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ARTICLE I.

THE HOMERIC QUESTION.<sup>1</sup>

By Professor William S. Tyler, Amherst College.

THE works, whose titles we have placed below, mark a new era in classical scholarship; an era signalized by the union of German learning with English common sense and practical wisdom. Germany is the land of scholars, but it is also the land of skeptics, theorizers, and dreamers. If German learning has passed into a proverb, German want of faith and ignorance of affairs, has become a byword. German scholars are the world's teachers in philology; but they need, themselves, to be taught the first principles of theology and anthropology. Prodigies in the knowledge of books, they are no less prodigies in that ignorance of themselves and of things around them, which necessarily involves a practical misunderstanding of past ages, and in that unbelief which is often connected with the excess of credulity.

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<sup>1</sup> History of Greece. By George Grote, Esq. Vol. II. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street. 1846. Part I. Legendary Greece.

A Critical History of the Language and Literature of Ancient Greece. By William Mure, of Caldwell. Second edition. Vol. I. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans. 1854.

They have almost revived the dead languages. They have almost reproduced the private life of the old Greeks and Romans. But they cannot understand the civil and political institutions of antiquity, because they have little or nothing to do with the government of their own country. And they have spread the mists and fogs of the dream-land, in which they live, over the ancient world, superseding its myths by more incredible fables of their own, substituting for its possible facts their own impossible fictions, turning history into poetry, and reducing poets to non-entities, and thus virtually annihilating both.

English scholars, on the other hand, have eschewed the wild speculations of their German cousins, but have been equally innocent of their comprehensive and profound scholarship. They have either confined their studies to mere words and metres; or, if they have launched out into the real life of antiquity, they have set out with too little capital to bring back a very valuable return-cargo; too often have gone out and returned with those strong social and political prejudices, which could not but mislead their explorations and blind their eyes to the true character of the people and their institutions.

But German scholarship is at length beginning to pervade the English mind; the minds of English merchants, gentlemen, and statesmen, as well as clergymen and scholars by profession. And the legitimate offspring of a union so auspicious is seen in such works as those of Bishop Thirlwall, Dr. Arnold, Mr. Grote, and Col. Mure.

Grote's *History of Greece*, though not entirely free from paradoxes and perhaps prejudices of its own, has exploded the monstrous misconceptions and misrepresentations of Mitford; and, rescuing the constitution and history of the Athenian Commonwealth, at once, from the darkness of ignorance and the grosser darkness of prejudice, has brought it out into the twofold light of the philology of the Teutonic, and the commerce and freedom of the Anglo-Saxon, race. The English tory and the German recluse are, alike, incapable of understanding Athens; it was reserved for an Eng-

lish Whig merchant and gentleman, saturated with the learning of Germany, to write her history. Not the politics only, but the literature of Greece, has been cast into the crucible of the English merchant-scholar; and the result, though we are sorry to say it is not wholly purified of the dross of German skepticism, is rich with the gold of true learning, and transparent as the crystal of good common sense. Recently completed, in twelve large octavo volumes, and reprinted in a compact and neat American edition, the History of Greece will gradually permeate the American mind with its juster ideas of the Athenian polity, and with its invaluable lessons of Grecian culture.

Mure's Critical History of the Language and Literature of Greece, is a more recent work, still unfinished, and comparatively little known in this country; though we trust, when it is completed, it will be republished and as extensively read as the History of Mr. Grote. Possessing the same familiar acquaintance with the results of German philology, and the same sterling good sense which distinguish the great historian; and, confining his attention to the *language* and *literature* of the Greeks, he has given us a more thorough and exhausting analysis of that literature; while, with a sturdy faith which it is refreshing to see combined with such entire candor, such profound research and so perfect a mastery of the subject, he resists and puts to rout the whole army of German literary skeptics, from Wolf to Nitzsch. The first four volumes, which have already appeared, bring the history down only so far as to include Herodotus. The first two volumes are taken up with the criticism of the Language and the Epic Poetry of the Greeks; the third, with Lyric Poetry and the early history of Writing; and the fourth, with Herodotus and the earlier Greek Prose compositions.

We do not propose to review both or either of these works; but rather to avail ourselves of them as an occasion and also as helps to review a subject which they have discussed at much length, namely, the Homeric Question.

The present seems to be a fit time for such a review.

Literary skepticism, in one of its forms at least, seems to have run its round even in Germany, and the cycle is coming to an end. The Wolfs and Heynes that contended for the equivocal honor of having originated it, have passed away, and there is no one to take up their mantle. The Hermanns and Lachmanns, who would recognize no man as a scholar who had not laid ruthless hands on some part of the Poems of Homer, or dissected some other sacred relic of antiquity — just as, among our American Indians, he is not counted a man, who cannot show his scalps — have, at length, scalped each other; and the land is no longer vexed with their unscrupulous and sacrilegious warfare. Nitzsch, “the last of the Mohicans,” formerly the most strenuous advocate of the Separatist theory, is now no less zealous in maintaining the one-authorship of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

So in Sacred Literature: aforesaid, in Germany, “a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees,” even the sacred cedars of Lebanon. Moses and Isaiah, like Homer and Hesiod, were robbed of their “lively oracles,” and of all but a dim, shadowy, and pitiable existence. But not a few of these famous robbers repented of their sacrilege, in their more advanced years; and a generation is now rising up which scarcely knows them: at the present moment, perhaps, the German mind is swinging from the extreme of skepticism towards the extreme of submission to authority.

There is a certain period in the life, as of an individual so of a nation, when there is a tendency to skepticism. Childhood believes implicitly. Youth doubts, disbelieves, misbelieves, runs into all sorts of wild vagaries. Mature manhood, in well-constituted minds, tends to that faith which is grounded partly in a believing disposition, and partly in knowledge and experience. The age of infidelity — of infidel writers and scholars — in England, came and passed away with the Eighteenth Century. It was not till the present century, that the same spirit, though in another form, reappeared in Germany; and there are not wanting indications that she may be exorcised of the evil spirit, in no

small measure, before the Nineteenth Century comes to a close. Such a period forms, if not an attractive, yet an instructive, chapter in the history of the human mind; and though our attention will be directed to a single phase of it, and that a literary one, still it is inseparably connected with a corresponding theological tendency, and therefore is not inappropriate to the pages of this Journal.

In few words, the Homeric Question is simply this: Were the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in substantially their present form, the production of a single author? The question resolves itself into two parts: Was each of the poems, separately considered, the work of a single poet? And allowing this to be the fact, were both the work of one and the same poet?

To the first question, antiquity returned but one answer. Without a dissenting voice, all who spoke the Greek, and all who spoke the Latin tongue, recognized unity of design and unity of authorship in each of these great poems. Homer wrote the *Iliad*, the whole *Iliad*, and the *Iliad* as a whole. Homer, the same Homer or another, wrote the *Odyssey* also, as a single, connected poem. On this point, no Greek or Roman ever whispered a doubt.

At the earliest period in Grecian history, of which we have any record, both these poems, together with several others which have not come down to us, but which, we know from contemporary notices, related to the same subject and were often rehearsed in connection with them, passed unquestioned under the common name of Homeric poems. In the golden age of prose composition, however (and the fact is worthy of notice as showing that Herodotus and Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, were not so utterly devoid of critical discernment as they are sometimes represented), the inferiority, of these secondary poems, to the great primaries about which they revolved, was so clearly seen, that they felt under the necessity of referring them to different authors, while they appropriated to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* alone the illustrious name of Homer. It was not till the time of the Alexandrian Grammarians, that the first doubt was ever raised, so far as we know, whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

both proceeded from the same mind. Only two names (Xenon and Hellanicus) are mentioned as advocates of the new heresy; and those two rescued from oblivion only by the answers to their novel opinions. With the solitary exception of these two men and their few and unknown followers (called the *Chorizontes* or Separatists), the whole succession of the Alexandrian Grammarians, with Zenodotus, Aristophanes, and Aristarchus at their head, to whom we are indebted for the standard ancient edition of Homer, agreed with the unanimous voice of the long line of poets, historians, orators, and philosophers, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not only each the work of a single author, but both the production of one and the same great poet.

This unanimous sentiment of Grecian antiquity, was as unanimously received by Roman authors, by Byzantine grammarians, by scholars in the Middle Ages and after the revival of letters; until, towards the close of the Seventeenth Century, "certain novelties of opinion began to transpire," and several writers in several countries, Perrault and Hedelin in France, Bentley in England, and Vico in Italy, expressed, at different times and in different degrees, their doubts as to the truth of the received doctrine. Perrault (*Parallele des Anciennes et des Moderns* : 1688) suggested that the poems of Homer are but a collection of many little poems of different authors. Hedelin (*Dissertation sur l'Iliad* : 1715) went so far as to deny the personal existence of Homer. Bentley (*Reply to Collins's Discourse on Free Thinking* : 1713) says : "Homer wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies. These loose songs were not collected together, into the form of an Epic poem, until five hundred years later." Vico (*Principii di Una Scienza Nuova* : 1725) says : "Homer left none of his compositions in writing, as we are told by Flavius Josephus, in his Tract against Apion; but the rhapsodists went about singing the works separately, some one, some another, at the feasts and public solemnities of the Greek cities. The Pisistratidæ first divided and arranged, or caused to be so arranged, the poems of Homer into the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, whence we may judge what a confused

collection of materials they must previously have been." In 1770, Robert Wood, in that "Essay on the Original Genius of Homer," which set the example of studying the Iliad itself on the ground where the scene was laid in order to a determination of the vexed questions touching the time and place of the poet's birth, argued more at length the position that he could not have committed his poems to writing, because the art of writing was of subsequent invention. But these suggestions were little heeded by their countrymen and contemporaries; and the current of opinion flowed on, undisturbed, in its old channel.

They were destined, however, to find a more fortunate, if not a more able, advocate in an age and country more favorable to the propagation of novel opinions. That country was Germany; that age was the close of the Eighteenth Century; and that advocate was F. A. Wolf. Combining the suggestions of Bentley, Vico, and Wood, and expanding them into an elaborate argument, he brought out, in 1795, his famous *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, which, borne on the wings of the controversy between himself and Heyne, who disputed not the truth of the theory, but the honor of having originated it, soon wafted it to every corner of Germany. Self-consistent only in *always denying* the proper unity of the poems, Wolf usually maintains the theory of separate and independent lays, first compiled into one epopee by Pisistratus, who was also the first to commit them to writing; but he sometimes seems to admit the existence of a primitive nucleus, which, by successive accretions, grew at length, in the days of the same Pisistratus, into the form and size of the present Iliad and Odyssey; and sometimes he argues the question, whether the two poems are by the same Homer or by different Homers; thus apparently conceding a real existence and a real author to each. In like manner, his followers, agreeing only in the negative part of his theory, have held the most opposite opinions as to the actual constitution and history of the poems; nearly all, however, withholding their assent to the extravagant part which he assigned to *Pisistratus* in their composition; and the gene-



ral tendency of his earlier followers being towards the disintegration, and that of the later towards the reintegration, of the poems; in other words, the former generally tending to depart more widely from the received doctrine, and the latter inclining more towards a return to the established faith. The extreme of the former tendency is reached by Lachmann (*Betrachtungen über die Ilias*), who has resolved the Iliad into fifteen originally distinct and, as he thinks, clearly defined lays. Heyne, Hermann, Thiersch, W. Müller, and F. Schlegel lean in the same direction. The opposite tendency is seen, in different degrees, in K. O. Müller, Ulrici, Welcker, Lange, and Nitzsch. The same individual who was, at first, swept away by the tide of innovation, has, in some instances, come back on the returning wave. The change of Göthe's opinions, in this direction, is recorded in one of his latest works (*Homer noch einmal*);<sup>1</sup> and Nitzsch has battled against "the extreme left" of the followers of Wolf, till, from being the zealous advocate of the Separatist Theory, he has become the no less strenuous and able champion of the one-authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey, though he still maintains that there have been large interpolations and additions to the primitive poems.

