

**THE AUTHORESS
OF THE
ODYSSEY,**

**WHERE AND WHEN SHE WROTE, WHO SHE WAS, THE USE SHE
MADE OF THE *ILIAD*,**

AND

HOW THE POEM GREW UNDER HER HANDS,

BY

SAMUEL BUTLER

AUTHOR OF "EREWON," "LIFE AND HABIT," "ALPS AND SANCTUARIES,"

"THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF DR. SAMUEL BUTLER," ETC.

"There is no single fact to justify a conviction," said Mr. Cock; whereon the Solicitor General replied that he did not rely upon any single fact, but upon a chain of facts, which taken all together left no possible means of escape.

Times, Leader, Nov. 16, 1894.
(The prisoner was convicted).

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Nausicaa (See *Preface*). (*Frontispiece*.)

**AL PROFESSORE
CAV. BIAGIO INGROIA,
PREZIOSO ALLEATO
L'AUTORE RICONOSCENTE.**

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PREFACE.

The following work consists in some measure of matter already published in England and Italy during the last six years. The original publications were in the *Athenæum*, Jan. 30 and Feb. 20, 1892, and in the *Eagle* for the Lent Term, 1892, and for the October Term, 1892. Both these last two articles were re-published by Messrs. Metcalfe & Co. of Cambridge, with prefaces, in the second case of considerable length. I have also drawn from sundry letters and articles that appeared in *Il Lambruschini*, a journal published at Trapani and edited by Prof. Giacalone-Patti, in 1892 and succeeding years, as also from two articles that appeared in the *Rassegna della Letteratura Siciliana*, published at Acireale in the autumn of 1893 and of 1894, and from some articles published in the *Italian Gazette* (then edited by Miss Helen Zimmern) in the spring of 1895.

Each of the publications above referred to contained some matter which did not appear in the others, and by the help of local students in Sicily, among whom I would name the late Signor E. Biaggini of Trapani, Signor Sugameli of Trapani, and Cavaliere Professore Ingroia of Calatafimi, I have been able to correct some errors and become possessed of new matter bearing on my subject. I have now entirely re-cast and re-stated the whole argument, adding much that has not appeared hitherto, and dealing for the first time fully with the question of the writer's sex.

No reply appeared to either of my letters to the *Athenæum* nor to my Italian pamphlets. It is idle to suppose that the leading Iliadic and Odyssean scholars in England and the continent do not know what I have said. I have taken ample care that they should be informed concerning it. It is equally idle to suppose that not one of them should have brought forward a serious argument against me, if there were any such [Pg x]argument to bring. Had they brought one it must have reached me, and I should have welcomed it with great pleasure; for, as I have said in my concluding Chapter, I do not care whether the *Odyssey* was written by man or by woman, nor yet where the poet or poetess lived who wrote it; all I care about is the knowing as much as I can about the poem; and I believe that scholars both in England and on the continent would have helped me to fuller understanding if they had seen their way to doing so.

A new edition, for example, of Professor Jebb's *Introduction to Homer* was published some six weeks after the first and more important of my letters to the *Athenæum* had appeared. It was advertised as "this day" in the *Athenæum* of March 12, 1892; so that if Professor Jebb had wished to say anything against what had appeared in the *Athenæum*, he had ample time to do so by way of postscript. I know very well what I should have thought it incumbent upon me to do had I been in his place, and found

his silence more eloquent on my behalf than any words would have been which he is at all likely to have written, or, I may add, to write.

I repeat that nothing deserving serious answer has reached me from any source during the six years, or so, that my Odyssean theories have been before the public. The principal notices of them that have appeared so far will be found in the *Spectator*, April 23, 1892; the *Cambridge Observer*, May 31, 1892; the *Classical Review* for November, 1892, June, 1893, and February, 1895, and *Longman's Magazine* (see *At the Sign of the Ship*) for June, 1892.

My frontispiece is taken by the kind permission of the Messrs. Alinari of Florence, from their photograph of a work in the museum at Cortona called *La Musa Polinnia*. It is on slate and burnt, is a little more than half life size, and is believed to be Greek, presumably of about the Christian era, but no more precise date can be assigned to it. I was assured at Cortona that it was found by a man who was ploughing his field, and who happened to be a baker. The size being suitable he used it for some time as a door for his oven, whence it was happily rescued and placed in the museum where it now rests.

