

Among the older translations is one by a man whose works are well known to the gentlemen in the Philosophy department—Thomas Hobbes. It is probably best known by the observation upon it in the preface to Pope's version—a perfectly true judgment, and doubtless caused by the fact that Pope errs just as badly on the other side—to the effect that its poetry is “too mean for criticism.” The following passage gives one a realizing sense of the need for “grandeur” in a rendering of Homer.

“ On Circe waiting-women four attended
 To do the service of the house, and were
 From sacred rivers, springs, and groves descended ;
 Each had her proper work assigned her.
 One does the chairs with coverings array ;
 Another does the silver tables spread.
 And on each one of them a basket lay
 Of gold, and into it she puts the bread ,
 The third does in a silver flagon mix
 The wine and water in a silver pot ;
 The fourth to make a fire brings in the sticks
 And for a bath makes ready water hot.’

Those who assert that Homer “ follows his subject,” is commonplace when the subject is commonplace, mean when it is mean, should hail this as an ideal version.

The little-known work of Sotheby, published in 1833, has certain good qualities. It is rapid in diction, fairly literal, and not aggressively commonplace in phraseology. But in the pathetic passages—those passages in which the simplicity of Homer, that art concealing art, is at its height—he fails altogether to make any impression. The two lines into which Homer compresses, somehow, by an exquisite choice of words, by a harmony of sound with sense, all the emotional value of the story of the dog Argus,

** Ἄργον δ' αὖ κατὰ μοῖρ' ἔλαβεν μέλανος θανάτοιο,
 αὐτίκ' ἰδόντ' Ὀδυσῆα ἔεικοστῶ ἐνιαυτῶ,*

these Sotheby renders, quite literally (except for omissions), and quite cheerfully,

“ Then in his twentieth year, as Argus eyed
 His much loved lord, he gazing on him died.”