HOMER'S ODYSSEYS.
TO THE MOST WORTHILY HONoured, MY
SINGULAR (GOOD) LORD, ROBERT,
EARL OF SOMERSET,
LORD CHAMBERLAIN, ETC.*

I HAVE adventured, right noble Earl, out
of my utmost and ever-vowed service to
your virtues, to entitle their merits to the
patronage of Homer's English life, whose

* The story of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, is too well
known to all who are familiar with the life and times of James
1st. He was a Scotsman by birth, the son of Carr of Fern-
hurst, so often mentioned in the letters of Mary Queen of Scots.
He had been a royal page before the accession of James to the
throne of England, and, having spent some years in France,
was re-introduced at Court in 1606. The circumstances of
this re-introduction are too familiar to need repetition. His
rise was rapid. He was knighted on Christmas-eve, 1607;
created Lord Carr of Bransprath, and Viscount Rochester,
1610, and made Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, shortly
after, Knight of the Garter; and in 1614 created Earl of
Somerset, and Lord Chamberlain of the Household. His con-
nection with the infamous Countess of Essex, and their trial for
the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, their condemnation, im-
prisonment, and subsequent pardon and release from the Tower
in 1621 are matters of history. The Countess died in ob-
scurity in 1632, and the Earl survived till July, 1645; both
having lived to see their former passion for each other
change to the bitterest hatred. Their only daughter, Anne,
marr ed William, afterwards the first Duke of Bedford.
wished natural life the great Macedon would have protected as the spirit of his empire,

That he to his unmeasur'd mighty acts
Might add a fame as vast; and their extracts,
In fires as bright and endless as the stars,
His breast might breathe and thunder out his wars.
But that great monarch's love of fame and praise
Receives an envious cloud in our foul days;
For since our great ones ceased themselves to do
Deeds worth their praise, they hold it folly too
To feed their praise in others. But what can,
Of all the gifts that are, be giv'n to man
More precious than Eternity and Glory,
Singing their praises in unsilenc'd story?
Which no black day, no nation, nor no age,
No change of time or fortune, force nor rage,

:Shall ever rase? All which the monarch knew,
Where Homer liv'd entitled, would ensue:

Cujus de qurgite vivo

Combìbit arcanos vatum omnis turba furores, &c.*
From whose deep fount of life the thirsty rout
Of Thespian prophets have lien sucking out
Their sacred rages. And as th' influent stone
Of Father Jove's great and laborious son†
Lifts high the heavy iron, and far implies
The wide orbs that the needle rectifies,
In virtuous guide of ev'ry sea-driv'n course,
To all aspiring his one boundless force;
So from one Homer all the holy fire
That ever did the hidden heat inspire
In each true Muse came clearly sparkling down,

* Ex Angeli Politiani Ambrâ, 12. † Hercules.
And must for him compose one flaming crown.

He, at Jove's table set, fills out to us
Cups that repair age sad and ruinous,
And gives it built of an eternal stand
With his all-sinewy Odyssean hand,
Shifts time and fate, puts death in life's free state,
And life doth into ages propagate.

He aloft in men the Gods' affects inflame,
His fuel Virtue blown by Praise and Fame;
And, with the high soul's first impression driv'n,
Breaks through rude chaos, earth, the seas, and heav'n.
The nerves of all things hid in nature lie
Naked before him; all their harmony
Tuned to his accents, that in beasts breathe minds.
What fowls, what floods, what earth, what air, what winds,
What fires ethereal, what the Gods conclude
In all their counsels, his Muse makes indued
With varied voices that ev'n rocks have mov'd.
And yet for all this, naked Virtue lov'd,
Honours without her he as abject prizes,
And foolish Fame, deriv'd from thence, despises.
When from the vulgar taking glorious bound
Up to the mountain where the Muse is crown'd,
He sits and laughs to see the jaded rabble
Toil to his hard heights, t' all access unable, &c.*

And that your Lordship may in his face take view of his mind, the first words of his Iliads is μῆν, wrath; the first word of his Odysseys, ἀνδρ, man: contracting in either word his each work's proposition. In one predominant perturbation; in the other overruling wisdom. In one the body's fervour and fashion of outward