[Pg xi]As regards the Greek text from which I have taken my abridged translation, I have borne in mind throughout the admirable canons laid down by Mr. Gladstone in his *Studies in Homer*, Oxford University Press, 1858, Vol. I., p. 43. He holds:—

1. That we should adopt the text itself as the basis of all Homeric enquiry, and not any preconceived theory nor any arbitrary standard of criticism, referable to any particular periods, schools, or persons.
2. That as we proceed in any work of construction drawn from the text, we should avoid the temptation to solve difficulties that lie in our way by denouncing particular portions of it as corrupt or interpolated; should never set it aside except on the closest examination of the particular passage questioned; should use sparingly the liberty of even arraying presumptions against it; and should always let the reader understand both when and why it is questioned.

The only emendation I have ventured to make in the text is to read Νηρίτω instead of Νηίω in i. 186 and ὕπονηρίτου for ὕπονηίου in iii. 81. A more speculative emendation in iv. 606, 607 I forbear even to suggest. I know of none others that I have any wish to make. As for interpolations I have called attention to three or four which I believe to have been made at a later period by the writer herself, but have seen no passage which I have been tempted to regard as the work of another hand.

I have followed Mr. Gladstone, Lord Derby, Colonel Mure, and I may add the late Professor Kennedy and the Rev. Richard Shilleto, men who taught me what little Greek I know, in retaining the usual Latin renderings of Greek proper names. What was good enough for the scholars whom I have named is good enough for me, and I should think also for the greater number of my readers. The public whom I am addressing know the *Odyssey* chiefly through Pope's translation, and will not, I believe, take kindly to Odysseus for Ulysses, Aias for Ajax, and Polydeukes for Pollux. Neither do I think that Hekabe will supersede Hecuba, till

"What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?"

is out of date.

[Pg xii]I infer that the authorities of the British Museum are with me in this matter, for on looking out Odysseus in the catalogue of the library I find "See Ulysses."

Moreover the authors of this new nomenclature are not consistent. Why not call Penelope Penelopeia? She is never called anything else in the *Odyssey*. Why not Achilles? Why not Bellerophontes? Why Hades, when Ἅιδης has no aspirate? Why Helios instead of Eëlios? Why insist on Achaians and Aitolians, but never on Aithiopians? Why not Athenæans rather than Athenians? Why not Apollon? Why not either Odusseus, or else Odysseys? and why not call him Oduseus or Odysseys whenever the *Odyssey* does so?

Admitting that the Greek names for gods and heroes may one day become as familiar as the Latin ones, they have not become so yet, nor shall I believe that they have done so, till I have seen Odysseus supplant Ulysses on railway engines, steam tugs, and boats or ships. Jove, Mercury, Minerva, Juno, and Venus convey a sufficiently accurate idea to people who would have no ready made idea in connection with Zeus, Hermes, Athene, Here, and Aphrodite. The personalities of the Latin gods do not differ so much from those of the Greek, as, for example, the Athene of the *Iliad* does from the Athene of the *Odyssey*. The personality of every god varies more or less with that of every writer, and what little difference may exist between Greek and Roman ideas of Jove, Juno, &c., is not sufficient to warrant the disturbance of a nomenclature that has long since taken an established place in literature.

Furthermore, the people who are most shocked by the use of Latin names for Greek gods and heroes, and who most insist on the many small innovations which any one who opens a volume of the *Classical Review* may discover for himself, are the very ones who have done most to foist Wolf and German criticism upon us, and who are most tainted with that affectation of higher critical taste and insight, which men of the

world distrust, and which has brought the word "academic" into use as expressive of everything which sensible people will avoid. I dare not, therefore, follow these men till time has shown whether they are faddists or no. Nevertheless, if I find the [Pg xiii] opinion of those whom I respect goes against me in this matter, I shall adopt the Greek names in any new edition of my book that may be asked for. I need hardly say that I have consulted many excellent scholars as to which course I should take, and have found them generally, though not always, approve of my keeping to the names with which Pope and others have already familiarised the public.

