Lang Andrew

Homer and His Age

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PREFACE

In *Homer and the Epic*, ten or twelve years ago, I examined the literary objections to Homeric unity. These objections are chiefly based on alleged discrepancies in the narrative, of which no one poet, it is supposed, could have been guilty. The critics repose, I venture to think, mainly on a fallacy. We may style it the fallacy of "the analytical reader." The poet is expected to satisfy a minutely critical reader, a personage whom he could not foresee, and whom he did not address. Nor are "contradictory instances" examined – that is, as Blass has recently reminded his countrymen, Homer is put to a test which Goethe could not endure. No long fictitious narrative can satisfy "the analytical reader."

The fallacy is that of disregarding the Homeric poet's audience. He did not sing for Aristotle or for Aristarchus, or for modern minute and reflective inquirers, but for warriors and ladies. He certainly satisfied them; but if he does not satisfy microscopic professors, he is described as a syndicate of many minstrels, living in many ages.

In the present volume little is said in defence of the poet's consistency. Several chapters on that point have been excised. The way of living which Homer describes is examined, and an effort is made to prove that he depicts the life of a single brief age of culture. The investigation is compelled to a tedious minuteness, because the points of attack – the alleged discrepancies in descriptions of the various details of existence – are so minute as to be all but invisible.

The unity of the Epics is not so important a topic as the methods of criticism. They ought to be sober, logical, and self-consistent. When these qualities are absent, Homeric criticism may be described, in the recent words of Blass, as "a swamp haunted by wandering fires, will o' the wisps."

In our country many of the most eminent scholars are no believers in separatist criticism. Justly admiring the industry and erudition of the separatists, they are unmoved by their arguments, to which they do not reply, being convinced in their own minds. But the number and perseverance of the separatists make on "the general reader" the impression that Homeric unity is chose *jugée*, that *scientia locuta est*, and has condemned Homer. This is far from being the case: the question is still open; "science" herself is subject to criticism; and new materials, accruing yearly, forbid a tame acquiescence in hasty theories.

May I say a word to the lovers of poetry who, in reading Homer, feel no more doubt than in reading Milton that, on the whole, they are studying a work of one age, by one author? Do not let them be driven from their natural impression by the statement that Science has decided against them. The certainties of the exact sciences are one thing: the opinions of Homeric commentators are other and very different things. Among all the branches of knowledge which the Homeric critic should have at his command, only philology, archaeology, and anthropology can be called "sciences"; and they are not exact sciences: they are but skirmishing advances towards the true solution of problems prehistoric and "proto-historic."

Our knowledge shifts from day to day; on every hand, in regard to almost every topic discussed, we find conflict of opinions. There is no certain scientific decision, but there is the possibility of working in the scientific spirit, with breadth of comparison; consistency of logic; economy of conjecture; abstinence from the piling of hypothesis on hypothesis.

Nothing can be more hurtful to science than the dogmatic assumption that the hypothesis most in fashion is scientific.

Twenty years ago, the philological theory of the Solar Myth was preached as "scientific" in the books, primers, and lectures of popular science. To-day its place knows it no more. The separatist

theories of the Homeric poems are not more secure than the Solar Myth, "like a wave shall they pass and be passed."

When writing on "The Homeric House" (Chapter X.) I was unacquainted with Mr. Percy Gardner's essay, "The Palaces of Homer" (*Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. iii. pp. 264-282). Mr. Gardner says that Dasent's plan of the Scandinavian Hall "offers in most respects not likeness, but a striking contrast to the early Greek hall." Mr. Monro, who was not aware of the parallel which I had drawn between the Homeric and Icelandic houses, accepted it on evidence more recent than that of Sir George Dasent. Cf. his *Odyssey*, vol. ii. pp. 490-494.

Mr. R. W. Raper, of Trinity College, Oxford, has read the proof sheets of this work with his habitual kindness, but is in no way responsible for the arguments. Mr. Walter Leaf has also obliged me by mentioning some points as to which I had not completely understood his position, and I have tried as far as possible to represent his ideas correctly. I have also received assistance from the wide and minute Homeric lore of Mr. A. Shewan, of St. Andrews, and have been allowed to consult other scholars on various points.

The first portion of the chapter on "Bronze and Iron" appeared in the Revue *Archéologique* for April 1905, and the editor, Monsieur Salomon Reinach, obliged me with a note on the bad iron swords of the Celts as described by Polybius.

The design of men in three shields of different shapes, from a Dipylon vase, is reproduced, with permission, from the British Museum *Guide to the Antiquities of the Iron Age*; and the shielded chessmen from Catalogue of Scottish Society of Antiquaries. Thanks for the two ships with men under shield are offered to the Rev. Mr. Browne, S.J., author of *Handbook of Homeric Studies* (Longmans). For the Mycenaean gold corslet I thank Mr. John Murray (Schliemann's Mycenae and Tiryns), and for all the other Mycenaean illustrations Messrs. Macmillan and Mr. Leaf, publishers and author of Mr. Leaf's edition of the *Iliad*.

CHAPTER I

THE HOMERIC AGE

The aim of this book is to prove that the Homeric Epics, as wholes, and apart from passages gravely suspected in antiquity, present a perfectly harmonious picture of the entire life and civilisation of one single age. The faint variations in the design are not greater than such as mark every moment of culture, for in all there is some movement; in all, cases are modified by circumstances. If our contention be true, it will follow that the poems themselves, as wholes, are the product of a single age, not a mosaic of the work of several changeful centuries.

This must be the case – if the life drawn is harmonious, the picture must be the work of a single epoch – for it is not in the nature of early uncritical times that later poets should adhere, or even try to adhere, to the minute details of law, custom, opinion, dress, weapons, houses, and so on, as presented in earlier lays or sagas on the same set of subjects. Even less are poets in uncritical times inclined to "archaise," either by attempting to draw fancy pictures of the manners of the past, or by making researches in graves, or among old votive offerings in temples, for the purpose of "preserving local colour." The idea of such archaising is peculiar to modern times. To take an instance much to the point, Virgil was a learned poet, famous for his antiquarian erudition, and professedly imitating and borrowing from Homer. Now, had Virgil worked as a man of to-day would work on a poem of Trojan times, he would have represented his heroes as using weapons of bronze. {Footnote: Looking back at my own poem, *Helen of Troy* (1883), I find that when the metal of a weapon is mentioned the metal is bronze.} No such idea of archaising occurred to the learned Virgil. It is "the iron" that pierces the head of Remulus (*Aeneid*, IX. 633); it is "the iron" that waxes warm in the breast of Antiphates (IX. 701). Virgil's men, again, do not wear the great Homeric shield, suspended by a baldric: AEneas holds up his buckler (*clipeus*), borne "on his left arm" (X. 26 i). Homer, familiar with no buckler worn on the left arm, has no such description. When the hostile ranks are to be broken, in the *Aeneid* it is "with the iron" (X. 372), and so throughout.

The most erudite ancient poet, in a critical age of iron, does not archaise in our modern fashion. He does not follow his model, Homer, in his descriptions of shields, swords, and spears. But, according to most Homeric critics, the later continuators of the Greek Epics, about 800-540 B.C., are men living in an age of iron weapons, and of round bucklers worn on the left arm. Yet, unlike Virgil, they always give their heroes arms of bronze, and, unlike Virgil (as we shall see), they do not introduce the buckler worn on the left arm. They adhere conscientiously to the use of the vast Mycenaean shield, in their time obsolete. Yet, by the theory, in many other respects they innovate at will, introducing corslets and greaves, said to be unknown to the beginners of the Greek Epics, just as Virgil innovates in bucklers and iron weapons. All this theory seems inconsistent, and no ancient poet, not even Virgil, is an archaiser of the modern sort.

All attempts to prove that the Homeric poems are the work of several centuries appear to rest on a double hypothesis: first, that the later contributors to the *ILIAD* kept a steady eye on the traditions of the remote Achaean age of bronze; next, that they innovated as much as they pleased.

Poets of an uncritical age do not archaise. This rule is overlooked by the critics who represent the Homeric poems as a complex of the work of many singers in many ages. For example, Professor Percy Gardner, in his very interesting *New chapters in Greek History* (1892), carries neglect of the rule so far as to suppose that the late Homeric poets, being aware that the ancient heroes could not ride, or write, or eat boiled meat, consciously and purposefully represented them as doing none of these things. This they did "on the same principle on which a writer of pastoral idylls in our own day

would avoid the mention of the telegraph or telephone." {Footnote: *Op. cit.*, p. 142.} "A writer of our own day," – there is the pervading fallacy! It is only writers of the last century who practise this archaeological refinement. The authors of *Beowulf* and the *Nibelungenlied*, of the Chansons de *Geste* and of the Arthurian romances, always describe their antique heroes and the details of their life in conformity with the customs, costume, and armour of their own much later ages.

But Mr. Leaf, to take another instance, remarks as to the lack of the metal lead in the Epics, that it is mentioned in similes only, as though the poet were aware the metal was unknown in the heroic age. {Footnote: *Iliad*, Note on, xi. 237.} Here the poet is assumed to be a careful but ill-informed archaeologist, who wishes to give an accurate representation of the past. Lead, in fact, was perfectly familiar to the Mycenaean prime. {Footnote: Tsountas and Manatt, p. 73.} The critical usage of supposing that the ancients were like the most recent moderns – in their archaeological preoccupations – is a survival of the uncritical habit which invariably beset old poets and artists. Ancient poets, of the uncritical ages, never worked "on the same principle as a writer in our day," as regards archaeological precision; at least we are acquainted with no example of such accuracy.

Let us take another instance of the critical fallacy. The age of the Achaean warriors, who dwelt in the glorious halls of Mycenae, was followed, at an interval, by the age represented in the relics found in the older tombs outside the Dipylon gate of Athens, an age beginning, probably, about 900-850 B.C. The culture of this "Dipylon age," a time of geometrical ornaments on vases, and of human figures drawn in geometrical forms, lines, and triangles, was quite unlike that of the Achaean age in many ways, for example, in mode of burial and in the use of iron for weapons. Mr. H. R. Hall, in his learned book, *The Oldest Civilisation of Greece* (1901), supposes the culture described in the Homeric poems to be contemporary in Asia with that of this Dipylon period in Greece. {Footnote: Op. cit., pp. 49, 222.} He says, "The Homeric culture is evidently the culture of the poet's own days; there is no attempt to archaise here…" They do not archaise as to the details of life, but "the Homeric poets consciously and consistently archaised, in regard to the political conditions of continental Greece," in the Achaean times. They give "in all probability a pretty accurate description" of the loose feudalism of Mycenaean Greece. {Footnote: Op. cit., pp. 223, 225.}

We shall later show that this Homeric picture of a past political and social condition of Greece is of vivid and delicate accuracy, that it is drawn from the life, not constructed out of historical materials. Mr. Hall explains the fact by "the conscious and consistent" archaeological precision of the Asiatic poets of the ninth century. Now to any one who knows early national poetry, early uncritical art of any kind, this theory seems not easily tenable. The difficulty of the theory is increased, if we suppose that the Achaeans were the recent conquerors of the Mycenaeans. Whether we regard the Achaeans as "Celts," with Mr. Ridgeway, victors over an Aryan people, the Pelasgic Mycenaeans; or whether, with Mr. Hall, we think that the Achaeans were the Aryan conquerors of a non-Aryan people, the makers of the Mycenaean civilisation; in the stress of a conquest, followed at no long interval by an expulsion at the hands of Dorian invaders, there would be little thought of archaising among Achaean poets. {Footnote: Mr. Hall informs me that he no longer holds the opinion that the poets archaised.}

A distinction has been made, it is true, between the poet and other artists in this respect. Monsieur Perrot says, "The vase-painter reproduces what he sees; while the epic poets endeavoured to represent a distant past. If Homer gives swords of bronze to his heroes of times gone by, it is because he knows that such were the weapons of these heroes of long ago. In arming them with bronze he makes use, in his way, of what we call 'local colour…' Thus the Homeric poet is a more conscientious historian than Virgil!" {Footnote: La *Grète de l'Epopée*, Perrot et Chipiez, p. 230.}

Now we contend that old uncritical poets no more sought for antique "local colour" than any other artists did. M. Perrot himself says with truth, "the *CHANSON DE ROLAND*, and all the *Gestes* of the same cycle explain for us the Iliad and the Odyssey." {Footnote: op. cit., p. 5.} But the poet of the *CHANSON DE ROLAND* accoutres his heroes of old time in the costume and armour of his own age, and the later poets of the same cycle introduce the innovations of their time; they do not hunt for "local

colour" in the *CHANSON DE ROLAND*. The very words "local colour" are a modern phrase for an idea that never occurred to the artists of ancient uncritical ages. The Homeric poets, like the painters of the Dipylon period, describe the details of life as they see them with their own eyes. Such poets and artists never have the fear of "anachronisms" before them. This, indeed, is plain to the critics themselves, for they, detect anachronisms as to land tenure, burial, the construction of houses, marriage customs, weapons, and armour in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These supposed anachronisms we examine later: if they really exist they show that the poets were indifferent to local colour and archaeological precision, or were incapable of attaining to archaeological accuracy. In fact, such artistic revival of the past in its habit as it lived is a purely modern ideal.

We are to show, then, that the Epics, being, as wholes, free from such inevitable modifications in the picture of changing details of life as uncritical authors always introduce, are the work of the one age which they represent. This is the reverse of what has long been, and still is, the current theory of Homeric criticism, according to which the Homeric poems are, and bear manifest marks of being, a mosaic of the poetry of several ages of change.

Till Wolf published his *Prolegomena* to {blank space} (1795) there was little opposition to the old belief that the *ILIAD* and Odyssey were, allowing for interpolations, the work of one, or at most of two, poets. After the appearance of Wolfs celebrated book, Homeric critics have maintained, generally speaking, that the *ILIAD* is either a collection of short lays disposed in sequence in a late age, or that it contains an ancient original "kernel" round which "expansions," made throughout some centuries of changeful life, have accrued, and have been at last arranged by a literary redactor or editor.