Out of Germany, the hypothesis of separate and independent lays, has met with little favor. English scholars, with scarcely an exception, hold to the unity of the Odyssey substantially in its present form. They maintain, also, the unity of the Iliad, though some of them do it with less confidence, and only with important modifications. Grote thinks the latter poem an *Achilleid* subsequently enlarged into an Iliad by additions, amounting in all to nearly half of the entire poem. The Odyssey he holds to be a later production and by another author; in which view he was preceded by Richard Payne Knight (*Prolegomena ad Homerum*) and Henry Nelson Coleridge (*Study of the Greek Classics*). Clinton (*Fasti Hellenici*, Vol. I.) and Mure defend, strenuously, the old doctrine of the one-authorship of

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<sup>1</sup> See Grote's *History of Greece*, Part I., Chap. 21.

both the poems, though the latter was originally, "like most young scholars, a zealous disciple of the Wolfian school, till he was led, by a twenty years' diligent scrutiny of its doctrines, to a thorough conviction of their fallacy."

The historical evidence, which Wolf adduces in support of his hypothesis of a chaotic Iliad and Odyssey reduced to order and committed to writing, for the *first time, under the Pisistratidæ*, so far from sustaining it, implies a pre-existing unity, which was only restored and enforced by Pisistratus and his successors;<sup>1</sup> and this hypothesis is so improbable in itself, as well as so contradictory to the best authorities, that, in its primary Wolfian form, it now numbers few, if any supporters. "Xenophanes of Colophon and Theagenes of Rhegium, both contemporary with Pisistratus, wrote commentaries on Homer. But a written commentary on a work itself unwritten, is surely a thing unheard of."<sup>2</sup> If authorities are to be consulted, there is none better than Aristotle; and he represents Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, as "having in the course of his travels, received the poems as written documents from Creophilus of Samos, and brought them to Lacedæmon, centuries prior to the time of Pisistratus."<sup>3</sup>

The followers of Wolf, while they, for the most part, abandon the Pisistratian part of his hypothesis, and refer to an earlier period and to a succession of bards, the reduction, or rather the gradual growth, of the Homeric poems into their present form, still avail themselves of his arguments, together with others of their own, against the original unity and the proper Homeric authorship of the Iliad and Odyssey. These arguments have a wide bearing on sacred as well as classical literature and antiquities; and, in this point of view, as well as because they belong to the history of "the Homeric Question," they must here be briefly stated and canvassed.

The grand historical argument on which they rely is, first, the alleged fact, that the Iliad and Odyssey were not

<sup>1</sup> See Grote's History of Greece, Part I., Chap. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Mare*, Vol. I., p. 207. Where see authorities.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

originally committed to writing, since writing was not in common use at so early a period; and then the inference, that they were not originally composed in their present form and compass, since poems so long could not be composed without the aid of writing.

In proof of the alleged fact, the evidence brought forward is, concisely, as follows :

1. No inscription is known to exist of a date prior to the fortieth Olympiad, B. C. 620.

2. Papyrus, the only suitable material which the Greeks had for writing long poems upon, was not easily accessible to them, till the reign of Psammetichus, king of Egypt, B. C. 650, and not plenty, as some maintain, till a century later, in the reign of Amasis.

3. Prose composition was not practised in Greece till the time of the Seven Sages, B. C. 600.

4. The Homeric poems themselves make but a single allusion to writing, even in its rudest form; and that single passage is of doubtful import.

5. The flexibility and freedom of the Homeric language, its license of metrical usage, particularly in contracting and resolving vowels, proves that it was, as yet, unwritten.

6. The Æolic digamma existed, as a consonant sound, at the time of the composition of the poems, but does not appear in the written copies, and therefore must have vanished from the language in the interval between their composition and their reduction to a written form.<sup>1</sup>

7. The authors of epic verse, in the Homeric age, are not called writers, or even poets, but singers (*ἀοιδοί*). They invoke the aid of the Muses, "daughters of memory;" and blindness, so far from being a disqualification for the functions of a bard, seems rather to have been commonly associated with the popular idea of the office.

This seven-fold array of arguments wears a somewhat for-

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<sup>1</sup> The fifth and sixth arguments have been insisted on chiefly by critics later than Wolf, especially by Richard Payne Knight, and Giese (de Dial. Æol.). The first four were brought forward by Wolf himself. The seventh is urged with considerable force by Grote.

midable appearance. Some concede the point, that the Homeric poems were not originally written, who still maintain their original unity. Grote comes to the conclusion, that they were probably not committed to writing till about the middle of the seventh century B. C. (660–630.)

Before proceeding to examine the validity of these arguments, it should be distinctly understood, what is the point in dispute. We freely admit, and fully believe, that the Homeric poems were usually recited, and not read, for some time after their original composition; and whenever they were, for the first time, committed to writing, it was probably not so much for the sake of finding readers, as for the convenience of reciters. Thus much is now generally conceded by intelligent advocates of the one-authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. We even confess to a spontaneous conviction, a sort of instinctive feeling, whenever we read the poems, that they were not only composed for hearers, instead of readers, but that they were originally composed in the mind of the poet without the constraint and hindrance of writing as he composed. But that they were not committed to writing, and could not have been, by the author, or any one else in his age — this, we are far from admitting. It is essential to the validity of these arguments against the received doctrine, that they not only show the improbability, but the impossibility, of a written *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the Homeric age. This is the real issue now before us; and this, the arguments above enumerated are by no means sufficient to demonstrate.

1. *Inscriptions.* Not one in a thousand of the inscriptions, which existed in *historical* times, have come down to us through the wreck of conquests and the wear of ages, that have passed over Greece. Is it then incredible, that there may have been hundreds in *ante-historical* times, and yet not one of them be now extant? That inscriptions were common in the age of Solon (B. C. 600), we know from his law prohibiting the erasure of them. And we have the best authority that can be found among Greek authors — the authority of Herodotus, Aristotle, Plutarch, and Pausanias, for

inscriptions, reaching back as far as the first Olympiad (B. C. 776), and even as early as the age of Iphitus and Lycurgus (B. C. 850-825).<sup>1</sup> But were this claim admitted in its fullest extent, it would by no means follow, that there were not written books at an earlier date. "Niebuhr has shown that written books existed in Rome under the Tarquins; but the date of the oldest extant Latin inscription is later by several centuries, than the expulsion of the kings;"<sup>2</sup> and the oldest extant specimens of Hebrew epigraphy are later, by five hundred years, than the Psalms of David, and nearly a thousand years later than the books of Moses.

2. Writing materials. The commercial factories of the Greeks established at the mouth of the Nile, in the reign of Psammetichus, introduced into Greece a more *copious supply* of papyrus; but it was known, though "*scarce*,"<sup>3</sup> at a still earlier period; and, prior to the introduction of papyrus, parchment was in so common use for written books, that books were still called parchments (*διφθέρα*) by the Ionians,<sup>4</sup> two centuries after parchment had been superseded by the cheaper and more convenient Egyptian material. Moreover, the Hebrews, Phœnicians, and other Aramæan nations, from whom the Greeks derived the use of parchment, together with alphabetic writing itself, had written books — had quite a body of poetical and even historical literature, while they had no better supply of writing-materials than the Greeks.

3. Prose composition. The preference of poetical or prose composition depends on the taste of the people, not on the extent to which writing and writing-materials prevail; as is shown by the comparison just adverted to between the

<sup>1</sup> A full citation of authorities, in an argument so comprehensive and so condensed as this, would occupy almost as much space as the argument itself, and would be of little interest to our readers. See, on this subject of early alphabetic writing, Hug *Erfindung der Buchstabenschrift*, Kreuser, *Vorfragen über Homeros*, and especially Mure, Vol. III., pp. 397 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Rom. Geschich.*, Vol. I., p. 526. See Mure, Vol. III., p. 441.

<sup>3</sup> Herod., 4. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Herod. *Ibid.* So the Latin *libri* proves the existence of books written on bark, before the *βιβλος* of the Egyptians and the Greeks was introduced among the Romans.

Greeks, whose early literary productions were all epic poems, and the Hebrews and other neighboring nations in the East, whose early literature, though they were no better provided with writing-materials, was for the most part historical prose. At the same time, there can be no reasonable doubt, that "epistolary or diplomatic correspondence, oracular edicts, public records, codes of laws, and other strictly useful documents, in Greece, were written in prose, from a very remote period"—long prior to that of the Seven Wise Men.<sup>1</sup>

4. Homeric allusions to writing. Suppose there were not a single allusion to writing, in the entire poems (a question which we waive for the present), would this suffice to disprove its existence? The argument from silence, if it proves anything, proves the poet's entire ignorance of any such *thing* as writing. But who can credit such entire ignorance of a bard who had wandered over all the shores and islands of the Ægean, and "seen the cities and manners of many men," in an age, when the arts were so far advanced, when the kindred arts of casting, carving, tapestry-weaving, and embroidery, were so well understood! The argument from silence would prove the entire abstinence of Homer's heroes, at their common meals and at their festivals, from those universal articles of good cheer, boiled flesh, fish, game, poultry, and not a few other things, to which he happens to make no allusion, but which are common in every age. The argument from silence would prove the poet's ignorance of painting, and its entire absence, in that age, even from the palaces of kings—an art of far more poetical interest than writing, more likely to attract the attention and excite the interest of the personages, especially, of the *Odyssey*, and less likely to be passed over in silence by the poet. "If Helen, in spite of the poet's silence as to painting, could embroider, on a large piece of tapestry, the adventures of the Trojan war, Homer, in spite of his silence as to writing, might record them on a few large sheets of diphthera."<sup>2</sup>

5. Homeric license. "The text of Chaucer, between

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Pyth. Orac.* See Mure, Vol. III., p. 458; and below, p. 698.

<sup>2</sup> See Mure, Vol. III., p. 481.

whom and Homer there are various other features of analogy, presents a mass of poetical and grammatical licenses, rivalling or even surpassing those of the Iliad and Odyssey."<sup>1</sup> Does this prove an unwritten "Canterbury Tales?"

6. The Æolic digamma. "The digamma never, at any period, either in Ionia, Bœotia, or Æolia, in the epic poetry of Homer or Hesiod, or in the lyric odes of Alcæus or Sappho, formed a necessary ingredient of manuscript orthography. The reason, also, is apparent. Being not a proper consonant, but a mere liquid element, the powers of which could be sustained, or dispensed with, at the discretion of the poet, it seemed more elegant as well as convenient to omit it constantly, than to insert it constantly, where its effects were so inconstant." Such is the conclusion at which Mure arrives, at the end of a very elaborate discussion of the subject, in his Appendix; and though we had been accustomed to concede not a little weight to this argument of Payne Knight, and others, we do not see how Mure's arguments and conclusions can well be invalidated.

