

**THE ODYSSEY OF
HOMER. IN TWO
VOLUMES - VOL. II**

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The Odyssey of Homer. In Two Volumes - Vol. II by Homer & George William Edginton

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HOMER & GEORGE WILLIAM EDGINTON

**THE ODYSSEY OF
HOMER. IN TWO
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The Odyssey of Homer,

BY

GEORGE WILLIAM EDGINTON.

“POPE, in his introduction to his well-known Work, says, ‘In some points, and those most essential to the epic poem, the Odyssey is confessed to excel the ‘Iliad,’ principally in the great end, ‘the moral.’ To transfer this great Work to English blank verse, must consequently be no slight tax upon genius, in its poetical range and its classical judgment. We think we may say that Mr. Edginton has evinced his capability of grappling with his difficult task most successfully.

“The following passage will give its evidence of the author’s faithfulness in rendering, as compared with that of Pope: the immersion of Ulyses in the ocean by angry Neptune is thus described by Pope:—

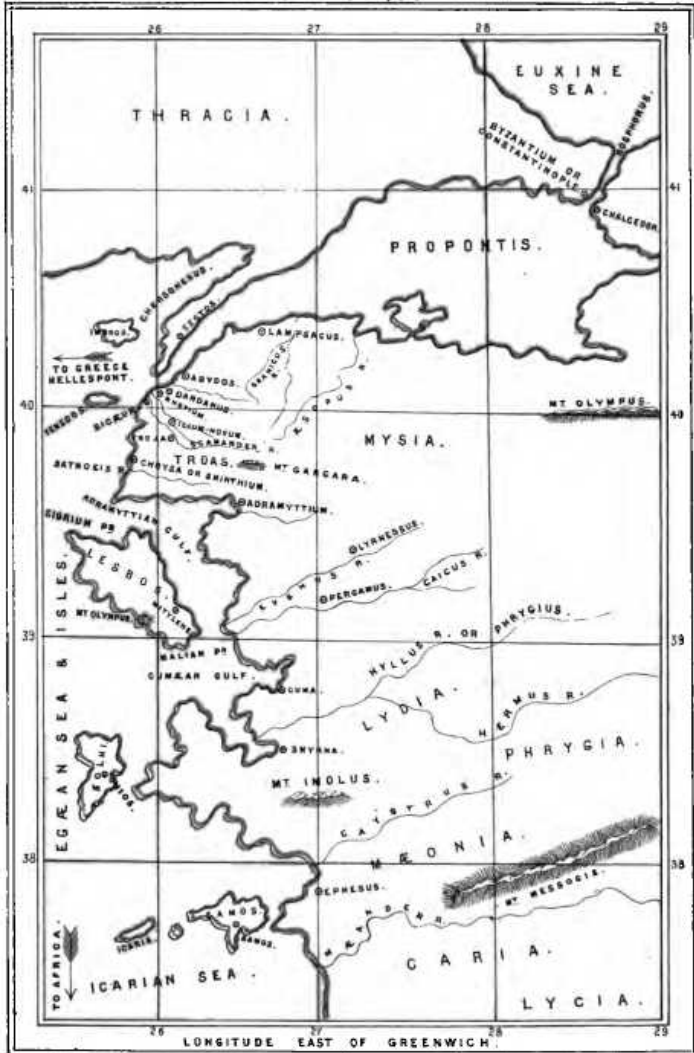
“While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
 The raging god a watery mountain roll’d;
 Like a black sheet the whelming billows spread,
 Burst o’er the float, and thunder’d on his head.
 Planks, beams, disparted fly; the scatter’d wood
 Rolls diverse, and in fragments strews the flood.
 So the rude Boreas, o’er the field new-shorn,
 Tosses and drives the scatter’d heaps of corn.
 And now a single beam the chief bestrides;
 There poised awhile above the bounding tides,
 His limbs discomburs of the clinging vest,
 And binds the sacred cincture round his breast:
 Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
 Stretch’d wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.

Mr. Edginton thus pourtrays the same scene:—

While pondering thus within his mind and heart,
 A mighty wave Neptunus heav’d o’er him,
 Both strong and high, which struck against him then;
 Like as a keen wind agitates a heap
 Of dry wheat chaff, and widely scatters it;
 So this dispers’d the long beams of his raft:
 He strode o’er one, as one vaults o’er a horse;
 But cast the garment off, Calypso’s gift;
 He spread the girdle underneath his breast,
 And plung’d head foremost, both his hands spread out,
 Prepar’d to swim; old Neptune saw him then,
 And shook his head, and commund’d with himself.”