The latter theory is now dominant. It is maintained that the *Iliad* is a work of at least four centuries. Some of the objections to this theory were obvious to Wolf himself – more obvious to him than to his followers. He was aware, and some of them are not, of the distinction between reading the *ILIAD* as all poetic literature is naturally read, and by all authors is meant to be read, for human pleasure, and studying it in the spirit of "the analytical reader." As often as he read for pleasure, he says, disregarding the purely fanciful "historical conditions" which he invented for Homer; as often as he yielded himself to that running stream of action and narration; as often as he considered the *harmony* of *colour* and of characters in the Epic, no man could be more angry with his own destructive criticism than himself. Wolf ceased to be a Wolfian whenever he placed himself at the point of view of the reader or the listener, to whom alone every poet makes his appeal.

But he deemed it his duty to place himself at another point of view, that of the scientific literary historian, the historian of a period concerning whose history he could know nothing. "How could the thing be possible?" he asked himself. "How could a long poem like the *Iliad* come into existence in the historical circumstances?" {Footnote, exact place in paragraph unknown: Preface to Homer, p, xxii., 1794.}. Wolf was unaware that he did not know what the historical circumstances were. We know how little we know, but we do know more than Wolf. He invented the historical circumstances of the supposed poet. They were, he said, like those of a man who should build a large ship in an inland place, with no sea to launch it upon. The *Iliad* was the large ship; the sea was the public. Homer could have no *readers*, Wolf said, in an age that, like the old hermit of Prague, "never saw pen and ink," had no knowledge of letters; or, if letters were dimly known, had never applied them to literature. In such circumstances no man could have a motive for composing a long poem. {Footnote: *Prolegomena to the Iliad*, p. xxvi.}

Yet if the original poet, "Homer," could make "the greater part of the songs," as Wolf admitted, what physical impossibility stood in the way of his making the whole? Meanwhile, the historical circumstances, as conceived of by Wolf, were imaginary. He did not take the circumstances of the poet as described in the Odyssey. Here a king or prince has a minstrel, honoured as were the minstrels described in the ancient Irish books of law. His duty is to entertain the prince and his family and guests by singing epic chants after supper, and there is no reason why his poetic narratives should be

brief, but rather he has an opportunity that never occurred again till the literary age of Greece for producing a long poem, continued from night to night. In the later age, in the Asiatic colonies and in Greece, the rhapsodists, competing for prizes at feasts, or reciting to a civic crowd, were limited in time and gave but snatches of poetry. It is in this later civic age that a poet without readers would have little motive for building Wolfs great ship of song, and scant chance of launching it to any profitable purpose. To this point we return; but when once critics, following Wolf, had convinced themselves that a long early poem was impossible, they soon found abundant evidence that it had never existed.

They have discovered discrepancies of which, they say, no one sane poet could have been guilty. They have also discovered that the poems had not, as Wolf declared, "one 'harmony of colour" (*unus color*). Each age, they say, during which the poems were continued, lent its own colour. The poets, by their theory, now preserved the genuine tradition of things old; cremation, cairn and urn burial; the use of the chariot in war; the use of bronze for weapons; a peculiar stage of customary law; a peculiar form of semi-feudal society; a peculiar kind of house. But again, by a change in the theory, the poets introduced later novelties; later forms of defensive armour; later modes of burial; later religious and speculative beliefs; a later style of house; an advanced stage of law; modernisms in grammar and language.

The usual position of critics in this matter is stated by Helbig; and we are to contend that the theory is contradicted by all experience of ancient literatures, and is in itself the reverse of consistent. "The *artists* of antiquity," says Helbig, with perfect truth, "had no idea of archaeological studies… They represented legendary scenes in conformity with the spirit of their own age, and reproduced the arms and implements and costume that they saw around them." {Footnote: *L'Épopée Homerique*, p. 5; *Homerische Epos*, p. 4.}

Now a poet is an *artist*, like another, and he, too – no less than the vase painter or engraver of gems – in dealing with legends of times past, represents (in an uncritical age) the arms, utensils, costume, and the religious, geographical, legal, social, and political ideas of his own period. We shall later prove that this is true by examples from the early mediaeval epic poetry of Europe.

It follows that if the *Iliad* is absolutely consistent and harmonious in its picture of life, and of all the accessories of life, the *Iliad* is the work of a single age, of a single stage of culture, the poet describing his own environment. But Helbig, on the other hand, citing Wilamowitz Moellendorff, declares that the *Iliad*– the work of four centuries, he says – maintains its unity of colour by virtue of an uninterrupted poetical tradition. {Footnote: *Homerische Untersuchungen*, p. 292; *Homerische Epos*, p. I.} If so, the poets must have archaeologised, must have kept asking themselves, "Is this or that detail true to the past?" which artists in uncritical ages never do, as we have been told by Helbig. They must have carefully pondered the surviving old Achaean lays, which "were born when the heroes could not read, or boil flesh, or back a steed." By carefully observing the earliest lays the late poets, in times of changed manners, "could avoid anachronisms by the aid of tradition, which gave them a very exact idea of the epic heroes." Such is the opinion of Wilamowitz Moellendorff. He appears to regard the tradition as keeping the later poets in the old way automatically, not consciously, but this, we also learn from Helbig, did not occur. The poets often wandered from the way. {Footnote: Helbig, *Homerische Epos,* pp. 2, 3.} Thus old Mycenaean lays, if any existed, would describe the old Mycenaean mode of burial. The Homeric poet describes something radically different. We vainly ask for proof that in any early national literature known to us poets have been true to the colour and manners of the remote times in which their heroes moved, and of which old minstrels sang. The thing is without example: of this proofs shall be offered in abundance.

Meanwhile, the whole theory which regards the *Iliad* as the work of four or five centuries rests on the postulate that poets throughout these centuries did what such poets never do, kept true to the details of a life remote from their own, and also did not.

For Helbig does not, after all, cleave to his opinion. On the other hand, he says that the later poets of the *Iliad* did not cling to tradition. "They allowed themselves to be influenced by

their own environment: *this influence betrays ITSELF IN THE descriptions of DETAILS*… The rhapsodists," (reciters, supposed to have altered the poems at will), "did not fail to interpolate relatively recent elements into the oldest parts of the Epic." {Footnote: *Homerische Epos,* p. 2.}

At this point comes in a complex inconsistency. The Tenth Book of the *Iliad*, thinks Helbig – in common with almost all critics – "is one of the most recent lays of the *Iliad*." But in this recent lay (say of the eighth or seventh century) the poet describes the Thracians as on a level of civilisation with the Achaeans, and, indeed, as even more luxurious, wealthy, and refined in the matter of good horses, glorious armour, and splendid chariots. But, by the time of the Persian wars, says Helbig, the Thracians were regarded by the Greeks as rude barbarians, and their military equipment was totally un-Greek. They did not wear helmets, but caps of fox-skin. They had no body armour; their shields were small round bucklers; their weapons were bows and daggers. These customs could not, at the time of the Persian wars, be recent innovations in Thrace. {Footnote: Herodotus, vii. 75.}

Had the poet of *ILIAD*, Book X., known the Thracians in *this* condition, says Helbig, as he was fond of details of costume and arms, he would have certainly described their fox-skin caps, bows, bucklers, and so forth. He would not here have followed the Epic tradition, which represented the Thracians as makers of great swords and as splendidly armed charioteers. His audience had met the Thracians in peace and war, and would contradict the poet's description of them as heavily armed charioteers. It follows, therefore, that the latest poets, such as the author of Book X., did not introduce recent details, those of their own time, but we have just previously been told that to do so was their custom in the description of details.

Now Studniczka {Footnote: *Homerische Epos, pp. 7-11, cf.* Note I; *Zeitschrift fur die Oestern Gymnasien*, 1886, p. 195.} explains the picture of the Thracians in *Iliad*, Book X., on Helbig's *other* principle, namely, that the very late author of the Tenth Book merely conforms to the conventional tradition of the Epic, adheres to the model set in ancient Achaean, or rather ancient Ionian times, and scrupulously preserved by the latest poets – that is, when the latest poets do not bring in the new details of their own age. But Helbig will not accept his own theory in this case, whence does it follow that the author of the Tenth Book must, in his opinion, have lived in Achaean times, and described the Thracians as they then were, charioteers, heavily armed, not light-clad archers? If this is so, we ask how Helbig can aver that the Tenth Book is one of the latest parts of the *Iliad?*

In studying the critics who hold that the *Iliad* is the growth of four centuries – say from the eleventh to the seventh century B.C. – no consistency is to be discovered; the earth is never solid beneath our feet. We find now that the poets are true to tradition in the details of ancient life – now that the poets introduce whatever modern details they please. The late poets have now a very exact knowledge of the past; now, the late poets know nothing about the past, or, again, some of the poets are fond of actual and very minute archaeological research! The theory shifts its position as may suit the point to be made at the moment by the critic. All is arbitrary, and it is certain that logic demands a very different method of inquiry. If Helbig and other critics of his way of thinking mean that in the *Iliad* (1) there are parts of genuine antiquity; other parts (2) by poets who, with stern accuracy, copied the old modes; other parts (3) by poets who tried to copy but failed; with passages (4) by poets who deliberately innovated; and passages (5) by poets who drew fanciful pictures of the past "from their inner consciousness," while, finally (6), some poets made minute antiquarian researches; and if the argument be that the critics can detect these six elements, then we are asked to repose unlimited confidence in critical powers of discrimination. The critical standard becomes arbitrary and subjective.

It is our effort, then, in the following pages to show that the *unus* color of Wolf does pervade the Epics, that recent details are not often, if ever, interpolated, that the poems harmoniously represent one age, and that a brief age, of culture; that this effect cannot, in a thoroughly uncritical period, have been deliberately aimed at and produced by archaeological learning, or by sedulous copying of poetic tradition, or by the scientific labours of an editor of the sixth century B.C. We shall endeavour

to prove, what we have already indicated, that the hypotheses of expansion are not self-consistent, or in accordance with what is known of the evolution of early national poetry. The strongest part, perhaps, of our argument is to rest on our interpretation of archaeological evidence, though we shall not neglect the more disputable or less convincing contentions of literary criticism.

CHAPTER II

HYPOTHESES AS TO THE GROWTH OF THE EPICS

A theorist who believes that the Homeric poems are the growth of four changeful centuries, must present a definite working hypothesis as to how they escaped from certain influences of the late age in which much of them is said to have been composed. We must first ask to what manner of audiences did the poets sing, in the alleged four centuries of the evolution of the Epics. Mr. Leaf, as a champion of the theory of ages of "expansion," answers that "the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are essentially, and above all, Court poems. They were composed to be sung in the palaces of a ruling aristocracy … the poems are aristocratic and courtly, not popular." {Footnote: Companion to the *Iliad*, pp. 2,8. 1892.} They are not *Volkspoesie*; they are not ballads. "It is now generally recognised that this conception is radically false."

> These opinions, in which we heartily agree – there never was such a thing as a "popular" Epic – were published fourteen years ago. Mr.
>
> Leaf, however, would not express them with regard to "our" *Iliad* and Odyssey, because, in his view, a considerable part of the *Iliad*, as it stands, was made, not by Court bards in the Achaean courts of Europe, not for an audience of noble warriors and dames, but by wandering minstrels in the later Ionian colonies of Asia. They did not chant for a military aristocracy, but for the enjoyment of town and country folk at popular festivals. {Footnote: Iliad, vol. i. p. xvi. 1900.} The poems were *begun*, indeed, he thinks, for "a wealthy aristocracy living on the product of their lands," in European Greece; were begun by contemporary court minstrels, but were continued, vastly expanded, and altered to taste by wandering singers and reciting rhapsodists, who amused the holidays of a commercial, expansive, and bustling Ionian democracy. {Footnote: *Companion to the Iliad*, p. II.} We must suppose that, on this theory, the later poets pleased a commercial democracy by keeping up the tone that had delighted an old land-owning military aristocracy. It is not difficult, however, to admit this as possible, for the poems continued to be admired in all ages of Greece and under every form of society. The real question is, would the modern poets be the men to keep up a tone some four or five centuries old, and to be true, if they were true, to the details of the heroic age? "It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some part of the most primitive *Iliad* may have been actually sung by the court minstrel in the palace whose ruins can still be seen in Mycenae." {Footnote:
>
> Leaf, *Iliad*, vol. i. p. xv.} But, by the expansionist theory, even the oldest parts of our *Iliad* are now full of what we may call quite recent Ionian additions, full of late retouches, and full, so to speak, of omissions of old parts.

Through four or five centuries, by the hypothesis, every singer who could find an audience was treating as much as he knew of a vast body of ancient lays exactly as he pleased, adding here, lopping there, altering everywhere. Moreover, these were centuries full of change. The ancient Achaean palaces were becoming the ruins which we still behold. The old art had faded, and then fallen under the disaster of the Dorian conquest. A new art, or a recrudescence of earlier art, very crude and barbaric, had succeeded, and was beginning to acquire form and vitality. The very scene of life was altered: the new singers and listeners dwelt on the Eastern side of the Aegean. Knights no longer, as in Europe, fought from chariots: war was conducted by infantry, for the most part, with mounted auxiliaries. With the disappearance of the war chariot the huge Mycenaean shields had vanished or

were very rarely used. The early vase painters do not, to my knowledge, represent heroes as fighting from war chariots. They had lost touch with that method. Fighting men now carried relatively small round bucklers, and iron was the metal chiefly employed for swords, spears, and arrow points. Would the new poets, in deference to tradition, abstain from mentioning cavalry, or small bucklers, or iron swords and spears? or would they avoid puzzling their hearers by speaking of obsolete and unfamiliar forms of tactics and of military equipment? Would they therefore sing of things familiar – of iron weapons, small round shields, hoplites, and cavalry? We shall see that confused and self-contradictory answers are given by criticism to all these questions by scholars who hold that the Epics are not the product of one, but of many ages.