Since Chapter XIV. was beyond reach of modification, I have asked the authorities of the British Museum to accept a copy of the *Odyssey* with all the Iliadic passages underlined and referred to in M.S. I have every reason to believe that this will very shortly be indexed under my name, and (I regret to say) also under that of Homer. It is my intention within the next few weeks to offer the Museum an *Iliad* with all passages borrowed by the writer of the *Odyssey* underlined—reference being given to the Odyssean passage in which they occur.

Lastly, I would express my great obligations to my friend Mr. H. Festing Jones, who in two successive years has verified all topographical details on the ground itself, and to whom I have referred throughout my work whenever I have been in doubt or difficulty.

September 27th, 1897.

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It may be said that we owe this book, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, to Charles Lamb. Butler, in his early days, had read all the usual English classics that young people read--Dickens, Tennyson, Thackeray, Scott, Lamb, and so on; as he grew older, however, he became more absorbed in his own work and had no time for general reading. When people allege want of time as an excuse for not doing something, they are usually trying to conceal their laziness. But laziness was not the reason why Butler refused to read books except for the purpose of whatever he was writing. It was that he was a martyr to self-indulgence, and the sin that did most easily beset him was over-work. He was St. Anthony, and the world of books was his desert, full of charming appearances assumed by demons who were bent on luring him to perdition. His refusal was not the cry of the slothful: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep"; it was the "Get thee behind me, Satan!" of one who is seeking salvation. For he knew his weakness and that temptation comes in such unexpected

shapes that the only way of escape is by perpetual watching and praying lest we fall. So he watched and prayed, and kept his powder dry by minding his own business. The Devil, how- ever, was on the watch also and had an inspiration; he baited his subtle hook with a combination fly composed partly of the gentle Elia and partly of the Rev. Canon Ainger. He knew that Butler, if he approached either of these authors, would do so without suspicion, because he had looked over his victim's shoulder one morning in the Reading Room of the British Museum while he was making this note:

"Charles Lamb was like Mr. Darwin, 'a master of happy simplicity.' Sometimes, of course, he says very good things, at any rate some very good things have been ascribed to him; but more[Pg xv] commonly he is forced, faint, full of false sentiment and prolix. I believe that he and his sister hated one another, as only very near relations can hate. He made capital out of his supposed admirable treatment of her. Aunt Sarah likes him, so do most old maids who were told what they ought to like about 55 years ago, but I never find men whom I think well of admire him. As for Ainger's *Life*, well, my sisters like it."

We need not agree, and I personally disagree, with Butler's view of the relations between Charles and Mary Lamb, for it seems to me that it is not supported by the Letters of Lamb. I do not suppose, however, that Butler intended his words to be taken very seriously; nor are they intended to be taken as direct abuse of Lamb. They are addressed rather to Lamb's admirers, and are conceived in the spirit of the Athenian, whose reason for helping to ostracise Aristides was that he was so bored by hearing him perpetually called "the Just." They are Butler's way of saying: "Don't you go and suppose that I should ever have anything to do with self-sacrifice and devotion." And yet his own life shows that he was himself capable of both; but, like many Englishmen, he was shy of displaying emotion or of admitting that he experienced it. When we remember that he had not read the Letters we can understand his being put off Lamb first by the Essays, and then by the admirers --Aunt Sarah, the old maids, and Canon Ainger. We must also remember that Canon Ainger used to go and stay down at Shrewsbury with a clergyman who, among other dissipations which he organised for his guest, took him to tea with Butler's sisters, where he played on their old piano which had been chosen by Mendelssohn. Nevertheless it might have been better for Butler if he had not made the note, for retribution followed.

In June, 1886, while we were completing the words and music of our cantata *Narcissus*, which was published in 1888, Butler wrote to Miss Butler:

"The successor of *Narcissus* is to be called Ulysses; and is this time a serious work dealing with the wanderings of the real Ulysses, and treating the subject much as

Hercules or Semele was treated by Handel. We think we could get some sailor choruses, and some Circe and pig choruses, and the sirens, and then Penelope and her[Pg xvi] loom all afford scope. I made up my mind about it when I read Charles Lamb's translation of parts of the 'Odyssey' in Ainger's book, but please don't say anything about it." {*Memoir*, II, 38.)

