapidity, but all is too artificial. 'Nor Jove disdained', for

instance, is a very artificial and literary way of rendering Homer's words and so is, 'coursers of immortal strain'.

Μυρομένω δ' ἄρα τώ γε ἰδὼν, ἐλέησε Κρονίων.

And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,
And he shook his head, and thus addressed his own bosom.
'Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you,
To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.
Was it that ye, with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?
For than man, indeed, there breathes no wretcheder creature,
Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving'.

Here I will observe that the use of 'own', in the second line for the last syllable of a dactyl, and the use of 'To a', in the fourth, for a complete spondee, though they do not, I think, actually spoil the run of the hexameter, are yet undoubtedly instances of that over-reliance on accent, and too free disregard of quantity, which Lord Redesdale visits with just reprehension[33].

I now take two longer passages in order to try my method more fully; but I still keep to passages which have already come under our notice. I quoted Chapman's version of some passages in the speech of Hector at his parting with Andromache. One astounding conceit will probably still be in your remembrance,

When sacred Troy shall *shed her tow'rs for tears of*

overthrow,

as a translation of ὅτ’ ἄν ποτ’ ὀλώλῃ Ἴλιος ἱρή. I will quote a few lines which will give you, also, the key-note to the Anglo-Augustan manner of rendering this passage and to the Miltonic manner of rendering it. What Mr Newman’s manner of rendering it would be, you can by this time sufficiently imagine for yourselves. Mr Wright,—to quote for once from his meritorious version instead of Cowper’s, whose strong and weak points are those of Mr Wright also,—Mr Wright begins his version of this passage thus:

> All these thy anxious cares are also mine,
> Partner beloved; but how could I endure
> The scorn of Trojans and their long-robed wives,
> Should they behold their Hector shrink from war,
> And act the coward’s part! Nor doth my soul
> Prompt the base thought.

Ex pede Herculem: you see just what the manner is. Mr Sotheby, on the other hand (to take a disciple of Pope instead of Pope himself), begins thus:

> ‘What moves thee, moves my mind,’ brave Hector
> said,
> ‘Yet Troy’s upbraiding scorn I deeply dread,
> If, like a slave, where chiefs with chiefs engage,
> The warrior Hector fears the war to wage.
> Not thus my heart inclines.’

From that specimen, too, you can easily divine what, with such a manner, will become of the whole passage. But Homer has neither

> What moves thee, moves my mind,

nor has he

All these thy anxious cares are also mine.

Ἦ καὶ ἐμοὶ τάδε πάντα μέλει, γύναι· ἀλλὰ μάλ’ αἰνῶς,

that is what Homer has, that is his style and movement, if one could but catch it. Andromache, as you know, has been entreating Hector to defend Troy from within the walls, instead of exposing his life, and, with his own life, the safety of all those dearest to him, by fighting in the open plain. Hector replies:

Woman, I too take thought for this; but then I bethink me
What the Trojan men and Trojan women might murmur,
If like a coward I skulked behind, apart from the battle.
Nor would my own heart let me; my heart, which has bid me be valiant
Always, and always fighting among the first of the Trojans,
Busy for Priam’s fame and my own, in spite of the future.
For that day will come, my soul is assured of its coming,
It will come, when sacred Troy shall go to destruction,
Troy, and warlike Priam too, and the people of Priam.
And yet not that grief, which then will be, of the Trojans,
Moves me so much—not Hecuba’s grief, nor Priam my father’s,
Nor my brethren’s, many and brave, who then will be lying
In the bloody dust, beneath the feet of their foemen —

As thy grief, when, in tears, some brazen-coated
Achaian
Shall transport thee away, and the day of thy
freedom be ended.
Then, perhaps, thou shalt work at the loom of
another, in Argos,
Or bear pails to the well of Messeïs, or Hypereia,
Sorely against thy will, by strong Necessity's order.
And some man may say, as he looks and sees thy
tears falling:
See, the wife of Hector, that great pre-eminent captain
Of the horsemen of Troy, in the day they fought for their
city.
So some man will say; and then thy grief will
redouble
At thy want of a man like me, to save thee from
bondage.
But let me be dead, and the earth be mounded above
me,
Ere I hear thy cries, and thy captivity told of.

The main question, whether or no this version reproduces for him the movement and general effect of Homer better than other versions[34] of the same passage, I leave for the judgment of the scholar. But the particular points, in which the operation of my own rules is manifested, are as follows. In the second line I leave out the epithet of the Trojan women ἐλκεσιπέπλους, altogether. In the sixth line I put in five words 'in spite of the future', which are in the original by implication only, and are not there actually expressed. This I do, because Homer, as I have before said, is so remote from one who reads him in English, that the English translator must be even plainer, if possible, and more unambiguous than Homer himself; the connection of meaning must be even more distinctly marked in the translation

than in the original. For in the Greek language itself there is something which brings one nearer to Homer, which gives one a clue to his thought, which makes a hint enough; but in the English language this sense of nearness, this clue, is gone; hints are insufficient, everything must be stated with full distinctness. In the ninth line Homer's epithet for Priam is ἐυμμελίω,—'armed with good ashen spear', say the dictionaries; 'ashen-speared', translates Mr Newman, following his own rule to 'retain every peculiarity of his original',—I say, on the other hand, that ἐυμμελίω has not the effect of a 'peculiarity' in the original, while 'ashen-speared' has the effect of a 'peculiarity' in English; and 'warlike' is as marking an equivalent as I dare give for ἐυμμελίω, for fear of disturbing the balance of expression in Homer's sentence. In the fourteenth line, again, I translate χαλκοχιτώνων by 'brazen-coated'. Mr Newman, meaning to be perfectly literal, translates it by 'brazen-cloaked', an expression which comes to the reader oddly and unnaturally, while Homer's word comes to him quite naturally; but I venture to go as near to a literal rendering as 'brazen-coated', because a 'coat of brass' is familiar to us all from the Bible, and familiar, too, as distinctly specified in connection with the wearer. Finally, let me further illustrate from the twentieth line the value which I attach, in a question of diction, to the authority of the Bible. The word 'pre-eminent' occurs in that line; I was a little in doubt whether that was not too bookish an expression to be used in rendering Homer, as I can imagine Mr Newman to have been a little in doubt whether his 'responsively accosted' for ἀμειβόμενος προσέφη, was not too bookish an expression. Let us both, I say, consult our Bibles: Mr Newman will nowhere find it in his Bible that David,

for instance, '*responsively accosted* Goliath'; but I do find in mine that 'the right hand of the Lord hath the *pre-eminence*'; and forthwith I use 'pre-eminent', without scruple. My Bibliolatry is perhaps excessive; and no doubt a true poetic feeling is the Homeric translator's best guide in the use of words; but where this feeling does not exist, or is at fault, I think he cannot do better than take for a mechanical guide Cruden's *Concordance*. To be sure, here as elsewhere, the consulter must know how to consult,—must know how very slight a variation of word or circumstance makes the difference between an authority in his favour, and an authority which gives him no countenance at all; for instance, the 'Great simpleton!' (for μέγα νήπιος) of Mr Newman, and the 'Thou fool!' of the Bible, are something alike; but 'Thou fool!' is very grand, and 'Great simpleton!' is an atrocity. So, too, Chapman's 'Poor wretched beasts' is pitched many degrees too low; but Shakspeare's 'Poor venomous fool, Be angry and despatch!' is in the grand style.

One more piece of translation and I have done. I will take the passage in which both Chapman and Mr Newman have already so much excited our astonishment, the passage at the end of the nineteenth book of the *Iliad*, the dialogue between Achilles and his horse Xanthus, after the death of Patroclus. Achilles begins:

> 'Xanthus and Balius both, ye far-famed seed of Podarga!
> See that ye bring your master home to the host of the Argives
> In some other sort than your last, when the battle is ended;
> And not leave him behind, a corpse on the plain, like

Patroclus'.
Then, from beneath the yoke, the fleet horse Xanthus addressed him:
Sudden he bowed his head, and all his mane, as he bowed it,
Streamed to the ground by the yoke, escaping from under the collar;
And he was given a voice by the white-armed Goddess Hera.
'Truly, yet this time will we save thee, mighty Achilles!
But thy day of death is at hand; nor shall *we* be the reason—
No, but the will of heaven, and Fate's invincible power.
For by no slow pace or want of swiftness of ours
Did the Trojans obtain to strip the arms from Patroclus;
But that prince among Gods, the son of the lovely-haired Leto,
Slew him fighting in front of the fray, and glorified Hector.
But, for us, we vie in speed with the breath of the West-Wind,
Which, men say, is the fleetest of winds; 'tis thou who art fated
To lie low in death, by the hand of a God and a Mortal'.
Thus far he; and here his voice was stopped by the Furies.
Then, with a troubled heart, the swift Achilles addressed him:
'Why dost thou prophesy so my death to me, Xanthus? It needs not.
I of myself know well, that here I am destined to perish,
Far from my father and mother dear: for all that I will not

Stay this hand from fight, till the Trojans are utterly routed

So he spake, and drove with a cry his steeds into battle.

Here the only particular remark which I will make is, that in the fourth and eighth line the grammar is what I call a loose and idiomatic grammar. In writing a regular and literary style, one would in the fourth line have to repeat before ‘leave’ the words ‘that ye’ from the second line, and to insert the word ‘do’; and in the eighth line one would not use such an expression as ‘he was given a voice’. But I will make one general remark on the character of my own translations, as I have made so many on that of the translations of others. It is, that over the graver passages there is shed an air somewhat too strenuous and severe, by comparison with that lovely ease and sweetness which Homer, for all his noble and masculine way of thinking, never loses.

Here I stop. I have said so much, because I think that the task of translating Homer into English verse both will be reattempted, and may be reattempted successfully. There are great works composed of parts so disparate that one translator is not likely to have the requisite gifts for poetically rendering all of them. Such are the works of Shakspeare, and Goethe’s *Faust*; and these it is best to attempt to render in prose only. People praise Tieck and Schlegel’s version of Shakspeare. I, for my part, would sooner read Shakspeare in the French prose translation, and that is saying a great deal; but in the German poets’ hands Shakspeare so often gets, especially where he is humorous, an air of what the French call *niaiserie*! and can anything be more un-

Shakspearian than that? Again; Mr Hayward's prose translation of the first part of *Faust*—so good that it makes one regret Mr Hayward should have abandoned the line of translation for a kind of literature which is, to say the least, somewhat slight—is not likely to be surpassed by any translation in verse. But poems like the *Iliad*, which, in the main, are in one manner, may hope to find a poetical translator so gifted and so trained as to be able to learn that one manner, and to reproduce it. Only, the poet who would reproduce this must cultivate in himself a Greek virtue by no means common among the moderns in general, and the English in particular, —*moderation*. For Homer has not only the English vigour, he has the Greek grace; and when one observes the bolstering, rollicking way in which his English admirers—even men of genius like the late Professor Wilson—love to talk of Homer and his poetry, one cannot help feeling that there is no very deep community of nature between them and the object of their enthusiasm. 'It is very well, my good friends', I always imagine Homer saying to them: if he could hear them: 'you do me a great deal of honour, but somehow or other you praise me too like barbarians'. For Homer's grandeur is not the mixed and turbid grandeur of the great poets of the north, of the authors of *Othello* and *Faust*; it is a perfect, a lovely grandeur. Certainly his poetry has all the energy and power of the poetry of our ruder climates; but it has, besides, the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky.

Homeric Translation in Theory and Practice
A Reply to Matthew Arnold
By Francis W. Newman

It is so difficult, amid the press of literature, for a mere versifier and translator to gain notice at all, that an assailant may even do one a service, if he so conduct his assault as to enable the reader to sit in intelligent judgment on the merits of the book assailed. But when the critic deals out to the readers only so much knowledge as may propagate his own contempt of the book, he has undoubtedly immense power to dissuade them from wishing to open it. Mr Arnold writes as openly aiming at this end. He begins by complimenting me, as ‘a man of great ability and genuine learning’; but on questions of learning, as well as of taste, he puts me down as bluntly, as if he had meant, ‘a man totally void both of learning and of sagacity’. He again and again takes for granted that he has ‘the scholar’ on his side, ‘the living scholar’, the man who has learning and taste without pedantry. He bids me please ‘the scholars’, and go to ‘the scholars’ tribunal’; and does not know that I did this, to the extent of my opportunity, before committing myself to a laborious, expensive and perhaps thankless task. Of course he cannot guess, what is the fact, that scholars of fastidious refinement, but of a judgment which I think far more

masculine than Mr Arnold's, have passed a most encouraging sentence on large specimens of my translations. I at this moment count eight such names, though of course I must not here adduce them: nor will I further allude to it, than to say, that I have no such sense either of pride or of despondency, as those are liable to, who are consciously isolated in their taste.

Scholars are the tribunal of Erudition, but of Taste the educated but unlearned public is the only rightful judge; and to it I wish to appeal. Even scholars collectively have no right, and much less have single scholars, to pronounce a final sentence on questions of taste in their court. Where I differ in Taste from Mr Arnold, it is very difficult to find 'the scholars' tribunal even if I acknowledged its absolute jurisdiction: but as regards Erudition, this difficulty does not occur, and I shall fully reply to the numerous dogmatisms by which he settles the case against me.

But I must first avow to the reader my own moderate pretensions. Mr Arnold begins by instilling two errors which he does not commit himself to assert. He says that my work will *not* take rank as *the* standard translation of Homer, but *other translations will be made*: as if I thought otherwise! If I have set the example of the right direction in which translators ought to aim, of course those who follow me will improve upon me and supersede me. A man would be rash indeed to withhold his version of a poem of fifteen thousand lines, until he had, to his best ability, imparted to them all their final perfection. He might spend the leisure of his life upon it. He would possibly be in his grave before it could see the light. If it then were published, and it was founded

on any new principle, there would be no one to defend it from the attacks of ignorance and prejudice. In the nature of the case, his wisdom is to elaborate in the first instance all the high and noble parts *carefully*, and get through the inferior parts *somehow*; leaving of necessity very much to be done in successive editions, if possibly it please general taste sufficiently to reach them. A generous and intelligent critic will test such a work mainly or solely by the most noble parts, and as to the rest, will consider whether the metre and style adapts itself naturally to them also.

Next, Mr Arnold asks, 'Who is to assure Mr Newman, that when he has tried to retain every peculiarity of his original, he has done that for which Mr Newman enjoins this to be done—adhered closely to Homer's manner and habit of thought? Evidently the translator needs more practical directions than these'. The tendency of this is, to suggest to the reader that I am not aware of the difficulty of rightly applying good principles; whereas I have in this very connection said expressly, that even when a translator has got right principles, he is liable to go wrong in the detail of their application. This is as true of all the principles which Mr Arnold can possibly give, as of those which I have given; nor do I for a moment assume, that in writing fifteen thousand lines of verse I have not made hundreds of blots.

At the same time Mr Arnold has overlooked the point of my remark. Nearly every translator before me has *knowingly*, *purposely*, *habitually* shrunk from Homer's thoughts and Homer's manner. The reader will afterwards see whether Mr Arnold does not justify them in their course. It is not for those who are

purposely unfaithful to taunt me with the difficulty of being truly faithful.

I have alleged, and, against Mr Arnold's flat denial, I deliberately repeat, that Homer rises and sinks with his subject, and is often homely or prosaic. I have professed as my principle, to follow my original in this matter. It is unfair to expect of me grandeur in trivial passages. If in any place where Homer is *confessedly* grand and noble, I have marred and ruined his greatness, let me be reproved. But I shall have occasion to protest, that Stateliness is not Grandeur, Picturesqueness is not Stately, Wild Beauty is not to be confounded with Elegance: a Forest has its swamps and brushwood, as well as its tall trees.

The duty of one who *publishes* his censures on me is, to select noble, greatly admired passages, and confront me both with a prose translation of the original (for the public cannot go to the Greek) and also with that which he judges to be a more successful version than mine. Translation being matter of compromise, and being certain to fall below the original, when this is of the highest type of grandeur; the question is not, What translator is perfect? but, Who is least imperfect? Hence the only fair test is by comparison, when comparison is possible. But Mr Arnold has not put me to this test. He has quoted two very short passages, and various single lines, half lines and single words, from me; and chooses to *tell* his readers that I ruin Homer's nobleness, when (if his censure is just) he might make them *feel* it by quoting me upon the most admired pieces. Now with the warmest sincerity I say: If any English reader, after perusing my version of four or five eminently noble passages of sufficient

length, side by side with those of other translators, and (better still) with a prose version also, finds in them high qualities which I have destroyed; I am foremost to advise him to shut my book, or to consult it only (as Mr Arnold suggests) as a schoolboy's 'help to construe', if such it can be. My sole object is, to bring Homer before the unlearned public: I seek no self-glorification: the sooner I am superseded by a really better translation, the greater will be my pleasure.

It was not until I more closely read Mr Arnold's own versions, that I understood how necessary is his repugnance to mine. I am unwilling to speak of his metrical efforts. I shall not say more than my argument strictly demands. It here suffices to state the simple fact, that for awhile I seriously doubted whether he meant his first specimen for metre at all. He seems distinctly to say, he is going to give us English Hexameters; but it was long before I could believe that he had written the following for that metre:

> So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of
> Xanthus,
> Between that and the ships, the Trojans' numerous
> fires.
> In the plain there were kindled a thousand fires: by
> each one
> There sate fifty men, in the ruddy light of the fire.
> By their chariots stood the steeds, and champ'd the
> white barley,
> While their masters sate by the fire, and waited for
> Morning.

I sincerely thought, this was meant for prose; at length the two last lines opened my eyes. He *does* mean them for Hexameters! 'Fire' (= feuer) with

him is a spondee or trochee. The first line, I now see, begins with three (quantitative) spondees, and is meant to be spondaic in the fifth foot. ‘Bed of, Between, In the’,—are meant for spondees! So are ‘There sate’, ‘*By* their’; though ‘Troy *by* the’ was a dactyl. ‘Champ’d the white’ is a dactyl. My ‘metrical exploits’ amaze Mr Arnold (p. 23); but my courage is timidity itself compared to his.

His second specimen stands thus:

> And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,
> And he shook his head, and thus address’d his own bosom:
> Ah, unhappy pair! to Peleus why did we give you,
> To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.
> Was it that ye with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?
> For than man indeed there breathes no wretcheder creature,
> Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving.

Upon this he apologises for ‘To a’, intended as a spondee in the fourth line, and ‘-dress’d his own’ for a dactyl in the second; liberties which, he admits, go rather far, but ‘do not actually spoil the run of the hexameter’. In a note, he attempts to palliate his deeds by recriminating on Homer, though he will not allow to me the same excuse. The accent (it seems) on the second syllable of αἰόλος makes it as impure a dactyl to a Greek as ‘death-destin’d’ is to us! Mr Arnold’s erudition in Greek metres is very curious, if he can establish that they take any cognisance *at all* of the prose accent, or that αἰολος is quantitatively more or less of a dactyl, according as the prose accent is on one or other syllable. His ear also must

be of a very unusual kind, if it makes out that ‘death-destin’d’ is anything but a downright Molossus. Write it *dethdestind*, as it is pronounced, and the eye, equally with the ear, decides it to be of the same type as the word *persistunt*. In the lines just quoted, most readers will be slow to believe, that they have to place an impetus of the voice (an ictus metricus at least) on Bétween, In´ the, Thére sate, By´ their, A´nd with, A´nd he, Tó a, Fór than, O´f all. Here, in the course of thirteen lines, *composed as a specimen of style*, is found the same offence nine times repeated, to say nothing here of other deformities. Now contrast Mr Arnold’s severity against me[35], p. 87: ‘It is a real fault when Mr Newman has:

> Infátuáte! óh that thou wért | lord to some other army—

for here the reader is required, not for any special advantage to himself, but *simply to save Mr Newman trouble*, to place the accent on the insignificant word *wert*, where it has *no business whatever*’. Thus to the flaw which Mr Arnold admits nine times in thirteen pattern lines, he shows no mercy in me, who have toiled through fifteen thousand. Besides, on *wert* we are free at pleasure to place or not to place the accent; but in Mr Arnold’s *Bétween*, *Tó a*, etc., it is impossible or offensive.

To avoid a needlessly personal argument, I enlarge on the general question of hexameters. Others, scholars of repute, have given example and authority to English hexameters. As matter of curiosity, as erudite sport, such experiments may have their value. I do not mean to express indiscriminate disapproval, much less contempt. I have myself privately tried the same in Alcaics; and find the chief

objection to be, not that the task is impossible, but that to execute it *well* is too difficult for a language like ours, overladen with consonants, and abounding with syllables neither distinctly long nor distinctly short, but of every intermediate length. Singing to a tune was essential to keep even Greek or Roman poetry to true *time*; to the English language it is of tenfold necessity. But if *time* is abandoned (as in fact it always is), and the prose accent has to do duty for the ictus metricus, the moral genius of the metre is fundamentally subverted. What previously was steady duplicate time ('march-time', as Professor Blackie calls it) vacillates between duplicate and triplicate. With Homer, a dactyl had nothing in it *more tripping* than a spondee: a crotchet followed by two quavers belongs to as grave an anthem as two crotchets. But Mr Arnold himself (p. 55) calls the introduction of anapæsts by Dr Maginn into our ballad measure, 'a detestable dance': as in:

> And scarcely hád shĕ bĕgún to wash,
> Ere shé wăs ăwáre ŏf thĕ grisly gash.

I will not assert that this is everywhere improper in the Odyssey; but no part of the Iliad occurs to me in which it is proper, and I have totally excluded it in my own practice. I notice it but once in Mr Gladstone's specimens, and it certainly offends my taste as out of harmony with the gravity of the rest, viz.

> My ships shall bound ĭn thĕ morning's light.

In Shakspeare we have *i'th'* and *o'th'* for monosyllables, but (so scrupulous am I in the midst of my 'atrocities') I never dream of such a liberty myself, much less of avowed 'anapæsts'. So far do I

go in the opposite direction, as to prefer to make such words as *Danai*, *victory* three syllables, which even Mr Gladstone and Pope accept as dissyllabic. Some reviewers have called my metre *lege solutum*; which is as ridiculous a mistake as Horace made concerning Pindar. That, in passing. But surely Mr Arnold's severe blow at Dr Maginn rebounds with double force upon himself.

> To Péleus whý dĭd wĕ gíve you?—
> Hécŭbă's griéf nor Príăm my fáther's—
> Thoúsănds ŏf sórrows—

cannot be a *less* detestable jig than that of Dr Maginn. And this objection holds against every accentual hexameter, even to those of Longfellow or Lockhart, if applied to grand poetry. For bombast, in a wild whimsical poem, Mr Clough has proved it to be highly appropriate; and I think, the more 'rollicking' is Mr Clough (if only I understand the word) the more successful his metre. Mr Arnold himself *feels* what I say against 'dactyls', for on this very ground he advises largely superseding them by spondees; and since what he calls a spondee is any pair of syllables of which the former is accentuable, his precept amounts to this, that the hexameter be converted into a line of six accentual trochees, with free liberty left of diversifying it, in any foot except the last, by Dr Maginn's 'detestable dance'. What more severe condemnation of the metre is imaginable than this mere description gives? 'Six trochees' seems to me the worst possible foundation for an English metre. I cannot imagine that Mr Arnold will give the slightest weight to this, as a judgment from me; but I do advise him to search in Samson Agonistes, Thalaba, Kehama, and Shelley's

works, for the phenomenon.

I have elsewhere insisted, but I here repeat, that for a long poem a trochaic beginning of the verse is most unnatural and vexatious in English, because so large a number of our sentences begin with unaccented syllables, and the vigour of a trochaic line eminently depends on the purity of its initial trochee. Mr Arnold's feeble trochees already quoted (from *Bétween* to *Tó a*) are all the fatal result of defying the tendencies of our language.

If by a happy combination any scholar could compose fifty *such* English hexameters, as would convey a living likeness of the Virgilian metre, I should applaud it as valuable for initiating schoolboys into that metre: but there its utility would end. The method could not be profitably used for translating Homer or Virgil, plainly because it is impossible to say for whose service such a translation would be executed. Those who can read the original will never care to read *through* any translation; and the unlearned look on all, even the best hexameters, whether from Southey, Lockhart or Longfellow, as odd and disagreeable prose. Mr Arnold deprecates appeal to popular taste: well he may! yet if the unlearned are to be our audience, we cannot defy them. I myself, before venturing to print, sought to ascertain how unlearned women and children would accept my verses. I could boast how children and half-educated women have extolled them; how greedily a working man has inquired for them, without knowing who was the translator; but I well know that this is quite insufficient to establish the merits of a translation. It is nevertheless *one* point. 'Homer is popular', is one of the very few matters of fact in this controversy on which Mr Arnold and I are

agreed. ‘English hexameters are not popular’, is a truth so obvious, that I do not yet believe he will deny it. Therefore, ‘Hexameters are not the metre for translating Homer’. Q. E. D.

I cannot but think that the very respectable scholars who pertinaciously adhere to the notion that English hexameters have something ‘epical’ in them, have no vivid *feeling* of the difference between Accent and Quantity: and this is the less wonderful, since so very few persons have ever actually *heard* quantitative verse. I have; by listening to Hungarian poems, read to me by my friend Mr Francis Pulszky, a native Magyar. He had not finished a single page, before I complained gravely of the monotony. He replied: ‘So do *we* complain of it’: and then showed me, by turning the pages, that the poet cut the knot which he could not untie, by frequent changes of his metre. Whether it was a change of mere length, as from Iambic senarian to Iambic dimeter; or implied a fundamental change of time, as in music from *common* to *minuet* time; I cannot say. But, to my ear, nothing but a tune can ever save a quantitative metre from hideous monotony. It is like strumming a piece of very simple music on a single note. Nor only so; but the most beautiful of anthems, after it has been repeated a hundred times on a hundred successive verses, begins to pall on the ear. How much more would an entire book of Homer, if chanted at one sitting! I have the conviction, though I will not undertake to impart it to another, that if the living Homer could sing his lines to us, they would at first move in us the same pleasing interest as an elegant and simple melody from an African of the Gold Coast; but that, after hearing twenty lines, we should complain of meagreness, sameness, and *loss of moral expression*; and should judge the style to be *as*

inferior to our own oratorical metres, as the music of Pindar to our third-rate modern music. But if the poet, at our request, instead of singing the verses, read or spoke them, then from the loss of well-marked time and the ascendency reassumed by the prose-accent, we should be as helplessly unable to *hear* any metre in them, as are the modern Greeks.

I expect that Mr Arnold will reply to this, that he *reads* and does not *sing* Homer, and yet he finds his verses to be melodious and not monotonous. To this, I retort, that he begins by wilfully pronouncing Greek falsely, according to the laws of *Latin* accent, and artificially assimilating the Homeric to the Virgilian line. Virgil has compromised between the ictus metricus and the prose accent, by exacting that the two coincide in the two last feet and generally forbidding it in the second and third foot. What is called the 'feminine cæsura' gives (in the Latin language) coincidence on the third foot. Our extreme familiarity with these laws of compromise enables us to anticipate recurring sounds and satisfies our ear. But the Greek prose accent, by reason of oxytons and paroxytons, and accent on the ante-penultima in spite of a long penultima, totally resists all such compromise; and proves that particular form of melody, which our scholars enjoy in Homer, to be an unhistoric imitation of Virgil.

I am aware, there is a bold theory, whispered if not published, that,—so out-and-out *Æolian* was Homer, —his laws of accent must have been almost Latin. According to this, Erasmus, following the track of Virgil blindly, has taught us to pronounce Euripides and Plato ridiculously ill, but Homer, with an accuracy of accent which puts Aristarchus to shame. This is no place for discussing so difficult a question.

Suffice it to say, *first*, that Mr Arnold cannot take refuge in such a theory, since he does not admit that Homer was antiquated to Euripides; *next*, that admitting the theory to him, still the loss of the Digamma destroys to him the true rhythm of Homer. I shall recur to both questions below. I here add, that our English pronunciation even of Virgil often so ruins Virgil's own *quantities*, that there is something either of delusion or of pedantry in our scholars' self-complacency in the rhythm which they elicit.