7. Blind bards, and Memory the Mother of the Muses. It is not denied that the early epic poets were singers, nor that they sung their poems from memory, and therefore invoked the aid of Mnemosyne and the Muses. But this would not of itself demonstrate, even in regard to the earliest, that they never committed their productions to writing. Still less would the same usage, when adopted by their successors, authorize any such inference. It became a fixed usage, of epic and lyric verse, to invoke the aid of the Muses; a practice which lasted not only through all periods of Greek and Roman literature, but has been perpetuated in modern poetry, and has not become obsolete even in these days of printing by steam. Why does no one argue an unwritten Æneid from the "*Arma virumque cano*" of Virgil; or an unwritten Paradise Lost, from the blindness of Milton and his repeated invocations of the Muses? The History of Herodotus was rehearsed at the Olympic Games; and his

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<sup>1</sup> Mure, Appendix, Vol. III., p. 519.

nine books have come down to us bearing the names of the nine Muses. At the same time, we know they were also written. As for those who can believe that Homer himself was *always* blind, we can only say, with Paterculus, that they must themselves be blind in all their senses.

In opposition to these arguments, thus susceptible of explanation, and in proof of the actual existence of writing in the Homeric age, we have the following facts and authorities :

1. The unquestionable existence and common practice of writing, at a still earlier period, among the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Hebrews, and the Phœnicians, as is proved by the extant literature, or by the ancient monuments of those nations ; and the acknowledged existence of written books, among the Romans, in the earliest periods of their history, under the government of the kings.<sup>1</sup> It is quite incredible that the quick-witted and early cultivated Greeks were behind the warlike and barbarous Romans ; were behind all their neighbors, on the West and on the East, in the use of letters ; so far behind those with whom they were connected, commercially and politically (to say nothing of a common origin and common alphabet), that they were ignorant of all literary use, if not of the very existence of letters, for centuries after those neighbors had them in constant use, in literary composition and in the transaction of business.

2. The tradition, that alphabetic writing was introduced into Greece from Phœnicia several centuries prior to the Trojan war, which is confirmed ; which, in all but the definite fixing of the time, is demonstrated to be a fact, by the manifest identity, in name and form, of most of the letters of the Greek alphabet with the Phœnician and the Hebrew. And, though the time of the introduction of letters from the East<sup>2</sup> is indefinite, there can be no doubt that it was at a very early period ; since, in the earliest period at which we

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 692.

<sup>2</sup> Mure interprets Cadmus as etymologically equivalent to *East-Man*, and so in itself expressive of the Eastern origin of those Cadmean colonies and influences, of which so many Greek writers have so much to say. Cf. Herod., 4, 147 ; Pausan. 3, 1, 7 ; Diod., 5, 58.



find any mention of alphabetic writing (in the seventh century before Christ), its introduction was referred back to a remote and immemorial antiquity. Moreover, the universal opinion in Greece — whatever difference there might be in regard to names and dates — the unanimous opinion ascribed the invention or the introduction of letters to the ante-Homeric age.

3. The letter or letters of Bellerophon (Il. 6. 168 seq.). The facts in this much-disputed matter are simply these: Bellerophon was falsely accused by Antea, wife of Prætus, king of Argos, precisely as Joseph was accused by Potiphar's wife — one of those innumerable incidents and illustrations of a primitive state of society by which the reader of the poems of Homer is perpetually reminded of the books of Moses. The king, wishing to dispose of him, and yet scrupling, himself, to lay violent hands on him, sends Bellerophon to his ally Iobates, king of Lycia, with a letter, directing that the bearer should be put to death. Was this a real letter, written in alphabetic characters, or were the characters mere cypher, hieroglyphics, or picture-writing? This is the point in dispute. In either case, it clearly answered all the purposes of a letter. On either supposition, it was a communication by signs, written or scratched<sup>1</sup> on a tablet, and sent to a person at a distance; and even if the signs were hieroglyphics or cypher, a people like the Greeks, who had advanced so far in the art, would not be long without alphabetic writing.

But the presumption is, that it was a real letter. It answered, as we have said, every purpose of a letter. The whole process of transmission and delivery is described just as if it were a letter. The Greek word by which it is designated (*σήμα*), though ambiguous in itself, yet being employed by the poet, both in the singular and the plural (the singular, *σήμα*, to denote the whole; and the plural, *σήματα*, to denote the parts which make up the whole), precisely as *γράμμα* and *γράμματα* were employed in the later Greek, *litera* and *literæ*

<sup>1</sup> The original word (*γράφας*) will bear either of these meanings, and in the connection must mean one or the other.

in the Latin, and *letter* and *letters* in English,—this fact, especially when taken in connection with the evidence already given that alphabetic writing was already known in Greece, creates a strong presumption that it was a real letter.

And this presumption is strengthened into an almost certainty, by two things, which are placed beyond dispute by the nature of the case or by the express declaration of the poet. 1. It was a *sealed* despatch, whose purport was concealed from the bearer, and that *not* by *unintelligible signs*, but by the *folding* of the material, ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῶ, *in a folded tablet*. This certainly looks more like ordinary letter writing, than cypher or hieroglyphics. 2. The contents of the despatch were *various, copious*, and intended to *provoke* Iobates to the execution of the order. The writer is expressly said to have “written in the folded tablet *many soul-harassing things*” (θυμοφθόρα πολλά);<sup>1</sup> that is, doubtless, a detailed account of the alleged crimes of Bellerophon, and the reasons why he should be put to death. How utterly inconsistent such copious detail is with the supposition of hieroglyphics or any form of picture-writing, need not be remarked. We have then, as we can scarcely doubt, an actual instance of alphabetic writing in the Iliad itself. For other less conspicuous allusions to written documents, in the Homeric poems, we must refer the reader to Mure.<sup>2</sup>

4. The law and practice of Ostracism, at Athens, implies the ability of the citizens generally to read and write, whenever it was introduced. At the latest, this cannot have been later, than the revision of the Athenian Constitution by Clisthenes<sup>3</sup> (B. C. 510). According to the more commonly received opinion, it was a provision in the laws of Solon. And this general ability to write, thus implied as existing or expected to exist, in the age of Solon, or, at the latest, in that

<sup>1</sup> This rendering of θυμοφθόρα, though different from that often given, is demanded by the etymology of the word, and by habitual Homeric usage. See Liddell and Scott, and places there cited. The plural form of πολλά implies variety as well as copiousness.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. III., p. 487 seq.

<sup>3</sup> See Grote's History.

of Clisthenes, could not have sprung up at once, like a mushroom from the earth. It must have been the growth of several generations, not to say several centuries.

The scytale (*σκυτάλη*), or parchment staff,<sup>1</sup> by which the Spartan magistrates sent despatches to the public servants abroad, implies the same ability, on the part of those who were eligible to the Spartan ephor-ship, that is, of all the citizens of that most illiterate of the Grecian States.<sup>2</sup> And this is alluded to as well known (so well known, that *σκυτάλη* had become another name for message), by Archilochus,<sup>3</sup> at the close of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh century before Christ. If such was the state of education in Sparta, in the time of Archilochus, we may well believe they might have had a written Homer in Athens and in Asiatic Greece in the age of Lycurgus and of the poet himself.

The same state of general education is implied by the written and posted laws of Solon, Draco, Lycurgus, and perhaps earlier lawgivers; by written oracles, treaties, records, and registers, in the temples and public archives, for which we have the testimony of the best Grecian authors;<sup>4</sup> by legal provisions for public education, and incidental allusions to schools<sup>5</sup> and public libraries; by the advanced state of the arts and sciences as far back even as Homer himself; by the tacit understanding as well as the explicit declarations of the whole succession of poets, historians, and philosophers, from Pindar and Hesiod<sup>6</sup> (not to say Homer)

<sup>1</sup> So called from *σκῆτος*, a skin. It was a staff, about which a long narrow strip of parchment was rolled *spirally*, and then the despatch was written on its surface; so that when unrolled, it would, of course, be illegible. Commanders and other public agents abroad had a precisely similar staff, about which they rolled the parchment, and thus the despatch became legible again.

<sup>2</sup> The Spartans did eschew *literary culture*, but were most carefully educated in all that was needful to qualify them for the duties of war and the state.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by the Scholiast on Pindar Ol., 6. 154.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 693, and Mure, Vol. III, p. 416 sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Herod., 6, 26; Aelian, Var. Hist., 7, 15; Athen., 1, 4; Anl. Gell., 6, 17; Herod., 5. 90.

<sup>6</sup> In Hesiod's *Maxims of Chiron*, a work of acknowledged high antiquity, and quoted and paraphrased by Pindar, it was enjoined that children should not be instructed in letters until seven years old. See Mure, Vol. III, p. 451.

downwards. Add to all this the direct authority of Aristotle, for a written Homer brought from Samos by Lycurgus,<sup>1</sup> and the universal belief in a written Homer, by Greek authors; and, though the authority and the belief might, of themselves, be insufficient to convince us; yet, when supported by such a variety and force of circumstantial evidence, does it not command our assent? Can we, at least, deny the possibility of a written Iliad and Odyssey?

5. The Homeric poems themselves, so far forth as they bear evidence of an original unity and extent too great to be secured, either in their composition or in their preservation, without the aid of writing; so far forth, these poems themselves go to prove the existence of writing in the Homeric age. This argument will have more or less weight with different individuals. In the estimation of some, it amounts almost to demonstration. Thus Hug, in his excellent treatise on Alphabetic Writing, reverses the reasoning of Wolf, and instead of disproving the integrity of the Iliad by denying the existence of writing, he infers the necessary existence of writing from the palpable unity of the Iliad. "Aristotle," he says, "has not erred, when he praised the perfect unity of the Iliad. It is incredible that a poem at once so unique and so complete, so admirable in its construction, so perfect in its minutest details, should have been produced without any aid from writing. It would be a miracle. To this art, then, is Homer indebted for his superiority over all his predecessors." And if we had to choose between the reasoning of Hug and that of Wolf, we should, by all means, adopt the former alternative. But we cannot think, that the unity of the Iliad is so indissolubly connected with alphabetic writing, that they must, of necessity, stand or fall together. Our reasons for this opinion, we will give presently. We only say, here, that so far forth, and so early, as we find proof of the existence of a poetical literature, whose unity, or whose aggregate amount forbids the supposition of their being composed or transmitted without the aid of writing, so far and

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 689 above.

so early we have a demonstration of the existence of writing. And when we take into consideration, not only the composition but the preservation of the Homeric poems, and not only the Homeric poems, but the half a dozen other poems,<sup>1</sup> of nearly equal length, which we know very early clustered around them, and also the rival school of Hesiodic poetry, all belonging to the same general and mythical age, we have an *aggregate amount* of literary productions, aside from of the length and unity of each particular poem, whose *preservation*, to say nothing of their original composition, without the aid of writing, would, in our estimation, be little short of a miracle.

In view of all these considerations, we cannot doubt the possibility, indeed, we cannot but maintain the probability, of a written Iliad and Odyssey, in the Homeric age; if not written by the poet himself in the process of composition, yet committed to writing by his contemporaries for the sake of a more perfect preservation of the poems.

But were we obliged to admit the improbability, or even the impossibility, of a written Iliad and Odyssey, we should not feel constrained to concede the impossibility of the composition of one or both of them by one author. Were the alleged fact of Wolf proved beyond a doubt, the inference which he drew from it, would by no means follow.