The serpent was lurking within the leaves of Ainger's book, and Butler was beguiled. The idea of using the story of the "Odyssey" for the words of an oratorio led him on to re-reading the poem in the original; but he could not make much progress just then because after his father's death, in December, 1886, he came into possession of all his grandfather's papers, and succumbed to the temptation of reading them and of writing Dr. Butler's life. When he did settle down to the poem it fascinated him, and there followed the further irresistible temptation of translating it. His grandfather's life still kept him so fully occupied that he did not reach Book ix till 1891; and then, as he writes in Chapter i of *The Authoress of the Odyssey*: "It was not till I got to Circe that it flashed upon me that I was reading the work not of an old man but of a young woman." And on a letter of 9th August, 1891, which I sent to him at Chiavenna, he made this note:

"It was during the few days that I was at Chiavenna (at the Hotel Grotta Crimee) that I hit upon the female authorship of the 'Odyssey.' I did not find out its having been written at Trapani till 1892."

Between 1892, when he made this discovery, and 1902, when he died, Butler published the *Life and Letters of Dr. Samuel Butler, Erewhon Revisited*, and a new and revised edition of *Erewhon*. These three books were the working off of material which was already in his mind, but everything else published during the last decade of his life grew directly out of the "Odyssey." There was a pamphlet entitled *The Humour of Homer* (1892), which was first delivered as a lecture at the Working Men's College; there were two other pamphlets which appeared in a Sicilian magazine (1893 and 1894), one of these being translated into English and published in 1893; there were articles about his Odyssean theories in *The Italian Gazette*, then under the editorship of Miss Helen Zimmern, published in Florence. In 1897 came *The Authoress of the Odyssey*; in 1898, *The Iliad Rendered into English Prose*; in 1899,[Pg xvii] *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered*; and in 1900, *The Odyssey Rendered into English Prose*. Besides these publications there were letters and articles about the "Odyssey" in the *Athenæum*, the *Eagle* and *Il Lambruschini*, a journal published at Trapani in Sicily.

The translation of the "Iliad" became a necessity when once that of the "Odyssey" had been undertaken, and the book about the Sonnets was also a consequence of the "Odyssey," for his interest in the problem of the Sonnets, the work of the greatest poet of modern times, was aroused by his interest in the problem of the "Odyssey," one of the two great poems of antiquity. Besides all this he was engaged upon the words and music of *Ulysses*, in making journeys to Sicily to pick up more facts about the topography of Scheria, and in making a journey to Greece and the Troad to investigate the geography of the "Iliad." Thus it may be said that the last ten years of his life were overshadowed by the "Odyssey," which dominated his thoughts--and not only his thoughts, his letters were full of it and it was difficult to get him to talk of anything else. I have little doubt that this perpetual preoccupation--I may even say obsession--tended to shorten his life.

None of the eminent classical scholars paid any attention to Butler's views on the "Odyssey," or if any did they did not say so in public, and he resented their neglect. He was not looking for praise; as Sir William Phipson Beale, one of his oldest friends, said to me very acutely: "People misunderstood Butler; he did not want praise, he wanted sympathy." It is true as he records in *The Authoress* ([p. 269](#)), that "one of our most accomplished living scholars"--I do not know who he was, though I no doubt heard at the time--chided him and accused him of being ruthless. "I confess," said the scholar, "I do not give much heed to the details on which you lay so much stress; I read the poem not to theorise about it but to revel in its amazing beauty." This can hardly be called sympathy. Butler comments upon it thus:

"It would shock me to think that I have done anything to impair the sense of that beauty which I trust I share in even measure with himself; but surely if the 'Odyssey' has charmed us as a[Pg xviii] man's work, its charm and its wonder are infinitely increased when we see it as a woman's."

Still there were some competent judges who approved. The late Lord Grimthorpe interested himself in the problem, accepted Butler's views, and gave him valuable suggestions about the description in the poem of the hanging of those maidservants in Ithaca who had disgraced themselves. Mr. Justice Wills also expressed agreement, but he did it in a letter to me after Butler's death. These names are mentioned in the Memoir, and there is another name which ought to have appeared there, but I overlooked the note at the right moment.