I think it fortunate for Mr Arnold, that he had *not* 'courage to translate Homer'; for he must have failed to make it acceptable to the unlearned. But if the public ear prefers ballad metres, still (Mr Arnold assumes) 'the scholar' is with him in this whole controversy. Nevertheless it gradually comes out that neither is this the case, but he himself is in the minority. P. 110, he writes: 'When one observes the boistering, rollicking way in which Homer's English admirers—even men of genius, like the late Professor Wilson—love to talk of Homer and his poetry, one cannot help feeling that there is no very deep community of nature between them and the object of their enthusiasm.' It does not occur to Mr Arnold that the defect of perception lies with himself, and that Homer has more sides than he has discovered. He deplores that Dr Maginn, and others whom he names, err with me, in believing that our ballad-style is the nearest approximation to that of Homer; and avows that '*it is time to say plainly*' (p. 46) that Homer is not of the ballad-type. So in p. 45, '—this *popular*, but, *it is time to say*, this erroneous analogy' between the ballad and Homer. Since it is reserved for Mr Arnold to turn the tide of opinion; since it is a task not yet achieved, but remains to be achieved by his authoritative enunciation; he confesses that hitherto

I have with me the suffrage of scholars. With this confession, a little more diffidence would be becoming, if diffidence were possible to the fanaticism with which he idolises hexameters. P. 88, he says: 'The hexameter has a natural dignity, which repels both the jaunty style and the jog-trot style, etc.... *The translator who uses it cannot too religiously follow the* INSPIRATION OF HIS METRE' etc. Inspiration from a metre which has no recognised type? from a metre which the *heart* and *soul* of the nation ignores? I believe, if the metre can inspire anything, it is to frolic and gambol with Mr Clough. Mr Arnold's English hexameter cannot be a higher inspiration to him, than the true hexameter was to a Greek: yet that metre inspired strains of totally different essential genius and merit.

But I claim Mr Arnold himself as confessing that our ballad *metre* is epical, when he says that Scott is '*bastard*-epic'. I do not admit that his quotations from Scott are all Scott's best, nor anything like it; but if they were, it would only prove something against Scott's genius or talent, nothing about his metre. The Κύπρια ἔπη or Ἰλίου πέρσις were probably very inferior to the Iliad; but no one would on that account call them or the Frogs and Mice bastard-epic. No one would call a bad tale of Dryden or of Crabbe bastard-epic. The application of the word to Scott virtually concedes what I assert. Mr Arnold also calls Macaulay's ballads 'pinchbeck'; but a man needs to produce something very noble himself, before he can afford thus to sneer at Macaulay's 'Lars Porsena'.

Before I enter on my own 'metrical exploits', I must get rid of a disagreeable topic. Mr Arnold's repugnance to them has led him into forms of attack, which I do not know how to characterize. I shall

state my complaints as concisely as I can, and so leave them.

1. I do not seek for any similarity of *sound* in an English accentual metre to that of a Greek quantitative metre; besides that Homer writes in a highly vocalized tongue, while ours is overfilled with consonants. I have disowned this notion of similar rhythm in the strongest terms (p. xvii of my Preface), expressly because some critics had imputed this aim to me in the case of Horace. I summed up: 'It is not audible sameness of metre, but a likeness of moral genius which is to be aimed at'. I contrast the audible to the moral. Mr Arnold suppresses this contrast, and writes as follows, p. 34. Mr Newman tells us that he has found a metre like in moral genius to Homer's. His judge has still the same answer: reproduce THEN *on our ear* something of 'the effect produced by the *movement* of Homer'. He recurs to the same fallacy in p. 57. 'For whose EAR do those two *rhythms* produce impressions of (*to use Mr Newman's own words*) "similar moral genius"'? His reader will naturally suppose that 'like in moral genius' is with me an eccentric phrase for 'like in musical cadence'. The only likeness to the ear which I have admitted, is, that the one and the other are primitively made *for music*. That, Mr Arnold knows, is a matter of fact, whether a ballad be well or ill written. If he pleases, he may hold the rhythm of our metre to be necessarily inferior to Homer's and to his own; but when I fully explained in my preface what were my tests of 'like moral genius', I cannot understand his suppressing them, and perverting the sense of my words.

2. In p. 52, Mr Arnold quotes Chapman's translation of ἆ δείλω, 'Poor wretched *beasts*' (of Achilles'

horses), on which he comments severely. He does *not* quote me. Yet in p. 100, after exhibiting Cowper's translation of the same passage, he adds: 'There is no want of dignity here, as in the versions of Chapman and of *Mr Newman, which I have already quoted*'. Thus he leads the reader to believe that I have the same phrase as Chapman! In fact, my translation is:

> Ha! why on Peleus, mortal prince,
> Bestowed we *you*, unhappy!

If he had done me the justice of quoting, it is possible that some readers would not have thought my rendering intrinsically 'wanting in dignity', or less noble than Mr Arnold's own, which is:

> Ah! unhappy pair! to Peleus[36] why did we give you,
> To a mortal?

In p. 52, he with very gratuitous insult remarks, that 'Poor wretched beasts' is a little over-familiar; but this is no objection to it for the ballad-manner[37]: *it is good enough ... for Mr Newman's Iliad, ...* etc.' Yet I myself have *not* thought it good enough for my Iliad.

3. In p. 107, Mr Arnold gives his own translation of the discourse between Achilles and his horse; and prefaces it with the words, 'I will take the passage in which both Chapman and Mr Newman *have already so much excited our astonishment*'. But he did not quote my translation of the noble part of the passage, consisting of 19 lines; he has merely quoted[38] the tail of it, 5 lines; which are altogether inferior. Of this a sufficient indication is, that Mr Gladstone has translated the 19 and omitted the 5. I shall below give my translation parallel to Mr Gladstone's. The curious reader may compare it with Mr Arnold's, if he choose.

4. In p. 102, Mr Arnold quotes from Chapman as a translation of ὅταν ποτ' ὀλώλῃ Ἰλιος ἱρὴ,

> 'When sacred Troy shall *shed her tow'rs for tears of overthrow*';

and adds: 'What Mr Newman's manner of rendering would be, you can by this time sufficiently imagine for yourselves'. *Would be!* Why does he set his readers to 'imagine', when in fewer words he could tell them what my version *is*? It stands thus:

> A day, when sacred Ilium | for overthrow is destin'd,
> —

which may have faults unperceived by me, but is in my opinion far better than Mr Arnold's, and certainly did not deserve to be censured side by side with Chapman's absurdity. I must say plainly; a critic has no right to hide what I have written, and stimulate his readers to despise me by these *indirect* methods.

I proceed to my own metre. It is exhibited in this stanza of Campbell:

> By this the storm grew loud apace:
> The waterwraith was shrieking,
> And in the scowl of heav'n each face
> Grew dark as they were speaking.

Whether I use this metre well or ill, I maintain that it is essentially a noble metre, a popular metre, a metre of great capacity. *It is essentially the national ballad metre*, for the double rhyme is an accident. Of *course* it can be applied to low, as well as to high subjects; else it would *not* be popular: it would *not* be 'of a like moral genius' to the Homeric metre, which was available equally for the comic poem *Margites*, for

the precepts of Pythagoras, for the pious prosaic hymn of Cleanthes, for the driest prose of a naval catalogue[39], in short, *for all early thought*. Mr Arnold appears to forget, though he cannot be ignorant, that prose-composition is later than Homer, and that in the epical days every initial effort at prose history was carried on in *Homeric doggerel* by the Cyclic poets, who traced the history of Troy *ab ovo* in consecutive chronology. I say, he is merely inadvertent, he cannot be ignorant, that the Homeric *metre*, like my metre, subserves prosaic thought with the utmost facility; but I hold it to be, not indavertence, but blindness, when he does not see that Homer's τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος is a line of as thoroughly unaffected *oratio pedestris* as any verse of Pythagoras or Horace's Satires. But on diction I defer to speak, till I have finished the topic of metre.

I do not say that any measure is faultless. Every measure has its foible: mine has that fault which every uniform line must have; it is liable to monotony. This is evaded of course, as in the hexameter or rather as in Milton's line, first, by varying the cæsura, secondly, by varying certain feet, within narrow and well understood limits, thirdly, by irregularity in the strength of accents, fourthly, by varying the weight of the unaccented syllables also. All these things are needed, *for the mere sake of breaking uniformity*. I will not here assert that Homer's many marvellous freedoms, such as ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, were dictated by this aim, like those in the *Paradise Lost*; but I do say, that it is most unjust, most unintelligent, in critics, to produce *single* lines from me, and criticize them as rough or weak, instead of examining them and presenting them as part of *a mass*. How would Shakspeare stand this sort of test? nay, or Milton? The metrical laws of

a long poem cannot be the same as of a sonnet: single verses are organic elements of a great whole. A crag must not be cut like a gem. Mr Arnold should remember Aristotle's maxim, that popular eloquence (and such is Homer's) should be broad, rough and highly coloured, like scene painting, not polished into delicacy like miniature. But I speak now of metre, not yet of diction. In *any* long and popular poem it is a mistake to wish every line to conform severely to a few types; but to claim this of a translator of *Homer* is a doubly unintelligent exaction, when Homer's own liberties transgress all bounds; many of them being feebly disguised by later double spellings, as εἴως, εἶος, invented for his special accommodation.

The Homeric verse has a rhythmical advantage over mine in less rigidity of cæsura. Though the Hexameter was made out of two Doric lines, yet no division of sense, no pause of the voice or thought, is exacted between them. The chasm between two English verses is deeper. Perhaps, on the side of syntax, a *four* + *three* English metre drives harder towards monotony than Homer's own verse. For other reasons, it lies under a like disadvantage, compared with Milton's metre. The secondary cæsuras possible in the four feet are of course less numerous than those in the five feet, and the three-foot verse has still less variety. To my taste, it is far more pleasing that the short line recur less regularly; just as the parœmiac of Greek anapæsts is less pleasant in the Aristophanic tetrameter, than when it comes frequent but not expected. This is a main reason why I prefer Scott's free metre to my own; yet, without rhyme, I have not found how to use his freedom. Mr Arnold wrongly supposes me to have overlooked his main and just objections to rhyming

Homer; viz. that so many Homeric lines are intrinsically made for isolation. In p. ix of my Preface I called it a fatal embarrassment. But the objection applies in its full strength only against Pope's rhymes, not against Walter Scott's.

Mr Gladstone has now laid before the public his own specimens of Homeric translation. Their dates range from 1836 to 1859. It is possible that he has as strong a distaste as Mr Arnold for my version; for he totally ignores the archaic, the rugged, the boisterous element in Homer. But as to metre, he gives me his full suffrage. He has lines with four accents, with three, and a few with two; not one with five. On the whole, his metre, his cadences, his varying rhymes, are those of Scott. He has more trochaic lines than I approve. He is truthful to Homer on many sides; and (such is the delicate grace and variety admitted by the rhyme) his verses are more pleasing than mine. I do not hesitate to say, that if *all* Homer could be put before the public in the same style equally well with his best pieces, a translation executed on my principles could not live in the market at its side; and certainly I should spare my labour. I add, that I myself prefer the former piece which I quote to my own, even while I see his defects: for I hold that his graces, at which I cannot afford to aim, more than make up for his losses. After this confession, I frankly contrast his rendering of the two noblest passages with mine, that the reader may see, what Mr Arnold does not show, my weak and strong sides.

GLADSTONE, Iliad 4, 422

As when the billow gathers fast
With slow and sullen roar
Beneath the keen northwestern blast

Against the sounding shore:
First far at sea it rears its crest,
Then bursts upon the beach,
Or[40] with proud arch and swelling breast,
Where headlands outward reach,
It smites their strength, and bellowing flings
Its silver foam afar;
So, stern and thick, the Danaan kings
And soldiers marched to war.
Each leader gave his men the word;
Each warrior deep in silence heard.
So mute they march'd, thou could'st not ken
They were a mass of speaking men:
And as they strode in martial might,
Their flickering arms shot back the light.
But as at even the folded sheep
Of some rich master stand,
Ten thousand thick their place they keep,
And bide the milkman's hand,
And more and more they bleat, the more
They hear their lamblings cry;
So, from the Trojan host, uproar
And din rose loud and high.
They were a many-voicèd throng:
Discordant accents there,
That sound from many a differing tongue,
Their differing race declare.
These, Mars had kindled for the fight;
Those, starry-ey'd Athenè's might,
And savage Terror and Affright,
And Strife, insatiate of wars,
The sister and the mate of Mars:
Strife, that, a pigmy at her birth,
By gathering rumour fed,
Soon plants her feet upon the earth,
And in the heav'n her head.

I add my own rendering of the same; somewhat

corrected, but only in the direction of my own principles and against Arnold's.

As when the surges of the deep, by Western blore uphoven,
Against the ever-booming strand dash up in roll successive;
A head of waters swelleth first aloof; then under harried
By the rough bottom, roars aloud; till, hollow at the summit,
Sputtering the briny foam abroad, the huge crest tumbleth over:
So then the lines of Danaï, successive and unceasing,
In battle's close array mov'd on. To his own troops each leader
Gave order: dumbly went the rest (nor mightèst thou discover,
So vast a train of people held a voice within their bosom),
In silence their commanders fearing: all the ranks wellmarshall'd
Were clad in crafty panoply, which glitter'd on their bodies.
Meantime, as sheep within the yard of some great cattle-master,
While the white milk is drain'd from them, stand round in number countless,
And, grievèd by their lambs' complaint, respond with bleat incessant;
So then along their ample host arose the Troian hurly.
For neither common words spake théy, nor kindred accent utter'd;
But mingled was the tongue of men from divers places summon'd.
By Arès these were urgèd on, those by grey-ey'd

Athenè,
By Fear, by Panic, and by Strife immeasurably
eager,
The sister and companion[41] of hero-slaying Arès,
Who truly doth at first her crest but humble rear;
thereafter,
Planting upon the ground her feet, her head in
heaven fixeth.

GLADSTONE, Iliad 19, 403

Hanging low his auburn head,
Sweeping with his mane the ground,
From beneath his collar shed,
Xanthus, hark! a voice hath found,
Xanthus of the flashing feet:
Whitearm'd Herè gave the sound.
'Lord Achilles, strong and fleet!
Trust us, we will bear thee home;
Yet cometh nigh thy day of doom:
No doom of ours, but doom that stands
By God and mighty Fate's commands.
'Twas not that we were slow or slack
Patroclus lay a corpse, his back
All stript of arms by Trojan hands.
The prince of gods, whom Leto bare,
Leto with the flowing hair,
He forward fighting did the deed,
And gave to Hector glory's meed.
In toil for thee, we will not shun
Against e'en Zephyr's breath to run,
Swiftest of winds: but all in vain:
By God and man shalt thou be slain.'
He spake: and here, his words among,
Erinnys bound his faltering tongue.

Beginning with Achilles' speech, I render the passage parallel to Gladstone thus.

‘*Chestnut* and *Spotted*! noble pair! farfamous brood
of *Spry-foot*!
In other guise now ponder ye your charioteer to
rescue
Back to the troop of Danaï, when we have done
with battle:
Nor leave him dead upon the field, as late ye left
Patroclus’.
But him the dapplefooted steed under the yoke
accosted;
(And droop’d his auburn head aside straightway;
and through the collar,
His full mane, streaming to the ground, over the
yoke was scatter’d:
Him Juno, whitearm’d goddess, then with voice
Of man endowèd):
‘Now and again we verily will save and more than
save thee,
Dreadful Achilles! yet for thee the deadly day
approacheth.
Not ours the guilt; but mighty God and stubborn
Fate are guilty.
Not by the slowness of our feet or dulness of our
spirit
The Troians did thy armour strip from shoulders
of Patroclus;
But the exalted god, for whom brighthair’d
Latona travail’d,
Slew him amid the foremost rank and glory gave
to Hector.
Now we, in coursing, pace would keep even with
breeze of Zephyr,
Which speediest they say to be: but for thyself ’tis
fated
By hand of hero and of God in mighty strife to
perish
So much he spake: thereat his voice the Furies
stopp’d for ever.

Now if any fool ask, Why does not Mr Gladstone translate *all* Homer? any fool can reply with me, Because he is Chancellor of the Exchequer. A man who has talents and acquirements adequate to translate Homer *well* into *rhyme*, is almost certain to have other far more urgent calls for the exercise of such talents.

So much of metre. At length I come to the topic of Diction, where Mr Arnold and I are at variance not only as to taste, but as to the main facts of Greek literature. I had called Homer's style quaint and garrulous; and said that he rises and falls with his subject, being prosaic when it is tame, and low when it is mean. I added no proof; for I did not dream that it was needed. Mr Arnold not only absolutely denies all this, and denies it without proof; but adds, that these assertions prove my incompetence, and account for my total and conspicuous failure. His whole attack upon my diction is grounded on a passage which I must quote at length; for it is so confused in logic, that I may otherwise be thought to garble it, pp. 36, 37.

'Mr Newman speaks of the more antiquated style suited to this subject. Quaint! Antiquated! but to whom? Sir Thomas Browne is quaint, and the diction of Chaucer is antiquated: does Mr Newman suppose that Homer seemed quaint to Sophocles, as Chaucer's diction seems antiquated to us? But we cannot really know, I confess (!!), how Homer seemed to Sophocles. Well then, to those who can tell us how he seems to them, to the living scholar, to our only present witness on this matter—does Homer make on the Provost of Eton, when he reads him, the impression of a poet quaint and antiquated! does he make this impression on Professor Thompson or

Professor Jowett? When Shakspeare says, “The Princes orgulous”, meaning “the proud princes”, we say, “This is antiquated”. When he says of the Trojan gates, that they,

> With massy staples
> And corresponsive and fulfilling bolts
> *Sperr* up the sons of Troy,

we say, “This is both quaint and antiquated”. But does Homer ever compose in a language, which produces on the scholar at all the same impression as this language which I have quoted from Shakspeare? Never once. Shakspeare is quaint and antiquated in the lines I have just quoted; but Shakspeare, need I say it? can compose, when he likes, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly simple, perfectly intelligible; in a language, which, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part its author from us, stops or surprises us as little as the language of a contemporary. And Homer has not Shakspeare’s variations. Homer always composes, as Shakspeare composes at his best. Homer is always simple and intelligible, as Shakspeare is often; Homer is never quaint and antiquated, as Shakspeare is sometimes’.

If Mr Arnold were to lay before none but Oxford students assertions concerning Greek literature so startlingly erroneous as are here contained, it would not concern me to refute or protest against them. The young men who read Homer and Sophocles and Thucydides, nay, the boys who read Homer and Xenophon, would know his statements to be against the most notorious and elementary fact: and the Professors, whom he quotes, would only lose credit, if they sanctioned the use he makes of their names. But when he publishes the book for the unlearned in

Greek, among whom I must include a great number of editors of magazines, I find Mr Arnold to do a public wrong to literature, and a private wrong to my book. If I am silent, such editors may easily believe that I have made an enormous blunder in treating the dialect of Homer as antiquated. If those who are ostensibly scholars, thus assail my version, and the great majority of magazines and reviews ignore it, its existence can never become known to the public; or it will exist not to be read, but to be despised without being opened; and it must perish as many meritorious books perish. I but lately picked up, new, and for a fraction of its price, at a second-hand stall, a translation of the Iliad by T. S. Brandreth, Esq. (Pickering, London), into Cowper's metre, which is, as I judge, immensely superior to Cowper. Its date is 1846: I had never heard of it. It seems to have perished uncriticized, unreproved, unwept, unknown. I do not wish my progeny to die of neglect, though I am willing that it should be slain in battle. However, just because I address myself to the public *unlearned* in Greek, and because Mr Arnold lays before *them* a new, paradoxical, monstrously erroneous representation of facts, with the avowed object of staying the plague of my Homer; I am forced to reply to him.

Knowingly or unknowingly, he leads his readers to confuse four different questions: 1. whether Homer is thoroughly intelligible to modern scholars; 2. whether Homer was antiquated to the Athenians of Themistocles and Pericles; 3. whether he was thoroughly understood by them; 4. whether he is, absolutely, an antique poet.

I feel it rather odd, that Mr Arnold begins by complimenting me with 'genuine learning', and

proceeds to appeal from me to the 'living scholar'. (What if I were bluntly to reply: 'Well! I am the living scholar'?) After starting the question, how Homer's style appeared to Sophocles, he suddenly enters a plea, under form of a concession ['I confess'!], as a pretence for carrying the cause into a new court, that of the Provost of Eton and two Professors, into which court I have no admission; and then, of his own will, pronounces a sentence in the name of these learned men. Whether they are pleased with this parading of their name in behalf of paradoxical error, I may well doubt: and until they indorse it themselves, I shall treat Mr Arnold's process as a piece of forgery. But, be this as it may, I cannot allow him to 'confess' for me against me: let him confess for himself that he does not know, and not for me, who know perfectly well, whether Homer seemed quaint or antiquated to Sophocles. Of course he did, as every beginner must know. Why, if I were to write *mon* for *man*, *londis* for *lands*, *nesties* for *nests*, *libbard* for *leopard*, *muchel* for *much*, *nap* for *snap*, *green-wood shaw* for *greenwood shade*, Mr Arnold would call me antiquated, although every word would be intelligible. Can he possibly be ignorant, that this exhibits but the smallest part of the chasm which separates the Homeric dialect not merely from the Attic prose, but from Æschylus when he borrows most from Homer? Every sentence of Homer was more or less antiquated to Sophocles, who could no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of the poetry, than an Englishman can help feeling the same in reading Burns' poems. Would *mon*, *londis*, *libbard*, *withouten*, *muchel* be antiquated or foreign, and are Πηληϊάδαο for Πηλείδου, ὁσσάτιος for ὅσος, ἤϋτε for ὡς, στήῃ for στῇ, τεκέεσσι for τέκνοις, τοῖσδεσσι for τοῖσδε,

πολέες for πολλοὶ, μεσοηγὺς for μεταξὺ, αἶα for γῆ, εἴβω for λείβω, and five hundred others, less antiquated or less foreign? Homer has archaisms in every variety; some rather recent to the Athenians, and carrying their minds back only to Solon, as βασιλῆος for βασίλεως; others harsher, yet varying as dialect still, as ξεῖνος for ξένος, τίε for ἐτίμα, ἀνθεμόεις for ἀνθηρὸς, κέκλυθι for κλύε or ἄκουσον, θαμὺς for θαμινὸς or συχνὸς, ναιετάοντες for ναίοντες or οἰκοῦντες: others varying in the root, like a new language, as ἄφενος for πλοῦτος, ἰότης for βούλημα, τῆ for δέξαι, under which head are heaps of strange words, as ἀκὴν, χώομαι, βιὸς, κῆλα, μέμβλωκε, γέντο, πέπον, etc. etc. Finally comes a goodly lot of words which to this day are most uncertain in sense. My learned colleague Mr Malden has printed a paper on Homeric words, misunderstood by the later poets. Buttmann has written an octavo volume (I have the English translation, *containing 548 pages*) to discuss 106 ill-explained Homeric words. Some of these Sophocles may have understood, though we do not; but even if so, they were not the less antiquated to him. If there has been any perfect traditional understanding of Homer, we should not need to deal with so many words by elaborate argument. On the face of the Iliad alone every learner must know how many difficult adjectives occur: I write down on the spur of the moment and without reference, κρήγυον, ἀργὸς, ἀδινὸς, ἄητος, αἴητος, νώροψ, ἦνοψ, εἰλίποδες, ἔλιξ, ἑλικῶπες, ἔλλοπες, μέροπες, ἠλίβατος, ἠλέκτωρ, αἰγίλιψ, σιγαλόεις, ἰόμωρος, ἐγχεσίμωρος, πέπονες, ἠθεῖος. If Mr Arnold thought himself wiser than all the world of Greek scholars, he would not appeal to them, but would surely enlighten us all: he would tell me, for instance, what

ἔλλοπες means, which Liddell and Scott do not pretend to understand; or ἠθεῖος, of which they give three different explanations. But he does not write as claiming an independent opinion, when he flatly opposes me and sets me down; he does but use surreptitiously the name of the 'living scholar' against me.

But I have only begun to describe the marked chasm often separating Homer's dialect from everything Attic. It has a wide diversity of grammatical inflections, far beyond such vowel changes of dialect as answer to our provincial pronunciations. This begins with new case-endings to the nouns; in -θι, -θεν, -δε, -φι, proceeds to very peculiar pronominal forms, and then to strange or irregular verbal inflections, infinitives in -μεν, -μεναι, imperfects in -εσκε, presents in -αθω, and an immensity of strange adverbs and conjunctions. In Thiersch's Greek Grammar, after the Accidence of common Greek is added as supplement an Homeric Grammar: and in it the Homeric Noun and Verb occupy (in the English Translation) 206 octavo pages. Who ever heard of a Spenserian Grammar? How many pages could be needed to explain Chaucer's grammatical deviations from modern English? The bare fact of Thiersch having written so copious a grammar will enable even the unlearned to understand the monstrous misrepresentation of Homer's dialect, on which Mr Arnold has based his condemnation of my Homeric diction. Not wishing to face the plain and undeniable facts which I have here recounted, Mr Arnold makes a 'confession' that we know nothing about them! and then appeals to three learned men whether Homer is antiquated to *them*; and expounds this to mean, *intelligible to them*! Well: if they have learned *modern* Greek, of course they may understand it; but Attic

Greek alone will not teach it to them. Neither will it teach them *Homer's* Greek. The difference of the two is in some directions so vast, that they may deserve to be called two languages as much as Portuguese and Spanish.

Much as I have written, a large side of the argument remains still untouched. The orthography of Homer was revolutionized in adapting it to Hellenic use, and in the process not only were the grammatical forms tampered with, but at least one consonant was suppressed. I am sure Mr Arnold has heard of the Digamma, though he does not see it in the current Homeric text. By the re-establishment of this letter, no small addition would be made to the 'oddity' of the sound to the ears of Sophocles. That the unlearned in Greek may understand this, I add, that what with us is written *eoika*, *oikon*, *oinos*, *hekas*, *eorga*, *eeipe*, *eleli*χθη, were with the poet *wewoika*, *wīkon*, *wīnos*, *wekas* (or *swekas*?), *weworga*, *eweipe*, *eweli*χθη[42]; and so with very many other words, in which either the metre or the grammatical formation helps us to detect a lost consonant, and the analogy of other dialects or languages assures us that it is *w* which has been lost. Nor is this all; but in certain words *sw* seems to have vanished. What in our text is *hoi*, *heos*, *hekuros*, were probably *woi* and *swoi*, *weos* and *sweos*, *swekuros*. Moreover the received spelling of many other words is corrupt: for instance, *deos*, *deidoika*, *eddeisen*, *periddeisas*, *addees*. The true root must have had the form *dwe* or *dre* or *dhe*. That the consonant lost was really *w*, is asserted by Benfey from the Sanscrit *dvish*. Hence the true forms are *dweos*, *dedwoika*, *edweisen*, etc.... Next, the initial *l* of Homer had in some words a stronger pronunciation, whether λλ or χλ, as in λλιταὶ, λλίσσομαι, λλωτὸς, λλιτανεύω. I have met with the opinion

that the consonant lost in *anax* is not *w* but *k*; and that Homer's *kanax* is connected with English *king*. The relations of *wergon*, *weworga*, *wrexai*, to English *work* and *wrought* must strike everyone; but I do not here press the phenomena of the Homeric *r* (although it became *br* in strong Æolism), because they do not differ from those in Attic. The Attic forms εἴληφα, εἴλεγμαι for λέληφα, etc., point to a time when the initial λ of the roots was a double letter. A root λλαβ would explain Homer's ἔλλαβε. If λλ[43] approached to its Welsh sound, that is, to χλ, it is not wonderful that such a pronunciation as οφρἄ λλαβωμεν was possible: but it is singular that the ὕδατι χλιαρῷ of Attic is written λιαρῷ in our Homeric text, though the metre needs a double consonant. Such phenomena as χλιαρὸς and λιαρὸς, εἴβω and λειβω, ἴα and μία, εἴμαρμαι and ἔμμορε, αἶα and γαῖα, γέντο for ἔλετο, ἰωκὴ and ἴωξις with διώκω, need to be reconsidered in connection. The εἰς ἄλα ἅλτο of our Homer was perhaps εἰς ἅλα σάλλτο: when λλ was changed into λ, they compensated by circumflexing the vowel. I might add the query, Is it so certain that his θεαων was θ*eāwōn*, and not θ*eārōn*, analogous to Latin *dearum*? But dropping here everything that has the slightest uncertainty, the mere restoration of the *w* where it is most necessary, makes a startling addition to the antiquated sound of the Homeric text. The reciters of Homer in Athens must have dropped the *w*, since it is never written. Nor indeed would Sophocles have introduced in his *Trachiniæ*, ἀ δέ οἱ φίλα δάμαρ ... leaving a hiatus most offensive to the Attics, in mere imitation of Homer, if he had been accustomed to hear from the reciters, *de woi* or *de swoi*. In other words also, as in οὐλόμενος for ὀλόμενος, later poets have slavishly followed Homer into

irregularities suggested by his peculiar metre. Whether Homer's ᾱθανατος, αμμορος ... rose out of ανθάνατος, ἄνμορος ... is wholly unimportant when we remember his Ᾱπόλλωνος.