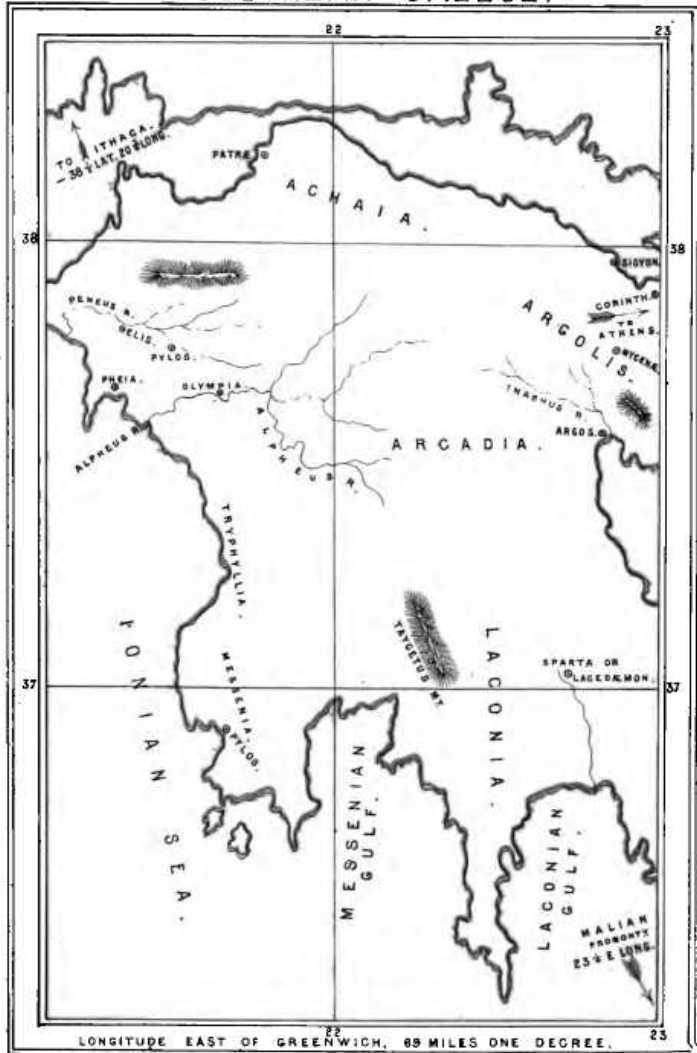
Reading Mercury, January 30th, 1869.

ASIA MINOR,
THE TROAD, &c:



DRAWN & LITHOGN

PART OF
SOUTHERN GREECE.



BY J. STEPHENS, DRAWING.

Troiani belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Roma, Præneste relegi ;
Qui, quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Planius ac melius Chryippo et Crantore dicit.

* * * * *
Quid virtus et quid sapientia poseit,
Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixem,
Qui domitor Trois multorum providus urbes
Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per aequor,
Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
Pertulit, adversis rerum immensabilis unda.
Sirenum voces et Circa pocula nosti ;
Quae si cum sociis stultus cupidusque bibisset,
Sub domina maretrice fuisset turpis, et excors
Virisset canis immundus vel amica luto sus.
Nos numerus sumus et fruges consumere nati,
Sponsi Penelope nebulones, Alcinoiqua
In cute curanda plus aequo operata inventus,
Cui pulchrum fuit in medicos dormire dies et
Ad strepitum citharæ cessatum ducere curam.

Q. Horatii Flacci, Epistola II.

PREFACE TO VOL. II.

THERE are many difficulties which beset the production of a Translation of the Homeric poems, that shall do justice to the originals. We are happy in the possession of a language which can mete out a fairer portion of justice to them than any other of the world's languages: and it has been said that fortunate is the man who enjoys the privilege of reading Homer and Shakespeare in their original tongues. But the Greek language is superior in its poetical capabilities to all other tongues; it possesses an energy of expression, a copiousness of diction, and a euphonism of which no other language can boast; its rhythmical utterance is music to the ear of one who is quite ignorant of the meaning of the sounds heard by him. The structure, again, of the Homeric verse presents a difficulty to the Translator: the hexameter metre which reads so well in the Greek becomes prosy and literal in the Saxon. Tennyson writes—"Some, and among them one at least, of our best and greatest have endeavoured to give the *Iliad* in English hexameters, and by what appears to be their failure have gone far to prove the impossibility of the task. I have long held by our Blank Verse in this matter:" he then gives a specimen of his own rendering in that metre.

The present Translator rendered the entire *Odysey* into English hexameters, and from that re-translated it into Blank Verse. He has preferred a line for line translation to a lengthening out of the number of lines of the entire poem, which would have diluted the spirit of the poetry, and have been for many reasons disadvantageous. Thus by the adoption of a metre of ten syllable lines in

the place of eighteen syllables, he was compelled to abridge as it were the poem, and to make a nice selection of the words which more peculiarly belong to the sense and spirit of the verse. This would have been a much easier task in a translation from English into Greek, from the structure of the Greek nouns and verbs. Amplification of the number of lines of the poem would have had inconveniences not counterbalancing its advantages.

The bias of the writer's mind has led him to attempt a translation truthful to the original, rather than a poetical parody. This is more calculated to meet the approbation of the classical than of the general reader. He has, however, studied a clearness of expression which may render it intelligible to all; and from the encomiums passed on it by readers whose judgment he respects, he flatters himself that he has succeeded.

The Homeric poems were composed before the use of writing had been introduced into the civilized world; consequently they were not made familiar to the Greek mind through that medium, but only through their recitation by practised rhapsodists at their public festivals.

At a later period the drama was invented, and shared the attention of the public in conjunction with the earlier epic and lyric poetry. The Grecian theatres were built of stone, and capacious enough to contain the whole adult population of the cities: Athens held 16,000 citizens besides foreigners and educated women. They had a capacious area for dancing, wherein the chorus was located, as in the Homeric times. No change of scene took place except an occasional drawing of curtains. There was no roof to the theatres; they were open to the skies, the performances taking place in the day-time: the audiences inhaled the pure air and were fanned by the breezes of their delicious climate. They were almost invariably built on the slope of a hill, and for the audience part it was only necessary to shape it out and erect the seats. The beautiful situation occupied by the remains of many of these buildings, shows that they were studiously placed so as to command the