Butler delivered at the Fabian Society a lecture entitled, "Was the 'Odyssey' written by a Woman?" At the close of the lecture Mr. Bernard Shaw got up and said that when he had first heard of the title he supposed it was some fad or fancy of Butler's, but that on

turning to the "Odyssey" to see what could have induced him to take it up he had not read a hundred lines before he found himself saying: "Why, of course it was!" And he spoke so strongly that people who had only laughed all though the lecture began to think there might be something in it after all.

These, however, were not the eminent Homeric scholars to whom Butler looked for sympathy. He was disappointed by the silence of the orthodox, and it was here that Charles Lamb got in his revenge, for the situation never would have arisen if it had not been for that fatal reading of "Charles Lamb's translation of parts of the 'Odyssey' in Ainger's book."

When Keats first looked into Chapman's Homer the result was the famous sonnet. When Lamb did the same thing the result was "a juvenile book, *The Adventures of Ulysses*." He wrote to Manning, 26th February, 1808:

"It is done out of the 'Odyssey,' not from the Greek (I would not mislead you), nor yet from Pope's 'Odyssey,' but from an older translation of one Chapman. The *Shakespeare Tales* suggested the doing of it."

I suppose that by "Ainger's book" Butler means Charles Lamb in the "English Men of Letters Series," edited by John[Pg xix] Morley and published by Macmillan in 1878; at least I do not find any other book by Ainger about Lamb which contains any mention of *The Adventures of Ulysses* between that date and the date of Butler's letter to his sister in 1886. If I remember right Butler saw "Ainger's book" at Shrewsbury when he was staying with his sisters, and I like to think that it was a copy given to them by the author. But I doubt whether he can have done more than look into it; if he had read it with attention he would scarcely have spoken of Lamb's work as translation. I imagine that he listlessly took the book up off the drawing-room table, and, happening to open it at page 68, saw that Lamb had written *The Adventures of Ulysses*; this would be enough to suggest the story of the "Odyssey" to him, and he must have missed or forgotten Ainger's statement that Lamb said to Bernard Barton: "Chapman is divine and my abridgement has not quite emptied him of his divinity." What concerns us now, however, is to note the result on Butler, which was that he embarked upon all this apparently fruitless labour. It is interesting to note also that as Lamb, by writing the *Tales from Shakespeare*, had been led to the "Odyssey," so Butler, by choosing Ulysses as the hero of our oratorio, was led, in a contrary direction, to the Sonnets.

We must now come nearer to modern times. *The Authoress of the Odyssey* appeared in 1897, and Butler's Translation in 1900--that is about twenty years ago; during which period, sympathy or no sympathy, the books must have had a good many readers, perhaps among the general public rather than among classical scholars, for now, in

1921, the stock is exhausted and new editions of both are wanted. They have been reset entirely, misprints and obvious mistakes have been corrected, the index has been revised, and there are a few minor typographical changes; but nothing has been done which could be called editing, bringing up to date, adding supplementary matter, dissenting or recording dissent from any of the author's views. The size of the original page has been reduced so as to make the books uniform with Butler's other works; and, fortunately, it has generally been possible, by using a smaller type, to get the same number of words into each page, so that the pagination is [Pg xx] scarcely altered and the references remain good. Except for the alterations about to be noted (in respect of *The Authoress*), the books are faithful reprints of the original editions.

(a) About three lines have been interpolated on page 207 which upsets the pagination until page 209. The interpolation, which is taken from a note by Butler in his copy of the work, is to the effect that the authoress, in Book vii, line 137, almost calls her countrymen scoundrels by saying that they made their final drink-offerings not to Jove but to Mercury, the god of thieves. On this passage there is a note in the Translation saying that the poet here intends hidden malice; but, except for this interpolation, attention does not appear to be called to the malice anywhere else in *The Authoress*.

(b) The note on page 214 is so printed that the pagination is upset for one page.

(c) The illustration of the coin which shows the design of the brooch of Ulysses is now given on a separate page, whereas formerly it was in the text, therefore the pagination is thrown out from page 227 until the end of the chapter, page 231. Doubt has recently been cast upon the accuracy of the statement on pp. 226-7, that this coin certainly belongs to the Eryx and Segesta group.