But this leads to remark on the acuteness of Mr Arnold's ear. I need not ask whether he recites the A differently in Ἄρες, Ἄρες, and in, Ἄπόλλων Ᾱπολλωνος. He will not allow anything antiquated in Homer; and therefore it is certain that he recites,

> αιδοιος τε μοι εσσι, φιλε εκυρε, δεινος τε
> and—ουδε εοικε—

as they are printed, and admires the rhythm. When he endures with exemplary patience such hiatuses, such dactyls as ἐεκυ, ουδεε, such a spondee as ρε δει, I can hardly wonder at his complacency in his own spondees "Between," "To a." He finds nothing wrong in και πεδια λωτευντα or πολλα λισσομενη. But Homer sang,

> φιλε ϝεκυρε δϝεινος τε—ουδε ϝεϝοικε—
> και πεδια λλωτευντα ... πολλα λλισσομενη.

Mr Arnold is not satisfied with destroying Quantity alone. After theoretically substituting Accent for it in his hexameters, he robs us of Accent also; and presents to us the syllables "to a," *both short* and *both necessarily unaccented*, for a Spondee, in a pattern piece seven lines long, and with an express and gratuitous remark, that in using 'to a' for a Spondee, he has perhaps relied too much on accent. I hold up these phenomena in Mr Arnold as a warning to all scholars, of the pit of delusion into which they will fall, if they allow themselves to talk fine about the 'Homeric rhythm' *as now heard*, and the duty of a translator to reproduce something of it.

It is not merely the sound and the metre of Homer, which are impaired by the loss of his radical *w*; in extreme cases the sense also is confused. Thus if a scholar be asked, what is the meaning of ἐείσατο in the Iliad? he will have to reply: If it stands for *eweisato*, it means, 'he was like', and is related to the English root *wis* and *wit*, Germ. *wiss*, Lat. *vid*; but it may also mean 'he went'—a very eccentric Homerism,—in which case we should perhaps write it *eyeisato*, as in old English we have *he yode* or *yede* instead of *he goed*, *gaed*, since too the current root in Greek and Latin *i* (go) may be accepted as *ye*, answering to German *geh*, English *go*. Thus two words, *eweisato*, 'he was like', *eyeisato*, 'he went', are confounded in our text. I will add, that in the Homeric

—ἤϋτε wέθνεα (*y*)εῖσι—(*Il.* 2, 87)

—διὰ πρὸ δὲ (*y*)είσατο καὶ τῆς (*Il.* 4, 138)

my ear misses the consonant, though Mr Arnold's (it seems) does not. If we were ordered to read *dat ting* in Chaucer for *that thing*, it would at first 'surprise' us as 'grotesque', but after this objection had vanished, we should still feel it 'antiquated'. The confusion of *thick* and *tick*, *thread* and *tread*, may illustrate the possible effect of dropping the *w* in Homer. I observe that Benfey's Greek Root Lexicon has a list of 454 digammated words, most of which are Homeric. But it is quite needless to press the argument to its full.

If as much learning had been spent on the double λ and on the *y* and *h* of Homer, as on the digamma, it might perhaps now be conceded that we have lost, not one, but three or four consonants from his text. That λ in λύω or λούω was ever a complex sound in Greek, I see nothing to indicate; hence *that* λ, and

the λ of λιταὶ, λιαρὸς, seem to have been different consonants in Homer, as *l* and *ll* in Welsh. As to *h* and *y* I assert nothing, except that critics appear too hastily to infer, that if a consonant has disappeared, it must needs be *w*. It is credible that the Greek *h* was once strong enough to stop hiatus or elision, as the English, and much more the Asiatic *h*. The later Greeks, after turning the character H into a vowel, seem to have had no idea of a consonant *h* in the middle of a word, nor any means of writing the consonant *y*. Since G passes through *gh* into the sounds *h*, *w*, *y*, *f* (as in English and German is obvious), it is easy to confound them all under the compendious word 'digamma'. I should be glad to know that Homer's forms were as well understood by modern scholars as Mr Arnold lays down.

On his quotation from Shakspeare, I remark, 1. 'Orgulous', from French 'orgueilleux', is intelligible to all who know French, and is comparable to Sicilian words in Æschylus. 2. It is contrary to fact to say, that Homer has not words, and words in great plenty, as unintelligible to later Greeks, as 'orgulous' to us. 3. *Sperr*, for *Bar*, as *Splash* for *Plash*, is much less than the diversity which separates Homer from the spoken Attic. What is σμικρὸς for μικρὸς to compare with ἠβαιὸς for μικρός? 4. Mr Arnold (as I understand him) blames Shakspeare for being sometimes antiquated: I do not blame him, nor yet Homer for the same; but neither can I admit the contrast which he asserts. He says: 'Shakspeare can compose, when he is at his best, in a language perfectly intelligible, in spite of the two centuries and a half which part him from us. *Homer has not Shakspeare's variations*: he is never antiquated, as Shakspeare is sometimes'. I certainly find the very same variations in Homer, as Mr Arnold finds in

Shakspeare. My reader unlearned in Greek might hastily infer from the facts just laid before him, that Homer is always equally strange to a purely Attic ear: but is not so. The dialects of Greece did indeed differ strongly, as broad Scotch from English; yet as we know, Burns is sometimes perfectly intelligible to an Englishman, sometimes quite unintelligible. In spite of Homer's occasional wide receding from Attic speech, he as often comes close to it. For instance, in the first piece quoted above from Gladstone, the simile occupying five (Homeric) lines would *almost* go down in Sophocles, if the Tragedian had chosen to use the metre. There is but one out-and-out Homeric word in it (ἐπασσύτερος): and even that is used once in an Æschylean chorus. There are no strange inflections, and not a single digamma is sensibly lost. Its peculiarities are only -εϊ for ει, ἐὸν for ὄν, and δέ τε for δέ, which could not embarrass the hearer as to the sense. I myself reproduce much the same result. Thus in my translation of these five lines I have the antiquated words *blore* for *blast*, *harry* for *harass* (*harrow*, *worry*), and the antiquated participle *hoven* from *heave*, as *cloven*, *woven* from *cleave*, *weave*. The whole has thus just a tinge of antiquity, as had the Homeric passage to the Attics, without any need of aid from a Glossary. But at other times the aid is occasionally convenient, just as in Homer or Shakspeare.

Mr Arnold plays fallaciously on the words familiar and unfamiliar. Homer's words may have been *familiar* to the Athenians (*i.e.* often heard), even when they were *not* understood, but, at most, were guessed at; or when, being understood, they were still felt and known to be utterly foreign. Of course, when thus 'familiar', they could not 'surprise' the Athenians, as Mr Arnold complains that my

renderings surprise the English. Let mine be heard as Pope or even Cowper has been heard, and no one will be ‘surprised’.

Antiquated words are understood well by some, ill by others, not at all by a third class; hence it is difficult to decide the limits of a glossary. Mr Arnold speaks scornfully of me (he wonders *with whom Mr Newman can have lived*), that I use the words which I use, and explain those which I explain. He censures my little Glossary, for containing three words which he did not know, and some others, which, he says, are ‘familiar to all the world’. It is clear, he will never want a stone to throw at me. I suppose I am often guilty of keeping low company. I have found ladies whom no one would guess to be so ill-educated, who yet do not distinctly know what *lusty* means; but have an uncomfortable feeling that it is very near to *lustful*; and understand *grisly* only in the sense of *grizzled*, *grey*. Great numbers mistake the sense of Buxom, Imp, Dapper, deplorably. I no more wrote my Glossary than my translation for persons so highly educated as Mr Arnold.

But I must proceed to remark: Homer might have been as unintelligible to Pericles, as was the court poet of king Crœsus, and yet it might be highly improper to translate him into an old English dialect; namely, if he had been the typical poet of a logical and refined age. *Here is the real question*;—is he absolutely antique, or only antiquated relatively, as Euripides is now antiquated? A modern Greek statesman, accomplished for every purpose of modern business, might find himself quite perplexed by the infinitives, the numerous participles, the optatives, the datives, by the particle ἄν, and by the whole syntax of Euripides, as also by many special

words; but this would never justify us in translating Euripides into any but a most refined style. Was Homer of this class? I say, that he *not only was* antiquated, relatively to Pericles, but *is also* absolutely antique, being the poet of a barbarian age. Antiquity in poets is not (as Horace stupidly imagines in the argument of the horse's tail) a question of years, but of intrinsic qualities. Homer sang to a wholly unfastidious audience, very susceptible to the marvellous, very unalive to the ridiculous, capable of swallowing with reverence the most grotesque conceptions. Hence nothing is easier than to turn Homer to ridicule. The fun which Lucian made of his mythology, a rhetorical critic like Mr Arnold could make of his diction, if he understood it as he understands mine. He takes credit to himself for *not* ridiculing me; and is not aware, that I could not be like Homer without being easy to ridicule. An intelligent child is the second-best reader of Homer. The best of all is a scholar of highly masculine taste; the worst of all is a fastidious and refined man, to whom everything quaint seems ignoble and contemptible.

I might have supposed that Mr Arnold thinks Homer to be a polished drawing-room poet, like Pope, when I read in him this astonishing sentence, p. 35. 'Search the English language for a word which does *not* apply to Homer, and you could not fix on a better word than *quaint*'. But I am taken aback at finding him praise the diction of Chapman's translation in contrast to mine. Now I never open Chapman, without being offended at his pushing Homer's quaintness most unnecessarily into the grotesque. Thus in Mr Gladstone's first passage above, where Homer says that the sea 'sputters out the foam', Chapman makes it, '*all her back in bristles set, spits*

every way *her* foam', obtruding what may remind one of a cat or a stoat. I hold *sputter* to be epical[44], because it is strong; but *spit* is feeble and mean. In passing, I observe that the universal praise given to Chapman as 'Homeric' (a praise which I have too absolutely repeated, perhaps through false shame of depreciating my only rival) is a testimony to me that I rightly appreciate Homeric style; for my style is Chapman's softened, purged of conceits and made far more melodious. Mr Arnold leaves me to wonder, how, with his disgust at me, he can avoid feeling tenfold disgust at Chapman; and to wonder also what he *means*, by so blankly contradicting my statement that Homer is quaint; and why he so vehemently resents it. He does not vouchsafe to me or to his readers one particle of disproof or of explanation.

I regard it as quaint in Homer to call Juno *white-arm'd goddess* and *large-ey'd*. (I have not rendered βοῶπις *ox-ey'd*, because in a case of doubt I shrank to obtrude anything so grotesque to us.) It is quaint to say, 'the lord of bright-haired Juno lightens' for 'it lightens'; or 'my heart in my *shaggy* bosom is divided', for 'I doubt': quaint to call waves *wet*, milk *white*, blood *dusky*, horses *singlehoofed*, a hero's hand *broad*, words *winged*, Vulcan *Lobfoot* (Κυλλοποδίων), a maiden *fair-ankled*, the Greeks *wellgreav'd*, a spear *longshadowy*, battle and council *man-ennobling*, one's knees *dear*, and many other epithets. Mr Arnold most gratuitously asserts that the sense of these had evaporated to the Athenians. If that were true, it would not signify to this argument. Δαιμόνιος (possessed by an elf or dæmon) so lost its sense in Attic talk, that although *Æ*schylus has it in its true meaning, some college tutors (I am told) render ὦ δαιμόνιε in Plato, 'my very good sir!' This is surely no good reason for mistranslating the word

in Homer. If Mr Arnold could prove (what he certainly cannot) that Sophocles had forgotten the derivation of ἐϋκνημῖδες and ἐϋμμελίης, and understood by the former nothing but ‘full armed’ and by the latter (as he says) nothing but ‘war-like’, this would not justify his blame of me for rendering the words correctly. If the whole Greek nation by long familiarity had become inobservant of Homer’s ‘oddities’ (conceding this for the moment), that also would be no fault of mine. That Homer *is* extremely peculiar, even if the Greeks had become deadened to the sense of it, the proof on all sides is overpowering.

It is very quaint to say, ‘the outwork (or rampart) of the teeth’ instead of ‘the lips’. If Mr Arnold will call it ‘portentous’ in my English, let him produce some shadow of reason for denying it to be portentous in Greek. Many phrases are so quaint as to be almost untranslatable, as μήστωρ φόβοιο (deviser of fear?) μήστωρ ἀϋτῆς (deviser of outcry?): others are quaint to the verge of being comical, as to call a man an *equipoise* (ἀτάλαντος) to a god, and to praise eyes for having a *curl* in them[45]. It is quaint to make Juno call Jupiter αἰνότατε (grimmest? direst?), whether she is in good or bad humour with him, and to call a Vision *ghastly*, when it is sent with a pleasant message. It is astonishingly quaint to tell how many oxen every fringe of Athene’s ægis was worth.—It is quaint to call Patroclus ‘a great simpleton’, for not foreseeing that he would lose his life in rushing to the rescue of his countrymen. (I cannot receive Mr Arnold’s suggested Biblical correction ‘Thou fool’! which he thinks grander: first, because grave moral rebuke is utterly out of place; secondly, because the Greek cannot mean this;—it means infantine simplicity, and has precisely the colour of the word which I have used.)—It is quaint

to say: ‘Patroclus kindled a great fire, *godlike man*’! or, ‘Automedon held up the meat, *divine* Achilles slic’d it’: quaint to address a young friend as ‘Oh[46] pippin’! or ‘Oh softheart’! or ‘Oh pet’! whichever is the true translation. It is quaint to compare Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring, Ulysses to a pet ram, Agamemnon in two lines to three gods, and in the third line to a bull; the Myrmidons to wasps, Achilles to a grampus chasing little fishes, Antilochus to a wolf which kills a dog and runs away. Menelaus striding over Patroclus’s body to a heifer defending her first-born. It is quaint to say that Menelaus was as brave as a bloodsucking fly, that Agamemnon’s sobs came thick as flashes of lightning; and that the Trojan mares, while running, groaned like overflowing rivers. All such similes come from a mind quick to discern similarities, but *very dull to feel incongruities*; unaware therefore that it is on a verge where the sublime easily turns into the ludicrous; a mind and heart inevitably quaint to the very core. What is it in Vulcan, when he would comfort his mother under Jupiter’s threat, to make jokes about the severe mauling which he himself formerly received, and his terror lest she should be now beaten? Still more quaint (if *rollicking* is not the word), is the address by which Jupiter tries to ingratiate himself with Juno: viz. he recounts to her all his unlawful amours, declaring that in none of them was he so smitten as now. I have not enough of the γενναῖος εὐηθεία, the barbarian simple-heartedness, needed by a reader of Homer, to get through this speech with gravity. What shall I call it, certainly much worse than quaint, that the poet adds: Jupiter was more enamoured than at his *stolen* embrace in their first bed ‘secretly from their dear parents’? But to develop Homer’s inexhaustible

quaintnesses, of which Mr Arnold denies the existence, seems to me to need a long treatise. It is not to be expected, that one who is blind to superficial facts so very prominent as those which I have recounted, should retain any delicate perception of the highly coloured, intense, and very eccentric diction of Homer, even if he has ever understood it, which he forces me to doubt. He sees nothing 'odd' in κυνὸς κακομηχάνου, or in κυνόμυια, 'thou dogfly'! He replaces to his imagination the flesh and blood of the noble barbarian by a dim feeble spiritless outline.

I have not adduced, in proof of Homer's quaintness, the monstrous simile given to us in Iliad 13, 754; viz. Hector 'darted forward screaming like a snowy mountain, and flew through the Trojans and allies': for I cannot believe that the poet wrote anything so absurd. Rather than admit this, I have suggested that the text is corrupt, and that for ὄρεϊ νιφόεντι we should read ὀρνέῳ θύοντι, 'darted forth screaming *like a raging bird*'. Yet, as far as I know, I am the first man that has here impugned the text. Mr Brandreth is faithful in his rendering, except that he says *shouting* for *screaming*:

> 'He said; and like a snowy mountain, rush'd
> Shouting; and flew through Trojans and allies.'

Chapman, Cowper, and Pope strain and twist the words to an impossible sense, putting in something about *white plume*, which they fancy suggested a snowy mountain; but they evidently accept the Greek as it stands, unhesitatingly. I claim this phenomenon in proof that to all commentators and interpreters hitherto Homer's quaintness has been such an *axiom*, that they have even acquiesced unsuspiciously in an

extravagance which goes far beyond oddity. Moreover the reader may augur by my opposite treatment of the passage, with what discernment Mr Arnold condemns me of obtruding upon Homer gratuitous oddities which equal the conceits of Chapman.

But, while thus vindicating *Quaintness* as an essential quality of Homer, do I regard it as a weakness to be apologized for? Certainly not; for it is a condition of his cardinal excellences. He could not otherwise be *Picturesque* as he is. So volatile is his mind, that what would be a Metaphor in a more logical and cultivated age, with him riots in Simile which overflows its banks. His similes not merely go beyond[47] the mark of likeness; in extreme cases they even turn into contrariety. If he were not so carried away by his illustration, as to forget what he is illustrating (which belongs to a quaint mind), he would never paint for us such full and splendid pictures. Where a logical later poet would have said that Menelaus

> With *eagle-eye* survey'd the field,

the mere metaphor contenting him; Homer says:

> Gazing around on every side, in fashion of an eagle,
> Which, of all heaven's fowl, they say, to scan the earth is keenest:
> Whose eye, when loftiest he hangs, not the swift hare escapeth,
> Lurking amid a leaf-clad bush: but straight at it he souseth,
> Unerring; and with crooked gripe doth quickly rieve its spirit.

I feel this long simile to be a disturbance of the logical balance, such as belongs to the lively eye of the savage, whose observation is intense, his concentration of reasoning powers feeble. Without this, we should never have got anything so picturesque.

Homer never sees things *in the same proportions* as we see them. To omit his digressions, and what I may call his 'impertinences', in order to give to his argument that which Mr Arnold is pleased to call the proper 'balance', is to value our own logical minds, more than his picturesque[48] but illogical mind.

Mr Arnold says that I am not quaint, but grotesque, in my rendering of κυνὸς κακομηχάνου. I do not hold the phrase to be quaint: to me it is excessively coarse. When Jupiter calls Juno 'a bitch', of course he means a snarling cur; hence my rendering, 'vixen' (or she-fox), is there perfect, since we say *vixen* of an irascible woman. But Helen had no such evil tempers, and beyond a doubt she meant to ascribe impurity to herself. I have twice committed a pious fraud by making her call herself 'a vixen', where 'bitch' is the only faithful rendering; and Mr Arnold, instead of thanking me for throwing a thin veil over Homer's deformity, assails me for my phrase as intolerably grotesque.

He further forbids me to invent new compound adjectives, as fair-thron'd, rill-bestream'd; because they strike us as new, though Homer's epithets (he says) did not so strike the Greeks: hence they derange attention from the main question. I hold this doctrine of his (conceding his fact for a moment) to be destructive of all translation whatever, into prose or poetry. When Homer tells us that Achilles' horses were munching lotus and parsley, Pope renders it by

'the horses grazed', and does not say on what. Using Mr Arnold's principles, he might defend himself by arguing: 'The Greeks, being familiar with such horsefood, were not struck by it as new, as my reader would be. I was afraid of telling him *what* the horses were eating, lest it should derange the balance of his mind, and injuriously divert him from the main idea of the sentence'. But, I find, readers are indignant on learning Pope's suppression: they feel that he has defrauded them of a piece of interesting information. —In short, how *can* an Englishman read any Greek composition and be affected by it as Greeks were? In a piece of Euripides my imagination is caught by many things, which he never intended or calculated for the prominence which they actually get in my mind. This or that absurdity in mythology, which passed with him as matter of course, may monopolize my main attention. Our minds are not passive recipients of this or that poet's influence; but the poet is the material on which our minds actively work. If an unlearned reader thinks it very 'odd' of Homer (the first time he hears it) to call Aurora 'fair-thron'd', so does a boy learning Greek think it odd to call her εὔθρονος. Mr Arnold ought to blot every odd Homeric epithet out of his *Greek* Homer (or never lend the copy to a youthful learner) if he desires me to expunge 'fair-thron'd' from the translation. Nay, I think he should conceal that the Morning was esteemed as a goddess, though she had no altars or sacrifice. It is *all* odd. But that is just why people want to read an English Homer,—to know all his oddities, exactly as learned men do. He is the phenomenon to be studied. His peculiarities, pleasant or unpleasant, are to be made known, precisely because of his great eminence and his substantial deeply seated worth. Mr Arnold writes like a timid

biographer, fearful to let too much of his friend come out. So much as to the substance. As to mere words, here also I hold the very reverse of Mr Arnold's doctrine. I do not feel free to translate οὐρανομήκης by 'heaven-kissing', precisely *because* Shakspeare has used the last word. It is his property, as ἐϋκνημῖδες, ἐϋμμελίης, κυδιάνειρα, etc., are Homer's property. I could not use it without being felt to *quote* Shakspeare, which would be highly inappropriate in a Homeric translation. But *if* nobody had ever yet used the phrase 'heaven-kissing' (or if it were current without any proprietor) *then* I should be quite free to use it as a rendering of οὐρανομήκης. I cannot assent to a critic killing the vital powers of our tongue. If Shakspeare might invent the compound 'heaven-kissing', or 'man-ennobling', so might William Wordsworth or Matthew Arnold; and so might I. Inspiration is not dead, nor yet is the English language.

Mr Arnold is slow to understand what I think very obvious. Let me then put a case. What if I were to scold a missionary for rendering in Feejee the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' and 'Lamb of God' accurately; also 'saints' and other words *characteristic of the New Testament*? I might urge against him: 'This and that sounds very *odd* to the Feejees: that cannot be right, for it did *not* seem odd to the Nicene bishops. The latter had forgotten that βασιλεία meant "kingdom"; they took the phrase "kingdom of God" collectively to mean "the Church". The phrase did not surprise them. As to "Lambs", the Feejees are not accustomed to sacrifice, and cannot be expected to know of themselves what "Lamb of God" means, as Hebrews did. The courtiers of Constantine thought it very natural to be called ἅγιοι, for they were accustomed to think every baptised person ἅγιος; but to the

baptised courtiers of Feejee it really seems very *odd* to be called *saints*. You disturb the balance of their judgment'.

The missionary might reply: 'You seemed to be ashamed of the oddities of the Gospel. I am not. They grow out of its excellences and cannot be separated. By avoiding a few eccentric phrases you will do little to remove the deep-seated eccentricity of its very essence. Odd and eccentric it will remain, unless you despoil it of its heart, and reduce it to a fashionable philosophy'. And just so do I reply to Mr Arnold. The Homeric style (whether it be that of an individual or of an age) is peculiar, is 'odd', if Mr Arnold like the word, to the very core. Its eccentricities in epithet are mere efflorescences of its essential eccentricity. If Homer could cry out to us, I doubt not he would say, as Oliver Cromwell to the painter, 'Paint me just I am, *wart and all*': but if the true Homer could reappear, I am sure Mr Arnold would start from him just as a bishop of Rome from a fisherman apostle. If a translator of the Bible honours the book by his close rendering of its characteristics, however 'odd', so do I honour Homer by the same. Those characteristics, the moment I produce them, Mr Arnold calls *ignoble*. Well: be it so; but I am not to blame for them. They exist whether Mr Arnold likes them or not.

I will here observe that he bids me paraphrase τανύπεπλος (trailing-robed) into something like, 'Let gorgeous Tragedy With sceptred pall come sweeping by'. I deliberately judge, that to paraphrase an otiose epithet is the very worst thing that can be done: to omit it entirely would be better. I object even to Mr Gladstone's

> ... whom Leto bare,

Leto with the flowing hair.

For the repetition overdoes the prominence of the epithet. Still more extravagant is Mr Arnold in wishing me to turn ‘single-hoofed horses’ in to ‘something which *as little surprises us* as “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds”’: p. 96. To reproduce Shakspeare would be in any case a ‘surprising’ mode of translating Homer: but the principle which changes ‘single-hoofed’ into a different epithet which the translator thinks *better*, is precisely that which for more than two centuries has made nearly all English translation worthless. To throw the poet into your crucible, and bring out old Pelias young, is not a hopeful process. I had thought, the manly taste of this day had outgrown the idea that a translator’s business is to melt up the old coin and stamp it with a modern image. I am wondering that I should have to write against such notions: I would not take the trouble, only that they come against me from an Oxford Professor of Poetry.

At the same time, his doctrine, as I have said, goes far beyond compound epithets. Whether I say ‘motley-helmèd Hector’ or ‘Hector of the motley helm’, ‘silver-footed Thetis’ or ‘Thetis of the silver foot’, ‘man-ennobling combat’ or ‘combat which ennobles man’, the novelty is so nearly on a par, that he cannot condemn one and justify the other on this score. Even Pope falls far short of the false taste which would plane down every Homeric prominence: for he prizes an elegant epithet like ‘silver-footed’, however new and odd.

From such a Homer as Mr Arnold’s specimens and principles would give us, no one could *learn* anything; no one could have any motive for reading the translation. He smooths down the stamp of

Homer's coin, till nothing is left even for microscopic examination. When he forbids me (p. 96) to let my reader know that Homer calls horses 'single-hoofed', of course he would suppress also the epithets 'white milk', 'dusky blood', 'dear knees', 'dear life', etc. His process obliterates everything characteristic, great or small.

Mr Arnold condemns my translating certain names of horses. He says (p. 58): 'Mr Newman calls Xanthus *Chesnut*; as he calls Balius *Spotted* and Podarga *Spry-foot*: which is as if a Frenchman were to call Miss Nightingale *Mdelle. Rossignol*, or Mr Bright *M. Clair*'. He is very wanting in discrimination. If I had translated Hector into *Possessor* or Agamemnon into *Highmind*, his censure would be just. A Miss White may be a brunette, a Miss Brown may be a blonde: we utter the proper names of men and women without any remembrance of their intrinsic meaning. But it is different with many names of domestic animals. We never call a dog *Spot*, unless he is spotted; nor without consciousness that the name expresses his peculiarity. No one would give to a black horse the name Chesnut; nor, if he had called a chesnut horse by the name Chesnut, would he ever forget the meaning of the name while he used it. The Greeks called a chesnut horse *xanthos* and a spotted horse *balios*; therefore, until Mr Arnold proves the contrary, I believe that they never read the names of Achilles' two horses without a sense of their meaning. Hence the names ought to be translated; while Hector and Laomedon ought not. The same reasoning applies to Podarga, though I do not certainly understand ἀργός. I have taken it to mean *sprightly*.

