

Still taking pleasure in strife, in war and
battle delighting;
Strong if perhaps you are, some god this
boon has accorded !
Go if you will to your home, with all your
ships and your comrades,
Rule the Myrmidons there. I take no count
of your anger,
Neither care for your spite."

By this taunt Achilles is provoked
almost beyond self-control. But then
the Queen of Heaven and guardian
of the Achaians, sends Athena, the
goddess of Wisdom, to tell Achilles
to restrain himself:

So he spake, but then came on the son of
Peleus anger,
Deep in his shaggy chest his heart per-
plexed was debating
Whether to draw from his side the keen-
edged sword that was hung there,
Thrusting the others aside, and the son of
Atreus slaying.

He sees Athena standing beside
him, and addresses her,—

"Daughter of ægis-holding Zeus, why comest
thou hither?

Is it to see the pride of Atreus' son, Aga-
memnon?

Nay then, I tell thee this, and soon I think
to fulfil it,

Soon shall his insolence bring his life on
earth to an ending."

Athena promises him satisfaction,
but tells him to revile Agamemnon as
much as he pleases, but on no ac-
count to strike him; he is to with-
draw from the army and take no part
in the war; the Achaians will thus
suffer, and Agamemnon will have to
humble himself. Athena goes away
and Achilles addresses Agamemnon:

Heavy with wine: with face of a dog, with
heart of the wild deer!

Never to gird thee with arms to go with the
army to battle,

Never to hold strong post among the chiefs
of Achaia

Hast thou dared in soul, for this appears to
thee dreadful,—

Gainfuller course is thine among the host of
Achaia,

Robbing his prize from him who so shall
dare to oppose thee.

King, thy people's bane, and ruling men that
are worthless,

Otherwise, now Atrides, thou shouldest have
robbed for the last time!

But I will tell thee this, and great the oath
that I swear by,

By this sceptre staff, which bears not blossoms
or branches,

Ever again, since it left its parent stem on
the hill-side;

Nor shall it bloom once more, since the
steel, close-cutting around it,

Lopped both leaves and bark; but now the
sons of Achaia

Bear it a staff in their hands, who sit to
minister justly

Laws by Zeus ordained. By this great oath
do I swear it—

Yet shall Achaia's host feel deep regret for
Achilles—

All together, but thou, though grieved, shalt
not be availing

Then to help when before the sword of
slaughtering Hector,

Many and brave they fall—and thou within
shalt reproach thee,

Grieving that didest despite to the bravest son
of Achaia."

So Peleides spoke and smote the earth with
his sceptre,

Studded with stars of gold.

These extracts endeavour to give
a fair idea of the exceedingly dra-
matic passages in the First Book,
which account for the anger of
Achilles—the subject of the poem.
They are literal, aiming at the
conservation of the words, the
rhythm, the flow and spirit of the
original. It is contended that they
give a far fairer expression of that
original than the couplet of Pope, or
the *ten* syllable blank verse which
Cowper took from Milton, which