There were other changes between the ages of the original minstrel and of the late successors who are said to have busied themselves in adding to, mutilating, and altering his old poem. Kings and courts had passed away; old Ionian myths and religious usages, unknown to the Homeric poets, had come out into the light; commerce and pleasure and early philosophies were the chief concerns of life. Yet the poems continued to be aristocratic in manners; and, in religion and ritual, to be pure from recrudescences of savage poetry and superstition, though the Ionians "did not drop the more primitive phases of belief which had clung to them; these rose to the surface with the rest of the marvellous Ionic genius, and many an ancient survival was enshrined in the literature or mythology of Athens which had long passed out of all remembrance at Mycenas." {Footnote: *Companion to the Iliad*, p. 7.}

Amazing to say, none of these "more primitive phases of belief," none of the recrudescent savage magic, was intruded by the late Ionian poets into the Iliad which they continued, by the theory. Such phases of belief were, indeed, by their time popular, and frequently appeared in the Cyclic poems on the Trojan war; continuations of the *ILIAD*, which were composed by Ionian authors at the same time as much of the *ILIAD* itself (by the theory) was composed. The authors of these Cyclic poems – authors contemporary with the makers of much of the *ILIAD—were* eminently "un-Homeric" in many respects. {Footnote: *Cf*. Monro, *The Cyclic Poets; Odyssey*, vol. ii, pp. 342-384.} They had ideas very different from those of the authors of the *Iliad* and *ODYSSEY*, as these ideas have reached us.

Helbig states this curious fact, that the Homeric poems are free from many recent or recrudescent ideas common in other Epics composed during the later centuries of the supposed four hundred years of Epic growth. {Footnote: *Homerische Epos*, p. 3.} Thus a signet ring was mentioned in the *Ilias Puma*, and there are no rings in *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. But Helbig does not perceive the insuperable difficulty which here encounters his hypothesis. He remarks: "In certain poems which were grouping themselves around the *Iliad and* Odyssey, we meet data absolutely opposed to the conventional style of the Epic." He gives three or four examples of perfectly un-Homeric ideas occurring in Epics of the eighth to seventh centuries, B.C., and a large supply of such cases can be adduced. But Helbig does not ask how it happened that, if poets of these centuries had lost touch with the Epic tradition, and had wandered into a new region of thought, as they had, examples of their notions do not occur in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. By his theory these poems were being added to and altered, even in their oldest portions, at the very period when strange fresh, or old and newly revived fancies were flourishing. If so, how were the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, unlike the Cyclic poems, kept uncontaminated, as they confessedly were, by the new romantic ideas?

Here is the real difficulty. Cyclic poets of the eighth and seventh centuries had certainly lost touch with the Epic tradition; their poems make that an admitted fact. Yet poets of the eighth to seventh centuries were, by the theory, busily adding to and altering the ancient lays of the *Iliad*. How did *they* abstain from the new or revived ideas, and from the new *genre* of romance? Are we to believe that one set of late Ionian poets – they who added to and altered the Iliad – were true to tradition, while another contemporary set of Ionian poets, the Cyclics – authors of new Epics on Homeric themes – are known to have quite lost touch with the Homeric taste, religion, and ritual? The reply will perhaps be a Cyclic poet said, "Here I am going to compose quite a new poem about the old heroes.

I shall make them do and think and believe as I please, without reference to the evidence of the old poems." But, it will have to be added, the rhapsodists of 800-540 B.C., and the general editor of the latter date, thought, *we* are continuing an old set of lays, and we must be very careful in adhering to manners, customs, and beliefs as described by our predecessors. For instance, the old heroes had only bronze, no iron, – and then the rhapsodists forgot, and made iron a common commodity in the *Iliad*. Again, the rhapsodists knew that the ancient heroes had no corslets – the old lays, we learn, never spoke of corslets – but they made them wear corslets of much splendour. {Footnote: The reader must remember that the view of the late poets as careful adherents of tradition in usages and ideas only obtains *sometimes*; at others the critics declare that archaeological precision is *not* preserved, and that the Ionic continuators introduced, for example, the military gear of their own period into a poem which represents much older weapons and equipments.} This theory does not help us. In an uncritical age poets could not discern that their genre of romance and religion was alien from that of Homer.

To return to the puzzle about the careful and precise continuators of the *Iliad*, as contrasted with their heedless contemporaries, the authors of the Cyclic poems. How "non-Homeric" the authors of these Cyclic poems were, before and after 660 B.C., we illustrate from examples of their left hand backslidings and right hand fallings off. They introduced (1) The Apotheosis of the Dioscuri, who in Homer (*Iliad*, III. 243) are merely dead men (*Cypria*). (2) Story of Iphigenia *Cypria*. (3) Story of Palamedes, who is killed when angling by Odysseus and Diomede (Cypria).

Homer's heroes never fish, except in stress of dire necessity, in the Odyssey, and Homer's own Diomede and Odysseus would never stoop to assassinate a companion when engaged in the contemplative man's recreation. We here see the heroes in late degraded form as on the Attic stage. (4) The Cyclics introduce Helen as daughter of Nemesis, and describe the flight of Nemesis from Zeus in various animal forms, a Märchen of a sort not popular with Homer; an Ionic Märchen, Mr. Leaf would say. There is nothing like this in the Iliad and Odyssey. (5) They call the son of Achilles, not Neoptolemus, as Homer does, but Pyrrhus. (6) They represent the Achaean army as obtaining supplies through three magically gifted maidens, who produce corn, wine, and oil at will, as in fairy tales. Another Ionic non-Achaean Märchen! They bring in ghosts of heroes dead and buried. Such ghosts, in Homer's opinion, were impossible if the dead had been cremated. All these non-Homeric absurdities, save the last, are from the Cypria, dated by Sir Richard Jebb about 776 B.C., long before the Odyssey was put into shape, namely, after 660 B. C. in his opinion. Yet the alleged late compiler of the Odyssey, in the seventh century, never wanders thus from the Homeric standard in taste. What a skilled archaeologist he must have been! The author of the Cypria knew the Iliad, {Footnote: Monro, Odyssey, vol. ii. p. 354.} but his knowledge could not keep him true to tradition. (7) In the AEthiopis (about 776 B.C.) men are made immortal after death, and are worshipped as heroes, an idea foreign to Iliad and Odyssey. (8) There is a savage ritual of purification from blood shed by a homicide (compare Eumenides, line 273). This is unheard of in Iliad and Odyssey, though familiar to Aeschylus. (9) Achilles, after death, is carried to the isle of Leuke. (10) The fate of Ilium, in the Cyclic Little *Iliad*, hangs on the Palladium, of which nothing is known in *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. The *Little Iliad* is dated about 700 B.C. (11) The *Nostoi* mentions Molossians, not named by Homer (which is a trifle); it also mentions the Asiatic city of Colophon, an Ionian colony, which is not a trivial self-betrayal on the part of the poet. He is dated about 750 B.C.

Thus, more than a century before the *Odyssey* received its final form, after 660 B.C., from the hands of one man (according to the theory), the other Ionian poets who attempted Epic were betraying themselves as non-Homeric on every hand. {Footnote: Monro, *Odyssey*, vol. ii. pp. 347-383.}

Our examples are but a few derived from the brief notices of the Cyclic poets' works, as mentioned in ancient literature; these poets probably, in fact, betrayed themselves constantly. But their contemporaries, the makers of late additions to the *Odyssey*, and the later mosaic worker who put it together, never betrayed themselves to anything like the fatal extent of anachronism exhibited by the Cyclic poets. How, if the true ancient tone, taste, manners, and religion were lost, as the Cyclic

poets show that they were, did the contemporary Ionian poets or rhapsodists know and preserve the old manner?

The best face we can put on the matter is to say that all the Cyclic poets were recklessly independent of tradition, while all men who botched at the *Iliad* were very learned, and very careful to maintain harmony in their pictures of life and manners, except when they introduced changes in burial, bride-price, houses, iron, greaves, and corslets, all of them things, by the theory, modern, and when they sang in modern grammar.

Yet despite this conscientiousness of theirs, most of the many authors of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were, by the theory, strolling irresponsible rhapsodists, like the later *jongleurs* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in mediaeval France. How could these strollers keep their modern Ionian ideas, or their primitive, recrudescent phases of belief, out of their lays, as far as they *did* keep them out, while the contemporary authors of the *Cypria*, *The Sack of Ilios*, and other Cyclic poets were full of new ideas, legends, and beliefs, or primitive notions revived, and, save when revived, quite obviously late and quite un-Homeric in any case?

The difficulty is the greater if the Cyclic poems were long poems, with one author to each Epic. Such authors were obviously men of ambition; they produced serious works *de longue haleine*. It is from them that we should naturally expect conservative and studious adhesion to the traditional models. From casual strollers like the rhapsodists and chanters at festivals, we look for nothing of the sort. *They* might be expected to introduce great feats done by sergeants and privates, so to speak – men of the nameless {Greek: laos}, the host, the foot men – who in Homer are occasionally said to perish of disease or to fall under the rain of arrows, but are never distinguished by name. The strollers, it might be thought, would also be the very men to introduce fairy tales, freaks of primitive Ionian myth, discreditable anecdotes of the princely heroes, and references to the Ionian colonies.

But it is not so; the serious, laborious authors of the long Cyclic poems do such un-Homeric things as these; the gay, irresponsible strolling singers of a lay here and a lay there – lays now incorporated in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*– scrupulously avoid such faults. They never even introduce a signet ring. These are difficulties in the theory of the *Iliad* as a patchwork by many hands, in many ages, which nobody explains; which, indeed, nobody seems to find difficult. Yet the difficulty is insuperable. Even if we take refuge with Wilamowitz in the idea that the Cyclic and Homeric poems were at first mere protoplasm of lays of many ages, and that they were all compiled, say in the sixth century, into so many narratives, we come no nearer to explaining why the tone, taste, and ideas of two such narratives – Illiad and Odyssey – are confessedly distinct from the tone, taste, and ideas of all the others. The Cyclic poems are certainly the production of a late and changed age? {Footnote: For what manner of audience, if not for readers, the Cyclic poems were composed is a mysterious question.} The *Iliad* is not in any degree – save perhaps in a few interpolated passages – touched by the influences of that late age. It is not a complex of the work of four incompatible centuries, as far as this point is concerned – the point of legend, religion, ritual, and conception of heroic character.

CHAPTER III

HYPOTHESES OF EPIC COMPOSITION

Whosoever holds that the Homeric poems were evolved out of the lays of many men, in many places, during many periods of culture, must present a consistent and logical hypothesis as to how they attained their present plots and forms. These could not come by accident, even if the plots are not good – as all the world held that they were, till after Wolf's day – but very bad, as some critics now assert. Still plot and form, beyond the power of chance to produce, the poems do possess. Nobody goes so far as to deny that; and critics make hypotheses explanatory of the fact that a single ancient "kernel" of some 2500 lines, a "kernel" altered at will by any one who pleased during four centuries, became a constructive whole. If the hypotheses fail to account for the fact, we have the more reason to believe that the poems are the work of one age, and, mainly, of one man.

In criticising Homeric criticism as it is to-day, we cannot do better than begin by examining the theories of Mr. Leaf which are offered by him merely as "a working hypothesis." His most erudite work is based on a wide knowledge of German Homeric speculation, of the exact science of Grammar, of archaeological discoveries, and of manuscripts. {Footnote: The Iliad. Macmillan & Co. 1900, 1902.} His volumes are, I doubt not, as they certainly deserve to be, on the shelves of every Homeric student, old or young, and doubtless their contents reach the higher forms in schools, though there is reason to suppose that, about the unity of Homer, schoolboys remain conservative.

In this book of more than 1200 pages Mr. Leaf's space is mainly devoted to textual criticism, philology, and pure scholarship, but his Introductions, Notes, and Appendices also set forth his mature ideas about the Homeric problem in general. He has altered some of his opinions since the publication of his *Companion to the Iliad*(1892), but the main lines of his old system are, except on one crucial point, unchanged. His theory we shall try to state and criticise; in general outline it is the current theory of separatist critics, and it may fairly be treated as a good example of such theories.

The system is to the following effect: Greek tradition, in the classical period, regarded the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as the work of one man, Homer, a native of one or other of the Ionian colonies of Asia Minor. But the poems show few obvious signs of origin in Asia. They deal with dwellers, before the Dorian invasion (which the poet never alludes to), on the continent of Europe and in Crete. {Footnote: If the poet sang after the tempest of war that came down with the Dorians from the north, he would probably have sought a topic in the Achaean exploits and sorrows of that period. The Dorians, not the Trojans, would have been the foes. The epics of France of the eleventh and twelfth centuries dwell, not on the real victories of the remote Charlemagne so much as on the disasters of Aliscans and Roncesvaux – defeats at Saracen hands, Saracens being the enemies of the twelfth-century poets. No Saracens, in fact, fought at Roncesvaux.} The lays are concerned with "good old times"; presumably between 1500 and 1100 B.C. Their pictures of the details of life harmonise more with what we know of the society of that period from the evidence of buildings and recent excavations, than with what we know of the life and the much more rude and barbaric art of the so-called "Dipylon" period of "geometrical" ornament considerably later. In the Dipylon age though the use of iron, even for swords (made on the lines of the old bronze sword), was familiar, art was on a most barbaric level, not much above the Bed Indian type, as far, at least, as painted vases bear witness. The human figure is designed as in Tommy Traddles's skeletons; there is, however, some crude but promising idea of composition.