Even in these days of devices to aid, and thus to impair, the memory, there are not wanting instances of a power to remember, little if at all inferior to that ascribed to Homer. It is said of the late queen of Spain, that she had only to read or hear hundreds of verses of a poem she never heard of before, and she could repeat them, word for word, immediately, or weeks and months afterwards. And what is "to our purpose quite," Scaliger committed Homer, entire, to memory in twelve days, and all the Greek poets in three months. But not to instance persons of extraordinary capacity, clergymen who are in the habit of preaching from

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<sup>1</sup> For a full account of these poems, the Thebais, Epigoni, Cypria, Little Iliad, Ilii Persis, Nosti, etc., etc., see Mure, Vol. II., p. 248 sqq. He makes out ten or twelve Cyclic poems.

memory, with or without writing, require little or no direct effort beyond that of composition to commit their discourses to memory; and, by frequent delivery, a large number of discourses become so fixed in the memory; so incorporated, as it were, with their mental and physical constitution, that they know them, as the saying now is, by heart; or, as the Greeks say, ἀπὸ στόματος. The prodigious number of songs which the rhapsodists of Modern Greece treasure up in their memories and sing, to the lyre, at the *panegyris*, in the country villages, is an illustration, still more in point. And it is an interesting analogy between Modern and Ancient Greece, that there are still two classes of rhapsodists: those who sing their own productions, and those who sing the verses of others; and, that not a few of those who follow this profession, are blind.<sup>1</sup> Of two hundred and fifty specimens, in the Collection named below, one is supposed to date back as far as the middle of the sixteenth century, since which time it has been preserved *in writing*. The rest are unwritten; and the most ancient is said to be a century and a half old.

Instead of being neglected and despised, as it is by too many young men of *genius*, in our day, the memory was honored and cultivated by the great men of Greece and Rome as the foundation of their greatness. Great commanders, like Cyrus, Themistocles, and Lucullus, knew every soldier in their armies. Great civil as well as military officers, like Scipio and Adrian, knew all the people of Rome. Great orators, like Carneades, could rehearse the contents of almost any book to be found in the libraries, as if they were reading. Great philosophers, like Seneca, by the mere force of unaided memory, were able to repeat two thousand words upon once hearing them, each in its order, though they had no natural connection with each other. It was no strange thing for educated men, at Athens, to know the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by heart.<sup>2</sup> And this in an age of books, written records, and all sorts of substitutes for the memory, and by

<sup>1</sup> Faurel's Introduction to his *Chants Populaires de la Grèce Moderne*.

<sup>2</sup> Xen. *Symp.*, 3, 5.

practical men, with whom the cultivation of the memory was a secondary thing.

Who, then, can set bounds to this faculty, in an age when the memory of the bard is not only the library, but the archives of the nation; when recitation is a profession, and memory the chief study; when Mnemosyne is honored, by rehearsers and hearers, as the Mother of the Muses; and the singer of his own verses, or those of others, is the pride of the people, the favorite of kings and princes, the ornament and glory of the festivals of the gods! If Scaliger could learn the poems of Homer by heart, in twelve days, could not Homer himself compose and preserve them in his own memory? Composition is not a hindrance, but a help, to remembrance. To compose, with many preachers and public speakers, is to remember; and their memory is the storehouse of all their oft-repeated productions. How much more may this be true; how much more must it have been true of the composer and public rehearser of verse in a primitive age? Of course, we are not to suppose that Homer threw off the *Iliad* at a single heat, perhaps not in a single year. It grew as he rehearsed it; and he rehearsed it as it grew; till it became, as it were, a part of himself; and he could no more forget it, than his right hand could forget her cunning. At the same time, if we could suppose he needed any help in remembering the successive parts as he composed, or the entire poem when it was finished, a whole tribe of rhapsodists — the Phemii and the Demodoci of the age — stood ready to aid him. Indeed, willing or unwilling, they could not be restrained from catching his inspired utterances, as they fell from his lips, and rehearsing them for the entertainment of the circles in which they respectively moved.

There is, then, no impossibility or violent improbability in either of the alternatives, which Wolf so stoutly denies. The Homeric poems might have been committed to writing, in the Homeric age; and they might have been composed without the aid of writing. We have dwelt on these points at considerable length, partly because of the great importance which has been attached to them as the main argu-

ments against the integrity of the Iliad and Odyssey; but partly, also, because they are, in themselves, questions of great interest, whose influence, according as they are seen in a true or a false light, must extend over the entire field of ancient literature, and effect the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, not less than the credit of Greek poetry.

The way is now clear for us to interrogate the poems themselves, and examine impartially the internal evidence of unity or diversity of authorship, which they present in their own structure. And here several facts require to be noted as preliminary to this inquiry, or rather as indirect testimony.

1. The Iliad and Odyssey have been recognized, ever since the days of Aristotle,<sup>1</sup> as not only each the production of a single author, but as the standard of epic unity for all time. That this is a fact, none will deny. It seems to us, also, to be a fact of some significance, entitled to some consideration even in this age of profound critical erudition, and more profound critical self-complacency. The prince of Greek philosophers had some acquaintance with the language and literature of the Greeks. The father of ancient and modern science, the classifier and systematizer of all knowledge, the most analytic and comprehensive mind of ancient times, not to say of all ages, had some idea of epic unity. The masters of the Alexandrian school had some critical acumen. The sacramental host of Greek authors and scholars knew something of the contents and spirit of the Greek Bible. Athens, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Modern Europe, were not entirely blind to the true character of the Homeric poems before the dawn of the Eighteenth Century. The superiority of our age, in critical acumen and philological learning, is not denied. But it may be doubted whether the *minute critics* of the day are not as blind to the soul of ancient poetry as the *minute philosophers* are to the spirit of true religion. The eye may be so trained to the discernment of microscopic objects, as to become incapable of wide views, to say nothing of telescopic vision. The ear may be so filled with

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<sup>1</sup> See Aris. Poetic, passim.



gross earthly sounds, as to be deaf to the music of the spheres.

2. The rank which literary men, in all ages, have agreed in assigning to the Homeric poems, is irreconcilable with the theory of several authors. The age or the country has usually been deemed singularly fortunate, which has produced one Homer. That any one country or any one age should have produced twenty Homers, or twenty poets (call them by what name you will), of the very same, and that the very highest, order of poetical excellence, is utterly incredible. That all these poets, of the very first order of original genius, should have confined their lays to one war, and to a very small portion of that war, is still more incredible. And that Pisistratus, or some nameless bard or scribe of his day, could have brought twenty different lays of twenty different Homers into an epic, to which all men of taste and learning, for twenty-five centuries, should ascribe the palm of genius and poetical excellence, is most incredible of all. As well might the Parthenon have been constructed from materials planned by twenty different architects, for twenty different edifices. We cannot conceive of a perfect work of art being produced in any such manner. It were too much like supposing the world we live in to have been put together by a creature, from twenty little worlds, made by twenty different creators. The creature who could do such a work, were more wonderful than all the original creators. And if we believed that Pisistratus, or any man of his day, rendered such a service, as some suppose, to the Iliad and Odyssey, we should think him the most remarkable man that ever lived. We should honor *him* as our Homer. Nay, we should worship him as the "Magnus Apollo" of the literary pantheon.

No more can we conceive of a master-piece of poetical genius and art *growing*, as the Iliad and Odyssey are represented in the more recent and more popular form of that theory, to have grown out of some greater or smaller lay, under the hand of successive bards, through successive generations. As well might we conceive the Parthenon, as hav-

ing power, by successive additions or enlargements of the primitive plan, under the direction of successive architects, till what was a small temple or a rude hut, in the days of Solon, stood forth, in the age of Pericles, as it has stood ever since, the admiration and study of the world.

The two ideas—such a work and such workmen; such a production and such a process—are incompatible. Accordingly we find, as might be expected, that just in proportion to the amount of patch-work which each man's particular form of the theory presupposes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in just the same proportion the advocates of the new theory are disposed to depreciate the perfection of the poems.

3. The authority, which has always been conceded to the Homeric poems, as correct representations, if not of the geography and history, yet of the manners and customs, of Greece in the heroic age, is inconsistent with the hypothesis of diverse and successive authors. As early as the time of Solon, a line of Homer was sufficient to settle a disputed territory, or a contested succession. Solon himself is charged with having interpolated a verse "for the sake of gaining a disputed point against the Megarians, who, on their side, set forth another version."<sup>1</sup> The Greek historians habitually refer to Homer as the standard authority in Grecian Antiquities;<sup>2</sup> and Strabo, the father of Greek Geography, reposes more confidence in Homer than in Herodotus, Ctesias, and Hellenicus. Modern critics, Wolf and his followers not excepted, not only see, in the Homeric poems, a faithful mirror of life and manners in the heroic age, but appeal to his speech or his silence as the standard authority in reference to the dialects, races, names, and migrations of the ancient Greeks. How this accords with the idea that they are the mere patch-work of a dozen or twenty different authors, belonging to as many different times and places, or that they were the growth of successive ages, down to that of Solon or Pisistratus, it is difficult to see.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch's Solon. See Grote, Part I., Chap. 21. Interpolated into what according to the Wolfian hypothesis?

<sup>2</sup> E. g. Thucyd., 1, 8.

But so far forth as the authority of the poems, in such matters, is relied on, so far forth their substantial unity is, *ipso facto*, acknowledged. For example : the absence, from either poem, of the names Hellas for Greece, of Hellene for its inhabitants, and of Peloponnesus for its southern peninsula, proves the non-application of those names *then*, and *then only*, when the poems were written ; in other words, proves the usage in question *just as far*, and *no farther*, than it proves the substantial integrity of the poems.

In proportion as the testimony of the poems is one, the presumption is, that they proceeded from the same age and the same author. And, in proportion to the intrinsic improbability of the facts in which the poems agree throughout, the improbability increases that they could have proceeded from different authors in different ages. The omission, whether owing to ignorance or to whatever cause, of all reference to the use of cavalry in war ; and the exclusion of boiled meat, game, and other articles of good cheer, from the table of the heroes : these, and the like negative peculiarities, in the poet's account of manners and institutions, singular enough in one Homer, become quite inexplicable and incredible when extended to a combination of a dozen or a score of authors, and those scattered along through several successive generations. <sup>1</sup>

4. The manner in which the Iliad and Odyssey were treated by the poets of the epic cycle, proves their existence in substantially their present form, in the time of those poets ; that is, as early as the First Olympiad. " Those poems, unfortunately, no longer exist in their integrity. Several of them, however, as may be collected from their remains, or the notices concerning them, contained in the choice of their subject and mode of treatment, proofs of a systematic imitation of the Iliad and Odyssey, and, by consequence, of a familiarity with their text, as already extant in the form in which we now possess it. While a veneration for the great master induced the disciples or imitators to select subjects

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<sup>1</sup> See these and other similar points well presented in Mure, Vol. I., p. 224.

connected with those on which he had shed lustre, a similar feeling, or the fear of entering into competition with him, also led them to avoid encroaching on the ground he had occupied. Arctinus, the next most celebrated poet of the school, took up, in his *Æthiopis*, the series of adventures before Troy, precisely at the stage in which the *Iliad* ceases, and carried them on to the death of Ajax. The *Lesser Iliad* continued the interrupted tale to the fall of the city, which catastrophe was also treated, by Arctinus, in a work entitled *The Destruction of Troy*.<sup>1</sup> The author of *The Cypria* treated the previous subject from the birth of Helen, and brought it down to the exact epoch at which the *Iliad* commences. The *Nosti* filled up the interval between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Each of these works, while vastly inferior, both in design and execution, to their two prototypes, emulated at least the comprehensive scope of their action, borrowing also much of their own epic machinery, such as catalogues of warriors, quarrels among the chiefs, funeral games, and other similar details.”<sup>2</sup>

5. Those who deny the one-authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, do not allege that there is any marked discrepancy of matter or manner, of style or spirit, between the two poems, still less between the different parts of the same poem. On the contrary, they acknowledge a remarkable uniformity and consistency in the pictures of society, in the portraiture of character, in the very genius and spirit, as well as the style and sentiment, of the poems; while, at the same time, they recognize a broad line of separation, in these respects, between the Homeric poems and the other Greek poets. “Immo,” says Wolf, in his *Prolegomena*, “congruunt in iis omnia ferme in idem ingenium, in eosdem mores, in eandem formam sentiendi et loquendi.”<sup>3</sup>

Now who would ever think of imputing such similarity,

<sup>1</sup> *Ilii-Persis*. The *Lesser* or *Little Iliad* was probably by Lesches of Lesbos. These inferior poets were very far from treating each other with the same deference with which they all treated the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. They did not scruple to handle the same subject which had already been handled by their brethren.