Mr Arnold further asserts, that Homer is never

'garrulous'. Allowing that too many others agree with me, he attributes our error to giving too much weight to a sentence in Horace! I admire Horace as an ode-writer, but I do not revere him as a critic, any more than as a moral philosopher. I say that Homer is garrulous, because I see and feel it. Mr Arnold puts me into a most unwelcome position. I have a right to say, I have some enthusiasm for Homer. In the midst of numerous urgent calls of duty and taste, I devoted every possible quarter of an hour for two years and a half to translate the Iliad, toiling unremittingly in my vacations and in my walks, and going to large expenses of money, in order to put the book before the unlearned; and this, though I am not a Professor of Poetry nor even of Greek. Yet now I am forced to appear as Homer's disparager and accuser! But if Homer were always a poet, he could not be, what he is, so many other things beside poet. As the Egyptians paint in their tombs processes of art, not because they are beautiful or grand, but from a mere love of imitating; so Homer narrates perpetually from a mere love of chatting. In how thoroughly Egyptian a way does he tell the process of cutting up an ox and making *kebâb*; the process of bringing a boat to anchor and carefully putting by the tackle; the process of taking out a shawl from a chest, where it lies at the very bottom! With what glee he repeats the secret talk of the gods; and can tell all about the toilet of Juno. Every particular of trifling actions comes out with him, as, the opening of a door or box with a key. He tells who made Juno's earrings or veil or the shield of Ajax, the history of Agamemnon's breast-plate, and in what detail a hero puts on his pieces of armour. I would not press the chattiness of Pandarus, Glaucus, Nestor, Æneas, in the midst of battle; I might press his description of wounds.

Indeed I have said enough, and more than enough, against Mr Arnold's novel, unsupported, paradoxical assertion.—But this is connected with another subject. I called Homer's manner 'direct': Mr Arnold (if I understand) would supersede this by his own epithet 'rapid'. But I cannot admit the exchange: Homer is often the opposite of rapid. Amplification is his characteristic, as it must be of every improvisatore, every popular orator: condensation indeed is improper for anything but written style; written to be read privately. But I regard as Homer's worst defect, his lingering over scenes of endless carnage and painful wounds. He knows to half an inch where one hero hits another and how deep. They arm: they approach: they encounter: we have to listen to stereotype details again and again. Such a style is anything but 'rapid'. Homer's garrulity often leads him into it; yet he can do far better, as in a part of the fight over Patroclus's body, and other splendid passages.

Garrulity often vents itself in expletives. Mr Arnold selects for animadversion this line of mine (p. 41),

> 'A thousand fires along the plain, *I say*, that night
> were gleaming'.

He says: 'This may be the genuine style of ballad poetry, but it is *not* the style of Homer'. I reply; my use of expletives is moderate indeed compared to Homer's. Mr Arnold writes, as if quite unaware that such words as the intensely prosaic ἄρα, and its abbreviations ἄρ, ῥα, with τοι, τε, δὴ, μάλα, ἦ, ἦ ῥα νυ, περ, overflow in epic style; and that a pupil who has mastered the very copious stock of Attic particles, is taken quite aback by the extravagant number in Homer. Our expletives are generally more

offensive, because longer. My principle is, to admit only such expletives as *add energy*, and savour of antiquity. To the feeble expletives of mean ditties I am not prone. I once heard from an eminent counsellor the first lesson of young lawyers, in the following doggerel:

He who holds his lands in fee,
  Need neither quake nor quiver:
For I humbly conceive, look ye, do ye see?
  He holds his lands for ever.

The 'humbly conceiving' certainly outdoes Homer. Yet if the poet had chosen (as he *might* have chosen) to make Polydamas or Glaucus say:

Ὅστις ἐπετράφθη τέμενος πίστει βασιλῆος,
φημί τοι, οὗτος ἀνὴρ οὔτ' ἄρ τρέμει οὔτε φοβεῖται·
δὴ μάλα γάρ ῥα ἐὰς κρατέοι κεν ἐσαιὲν ἀρούρας:

I rather think the following would be a fair prose rendering: 'Whoso hath been entrusted with a demesne under pledge with the king (I tell you); this man neither trembleth (you see) nor feareth: for (look ye!) he (verily) may hold (you see) his lands for ever'.

Since Mr Arnold momentarily appeals to me on the chasm between Attic and Homeric Greek, I turn the last piece into a style *far less* widely separated from modern English than Homer from Thucydides.

Dat mon, quhich hauldeth Kyngis-af
  Londis yn féo, niver
(I tell 'e) feereth aught; sith hee
  Doth hauld hys londis yver.

I certainly do *not* recommend this style to a

translator, yet it would have its advantage. Even with a smaller change of dialect it would aid us over Helen's self-piercing denunciation, 'approaching to Christian penitence', as some have judged it.

> Quoth she, I am a gramsome bitch,
> If woman bitch may bee.

But in behalf of the poet I must avow: when one considers how dramatic he is, it is marvellous how little in him can offend. For this very reason he is above needing tender treatment from a translator, but can bear faithful rendering, not only better than Shakspeare but better than Pindar or Sophocles.

When Mr Arnold denies that Homer is ever prosaic or homely, his own specimens of translation put me into despair of convincing him; for they seem to me a very anthology of prosaic flatness. Phrases, which are not in themselves bad, if they were elevated by something in the syntax or rhythm distinguishing them from prose, become in him prose out-and-out. 'To Peleus why did we give you, to a mortal'? 'In the plain *there* were kindled a thousand fires; by each one *there* sate fifty men'. [At least he might have left out the expletive.] 'By their chariots stood the steeds, and champed the white barley; while their masters sate by the fire and waited for morning'. 'Us, whose portion for ever Zeus has made it, from youth *right up* to age, to be winding skeins of grievous wars, till *every soul of us* perish'. The words which I here italicize, seem to me below noble ballad. What shall I say of 'I bethink me what the Trojan men and Trojan women might murmur'. 'Sacred Troy shall *go to destruction*'. 'Or bear pails to the well of Messeïs'. 'See, the wife of Hector, that great pre-eminent captain of the horsemen of Troy, *in the day they*

fought for their city', for, '*who was* captain in the day *on which*——'. 'Let me be dead and the earth be mounded (?) above me, ere I hear thy cries, and thy captivity[49] *told of*'. 'By no slow pace or want of swiftness *of ours*[50] did the Trojans *obtain to strip* the arms of Patroclus'. 'Here I am destined to perish, far from my father and mother dear; *for all that*, I will not', etc. 'Dare they not enter the fight, or stand in the council of heroes, *all* for fear of the shame and the *taunts my crime* has awakened?' One who regards all this to be high poetry,—emphatically 'noble',—may well think τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος or 'with him there came forty black galleys', or the broiling of the beef collops, to be such. When Mr Arnold regards 'no want of swiftness of *ours*'; 'for all that', in the sense of nevertheless; '*all* for fear', *i.e.* because of the fear; *not* to be prosaic: my readers, however ignorant of Greek, will dispense with further argument from me. Mr Arnold's inability to discern prose in Greek is not to be trusted.

But I see something more in this phenomenon. Mr Arnold is an original poet; and, as such, certainly uses a diction far more elevated than he here puts forward to represent Homer. He calls his Homeric diction *plain* and *simple*. Interpreting these words from the contrast of Mr Arnold's own poems, I claim his suffrage as on my side, that Homer is often in a style much lower than what the moderns esteem to be poetical. But I protest, that he carries it *very much* too far, and levels the noblest down to the most negligent style of Homer. The poet is *not* always so 'ignoble', as the unlearned might infer from my critic's specimens. He never drops so low as Shakspeare; yet if he were as sustained as Virgil or Milton, he would with it lose his vast superiority over these, his rich variety. That the whole first book

of the Iliad is pitched lower than the rest, though it has vigorous descriptions, is denoted by the total absence of simile in it: for Homer's kindling is always indicated by simile. The second book rises on the first, until the catalogue of ships, which (as if to atone for its flatness) is ushered in by five consecutive similes. In the third and fourth books the poet continues to rise, and almost culminates in the fifth; but then seems to restrain himself, lest nothing grander be left for Achilles. Although I do not believe in a unity of authorship between the Odyssey and the Iliad, yet in the Iliad itself I see such unity, that I cannot doubt its negligences to be from art. (The monstrous speech of Nestor in the 11th book is a case by itself. About 100 lines have perhaps been added later, for reasons other than literary.) I observe that just before the poet is about to bring out Achilles in his utmost splendour, he has three-quarters of a book comparatively tame, with a ridiculous legend told by Agamemnon in order to cast his own sins upon Fate. If Shakspeare introduces coarse wrangling, buffoonery, or mean superstition, no one claims or wishes this to be in a high diction or tragic rhythm; and why should anyone wish such a thing from Homer or Homer's translator? I find nothing here in the poet to apologize for; but much cause for indignation, when the unlearned public is misled by translators or by critics to expect delicacy and elegance out of place. But I beg the unlearned to judge for himself whether Homer *can* have intended such lines as the following for poetry, and whether I am bound to make them any better than I do.

> Then visiting he urged each man with words,
> Mesthles and Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus
> And Asteropæus and Deisenor and Hippothoüs
> And Phorkys and Chromius and Ennomus the augur.

He has lines in plenty as little elevated. If they came often in masses, it would be best to translate them into avowed prose: but since gleams of poetry break out amid what is flattest, I have no choice but to imitate Homer in retaining a uniform, but easy and unpretending metre. Mr Arnold calls my metre 'slip-shod': if it can rise into grandeur when needful, the epithet is a praise.

Of course I hold the Iliad to be *generally* noble and grand. Very many of the poet's conceptions were grand to him, mean to us: especially is he mean and absurd in scenes of conflict between the gods. Besides, he is disgusting and horrible occasionally in word and thought; as when Hecuba wishes to 'cling on Achilles and eat up his liver'; when (as Jupiter says) Juno would gladly eat Priam's children raw; when Jupiter hanged Juno up and fastened a pair of anvils to her feet; also in the description of dreadful wounds, and the treatment which (Priam says) dogs give to an old man's corpse. The descriptions of Vulcan and Thersites are ignoble; so is the mode of mourning for Hector adopted by Priam; so is the treatment of the populace by Ulysses, which does but reflect the manners of the day. I am not now blaming Homer for these things; but I say no treatment can elevate the subject; the translator must not be expected to make noble what is not so intrinsically.

If anyone think that I am disparaging Homer, let me remind him of the horrid grossnesses of Shakspeare, which yet are not allowed to lessen our admiration of Shakspeare's grandeur. The Homer of the Iliad is morally pure and often very tender; but to expect refinement and universal delicacy of expression in that stage of civilization is quite anachronistic and unreasonable. As in earlier England, so in Homeric

Greece, even high poetry partook of the coarseness of society. This was probably inevitable, precisely because Greek epic poetry was so *natural*.

Mr Arnold says that I make Homer's nobleness *eminently ignoble*. This suggests to me to quote a passage, not because I think myself particularly successful in it, but because the poet is evidently aiming to be grand, when his mightiest hero puts forth mighty boastings, offensive to some of the gods. It is the speech of Achilles over the dead body of Asteropæus (Iliad 21, 184). Whether I make it ignoble, by my diction or my metre, the reader must judge.

Lie as thou art. 'Tis hard for thee to strive against the children
Of overmatching Saturn's son, tho' offspring of a River.
Thou boastest, that thy origin is from a Stream broad-flówing;
I boast, from mighty Jupiter to trace my first beginning.
A man who o'er the Myrmidons holdeth wide rule, begat me,
Peleus; whose father Æacus by Jupiter was gotten.
Rivers, that trickle to the sea, than Jupiter are weaker;
So, than the progeny of Jove, weaker a River's offspring.
Yea, if he aught avail'd to help, behold! a mighty River
Beside thee here: but none can fight with Jove, the child of Saturn.
Not royal Acheloïus with him may play the equal.
Nor e'en the amplebosom'd strength of deeply-flowing Ocean:

Tho' from his fulness every Sea and every River welleth,
And all the ever-bubbling springs and eke their vasty sources.
Yet at the lightning-bolt of Jove doth even Ocean shudder,
And at the direful thunder-clap, when from the sky it crasheth.

Mr Arnold has in some respects attacked me discreetly; I mean, where he has said that which damages me with his readers, and yet leaves me no possible reply. What is easier than for one to call another ignoble? what more damaging? what harder to refute? Then when he speaks of my 'metrical exploits' how can I be offended? to what have I to reply? His words are expressive either of compliment or of contempt; but in either case are untangible. Again: when he would show how tender he has been of my honour, and how unwilling to expose my enormities, he says: p. 57: 'I will by no means search in Mr Newman's version for passages likely to raise a laugh: that search, *alas!* would be far too easy'; I find the pity which the word *alas!* expresses, to be very clever, and very effective against me. But, I think, he was not discreet, but very unwise, in making dogmatic statements on the ground of erudition, many of which I have exposed; and about which much more remains to be said than space will allow me.

In his denial that Homer is 'garrulous', he complains that so many think him to be 'diffuse'. Mr Arnold, it seems, is unaware of that very prominent peculiarity; which suits ill even to Mr Gladstone's style. Thus, where Homer said (and I said) in a passage quoted above, 'people that have *a voice in their bosom*', Mr

Gladstone has only '*speaking* men'. I have noticed the epithet *shaggy* as quaint, in 'His heart in his shaggy bosom was divided', where, in a moral thought, a physical epithet is obtruded. But even if 'shaggy' be dropped, it remains diffuse (and characteristically so) to say 'my *heart in my bosom* is divided', for 'I doubt'. So—'I will speak what *my heart in my bosom* bids me'. So, Homer makes men think κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν, 'in their heart *and mind*'; and deprives them of 'mind and soul'. Also: 'this appeared to him *in his mind* to be the best counsel'. Mr Arnold assumes tones of great superiority; but every school-boy knows that diffuseness is a distinguishing characteristic of Homer. Again, the poet's epithets are often selected by their convenience for his metre; sometimes perhaps even appropriated for no other cause. No one has ever given any better reason why Diomedes and Menelaus are almost exclusively called βοὴν ἀγαθὸς, except that it suits the metre. This belongs to the improvisatore, the negligent, the ballad style. The word ἐϋμμελίης, which I with others render 'ashen-speared', is said of Priam, of Panthus, and of sons of Panthus. Mr Arnold rebukes me, p. 106, for violating my own principles. 'I say, on the other hand, that εὐμμελίω has *not* the effect[51] of a peculiarity in the original, while "ashen-speared" *has* the effect of a peculiarity in the English: and "warlike" is as marking an equivalent as I dare give for ἐϋμμελίω, *for fear of disturbing the balance of expression* in Homer's sentence'. Mr Arnold cannot write a sentence on Greek, without showing an ignorance hard to excuse in one who thus comes forward as a vituperating censor. *Warlike* is a word current in the lips and books of all Englishmen: ἐϋμμελίης is a word *never* used, never, I believe, in all Greek literature, by anyone but Homer. If he does

but turn to Liddell and Scott, he will see their statement, that the Attic form εὐμελίας is only to be found in grammars. He is here, as always, wrong in his facts. The word is most singular in Greek; more singular by far than 'ashen-spear'd' in English, because it is more obscure, as is its special application to one or two persons: and in truth I have doubted whether we any better understand Eumelian Priam than Gerenian Nestor.—Mr Arnold presently imputes to me the opinion that χιτὼν means 'a cloak', *which he does not dispute*; but if I had thought it necessary to be literal, I must have rendered χαλκοχίτωνες brazen-shirted. He suggests to me the rendering 'brazen-coated', which I have used in Il. 4, 285 and elsewhere. I have also used 'brazen-clad', and I now prefer 'brazen-mail'd'. I here wish only to press that Mr Arnold's criticism proceeds on a false fact. Homer's epithet was *not* a familiar word at Athens (in any other sense than as Burns or Virgil may be familiar to Mr Arnold), but was strange, unknown even to their poets; hence his demand that I shall use a word already familiar in English poetry is doubly baseless. The later poets of Greece have plenty of words beginning with χαλκο-; but this one word is exclusively Homer's.—Everything that I have now said, may be repeated still more pointedly concerning ἐϋκνημῖδες, inasmuch as directing attention to leg-armour is peculiarly quaint. No one in all Greek literature (as far as I know) names the word but Homer; and yet Mr Arnold turns on me with his ever reiterated, ever unsupported, assertions and censures, of course assuming that 'the scholar' is with him. (I have no theory at hand, to explain why he regards his own word to suffice without attempt at proof.) The epithet is intensely peculiar; and I observe that Mr Arnold has not dared to suggest a

translation. It is clear to me that he is ashamed of my poet's oddities; and has no mode of escaping from them but by bluntly denying facts. Equally peculiar to Homer are the words κυδιάνειρα, τανύπεπλος and twenty others, equally unknown to Attic the peculiar compound μελιήδης (adopted from Homer by Pindar), about all which he carps at me on false grounds. But I pass these, and speak a little more at length about μέροπες.

Will the reader allow me to vary these tedious details, by imagining a conversation between the Aristophanic Socrates and his clownish pupil Strepsiades. I suppose the philosopher to be instructing him in the higher Greek, Homer being the text.

Soc. Now Streppy, tell me what μέροπες ἄνθρωποι means?

Strep. Let me see: μέροπες? that must mean 'half-faced'.

Soc. Nonsense, silly fellow: think again.

Strep. Well then: μέροπες, half-eyed, squinting.

Soc. No; you are playing the fool: it is not our ὀπ in ὄψις, ὄψομαι, κάτοπτρον, but another sort of ὀπ.

Strep. Why, you yesterday told me that οἴνοπα was 'wine-faced', and αἴθοπα 'blazing-faced', something like our αἰθίοψ.

Soc. Ah! well: it is not so wonderful that you go wrong. It is true, there is also νῶροψ, στέροψ, ἦνοψ. Those might mislead you: μέροψ is rather peculiar. Now cannot you think of any characteristic of mankind, which μέροπες will express. How do men differ from other animals?

Strep. I have it! I heard it from your young friend Euclid. Μέροψ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, 'man is a cooking animal'.

Soc. You stupid lout! what are you at? what do you mean?

Strep. Why, μέροψ, from μείρω, I distribute, ὄψον sauce.

Soc. No, no: ὄψον has the ὀψ, with radical immovable ς in it; but here ὀπ is the root, and ς is movable.

Strep. Now I have got it; μείρω, I distribute, ὀπὸν, juice, rennet.

Soc. Wretched man! you must forget your larder and your dairy, if ever you are to learn grammar.—Come Streppy: leave rustic words, and think of the language of the gods. Did you ever hear of the brilliant goddess Circe and of her ὄπα καλὴν?

Strep. Oh yes; Circe and her beautiful face.

Soc. I told you, *no*! you forgetful fellow. It is ANOTHER ὀπ. Now I will ask you in a different way. Do you know why we call fishes ἔλλοπες?

Strep. I suppose, because they are cased in scales.

Soc. That is not it. (And yet I am not sure. Perhaps the fellow is right, after all.) Well, we will not speak any more of ἔλλοπες. But did you never hear in Euripides, οὐκ ἔχω γεγωνεῖν ὄπα? What does that mean?

Strep. 'I am not able to shout out, ὦ πόποι'.

Soc. No, no, Streppy: but Euripides often uses ὄπα. He takes it from Homer, and it is akin to ἐπ, not to *our* ὀπ and much less to πόποι. What does ἔπη mean?

Strep. It means such lines as the diviners sing.

Soc. So it does in Attic, but Homer uses it for ῥήματα, words; indeed we also sometimes.

Strep. Yes, yes, I do know it. All is right.

Soc. I think you do: well, and ὄψ means a voice, φωνὴ.

Strep. How you learned men like to puzzle us! I often have heard ὀπι, ὄπα in the Tragedies, but never quite understood it. What a pity they do not say φωνὴ when they mean φωνή.

Soc. We have at last made one step. Now what is μέροψ? μέροπες ἄνθρωποι.

Strep. Μείρω, I divide, ὄπα, φωνὴν, voice; 'voice-dividing': what *can* that mean?

Soc. You have heard a wild dog howl, and a tame dog bark: tell me how they differ.

Strep. The wild dog gives a long long *oo-oo*, which changes like a trumpet if you push your hand up and down it; and the tame dog says *bow, wow, wow*, like two or three panpipes blown one after another.

Soc. Exactly; you see the tame dog is humanized: he *divides his voice* into syllables, as men do. 'Voice-dividing' means 'speaking in syllables'.

Strep. Oh, how clever you are!

Soc. Well then, you understand; 'Voice-dividing' means *articulating*.

Mr Arnold will see in the Scholiast on Iliad 1, 250, precisely this order of analysis for μέροπες. It seems to me to give not a traditional but a grammatical explanation. Be that as it may, it indicates that a Greek had to pass through *exactly the same process* in

order to expound μέροπες, as an Englishman to get sense out of ‘voice-dividing’. The word is twice used by Æschylus, who affects Homeric words, and once by Euripides (Iph. T.) in the connection πολέσιν μερόπων, where the very unusual Ionism πολέσιν shows in how Homeric a region is the poet’s fancy. No other word ending in οψ except μέροψ can be confidently assigned to the root ὀψ, a voice. Ἦνοψ in Homer (itself of most uncertain sense and derivation) is generally referred to the other ὄψ. The sense of ἔλλοψ again[52] is very uncertain. Every way therefore μέροψ is ‘odd’ and obscure. The phrase ‘articulating’ is utterly prosaic and inadmissible. *Vocal* is rather too Latinized for my style, and besides, is apt to mean *melodious*. The phrase ‘voice-dividing’ is indeed easier to us than μέροπες can have been to the Athenians, because we all know what *voice* means, but they had to be taught scholastically what ὄπα meant; nor would easily guess that ὀψ in μέροψ had a sense, differing from ὀψ in (ἀ)στέροψ οἶνοψ, αἶθοψ, αἰθίοψ, νῶροψ (ἦνοψ), χάροψ. Finally, since μέροπες is only found in the plural, it remains an open question, whether it does not mean ‘speaking various languages’. Mr Arnold will find that Stephanus and Scapula treat it as doubtful, though Liddell and Scott do not name the second interpretation. I desired to leave in the English all the uncertainty of the Greek: but my critic is unencumbered with such cares.

Hitherto I have been unwillingly thrown into nothing but antagonism to Mr Arnold, who thereby at least adds tenfold value to his praise, and makes me proud when he declares that the *structure* of my sentences is good and Homeric. For this I give the credit to my metre, which alone confers on me this cardinal advantage. But in turn I will compliment Mr Arnold

at the expense of some other critics. He does know, and they do not, the difference of *flowing* and *smooth*. A mountain torrent is flowing, but often very rough; such is Homer. The 'staircases of Neptune' on the canal of Languedoc are smooth, but do not flow: you have to descend abruptly from each level to the next. It would be unjust to say absolutely, that such is Pope's smoothness; yet often, I feel, this censure would not be too severe. The rhyme forces him to so frequent a change of the nominative, that he becomes painfully discontinuous, where Homer is what Aristotle calls 'long-linked'. At the same time, in our language, in order to impart a flowing style, good structure does not suffice. A principle is needed, unknown to the Greeks; viz. the natural divisions of the sentence oratorically, must coincide with the divisions of the verse musically. To attain this *always* in a long poem, is very difficult to a translator who is scrupulous as to tampering with the sense. I have not always been successful in this. But before any critic passes on me the general sentence that I am 'deficient in flow', let him count up the proportion of instances in which he can justly make the complaint, and mark whether they occur in elevated passages.

I shall now speak of the peculiarities of my diction, under three heads: 1. old or antiquated words; 2. coarse words expressive of outward actions, but having no moral colour; 3. words of which the sense has degenerated in modern days.

1. Mr Arnold appears to regard what is *antiquated* as *ignoble*. I think him, as usual, in fundamental error. In general the nobler words come from ancient style, and in no case can it be said that old words (as such) are ignoble. To introduce such terms as *whereat*,

therefrom, *quoth*, *beholden*, *steed*, *erst*, *anon*, *anent*, into the midst of style which in all other respects is modern and prosaic, would be like to that which we often hear from half-educated people. The want of harmony makes us regard it as low-minded and uncouth. From this cause (as I suspect) has stolen into Mr Arnold's mind the fallacy, that the words themselves are uncouth[53]. But the words are excellent, if only they are in proper keeping with the general style.—Now it is very possible, that in some passages, few or many, I am open to the charge of having mixed old and new style unskilfully; but I cannot admit that the old words (as such) are ignoble. No one speaks of Spenser's dialect, nay, nor of Thomson's; although with Thomson it was assumed, exactly as by me, but to a far greater extent, and without any such necessity as urges me. As I have stated in my preface, a broad tinge of antiquity in the style is essential, to make Homer's barbaric puerilities and eccentricities less offensive. (Even Mr Arnold would admit this, if he admitted my *facts*: but he denies that there is anything eccentric, antique, quaint, barbaric in Homer: that is his *only* way of resisting my conclusion.) If Mr Gladstone were able to give his valuable time to work out an entire Iliad in his refined modern style, I feel confident that he would find it impossible to deal faithfully with the eccentric phraseology and with the negligent parts of the poem. I have the testimony of an unfriendly reviewer, that I am the first and *only* translator that has dared to give Homer's constant epithets and not conceal his forms of thought: of course I could not have done this in modern style. The lisping of a child is well enough from a child, but is disgusting in a full-grown man. Cowper and Pope systematically cut out from Homer whatever

they cannot make *stately*, and harmonize with modern style: even Mr Brandreth often shrinks, though he is brave enough to say *ox-eyed Juno*. Who then can doubt the extreme unfitness of their metre and of their modern diction? My opposers never fairly meet the argument. Mr Arnold, when most gratuitously censuring my mild rendering of κυνὸς κακομηχάνου ὀκρυοέσσης, *does not dare to suggest any English for it himself*. Even Mr Brandreth skips it. It is not merely offensive words; but the purest and simplest phrases, as a man's 'dear life', 'dear knees', or his 'tightly-built house', are a stumbling-block to translators. No stronger proof is necessary, or perhaps is possible, than these phenomena give, that to shed an antique hue over Homer is of first necessity to a translator: without it, *injustice* is done both to the reader and to the poet. Whether I have managed the style well, is a separate question, and is matter of detail. I may have sometimes done well, sometimes ill; but I claim that my critics shall judge me from a broader ground, and shall not pertinaciously go on comparing my version with modern style, and condemning me as (what they are pleased to call) *inelegant* because it is not like refined modern poetry, when it specially avoids to be such. They never deal thus with Thomson or Chatterton, any more than with Shakspeare or Spenser.

There is no sharp distinction possible between the foreign and the antiquated in language. What is obsolete with us, may still live somewhere: as, what in Greek is called Poetic or Homeric, may at the same time be living Æolic. So, whether I take a word from Spenser or from Scotland, is generally unimportant. I do not remember more than four Scotch words, which I have occasionally adopted for convenience; viz. Callant, young man; Canny, right-

minded; Bonny, handsome; to Skirl, to cry shrilly. A trochaic word, which I cannot get in English, is sometimes urgently needed. It is astonishing to me that those who ought to know both what a large mass of antique and foreign-sounding words an Athenian found in Homer, and how many Doric or Sicilian forms as well as Homeric words the Greek tragedians *on principle* brought into their songs, should make the outcry that they do against my very limited use of that which has an antique or Scotch sound. Classical scholars ought to set their faces against the double heresy, of trying to enforce, that foreign poetry, however various, shall be all rendered into one English dialect, and that this shall, in order of words and in diction, closely approximate to polished prose. From an Oxford Professor I should have expected the very opposite spirit to that which Mr Arnold shows. He ought to know and feel that one glory of Greek poetry is its great internal variety. He admits the principle that old words are a source of ennoblement for diction, when he extols the Bible as his standard: for surely he claims no rhetorical inspiration for the translators. Words which have come to us in a sacred connection, no doubt, gain a sacred hue, but they must not be allowed to desecrate other old and excellent words. Mr Arnold informs his Oxford hearers that 'his Bibliolatry is perhaps excessive'. So the public will judge, if he say that *wench*, *whore*, *pate*, *pot*, *gin*, *damn*, *busybody*, *audience*, *principality*, *generation*, are epical noble words because they are in the Bible, and that *lief*, *ken*, *in sooth*, *grim*, *stalwart*, *gait*, *guise*, *eld*, *hie*, *erst*, are bad, because they are not there. Nine times out of ten, what are called 'poetical' words, are nothing but antique words, and are made ignoble by Mr Arnold's doctrine. His very arbitrary condemnation

of *eld*, *lief*, *in sooth*, *gait*, *gentle friend* in one passage of mine as 'bad words', is probably due to his monomaniac fancy that there is nothing quaint and nothing antique in Homer. Excellent and noble as are these words which he rebukes, excellent even for Æschylus, I should doubt the propriety of using them in the dialogue of Euripides; on the level of which he seems to think Homer to be.