The picture of life in the Homeric poems, then, is more like that of, say, 1500-1100 B.C. than of, say, 1000-850 B.C. in Mr. Leaf's opinion. Certainly Homer describes a wealthy aristocracy, subject to an Over-Lord, who rules, by right divine, from "golden Mycenae." We hear of no such

potentate in Ionia. Homer's accounts of contemporary art seem to be inspired by the rich art generally dated about 1500-1200. Yet there are "many traces of apparent anachronism," of divergence from the more antique picture of life. In these divergences are we to recognise the picture of a later development of the ancient existence of 1500-1200 B.C.? Or have elements of the life of a much later age of Greece (say, 800-550 B.C.) been consciously or unconsciously introduced by the late poets? Here Mr. Leaf recognises a point on which we have insisted, and must keep insisting, for it is of the first importance. "It is *a priori* the most probable" supposition that, "in an uncritical age," poets do *not* "reproduce the circumstances of the old time," but "only clothe the old tale in the garb of their own days." Poets in an uncritical age always, in our experience, "clothe old tales with the garb of their own time," but Mr. Leaf thinks that, in the case of the Homeric poems, this idea "is not wholly borne out by the facts."

In fact, Mr. Leaf's hypothesis, like Helbig's, exhibits a come-and-go between the theory that his late poets clung close to tradition and so kept true to ancient details of life, and the theory that they did quite the reverse in many cases. Of this frequent examples will occur. He writes, "The Homeric period is certainly later than the shaft tombs" (discovered at Mycenae by Dr. Schliemann), "but it does not necessarily follow that it is post-Mycenaean. It is quite possible that certain notable differences between the poems and the monuments" (of Mycenae) "in burial, for instance, and in women's dress may be due to changes which arose within the Mycenaean age itself, in that later part of it of which our knowledge is defective – almost as defective as it is of the subsequent 'Dipylon' period. On the whole, the resemblance to the typical Mycenaean culture is more striking than the difference." {Footnote: Leaf, Iliad, vol. i. pp. xiii. – xv. 1900.}

So far Mr. Leaf states precisely the opinion for which we argue. The Homeric poems describe an age later than that of the famous tombs – so rich in relics – of the Mycenaean acropolis, and earlier than the tombs of the Dipylon of Athens. The poems thus spring out of an age of which, except from the poems themselves, we know little or nothing, because, as is shown later, no cairn burials answering to the frequent Homeric descriptions have ever been discovered – so relics corroborating Homeric descriptions are to seek. But the age attaches itself in many ways to the age of the Mycenaean tombs, while, in our opinion, it stands quite apart from the post-Dorian culture.

Where we differ from Mr. Leaf is in believing that the poems, as wholes, were composed in that late Mycenaean period of which, from material remains, we know very little; that "much new" was not added, as he thinks, in "the Ionian development" which lasted perhaps "from the ninth century B.C. to the seventh." We cannot agree with Mr. Leaf, when he, like Helbig, thinks that much of the detail of the ancient life in the poems had early become so "stereotyped" that no continuator, however late, dared "intentionally to sap" the type, "though he slipped from time to time into involuntary anachronism." Some poets are also asserted to indulge in *voluntary* anachronism when, as Mr. Leaf supposes, they equip the ancient warriors with corslets and greaves and other body armour of bronze such as, in his opinion, the old heroes never knew, such as never were mentioned in the oldest parts or "kernel" of the poems. Thus the traditional details of Mycenaean life sometimes are regarded as "stereotyped" in poetic tradition; sometimes as subject to modern alterations of a sweeping and revolutionary kind.

As to deliberate adherence to tradition by the poets, we have proved that the Cyclic epic poets of 800-660 B.C. wandered widely from the ancient models. If, then, every minstrel or rhapsodist who, anywhere, added at will to the old "kernel" of the *Achilles* was, so far as he was able, as conscientiously precise in his stereotyped archaeological details as Mr. Leaf sometimes supposes, the fact is contrary to general custom in such cases. When later poets in an uncritical age take up and rehandle the poetic themes of their predecessors, they always give to the stories "a new costume," as M. Gaston Paris remarks in reference to thirteenth century dealings with French epics of the eleventh century. But, in the critics' opinion, the late rehandlers of old Achaean lays preserved the archaic modes of life, war, costume, weapons, and so forth, with conscientious care, except in certain matters to be considered

later, when they deliberately did the very reverse. Sometimes the late poets devoutly follow tradition. Sometimes they deliberately innovate. Sometimes they pedantically "archaise," bringing in genuine, but by their time forgotten, Mycenaean things, and criticism can detect their doings in each case.

Though the late continuators of the *Iliad* were able, despite certain inadvertencies, to keep up for some four centuries in Asia the harmonious picture of ancient Achaean life and society in Europe, critics can distinguish four separate strata, the work of many different ages, in the *Iliad*. Of the first stratum composed in Europe, say about 1300-1150 B.C. (I give a conjectural date under all reserves), the topic was *THE Wrath of ACHILLES*. Of this poem, in Mr. Leaf's opinion, (a) the First Book and fifty lines of the Second Book remain intact or, perhaps, are a blend of two versions. (b) The *Valour of Agamemnon* and *Defeat of THE Achaeans*. Of this there are portions in Book XI., but they were meddled with, altered, and generally doctored, "down to the latest period," namely, the age of Pisistratus in Athens, the middle of the sixth century B.C. (c) The fight in which, after their defeat, the Achaeans try to save the ships from the torch of Hector, and the *Valour of Patroclus* (but some critics do not accept this), with his death (XV., XVI. in parts). (d) Some eighty lines on the *ARMING OF ACHILLES* (XIX.). (e) Perhaps an incident or two in Books XX., XXI. (f) The *Slaying HECTOR* by Achilles, in Books XXI., XXII. (but some of the learned will not admit this, and we shall, unhappily, have to prove that, if Mr. Leaf's principles be correct, we really know nothing about the *SLAYING OF HECTOR* in its original form).

Of these six elements only did the original poem consist, Mr. Leaf thinks; a rigid critic will reject as original even the *Valour of Patroclus* and the *DEATH OF HECTOR*, but Mr. Leaf refuses to go so far as that. The original poem, as detected by him, is really "the work of a single poet, perhaps the greatest in all the world's history." If the original poet did no more than is here allotted to him, especially if he left out the purpose of Zeus and the person of Thetis in Book I., we do not quite understand his unapproachable greatness. He must certainly have drawn a rather commonplace Achilles, as we shall see, and we confess to preferring the *Iliad* as it stands.

The brief narrative cut out of the mass by Mr. Leaf, then, was the genuine old original poem or "kernel." What we commonly call the *ILIAD*, on the other hand, is, by his theory, a thing of shreds and patches, combined in a manner to be later described. The blend, we learn, has none of the masterly unity of the old original poem. Meanwhile, as criticism of literary composition is a purely literary question, critics who differ from Mr. Leaf have a right to hold that the *Iliad* as it stands contains, and always did contain, a plot of masterly perfection. We need not attend here so closely to Mr. Leaf's theory in the matter of the First Expansions, (2) and the Second Expansions, (3) but the latest Expansions (4) give the account of *The EMBASSY* to *Achilles* with his refusal of *Agamemnon's APOLOGY*(Book IX.), the {blank space} (Book XXIV.), the *RECONCILIATION OF ACHILLES AND Agamemnon, AND the FUNERAL Games* of *Patroclus* (XXIII.). In all these parts of the poem there are, we learn, countless alterations, additions, and expansions, with, last of all, many transitional passages, "the work of the editor inspired by the statesman," that is, of an hypothetical editor who really by the theory made our *ILIAD*, being employed to that end by Pistratus about 540 B.C. {Footnote: Leaf, *Iliad*, vol. ii. pp. x., xiv. 1900.}.

Mr. Leaf and critics who take his general view are enabled to detect the patches and tatters of many ages by various tests, for example, by discovering discrepancies in the narrative, such as in their opinion no one sane poet could make. Other proofs of multiplex authorship are discovered by the critic's private sense of what the poem ought to be, by his instinctive knowledge of style, by detection of the poet's supposed errors in geography, by modernisms and false archaisms in words and grammar, and by the presence of many objects, especially weapons and armour, which the critic believes to have been unknown to the original minstrel.

Thus criticism can pick out the things old, fairly old, late, and quite recent, from the mass, evolved through many centuries, which is called the *Iliad*.

If the existing *ILIAD* is a mass of "expansions," added at all sorts of dates, in any number of places, during very different stages of culture, to a single short old poem of the Mycenaean age, science needs an hypothesis which will account for the *ILIAD* "as it stands." Everybody sees the need of the hypothesis, How was the medley of new songs by many generations of irresponsible hands codified into a plot which used to be reckoned fine? How were the manners, customs, and characters, *unus color*, preserved in a fairly coherent and uniform aspect? How was the whole Greek world, throughout which all manner of discrepant versions and incongruous lays must, by the theory, have been current, induced to accept the version which has been bequeathed to us? Why, and for what audience or what readers, did somebody, in a late age of brief lyrics and of philosophic poems, take the trouble to harmonise the body of discrepant wandering lays, and codify them in the *Iliad*?

An hypothesis which will answer all these questions is the first thing needful, and hypotheses are produced.

Believers like Mr. Leaf in the development of the *Iliad* through the changing revolutionary centuries, between say 1200 and 600 B.C., consciously stand in need of a working hypothesis which will account, above all, for two facts: first, the relatively correct preservation of the harmony of the picture of life, of ideas political and religious, of the characters of the heroes, of the customary law (such as the bride-price in marriage), and of the details as to weapons, implements, dress, art, houses, and so forth, when these are not (according to the theory) deliberately altered by late poets.

Next, the hypothesis must explain, in Mr. Leafs own words, how a single version of the *Iliad* came to be accepted, "where many rival versions must, from the necessity of the case, have once existed side by side." {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. p. xviii. 1900.}

Three hypotheses have, in fact, been imagined: the first suggests the preservation of the original poems in very early written texts; not, of course, in "Homer's autograph." This view Mr. Leaf, we shall see, discards. The second presents the notion of one old sacred college for the maintenance of poetic uniformity. Mr. Leaf rejects this theory, while supposing that there were schools for professional reciters.

Last, there is the old hypothesis of Wolf: "Pisistratus" (about 540 B.C.) "was the first who had the Homeric poems committed to writing, and brought into that order in which we now possess them."

This hypothesis, now more than a century old, would, if it rested on good evidence, explain how a single version of the various lays came to be accepted and received as authorised. The Greek world, by the theory, had only in various places various sets of incoherent chants *orally* current on the Wrath of The public was everywhere a public of listeners, who heard the lays sung on rare occasions at feasts and fairs, or whenever a strolling rhapsodist took up his pitch, for a day or two, at a street corner. There was, by the theory, no reading public for the Homeric poetry. But, by the time of Pisistratus, a reading public was coming into existence. The tyrant had the poems collected, edited, arranged into a continuous narrative, primarily for the purpose of regulating the recitals at the Panathenaic festival. When once they were written, copies were made, and the rest of Hellas adopted these for their public purposes.

On a small scale we have a case analogous. The old songs of Scotland existed, with the airs, partly in human memory, partly in scattered broadsheets. The airs were good, but the words were often silly, more often they were Fescennine – "more dirt than wit." Burns rewrote the words, which were published in handsome volumes, with the old airs, or with these airs altered, and his became the authorised versions, while the ancient anonymous chants were almost entirely forgotten.

The parallel is fairly close, but there are points of difference. Burns was a great lyric poet, whereas we hear of no great epic poet in the age of Pisistratus. The old words which Burns's songs superseded were wretched doggerel; not such were the ancient Greek heroic lays. The old Scottish songs had no sacred historic character; they did not contain the history of the various towns and districts of Scotland. The heroic lays of Greece were believed, on the other hand, to be a kind of Domesday book of ancient principalities, and cities, and worshipped heroes. Thus it was much easier

for a great poet like Burns to supersede with his songs a mass of unconsidered "sculdudery" old lays, in which no man or set of men had any interest, than for a mere editor, in the age of Pisistratus, to supersede a set of lays cherished, in one shape or another, by every State in Greece. This holds good, even if, prior to Pisistratus, there existed in Greece no written texts of Homer, and no reading public, a point which we shall show reasons for declining to concede.

The theory of the edition of Pisistratus, if it rested on valid evidence, would explain "how a single version of the poems came to be accepted," namely, because the poem was now *written* for the first time, and oral versions fell out of memory. But it would not, of course, explain how, before Pisistratus, during four or five centuries of change, the new poets and reciters, throughout the Greek world, each adding such fresh verses as he pleased, and often introducing such modern details of life as he pleased, kept up the harmony of the Homeric picture of life, and character, and law, as far as it confessedly exists.

To take a single instance: the poems never allude to the personal armorial bearings of the heroes. They are unknown to or unnamed by Homer, but are very familiar on the shields in seventh century and sixth century vases, and AEschylus introduces them with great poetic effect in {blank space}. How did late continuators, familiar with the serpents, lions, bulls' heads, crabs, doves, and so forth, on the contemporary shields, keep such picturesque and attractive details out of their new rhapsodies? In mediaeval France, we shall show, the epics (eleventh to thirteenth centuries) deal with Charlemagne and his peers of the eighth century A.D. But they provide these heroes with the armorial bearings which came in during the eleventh to twelfth century A.D. The late Homeric rhapsodists avoided such tempting anachronisms.

Wolf's theory, then, explains "how a single version came to be accepted." It was the first *WRITTEN* version; the others died out, like the old Scots orally repeated songs, when Burns published new words to the airs. But Wolf's theory does not explain the harmony of the picture of life, the absence of post-Homeric ideas and ways of living, in the first written version, which, practically, is our own version.

In 1892 (*COMPANION TO THE Iliad*) Mr. Leaf adopted a different theory, the hypothesis of a Homeric "school" "which busied itself with the tradition of the Homeric poetry," for there must have been some central authority to preserve the text intact when it could not be preserved in writing. Were there no such body to maintain a fixed standard, the poems must have ended by varying indefinitely, according to the caprice of their various reciters. This is perfectly obvious.