<sup>2</sup> Mure, Vol. I., p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> To the same purport is the language of Hermann, *Opusc.* Vol. VI., p. 72.

may such identity, to the productions of Shakspeare and those of the other dramatic writers of his day; to the writings of Milton and those of his contemporaries; to the works of any great poetical genius of modern times, and those of any, even the best, authors of the same age! We have not been accustomed to think so lightly of the difference between genius and mediocrity, or between the highest poetical excellence and the nearest approaches to it. It is not so easy a thing to rival Shakspeare in delineation of character, Milton in sublimity of thought and language, or even Pope in sweetness of versification; still less, to vie with Homer in the combination of all these excellences. As well might fowls of every feather flock around the bird of Jove and soar, with him, to the sun! Let the opponents of the integrity of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* undertake to manufacture, out of the whole compass of English or German poetry, two epics of fifteen thousand lines, that should wear, throughout, the air of consistency and uniformity which they themselves concede to these poems, "*idem ingenium, eosdem mores, eandem formam sentiendi et loquendi!*"

Sudet multum frustra que laboret,  
Ausus idem.

And the argument for the integrity of each poem is strengthened rather than weakened by the distinction which these critics sometimes labor to establish between the two poems. This twofold separation of the Homeric poems, first from all other Greek poetry, and secondly from each other, must rest, if it has any basis, on a twofold unity: the one of a more general nature, and the other of a more specific kind; and what can these be, but the former identity of authorship, and the latter identity of plan?

Genius may be unequal to, and even inconsistent with, itself; but mediocrity never can be equal to genius. Hence, as Mure well argues, similarity of genius, style, and spirit, affords much stronger proof of identity of authorship than dissimilarity does of diversity. The discrepancies which are so much insisted on in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, are chiefly

those petty anachronisms and self-contradictions, and those slight diversities of style or sentiment, which are incident to human imperfection on the one hand, or which, on the other, genius overlooks, and even exults in as the very element of freedom and the proof of superiority to those minute accuracies which shackle ordinary mortals.

For example, the *Teicho-scopia*, in the Third Book of the *Iliad*, represents Helen on the Wall, pointing out the Grecian heroes to Priam and his counsellors, as if they had hitherto been strangers to each other, and were now brought face to face for the first time. Yet we learn, from the complaints of the desponding commander-in-chief of the Grecian army, in the Second Book, that they had already been encamped before Troy for nine long years. And this accords with the plan of the poem, the turning-point in which is the slaying of Hector, as the immediate consequence of the reconciliation of the chiefs, and thus (in the fall of its chief defender) a preparation for the speedy downfall of the city. The inconsistency is not perhaps so great, in reality, as at first view it appears to be; since we know that, after the first conflicts in the open field, finding themselves unable to cope with their adversaries in pitched battle, the Trojans retired within the walls, and the most enterprising of the Greeks, with Achilles at their head, gave themselves up to the conquest and sacking of the neighboring towns, that were less strongly fortified.<sup>1</sup> It is not therefore impossible, or improbable, that in the tenth year of the war the forms and features of the Grecian chiefs should be far from familiar to the king and counsellors of Troy. Still we do not believe that Homer felt the necessity of any such justification of the *Teicho-scopia*; and we do not regard this as the true explanation of the apparent inconsistency. It was fitting that, at an early stage in the poem, and especially on the eve of a single combat between the rival claimants to the hand of Helen, Helen herself, the object of the strife, should be introduced. A bird's-eye view of the scene of conflict, and the principal

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<sup>1</sup> *Il.*, 9, 352 sqq.; 328 sqq. et passim.

actors in it, was also appropriate to the same stage of the grand epic. The poet, with characteristic skill, seizes on the period of inaction, while Hector is sending to Troy and making arrangements for the single combat between Paris and Menelaus, and introduces the scene on the Wall, at the West Gate, to fill up the interval. In short, the Teichoscopia fills its place in the Book and in the Poem as perfectly as the grand gateway formed the entrance to the cella of the Parthenon. And this was all the poet thought of, or cared for. It was *poetically* true, proper, and probable; and he never raised the question whether it was historically accurate. At the same time, he does not entirely forget himself. That the Teichoscopia belongs to the same advanced stage of the war with the rest of the poem, is implied in the *πολὸν χρόνον* (v. 157) during which the Greeks and Trojans had been struggling for the possession of such a prize, and in the changes and deaths which had taken place since Helen left her native land (v. 243). And that it belongs, like all the other books, between the first and the eighteenth, to the period of Achilles's non-participation in the strife, appears from the fact that *he*, the son of a goddess, and the universally acknowledged champion of the Greeks, is not seen among the heroes on the plain.

The same remarks apply to the detailed and admirable story of old Nestor as he is seen, by Agamemnon, marshalling and haranguing his troops, as if it were the first time he had ever drawn them out, in order of battle, on the plain of Troy; a story, historically speaking, out of place in the tenth year of the war, and yet poetically true to the character of the Pylian sage, and perfectly appropriate to its place in the *plan of the poem*.<sup>1</sup>

The chronological discrepancies between the different parts of the *Odyssey* — such, for instance, as the want of synchronism between the voyage of Telemachus and the return of Ulysses — may, with strong probability, be referred to mere inadvertence. It is at least doubtful whether the poet was

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<sup>1</sup> Il. 4, 292 sqq.

conscious of any discrepancy. No simple reader and admirer of the poem would be likely to notice it. And none but a critic who looked more at the arithmetic than at the poetry; none but an anatomical student, who has dissected the poem, instead of gazing on its living form and features, would deem it any blot on the fair proportions of the *Odyssey*.

As to the differences in style, manners, and mythology, between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, they have been partly exaggerated; and, in part, they admit of a ready explanation. It has been said, for instance, that the language of the *Odyssey* is more cultivated and refined than that of the *Iliad*; the state of society more advanced; the morals and religion more elevated; the gods more human and less divine, less grossly corporeal and more spiritual and invisible in their presence and agency. These topics are too numerous and too extensive to be discussed at length in this Article. The reader who wishes to examine the subject in detail, will find the facts well summed up in Mure's Chapter on the Doctrine of the Separatists.<sup>1</sup> And if he will look at all the facts in the case, we are sure that he will come to the conclusion that the gods of *both* poems are essentially the same ungod-like medley of virtues and vices, of grandeur and weakness, visible to mortal eyes, in different forms and degrees, according to the ends to be answered by their appearance;<sup>2</sup> that, as in the character and conduct of the leading heroes, so of the principal gods of the two poems, there is a striking analogy, and consistency, in so many particulars as to preclude the supposition of different authors;<sup>3</sup> that the tables may

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II., p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> See the striking similarity of language as well as sentiment in two passages cited by Mure, II., 20, 131: . . . . χαλεποι δὲ θεοὶ φαίνεσθαι ἐναργεῖς; and *Od.*, 16, 161: Ὅθ γὰρ πᾶσι πάντεςσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, in the absence of Jupiter in the *Iliad*, and of Neptune in the *Odyssey*, at a festival of the *Aethiopians*, while important events are transpiring; in Jupiter's yielding to the entreaties of Thetis in the one, and giving place to the resentment of Neptune in the other, on which so much of the action of the two poems turns; in the deception, by a god appearing in a dream, of Agamemnon in the one, and of Telemachus in the other; and even in the alleged discrepancy between the two poems as to the wife of Vulcan, since the *Odyssey* indirectly explains why it is that Venus has been divorced (namely for her



be turned, and it may be shown that, in many respects, the morals and religion of the *Iliad* are of a higher tone than those of the *Odyssey*, the arts and sciences more advanced,<sup>1</sup> society and language more refined; and that all these differences are not only explained but demanded by the different subjects and scenes of the two poems, together with a probable change in the poet's situation and period of life. Let it be granted that the *Iliad* was the work of his earlier life, and the *Odyssey* of his more advanced years (a supposition not only suggested by tradition, but almost necessitated by the mutual relation of the two poems); that the same bard, equally familiar, in his wanderings, with Asiatic Greece and the islands of the *Ægean*, on the one hand, and with European Greece and the Ionian isles on the other (as each poem proves its author to have been), might have chosen to make each familiar scene the centre of a separate poem; and that he chose, as the versatility of his genius not less than the fitness of things would naturally lead him to choose, subjects as different as the scenes — the one a warrior youthful and brilliant, the very beau-ideal of heroism in the heroic age, and the other a wandering adventurer experienced and versed in all arts, the pattern of wisdom and fortitude — let these postulates be granted, and every other difference follows from these as necessarily, almost, as a corollary from its proposition; let these germinant ideas be cast into a mind original and versatile as Homer's, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with all their manifest differences but more marked resemblances, spring up as naturally as different trees spring from different seeds in the same soil. Thus (to illustrate by a difference between the two poems, which attracted the attention of ancient as well as modern critics), the brilliant Iris is the befitting messenger of the gods in the splendid scenes of the *Iliad*, while the busy and dusty Hermes is equally appropriate to the humbler services which he per-

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amours with Mars), and thus opened the way for Charis, who appears as his wife in the *Iliad*.

<sup>1</sup> E. g., embroidery, II, 3, 125 seq.; and the working of metals, as in the shield of Achilles, II., 18, 428 seqq.

forms in the *Odyssey*; and, as if to demonstrate that this is the true explanation of the difference, in the *Iliad*, when a similar service is to be performed — in conducting Priam to the presence of Achilles — Hermes is employed, and is brought upon the stage with the same seven verses of description (identical, word for word) with which he is introduced in the *Odyssey*.<sup>1</sup> A battle of the gods, in the *Odyssey*, were as clearly out of place, as the prodigies of the far-off isles of the Mediterranean in the *Iliad*. We do not expect to find the wit of Falstaff in Hamlet, nor the soliloquies of Hamlet in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. We should like to see Shakspeare or Milton subjected to the dissecting process according to the rules and methods by which Homer has been cut to pieces. We venture to affirm that, in proportion to their length, there are fewer self-contradictions, and far more marked resemblances in plan, style, and sentiment, between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, than there are between Hamlet and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or between the *Paradise Lost* and *Comus*. If freedom from self-contradiction, direct or implied, be the test of integrity, the *Æneid*, the *Inferno*, *Don Quixote*, must all be resolved into separate lays, and their authors reduced to myths and non-entities.<sup>2</sup> No great poem, that was ever written under the most auspicious circumstances, will bear the test of such criticism as has been unhesitatingly applied to these productions of an antiquity so remote and so rude as, in the opinion of these critics, to be destitute of the art of writing!