* Thus far Angel, Politianus, for the most part, translated.
fortitude to all possible height of heroical action; in the other the mind’s inward, constant, and unconquered empire, unbroken, unaltered, with any most insolent and tyrannous infliction. To many most sovereign praises is this poem entitled; but to that grace, in chief, which sets on the crown both of poets and orators; τὸ τὰ μικρὰ μεγάλως, καὶ τὰ κοντὰ καλῶς: that is, Parva magnó dicere; pervulgata novè; jejuna plúnd. —To speak things little greatly; things common rarely; things barren and empty fruitfully and fully. The return of a man into his country is his whole scope and object; which in itself, your Lordship may well say, is jejune and fruitless enough, affording nothing feastful, nothing magnificent. And yet even this doth the divine inspiration render vast, illustrious, and of miraculous composure. And for this, my Lord, is this poem preferred to his Iliads; for therein much magnificence, both of person and action, gives great aid to his industry; but in this are these helps exceeding sparing, or nothing; and yet is the structure so elaborate and pompous that the poor plain ground-work, considered together, may seem the naturally rich womb to it, and produce it needfully. Much wondered at, therefore, is the censure of Dionysius Longinus, (a man otherwise affirmed grave and of elegant judgment,) comparing Homer in his Iliads to the Sun rising, in his Odysseys to his descent or setting, or to the ocean robbed of his estate, many tributary floods and rivers of excellent ornament withheld from their observance. When this his work so far exceeds the ocean, with all his court and concourse, that all his sea is only a serviceable stream to it. Nor can it be compared to any one power to be named in nature, being
THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY. xlix

an entirely well-sorted and digested confluence of all; where the most solid and grave is made as nimble and fluent as the most airy and fiery, the nimble and fluent as firm and well-bounded as the most grave and solid. And, taking all together, of so tender impression, and of such command to the voice of the Muse, that they knock heaven with her breath, and discover their foundations as low as hell. Nor is this all-comprising Poesy fantastic or mere fictive; but the most material and doctrinal illusions of truth, both for all manly information of manners in the young, all prescription of justice, and even Christian piety, in the most grave and high governed. To illustrate both which, in both kinds, with all height of expression, the Poet creates both a body and a soul in them. Wherein, if the body (being the letter or history) seems fictive, and beyond possibility to bring into act, the sense then and allegory, which is the soul, is to be sought, which intends a more eminent expressure of Virtue for her loveliness, and of Vice for her ugliness, in their several effects; going beyond the life than any art within life can possibly delineate. Why then is fiction to this end so hateful to our true ignorants? Or why should a poor chronicler of a Lord Mayor's naked truth (that peradventure will last his year) include more worth with our modern wizards than Homer for his naked Ulysses clad in eternal fiction? But this prosér Dionysius, and the rest of these grave and reputatively learned—that dare undertake for their gravities the headstrong censure of all things, and challenge the understanding of these toys in their childhoods; when even these childish vanities retain deep and most necessary learning enough in them to make them children in their ages, and teach them
while they live—are not in these absolute divine infusions allowed either voice or relish: for, *Qui Poeticas ad fores accedit, &c.* (says the divine philosopher) he that knocks at the gates of the Muses, *sine Musarum furore,* is neither to be admitted entry, nor a touch at their thresholds; his opinion of entry ridiculous, and his presumption impious. Nor must Poets themselves (might I a little insist on these contempts, not tempting too far your Lordship’s Ulysscean patience) presume to these doors without the truly genuine and peculiar induction. There being in Poesy a twofold rapture,—oralienation of soul, as the above-said teacher terms it,—one *insania,* a disease of the mind, and a mere madness, by which the infected is thrust beneath all the degrees of humanity: *et ex homine, brutum quodammodo redditur:*—(for which poor Poesy, in this diseased and impostorous age, is so barbarously vilified ;)—the other is, *divinus furor,* by which the sound and divinely healthful *supra hominis naturam erigitur, et in Deum transit.* One a perfection directly infused from God; the other an infection obliquely and degenerately proceeding from man. Of the divine fury, my Lord, your Homer hath ever been both first and last instance; being pronounced absolutely, *τὸν σοφότατον, καὶ τὸν θειότατον ποιητὴν,* "**THE MOST WISE AND MOST DIVINE POET."** Against whom whosoever shall open his profane mouth may worthily receive answer with this of his divine defender—*Empedocles, Heraclitus, Protagoras, Epicharmus, &c. being of Homer’s part—**τὸν οἶνον, &c.;** who against such an army, and the general *Homer,* dares attempt the assault, but he must be reputed ridiculous? And yet against this host, and this invincible commander, shall we have every *besogno* and fool a