Such a school could keep an eye on anachronisms and excise them; in fact, the Maori priests, in an infinitely more barbarous state of society, had such schools for the preservation of their ancient hymns in purity. The older priests "insisted on a critical and verbatim rehearsal of all the ancient lore." Proceedings were sanctioned by human sacrifices and many mystic rites. We are not told that new poems were produced and criticised; it does not appear that this was the case. Pupils attended from three to five years, and then qualified as priests or *tohunga* {Footnote: White, *THE Ancient HISTORY OF THE Maori, VOL.* i. pp. 8-13.}. Suppose that the Asiatic Greeks, like the Maoris and Zuñis, had Poetic Colleges of a sacred kind, admitting new poets, and keeping them up to the antique standard in all respects. If this were so, the relative rarity of "anachronisms" and of modernisms in language in the Homeric poems is explained. But Mr. Leaf has now entirely and with a light heart abandoned his theory of a school, which is unsupported by evidence, he says.'

"The great problem," he writes, "for those who maintain the gradual growth of the poems by a process of crystallisation has been to understand how a single version came to be accepted, where many rival versions must, from the necessity of the case, have once existed side by side. The assumption of a school or guild of singers has been made," and Mr. Leaf, in 1892, made the assumption himself: "as some such hypothesis we are bound to make in order to explain the possibility of any theory" (1892). {Footnote: *COMPANION TO THE Iliad, pp. 20, 21.*}

But now (1900) he says, after mentioning "the assumption of a school or guild of singers," that "the rare mention of {Greek: Homeridai} in Chios gives no support to this hypothesis, which lacks any other confirmation." {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. xviii. p. xix.} He therefore now adopts the Wolfian hypothesis that "an official copy of Homer was made in Athens at the time of Solon or Pisistratus," from the rhapsodies existing in the memory of reciters. {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. p. xix.} But Mr. Leaf had previously said {Footnote: *COMPANION TO THE Iliad*, p. 190.} that "the legend which connects his" (Pisistratus's) "name with the Homeric poems is itself probably only conjectural, and of late date." Now the evidence for Pisistratus which, in 1892, he thought "conjectural and of late date," seems to him a sufficient basis for an hypothesis of a Pisistratean editor of the Iliad, while the evidence for an Homeric school which appeared to him good enough for an hypothesis in 1892 is rejected as worthless, though, in each case, the evidence itself remains just what it used to be.

This is not very satisfactory, and the Pisistratean hypothesis is much less useful to a theorist than the former hypothesis of an Homeric school, for the Pisistratean hypothesis cannot explain the harmony of the characters and the details in the *Iliad*, nor the absence of such glaring anachronisms as the Cyclic poets made, nor the general "pre-Odyssean" character of the language and grammar. By the Pisistratean hypothesis there was not, what Mr. Leaf in 1892 justly deemed essential, a school "to maintain a fixed standard," throughout the changes of four centuries, and against the caprice of many generations of fresh reciters and irresponsible poets. The hypothesis of a school *was* really that which, of the two, best explained the facts, and there is no more valid evidence for the first making and writing out of our *Iliad* under Pisistratus than for the existence of a Homeric school.

The evidence for the *Iliad* edited for Pisistratus is examined in a Note at the close of this chapter. Meanwhile Mr. Leaf now revives Wolf's old theory to account for the fact that somehow "a single version" (of the Homeric poems) "came to be accepted." His present theory, if admitted, does account for the acceptation of a single version of the poems, the first standard *written* version, but fails to explain how "the caprice of the different reciters" (as he says) did not wander into every variety of anachronism in detail and in diction, thus producing a chaos which no editor of about 540 A.D. could force into its present uniformity.

Such an editor is now postulated by Mr. Leaf. If his editor's edition, as being *written*, was accepted by Greece, then we "understand how a single version came to be accepted." But we do not understand how the editor could possibly introduce a harmony which could only have characterised his materials, as Mr. Leaf has justly remarked, if there was an Homeric school "to maintain a fixed standard." But now such harmony in the picture of life as exists in the poems is left without any explanation. We have now, by the theory, a crowd of rhapsodists, many generations of uncontrolled wandering men, who, for several centuries,

"Rave, recite, and madden through the land,"

with no written texts, and with no "fixed body to maintain a standard." Such men would certainly not adhere strictly to a stereotyped early tradition: *that* we cannot expect from them.

Again, no editor of about 540 B.C. could possibly bring harmony of manners, customs, and diction into such of their recitals as he took down in writing.

Let us think out the supposed editor's situation. During three centuries nine generations of strollers have worked their will on one ancient short poem, *The Wrath* of *Achilles*. This is, in itself, an unexampled fact. Poets turn to new topics; they do not, as a rule, for centuries embroider one single situation out of the myriads which heroic legend affords. Strolling reciters are the least careful of men, each would recite in the language and grammar of his day, and introduce the newly evolved words and idioms, the new and fashionable manners, costume, and weapons of his time. When war chariots became obsolete, he would bring in cavalry; when there was no Over-Lord, he would not trouble himself to maintain correctly the character and situation of Agamemnon. He would speak of coined money, in cases of buying and selling; his European geography would often be wrong;

he would not ignore the Ionian cities of Asia; most weapons would be of iron, not bronze, in his lays. Ionian religious ideas could not possibly be excluded, nor changes in customary law, civil and criminal. Yet, we think, none of these things occurs in Homer.

The editor of the theory had to correct all these anachronisms and discrepancies. What a task in an uncritical age! The editor's materials would be the lays known to such strollers as happened to be gathered, in Athens, perhaps at the Panathenaic festival. The *répertoire* of each stroller would vary indefinitely from those of all the others. One man knew this chant, as modified or made by himself; other men knew others, equally unsatisfactory.

The editor must first have written down from recitation all the passages that he could collect. Then he was obliged to construct a narrative sequence containing a plot, which he fashioned by a process of selection and rejection; and then he had to combine passages, alter them, add as much as he thought fit, remove anachronisms, remove discrepancies, accidentally bring in fresh discrepancies (as always happens), weave transitional passages, look with an antiquarian eye after the too manifest modernisms in language and manners, and so produce the {blank space}. That, in the sixth century B.C., any man undertook such a task, and succeeded so well as to impose on Aristotle and all the later Greek critics, appears to be a theory that could only occur to a modern man of letters, who is thinking of the literary conditions of his own time. The editor was doing, and doing infinitely better, what Lönnrot, in the nineteenth century, tried in vain to achieve for the Finnish *Kalewala*. {Footnote: See Comparetti, *The Kalewala*.}

Centuries later than Pisistratus, in a critical age, Apollonius Rhodius set about writing an epic of the Homeric times. We know how entirely he failed, on all hands, to restore the manner of Homer. The editor of 540 B.C. was a more scientific man. Can any one who sets before himself the nature of the editor's task believe in him and it? To the master-less floating jellyfish of old poems and new, Mr. Leaf supposes that "but small and unimportant additions were made after the end of the eighth century or thereabouts," especially as "the creative and imaginative forces of the Ionian race turned to other forms of expression," to lyrics and to philosophic poems. But the able Pisistratean editor, after all, we find, introduced quantities of new matter into the poems – in the middle of the sixth century; that kind of industry, then, did not cease towards the end of the eighth century, as we have been told. On the other hand, as we shall learn, the editor contributed to the *Iliad*, among other things, Nestor's descriptions of his youthful adventures, for the purpose of flattering Nestor's descendant, the tyrant Pisistratus of Athens.

One hypothesis, the theory of an Homeric school – which would answer our question, "How was the harmony of the picture of life in remote ages preserved in poems composed in several succeeding ages, and in totally altered conditions of life?" – Mr. Leaf, as we know, rejects. We might suggest, again, that there were written texts handed down from an early period, and preserved in new copies from generation to generation. Mr. Leaf states his doubt that there were any such texts. "The poems were all this time handed down orally only by tradition among the singers (*sic*), who used to wander over Greece reciting them at popular festivals. Writing was indeed known through the whole period of epic development" (some four centuries at least), "but it is in the highest degree unlikely that it was ever employed to form a standard text of the Epic or *ANY* part of it. There can hardly have been any standard text; at best there was a continuous tradition of those parts of the poems which were especially popular, and the knowledge of which was a valuable asset to the professional reciter."

Now we would not contend for the existence of any {blank space} text much before 600 B.C., and I understand Mr. Leaf not to deny, now, that there may have been texts of the *ODYSSEY* and *Iliad* before, say, 600-540 B.C. If cities and reciters had any ancient texts, then texts existed, though not "standard" texts: and by this means the harmony of thought, character, and detail in the poems might be preserved. We do not think that it is "in the highest degree unlikely" that there were no texts. Is this one of the many points on which every savant must rely on his own sense of what is "likely"? To this essential point, the almost certain existence of written texts, we return in our conclusion.

What we have to account for is not only the relative lack of anachronisms in poems supposed to have been made through a period of at least four hundred years, but also the harmony of the *CHARACTERS* in subtle details. Some of the characters will be dealt with later; meanwhile it is plain that Mr. Leaf, when he rejects both the idea of written texts prior to 600-540 B.C., and also the idea of a school charged with the duty of "maintaining a fixed standard," leaves a terrible task to his supposed editor of orally transmitted poems which, he says – if unpreserved by text or school – "must have ended by varying infinitely according to the caprice of their various reciters." {Footnote: *Companion to the Iliad, p. 21.*}

On that head there can be no doubt; in the supposed circumstances no harmony, no *unus* color, could have survived in the poems till the days of the sixth century editor.

Here, then, is another difficulty in the path of the theory that the *Iliad* is the work of four centuries. If it was, we are not enabled to understand how it came to be what it is. No editor could possibly tinker it into the whole which we possess; none could steer clear of many absurd anachronisms. These are found by critics, but it is our hope to prove that they do not exist.

NOTE

THE LEGEND OF THE MAKING OF THE "ILIAD" UNDER PISISTRATOS

It has been shown in the text that in 1892 Mr. Leaf thought the story about the making of the *Iliad* under Pisistratus, a legend without authority, while he regarded the traditions concerning an Homeric school as sufficient basis for an hypothesis, "which we are bound to make in order to explain the possibility of any theory." In 1900 he entirely reversed his position, the school was abandoned, and the story of Pisistratus was accepted. One objection to accepting any of the various legends about the composing and writing out, for the first time, of the *Iliad*, in the sixth century, the age of Pisistratus, was the silence of Aristarchus on the subject. He discussed the authenticity of lines in the *Iliad* which, according to the legend, were interpolated for a political purpose by Solon or Pisistratus, but, as far as his comments have reached us in the scholia, he never said a word about the tradition of Athenian interpolation. Now Aristarchus must, at least, have known the tradition of the political use of a disputed line, for Aristotle writes (*Rhetoric*, i. 15) that the Athenians, early in the sixth century, quoted *Iliad*, II. 558, to prove their right to Salamis. Aristarchus also discussed *Iliad*, II. 553, 555, to which the Spartans appealed on the question of supreme command against Persia (Herodotus, vii. 159). Again Aristarchus said nothing, or nothing that has reached us, about Athenian interpolation. Once more, Odyssey, II. 631, was said by Hereas, a Megarian writer, to have been interpolated by Pisistratus (Plutarch.) But "the scholia that represent the teaching of Aristarchus" never make any reference to the alleged dealings of Pisistratus with the *Iliad*. The silence of Aristarchus, however, affords no safe ground of argument to believers or disbelievers in the original edition written out by order of Pisistratus.

It can never be proved that the scholiasts did not omit what Aristarchus said, though we do not know why they should have done so; and it can never be proved that Aristarchus was ignorant of the traditions about Pisistratus, or that he thought them unworthy of notice. All is matter of conjecture on these points. Mr. Leaf's conversion to belief in the story that our *Iliad* was practically edited and first committed to writing under Pisistratus appears to be due to the probability that Aristarchus must have known the tradition. But if he did, there is no proof that he accepted it as historically authentic. There is not, in fact, any proof even that Aristarchus must have known the tradition. He had probably read Dieuchidas of Megara, for "Wilamowitz has shown that Dieuchidas wrote in the fourth century." {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. p. xix.} But, unluckily, we do not know that Dieuchidas stated that the *Iliad* was made and first committed to writing in the sixth century B.C. No mortal knows what Dieuchidas said: and, again, what Dieuchidas said is not evidence. He wrote as a partisan in a historical dispute.

The story about Pisistratus and his editor, the practical maker of the *Iliad*, is interwoven with a legend about an early appeal, in the beginning of the sixth century B.C., to Homer as an historical authority. The Athenians and Megarians, contending for the possession of the island of Salamis, the home of the hero Aias, are said to have laid their differences before the Spartans (*cir.* 600-580 B.C.). Each party quoted Homer as evidence. Aristotle, who, as we saw, mentions the tale (Rhetoric, i. 15), merely says that the Athenians cited *Iliad*, II. 558: "Aias led and stationed his men where the phalanxes of the Athenians were posted." Aristarchus condemned this line, not (as far as evidence goes) because there was a tradition that the Athenians had interpolated it to prove their point, but because he thought it inconsistent with *Iliad*, III. 230; IV. 251, which, if I may differ from so great a critic, it is not; these two passages deal, not with the position of the camps, but of the men in the field on a certain occasion. But if Aristarchus had thought the tradition of Athenian interpolation of II. 558 worthy of notice, he might have mentioned it in support of his opinion. Perhaps he did. No reference to his notice has reached us. However this may be, Mr. Leaf mainly bases his faith in the Pisistratean editor (apparently, we shall see, an Asiatic Greek, residing in Athens), on a fragmentary passage of Diogenes Laertius (third century A.D.), concerned with the tale of Homer's being cited about 600-580 B.C. as an authority for the early ownership of Salamis. In this text Diogenes quotes Dieuchidas as saying something about Pisistratus in relation to the Homeric poems, but what Dieuchidas really said is unknown, for a part has dropped out of the text.

The text of Diogenes Laertius runs thus (Solon, i. 57): "He (Solon) decreed that the Homeric poems should be recited by rhapsodists {Greek text: ex hypobolaes}" (words of disputed sense), so that where the first reciter left off thence should begin his successor. It was rather Solon, then, than Pisistratus who brought Homer to light ({Greek text: ephotisen}), as Diogenes says in the Fifth Book of his *Megarica*. And *the lines* were *especially these*: "They who held Athens," &c. (*Iliad*, II. 546-558), the passage on which the Athenians rested in their dispute with the Megarians.