6. This suggests the further remark, that the utter disagreement of these critics, among themselves, deprives their criticism of all its force. They have only to be brought together, and, like acids and alkalis, they neutralize each other. Were the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to be so divided as to meet the views of all (waiving the impossibility of the same part being in half a dozen different places at the same time), not only would they be dismembered limb from limb, but dissevered muscle from muscle, nay, disintegrated particle from particle; and not only the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Il.*, 24, 339; *Od.*, 5, 43.

<sup>2</sup> See this point well illustrated in Mure's *Appendixes to Vol. I. and II.*

two great epics, but the half a dozen or dozen, half a score or score, of separate lays would be annihilated in the process. Let every lay be removed, and every line be blotted, which has, at any time, been pronounced an interpolation or an addition, and, like the picture which was hung in the marketplace and every spectator invited to try his hand at amendment, not a feature would be left visible in the great epic painting of Greece in the Heroic Age. Add to this the fact that Wolf and his followers so contradict themselves,<sup>1</sup> as well as each other, that, according to their own rules, scarcely any one of their own *critiques* can be the production of a single author, and the rest of the world may certainly be excused from attempting to follow them in such tortuous and diverging paths. And what does all this discordance of opinion indicate? Not their want of learning and acuteness, but the slippery ground on which they stand; the shadowy nature of those differences of style and coloring on which they build their arguments. The ancients doubtless went to the extreme of faith and veneration, in their famous challenge, which declared it alike impossible "to wrest the thunderbolt from Jove, the club from Hercules, or a line from the Iliad." But the moderns have gone to the extreme of absurdity and impiety in the utter dismemberment and annihilation of this divine poem. If the shade of Homer were asked, which of all the lays and lines expunged from his works by the critics were spurious, he might not perhaps answer as Lucian makes him,—None; but it is quite certain he would not answer,—All; since, in that case, the poor bard would have nothing left.

7. All the principal parts of the Iliad, even those that have been most suspected, and still more all the principal parts of the Odyssey are bound to all the other parts by a network of mutual reference and connection which, like the nerves and veins of the human body, must be cut and tied, before a limb can be amputated. Mure has done excellent service in illustrating this point; and the reader who will

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 687 above.

take the pains to examine, in detail, his copious summary of the contents of either poem, and to trace out the references, backward and forward, in the foot-notes, however familiar he may have been with the outlines of the story, will be surprised to see how numerous are the links, or rather how complete is the network, which connects every book indissolubly to the books that precede and follow it; and however he may have been previously inclined to believe in the integrity of the Homeric poems, he can hardly fail to be established in a more steadfast as well as a more intelligent conviction of that integrity. Then with the summary, or the poems themselves, in hand, let him take some leading topic,— the absence of Achilles, for instance, after the first book until the eighteenth; or the construction of the rampart, rendered necessary, in the eighth book, by the disasters consequent on the accession of Achilles, and accordingly never mentioned in the battles previous to that book, but constituting a prominent feature in those of the following books; the promise of Jove to Thetis, in secret, at the commencement, and the gradual disclosure and execution of his plan to honor her son, yet, through him, to slay Hector, and thus prepare the way for the overthrow of Troy; Jove's interdict, in the beginning of the eighth book, prohibiting the gods to participate in the strife, and the actual absence of the gods (with attempted exceptions, which only strengthen the argument) from that time till the interdict is withdrawn in the twentieth book— let him take any one of these topics, and, following it through, see how often it is alluded to, and how, consistently with it, the whole course of the dialogue and the action proceeds; and he will find, that any one of these series of allusions, with the corresponding course of action, is of itself sufficient to link the successive books together as with a chain of adamant. Let him especially apply these tests to the most suspected portions of the Iliad— the Catalogue, for instance, in the second book; the Prowess of Diomed, in the fifth and sixth; the Embassy to Achilles, in the ninth; the Dolonea, in the tenth; the Shield of Achilles, in the eighteenth; or the Burial Rites in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth.

Perhaps there is no part of the *Iliad*, which wears so much the appearance of a disconnected episode, and which might be detached from the poem with so little violence to the connection as the *Dolonea*, or *Night-watch*. Yet, on close examination, this book is found to be connected with the foregoing and following books, not only by a chain of references, but as an essential link in the progress of the action. "The sleepless anxiety of Agamemnon during the night, owing to the gloomy prospects of his host after the disasters of the previous day; his allusion to the prowess of Hector as the immediate, and to his quarrel with Achilles as the remote, cause of his distress; to the bivouac of the Trojans on the plain, to the construction of the rampart and the posting of the guard, with his pointed mention of Rhesus of Thrace, unnoticed among the chiefs of that country in the Catalogue, as but recently arrived in the Trojan camp; all guarantee the previous existence of the first nine books of the poem in their substantial integrity. Nor, even were it not self-evident that this episode could only be intended as a continuation, not as a conclusion, of the foregoing narrative, are there wanting sufficiently plain, though not quite so specific, allusions to a sequel."<sup>1</sup> Besides, "in the first nine books of the poem, there is no allusion to any special military connection or comradeship between Ulysses and Diomed. The subject of the tenth book hinges, essentially, on the formation of that comradeship. In the ensuing battle, accordingly, of the eleventh book, those two heroes are found still, conjointly and in partnership, stemming the tide of war." And what is, perhaps, still more remarkable, the brilliant and cheering exploits of the tenth book are necessary "to account for the change of feeling in the army, between the ninth and eleventh books, from despondency at the close of the one, to cheerful hope and confidence at the commencement of the other."<sup>2</sup>

8. Besides this network of mutual reference, there is another chain, running through the mechanical structure of the

<sup>1</sup> Mure, Vol. I., p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Mure's Preface to his second edition of Vol. I., where, in a foot-note, he gives credit to Rev. Mr. Blake of Stobo for these last suggestions.

Iliad and Odyssey, which is still more distinctively Homeric — which forms such a connection between the several parts of each poem, and also between the two poems, as pervades no other poetical compositions of the same extent. We refer to those often repeated verses, which mark the transitions in the dialogue ; the familiar but not hackneyed lines by which each speaker is introduced and dismissed from the stage ; the technical descriptions and illustrations of a feast or a battle which occur as often as a feast or a battle is described ; the repetition of orders, messages, and proposals, at full length, perhaps two or three times, in the very same words ; and all the other epic common-places, as they are sometimes called, which not only impress the reader with a spontaneous conviction of the integrity of each poem, but assure him when he passes from one to the other that he is still travelling with the same guide, and that too a guide so intelligent as to *see everything just as it is*, and so faithful as to tell everything *just as he sees or hears it*. There are some two thousand verses of these several sorts, which are the same, word for word, in the Odyssey as in the Iliad. The naked fact, thus stated, is certainly no small evidence of identity of authorship. No other two poems, ancient or modern, bear this evidence, so ample and palpable, on their surface.

But this connection is not merely superficial. It enters into the substantial merits and the characteristic excellences of the Homeric poems. Common-place as (to the superficial reader) these repetitions appear to be, they exhibit the same master-strokes, the same marvellous power of individualizing men and things and portraying them to the life, which, as manifested in the whole of his works, signalize Homer as the greatest of all painters from nature and from real life. Thus Diomed seldom speaks in council. Directly the opposite of what Agamemnon hastily accuses him of being, and partly perhaps in intentional refutation of that groundless charge, he is more valiant in deeds than in words. But when all the other chiefs, in the

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<sup>1</sup> Iliad, 4. 400.

absence of Achilles, are reduced to the silence of despair, then in repeated instances he comes forward with a brief harangue, full of hope and courage; in every instance it meets the instantaneous approval of all, restores their confidence, and rouses them to vigorous action. This distinctive trait in the character of Diomed, and in the style of his eloquence, together with its unfailing influence on the other leaders and the Grecian host is set forth again and again in successive books (among the rest, in the much suspected and greatly wronged tenth book), in those apparently commonplace, but really most characteristic and significant, repetitions:

ὡς ἔφαθ' · οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῇ ·  
 δὴν δ' ἀνέφ' ἦσαν τετιηότες υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν ·  
 ὄψ' ἐ δὲ δὴ μετέειπε βοήην ἀγαθὸς<sup>1</sup> Διομήδης ·  
 Ἀτρείδην, σοὶ πρῶτα μαχίσομαι ἀφραδέοντι, . . . .  
 ὡς ἔφαθ' · οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπὶ λαχον υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν,  
 μῦθον ἀγασσάμενοι Διομήδεος ἵπποδάμοιο.<sup>2</sup>

In like manner, Achilles has his own characteristic commonplace: ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν προτετύχθαι εἴσομεν . . .<sup>3</sup> never used by any other speaker, but repeatedly by him, falling in with the abruptness and sententiousness which distinguish all his speeches, and even that of the shade of Achilles in the *Odyssey*,<sup>4</sup> and picturing to the life his impetuous and impatient spirit. Old Nestor brings out, in the repetitions which mark his<sup>5</sup> eloquence, not only the general characteristics of old age, but some of the most distinctive features of his individual character; not only wishing that he were young again as when he slew Ereuthalion;<sup>5</sup> but show-

<sup>1</sup> The reader scarcely need be reminded how appropriate this epithet, "good at the rescue," is to the trait of character we are illustrating.

<sup>2</sup> Il., 9, 29 sqq.; Cf., 9, 693; 10, 218; 7, 398; 14, 103 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Il., 16, 60; 18, 112; 19, 65; 24, 523-4. προτετύχθαι occurs only in the *Iliad*, and in the *Iliad* proceeds only from the mouth of Achilles. Mure was the first to call attention to this characteristic of Achilles' speeches, so appropriate to his character. The frequent recurrence of the transitional and adversative particles ἀλλά, αὐτόν, ἀλλά, ἀλλ' ἔγωγε, ἀλλά . . . ἐββένω, etc., is highly characteristic of the speeches of Achilles.

<sup>4</sup> Od., 11, 492; Cf. Il., 20, 351.

<sup>5</sup> Il., 4, 319; 7, 149 sqq., etc.

ing his lively sense of shame at the degeneracy of the times, and his peculiar sensitiveness to the good opinion of men.<sup>1</sup> How characteristic of the self-condemned and conscience-stricken Paris is his repeated :

"Ἐκτορ' ἐπέει με κατ' αἴσαν ἐνέλκεσας, οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἴσαν."<sup>2</sup>

These parallel passages, which have ever been regarded as among the best proofs of identity of authorship, sometimes take the form of kindred *ideas* and *images*, with more or less of similarity but not exact identity of language ; as in the wish of the two leading female characters of the two poems : Helen (Il. vi, 345), that she had been, and Penelope (Od. xx, 63), that she might be, swept away by the tempest, or engulfed in the waves ; the care taken in regard to the hero of each poem<sup>3</sup> that he may not suffer present evil, coupled with the declaration that hereafter he will suffer what *the Fates had spun for him at his birth* ; the hatred of deception expressed by Achilles in the Iliad (ix, 312), and by Eumæus in the Odyssey (xiv, 156), and enforced by the same strong comparison : *hateful as the gates of Hades*, — an image of hatefulness which the poet applies only to this hateful vice. In these and many similar passages, the parallelism lies, not in the exact form of words, but in the general cast of conception and expression, thus indicating not a repetition from the memory of the bard, but a like action of the same original and creative powers of mind under similar circumstances and showing the same marvellous faculty to individualize and characterize *things* in these passages, as in the others above cited, he has shown to distinguish and portray *persons*. More commonly, however, where Homer has occasion to repeat the same ideas, he does it in the same *words*, and with good reason ; for those words are so exactly the living image of the ideas, that to vary them were to mar the image.