*Besogno—Italian besognio, a beggar.*
leader. The common herd, I assure myself, ready to receive it on their horns. Their infected leaders,
Such men as sideling ride the ambling Muse,
Whose saddle is as frequent as the stews.
Whose raptures are in ev'ry pageant seen,
In ev'ry wassail-rhyme and dancing-green;
When he that writes by any beam of truth
Must dive as deep as he, past shallow youth.
Truth dwells in gulfs, whose deeps hide shades so rich
That Night sits muffled there in clouds of pitch,
More dark than Nature made her, and requires,
To clear her tough mists, heav'n's great fire of fires,
To whom the sun itself is but a beam.
For sick souls then—but rapt in foolish dream—
To wrestle with these heav'n-strong mysteries,
What madness is it? when their light serves eyes
That are not worldly in their least aspect,
But truly pure, and aim at heav'n direct.
Yet these none like but what the brazen head
Blatters abroad, no sooner born but dead.

Holding, then, in eternal contempt, my Lord, those short-lived bubbles, eternize your virtue and judgment with the Grecian monarch; esteeming not as the least of your new-year's presents,

HOMER, three thousand years dead, now reviv'd,
Ev'n from that dull death that in life he liv'd;
When none conceived him, none understood
That so much life in so much death as blood
Conveys about it could mix. But when death
Drunk up the bloody mist that human breath
Pour'd round about him—poverty and spite
Thick'ning the hapless vapour—then truth's light
Glimmer'd about his poem; the pinch'd soul
(Amidst the mysteries it did enrol)
Brake pow'rfully abroad. And as we see
The sun all-hid in clouds, at length got free,
Through some forc'd covert, over all the ways,
Near and beneath him, shoots his vented rays
Far off, and sticks them in some little glade,
All woods, fields, rivers, left besides in shade;
So your Apollo, from that world of light
Clos'd in his poem's body, shot to sight
Some few forc'd beams, which near him were not seen,
(As in his life or country) Fate and spleen
Clouding their radiance; which when Death had clear'd,
To far-off regions his free beams appear'd;
In which all stood and wonder'd, striving which
His birth and rapture should in right enrich.

Twelve labours of your Thespian Hercules
I now present your Lordship; do but please
To lend life means till th' other twelve receive
Equal achievement; and let Death then reave
My life now lost in our patrician loves,
That knock heads with the herd; in whom there moves
One blood, one soul, both drown'd in one set height
Of stupid envy and mere popular spite.
Whose loves with no good did my least vain fill;
And from their hates I fear as little ill.
Their bounties nourish not when most they feed,
But, where there is no merit or no need,
Rain into rivers still, and are such show'rs
As bubbles spring and overflow the flow'rs.
Their worst parts and worst men their best suborn,
Like winter cows whose milk runs to their horns.
And as litigious clients' books of law
Cost infinitely; taste of all the awo
Bench'd in our kingdom's policy, piety, state;
Earn all their deep explorings; satiate
All sorts there thrust together by the heart
With thirst of wisdom spent on either part;
Horrid examples made of Life and Death
From their fine stuff wov'n; yet when once the breath
Of sentence leaves them, all their worth is drawn
As dry as dust, and wears like cobweb lawn:
So these men set a price upon their worth,
That no man gives but those that trot it forth
Though Need's foul ways, feed Humours with all cost
Though Judgment sterves in them; rout, State engrost
(At all tobacco-benches, solemn tables,
Where all that cross their envies are their fables)
In their rank faction; shame and death approv'd
Fit penance for their opposites; none lov'd
But those that rub them; not a reason heard
That doth not soothe and glorify their preferr'd
Bitter opinions. When, would Truth resume
The cause to his hands, all would fly in fume
Before his sentence; since the innocent mind
Just God makes good, to Whom their worst is wind.
For, that I freely all my thoughts express,
My conscience is my thousand witnesses;
And to this stay my constant comforts vow,
You for the world I have, or God for you.
CERTAIN ANCIENT GREEK EPIGRAMS
TRANSLATED.