And *what* "lines were especially these"? Mr. Leaf fills up the gap in the sense, after "Pisistratus" thus, "for it was he" (Solon) "who interpolated lines in the *Catalogue*, and not Pisistratus." He says: "The natural sense of the passage as it stands" (in Diogenes Laertius) "is this: It was not Peisistratos, as is generally supposed, but Solon *who collected the scattered Homer* of *his* day, for he it was who interpolated the lines in the *Catalogue of the Ships*"… But Diogenes neither says for himself nor quotes from Dieuchidas anything about "collecting the scattered Homer of his day." That Pisistratus did so is Mr. Leafs theory, but there is not a hint about anybody collecting anything in the Greek. Ritschl, indeed, conjecturally supplying the gap in the text of Diogenes, invented the words, "Who *collected* the Homeric poems, and inserted some things to please the Athenians." But Mr. Leaf rejects that conjecture as "clearly wrong." Then why does he adopt, as "the natural sense of the passage," "it was not Peisistratos but Solon who *collected* the scattered Homer of his day?" {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. p. xviii.} The testimony of Dieuchidas, as far as we can see in the state of the text, "refers," as Mr. Monro says, "to the *interpolation* that has just been mentioned, and need not extend further back." "Interpolation is a process that postulates a text in which the additional verses can be inserted," whereas, if I understand Mr. Leaf, the very first text, in his opinion, was that compiled by the editor for Pisistratus. {Footnote: Monro, Odyssey, vol. ii. pp. 400 410, especially pp. 408-409.} Mr. Leaf himself dismisses the story of the Athenian appeal to Homer for proof of their claim as "a fiction." If, so, it does not appear that ancient commentaries on a fiction are of any value as proof that Pisistratus produced the earliest edition of the *Iliad*. {Footnote: Mr. Leaf adds that, except in one disputed line (*Iliad*, II. 558) Aias "is not, in the *Iliad*, encamped next the Athenians." His proofs of this odd oversight of the fraudulent interpolator, who should have altered the line, are *Iliad*, IV. 327 ff, and XII. 681 ff. In the former passage we find Odysseus stationed next to the Athenians. But Odysseus would have neighbours on either hand. In the second passage we find the Athenians stationed next to the Boeotians and Ionians, but the Athenians, too, had neighbours on either side. The arrangement was, on the Achaean extreme left, Protesilaus's command (he was dead), and that of Aias; then the Boeotians

and Ionians, with "the picked men of the Athenians"; and then Odysseus, on the Boeotolono-Athenian right; or so the Athenians would read the passage. The texts must have seemed favourable to the fraudulent Athenian interpolator denounced by the Megarians, or he would have altered them. Mr. Leaf, however, argues that line 558 of Book II. "cannot be original, as is patent from the fact that Aias in the rest of the *Iliad* is not encamped next the Athenians" (see IV. 327; XIII. 681). The Megarians do not seem to have seen it, or they would have cited these passages. But why argue at all about the Megarian story if it be a fiction? Mr. Leaf takes the brief bald mention of Aias in *Iliad*, II. 558 as "a mocking cry from Athens over the conquest of the island of the Aiakidai." But as, in this same *Catalogue*, Aias is styled "by far the best of warriors" after Achilles (II. 768), while there is no more honourable mention made of Diomede than that he had "a loud war cry" (II. 568), or of Menelaus but that he was also sonorous, and while Nestor, the ancestor of Pisistratus, receives not even that amount of praise (line 601), "the mocking cry from Athens" appears a vain imagination.}

The lines disputed by the Megarians occur in the *Catalogue*, and, as to the date and original purpose of the *Catalogue*, the most various opinions prevail. In Mr. Leaf's earlier edition of the *Iliad* (vol. i. p. 37), he says that "nothing convincing has been urged to show" that the *Catalogue* is "of late origin." We know, from the story of Solon and the Megarians, that the *Catalogue* "was considered a classical work – the Domesday Book of Greece, at a very early date" – say 600-580 B.C. "It agrees with the poems in being pre-Dorian" (except in lines 653-670).

"There seems therefore to be no valid reason for doubting that it, like the bulk of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, was composed in Achaean times, and carried with the emigrants to the coast of Asia Minor…"

In his new edition (vol. ii. p. 86), Mr. Leaf concludes that the *Catalogue* "originally formed an introduction to the whole Cycle," the compiling of "the whole Cycle" being of uncertain date, but very late indeed, on any theory. The author "studiously preserves an ante-Dorian standpoint. It is admitted that there can be little doubt that some of the material, at least, is old."

These opinions are very different from those expressed by Mr. Leaf in 1886. He cannot now give "even an approximate date for the composition of the *Catalogue*" which, we conceive, must be the latest thing in Homer, if it was composed "for that portion of the whole Cycle which, as worked up in a separate poem, was called the *Kypria*" for the *Kypria* is obviously a very late performance, done as a prelude to the *Iliad*.

I am unable to imagine how this mutilated passage of Diogenes, even if rightly restored, proves that Dieuchidas, a writer of the fourth century B.C., alleged that Pisistratus made a collection of scattered Homeric poems – in fact, made "a standard text."

The Pisistratean hypothesis "was not so long ago unfashionable, but in the last few years a clear reaction has set in," says Mr. Leaf. {Footnote: *Iliad*, i. p. XIX.}

The reaction has not affected that celebrated scholar, Dr. Blass, who, with Teutonic frankness, calls the Pisistratean edition "an absurd legend." {Footnote: Blass, Die *Interpolationen* in der *Odyssee*, pp. I, 2. Halle, 1904.} Meyer says that the Alexandrians rejected the Pisistratean story "as a worthless fable," differing here from Mr. Leaf and Wilamowitz; and he spurns the legend, saying that it is incredible that the whole Greek world would allow the tyrants of Athens to palm off a Homer on them. {Footnote: Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii. 390, 391. 1893.}

Mr. T. W. Allen, an eminent textual scholar, treats the Pisistratean editor with no higher respect. In an Egyptian papyrus containing a fragment of Julius Africanus, a Christian chronologer, Mr. Allen finds him talking confidently of the Pisistratidae. They "stitched together the rest of the epic," but excised some magical formulae which Julius Africanus preserves. Mr. Allen remarks: "The statements about Pisistratus belong to a well-established category, that of Homeric mythology… The anecdotes about Pisistratus and the poet himself are on a par with Dares, who 'wrote the *Iliad* before Homer.'" {Footnote: *Classical Review* xviii. 148.}

The editor of Pisistratus is hardly in fashion, though that is of no importance. Of importance is the want of evidence for the editor, and, as we have shown, the impossible character of the task allotted to him by the theory.

As I suppose Mr. Leaf to insinuate, "fashion" has really nothing to do with the question. People who disbelieve in written texts must, and do, oscillate between the theory of an Homeric "school" and the Wolfian theory that Pisistratus, or Solon, or somebody procured the making of the first written text at Athens in the sixth century – a theory which fails to account for the harmony of the picture of life in the poems, and, as Mr. Monro, Grote, Nutzhorn, and many others argue, lacks evidence.

As Mr. Monro reasons, and as Blass states the case bluntly, "Solon, or Pisistratus, or whoever it was, put a stop, at least as far as Athens was concerned, to the mangling of Homer" by the rhapsodists or reciters, each anxious to choose a pet passage, and not going through the whole *Iliad* in due sequence. "But the unity existed before the mangling. That this has been so long and so stubbornly misunderstood is no credit to German scholarship: blind uncritical credulity on one side, limitless and arbitrary theorising on the other!" We are not solitary sceptics when we decline to accept the theory of Mr. Leaf. It is neither bottomed on evidence nor does it account for the facts in the case. That is to say, the evidence appeals to Mr. Leaf as valid, but is thought worse than inadequate by other great scholars, such as Monro and Blass; while the fact of the harmony of the picture of life, preserved through four or five centuries, appears to be left without explanation.

Mr. Leaf holds that, in order to organise recitations in due sequence, the making of a text, presenting, for the first time, a due sequence, was necessary. His opponents hold that the sequence already existed, but was endangered by the desultory habits of the rhapsodists. We must here judge each for himself; there is no court of final appeal.

I confess to feeling some uncertainty about the correctness of my statement of Mr. Leaf's opinions. He and I both think an early Attic "recension" probable, or almost certain. But (see' "Conclusion") I regard such recension as distinct from the traditional "edition" of Pisistratus. Mr. Leaf, I learn, does not regard the "edition" as having "made" the *Iliad*; yet his descriptions of the processes and methods of his Pisistratean editor correspond to my idea of the "making" of our *Iliad* as it stands. See, for example, Mr. Leaf's Introduction to *Iliad*, Book II. He will not even insist on the early Attic as the first *written* text; if it was not, its general acceptance seems to remain a puzzle. He discards the idea of one Homeric "school" of paramount authority, but presumes that, as recitation was a profession, there must have been schools. We do not hear of them or know the nature of their teaching. The Beauvais "school" of *jongleurs* in Lent (fourteenth century A.D.) seems to have been a holiday conference of strollers.

CHAPTER IV

LOOSE FEUDALISM: THE OVER-LORD IN "ILIAD," BOOKS I. AND II

We now try to show that the Epics present an historical unity, a complete and harmonious picture of an age, in its political, social, legal, and religious aspects; in its customs, and in its military equipment. A long epic can only present an unity of historical ideas if it be the work of one age. Wandering minstrels, living through a succession of incompatible ages, civic, commercial, democratic, could not preserve, without flaw or failure, the attitude, in the first place, of the poet of feudal princes towards an Over-Lord who rules them by undisputed right divine, but rules weakly, violently, unjustly, being subject to gusts of arrogance, and avarice, and repentance. Late poets not living in feudal society, and unfamiliar alike with its customary law, its jealousy of the Over-Lord, its conservative respect for his consecrated function, would inevitably miss the proper tone, and fail in some of the many {blank space} of the feudal situation. This is all the more certain, if we accept Mr. Leaf's theory that each poet-rhapsodist's *répertoire* varied from the *répertoires* of the rest. There could be no unity of treatment in their handling of the character and position of the Over-Lord and of the customary law that regulates his relations with his peers. Again, no editor of 540 B.C. could construct an harmonious picture of the Over-Lord in relation to the princes out of the fragmentary *répertoires* of strolling rhapsodists, which now lay before him in written versions. If the editor could do this, he was a man of Shakespearian genius, and had minute knowledge of a dead society. This becomes evident when, in place of examining the *Iliad* through microscopes, looking out for discrepancies, we study it in its large lines as a literary whole. The question being, Is the *Iliad* a literary whole or a mere literary mosaic? we must ask "What, taking it provisionally as a literary whole, are the qualities of the poet as a painter of what we may call feudal society?"

Choosing the part of the Over-Lord Agamemnon, we must not forget that he is one of several analogous figures in the national poetry and romance of other feudal ages. Of that great analogous figure, Charlemagne, and of his relations with his peers in the earlier and later French mediaeval epics we shall later speak. Another example is Arthur, in some romances "the blameless king," in others *un roi fainéant*.

The parallel Irish case is found in the Irish saga of Diarmaid and Grainne. We read Mr. O'Grady's introduction on the position of Eionn Mac Cumhail, the legendary Over-Lord of Ireland, the Agamemnon of the Celts. "Fionn, like many men in power, is variable; he is at times magnanimous, at other times tyrannical and petty. Diarmaid, Oisin, Oscar, and Caoilte Mac Rohain are everywhere the {Greek: kaloi kachotoi} of the Fenians; of them we never hear anything bad." {Footnote: *Transactions of the Ossianic* Society, vol. iii. p. 39.}

Human nature eternally repeats itself in similar conditions of society, French, Norse, Celtic, and Achaean. "We never hear anything bad" of Diomede, Odysseus, or Aias, and the evil in Achilles's resentment up to a certain point is legal, and not beyond what the poet thinks natural and pardonable in his circumstances.

The poet's view of Agamemnon is expressed in the speeches and conduct of the peers. In Book I. we see the bullying truculence of Agamemnon, wreaked first on the priest of Apollo, Chryses, then in threats against the prophet Chalcas, then in menaces against any prince on whom he chooses to avenge his loss of fair Chryseis, and, finally, in the Seizure of Briseis from Achilles.

This part of the First Book of the *Iliad* is confessedly original, and there is no varying, throughout the Epic, from the strong and delicate drawing of an historical situation, and of a complex character. Agamemnon is truculent, and eager to assert his authority, but he is also possessed of a

heavy sense of his responsibilities, which often unmans him. He has a legal right to a separate "prize of honour" (geras) after each capture of spoil. Considering the wrath of Apollo for the wrong done in refusing his priest's offered ransom for his daughter, Agamemnon will give her back, "if that is better; rather would I see my folks whole than perishing." {Footnote: *Iliad*, I. 115-117.}

Here we note points of feudal law and of kingly character. The giving and taking of ransom exists as it did in the Middle Ages; ransom is refused, death is dealt, as the war becomes more fierce towards its close. Agamemnon has sense enough to waive his right to the girlish prize, for the sake of his people, but is not so generous as to demand no compensation. But there are no fresh spoils to apportion, and the Over-Lord threatens to take the prize of one of his peers, even of Achilles.