2. Our language, especially the Saxon part of it, abounds with vigorous monosyllabic verbs, and dissyllabic frequentatives derived from them, indicative of strong physical action. For these words (which, I make no doubt, Mr Arnold regards as ignoble plebeians), I claim Quiritarian rights: but I do not wish them to displace patricians from high service. Such verbs as *sweat*, *haul*, *plump*, *maul*, *yell*, *bang*, *splash*, *smash*, *thump*, *tug*, *scud*, *sprawl*, *spank*, etc., I hold (in their purely physical sense) to be eminently epical: for the epic revels in descriptions of violent action to which they are suited. Intense muscular exertion in every form, intense physical action of the surrounding elements, with intense ascription or description of size or colour;—together make up an immense fraction of the poem. To cut out these words is to emasculate the epic. Even Pope admits such words. My eye in turning his pages was just now caught by: 'They tug, they sweat'. Who will say that 'tug', 'sweat' are admissible, but 'bang', 'smash', 'sputter' are inadmissible? Mr Arnold resents my saying that Homer is often homely. He is homely expressly because he is natural. The epical diction admits both the gigantesque and the homely: it inexorably refuses the conventional, under which is comprised a vast mass of what some wrongly call elegant. But while I justify the use of homely words in a primary physical, I depreciate them in a

secondary moral sense. Mr Arnold clearly is dull to this distinction, or he would not utter against me the following taunt, p. 91:

'*To grunt and sweat under a weary load* does perfectly well where it comes in Shakspeare: but if the translator of Homer, who will hardly have wound up our minds to the pitch at which these words of Hamlet find them, were to employ, when he has to speak of Homer's heroes under the load of calamity, this figure of "grunting" and "sweating", we should say, *He Newmanizes*'.

Mr Arnold here not only makes a mistake, he propagates a slander; as if I had ever used such words as *grunt* and *sweat* morally. If Homer in the Iliad spoke of grunting swine, as he does of sweating steeds, so should I. As the coarse metaphors here quoted from Shakspeare are utterly opposed to Homer's style, to obtrude them on him would be a gross offence. Mr Arnold sends his readers away with the belief that this is my practice, though he has not dared to assert it. I *bear* such coarseness in Shakspeare, not because I am 'wound up to a high pitch' by him, 'borne away by a mighty current' (which Mr Arnold, with ingenious unfairness to me, assumes to be certain in a reader of Shakspeare and all but impossible in a reader of Homer), but because I know, that in Shakspeare's time all literature was coarse, as was the speech of courtiers and of the queen herself. Mr Arnold imputes to me Shakspeare's coarseness, from which I instinctively shrink; and when his logic leads to the conclusion, 'he Shakspearizes', he with gratuitous rancour turns it into 'he Newmanizes'.

Some words which with the Biblical translators seem to have been noble, I should not now dare to use in

the primitive sense. For instance, ‘His iniquity shall fall upon his own *pate*’. Yet I think *pate* a good metaphorical word and have used it of the sea-waves, in a bold passage, Il. 13, 795:

Then ón rush'd théy, with weight and mass like to
a troublous whirlwind,
Which from the thundercloud of Jove down on
the campaign plumpeth,
And doth the briny flood bestir with an unearthly
uproar:
Then in the everbrawling sea full many a billow
splasheth,
Hollow, and bald with hoary *pate*, one racing
after other.

Is there really no 'mighty current' here, to sweep off petty criticism?

I have a remark on the strong physical word 'plumpeth' here used. It is fundamentally Milton's, 'plump down he drops ten thousand fathom deep'; *plumb* and *plump* in this sense are clearly the same root. I confess I have not been able to find the *verb* in an old writer, though it is so common now. Old writers do not say 'to plumb down', but 'to *drop* plumb down'. Perhaps in a second edition (if I reach to it), I may alter the words to 'plumb ... droppeth', on this ground; but I do turn sick at the mawkishness of critics, one of whom, who ought to know better, tells me that the word *plump* reminds him 'of the crinolined hoyden of a boarding-school'!! If he had said, 'It is too like the phrase of a sailor, of a peasant, of a schoolboy', this objection would be at least intelligible. However: the word is intended to express the *violent impact of a body descending from aloft*, and it *does* express it.

Mr Arnold censures me for representing Achilles as *yelling*. He is depicted by the poet as in the most violent physical rage, boiling over with passion and wholly uncontrouled. He smacks his two thighs at

once; he rolls on the ground, μέγας μεγαλωστὶ; he defiles his hair with dust; he rends it; he grinds his teeth; fire flashes from his eyes; but—he may not 'yell', that would not be *comme il faut*! We shall agree, that in peace nothing so becomes a hero as modest stillness; but that 'Peleus' son, insatiate of combat', full of the fiercest pent-up passion, should vent a little of it in a *yell*, seems to me quite in place. That the Greek ἰάχων is not necessarily to be so rendered, I am aware; but it is a very vigorous word, like *peal* and *shriek*; neither of which would here suit. I sometimes render it *skirl*: but 'battle-yell' is a received rightful phrase. Achilles is not a stately Virgilian *pius Æneas*, but is a far wilder barbarian.

After Mr Arnold has laid upon me the sins of Shakspeare, he amazes me by adding, p. 92: 'The idiomatic language of Shakspeare, such language as "prate of his *whereabout*", "*jump* the life to come", "the damnation of his *taking-off*", "*quietus make* with a bare bodkin", should be carefully observed by the translator of Homer; although in every case he will have to decide for himself, whether the use, by him, of Shakspeare's liberty, will or will not clash with his indispensable duty of nobleness'.

Of the Shakspearianisms here italicized by Mr Arnold, there is not one which I could endure to adopt. 'His whereabout', I regard as the flattest prose. (The word *prate* is a plebeian which I admit in its own low places; but how Mr Arnold can approve of it, consistently with his attacks on me, I do not understand.) Damnation and Taking-off (for Guilt and Murder), and Jump, I absolutely reject; and 'quietus make' would be nothing but an utterly inadmissible *quotation* from Shakspeare. *Jump* as an active verb is to me monstrous, but *Jump* is just the

sort of modern prose word which is not noble. *Leap*, *Bound*, for great action, *Skip*, *Frisk*, *Gambol* for smaller, are all good.

I have shown against Mr Arnold—(1) that Homer was out-and-out antiquated to the Athenians, even when perfectly understood by them; (2) that his conceptions, similes, phraseology and epithets are habitually quaint, strange, unparalleled in Greek literature; and pardonable only to semibarbarism; (3) that they are intimately related to his noblest excellences; (4) that many words are so peculiar as to be still doubtful to us; (5) I have indicated that some of his descriptions and conceptions are horrible to us, though they are not so to his barbaric auditors; (6) that considerable portions of the poem are not poetry, but rhythmical prose like Horace's Satires, and are interesting to us not as poetry but as portraying the manners or sentiments of the day. I now add (7) what is inevitable in all high and barbaric poetry, perhaps in all high poetry, many of his energetic descriptions are expressed in *coarse physical words*. I do not here attempt proof, for it might need a treatise: but I give one illustration; Il. 13, 136, Τρῶες προὔτυψαν ἀολλέες. Cowper, misled by the *ignis fatuus* of 'stateliness', renders it absurdly

> *The pow'rs of Ilium* gave the first assault,
> *Embattled* close;

but it is strictly, 'The Trojans *knocked-forward* (or, thumped, *butted*, forward) in close pack'. The verb is too coarse for later polished prose, and even the adjective is very strong (*packed together*). I believe, that 'Forward in *pack* the Troians *pitch'd*', would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour; and I

maintain that ‘Forward in mass the Troians pitch’d’, would be an irreprovable rendering.

Dryden in this respect is in entire harmony with Homeric style. No critic deals fairly with me in isolating any of these strong words, and then appealing to his readers whether I am not ignoble. Hereby he deprives me of the ἀγὼν, the ‘mighty current’ of Mr Arnold, and he misstates the problem; which is, whether the word is suitable, *then* and *there*, for the work required of it, as the coalman at the pit, the clown in the furrow, the huntsman in the open field.

3. There is a small number of words not natural plebeians, but patricians on which a most unjust bill of attainder has been passed, which I seek to reverse. On the first which I name, Mr Arnold will side with me, because it is a Biblical word, *wench*. In Lancashire I believe that at the age of about sixteen a ‘girl’ turns into ‘a wench’, or as we say ‘a young woman’. In Homer, ‘girl’ and ‘young woman’ are alike inadmissible; ‘maid’ or ‘maiden’ will not always suit, and ‘wench’ is the natural word. I do not know that I have used it three times, but I claim a right of using it, and protest against allowing the heroes of slang to deprive us of excellent words by their perverse misuse. If the imaginations of some men are always in satire and in low slang, so much the worse for them: but the more we yield to such demands, the more will be exacted. I expect, before long, to be told that *brick* is an ignoble word, meaning a jolly fellow, and that *sell*, *cut* are out of place in Homer. My metre, it seems, is inadmissible with some, because it is the metre of Yankee Doodle! as if Homer’s metre were not that of the Margites. Every noble poem is liable to be travestied, as the Iliad and

Æschylus and Shakspeare have been. Every burlesque writer uses the noble metre, and caricatures the noble style. Mr Arnold says, I must not render τανύπεπλος 'trailing-rob'd', because it reminds him of 'long petticoats sweeping a dirty pavement'. What a confession as to the state of his imagination! Why not, of 'a queen's robe trailing on a marble pavement'? Did he never read

πέπλον μὲν κατέχευεν ἑανὸν πατρὸς ἐτ' οὔδει?

I have digressed: I return to words which have been misunderstood. A second word is of more importance, *Imp*; which properly means a Graft. The best translation of ὦ Λήδας ἔρνος to my mind, is, 'O Imp of Leda'! for neither 'bud of Leda', nor 'scion of Leda' satisfy me: much less 'sprig' or 'shoot of Leda'. The theological writers so often used the phrase 'imp of Satan' for 'child of the devil', that (since Bunyan?) the vulgar no longer understand that *imp* means *scion*, *child*, and suppose it to mean 'little devil'. A Reviewer has omitted to give his unlearned readers any explanation of the word (though I carefully explained it) and calls down their indignation upon me by his censures, which I hope proceeded from carelessness and ignorance.

Even in Spenser's Fairy Queen the word retains its rightful and noble sense:

Well worthy *imp*! then said the lady, etc.,

and in North's Plutarch,

'He took upon him to protect him from them all, and not to suffer so goodly an *imp* [Alcibiades] to lose the good fruit of his youth'.

Dryden uses the verb, To imp; to graft, insert.

I was quite aware that I claimed of my readers a certain strength of mind, when I bid them to forget the defilements which vulgarity has shed over the noble word Imp, and carry their imaginations back two or three centuries: but I did not calculate that any critic would call Dainty grotesque. This word is equivalent in meaning to Delicate and Nice, but has precisely the epical character in which both those words are deficient. For instance, I say, that after the death of Patroclus, the coursers 'stood motionless',

> Drooping tōwārd the ground their heads, and
> down their plaintive eyelids
> Did warm tears trickle to the ground, their
> charioteer bewailing.
> Defilèd were their *dainty* manes, over the yoke-
> strap dropping.

A critic who objects to this, has to learn English from my translation. Does he imagine that Dainty can mean nothing but 'over-particular as to food'?

In the compound Dainty-cheek'd, Homer shows his own epic peculiarity. It is imitated in the similar word εὐπάρᾳος applied to the Gorgon Medusa by Pindar: but not in the Attics. I have somewhere read, that the rudest conception of female beauty is that of a brilliant red *plump* cheek; such as an English clown admires (was this what Pindar meant?); the second stage looks to the delicacy of tint in the cheek (this is Homer's καλλιπάρῃος:) the third looks to shape (this is the εὔμορφος of the Attics, the *formosus* of the Latins, and is seen in the Greek sculpture); the fourth and highest looks to moral expression: this is the idea of Christian Europe. That Homer rests exclusively in the second or semibarbaric stage, it is not for me to say, but, as far as I am able, to give to

the readers of my translation materials for their own judgment. From the vague word εἶδος, *species*, *appearance*, it cannot be positively inferred whether the poet had an eye for Shape. The epithets curl-eyed and fine-ankled decidedly suggest that he had; except that his application of the former to the entire nation of the Greeks makes it seem to be of foreign tradition, and as unreal as brazen-*mailed*.

Another word which has been ill-understood and ill-used, is *dapper*. Of the epithet dappergreav'd for ἐϋκνημὶς I certainly am not enamoured, but I have not yet found a better rendering. It is easier to carp at my phrase, than to suggest a better. The word *dapper* in Dutch = German *tapfer*; and like the Scotch *braw* or *brave* means with us *fine*, *gallant*, *elegant*. I have read the line of an old poet,

> The dapper words which lovers use,

for *elegant*, I suppose; and so 'the dapper does' and 'dapper elves' of Milton must refer to elegance or refined beauty. What is there[54] ignoble in such a word? 'Elegant' and 'pretty' are inadmissible in epic poetry: 'dapper' is logically equivalent, and *has the epic colour*. Neither 'fair' nor 'comely' here suit. As to the school translation of 'wellgreav'd', every common Englishman on hearing the sound receives it as 'wellgrieved', and to me it is very unpleasing. A part of the mischief, a large part of it, is in the word *greave*; for *dapper-girdled* is on the whole well-received. But what else can we say for *greave*? leggings? gambados?

Much perhaps remains to be learnt concerning Homer's perpetual epithets. My very learned colleague Goldstücke, Professor of Sanscrit, is convinced that the epithet *cow-eyed* of the Homeric

Juno is an echo of the notion of Hindoo poets, that (if I remember his statement) ‘the sun-beams are the *cows* of heaven’. The sacred qualities of the Hindoo cow are perhaps not to be forgotten. I have myself been struck by the phrase διϊπετέος ποτάμοιο as akin to the idea that the Ganges falls from Mount Meru, the Hindoo Olympus. Also the meaning of two other epithets has been revealed to me from the pictures of Hindoo ladies. First, *curl-eyed*, to which I have referred above; secondly, *rosy-fingered Aurora*. For Aurora is an ‘Eastern lady’; and, as such, has the tips of her fingers dyed rosy-red, whether by henna or by some more brilliant drug. Who shall say that the kings and warriors of Homer do not derive from the East their epithet ‘Jove-nurtured’? or that this or that goddess is not called ‘golden-throned’ or ‘fair-throned’ in allusion to Assyrian sculptures or painting, as Rivers probably drew their later poetical attribute ‘bull-headed’ from the sculpture of fountains? It is a familiar remark, that Homer’s poetry presupposes a vast pre-existing art and material. Much in him was traditional. Many of his wild legends came from Asia. He is to us much beside a poet; and that a translator should assume to cut him down to the standard of modern taste, is a thought which all the higher minds of this age have outgrown. How much better is that reverential Docility, which with simple and innocent wonder, receives the oddest notions of antiquity as material of instruction yet to be revealed, than the self-complacent Criticism, which pronouncing everything against modern taste to be grotesque[55] and contemptible, squares the facts to its own ‘Axioms’! *Homer is noble: but this or that epithet is not noble: therefore we must explode it from Homer!* I value, I maintain, I struggle for the ‘high a priori road’ in its

own place; but certainly not in historical literature. To read Homer's own thoughts is to wander in a world abounding with freshness: but if we insist on treading round and round in our own footsteps, we shall never ascend those heights whence the strange region is to be seen. Surely an intelligent learned critic ought to inculcate on the unlearned, that if they would get instruction from Homer, they must not expect to have their ears tickled by a musical sound as of a namby-pamby poetaster; but must look on a metre as doing its duty, when it 'strings the mind up to the necessary pitch' in elevated passages; and that instead of demanding of a translator everywhere a rhythmical perfection which perhaps can only be attained by a great sacrifice of higher qualities, they should be willing to submit to a small part of that ruggedness, which Mr Arnold cheerfully bears in Homer himself through the loss of the Digamma. And now, for a final protest. To be *stately* is not to be *grand*. Nicolas of Russia may have been stately like Cowper, Garibaldi is grand like the true Homer. A diplomatic address is stately; it is not grand, nor often noble. To expect a translation of Homer to be *pervadingly elegant*, is absurd; Homer is not such, any more than is the side of an Alpine mountain. The elegant and the picturesque are seldom identical, however much of delicate beauty may be interstudded in the picturesque; but this has always got plenty of what is shaggy and uncouth, without which contrast the full delight of beauty would not be attained. I think Moore in his characteristic way tells of a beauty

> Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
> Till love falls asleep in the sameness of splendour.

Such certainly is not Homer's. His beauty, when at its

height, is *wild* beauty: it smells of the mountain and of the sea. If he be compared to a noble animal, it is not to such a spruce rubbed-down Newmarket racer as our smooth translators would pretend, but to a wild horse of the Don Cossacks: and if I, instead of this, present to the reader nothing but a Dandie Dinmont's pony, this, as a first approximation, is a valuable step towards the true solution.

Before the best translation of the Iliad of which our language is capable can be produced, the English public has to unlearn the false notion of Homer which his *deliberately faithless* versifiers have infused. Chapman's conceits unfit his translation for instructing the public, even if his rhythm 'jolted' less, if his structure were simpler, and his dialect more intelligible. My version, if allowed to be read, will prepare the public to receive a version better than mine. I regard it as a question about to open hereafter, whether a translator of Homer ought not to adopt the old dissyllabic *landis*, *houndis*, *hartis*, etc., instead of our modern unmelodious *lands*, *hounds*, *harts*; whether the *ye* or *y* before the past participle may not be restored; the want of which confounds that participle with the past tense. Even the final -en of the plural of verbs (we dancen, they singen, etc.) still subsists in Lancashire. It deserves consideration whether by a *few* such slight grammatical retrogressions into antiquity a translator of Homer might not add much melody to his poem and do good service to the language.

Last Words on Translating Homer
A Reply to Francis W. Newman
By Matthew Arnold

> 'Multi, qui persequuntur me, et tribulant me: a testimoniis non declinavi.'

Buffon, the great French naturalist, imposed on himself the rule of steadily abstaining from all answer to attacks made upon him. 'Je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique', he said to one of his friends who, on the occasion of a certain criticism, was eager to take up arms in his behalf; 'je n'ai jamais répondu à aucune critique, et je garderai le même silence sur celle-ci'. On another occasion, when accused of plagiarism, and pressed by his friends to answer, 'Il vaut mieux', he said, 'laisser ces mauvaises gens dans l'incertitude'. Even when reply to an attack was made successfully, he disapproved of it, he regretted that those he esteemed should make it. Montesquieu, more sensitive to criticism than Buffon, had answered, and successfully answered, an attack made upon his great work, the *Esprit des Lois*, by the *Gazetier Janséniste*. This Jansenist Gazetteer was a periodical of those times, a periodical such as other times, also, have occasionally seen, very pretentious, very aggressive, and, when the point to be seized was at all a delicate

one, very apt to miss it. ‘Notwithstanding this example’, said Buffon, who, as well as Montesquieu, had been attacked by the Jansenist Gazetteer, ‘notwithstanding this example, I think I may promise my course will be different. I shall not answer a single word’.

And to anyone who has noticed the baneful effects of the controversy, with all its train of personal rivalries and hatreds, on men of letters or men of science; to anyone who has observed how it tends to impair, not only their dignity and repose, but their productive force, their genuine activity; how it always checks the free play of the spirit, and often ends by stopping it altogether; it can hardly seem doubtful that the rule thus imposed on himself by Buffon was a wise one. His own career, indeed, admirably shows the wisdom of it. That career was as glorious as it was serene; but it owed to its serenity no small part of its glory. The regularity and completeness with which he gradually built up the great work which he had designed, the air of equable majesty which he shed over it, struck powerfully the imagination of his contemporaries, and surrounded Buffon’s fame with a peculiar respect and dignity. ‘He is’, said Frederick the Great of him, ‘the man who has best deserved the great celebrity which he has acquired’. And this regularity of production, this equableness of temper, he maintained by his resolute disdain of personal controversy.

Buffon’s example seems to me worthy of all imitation, and in my humble way I mean always to follow it. I never have replied, I never will reply, to any literary assailant; in such encounters tempers are lost, the world laughs, and truth is not served. Least of all should I think of using this Chair as a place

from which to carry on such a conflict. But when a learned and estimable man thinks he has reason to complain of language used by me in this Chair, when he attributes to me intentions and feelings towards him which are far from my heart, I owe him some explanation, and I am bound, too, to make the explanation as public as the words which gave offence. This is the reason why I revert once more to the subject of translating Homer. But being thus brought back to that subject, and not wishing to occupy you solely with an explanation which, after all, is Mr Newman's affair and mine, not the public's, I shall take the opportunity, not certainly to enter into any conflict with anyone, but to try to establish our old friend, the coming translator of Homer, yet a little firmer in the positions which I hope we have now secured for him; to protect him against the danger of relaxing, in the confusion of dispute, his attention to those matters which alone I consider important for him; to save him from losing sight, in the dust of the attacks delivered over it, of the real body of Patroclus. He will, probably, when he arrives, requite my solicitude very ill, and be in haste to disown his benefactor: but my interest in him is so sincere that I can disregard his probable ingratitude.

First, however, for the explanation. Mr Newman has published a reply to the remarks which I made on his translation of the *Iliad*. He seems to think that the respect which at the outset of those remarks I professed for him must have been professed ironically; he says that I use 'forms of attack against him which he does not know how to characterize'; that I 'speak scornfully' of him, treat him with 'gratuitous insult, gratuitous rancour'; that I 'propagate slanders' against him, that I wish to 'damage him with my readers', to 'stimulate my

readers to despise' him. He is entirely mistaken. I respect Mr Newman sincerely; I respect him as one of the few learned men we have, one of the few who love learning for its own sake; this respect for him I had before I read his translation of the *Iliad*, I retained it while I was commenting on that translation, I have not lost it after reading his reply. Any vivacities of expression which may have given him pain I sincerely regret, and can only assure him that I used them without a thought of insult or rancour. When I took the liberty of creating the verb *to Newmanize*, my intentions were no more rancorous than if I had said to *Miltonize*; when I exclaimed, in my astonishment at his vocabulary, 'With whom can Mr Newman have lived'? I meant merely to convey, in a familiar form of speech, the sense of bewilderment one has at finding a person to whom words one thought all the world knew seem strange, and words one thought entirely strange, intelligible. Yet this simple expression of my bewilderment Mr Newman construes into an accusation that he is 'often guilty of keeping low company', and says that I shall 'never want a stone to throw at him'. And what is stranger still, one of his friends gravely tells me that Mr Newman 'lived with the fellows of Balliol'. As if that made Mr Newman's glossary less inexplicable to me! As if he could have got his glossary from the fellows of Balliol! As if I could believe that the members of that distinguished society, of whose discourse, not so many years afterwards, I myself was an unworthy hearer, were in Mr Newman's time so far removed from the Attic purity of speech which we all of us admired, that when one of them called a calf a *bulkin*, the rest 'easily understood' him; or, when he wanted to say that a newspaper-article was 'proudly fine', it

mattered little whether he said it was that or *bragly*! No; his having lived with the fellows of Balliol does not explain Mr Newman's glossary to me. I will no longer ask 'with whom he can have lived', since that gives him offence; but I must still declare that where he got his test of rarity or intelligibility for words is a mystery to me.

That, however, does not prevent me from entertaining a very sincere respect for Mr Newman, and since he doubts it, I am glad to reiterate my expression of it. But the truth of the matter is this: I unfeignedly admire Mr Newman's ability and learning; but I think in his translation of Homer he has employed that ability and learning quite amiss. I think he has chosen quite the wrong field for turning his ability and learning to account. I think that in England, partly from the want of an Academy, partly from a national habit of intellect to which that want of an Academy is itself due, there exists too little of what I may call a public force of correct literary opinion, possessing within certain limits a clear sense of what is right and wrong, sound and unsound, and sharply recalling men of ability and learning from any flagrant misdirection of these their advantages. I think, even, that in our country a powerful misdirection of this kind is often more likely to subjugate and pervert opinion than to be checked and corrected by it[56]. Hence a chaos of false tendencies, wasted efforts, impotent conclusions, works which ought never to have been undertaken. Anyone who can introduce a little order into this chaos by establishing in any quarter a single sound rule of criticism, a single rule which clearly marks what is right as right, and what is wrong as wrong, does a good deed; and his deed is so much the better the greater force he counteracts of learning and

ability applied to thicken the chaos. Of course no one can be sure that he has fixed any such rules; he can only do his best to fix them; but somewhere or other, in the literary opinion of Europe, if not in the literary opinion of one nation, in fifty years, if not in five, there is a final judgment on these matters, and the critic's work will at last stand or fall by its true merits.

Meanwhile, the charge of having in one instance misapplied his powers, of having once followed a false tendency, is no such grievous charge to bring against a man; it does not exclude a great respect for himself personally, or for his powers in the happiest manifestations of them. False tendency is, I have said, an evil to which the artist or the man of letters in England is peculiarly prone; but everywhere in our time he is liable to it,—the greatest as well as the humblest. 'The first beginnings of my *Wilhelm Meister*', says Goethe, 'arose out of an obscure sense of the great truth that man will often attempt something of which nature has denied him the proper powers, will undertake and practise something in which he cannot become skilled. An inward feeling warns him to desist' (yes, but there are, unhappily, cases of absolute judicial blindness!), 'nevertheless he cannot get clear in himself about it, and is driven along a false road to a false goal, without knowing how it is with him. To this we may refer everything which goes by the name of false tendency, dilettanteism, and so on. A great many men waste in this way the fairest portion of their lives, and fall at last into wonderful delusion'. Yet after all, Goethe adds, it sometimes happens that even on this false road a man finds, not indeed that which he sought, but something which is good and useful for him; 'like Saul, the son of Kish, who went

forth to look for his father's asses, and found a kingdom'. And thus false tendency as well as true, vain effort as well as fruitful, go together to produce that great movement of life, to present that immense and magic spectacle of human affairs, which from boyhood to old age fascinates the gaze of every man of imagination, and which would be his terror, if it were not at the same time his delight.

So Mr Newman may see how wide-spread a danger it is, to which he has, as I think, in setting himself to translate Homer, fallen a prey. He may be well satisfied if he can escape from it by paying it the tribute of a single work only. He may judge how unlikely it is that I should 'despise' him for once falling a prey to it. I know far too well how exposed to it we all are; how exposed to it I myself am. At this very moment, for example, I am fresh from reading Mr Newman's Reply to my Lectures, a reply full of that erudition in which (as I am so often and so good-naturedly reminded, but indeed I know it without being reminded) Mr Newman is immeasurably my superior. Well, the demon that pushes us all to our ruin is even now prompting me to follow Mr Newman into a discussion about the digamma, and I know not what providence holds me back. And some day, I have no doubt, I shall lecture on the language of the Berbers, and give him his entire revenge.