All stars are drunk-up by the fiery sun,
And in so much a flame lies shrunk the moon.
Homer's all-liv'd name all names leaves in death,
Whose splendour only Muses' bosoms breathe.

ANOTHER.

Heav'n's fires shall first fall darken'd from his sphere,
Grave Night the light weed of the Day shall wear,
Fresh streams shall chase the sea, tough plough shall tear
Her fishy bottoms, men in long date dead
Shall rise and live, before Oblivion shed
Those still-green leaves that crown great Homer's head.

ANOTHER.

The Μεσονίδες doth only write,
And to him dictates the great God of Light.

ANOTHER.

Sev'n kingdoms strove in which should swell the womb
That bore great Homer, whom Fame freed from tomb;
Argos, Chios, Pylos, Smyrna, Colophon,
The learn'd Athenian, and Ulysscean throne.
Another.

Art thou of Chios? No. Of Salamine?
As little. Was the Smyrmean country thine?
Nor so. Which then? Was Cuma's? Colophone?
Nor one, nor other. Art thou, then, of none
That fame proclaims thee? None. Thy reason call.
If I confess of one I anger all.
ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA.

To the numerous testimonies in favour of Chapman's Homer may be added the following. Speaking of the predecessors and contemporaries of Shakespeare, the elder Disraeli, in his charming "Amenities of Literature" (vol. iii. p. 33, ed. 1841) says: "Among these poets stood He, in whose fire the Greek of Homer burned clear in his Homeric English. Chapman often caught the ideas of Homer, and went on writing HomERICally; at once the translator and the original." In a note Mr. Disraeli adds—"When Pope translated Homer, Chapman's version lay open before him. The same circumstance, as I have witnessed, occurred with the last translator—Mr. Sotheby."

A note or two may be added to our text.

Book x. 569, a feast secret. Though this is the reading of the folio, select would appear the right word. The epithet is not in the original.

Book xxii., 24, high-born. So in folio, but probably high-borne would be the proper spelling. It is not in the original.

Book xxii. 251. Gainst these odd mischiefs—odd, unequalled, peerless. In this sense of peerless, without an equal, it occurs in Arthur Hall's rare translation of the Iliad (1581). In the preface he says, "I cried out envying Virgil's prosperitie, who gathered of Homer, that he had fallen into the oddest man's hands that England ever bred." And in the VIth Book, at the parting of Hector and Andromache:

* "The servantes al do sobbe and howles with shrill and heavy cries, Beweeping Hector thus they say: on this odde knyghte alakke! We never shall set eyes again, this day will be his wraecke."

Book xxii. 388, breeses—a name for the gad-fly.

The extreme accuracy of the printers has rendered my task of correction comparatively a light one. The "faults escaped," I am happy to say, are not only very few, but of
the most trivial kind, such probably as only the most critical eye would detect. The reader, therefore, is requested to correct with the pen the following:—

Book ii. Arg. 3, dele comma before and after taken; 471, dele comma after fleet. iii. 7, dele comma after I. iv. 627, put comma after me; 1070, dele comma after sleep. vi. Put Chapman to note on line 3. vii. 141, dele comma after motion; 196, dele comma after view. viii. note on 239, read others'. x. 202, dele comma after way. xv. Arg. dele comma after Isle; 154, read house-keeping; 251, put semi-colon for comma after same; 252, put comma for semi-colon after friendship; 570 for their prise read her. xxii. 405, for pray'res read prayers. xxii. 277, put comma after used. xxiv. 132, put comma after Fate.

In a very few cases the elision of the e in such words as pow"rs, ev'ry, heav'n, &c., has escaped observation. The reader is requested to correct such (though no errors) for uniformity's sake.

The following is a mere slip of the press:—Book ii. 230, for ruinsall read ruins all.