Thereon Achilles does what was frequently done in the feudal age of western Europe, he "renounces his fealty," and will return to Phthia. He adds insult, "thou dog-face!" The whole situation, we shall show, recurs again and again in the epics of feudal France, the later epics of feudal discontent. Agamemnon replies that Achilles may do as he pleases. "I have others by my side that shall do me honour, and, above all, Zeus, Lord of Counsel" (I. 175). He rules, literally, by divine right, and we shall see that, in the French feudal epics, as in Homer, this claim of divine right is granted, even in the case of an insolent and cowardly Over-Lord. Achilles half draws "his great sword," one of the long, ponderous cut-and-thrust bronze swords of which we have actual examples from Mycenae and elsewhere. He is restrained by Athene, visible only to him. "With words, indeed," she says, "revile him … hereafter shall goodly gifts come to thee, yea, in threefold measure…"

Gifts of atonement for "surquedry," like that of Agamemnon, are given and received in the French epics, for example, in the {blank space}. The *Iliad* throughout exhibits much interest in such gifts, and in the customary law as to their acceptance, and other ritual or etiquette of reconciliation. This fact, it will be shown, accounts for a passage which critics reject, and which is tedious to our taste, as it probably was tedious to the age of the supposed late poets themselves. (Book XIX.). But the taste of a feudal audience, as of the audience of the Saga men, delighted in "realistic" descriptions of their own customs and customary law, as in descriptions of costume and armour. This is fortunate for students of customary law and costume, but wearies hearers and readers who desire the action to advance. Passages of this kind would never be inserted by late poets, who had neither the knowledge of, nor any interest in, the subjects.

To return to Achilles, he is now within his right; the moral goddess assures him of that, and he is allowed to give the reins to his tongue, as he does in passages to which the mediaeval epics offer many parallels. In the mediaeval epics, as in Homer, there is no idea of recourse to a duel between the Over-Lord and his peer. Achilles accuses Agamemnon of drunkenness, greed, and poltroonery. He does not return home, but swears by the sceptre that Agamemnon shall rue his *outrecuidance* when Hector slays the host. By the law of the age Achilles remains within his right. His violent words are not resented by the other peers. They tacitly admit, as Athene admits, that Achilles has the right, being so grievously injured, to "renounce his fealty," till Agamemnon makes apology and gives gifts of atonement. Such, plainly, is the unwritten feudal law, which gives to the Over-Lord the lion's share of booty, the initiative in war and council, and the right to command; but limits him by the privilege of the peers to renounce their fealty under insufferable provocation. In no Book is Agamemnon so direfully insulted as in the First, which is admitted to be of the original "kernel." Elsewhere the sympathy of the poet occasionally enables him to feel the elements of pathos in the position of the over-tasked King of Men.

As concerns the apology and the gifts of atonement, the poet has feudal customary law and usage clearly before his eyes. He knows exactly what is due, and the limits of the rights of Over-Lord and prince, matters about which the late Ionian poets could only pick up information by a course of study in constitutional history – the last thing they were likely to attempt – unless we suppose that they all kept their eyes on the "kernel," and that steadily, through centuries, generations of strollers worked on the lines laid down in that brief poem.

Thus the poet of Book IX. – one of "the latest expansions," – thoroughly understands the legal and constitutional situation, as between Agamemnon and Achilles. Or rather all the poets who collaborated in Book IX., which "had grown by a process of accretion," {Footnote: Leaf, Iliad, vol. i. p. 371.} understood the legal situation.

Returning to the poet's conception of Agamemnon, we find in the character of Agamemnon himself the key to the difficulties which critics discover in the Second Book. The difficulty is that when Zeus, won over to the cause of Achilles by Thetis, sends a false Dream to Agamemnon, the Dream tells the prince that he shall at once take Troy, and bids him summon the host to arms. But Agamemnon, far from doing that, summons the host to a peaceful assembly, with the well-known results of demoralisation.

Mr. Leaf explains the circumstances on his own theory of expansions compiled into a confused whole by a late editor. He thinks that probably there were two varying versions even of this earliest Book of the poem. In one (A), the story went on from the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, to the holding of a general assembly "to consider the altered state of affairs." This is the Assembly of Book H, but debate, in version A, was opened by Thersites, not by Agamemnon, and Thersites proposed instant flight! That was probably the earlier version.

In the other early version (B), after the quarrel between the chiefs, the story did not, as in A, go on straight to the Assembly, but Achilles appealed to his mother, the fair sea-goddess, as in our Iliad, and she obtained from Zeus, as in the actual *Iliad*, his promise to honour Achilles by giving victory, in his absence, to the Trojans. The poet of version B, in fact, created the beautiful figure of Thetis, so essential to the development of the tenderness that underlies the ferocity of Achilles. The other and earliest poet, who treated of the Wrath of the author of version A, neglected that opportunity with all that it involved, and omitted the purpose of Zeus, which is mentioned in the fifth line of the Epic. The editor of 540 B.C., seeing good in both versions, A and B, "combined his information," and produced Books I. and II. of the *ILIAD* as they stand. {Footnote: Leaf, *Iliad*, vol. i. p. 47.}

Mr. Leaf suggests that "there is some ground for supposing that the oldest version of the Wrath of Achilles did not contain the promise of Zeus to Thetis; it was a tale played exclusively on the earthly stage." {Footnote: *Ibid*, vol. i. p. xxiii.} In that case the author of the oldest form (A) must have been a poet very inferior indeed to the later author of B who took up and altered his work. In *his* version, Book I. does not end with the quarrel of the princes, but Achilles receives, with all the courtesy of his character, the unwelcome heralds of Agamemnon, and sends Briseis with them to the Over-Lord. He then with tears appeals to his goddess-mother, Thetis of the Sea, who rose from the grey mere like a mist, leaving the sea deeps where she dwelt beside her father, the ancient one of the waters. Then sat she face to face with her son as he let the tears down fall, and caressed him, saying, "Child, wherefore weepest thou, for what sorrow of heart? Hide it not, tell it to me; that I may know it as well as thou." Here the poet strikes the keynote of the character of Achilles, the deadly in war, the fierce in council, who weeps for his lost lady and his wounded honour, and cries for help to his mother, as little children cry.

Such is the Achilles of the *Iliad* throughout and consistently, but such he was not to the mind of Mr. Leaf's probably elder poet, the author of version A. Thetis, in version B, promises to persuade Zeus to honour Achilles by making Agamemnon rue his absence, and, twelve days after the quarrel, wins the god's consent.

In Book II. Zeus reflects on his promise, and sends a false Dream to beguile Agamemnon, promising that now he shall take Troy. Agamemnon, while asleep, is full of hope; but when he wakens he dresses in mufti, in a soft doublet, a cloak, and sandals; takes his sword (swords were then worn as part of civil costume), and the ancestral sceptre, which he wields in peaceful assemblies. Day dawns, and "he bids the heralds…" A break here occurs, according to the theory.

Here (*Iliad*, Book II., line 50) the kernel ceases, Mr. Leaf says, and the editor of 540 B.C. plays his pranks for a while.

The kernel (or one of the *two* kernels), we are to take up again at Book II., 443-483, and thence "skip" to XI. 56, and now "we have a narrative masterly in conception and smooth in execution," {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. i. p. 47.} says Mr. Leaf. This kernel is kernel B, probably the later kernel of the pair, that in which Achilles appeals to his lady mother, who wins from Zeus the promise to cause Achaean defeat, till Achilles is duly honoured. The whole Epic turns on this promise of Zeus, as announced in the fifth, sixth, and seventh lines of the very first Book. If kernel A is the first kernel, the poet left out the essence of the plot he had announced. However, let us first examine probable kernel B, reading, as advised, Book II. 1-50, {blank space}; XI. 56 ff.

We left Agamemnon (though the Dream bade him summon the host to arms) dressed in *civil costume*. His ancestral sceptre in his hand, he is going to hold a deliberative assembly of the unarmed host. His attire proves that fact ({Greek: *prepodaes de ae stolae to epi Boulaen exionti*}, says the scholiast). Then if we skip, as advised, to II. 443-483 he bids the heralds call the host not to peaceful council, for which his costume is appropriate, but to *war*! The host gathers, "and in their midst the lord Agamemnon," – still in civil costume, with his sceptre (he has not changed his attire as far as we are told) – "in face and eyes like Zeus; in waist like Ares" (god of war); "in breast like Poseidon," – yet, for all that we are told, entirely unarmed! The host, however, were dressed "in innumerable bronze," "war was sweeter to them than to depart in their ships to their dear native land," – so much did Athene encourage them.

But nobody had been speaking of flight, in THE KERNEL B: THAT proposal was originally made by Thersites, in kernel A, and was attributed to Agamemnon in the part of Book II. where the editor blends A and B. This part, at present, Mr. Leaf throws aside as a very late piece of compilation. Turning next, as directed, to XI. 56, we find the Trojans deploying in arms, and the hosts encounter with fury – Agamemnon still, for all that appears, in the raiment of peace, and with the sceptre of constitutional monarchy. "In he rushed, first of all, and slew Bienor," and many other gentlemen of Troy, not with his sceptre!

Clearly all this is the reverse of "a narrative masterly in conception and smooth in execution: " it is an impossible narrative.

Mr. Leaf has attempted to disengage one of two forms of the old original poem from the parasitic later growths; he has promised to show us a smooth and masterly narrative, and the result is a narrative on which no Achasan poet could have ventured. In II. 50 the heralds are bidden {Greek: *kurussein*}, that is to summon the host – to *what*? To a peaceful assembly, as Agamemnon's costume proves, says the next line (II. 51), but that is excised by Mr. Leaf, and we go on to II. 443, and the reunited passage now reads, "Agamemnon bade the loud heralds" (II. 50) "call the Achaeans to battle" (II. 443), and they came, in harness, but their leader – when did he exchange chiton, cloak, and sceptre for helmet, shield, and spear? A host appears in arms; a king who set out with sceptre and doublet is found with a spear, in bronze armour: and not another word is said about the Dream of Agamemnon.

It is perfectly obvious and certain that the two pieces of the broken kernel B do not fit together at all. Nor is this strange, if the kernel was really broken and endured the insertion of matter enough to fill nine Books (IL-XL). If kernel B really contained Book II., line 50, as Mr. Leaf avers, if Agamemnon, as in that line (50) "bade the clear-voiced heralds do…" something – what he bade them do was, necessarily, as his peaceful costume proves, to summon the peaceful assembly which he was to moderate with his sceptre. At such an assembly, or at a preliminary council of Chiefs, he would assuredly speak of his Dream, as he does in the part excised. Mr. Leaf, if he will not have a peaceful assembly as part of kernel B, must begin his excision at the middle of line 42, in II., where Agamemnon wakens; and must make him dress not in mufti but in armour, and call the host of the Achaeans to arm, as the Dream bade him do, and as he does in II. 443. Perhaps we should then excise II. 45 2, 45 3, with the reference to the plan of retreat, for *THAT* is part of kernel A where there was no promise of Zeus, and no Dream sent to Agamemnon. Then from II. 483, the

description of the glorious armed aspect of Agamemnon, Mr. Leaf may pass to XI. 56, the account of the Trojans under Hector, of the battle, of the prowess of Agamemnon, inspired by the Dream which he, contrary to Homeric and French epic custom, has very wisely mentioned to nobody – that is, in the part not excised.

This appears to be the only method by which Mr. Leaf can restore the continuity of his kernel B.

Though Mr. Leaf has failed to fit Book XI. to any point in Book II., of course it does not follow that Book XI. cannot be a continuation of the original *Wrath* of *Achilles* (version B). If so, we understand why Agamemnon plucks up heart, in Book XI., and is the chief cause of a temporary Trojan reverse. He relies on the Dream sent from Zeus in the opening lines of Book II., the Dream which was not in kernel A; the Dream which he communicated to nobody; the Dream conveying the promise that he should at once take Troy. This is perhaps a tenable theory, though Agamemnon had much reason to doubt whether the host would obey his command to arm, but an alternative theory of why and wherefore Agamemnon does great feats of valour, in Book XI., will later be propounded. Note that the events of Books XL. – XVIII., by Mr. Leaf's theory, all occur on the very day after Thetis (according to kernel B)' {79} obtains from Zeus his promise to honour Achilles by the discomfiture of the Achaeans; they have suffered nothing till that moment, as far as we learn, from the absence of Achilles and his 2500 men: allowing for casualties, say 2000.

So far we have traced – from Books I. and II. to Book XI. – the fortunes of kernel B, of the supposed later of two versions of the opening of the *Iliad*. But there may have been a version (A) probably earlier, we have been told, in which Achilles did not appeal to his mother, nor she to Zeus, and Zeus did not promise victory to the Trojans, and sent no false Dream of success to Agamemnon. What were the fortunes of that oldest of all old kernels? In this version (A) Agamemnon, having had no Dream, summoned a peaceful assembly to discuss the awkwardness caused by the mutiny of Achilles. The host met (*Iliad,* II. 87-99). Here we pass from line 99 to 212-242: Thersites it is who opens the debate, (in version A) insults Agamemnon, and advises flight. The army rushed off to launch the ships, as in II. 142-210, and were brought back by Odysseus, who made a stirring speech, and was well backed by Agamemnon, urging to battle.

Version A appears to us to have been a version that no heroic audience would endure. A low person like Thersites opens a debate in an assembly called by the Over-Lord; this could not possibly pass unchallenged among listeners living in the feudal age. When a prince called an assembly, he himself opened the debate, as Achilles does in Book I. 54-67. That a lewd fellow, the buffoon and grumbler of the host, of "the people," nameless and silent throughout the Epic, should rush in and open debate in an assembly convoked by the Over-Lord, would have been regarded by feudal hearers, or by any hearers with feudal traditions, as an intolerable poetical license. Thersites would have been at once pulled down and beaten; the host would not have rushed to the ships on *his* motion. Any feudal audience would know better than to endure such an impossibility; they would have asked, "How could Thersites speak – without the sceptre?"

As the poem stands, and ought to stand, nobody less than the Over-Lord, acting within his right, ({Greek: ae themis esti} II. 73), could suggest the flight of the host, and be obeyed.

It is the absolute demoralisation of the host, in consequence of the strange test of their Lord, Agamemnon, making a feigned proposal to fly, and it is their confused, bewildered return to the assembly under the persuasions of Odysseus, urged by Athene, that alone, in the poem, give Thersites his unique opportunity to harangue. When the Over-Lord had called an assembly the first word, of course, was for to speak, as he does in the poem as it stands. That Thersifes should rise in the arrogance bred by the recent disorderly and demoralised proceedings is one thing; that he should open the debate when excitement was eager to hear Agamemnon, and before demoralisation set in, is quite another. We never hear again of Thersites, or of any one of the commonalty, daring to open his mouth in an assembly. Thersites sees his one chance, the chance of a life time, and takes it; because

Agamemnon, by means of the test – a proposal to flee homewards – which succeeded, it is said, in the case of Cortès, – has reduced the host, already discontented, to a mob.