The same principles — the same power of discrimination

<sup>1</sup> Il., 1, 254 ; 7, 124 ; 15, 691, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Il., 3, 59 ; 6, 333.

<sup>3</sup> In regard to Achilles by the goddess Juno (Il., 20, 126 seq.), and in regard to Ulysses by the god-like Acynous, king of the Phæacians (Od., 7, 195 seq.).



on the part of the author, and the same inference that the author is one and the same — are involved in those descriptive and distinctive epithets, which Homer applies to persons and things with the uniformity of common-place, but with the discrimination of a master in painting. These epithets are in fact pictures, *in miniature*, of the persons and things, to which they are applied. It is as if the poet, when he was about to introduce an actor on the stage, first held up, before the audience, a picture of the man, so drawn to the life, that you not only recognize the actor at once, whenever he appears, though amid a multitude of other actors, but you know beforehand, more or less perfectly, how he will speak and act. Thus the epithets by which the two protagonists are distinguished from other men and those by which they are distinguished from each other, exhibit these two heroes not only in their most characteristic features, as unitedly “the destroyers of cities,” and as severally “the lion-hearted,” and “the versatile,” “the crusher of heroes,” and “the man of many expedients,”<sup>1</sup> but also in a variety of other proper and interesting attitudes; while those by which the inferior heroes, and even the contending nations, are characterized, constitute a whole gallery of portraits and groups, in which individual and national character stands out almost visibly before the eye. And not only the science of human nature, but the profoundest philosophy of the material and spiritual universe is not unfrequently shadowed forth in Homeric epithets, as “the cope of heaven is imaged in a dew-drop.”

The dramatic structure of the Homeric poems is one of their most characteristic features. The mere extent to which dialogue prevails over direct narration, were sufficient, of itself, to distinguish these from any other epic poems in existence. But when we further observe with what masterly skill and power the dialogue is made to develop character

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<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of notice, how the *many-sidedness* of Ulysses is set forth in his epithets, most of which contain *πολυ* in their composition. Mure has gone into particulars on this subject of Homeric epithets (Vol. II., p. 75 sq.), and given *numerically* their application to different persons, and their distribution between the Iliad and the Odyssey.

and history, it becomes distinctive not only as an outward form, but as a spiritual element; it becomes, like the epithets and the common-place, and preëminently above even them, a proof of that insight into human nature, of that creative or rather representative faculty, in a word, of that original genius, which never was, and probably never will be, found in such perfection, in more than one man of the same age.

9. The perfection of the plot affords a strong argument for the integrity of each poem; and this, together with the striking similarity of the plot in the two poems, affords evidence scarcely less convincing, that they both proceeded from one and the same author.

The plan of the Iliad and the Odyssey has been the admiration of men of taste in all ages. Aristotle held them up as the beau ideal of the epic, and, for two thousand years, they remained the undisputed standard. Horace<sup>1</sup> praises the simplicity and modesty of Homer's introductions; his skill in the choice of his subject, and the selection of his materials; the rapidity with which he ushers his hearers into the midst of the matter, and hurries them on to the issue; the consistency of the parts and the completeness of the whole; in a word, the faultless excellence of the plan: "*qui nil molitur inepte,*" while at the same time he grieves that he sometimes falls below himself in the execution: "*quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*" How diametrically opposite all this is to the notions of the Wolfian school need not be remarked. Nor is it difficult to show that Horace is the more correct in his judgment; that he has, in fact, set forth, in these few lines of his Epistle to the Pisos, the characteristic merits of the Homeric poems.

The general object of the Iliad was, as its name imports, to illustrate the war of Troy. But the author does not, like a tasteless and common-place poet, begin with the birth of Helen, the cause of the war, *nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo*, and trace the whole series of events, in histori-

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<sup>1</sup> Ars Poetica, 136 sqq.

cal order. He seizes upon the crisis of the war, nay, the hinge of that crisis, and groups all persons and things, agencies and events, about that central point. The crisis of the war was in the tenth year, just before its close, when an unforeseen and most unlikely concurrence of circumstances brought about a sudden change in the course of events, and resulted in the death of Hector, the sole bulwark of the Trojan city. The hinge of that crisis was the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, the commander-in-chief and the foremost warrior of the Grecian army, and the withdrawal of the latter, in anger at the commander's insult, and in disgust at the acquiescence of the troops, from the Grecian cause.

Since the first encounters on the plain of Troy, the Trojans, worsted in the conflict, had retired within the walls of the city; and the Greeks, despairing of a siege, or direct assault, had occupied themselves mainly with capturing the neighboring towns and ravaging the country,<sup>1</sup> in the hope of thus compelling an ultimate surrender. But no sooner were the Trojans apprised of the quarrel of the chiefs, and the consequent withdrawal of Achilles,<sup>2</sup> than they took courage, sallied from the gates, and, with the aid of Jove, who had promised to avenge Achilles, so triumphed over their adversaries, that at length they encamped, over night, on the plain, and threatened, ere long, to burn the Grecian ships and drive the Greeks themselves into the sea. Under these circumstances, Achilles is so wrought upon by the entreaties of his friend Patroclus, as to consent that *he* shall go forth, clad in Achilles' armor, and turn back the tide of war. Patroclus goes forth, repels the Trojans, but, in the event, is slain by Hector. Achilles now renounces his resentment against Agamemnon, concentrates all his wrath on Hector, slays him, and thus ensures the speedy downfall of Troy.\* That downfall is not narrated; but it has been foreshadowed from the beginning; and now it is clearly seen to be near at hand. But Troy was destined to fall by meaner hands than those of Achilles,<sup>3</sup> and by more ignoble means than

<sup>1</sup> *H.*, 6, 415; 1, 163; 9, 328, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.*, 9, 352 sqq., et passim.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.*, 20, 30; *Od.*, 8, 502.

this last great battle in the open field, in which the champion of the Greeks slays the champion of the Trojans. No subsequent event could compare, in poetical interest, nor even in real importance, with this battle. No other moment, in the whole war, so brings out the heroes on both sides, so enlists the sympathies of men and gods, is so pregnant with the final issue. This, then, is the crisis; and it all turns palpably, from first to last, on the anger of Achilles. The poet accordingly seizes upon this turning-point, and announces the Wrath of Achilles, in connection with that plan and purpose of Jove of which it was the instrument,<sup>1</sup> as the subject of the Iliad. And there is not a little truth in the strong language of Hug: "the very proposition of the poet is a head of Medusa, which turns to stone every audacious hand that would rob him of a single book."<sup>2</sup> At least, we cannot but subscribe to the more sober conclusion of Mure, that "the Anger of Achilles, with its consequences, really includes all that the Iliad relates, and excludes all that it omits."

His subject thus announced, the poet begins with many incidents but few ornaments, as if he were not finishing a lay, but laying the foundations of an epopee. The first book contains not a single simile, but shifts the scene and consumes more time than all the subsequent books together. The earlier books are all clearly introductory, being designed to set before the reader, in successive pictures, the principal actors in the grand drama, the causes, authors, and leaders of the strife, the forces on both sides, and the state of feeling in the Grecian army and at the homes of Troy. It is only in the eighth book that Jove enters, in earnest, upon his purpose to avenge Achilles, and sends such disasters on the Greeks that they are fain to intreat and purchase, at any price, his return to the Grecian ranks. But he is implacable, inexorable. The tide of Trojan success rolls on, though not with-

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<sup>1</sup> Il. 1, 5: *Διὸς δ' ἐτελέετο βουλή.* See Granville Penn's Primary Argument of the Iliad for a masterly analysis of the poem in this theological point of view.

<sup>2</sup> *Erfind. der Buchstab.*

out an occasional ebb. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Ulysses, Diomed, Ajax, Antilochus, all perform prodigies of valor; but all are insufficient to stem the advancing flood. Patroclus comes forth, in Achilles' armor; and, while he is mistaken for that hero himself, drives the Trojans before him. But they discover their mistake, rally, slay Patroclus, and the flying Greeks, with difficulty, bear off his dead body. The flood swells higher, goes over the ramparts which the Greeks have lately built around their ships, reaches the ships themselves, and threatens to sweep the soil clear of its invaders. Nothing checks its progress till Achilles himself, unarmed but clothed, by Minerva, with more than his wonted grandeur of form and voice, shows himself on the rampart, and, by his terrible shout, sends every Trojan warrior flying to the gates of Troy. A lull succeeds, in which the hero vents his grief over the body of his friend, and Thetis brings a new suit of armor, forged by Vulcan, for her son. Then the storm of Achillean wrath bursts upon the Trojan host. He slaughters or drives before him every living thing on the plain of Troy. The gods enter the field with him, and somewhat equalize the strife, else he had entered the city with the fugitives and, contrary to fate, levelled it with the dust."<sup>1</sup> He encounters Hector, slays him, and drags his lifeless body, trailing in the dust, behind his chariot, to his own tent. The funeral rites are then performed over the body, first, of Patroclus, and, at length, of Hector; and the poem dies away on the ear as naturally, as sweetly, as it began; ending in the simple, touching words: "Such burial the illustrious Hector found."

We have neither time nor patience to discuss the tasteless, soulless objections that have been urged against these concluding books, as not coming within the scope of the subject. They are essential to the development of Achilles' character—as intense in his love as he is in his hatred, and as superior to all other heroes in knightly courtesy and generosity, as he is in military prowess. Moreover, the poem

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<sup>1</sup> Il., 20, 23 sqq.

could not have ended till the rites of burial were first performed over the body of Patroclus and the mangled corpse of Hector; because, according to Aristotle's definition of an *end*, there would still have been indispensable duties which, as the Greeks viewed it, must needs have *succeeded*, and in reference to which, in this case, the previous conduct of Achilles could not but have excited painful anxiety. Two, at least, of the tragedies of Sophocles,<sup>1</sup> that perfect master of tragic unity, are prolonged to considerable length beyond the catastrophe, for the same reason as the Iliad, to put the mind of the Greeks (who had a religious horror of remaining unburied, of which we can scarcely conceive), to put their mind at rest as to the due burial of the heroes of the tale.