But Mr Newman does not confine himself to complaints on his own behalf, he complains on Homer's behalf too. He says that my 'statements about Greek literature are against the most notorious and elementary fact'; that I 'do a public wrong to literature by publishing them'; and that the Professors to whom I appealed in my three Lectures,

'would only lose credit if they sanctioned the use I make of their names'. He does these eminent men the kindness of adding, however, that 'whether they are pleased with this parading of their names in behalf of paradoxical error, he may well doubt', and that 'until they endorse it themselves, he shall treat my process as a piece of forgery'. He proceeds to discuss my statements at great length, and with an erudition and ingenuity which nobody can admire more than I do. And he ends by saying that my ignorance is great.

Alas! that is very true. Much as Mr Newman was mistaken when he talked of my rancour, he is entirely right when he talks of my ignorance. And yet, perverse as it seems to say so, I sometimes find myself wishing, when dealing with these matters of poetical criticism, that my ignorance were even greater than it is. To handle these matters properly there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. Temper destroys it, a crotchet destroys it, even erudition may destroy it. To press to the sense of the thing itself with which one is dealing, not to go off on some collateral issue about the thing, is the hardest matter in the world. The 'thing itself' with which one is here dealing, the critical perception of poetic truth, is of all things the most volatile, elusive, and evanescent; by even pressing too impetuously after it, one runs the risk of losing it. The critic of poetry should have the finest tact, the nicest moderation, the most free, flexible, and elastic spirit imaginable; he should be indeed the 'ondoyant et divers', the *undulating and diverse* being of Montaigne. The less he can deal with his object simply and freely, the more things he has to take into account in dealing with it, the more, in short, he has to encumber himself, so much the greater force of

spirit he needs to retain his elasticity. But one cannot exactly have this greater force by wishing for it; so, for the force of spirit one has, the load put upon it is often heavier than it will well bear. The late Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that ‘it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities’. In like manner, one often sees erudition out of all proportion to its owner’s critical faculty. Little as I know, therefore, I am always apprehensive, in dealing with poetry, lest even that little should prove ‘too much for my abilities’.

With this consciousness of my own lack of learning, nay, with this sort of acquiescence in it, with this belief that for the labourer in the field of poetical criticism learning has its disadvantages, I am not likely to dispute with Mr Newman about matters of erudition. All that he says on these matters in his Reply I read with great interest; in general I agree with him; but only, I am sorry to say, up to a certain point. Like all learned men, accustomed to desire definite rules, he draws his conclusions too absolutely; he wants to include too much under his rules; he does not quite perceive that in poetical criticism the shade, the fine distinction, is everything; and that, when he has once missed this, in all he says he is in truth but beating the air. For instance: because I think Homer noble, he imagines I must think him elegant; and in fact he says in plain words that I do think him so, that to me Homer seems ‘pervadingly elegant’. But he does not. Virgil is elegant, ‘pervadingly elegant’, even in passages of the highest emotion:

> O, ubi campi,
> Spercheosque, et virginibus bacchata Lacænis
> Taygeta[57]!

Even there Virgil, though of a divine elegance, is still elegant, but Homer is not elegant; the word is quite a wrong one to apply to him, and Mr Newman is quite right in blaming anyone he finds so applying it. Again; arguing against my assertion that Homer is not quaint, he says: 'It is quaint to call waves *wet*, milk *white*, blood *dusky*, horses *single-hoofed*, words winged, Vulcan *Lobfoot* (Κυλλοποδίων), a spear *longshadowy*', and so on. I find I know not how many distinctions to draw here. I do not think it quaint to call waves *wet*, or milk *white*, or words *winged*; but I do think it quaint to call horses *single-hoofed*, or Vulcan *Lobfoot*, or a spear *longshadowy*. As to calling blood *dusky*, I do not feel quite sure; I will tell Mr Newman my opinion when I see the passage in which he calls it so. But then, again, because it is quaint to call Vulcan *Lobfoot*, I cannot admit that it was quaint to call him Κυλλοποδίων; nor that, because it is quaint to call a spear *longshadowy*, it was quaint to call it δολιχόσκιον. Here Mr Newman's erudition misleads him: he knows the literal value of the Greek so well, that he thinks his literal rendering identical with the Greek, and that the Greek must stand or fall along with his rendering. But the real question is, not whether he has given us, so to speak, full change for the Greek, but *how* he gives us our change: we want it in gold, and he gives it us in copper. Again: 'It is quaint', says Mr Newman, 'to address a young friend as "O Pippin"! it is quaint to compare Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring'. Here, too, Mr Newman goes much too fast, and his category of quaintness is too comprehensive. To address a young friend as 'O Pippin'! is, I cordially agree with him, very quaint; although I do not think it was quaint in Sarpedon to address Glaucus as ὦ πέπον: but in comparing,

whether in Greek or in English, Ajax to an ass whom boys are belabouring, I do not see that there is of necessity anything quaint at all. Again; because I said that *eld*, *lief*, *in sooth*, and other words, are, as Mr Newman uses them in certain places, bad words, he imagines that I must mean to stamp these words with an absolute reprobation; and because I said that 'my Bibliolatry is excessive', he imagines that I brand all words as ignoble which are not in the Bible. Nothing of the kind: there are no such absolute rules to be laid down in these matters. The Bible vocabulary is to be used as an assistance, not as an authority. Of the words which, placed where Mr Newman places them, I have called bad words, everyone may be excellent in some other place. Take *eld*, for instance: when Shakspeare, reproaching man with the dependence in which his youth is passed, says:

> all thy blessed youth
> Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
> Of palsied *eld*, ...

it seems to me that *eld* comes in excellently there, in a passage of curious meditation; but when Mr Newman renders ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε by 'from *Eld* and Death exempted', it seems to me he infuses a tinge of quaintness into the transparent simplicity of Homer's expression, and so I call *eld* a bad word in that place.

Once more. Mr Newman lays it down as a general rule that 'many of Homer's energetic descriptions are expressed in coarse physical words'. He goes on: 'I give one illustration,—Τρῶες προὔτυψαν ἀολλέες. Cowper, misled by the *ignis fatuus* of "stateliness" renders it absurdly:

> The powers of Ilium gave the first assault

Embattled close;

but it is, strictly, “The Trojans *knocked forward* (or, thumped, butted forward) *in close pack*”. The verb is too coarse for later polished prose, and even the adjective is very strong (*packed together*). I believe that “forward in pack the Trojans pitched”, would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour; and I maintain that “forward in mass the Trojans pitched”, would be an irreprovable rendering’. He actually gives us all that as if it were a piece of scientific deduction; and as if, at the end, he had arrived at an incontrovertible conclusion. But, in truth, one cannot settle these matters quite in this way. Mr Newman’s general rule may be true or false (I dislike to meddle with general rules), but every part in what follows must stand or fall by itself, and its soundness or unsoundness has nothing at all to do with the truth or falsehood of Mr Newman’s general rule. He first gives, as a strict rendering of the Greek, ‘The Trojans knocked forward (or, thumped, butted forward), in close pack’. I need not say that, as a ‘strict rendering of the Greek’, this is good; all Mr Newman’s ‘strict renderings of the Greek’ are sure to be, as such, good; but ‘in close pack’, for ἀολλέες, seems to me to be what Mr Newman’s renderings are not always, —an excellent *poetical rendering* of the Greek; a thousand times better, certainly, than Cowper’s ‘embattled close’. Well, but Mr Newman goes on: ‘I believe that, “forward in pack the Trojans pitched”, would not be really unfaithful to the Homeric colour’. Here, I say, the Homeric colour is half washed out of Mr Newman’s happy rendering of ἀολλέες; while in ‘pitched’ for προΰτυψαν, the literal fidelity of the first rendering is gone, while certainly no Homeric colour has come in its place.

Finally, Mr Newman concludes: ‘I maintain that “forward in mass the Trojans pitched”, would be an irreprovable rendering’. Here, in what Mr Newman fancies his final moment of triumph, Homeric colour and literal fidelity have alike abandoned him altogether; the last stage of his translation is much worse than the second, and immeasurably worse than the first.

All this to show that a looser, easier method than Mr Newman’s must be taken, if we are to arrive at any good result in these questions. I now go on to follow Mr Newman a little further, not at all as wishing to dispute with him, but as seeking (and this is the true fruit we may gather from criticisms upon us) to gain hints from him for the establishment of some useful truth about our subject, even when I think him wrong. I still retain, I confess, my conviction that Homer’s characteristic qualities are rapidity of movement, plainness of words and style, simplicity and directness of ideas, and, above all, nobleness, the grand manner. Whenever Mr Newman drops a word, awakens a train of thought, which leads me to see any of these characteristics more clearly, I am grateful to him; and one or two suggestions of this kind which he affords, are all that now, having expressed my sorrow that he should have misconceived my feelings towards him, and pointed out what I think the vice of his method of criticism, I have to notice in his Reply.

Such a suggestion I find in Mr Newman’s remarks on my assertion that the translator of Homer must not adopt a quaint and antiquated style in rendering him, because the impression which Homer makes upon the living scholar is not that of a poet quaint and antiquated, but that of a poet perfectly simple,

perfectly intelligible. I added that we cannot, I confess, really know how Homer seemed to Sophocles, but that it is impossible to me to believe that he seemed to him quaint and antiquated. Mr Newman asserts, on the other hand, that I am absurdly wrong here; that Homer seemed 'out and out' quaint and antiquated to the Athenians; that 'every sentence of him was more or less antiquated to Sophocles, who could no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of the poetry than an Englishman can help feeling the same in reading Burns' poems'. And not only does Mr Newman say this, but he has managed thoroughly to convince some of his readers of it. 'Homer's Greek', says one of them, 'certainly seemed antiquated to the historical times of Greece. Mr Newman, taking a far broader historical and philological view than Mr Arnold, stoutly maintains that it did seem so.' And another says: 'Doubtless Homer's dialect and diction were as hard and obscure to a later Attic Greek as Chaucer to an Englishman of our day.'

Mr Newman goes on to say, that not only was Homer antiquated relatively to Pericles, but he is antiquated to the living scholar; and, indeed, is in himself 'absolutely antique, being the poet of a barbarian age'. He tells us of his 'inexhaustible quaintnesses', of his 'very eccentric diction'; and he infers, of course, that he is perfectly right in rendering him in a quaint and antiquated style.

Now this question, whether or no Homer seemed quaint and antiquated to Sophocles, I call a delightful question to raise. It is not a barren verbal dispute; it is a question 'drenched in matter', to use an expression of Bacon; a question full of flesh and blood, and of which the scrutiny, though I still think

we cannot settle absolutely, may yet give us a directly useful result. To scrutinize it may lead us to see more clearly what sort of a style a modern translator of Homer ought to adopt.

Homer's verses were some of the first words which a young Athenian heard. He heard them from his mother or his nurse before he went to school; and at school, when he went there, he was constantly occupied with them. So much did he hear of them that Socrates proposes, in the interests of morality, to have selections from Homer made, and placed in the hands of mothers and nurses, in his model republic; in order that, of an author with whom they were sure to be so perpetually conversant, the young might learn only those parts which might do them good. His language was as familiar to Sophocles, we may be quite sure, as the language of the Bible is to us.

Nay, more. Homer's language was not, of course, in the time of Sophocles, the spoken or written language of ordinary life, any more than the language of the Bible, any more than the language of poetry, is with us; but for one great species of composition, epic poetry, it was still the current language; it was the language in which everyone who made that sort of poetry composed. Everyone at Athens who dabbled in epic poetry, not only understood Homer's language, he possessed it. He possessed it as everyone who dabbles in poetry with us, possesses what may be called the poetical vocabulary, as distinguished from the vocabulary of common speech and of modern prose: I mean, such expressions as *perchance* for *perhaps*, *spake* for *spoke*, *aye* for *ever*, *don* for *put on*, *charméd* for *charm'd*, and thousands of others.

I might go to Burns and Chaucer, and, taking words and passages from them, ask if they afforded any parallel to a language so familiar and so possessed. But this I will not do, for Mr Newman himself supplies me with what he thinks a fair parallel, in its effect upon us, to the language of Homer in its effect upon Sophocles. He says that such words as *mon*, *londis*, *libbard*, *withouten*, *muchel*, give us a tolerable but incomplete notion of this parallel; and he finally exhibits the parallel in all its clearness, by this poetical specimen:

> Dat mon, quhich hauldeth Kyngis af
> Londis yn féo, niver
> (I tell 'e) feereth aught; sith hee
> Doth hauld hys londis yver.

Now, does Mr Newman really think that Sophocles could, as he says, 'no more help feeling at every instant the foreign and antiquated character of Homer, than an Englishman can help feeling the same in hearing these lines'? Is he quite sure of it? He says he is; he will not allow of any doubt or hesitation in the matter. I had confessed we could not really know how Homer seemed to Sophocles; 'Let Mr Arnold confess for himself', cries Mr Newman, 'and not for me, who know perfectly well'. And this is what he knows!

Mr Newman says, however, that I 'play fallaciously on the words familiar and unfamiliar'; that 'Homer's words may have been familiar to the Athenians (*i.e.* often heard) even when they were either not understood by them or else, being understood, were yet felt and known to be utterly foreign. Let my renderings', he continues, 'be heard, as Pope or even Cowper has been heard, and no one will be

"surprised"'.

But the whole question is here. The translator must not assume that to have taken place which has not taken place, although, perhaps, he may wish it to have taken place, namely, that his diction is become an established possession of the minds of men, and therefore is, in its proper place, familiar to them, will not 'surprise' them. If Homer's language was familiar, that is, often heard, then to his language words like *londis* and *libbard*, which are not familiar, offer, for the translator's purpose, no parallel. For some purpose of the philologer they may offer a parallel to it; for the translator's purpose they offer none. The question is not, whether a diction is antiquated for current speech, but whether it is antiquated for that particular purpose for which it is employed. A diction that is antiquated for common speech and common prose, may very well not be antiquated for poetry or certain special kinds of prose. 'Peradventure there shall be ten found there', is not antiquated for Biblical prose, though for conversation or for a newspaper it is antiquated. 'The trumpet spake not to the arméd throng', is not antiquated for poetry, although we should not write in a letter, 'he *spake* to me', or say, 'the British soldier is *arméd* with the Enfield rifle'. But when language is antiquated for that particular purpose for which it is employed, as numbers of Chaucer's words, for instance, are antiquated for poetry, such language is a bad representative of language which, like Homer's, was never antiquated for that particular purpose for which it was employed. I imagine that Πηληϊάδεω for Πηλείδου, in Homer, no more sounded antiquated to Sophocles, than *arméd* for *arm'd,* in Milton, sounds antiquated to us; but Mr Newman's *withouten* and *muchel* do sound to

us antiquated, even for poetry, and therefore they do not correspond in their effect upon us with Homer's words in their effect upon Sophocles. When Chaucer, who uses such words, is to pass current amongst us, to be familiar to us, as Homer was familiar to the Athenians, he has to be modernized, as Wordsworth and others set to work to modernize him; but an Athenian no more needed to have Homer modernized, than we need to have the Bible modernized, or Wordsworth himself.

Therefore, when Mr Newman's words *bragly*, *bulkin*, and the rest, are an established possession of our minds, as Homer's words were an established possession of an Athenian's mind, he may use them; but not till then. Chaucer's words, the words of Burns, great poets as these were, are yet not thus an established possession of an Englishman's mind, and therefore they must not be used in rendering Homer into English.

Mr Newman has been misled just by doing that which his admirer praises him for doing, by taking a 'far broader historical and philological view than mine'. Precisely because he has done this, and has applied the 'philological view' where it was not applicable, but where the 'poetical view' alone was rightly applicable, he has fallen into error.

It is the same with him in his remarks on the difficulty and obscurity of Homer. Homer, I say, is perfectly plain in speech, simple, and intelligible. And I infer from this that his translator, too, ought to be perfectly plain in speech, simple, and intelligible; ought not to say, for instance, in rendering

Οὔτε κέ σε στέλλοιμι μάχην ἐς κυδιάνειραν ...

‘Nor liefly thee would I advance to man-ennobling battle’,—and things of that kind. Mr Newman hands me a list of some twenty hard words, invokes Buttmann, Mr Malden, and M. Benfey, and asks me if I think myself wiser than all the world of Greek scholars, and if I am ready to supply the deficiencies of Liddell and Scott’s *Lexicon*! But here, again, Mr Newman errs by not perceiving that the question is not one of scholarship, but of a poetical translation of Homer. This, I say, should be perfectly simple and intelligible. He replies by telling me that ἀδινὸς, εἰλίποδες, and σιγαλόεις are hard words. Well, but what does he infer from that? That the poetical translation, in his rendering of them, is to give us a sense of the difficulties of the scholar, and so is to make his translation obscure? If he does not mean that, how, by bringing forward these hard words, does he touch the question whether an English version of Homer should be plain or not plain? If Homer’s poetry, as poetry, is in its general effect on the poetical reader perfectly simple and intelligible, the uncertainty of the scholar about the true meaning of certain words can never change this general effect. Rather will the poetry of Homer make us forget his philology, than his philology make us forget his poetry. It may even be affirmed that everyone who reads Homer perpetually for the sake of enjoying his poetry (and no one who does not so read him will ever translate him well), comes at last to form a perfectly clear sense in his own mind for every important word in Homer, such as ἀδινὸς, or ἠλίβατος, whatever the scholar’s doubts about the word may be. And this sense is present to his mind with perfect clearness and fulness, whenever the word recurs, although as a scholar he may know that he cannot be sure whether this sense is the right one

or not. But poetically he feels clearly about the word, although philologically he may not. The scholar in him may hesitate, like the father in Sheridan's play; but the reader of poetry in him is, like the governor, fixed. The same thing happens to us with our own language. How many words occur in the Bible, for instance, to which thousands of hearers do not feel sure they attach the precise real meaning; but they make out *a* meaning for them out of what materials they have at hand; and the words, heard over and over again, come to convey this meaning with a certainty which poetically is adequate, though not philologically. How many have attached a clear and poetically adequate sense to '*the beam*' and '*the mote*', though not precisely the right one! How clearly, again, have readers got a sense from Milton's words, 'grate on their *scrannel* pipes', who yet might have been puzzled to write a commentary on the word *scrannel* for the dictionary! So we get a clear sense from ἀδινὸς as an epithet for grief, after often meeting with it and finding out all we can about it, even though that all be philologically insufficient; so we get a clear sense from εἰλίποδες as an epithet for cows. And this his clear poetical sense about the words, not his philological uncertainties about them, is what the translator has to convey. Words like *bragly* and *bulkin* offer no parallel to these words; because the reader, from his entire want of familiarity with the words bragly and bulkin, has no clear sense of them poetically.

Perplexed by his knowledge of the philological aspect of Homer's language, encumbered by his own learning, Mr Newman, I say, misses the poetical aspect, misses that with which alone we are here concerned. 'Homer *is* odd', he persists, fixing his eyes on his own philological analysis of μώνυξ, and

μέροψς, and Κυλλοποδίων, and not on these words in their synthetic character;—just as Professor Max Müller, going a little farther back, and fixing his attention on the elementary value of the word θυγάτηρ, might say Homer was 'odd' for using *that* word;—'if the whole Greek nation, by long familiarity, had become inobservant of Homer's oddities', of the oddities of this 'noble barbarian', as Mr Newman elsewhere calls him, this 'noble barbarian' with the 'lively eye of the savage', 'that would be no fault of mine. That would not justify Mr Arnold's blame of me for rendering the words correctly'. *Correctly*,—ah, but what *is* correctness in this case? This correctness of his is the very rock on which Mr Newman has split. He is so correct that at last he finds peculiarity everywhere. The true knowledge of Homer becomes at last, in his eyes, a knowledge of Homer's 'peculiarities, pleasant and unpleasant'. Learned men know these 'peculiarities', and Homer is to be translated because the unlearned are impatient to know them too. 'That', he exclaims, 'is just why people want to read an English Homer, *to know all his oddities, just as learned men do*'. Here I am obliged to shake my head, and to declare that, in spite of all my respect for Mr Newman, I cannot go these lengths with him. He talks of my 'monomaniac fancy that there is nothing quaint or antique in Homer'. Terrible learning, I cannot help in my turn exclaiming, terrible learning, which discovers so much!

Here, then, I take my leave of Mr Newman, retaining my opinion that his version of Homer is spoiled by his making Homer odd and ignoble; but having, I hope, sufficient love for literature to be able to canvass works without thinking of persons, and to hold this or that production cheap, while retaining a

sincere respect, on other grounds, for its author.

In fulfilment of my promise to take this opportunity for giving the translator of Homer a little further advice, I proceed to notice one or two other criticisms which I find, in like manner, *suggestive*; which give us an opportunity, that is, of seeing more clearly, as we look into them, the true principles on which translation of Homer should rest. This is all I seek in criticisms; and, perhaps (as I have already said) it is only as one seeks a positive result of this kind, that one can get any fruit from them. Seeking a negative result from them, personal altercation and wrangling, one gets no fruit; seeking a positive result, the elucidation and establishment of one's ideas, one may get much. Even bad criticisms may thus be made suggestive and fruitful. I declared, in a former lecture on this subject, my conviction that criticism is not the strong point of our national literature. Well, even the bad criticisms on our present topic which I meet with, serve to illustrate this conviction for me. And thus one is enabled, even in reading remarks which for Homeric criticism, for their immediate subject, have no value, which are far too personal in spirit, far too immoderate in temper, and far too heavy-handed in style, for the delicate matter they have to treat, still to gain light and confirmation for a serious idea, and to follow the Baconian injunction, *semper aliquid addiscere*, always to be adding to one's stock of observation and knowledge. Yes, even when we have to do with writers who, to quote the words of an exquisite critic, the master of us all in criticism, M. Sainte-Beuve, remind us, when they handle such subjects as our present, of 'Romans of the fourth or fifth century, coming to hold forth, all at random, in African style, on papers found in the desk of Augustus, Mæcenas,

or Pollio', even then we may instruct ourselves if we may regard ideas and not persons; even then we may enable ourselves to say, with the same critic describing the effect made upon him by D'Argenson's *Memoirs*: 'My taste is revolted, but I learn something; *Je suis choqué mais je suis instruit*'.

But let us pass to criticisms which are suggestive directly and not thus indirectly only, criticisms by examining which we may be brought nearer to what immediately interests us, the right way of translating Homer.

I said that Homer did not rise and sink with his subject, was never to be called prosaic and low. This gives surprise to many persons, who object that parts of the *Iliad* are certainly pitched lower than others, and who remind me of a number of absolutely level passages in Homer. But I never denied that a *subject* must rise and sink, that it must have its elevated and its level regions; all I deny is, that a poet can be said to rise and sink when all that he, as a poet, can do, is perfectly well done; when he is perfectly sound and good, that is, perfect as a poet, in the level regions of his subject as well as in its elevated regions. Indeed, what distinguishes the greatest masters of poetry from all others is, that they are perfectly sound and poetical in these level regions of their subject, in these regions which are the great difficulty of all poets but the very greatest, which they never quite know what to do with. A poet may sink in these regions by being falsely grand as well as by being low; he sinks, in short, whenever he does not treat his matter, whatever it is, in a perfectly good and poetic way. But, so long as he treats it in this way, he cannot be said to *sink*, whatever his matter may do. A passage of the simplest narrative is quoted to me

from Homer:—

> ὥτρυνεν δὲ ἕκαστον ἐποιχόμενος ἐπέεσσιν,
> Μέσθλην τε, Γλαῦκόν τε, Μέδοντά τε, θερσιλοχόν τε ...[58]

and I am asked, whether Homer does not sink *there*; whether he '*can* have intended such lines as those for poetry'? My answer is: Those lines are very good poetry indeed, poetry of the best class, *in that place*. But when Wordsworth, having to narrate a very plain matter, tries *not* to sink in narrating it, tries, in short, to be what is falsely called poetical, he does sink, although he sinks by being pompous, not by being low.

> Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,
> While crossing Magdalen Bridge, a glimpse of Cam,
> And at the Hoop alighted, famous inn.

That last line shows excellently how a poet may sink with his subject by resolving not to sink with it. A page or two farther on, the subject rises to grandeur, and then Wordsworth is nobly worthy of it:

> The antechapel, where the statue stood
> Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
> The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

But the supreme poet is he who is thoroughly sound and poetical, alike when his subject is grand, and when it is plain: with him the subject may sink, but never the poet. But a Dutch painter does not rise and sink with his subject; Defoe, in *Moll Flanders*, does not rise and sink with his subject, in so far as an artist cannot be said to sink who is sound in his treatment of his subject, however plain it is: yet

Defoe, yet a Dutch painter, may in one sense be said to sink with their subject, because though sound in their treatment of it, they are not *poetical*, poetical in the true, not the false sense of the word; because, in fact, they are not in the grand style. Homer can in no sense be said to sink with his subject, because his soundness has something more than literal naturalness about it; because his soundness is the soundness of Homer, of a great epic poet; because, in fact, he is in the grand style. So he sheds over the simplest matter he touches the charm of his grand manner; he makes everything noble. Nothing has raised more questioning among my critics than these words, *noble*, *the grand style*. People complain that I do not define these words sufficiently, that I do not tell them enough about them. 'The grand style, but what *is* the grand style'? they cry; some with an inclination to believe in it, but puzzled; others mockingly and with incredulity. Alas! the grand style is the last matter in the world for verbal definition to deal with adequately. One may say of it as is said of faith: 'One must feel it in order to know what it is'. But, as of faith, so too one may say of nobleness, of the grand style: 'Woe to those who know it not'! Yet this expression, though indefinable, has a charm; one is the better for considering it; *bonum est, nos hic esse*; nay, one loves to try to explain it, though one knows that one must speak imperfectly. For those, then, who ask the question, What is the grand style? with sincerity, I will try to make some answer, inadequate as it must be. For those who ask it mockingly I have no answer, except to repeat to them, with compassionate sorrow, the Gospel words: *Moriemini in peccatis vestris*, Ye shall die in your sins.

But let me, at any rate, have the pleasure of again giving, before I begin to try and define the grand

style, a specimen of what it *is*.

> Standing on earth, not wrapt above the pole,
> More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
> To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
> On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues....

There is the grand style in perfection; and anyone who has a sense for it, will feel it a thousand times better from repeating those lines than from hearing anything I can say about it.

Let us try, however, what *can* be said, controlling what we say by examples. I think it will be found that the grand style arises in poetry, *when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject*. I think this definition will be found to cover all instances of the grand style in poetry which present themselves. I think it will be found to exclude all poetry which is not in the grand style. And I think it contains no terms which are obscure, which themselves need defining. Even those who do not understand what is meant by calling poetry noble, will understand, I imagine, what is meant by speaking of a noble nature in a man. But the noble or powerful nature—the *bedeutendes Individuum* of Goethe—is not enough. For instance, Mr Newman has zeal for learning, zeal for thinking, zeal for liberty, and all these things are noble, they ennoble a man; but he has not the poetical gift: there must be the poetical gift, the 'divine faculty', also. And, besides all this, the subject must be a serious one (for it is only by a kind of licence that we can speak of the grand style in comedy); and it must be treated *with simplicity or severity*. Here is the great difficulty: the poets of the world have been many; there has been wanting neither abundance of

poetical gift nor abundance of noble natures; but a poetical gift so happy, in a noble nature so circumstanced and trained, that the result is a continuous style, perfect in simplicity or perfect in severity, has been extremely rare. One poet has had the gifts of nature and faculty in unequalled fulness, without the circumstances and training which make this sustained perfection of style possible. Of other poets, some have caught this perfect strain now and then, in short pieces or single lines, but have not been able to maintain it through considerable works; others have composed all their productions in a style which, by comparison with the best, one must call secondary.

The best model of the grand style simple is Homer; perhaps the best model of the grand style severe is Milton. But Dante is remarkable for affording admirable examples of both styles; he has the grand style which arises from simplicity, and he has the grand style which arises from severity; and from him I will illustrate them both. In a former lecture I pointed out what that severity of poetical style is, which comes from saying a thing with a kind of intense compression, or in an illusive, brief, almost haughty way, as if the poet's mind were charged with so many and such grave matters, that he would not deign to treat any one of them explicitly. Of this severity the last line of the following stanza of the *Purgatory* is a good example. Dante has been telling Forese that Virgil had guided him through Hell, and he goes on:

> Indi m' han tratto su gli suoi conforti,
> Salendo e rigirando la Montagna
> *Che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti*[59].