Before Agamemnon thus displayed his ineptitude, as he often does later, Thersites had no chance. All this appears sufficiently obvious, if we put ourselves at the point of view of the original listeners. Thersites merely continues, in full assembly, the mutinous babble which he has been pouring out to his neighbours during the confused rush to launch the ships and during the return produced by the influence of Odysseus. The poet says so himself (*Iliad*, II. 212). "The rest sat down … only Thersites still chattered on." No original poet could manage the situation in any other way.

We have now examined Mr. Leaf's two supposed earliest versions of the beginning of the *Iliad*. His presumed earlier version (A), with no Thetis, no promise of Zeus, and no Dream, and with Thersites opening debate, is jejune, unpoetical, and omits the gentler and most winning aspect of the character of Achilles, while it could not possibly have been accepted by a feudal audience for the reasons already given. His presumed later version (B), with Thetis, Zeus, and the false Dream, cannot be, or certainly has not been, brought by Mr. Leaf into congruous connection with Book XI., and it results in the fighting of the *unarmed* Agamemnon, which no poet could have been so careless as to invent. Agamemnon could not go into battle without helmet, shield, and spears (the other armour we need not dwell upon here), and Thersites could not have opened a debate when the Over-Lord had called the Assembly, nor could he have moved the chiefs to prepare for flight, unless, as in the actual *Iliad*, they had already been demoralised by the result of the feigned proposal of flight by Agamemnon, and its effect upon the host. Probably every reader who understands heroic society, temper, and manners will, so far, agree with us.

Our own opinion is that the difficulties in the poem are caused partly by the poet's conception of the violent, wavering, excitable, and unstable character of Agamemnon; partly by some accident, now indiscoverable, save by conjecture, which has happened to the text.

The story in the actual *Iliad* is that Zeus, planning disaster for the Achaeans, in accordance with his promise to Thetis, sends a false Dream, to tell Agamemnon that he will take Troy instantly. He is bidden by the Dream to summon the host to arms. Agamemnon, *still asleep*, "has in his mind things not to be fulfilled: Him seemeth that he shall take Priam's town that very day" (II. 36, 37). "Then he awoke" (II. 41), and, obviously, was no longer so sanguine, once awake!

Being a man crushed by his responsibility, and, as commander-in-chief, extremely timid, though personally brave, he disobeys the Dream, dresses in civil costume, and summons the host to a *peaceful* assembly, not to war, as the Dream bade him do. Probably he thought that the host was disaffected, and wanted to argue with them, in place of commanding.

Here it is that the difficulty comes in, and our perplexity is increased by our ignorance of the regular procedure in Homeric times. Was the host not in arms and fighting every day, when there was no truce? There seems to have been no armistice after the mutiny of Achilles, for we are told that, in the period between his mutiny and the day of the Dream of Agamemnon, Achilles "was neither going to the Assembly, nor into battle, but wasted his heart, abiding there, longing for war and the slogan" (I. 489, 492). Thus it seems that war went on, and that assemblies were being held, in the absence of Achilles. It appears, however, that the fighting was mere skirmishing and raiding, no general onslaught was attempted; and from Book II. *73*, 83 it seems to have been a matter of doubt, with Agamemnon and Nestor, whether the army would venture a pitched battle.

It also appears, from the passage cited (I. 489, 492) that assemblies were being regularly held; we are told that Achilles did not attend them. Yet, when we come to the assembly (II. 86-100) it seems to have been a special and exciting affair, to judge by the brilliant picture of the crowds, the confusion, and the cries. Nothing of the sort is indicated in the meeting of the assembly in I. *54-5* 8. Why is there so much excitement at the assembly of Book II.? Partly because it was summoned *at* dawn, whereas the usual thing was for the host to meet in arms before fighting on the plain or going on raids; assemblies were held when the day's work was over. The host, therefore, when summoned

to an assembly *at dawn*, expects to hear of something out of the common – as the mutiny of Achilles suggests – and is excited.

We must ask, then, why does Agamemnon, after the Dream has told him merely to summon the host to arm – a thing of daily routine – call a deliberative morning assembly, a thing clearly not of routine? If Agamemnon is really full of confidence, inspired by the Dream, why does he determine, not to do what is customary, call the men to arms, but as Jeanne d'Arc said to the Dauphin, to "hold such long and weary councils"? Mr. Jevons speaks of Agamemnon's "confidence in the delusive dream" as at variance with his proceedings, and would excise II. 35-41, "the only lines which represent Agamemnon as confidently believing in the Dream." {Footnote: *Journal* of *Hellenic* Studies, vol. vii. pp. 306, 307.} But the poet never once says that Agamemnon, awake, did believe confidently in the Dream! Agamemnon dwelt with hope *while* asleep; when he wakened – he went and called a peaceful morning assembly, though the Dream bade him call to arms. He did not dare to risk his authority. This was exactly in keeping with his character. The poet should have said, "When he woke, the Dream appeared to him rather poor security for success" (saying so in poetic language, of course), and then there would be no difficulty in the summoning of an assembly at dawn. But either the poet expected us to understand the difference between the hopes of Agamemnon sleeping, and the doubts of Agamemnon waking to chill realities – an experience common to all of us who dream – or some explanatory lines have been dropped out – one or two would have cleared up the matter.

If I am right, the poet has not been understood. People have not observed that Agamemnon hopes while asleep, and doubts, and acts on his doubt, when awake. Thus Mr. Leaf writes: "Elated by the dream, as we are led to suppose, Agamemnon summons the army – to lead them into battle? Nothing of the sort; he calls them to assembly." {Footnote: *Iliad*, vol. ii. p. 46.} But we ought not to have been led to suppose that the waking Agamemnon was so elated as the sleeping Agamemnon. He was "disillusioned" on waking; his conduct proves it; he did not know what to think about the Dream; he did not know how the host would take the Dream; he doubted whether they would fight at his command, so he called an assembly.

Mr. Jevons very justly cites a parallel case. Grote has remarked that in Book VII. of Herodotus, "The dream sent by the Gods to frighten Xerxes when about to recede from his project," has "a marked parallel in the *Iliad*." Thus Xerxes, after the defection of Artabanus, was despondent, like Agamemnon after the mutiny of Achilles, and was about to recede from his project. To both a delusive dream is sent urging them to proceed. Xerxes calls an assembly, however, and says that he will not proceed. Why? Because, says Herodotus, "when day came, he thought nothing of his dream." Agamemnon, once awake, thought doubtfully of *his* dream; he called a Privy Council, told the princes about his dream – of which Nestor had a very dubious opinion – and said that he would try the temper of the army by proposing instant flight: the chiefs should restrain the men if they were eager to run away.

Now the epic prose narrative of Herodotus is here clearly based on *Iliad*, II., which Herodotus must have understood as I do. But in Homer there is no line to say – and one line or two would have been enough – that Agamemnon, when awake, doubted, like Xerxes, though Agamemnon, when asleep, had been confident. The necessary line, for all that we know, still existed in the text used by Herodotus. Homer may lose a line as well as Dieuchidas of Megara, or rather Diogenes Laertius. Juvenal lost a whole passage, re-discovered by Mr. Winstedt in a Bodleian manuscript. If Homer expected modern critics to note the delicate distinction between Agamemnon asleep and Agamemnon awake, or to understand Agamemnon's character, he expected too much. {Footnote: Cf. Jevons, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. vii. pp. 306, 307.} The poet then treats the situation on these lines: Agamemnon, awake and free from illusion, does not obey the dream, does *not* call the army to war; he takes a middle course.

In the whole passage the poet's main motive, as Mr. Monro remarks with obvious truth, is "to let his audience become acquainted with the temper and spirit of the army as it was affected by the

long siege … and by the events of the First Book." {Footnote: Monro, *Iliad*, vol. i. p. 261.} The poet could not obtain his object if Agamemnon merely gave the summons to battle; and he thinks Agamemnon precisely the kind of waverer who will call, first the Privy Council of the Chiefs, and then an assembly. Herein the homesick host will display its humours, as it does with a vengeance. Agamemnon next tells his Dream to the chiefs (if he had a dream of this kind he would most certainly tell it), and adds (as has been already stated) that he will first test the spirit of the army by a feigned proposal of return to Greece, while the chiefs are to restrain them if they rush to launch the ships. Nestor hints that there is not much good in attending to dreams; however, this is the dream of the Over-Lord, who is the favoured of Zeus.

Agamemnon next, addressing the assembly, says that posterity will think it a shameful thing that the Achaeans raised the siege of a town with a population much smaller than their own army; but allies from many cities help the Trojans, and are too strong for him, whether posterity understands that or not. "Let us flee with our ships!"

On this the host break up, in a splendid passage of poetry, and rush to launch the ships, the passion of *nostalgie* carrying away even the chiefs, it appears – a thing most natural in the circumstances. But Athene finds Odysseus in grief: "neither laid he any hand upon his ship," as the others did, and she encouraged him to stop the flight. This he does, taking the sceptre of Agamemnon from his unnerved hand.

He goes about reminding the princes "have we not heard Agamemnon's real intention in council?" (II. 188-197), and rating the common sort. The assembly meets again in great confusion; Thersites seizes the chance to be insolent, and is beaten by Odysseus. The host then arms for battle.

The poet has thus shown Agamemnon in the colours which he wears consistently all through the *Iliad*. He has, as usual, contrasted with him Odysseus, the type of a wise and resolute man. This contrast the poet maintains without fail throughout. He has shown us the temper of the weary, home-sick army, and he has persuaded us that he knows how subtle, dangerous, and contagious a thing is military panic. Thus, at least, I venture to read the passage, which, thus read, is perfectly intelligible. Agamemnon is no personal coward, but the burden of the safety of the host overcomes him later, and he keeps suggesting flight in the ships, as we shall see. Suppose, then, we read on from II. 40 thus: "The Dream left him thinking of things not to be, even that on this day he shall take the town of Priam… But he awoke from sleep with the divine voice ringing in his ears. (*Then it seemed him that some dreams are true and* some *false, for all do* not *come through the Gate of* Horn.) So he arose and sat up and did on his soft tunic, and his great cloak, and grasped his ancestral sceptre … and bade the clear-voiced heralds summon the Achaeans of the long locks to the deliberative assembly." He then, as in II. 53-75 told his Dream to the preliminary council, and proposed that he should try the temper of the host by proposing flight – which, if it began, the chiefs were to restrain – before giving orders to arm. The test of the temper of the host acted as it might be expected to act; all rushed to launch the ships, and the princes were swept away in the tide of flight, Agamemnon himself merely looking on helpless. The panic was contagious; only Odysseus escaped its influence, and redeemed the honour of the Achaeans, as he did again on a later day.

The passage certainly has its difficulties. But Erhardt expresses the proper state of the case, after giving his analysis. "The hearer's imagination is so captured, first by the dream, then by the brawling assembly, by the rush to the ships, by the intervention of Odysseus, by the punishment of Thersites – all these living pictures follow each other so fleetly before the eyes that we have scarcely time to make objections." {Footnote: *Die Enstehung der Homerische Gedichte*, p. 29.}. The poet aimed at no more and no less effect than he has produced, and no more should be required by any one, except by that anachronism – "the analytical reader." *He* has "time to make objections": the poet's audience had none; and he must be criticised from their point of view. Homer did not sing for analytical readers, for the modern professor; he could not possibly conceive that Time would bring such a being into existence.

To return to the character of Agamemnon. In moments of encouragement Agamemnon is a valiant fighter, few better spearmen, yet "he attains not to the first Three," Achilles, Aias, Diomede. But Agamemnon is unstable as water; again and again, as in Book II., the lives and honour of the Achaeans are saved in the Over-Lord's despite by one or other of the peers. The whole *Iliad*, with consistent uniformity, pursues the scheme of character and conduct laid down in the two first Books. It is guided at once by feudal allegiance and feudal jealousy, like the *Chansons de Geste* and the early sagas or romances of Ireland. A measure of respect for Agamemnon, even of sympathy, is preserved; he is not degraded as the kings and princes are often degraded on the Attic stage, and even in the Cyclic poems. Would wandering Ionian reciters at fairs have maintained this uniformity? Would the tyrant Pisistratus have made his literary man take this view?

CHAPTER V

AGAMEMNON IN THE LATER "ILIAD"

In the Third Book, Agamemnon receives the compliments due to his supremacy, aspect, and valour from the lips of Helen and Priam. There are other warriors taller by a head, and Odysseus was shorter than he by a head, so Agamemnon was a man of middle stature. He is "beautiful and royal" of aspect; "a good king and a mighty spearman," says Helen.

The interrupted duel between Menelaus and Paris follows, and then the treacherous wounding of Menelaus by Pandarus. One of Agamemnon's most sympathetic characteristics is his intense love of his brother, for whose sake he has made the war. He shudders on seeing the arrow wound, but consoles Menelaus by the certainty that Troy will fall, for the Trojans have broken the solemn oath of truce. Zeus "doth fulfil at last, and men make dear amends." But with characteristic inconsistency he discourages Menelaus by a picture of many a proud Trojan leaping on his tomb, while the host will return home-an idea constantly present to Agamemnon's mind. He is always the first to propose flight, though he will "return with shame" to Mycenae. Menelaus is of much better cheer: "Be of good courage, {blank space} ALL THE HOST OF THE {misprint}" – a thing which Agamemnon does habitually, though he is not a personal poltroon. As Menelaus has only a slight flesh wound after all, and as the Trojans are doomed men, Agamemnon is now "eager for glorious battle." He encourages the princes, but, of all men, rebukes Odysseus as "last at a fray and first at a feast": such is his insolence, for which men detest him.

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