We hasten to show, in few words, how very similar, and yet not tamely like, is the plan of the Odyssey. The Odyssey is intended as a sort of sequel to the Iliad, to acquaint us with the subsequent fortunes of those who were engaged in the war of Troy. Achilles, Ajax, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, Ulysses, Paris, Helen: what became of them afterwards? Did they ever reach home? In what state did they find things after their long absence; and what reception did they meet with from their wives, and children, and people? With a view to satisfy this natural curiosity, the poet selects the hero who was the last to reach home, seizes on the last and that the *tenth* year of his wanderings, and the last *month* of that year, when his long frustrated desire was at length to be accomplished, and groups all other persons and events about that most eventful epoch of that most adventurous hero's life. He announces his subject in few words, at the outset; and that, as in the Iliad, in the form of an invocation to the Muse. The earlier books are introductory and more than usually simple. They show us the principal scene of action in Ithaca, the homes of Nestor and Menelaus, and the island-prison of Ulysses; and we hear from the lips of those heroes, in succession, the wondrous story of their adventures, involving also more or less of the fortunes of their compeers and the fate of Troy, but never encroaching on the field of

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<sup>1</sup> Ajax and Antigone.

the Iliad; and giving peculiar prominence to that masterpiece of story-telling and half-epic, half-romantic song—the Adventures of Ulysses. As in the Iliad, so in the Odyssey, through more than half of the entire poem, the principal hero is absent from the principal scene of action; though we never, for a moment, lose sight of him in the back-ground, as the real centre of every movement, whether of gods or men. Meanwhile, the young sprigs of nobility, from Ithaca and the neighboring islands, sue for the hand of the faithful Penelope, insult his youthful son, and prey upon his dilapidated estate as if it were their own. Things wax worse and worse, the suitors and servants grow more and more reckless of duty and fearless of punishment; they even threaten to take the life of the young prince, and to lay violent hands on his mother; till the *πολυμήτις* *Ὀδυσσεύς* appears on the stage. And when he comes to the palace, and his affectionate old dog dies for joy at his return, and his faithful nurse recognizes him in the bath, but all other eyes are blinded, and most hearts are hardened against the master of the house, who enters it in the guise of a beggar; when the suitors, in the face of portentous signs, load him with insults such as, in those good old times, it was deemed impious to heap on the meanest stranger; when Penelope listens, with a strange fascination, to the unknown beggar's feigned history of himself, and is visited with unaccountable dreams of the return of her lord; when that despised beggar draws the bow which no suitor could bend, and sends the arrow, whizzing, through the mark, of which the prize was the hand of Penelope; in a word, when the plan of the inventful Ulysses is ripe for execution, and with the *aid of Minerva*, he throws off his disguise, stands forth in more than the force and fire of his early youth, and rains his deadly shafts among the guilty and trembling crew who had so long triumphed in the vain assurance of his death; the plot is brought to a conclusion of such moral grandeur as no other poet has reached. It finds its parallel in the *περιπέτεια* of the Iliad, and nowhere else.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This parallel is suggested in the Quarterly Review, No. 89, and has always struck us as an argument of great force.

This sublime crisis is followed by more tranquil scenes; scenes of touching interest and tender pathos like, and yet not like, those which we have characterized as a *lull* after the first out-burst of Achilles in the *Iliad* — the recognition of Ulysses by Penelope, the interview between the long-absent son and his aged father, the *conducting* of the *souls* of the suitors down to *Hades*. Another battle ensues, in which Minerva gives her favorite hero an easy victory over the rebellious portion of his subjects; and then the poem ends more abruptly, but not less simply, than the *Iliad*. In short, the two plots are exceedingly alike in principle and general impression, and yet not a little unlike in details; too much alike to have proceeded from different authors; yet too unlike to be chargeable with sameness or repetition; just as similar, and just as dissimilar, as an original genius like Homer would naturally plan an *Odyssey* and an *Iliad*.

Is it possible, that a plot so perfect as either of these, was the production of an ordinary mind; nay, of an indefinite number of such minds, living and working at unknown intervals of time and place? Is it possible that the perfection and the similarity of the plots should both be the result of mere accident?

10. The power of delineating character, which is shown in both poems, and the consistency which is preserved in the greater and the minor characters, demonstrate the same master-hand throughout the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

It will not be necessary to dwell on this argument. The power of reproducing real characters, or creating ideal ones with perfect truth and consistency, is confessedly one of the rarest endowments which God has bestowed on the most gifted of the sons of earth. It is the prerogative of genius only, to see just how all sorts of men will act in all circumstances: for the very obvious reason that genius only, combines in itself, and in large measure too, all those various talents and susceptibilities proper to humanity, which exist singly, or in smaller measures, in ordinary mortals. In the Homeric poems, the difficulty is greatly enhanced by the infinite variety of characters of different grades and *orders*



of *being*, real or imaginary, gods and demigods, heroes and common men, sirens and sorceresses, monsters and prodigies, horses and dogs, that appear upon the stage; by the equal diversity of scene and element in which they act their respective parts: on Mt. Olympus, at the bottom of the sea, in Hades, at the summit of Ida, on the plains of Troy, in the city, in the camp, in the homes of Troy, Ithaca, Pylus, and Sparta, in the islands of the then far off and fabulous Mediterranean, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, on the land, on the water, ~~in~~ the water, in the air; and by the dramatic structure of the poems, in which character is not drawn out in narrative and description, but developed in dialogue and action before the eyes of the spectators. And yet it is universally acknowledged that, with the exception of Shakspeare, no poet has ever exhibited this rare power, beset in his case with these peculiar difficulties, with such unconscious ease and in such faultless perfection, as the author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He has turned these very difficulties into more splendid successes, and triumphed in fields which other men have not dared to enter.

Follow the Homeric gods, as a class or as individuals, through all the scenes of love and hate, joy and sorrow, doing and suffering, feasting and fighting; from the councils round the throne of Jupiter to the series of single combats on the plains of Troy; from Jove sitting apart, on Mt. Ida, and balancing the destinies of nations, to Mars sprawling over seven acres at the feet of Minerva, in the *Iliad*, or fast bound in the toils of Vulcan, in the *Odyssey* — scenes so strangely mingling the tragic with the comic; and so constantly, in both poems, passing, by a single step, from the sublime to the ridiculous, that you know not whether to laugh or weep over them — follow the Homeric gods through all these various yet analogous scenes; and, whatever you may think of the gods, you can scarcely fail to be impressed with the oneness and the exalted genius of the poet. The *Calypso* and *Circe*, the *Cyclops* and *Sirens*, and other monsters of the *Odyssey*, are unlike in kind to anything in the *Iliad*; else they would not be in keeping with the strange and fabulous regions into which

Ulysses wanders ; but they gather about the man of many wiles as naturally as the pantheon of the Iliad hovers around the son of Thetis ; and they excite pretty much the same mingled emotions of laughter and compassion, of fear and disgust : they are manifestly the offspring of the same fruitful yet unerring imagination ; just as Shakspeare's fairies, hobgoblins, and witches, show the same fertile and self-consistent genius, which appears in his divinest creations.

We will not delay on the wonderful variety and distinctness of the principal human personages in the Iliad, nor on the equally wonderful consistency with which each speaker acts his part, the speeches beautifully harmonizing with each other and with the actions, and the actions perfectly according with each other and with the speeches : a uniformity amid variety, like that of nature herself ; for no one has had the hardihood to deny it. We hasten to seek out the same persons in the Odyssey ; and we recognize them at once as old acquaintances, with the same familiar forms and features, the same peculiar manner of speaking, and the same characteristic modes of action. The Ulysses of the Odyssey is the Ulysses of the Iliad, placed in different circumstances, but displaying the same essential traits of character : artful, inventful, deeming discretion the better part of valor, and stratagem the noblest art in war ; patient, self-possessed, self-relying, all-enduring, never at a loss for a word or an expedient, always equal to himself and to every emergency. Calling himself the father of Telemachus, in the Iliad ; the Odyssey is the history of his superhuman trials and struggles to see, again, his beloved Telemachus, Penelope, and Ithaca. Nestor is still the orator and the sage of Pylus, only more than ever garrulous of himself and the good old times, rejoicing in the admiration of others, rich in the treasures of experience, and yet richer in the flow of his honeyed eloquence. Menelaus is still in nature, as also in name, "the sandy-haired," ardent, affectionate, self-sacrificing. He mourns his brother dead, as he loved and honored him living, and would gladly forego all the honors and advantages of the war, if *Agamemnon* might be restored to his fraternal

embrace. Helen is still the fair penitent, and, though restored to the favor of her rightful husband, still calls herself the *shameless dog*, in remembrance of her unfaithfulness.

The very shades of departed heroes show "the ruling passion strong *after death*." Agamemnon is a great weeper in Hades, even as on earth his tears flowed like the streaming of a "dark-watered fountain from the goat-left rock,"<sup>1</sup> and woman is still the root of all his troubles. At sight of his successful rival for the armor of Achilles, the ghost of Ajax stalks away, in gloomy silence, the perfect picture of Ajax himself on the plain of Troy, as he strode from the battlefield, half-indignant, half-contemptuous, with his shield slung over his lusty shoulders, stuck full with Trojan spears.<sup>2</sup> The shade of Achilles, with all the intensity of his fiery and impassioned nature, mourns over his short-lived though brilliant destiny, and declares that he would rather be the meanest slave on earth, than rule over the spirits of all the mighty dead.<sup>3</sup> And Patroclus is still his silent and deferential companion.

The minor personages, the suitors and servants, the heralds and squires, the bards and goatherds, Thersites the buffoon, the archer Pandarus, the beggar Irus, the nurse Euryclea, and last, not least, the old hunting-dog Argus, all have their own characters and parts, which are as distinct from each other as their faces, and as well sustained as the jesters and grave-diggers, sentinels and executioners, Pistols and Quicklys of Shakspeare's fancy.

National character is generalized and distinguished. The Trojans are generally false and fair, greater in speech than in action,<sup>4</sup> godlike in form, but deficient in moral principle. The Phæacians are the celestials of the heroic age, vain and boastful of their fancied superiority, looking with pity or contempt on outside barbarians, but listening with wonder to

<sup>1</sup> Il., 9, 14; Cf. Od., 11, 391.

<sup>2</sup> Il., 11, 556 sqq.; Cf. Od., 11, 543.

<sup>3</sup> Od., 11, 489.

<sup>4</sup> See Aeneas II., 20, 199 sqq., and Hector passim. Hence the English use of the word "*hector*."

the shipwrecked mariner's strange adventures, and beholding with astonishment his manifest superiority to themselves in all manly exercises.

Now this matchless power of conceiving and representing human nature, in all its various phases, so rare in any poem, so universal in these; this were, of itself, sufficient to demonstrate the absurdity of the hypothesis, which refers the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to a number of different authors. But when we further observe the consistency with which each character is sustained, from the beginning of the *Iliad* to the end of the *Odyssey*, we see the most convincing demonstration that both poems must have proceeded from one and the same author. That consistent and complete idea of Ulysses, for instance, could not have been the offspring of more than one mind. As well might Ulysses himself have been the son of more than one father. That portrait of Helen, begun in the *Iliad* and finished in the *Odyssey*, is no patchwork of several authors. As well might Guido's Magdalen have been painted by half a dozen different masters. Each one of the characters, of either or both of the poems, is as palpably and necessarily the work of one hand, as the *Venus de Medici* or the *Apollo Belvidere*.

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## ARTICLE II.

### FEUERBACH'S ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.<sup>1</sup>

By Rev. Charles C. Tiffany, Derby, Ct.

THE English and American public is indebted to the translator of *Strauss's "Leben Jesu,"* for the appearance of *Feuerbach's "Wesen des Christenthum's,"* in an English dress.

<sup>1</sup> DAS WESEN DES CHRISTENTHUMS, von Ludwig Feuerbach. Leipzig, 1843.  
THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. By Ludwig Feuerbach. Translated from the second German edition by Marian Evans.