'Thence hath his comforting aid led me up, climbing and circling the Mountain, *which straightens you whom the world made crooked*'. These last words, 'la Montagna *che drizza voi che il mondo fece torti*', 'the Mountain *which straightens you whom the world made crooked*', for the Mountain of Purgatory, I call an excellent specimen of the grand style in severity, where the poet's mind is too full charged to suffer him to speak more explicitly. But the very next stanza is a beautiful specimen of the grand style in simplicity, where a noble nature and a poetical gift unite to utter a thing with the most limpid plainness and clearness:

> Tanto dice di farmi sua compagna
> Ch' io sarò là dove fia Beatrice;
> Quivi convien che senza lui rimagna[60].

'So long', Dante continues, 'so long he (Virgil) saith he will bear me company, until I shall be there where Beatrice is; there it behoves that without him I remain'. But the noble simplicity of that in the Italian no words of mine can render.

Both these styles, the simple and the severe, are truly grand; the severe seems, perhaps, the grandest, so long as we attend most to the great personality, to the noble nature, in the poet its author; the simple seems the grandest when we attend most to the exquisite faculty, to the poetical gift. But the simple is no doubt to be preferred. It is the more *magical*: in the other there is something intellectual, something which gives scope for a play of thought which may exist where the poetical gift is either wanting or present in only inferior degree: the severe is much more imitable, and this a little spoils its charm. A kind of semblance of this style keeps Young going,

one may say, through all the nine parts of that most indifferent production, the *Night Thoughts*. But the grand style in simplicity is inimitable:

> αἰὼν ἀσφαλὴς
> οὐκ ἔγεντ' οὔτ' Αἰακίδᾳ παρὰ Πηλεῖ,
> οὔτε παρ' ἀντιθέῳ Κάδμῳ· λέγονται μὰν βροτῶν
> ὄλβον ὑπέρτατον οἱ σχεῖν, οἵ τε καὶ
> χρυσαμπύκων
> μελπομενᾶν ἐν ὄρει Μοισᾶν, καὶ ἐν ἑπταπύλοις
> ἄϊον Θήβαις ..[61]..

There is a limpidness in that, a want of salient points to seize and transfer, which makes imitation impossible, except by a genius akin to the genius which produced it.

Greek simplicity and Greek grace are inimitable; but it is said that the *Iliad* may still be ballad-poetry while infinitely superior to all other ballads, and that, in my specimens of English ballad-poetry, I have been unfair. Well, no doubt there are better things in English ballad-poetry than

> Now Christ thee save, thou proud portér, ...

but the real strength of a chain, they say, is the strength of its weakest link; and what I was trying to show you was, that the English ballad-style is not an instrument of enough compass and force to correspond to the Greek hexameter; that, owing to an inherent weakness in it as an epic style, it easily runs into one or two faults, either it is prosaic and humdrum, or, trying to avoid that fault, and to make itself lively (*se faire vif*), it becomes pert and jaunty. To show that, the passage about King Adland's porter serves very well. But these degradations are not proper to a true epic instrument, such as the Greek

hexameter.

You may say, if you like, when you find Homer's verse, even in describing the plainest matter, neither humdrum nor jaunty, that this is because he is so incomparably better a poet than other balladists, because he is Homer. But take the whole range of Greek epic poetry, take the later poets, the poets of the last ages of this poetry, many of them most indifferent, Coluthus, Tryphiodorus, Quintus of Smyrna, Nonnus. Never will you find in this instrument of the hexameter, even in their hands, the vices of the ballad-style in the weak moments of this last: everywhere the hexameter, a noble, a truly epical instrument, rather resists the weakness of its employer than lends itself to it. Quintus of Smyrna is a poet of merit, but certainly not a poet of a high order: with him, too, epic poetry, whether in the character of its prosody or in that of its diction, is no longer the epic poetry of earlier and better times, nor epic poetry as again restored by Nonnus: but even in Quintus of Smyrna, I say, the hexameter is still the hexameter; it is a style which the ballad-style, even in the hands of better poets, cannot rival. And in the hands of inferior poets, the ballad-style sinks to vices of which the hexameter, even in the hands of a Tryphiodorus, never can become guilty.

But a critic, whom it is impossible to read without pleasure, and the disguise of whose initials I am sure I may be allowed to penetrate, Mr Spedding says that he 'denies altogether that the metrical movement of the English hexameter has any resemblance to that of the Greek'. Of course, in that case, if the two metres in no respect correspond, praise accorded to the Greek hexameter as an epical instrument will not extend to the English. Mr Spedding seeks to establish

his proposition by pointing out that the system of accentuation differs in the English and in the Virgilian hexameter; that in the first, the accent and the long syllable (or what has to do duty as such) coincide, in the second they do not. He says that we cannot be so sure of the accent with which Greek verse should be read as of that with which Latin should; but that the lines of Homer in which the accent and the long syllable coincide, as in the English hexameter, are certainly very rare. He suggests a type of English hexameter in agreement with the Virgilian model, and formed on the supposition that 'quantity is as distinguishable in English as in Latin or Greek by any ear that will attend to it'. Of the truth of this supposition he entertains no doubt. The new hexameter will, Mr Spedding thinks, at least have the merit of resembling, in its metrical movement, the classical hexameter, which merit the ordinary English hexameter has not. But even with this improved hexameter he is not satisfied; and he goes on, first to suggest other metres for rendering Homer, and finally to suggest that rendering Homer is impossible.

A scholar to whom all who admire Lucretius owe a large debt of gratitude, Mr Munro, has replied to Mr Spedding. Mr Munro declares that 'the accent of the old Greeks and Romans resembled our accent only in name, in reality was essentially different'; that 'our English reading of Homer and Virgil has in itself no meaning'; and that 'accent has nothing to do with the Virgilian hexameter'. If this be so, of course the merit which Mr Spedding attributes to his own hexameter, of really corresponding with the Virgilian hexameter, has no existence. Again; in contradiction to Mr Spedding's assertion that lines in which (in our reading of them) the accent and the long syllable

coincide[62], as in the ordinary English hexameter, are ‘rare even in Homer’, Mr Munro declares that such lines, ‘instead of being rare, are among the very commonest types of Homeric rhythm’. Mr Spedding asserts that ‘quantity is as distinguishable in English as in Latin or Greek by any ear that will attend to it’; but Mr Munro replies, that in English ‘neither his ear nor his reason recognises any real distinction of quantity except that which is produced by accentuated and unaccentuated syllables’. He therefore arrives at the conclusion that in constructing English hexameters, ‘quantity must be utterly discarded; and longer or shorter unaccentuated syllables can have no meaning, except so far as they may be made to produce sweeter or harsher sounds in the hands of a master’.

It is not for me to interpose between two such combatants; and indeed my way lies, not up the highroad where they are contending, but along a bypath. With the absolute truth of their general propositions respecting accent and quantity, I have nothing to do; it is most interesting and instructive to me to hear such propositions discussed, when it is Mr Munro or Mr Spedding who discusses them; but I have strictly limited myself in these Lectures to the humble function of giving practical advice to the translator of Homer. He, I still think, must not follow so confidently, as makers of English hexameters have hitherto followed, Mr Munro’s maxim, *quantity may be utterly discarded*. He must not, like Mr Longfellow, make *seventeen* a dactyl in spite of all the length of its last syllable, even though he can plead that in counting we lay the accent on the first syllable of this word. He may be far from attaining Mr Spedding’s nicety of ear; may be unable to feel that ‘while *quantity* is a dactyl, *quiddity* is a tribrach’, and

that '*rapidly* is a word to which we find no parallel in Latin'; but I think he must bring himself to distinguish, with Mr Spedding, between '*th' o'er*-wearied eyelid', and '*the* wearied eyelid', as being, the one a correct ending for a hexameter, the other an ending with a false quantity in it; instead of finding, with Mr Munro, that this distinction 'conveys to his mind no intelligible idea'. He must temper his belief in Mr Munro's dictum, *quantity must be utterly discarded*, by mixing with it a belief in this other dictum of the same author, *two or more consonants take longer time in enunciating than one*[63].

Criticism is so apt in general to be vague and impalpable, that when it gives us a solid and definite possession, such as is Mr Spedding's parallel of the Virgilian and the English hexameter with their difference of accentuation distinctly marked, we cannot be too grateful to it. It is in the way in which Mr Spedding proceeds to press his conclusions from the parallel which he has drawn out, that his criticism seems to me to come a little short. Here even he, I think, shows (if he will allow me to say so) a little of that want of pliancy and suppleness so common among critics, but so dangerous to their criticism; he is a little too absolute in imposing his metrical laws; he too much forgets the excellent maxim of Menander, so applicable to literary criticism:—

> Καλὸν οἱ νόμοι σφόδρ' εἰσίν· ὁ δ' ὁρῶν τοὺς
> νόμους
> λίαν ἀκριβῶς, συκοφάντης φαίνεται·

'Laws are admirable things; but he who keeps his eye too closely fixed upon them, runs the risk of becoming', let us say, a purist. Mr Spedding is

probably mistaken in supposing that Virgil pronounced his hexameters as Mr Spedding pronounces them. He is almost certainly mistaken in supposing that Homer pronounced his hexameters as Mr Spedding pronounces Virgil's. But this, as I have said, is not a question for us to treat; all we are here concerned with is the imitation, by the English hexameter, of the ancient hexameter *in its effect upon us moderns*. Suppose we concede to Mr Spedding that his parallel proves our accentuation of the English and of the Virgilian hexameter to be different: what are we to conclude from that; how will a criticism, not a formal, but a substantial criticism, deal with such a fact as that? Will it infer, as Mr Spedding infers, that the English hexameter, therefore, must not pretend to reproduce better than other rhythms the movement of Homer's hexameter for us, that there can be no correspondence at all between the movement of these two hexameters, that if we want to have such a correspondence, we must abandon the current English hexameter altogether, and adopt in its place a new hexameter of Mr Spedding's Anglo-Latin type, substitute for lines like the

> Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of
> Achaia ...

of Dr Hawtrey, lines like the

> Procession, complex melodies, pause, quantity,
> accent,
> After Virgilian precedent and practice, in order ...

of Mr Spedding? To infer this, is to go, as I have complained of Mr Newman for sometimes going, a great deal too fast. I think prudent criticism must certainly recognise, in the current English hexameter,

a fact which cannot so lightly be set aside; it must acknowledge that by this hexameter the English ear, the genius of the English language, have, in their own way, adopted, have *translated* for themselves the Homeric hexameter; and that a rhythm which has thus grown up, which is thus, in a manner, the production of nature, has in its general type something necessary and inevitable, something which admits change only within narrow limits, which precludes change that is sweeping and essential. I think, therefore, the prudent critic will regard Mr Spedding's proposed revolution as simply impracticable. He will feel that in English poetry the hexameter, if used at all, must be, in the main, the English hexameter now current. He will perceive that its having come into existence as the representative of the Homeric hexameter, proves it to have, for the English ear, a certain correspondence with the Homeric hexameter, although this correspondence may be, from the difference of the Greek and English languages, necessarily incomplete. This incompleteness he will endeavour[64], as he may find or fancy himself able, gradually somewhat to lessen through minor changes, suggested by the ancient hexameter, but respecting the general constitution of the modern: the notion of making it disappear altogether by the critic's inventing in his closet a new constitution of his own for the English hexameter, he will judge to be a chimerical dream.

When, therefore, Mr Spedding objects to the English hexameter, that it imperfectly represents the movement of the ancient hexameters, I answer: We must work with the tools we have. The received English type, in its general outlines, is, for England, the necessary given type of this metre; it is by rendering the metrical beat of its pattern, not by

rendering the accentual beat of it, that the English language has adapted the Greek hexameter. To render the metrical beat of its pattern is something; by effecting so much as this the English hexameter puts itself in closer relations with its original, it comes nearer to its movement than any other metre which does not even effect so much as this; but Mr Spedding is dissatisfied with it for not effecting more still, for not rendering the accentual beat too. If he asks me *why* the English hexameter has not tried to render this too, *why* it has confined itself to rendering the metrical beat, *why*, in short, it is itself, and not Mr Spedding's new hexameter, that is a question which I, whose only business is to give practical advice to a translator, am not bound to answer; but I will not decline to answer it nevertheless. I will suggest to Mr Spedding that, as I have already said, the modern hexameter is merely an attempt to imitate the effect of the ancient hexameter, as read by us moderns; that the great object of its imitation has been the hexameter of Homer; that of this hexameter such lines as those which Mr Spedding declares to be so rare, even in Homer, but which are in truth so common, lines in which the quantity and the reader's accent coincide, are, for the English reader, just from that simplicity (for him) of rhythm which they owe to this very coincidence, the master-type; that so much is this the case that one may again and again notice an English reader of Homer, in reading lines where his Virgilian accent would not coincide with the quantity, abandoning this accent, and reading the lines (as we say) *by quantity*, reading them as if he were scanning them; while foreigners neglect our Virgilian accent even in reading Virgil, read even Virgil by quantity, making the accents coincide with the long syllables.

And no doubt the hexameter of a kindred language, the German, based on this mode of reading the ancient hexameter, has had a powerful influence upon the type of its English fellow. But all this shows how extremely powerful accent is for us moderns, since we find not even Greek and Latin quantity perceptible enough without it. Yet in these languages, where we have been accustomed always to look for it, it is far more perceptible to us Englishmen than in our own language, where we have not been accustomed to look for it. And here is the true reason why Mr Spedding's hexameter is not and cannot be the current English hexameter, even though it is based on the accentuation which Englishmen give to all Virgil's lines, and to many of Homer's,—that the quantity which in Greek or Latin words we feel, or imagine we feel, even though it be unsupported by accent, we do not feel or imagine we feel in English words when it is thus unsupported. For example, in repeating the Latin line

Ipsa tibi blandos *fundent* cunabula flores,

an Englishman feels the length of the second syllable of *fundent*, although he lays the accent on the first; but in repeating Mr Spedding's line,

Softly cometh slumber *closing* th' o'erwearied eyelid,

the English ear, full of the accent on the first syllable of *closing*, has really no sense at all of any length in its second. The metrical beat of the line is thus quite destroyed.

So when Mr Spedding proposes a new Anglo-Virgilian hexameter he proposes an impossibility; when he 'denies altogether that the metrical movement of the English hexameter has *any*

resemblance to that of the Greek', he denies too much; when he declares that, 'were every other metre impossible, an attempt to translate Homer into English hexameters might be permitted, *but that such an attempt he himself would never read*', he exhibits, it seems to me, a little of that obduracy and over-vehemence in liking and disliking,—a remnant, I suppose, of our insular ferocity,—to which English criticism is so prone. He ought to be enchanted to meet with a good attempt in any metre, even though he would never have advised it, even though its success be contrary to all his expectations; for it is the critic's first duty—prior even to his duty of stigmatizing what is bad—*to welcome everything that is good*. In welcoming this, he must at all times be ready, like the Christian convert, even to burn what he used to worship, and to worship what he used to burn. Nay, but he need not be thus inconsistent in welcoming it; he may retain all his principles: principles endure, circumstances change; absolute success is one thing, relative success another. Relative success may take place under the most diverse conditions; and it is in appreciating the good in even relative success, it is in taking into account the change of circumstances, that the critic's judgment is tested, that his versatility must display itself. He is to keep his idea of the best, of perfection, and at the same time to be willingly accessible to every second best which offers itself. So I enjoy the ease and beauty of Mr Spedding's stanza,

> Therewith to all the gods in order due ...

I welcome it, in the absence of equally good poetry in another metre[65], although I still think the stanza unfit to render Homer thoroughly well, although I still think other metres fit to render him better. So I

concede to Mr Spedding that every form of translation, prose or verse, must more or less break up Homer in order to reproduce him; but then I urge that that form which needs to break him up least is to be preferred. So I concede to him that the test proposed by me for the translator—a competent scholar's judgment whether the translation more or less reproduces for him the effect of the original—is not perfectly satisfactory; but I adopt it as the best we can get, as the only test capable of being really applied; for Mr Spedding's proposed substitute, the translations making the same effect, more or less, upon the unlearned which the original makes upon the scholar, is a test which can never really be applied at all. These two impressions, that of the scholar, and that of the unlearned reader, can, practically, never be accurately compared; they are, and must remain, like those lines we read of in Euclid, which, though produced ever so far, can never meet. So, again, I concede that a good verse-translation of Homer, or, indeed, of any poet, is very difficult, and that a good prose-translation is much easier; but then I urge that a verse-translation, while giving the pleasure which Pope's has given, might at the same time render Homer more faithfully than Pope's; and that this being possible, we ought not to cease wishing for a source of pleasure which no prose-translation can ever hope to rival.

Wishing for such a verse-translation of Homer, believing that rhythms have natural tendencies which, within certain limits, inevitably govern them; having little faith, therefore, that rhythms which have manifested tendencies utterly un-Homeric can so change themselves as to become well adapted for rendering Homer, I have looked about for the rhythm which seems to depart least from the tendencies of

Homer's rhythm. Such a rhythm I think may be found in the English hexameter, somewhat modified. I look with hope towards continued attempts at perfecting and employing this rhythm; but my belief in the immediate success of such attempts is far less confident than has been supposed. Between the recognition of this rhythm as ideally the best, and the recommendation of it to the translator for instant practical use, there must come all that consideration of circumstances, all that pliancy in foregoing, under the pressure of certain difficulties, the absolute best, which I have said is so indispensable to the critic. The hexameter is, comparatively, still unfamiliar in England; many people have a great dislike to it. A certain degree of unfamiliarity, a certain degree of dislike, are obstacles with which it is not wise to contend. It is difficult to say at present whether the dislike to this rhythm is so strong and so wide-spread that it will prevent its ever becoming thoroughly familiar. I think not, but it is too soon to decide. I am inclined to think that the dislike of it is rather among the professional critics than among the general public; I think the reception which Mr Longfellow's *Evangeline* has met with indicates this. I think that even now, if a version of the *Iliad* in English hexameters were made by a poet who, like Mr Longfellow, has that indefinable quality which renders him popular, something *attractive* in his talent, which communicates itself to his verses, it would have a great success among the general public. Yet a version of Homer in hexameters of the *Evangeline* type would not satisfy the judicious, nor is the definite establishment of this type to be desired; and one would regret that Mr Longfellow should, even to popularise the hexameter, give the immense labour required for a translation of Homer when one

could not wish his work to stand. Rather it is to be wished that by the efforts of poets like Mr Longfellow in original poetry, and the efforts of less distinguished poets in the task of translation, the hexameter may gradually be made familiar to the ear of the English public; at the same time that there gradually arises, out of all these efforts, an improved type of this rhythm; a type which some man of genius may sign with the final stamp, and employ in rendering Homer; a hexameter which may be as superior to Vosse's as Shakspeare's blank verse is superior to Schiller's. I am inclined to believe that all this travail will actually take place, because I believe that modern poetry is actually in want of such an instrument as the hexameter.

In the meantime, whether this rhythm be destined to success or not, let us steadily keep in mind what originally made us turn to it. We turned to it because we required certain Homeric characteristics in a translation of Homer, and because all other rhythms seemed to find, from different causes, great difficulties in satisfying this our requirement. If the hexameter is impossible, if one of these other rhythms must be used, let us keep this rhythm always in mind of our requirements and of its own faults, let us compel it to get rid of these latter as much as possible. It may be necessary to have recourse to blank verse; but then blank verse must *de-Cowperize* itself, must get rid of the habits of stiff self-retardation which make it say '*Not fewer* shone', for '*So many shone*'. Homer moves swiftly: blank verse *can* move swiftly if it likes, but it must remember that the movement of such lines as

A thousand fires were burning, and by each ...

is just the slow movement which makes us despair of it. Homer moves with noble ease: blank verse must not be suffered to forget that the movement of

> Came they not over from sweet Lacedæmon ...

is ungainly. Homer's expression of his thought is simple as light: we know how blank verse affects such locutions as

> While the steeds *mouthed their corn aloof* ...

and such models of expressing one's thought are sophisticated and artificial.

One sees how needful it is to direct incessantly the English translator's attention to the essential characteristics of Homer's poetry, when so accomplished a person as Mr Spedding, recognising these characteristics as indeed Homer's, admitting them to be essential, is led by the ingrained habits and tendencies of English blank verse thus repeatedly to lose sight of them in translating even a few lines. One sees this yet more clearly, when Mr Spedding, taking me to task for saying that the blank verse used for rendering Homer 'must not be Mr Tennyson's blank verse', declares that in most of Mr Tennyson's blank verse all Homer's essential characteristics, 'rapidity of movement, *plainness of words and style*, *simplicity and directness of ideas*, and, above all, nobleness of manner, are as conspicuous as in Homer himself'. This shows, it seems to me, how hard it is for English readers of poetry, even the most accomplished, to feel deeply and permanently what Greek plainness of thought and Greek simplicity of expression really are: they admit the importance of these qualities in a general way, but they have no ever-present sense of them; and they easily attribute

them to any poetry which has other excellent qualities, and which they very much admire. No doubt there are plainer things in Mr Tennyson's poetry than the three lines I quoted; in choosing them, as in choosing a specimen of ballad-poetry, I wished to bring out clearly, by a strong instance, the qualities of thought and style to which I was calling attention; but when Mr Spedding talks of a plainness of thought *like Homer's*, of a plainness of speech *like Homer's*, and says that he finds these constantly in Mr Tennyson's poetry, I answer that these I do not find there at all. Mr Tennyson is a most distinguished and charming poet; but the very essential characteristic of his poetry is, it seems to me, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of thought, an extreme subtlety and curious elaborateness of expression. In the best and most characteristic productions of his genius, these characteristics are most prominent. They are marked characteristics, as we have seen, of the Elizabethan poets; they are marked, though not the essential, characteristics of Shakspeare himself. Under the influences of the nineteenth century, under wholly new conditions of thought and culture, they manifest themselves in Mr Tennyson's poetry in a wholly new way. But they are still there. The essential bent of his poetry is towards such expressions as

> Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars;
>
> O'er the sun's bright eye
> Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud;
>
> When the cairned mountain was a shadow, sunned
> The world to peace again;
>
> The fresh young captains flashed their glittering

teeth,
The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew;

He bared the knotted column of his throat,
The massive square of his heroic breast,
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,
Running too vehemently to break upon it.

And this way of speaking is the least *plain*, the most *un-Homeric*, which can possibly be conceived. Homer presents his thought to you just as it wells from the source of his mind: Mr Tennyson carefully distils his thought before he will part with it. Hence comes, in the expression of the thought, a heightened and elaborate air. In Homer's poetry it is all natural thoughts in natural words; in Mr Tennyson's poetry it is all distilled thoughts in distilled words. Exactly this heightening and elaboration may be observed in Mr Spedding's

While the steeds *mouthed their corn aloof*

(an expression which might have been Mr Tennyson's), on which I have already commented; and to one who is penetrated with a sense of the real simplicity of Homer, this subtle sophistication of the thought is, I think, very perceptible even in such lines as these,

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,

which I have seen quoted as perfectly Homeric. Perfect simplicity can be obtained only by a genius of which perfect simplicity is an essential characteristic.

So true is this, that when a genius essentially subtle,

or a genius which, from whatever cause, is in its essence not truly and broadly simple, determines to be perfectly plain, determines not to admit a shade of subtlety or curiosity into its expression, it cannot ever then attain real simplicity; it can only attain a semblance of simplicity[66]. French criticism, richer in its vocabulary than ours, has invented a useful word to distinguish this semblance (often very beautiful and valuable) from the real quality. The real quality it calls *simplicité*, the semblance *simplesse*. The one is natural simplicity, the other is artificial simplicity. What is called simplicity in the productions of a genius essentially not simple, is, in truth, *simplesse*. The two are distinguishable from one another the moment they appear in company. For instance, let us take the opening of the narrative in Wordsworth's *Michael*:

> Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
> There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
> An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
> His bodily frame had been from youth to age
> Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
> Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs;
> And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
> And watchful more than ordinary men.

Now let us take the opening of the narrative in Mr Tennyson's *Dora*:

> With Farmer Allan at the farm abode
> William and Dora. William was his son,
> And she his niece. He often looked at them,
> And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife'.

The simplicity of the first of these passages is *simplicité*; that of the second, *simplesse*. Let us take the end of the same two poems: first, of *Michael*:

> The cottage which was named the Evening Star
> Is gone, the ploughshare has been through the
> ground
> On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
> In all the neighbourhood: yet the oak is left
> That grew beside their door: and the remains
> Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
> Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

And now, of *Dora*:

> So those four abode
> Within one house together; and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate:
> But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

A heedless critic may call both of these passages simple if he will. Simple, in a certain sense, they both are; but between the simplicity of the two there is all the difference that there is between the simplicity of Homer and the simplicity of Moschus.

But, whether the hexameter establish itself or not, whether a truly simple and rapid blank verse be obtained or not, as the vehicle for a standard English translation of Homer, I feel sure that this vehicle will not be furnished by the ballad-form. On this question about the ballad-character of Homer's poetry, I see that Professor Blackie proposes a compromise: he suggests that those who say Homer's poetry is pure ballad-poetry, and those who deny that it is ballad-poetry at all, should split the difference between them; that it should be agreed that Homer's poems are ballads *a little*, but not so much as some have said. I am very sensible to the courtesy of the terms in which Mr Blackie invites me to this compromise; but I cannot, I am sorry to say, accept it; I cannot allow that Homer's poetry is ballad-poetry at all. A

want of capacity for sustained nobleness seems to me inherent in the ballad-form when employed for epic poetry. The more we examine this proposition, the more certain, I think, will it become to us. Let us but observe how a great poet, having to deliver a narrative very weighty and serious, instinctively shrinks from the ballad-form as from a form not commensurate with his subject-matter, a form too narrow and shallow for it, and seeks for a form which has more amplitude and impressiveness. Everyone knows the *Lucy Gray* and the *Ruth* of Wordsworth. Both poems are excellent; but the subject-matter of the narrative of *Ruth* is much more weighty and impressive to the poet's own feeling than that of the narrative of *Lucy Gray*, for which latter, in its unpretending simplicity, the ballad-form is quite adequate. Wordsworth, at the time he composed *Ruth*, his great time, his *annus mirabilis*, about 1800, strove to be simple; it was his mission to be simple; he loved the ballad-form, he clung to it, because it was simple. Even in *Ruth* he tried, one may say, to use it; he would have used it if he could: but the gravity of his matter is too much for this somewhat slight form; he is obliged to give to his form more amplitude, more augustness, to shake out its folds.

> The wretched parents all that night
> Went shouting far and wide;
> But there was neither sound nor sight
> To serve them for a guide.

That is beautiful, no doubt, and the form is adequate to the subject-matter. But take this, on the other hand:

> I, too, have passed her on the hills,

Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild;
Such small machinery as she turned,
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy child.

Who does not perceive how the greater fulness and weight of his matter has here compelled the true and feeling poet to adopt a form of more *volume* than the simple ballad-form?

It is of narrative poetry that I am speaking; the question is about the use of the ballad-form for *this*. I say that for this poetry (when in the grand style, as Homer's is) the ballad-form is entirely inadequate; and that Homer's translator must not adopt it, because it even leads him, by its own weakness, away from the grand style rather than towards it. We must remember that the matter of narrative poetry stands in a different relation to the vehicle which conveys it, is not so independent of this vehicle, so absorbing and powerful in itself, as the matter of purely emotional poetry. When there comes in poetry what I may call the *lyrical cry*, this transfigures everything, makes everything grand; the simplest form may be here even an advantage, because the flame of the emotion glows through and through it more easily. To go again for an illustration to Wordsworth; our great poet, since Milton, by his performance, as Keats, I think, is our great poet by his gift and promise; in one of his stanzas to the Cuckoo, we have:

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

Here the lyrical cry, though taking the simple ballad-form, is as grand as the lyrical cry coming in poetry of an ampler form, as grand as the

> An innocent life, yet far astray!

of *Ruth*; as the

> There is a comfort in the strength of love

of *Michael*. In this way, by the occurrence of this lyrical cry, the ballad-poets themselves rise sometimes, though not so often as one might perhaps have hoped, to the grand style.

> O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
> Wi' their fans into their hand,
> Or ere they see Sir Patrick Spence
> Come sailing to the land.
>
> O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
> Wi' their gold combs in their hair,
> Waiting for their ain dear lords,
> For they'll see them nae mair.

But from this impressiveness of the ballad-form, when its subject-matter fills it over and over again, is, indeed, in itself, all in all, one must not infer its effectiveness when its subject-matter is not thus overpowering, in the great body of a narrative.

But, after all, Homer is not a better poet than the balladists, because he has taken in the hexameter a better instrument; he took this instrument because he was a *different* poet from them; so different, not only so much better, but so essentially different, that he has not to be classed with them at all. Poets receive their distinctive character, not from their subject, but from their application to that subject of the ideas (to

quote the *Excursion*)

> On God, on Nature, and on human life,

which they have acquired for themselves. In the ballad-poets in general, as in men of a rude and early stage of the world, in whom their humanity is not yet variously and fully developed, the stock of these ideas is scanty, and the ideas themselves not very effective or profound. From them the narrative itself is the great matter, not the spirit and significance which underlies the narrative. Even in later times of richly developed life and thought, poets appear who have what may be called a *balladist's mind*; in whom a fresh and lively curiosity for the outward spectacle of the world is much more strong than their sense of the inward significance of that spectacle. When they apply ideas to their narrative of human events, you feel that they are, so to speak, travelling out of their own province: in the best of them you feel this perceptibly, but in those of a lower order you feel it very strongly. Even Sir Walter Scott's efforts of this kind, even, for instance, the

> Breathes there the man with soul so dead,

or the

> O woman! in our hours of ease,

even these leave, I think, as high poetry, much to be desired; far more than the same poet's descriptions of a hunt or a battle. But Lord Macaulay's

> Then out spake brave Horatius,
> The captain of the gate:
> 'To all the men upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late'.

(and here, since I have been reproached with undervaluing Lord Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, let me frankly say that, to my mind, a man's power to detect the ring of false metal in those Lays is a good measure of his fitness to give an opinion about poetical matters at all), I say, Lord Macaulay's

> To all the men upon this earth
> Death cometh soon or late,

it is hard to read without a cry of pain. But with Homer it is very different. This 'noble barbarian', this 'savage with the lively eye', whose verse, Mr Newman thinks, would affect us, if we could hear the living Homer, 'like an elegant and simple melody from an African of the Gold Coast', is never more at home, never more nobly himself, than in applying profound ideas to his narrative. As a poet he belongs, narrative as is his poetry, and early as is his date, to an incomparably more developed spiritual and intellectual order than the balladists, or than Scott and Macaulay; he is here as much to be distinguished from them, and in the same way, as Milton is to be distinguished from them. He is, indeed, rather to be classed with Milton than with the balladists and Scott; for what he has in common with Milton, the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. The most essentially grand and characteristic things of Homer are such things as

> ἔτλην δ', οἷ' οὔπω τις ἐπιχθόνιος βροτὸς ἄλλος,
> ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ'
> ὀρέγεσθαι[67],

or as

καὶ σὲ, γέρον, τὸ πρὶν μὲν ἀκούομεν ὄλβιον
εἶναι[68],

or as

ὥς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν,
ζώειν ἀχνυμένους· αὐτοὶ δὲ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσίν[69],

and of these the tone is given, far better than by anything of the balladists, by such things as the

Io no piangeva: sì dentro impietrai:
Piangevan elli ...[70]

of Dante; or the

Fall'n Cherub! to be weak is miserable

of Milton.

I suppose I must, before I conclude, say a word or two about my own hexameters; and yet really, on such a topic, I am almost ashamed to trouble you. From those perishable objects I feel, I can truly say, a most Oriental detachment. You yourselves are witnesses how little importance, when I offered them to you, I claimed for them, how humble a function I designed them to fill. I offered them, not as specimens of a competing translation of Homer, but as illustrations of certain canons which I had been trying to establish for Homer's poetry. I said that these canons they might very well illustrate by failing as well as by succeeding: if they illustrate them in any manner, I am satisfied. I was thinking of the future translator of Homer, and trying to let him see as clearly as possible what I meant by the combination of characteristics which I assigned to Homer's poetry, by saying that this poetry was at

once rapid in movement, plain in words and style, simple and direct in its ideas, and noble in manner. I do not suppose that my own hexameters are rapid in movement, plain in words and style, simple and direct in their ideas, and noble in manner; but I am in hopes that a translator, reading them with a genuine interest in his subject, and without the slightest grain of personal feeling, may see more clearly, as he reads them, what I meant by saying that Homer's poetry is all these. I am in hopes that he may be able to seize more distinctly, when he has before him my

> So shone forth, in front of Troy, by the bed of the Xanthus,

or my

> Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you?

or my

> So he spake, and drove with a cry his steeds into battle,

the exact points which I wish him to avoid in Cowper's

> So numerous seemed those fires the banks between,

or in Pope's

> Unhappy coursers of immortal strain,

or in Mr Newman's

> He spake, and, yelling, held a-front his single-hoofed horses.

At the same time there may be innumerable points in mine which he ought to avoid also. Of the merit of his own compositions no composer can be admitted the judge.

But thus humbly useful to the future translator I still hope my hexameters may prove; and he it is, above all, whom one has to regard. The general public carries away little from discussions of this kind, except some vague notion that one advocates English hexameters, or that one has attacked Mr Newman. On the mind of an adversary one never makes the faintest impression. Mr Newman reads all one can say about diction, and his last word on the subject is, that he 'regards it as a question about to open hereafter, whether a translator of Homer ought not to adopt the old dissyllabic *landis*, *houndis*, *hartis*' (for lands, hounds, harts), and also 'the final *en* of the plural of verbs (we *dancen*, they *singen*, etc.), which still subsists in Lancashire'. A certain critic reads all one can say about style, and at the end of it arrives at the inference that, 'after all, there is some style grander than the grand style itself, since Shakspeare has not the grand manner, and yet has the supremacy over Milton'; another critic reads all one can say about rhythm, and the result is, that he thinks Scott's rhythm, in the description of the death of Marmion, all the better for being *saccadé*, because the dying ejaculations of Marmion were likely to be 'jerky'. How vain to rise up early, and to take rest late, from any zeal for proving to Mr Newman that he must not, in translating Homer, say *houndis* and *dancen*; or to the first of the two critics above quoted, that one poet may be a greater poetical force than another, and yet have a more unequal style; or to the second, that the best art, having to represent the death of a hero, does not set about imitating his

dying noises! Such critics, however, provide for an opponent's vivacity the charming excuse offered by Rivarol for his, when he was reproached with giving offence by it: 'Ah'! he exclaimed, 'no one considers how much pain every man of taste has had to *suffer*, before he ever inflicts any'.

It is for the future translator that one must work. The successful translator of Homer will have (or he cannot succeed) that true sense for his subject, and that disinterested love for it, which are, both of them, so rare in literature, and so precious; he will not be led off by any false scent; he will have an eye for the real matter, and where he thinks he may find any indication of this, no hint will be too slight for him, no shade will be too fine, no imperfections will turn him aside, he will go before his adviser's thought, and help it out with his own. This is the sort of student that a critic of Homer should always have in his thoughts; but students of this sort are indeed rare.

And how, then, can I help being reminded what a student of this sort we have just lost in Mr Clough, whose name I have already mentioned in these lectures? He, too, was busy with Homer; but it is not on that account that I now speak of him. Nor do I speak of him in order to call attention to his qualities and powers in general, admirable as these were. I mention him because, in so eminent a degree, he possessed these two invaluable literary qualities, a true sense for his object of study, and a single-hearted care for it. He had both; but he had the second even more eminently than the first. He greatly developed the first through means of the second. In the study of art, poetry, or philosophy, he had the most undivided and disinterested love for his

object in itself, the greatest aversion to mixing up with it anything accidental or personal. His interest was in literature itself; and it was this which gave so rare a stamp to his character, which kept him so free from all taint of littleness. In the saturnalia of ignoble personal passions, of which the struggle for literary success, in old and crowded communities, offers so sad a spectacle, he never mingled. He had not yet traduced his friends, nor flattered his enemies, nor disparaged what he admired, nor praised what he despised. Those who knew him well had the conviction that, even with time, these literary arts would never be his. His poem, of which I before spoke, has some admirable Homeric qualities; —out-of-doors freshness, life, naturalness, buoyant rapidity. Some of the expressions in that poem, '*Dangerous Corrievreckan ... Where roads are unknown to Loch Nevish*', come back now to my ear with the true Homeric ring. But that in him of which I think oftenest is the Homeric simplicity of his literary life.

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Footnotes

1. *Iliad*, iii. 243.

2. *Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, vi. 230.

3. *Iliad*, xix. 420.

4. *Iliad*, xii. 324.

5. These are the words on which Lord Granville ‘dwelled with particular emphasis’.

6. Robert Wood, *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer*, London, 1775, p. vii.

7. *Iliad*, viii. 560.

8. *Iliad*, xvii. 443.

9. *Iliad*, vi. 444.

10. *Iliad*, vi. 344.

11. From the reproachful answer of Ulysses to Agamemnon, who had proposed an abandonment of their expedition. This is one of the ‘tonic’ passages of the *Iliad*, so I quote it:

> Ah, unworthy king, some other inglorious army
> Should’st thou command, not rule over *us*,
> whose portion for ever
> Zeus hath made it, from youth right up to age,
> to be winding
> Skeins of grievous wars, till every soul of us
> perish.

Iliad, xiv. 84.

12. From the ballad of *King Estmere*, in Percy’s

Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, i. 69 (edit. of 1767).

13.
Reliques, i. 241

14.
Iliad, xvii. 443.

15.
All the editions which I have seen have ‘haste’, but the right reading must certainly be ‘taste’.

16.
Iliad, xix. 419.

17.
Odyssey, xix. 392.

18.
Mr Marsh, in his *Lectures on the English Language*, New York, 1860, p. 520.

19.
Marmion, canto vi. 38.

20.
Marmion, canto vi. 29.

21.
‘Be content, good friend, die also thou! why lamentest thou thyself on this wise? Patroclus, too, died, who was a far better than thou.’—*Iliad*, xxi. 106.

22.
‘From me, young man, learn nobleness of soul and true effort: learn success from others.’—

Æneid, xii. 435.

23.
‘I leave the gall of bitterness, and I go for the apples of sweetness promised unto me by my faithful Guide; but far as the centre it behoves me first to fall.’—*Hell*, xvi. 61.

24.
Paradise Lost, i. 591.

25.
The Faery Queen, Canto ii. stanza I.

26.
Odes, IV. vii. 13.

27.
Odyssey iv. 563.

28.
Odes, III. ii. 31.

29.
So short, that I quote it entire:

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all; their names I remember;
Two, two only remain, whom I see not among the commanders,
Castor fleet in the car,—Polydeukes brave with the cestus,—
Own dear brethren of mine,—one parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from the shores of loved Lacedæmon,

Or, though they came with the rest in ships
that bound through the waters,
Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the
council of Heroes,
All for fear of the shame and the taunts my
crime has awakened?
So said she;—they long since in Earth's soft
arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their Fatherland,
Lacedæmon.

English Hexameter Translations, London, 1847, p. 242.

I have changed Dr Hawtrey's 'Kastor', 'Lakedaimon', back to the familiar 'Castor', 'Lacedæmon', in obedience to my own rule that everything *odd* is to be avoided in rendering Homer, the most natural and least odd of poets. I see Mr Newman's critic in the *National Review* urges our generation to bear with the unnatural effect of these rewritten Greek names, in the hope that by this means the effect of them may have to the next generation become natural. For my part, I feel no disposition to pass all my own life in the wilderness of pedantry, in order that a posterity which I shall never see may one day enter an orthographical Canaan; and, after all, the real question is this: whether our living apprehension of the Greek world is more checked by meeting in an English book about the Greeks, names not spelt letter for letter as in the original Greek, or by meeting names which make us rub our eyes and call out, 'How exceedingly odd!'

The Latin names of the Greek deities raise in most cases the idea of quite distinct personages

from the personages whose idea is raised by the Greek names. Hera and Juno are actually, to every scholar's imagination, two different people. So in all these cases the Latin names must, at any inconvenience, be abandoned when we are dealing with the Greek world. But I think it can be in the sensitive imagination of Mr Grote only, that 'Thucydides' raises the idea of a different man from Θουκυδίδης.

30. For instance; in a version (I believe, by the late Mr Lockhart) of Homer's description of the parting of Hector and Andromache, there occurs, in the first five lines, but one spondee besides the necessary spondees in the sixth place; in the corresponding five lines of Homer there occur ten. See *English Hexameter Translations*, 244.

31. See for instance, in the *Iliad*, the loose construction of ὅστε, xvii. 658; that of ἴδοιτο, xvii. 681; that of οἵτε, xviii. 209; and the elliptical construction at xix. 42, 43; also the idiomatic construction of ἐγὼν ὅδε παρασχεῖν, xix. 140. These instances are all taken within a range of a thousand lines; anyone may easily multiply them for himself.

32. Our knowledge of Homer's Greek is hardly such as to enable us to pronounce quite confidently what is idiomatic in his diction, and what is not, any more than in his grammar; but I seem to myself clearly to recognise an idiomatic stamp in such expressions as τολυπεύειν

πολέμους, xiv. 86; φάος ἐν νήεσσιν θήῃς, xvi. 94; τιν' οἴω ἀσπασίως αὐτῶν γόνυ κάμψειν, xix. 71; κλοτοπεύειν, xix. 149; and many others. The first-quoted expression, τολυπεύειν ἀργαλέους πολέμους, seems to me to have just about the same degree of freedom as the '*jump* the life to come', or the '*shuffle off* this mortal coil', of Shakspeare.

33.

It must be remembered, however, that, if we disregard quantity too much in constructing English hexameters, we also disregard accent too much in reading Greek hexameters. We read every Greek dactyl so as to make a pure dactyl of it; but, to a Greek, the accent must have hindered many dactyls from sounding as pure dactyls. When we read αἰόλος ἵππος, for instance, or αἰγιόχοιο, the dactyl in each of these cases is made by us as pure a dactyl as 'Tityre', or 'dignity'; but to a Greek it was not so. To him αἰόλος must have been nearly as impure a dactyl as 'death-destined' is to us; and αἰγιόχ nearly as impure as the 'dressed his own' of my text. Nor, I think, does this right mode of pronouncing the two words at all spoil the run of the line as a hexameter. The effect of αἰόλλος ἵππος (or something like that), though not *our* effect, is not a disagreeable one. On the other hand, κορυθαιόλος as a paroxytonon, although it has the respectable authority of Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* (following Heyne), is certainly wrong; for then the word cannot be pronounced without throwing an accent on the first syllable as well as the third, and μέγας κορύθαιόλος

Ἕκτωρ would have been to a Greek as intolerable an ending for a hexameter line as ‘accurst *orphanhood-destined* houses’ would be to us. The best authorities, accordingly, accent κορυθαίολος as a proparoxytonon.

34.

Dr Hawtrey also has translated this passage; but here, he has not, I think, been so successful as in his ‘Helen on the walls of Troy’.

35.

He attacks the same line also in p. 44; but I do not claim this as a mark, how free I am from the fault.

36.

If I had used such a double dative, as ‘to Peleus to a mortal’, what would he have said of my syntax?

37.

Ballad-*manner*! The prevalent ballad-*metre* is the Common Metre of our Psalm tunes: and yet he assumes that whatever is in this metre must be on the same level. I have professed (Pref. p. x) that our *existing* old ballads are ‘poor and mean’, and are not my pattern.

38.

He has also overlooked the misprint *Trojans*, where I wrote *Troïans* (in three syllables), and has thus spoiled one verse out of the five.

39.

As a literary curiosity I append the sentence of a learned reviewer concerning this metre of

Campbell. ‘It is a metre fit for introducing anything or translating anything; a metre that *nothing can elevate, or degrade, or improve, or spoil*; in which all subjects will sound alike. A theorem of Euclid, a leading article from the *Times*, a dialogue from the last new novel, could all be reduced to it with the slightest possible verbal alteration’. [Quite true of Greek hexameter or Shakspeare’s line. It is a *virtue* in the metres]. ‘To such a mill all would be grist that came near it, and *in no grain that had once passed through it would human ingenuity ever detect again a characteristic quality*’. This writer is a stout maintainer that English ballad metre is the right one for translating Homer: only, somehow, he shuts his eyes to the fact that Campbell’s *is* ballad metre! Sad to say, extravagant and absurd assertions, like these, though anonymous, can, by a parade of learning, do much damage to the sale of a book in verse.

40.

I think he has mistaken the *summit* of the wave for a *headland*, and has made a single description into two, by the word *Or*: but I now confine my regard to the metre and general effect of the style.

41.

Companion, in four syllables, is in Shakspeare’s style; with whom habitually the termination -*tion* is two.

42.

By corrupting the past tenses of *welisso* into a false similarity to the past tenses of *elelizo*, the

old editors superimposed a new and false sense on the latter verb; which still holds its place in our dictionaries, as it deceived the Greeks themselves.

43. That λλ *in Attic* was sounded like French *l mouillée*, is judged probable by the learned writer of the article L (Penny Cyclop.), who urges that μᾶλλον is for μάλιον, and compares φυλλο with *folio*, αλλο with *alio*, ἀλλ with *sali*.

44. Men who can bear 'belch' in poetry, nowadays pretend that 'sputter' is indelicate. They find Homer's ἀποπτύει to be 'elegant', but *sputter*—not! 'No one would guess from Mr Newman's coarse phrases how *elegant* is Homer'!!

45. In a Note to my translation (overlooked by more than one critic) I have explained *curl-ey'd*, carefully, but not very accurately perhaps; as I had not before me the picture of the Hindoo lady to which I referred. The whole *upper eyelid*, when *open*, may be called the curl; for it is shaped like a buffalo's horns. This accounts for ἑλικοβλέφαρος, 'having a curly eye*lid*'.

46.

I thought I had toned it down pretty well, in rendering it ‘O gentle friend’! Mr Arnold rebukes me for this, without telling me what I ought to say, or what is my fault. One thing is certain, that the Greek is most *odd* and peculiar.

47.

In the noble simile of the sea-tide, quoted p. 138 above, only the two first of its five lines are to the purpose. Mr Gladstone, seduced by rhyme, has so tapered off the point of the similitude, that only a microscopic reader will see it.

48.

It is very singular that Mr Gladstone should imagine such a poet to have no eye for colour. I totally protest against his turning Homer’s paintings into leadpencil drawings. I believe that γλαυκὸς is grey (silvergreen), χάροψ blue; and that πρασινὸς, ‘leek-colour’, was too mean a word for any poets, early or late, to use for ‘green’, therefore χλωρὸς does duty for it. Κῦμα πορφύρεον is surely ‘the purple wave’, and ἰοειδέα πόντον ‘the violet sea’.

49.

He pares down ἑλκηθμοῖο (the dragging away of a woman by the hair) into ‘captivity’! Better surely is my ‘ignoble’ version: ‘Ere-that I see thee *dragg’d away*, and hear thy shriek of anguish’.

50.

He means *ours* for two syllables. ‘Swiftness of ours’ is surely ungrammatical. ‘A galley of my own’ = one of my own galleys; but ‘a father of mine’, is absurd, since each has but one father. I confess I have myself been seduced into writing ‘those two eyes of his’, to avoid ‘*those his* two eyes’: but I have since condemned and altered it.

51.

Of course no peculiarity of phrase has *the effect* of peculiarity on a man who has imperfect acquaintance with the delicacies of a language; who, for instance, thinks that ἐλκηθμὸς means δουλεία.

52.

Ἔλλὸς needs light and gives none. Benfey suggests that it is for ἐνεὸς, as ἄλλος, *alius*, for Sanscrit *anya*. He with me refers ἔλλοψ to λέπω. Cf. *squamigeri* in Lucretius.

53.

I do not see that Mr Arnold has any right to reproach *me*, because *he* does not know Spenser’s word ‘bragly’ (which I may have used twice in the Iliad), or Dryden’s word ‘plump’, for a mass. The former is so near in sound to *brag* and *braw*, that an Englishman who is once told that it means ‘proudly fine’, ought thenceforward to find it very intelligible: the latter is a noble modification of the vulgar *lump*. That he can carp as he does against these words and against *bulkin* (= young bullock) as unintelligible, is a testimony how little I have imposed of difficulty on my readers. Those who know *lambkin* cannot find *bulkin* very hard.

Since writing the above, I see a learned writer in the Philological Museum illustrates ἴλη by the old English phrase ‘a plump of spears’.

54.

I observe that Lord Lyttelton renders Milton’s *dapper elf* by ῥαδινὰ, ‘softly moving’.

55.

Mr Arnold calls it an unfortunate sentence of mine: ‘I ought to be quaint; I ought not to be grotesque’. I am disposed to think him right, but for reasons very opposite to those which he assigns. I have ‘unfortunately’ given to querulous critics a cue for attacking me unjustly. I should rather have said: ‘We ought to be *quaint*, and not to shrink from that which the fastidious modern will be sure to call *grotesque* in English, when he is too blunted by habit, or too poor a scholar to discern it in the Greek’.

56.

‘It is the fact, that scholars of fastidious refinement, but of a judgment which I think far more masculine than Mr Arnold’s, have passed a most encouraging sentence on large specimens of my translation. I at present count eight such names’.—‘Before venturing to print, I sought to ascertain how unlearned women and children would accept my verses. I could boast how children and half-educated women have extolled them, how greedily a working man has inquired for them, without knowing who was the translator’.—Mr Newman’s Reply, pp. 113, 124, *supra*.

57.

‘O for the fields of Thessaly and the streams of Spercheios! O for the hills alive with the dances of the Laconian maidens, the hills of Taygetus’! —*Georgics*, ii. 486.

58.

Iliad, xvii, 216.

59.

Purgatory, xxiii, 124.

60.

Purgatory, xxiii, 127.

61.

‘A secure time fell to the lot neither of Peleus the son of Æacus, nor of the godlike Cadmus; howbeit these are said to have had, of all mortals, the supreme of happiness, who heard the golden-snooded Muses sing, one of them on the mountain (Pelion), the other in seven-gated Thebus’.

62.

Lines such as the first of the *Odyssey*

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὅς
μάλα πολλὰ....

63.

Substantially, however, in the question at issue between Mr Munro and Mr Spedding, I agree with Mr Munro. By the italicized words in the following sentence, ‘The rhythm of the Virgilian hexameter depends entirely on *cæsura*, *pause*, and a due arrangement of words’, he has touched, it seems to me, in the

constitution of this hexameter, the central point which Mr Spedding misses. The accent, or *heightened tone*, of Virgil in reading his own hexameters, was probably far from being the same thing as the accent or *stress* with which we read them. The general effect of each line, in Virgil's mouth, was probably therefore something widely different from what Mr Spedding assumes it to have been: an ancient's accentual reading was something which allowed the metrical beat of the Latin line to be far more perceptible than our accentual reading allows it to be.

On the question as to the *real* rhythm of the ancient hexameter, Mr Newman has in his *Reply* a page quite admirable for force and precision. Here he is in his element, and his ability and acuteness have their proper scope. But it is true that the *modern* reading of the ancient hexameter is what the modern hexameter has to imitate, and that the English reading of the Virgilian hexameter is as Mr Spedding describes it. Why this reading has not been imitated by the English hexameter, I have tried to point out in the text.

64.

Such a minor change I have attempted by occasionally shifting, in the first foot of the hexameter, the accent from the first syllable to the second. In the current English hexameter, it is on the first. Mr Spedding, who proposes radically to subvert the constitution of this hexameter, seems not to understand that anyone can propose to modify it partially; he can comprehend revolution in this metre, but

not reform. Accordingly he asks me how I can bring myself to say, '*Bé*tween that and the ships', or '*Thére* sat fifty men'; or how I can reconcile such forcing of the accent with my own rule, that 'hexameters must *read themselves*'. Presently he says that he cannot believe I do pronounce these words so, but that he thinks I leave out the accent in the first foot altogether, and thus get a hexameter with only five accents. He will pardon me: I pronounce, as I suppose he himself does, if he reads the words naturally, 'Be*tween* that and the ships', and 'There *sát* fifty men'. Mr Spedding is familiar enough with this accent on the second syllable in Virgil's hexameters; in 'et *té* montosæ', or 'Ve*ló*ces jaculo'. Such a change is an attempt to relieve the monotony of the current English hexameter by occasionally altering the position of one of its accents; it is not an attempt to make a wholly new English hexameter by habitually altering the position of four of them. Very likely it is an unsuccessful attempt; but at any-rate it does not violate what I think is the fundamental rule for English hexameters, that may be such as to *read themselves* without necessitating, on the reader's part, any non-natural putting-on or taking-off accent. Hexameters like these of Mr Longfellow,

'In that delightful land which is washed by the
Delaware's waters',

and,

'As if they fain would appease the Dryads,
whose haunts they molested',

violate this rule; and they are very common. I think the blemish of Mr Dart's recent meritorious version of the *Iliad* is that it contains too many of them.

65. As I welcome another more recent attempt in stanza,—Mr Worsley's version of the *Odyssey* in Spenser's measure. Mr Worsley does me the honour to notice some remarks of mine on this measure: I had said that its greater intricacy made it a worse measure than even the ten-syllable couplet to employ for rendering Homer. He points out, in answer, that 'the more complicated the correspondences in a poetical measure, the less obtrusive and absolute are the rhymes'. This is true, and subtly remarked; but I never denied that the single shocks of rhyme in the couplet were more *strongly felt* than those in the stanza; I said that the more frequent recurrence of the same rhyme, in the stanza, necessarily made this measure more *intricate*. The stanza repacks Homer's matter yet more arbitrarily, and therefore changes his movement yet more radically, than the couplet. Accordingly, I imagine a nearer approach to a perfect translation of Homer is possible in the couplet, well managed, than in the stanza, however well managed. But meanwhile Mr Worsley, applying the Spenserian stanza, that beautiful romantic measure, to the most romantic poem of the ancient world; making this stanza yield him, too (what it never yielded to Byron), its treasures of fluidity and sweet ease; above all, bringing to his task a truly poetical sense and

skill, has produced a version of the *Odyssey* much the most pleasing of those hitherto produced, and which is delightful to read.

For the public this may well be enough, nay, more than enough; but for the critic even this is not yet quite enough.

66.

I speak of poetic genius as employing itself upon narrative or dramatic poetry,—poetry in which the poet has to go out of himself and to create. In lyrical poetry, in the direct expression of personal feeling, the most subtle genius may, under the momentary pressure of passion, express itself simply. Even here, however, the native tendency will generally be discernible.

67.

‘And I have endured—the like whereof no soul upon the earth hath yet endured—to carry to my lips the hand of him who slew my child’.—*Iliad*, xxiv. 505.

68.

‘Nay and thou too, old man, in times past wert, as we hear, happy’.—*Iliad*, xxiv. 543. In the original this line, for mingled pathos and dignity, is perhaps without a rival even in Homer.

69.

’For so have the gods spun our destiny to us wretched mortals,—that we should live in sorrow; but they themselves are without trouble’.—*Iliad*, xxiv. 525.

70.
‘*I* wept not: so of stone grew I within:—*they* wept’.—*Hell*, xxxiii. 49 (Carlyle’s Translation, slightly altered).

- Transcriber’s Note:
  - Footnotes have been collected at the end of the text, and are linked for ease of reference.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ON TRANSLATING HOMER ***

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