(d) Some of the headlines have been shortened because of the reduction in the size of the page, and here advantage has been taken of various corrections of and additions to the headlines and shoulder-notes made by Butler in his own copies of the two books.

(e) For the most part each of the illustrations now occupies a page, whereas in the original editions they generally appeared two on one page. It has been necessary to reduce the plan of the House of Ulysses.

On page 31 this note occurs: "Scheria means Jutland--a piece of land jutting out into the sea." Butler afterwards found that Jutland means the land of the Jutes, and has nothing to do with jutting. A note to this effect is in *The Notebooks of Samuel Butler*, p. 350.

On page 153 Butler says: "No great poet would compare his hero to a paunch full of blood and fat cooking before the fire (xx, 24-28)."[Pg xxi] This passage is not given in the abridged "Story of the Odyssey" at the beginning of the book, but in Butler's Translation it occurs in these words:

"Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible; even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single-handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors."

It looks as though in the interval between the publication of *The Authoress* (1897) and of the Translation (1900) Butler had changed his mind; for in the first case the comparison is between Ulysses and a paunch full, etc., and in the second it is between Ulysses and a man who turns a paunch full, etc. The second comparison is perhaps one which a great poet might make.

In seeing the works through the press I have had the invaluable assistance of Mr. A. T. Bartholomew of the University Library, Cambridge, and of Mr. Donald S. Robertson, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. To both these friends I give my most cordial thanks for the care and skill exercised by them. Mr. Robertson has found time for the labour of checking and correcting all the quotations from and references to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and I believe that it could not have been better performed. It was, I know, a pleasure for him; and it would have been a pleasure also for Butler if he could have known that his work was being shepherded by the son of his old friend, Mr. H. R. Robertson, who more than a half a century ago was a fellow-student with him at Cary's School of Art in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury.

HENRY FESTING JONES.

120 Maida Vale, W.9.

4th December, 1921.

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[Pg 1]

THE AUTHORESS OF THE ODYSSEY.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ENQUIRY—THE STEPS WHEREBY I WAS LED TO MY CONCLUSIONS—THE MULTITUDE OF EARLY GREEK POETESSES REMOVES ANY *À PRIORI* DIFFICULTY—THE MUSES AND MINERVA AS HEADS OF LITERATURE—MAN, RATHER THAN WOMAN, THE INTERLOPER.

If the questions whether the *Odyssey* was written by a man or a woman, and whether or no it is of exclusively Sicilian origin, were pregnant with no larger issues than the determination of the sex and abode of the writer, it might be enough merely to suggest the answers and refer the reader to the work itself. Obviously, however, they have an important bearing on the whole Homeric controversy; for if we find a woman's hand omnipresent throughout the *Odyssey*, and if we also find so large a number of local details, taken so exclusively and so faithfully from a single Sicilian town as to warrant the belief that the writer must have lived and written there, the presumption seems irresistible that the poem was written by a single person. For there can hardly have been more than one woman in the same place able to write such—and such homogeneous—poetry as we find throughout the *Odyssey*.

Many questions will become thus simplified. Among others we can limit the date of the poem to the lifetime of a single person, and if we find, as I believe we shall, that this person in all probability flourished, roughly between 1050 and 1000 B.C., if, moreover, we can show, as we assuredly can, that she had[Pg 2] the *Iliad* before her much as we have it now, quoting, consciously or unconsciously, as freely from the most suspected parts as from those that are admittedly Homer's, we shall have done much towards settling the question whether the *Iliad* also is by one hand or by many.

Not that this question ought to want much settling. The theory that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written each of them by various hands, and pieced together in various centuries by various editors, is not one which it is easy to treat respectfully. It does not rest on the well established case of any other poem so constructed; literature furnishes us with no poem whose genesis is known to have been such as that which we are asked to foist upon the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The theory is founded on a supposition as to the date when writing became possible, which has long since been shown to be untenable; not only does it rest on no external evidence, but it flies in the face of what little external evidence we have. Based on a base that has been cut from under it, it has been sustained by arguments which have never

succeeded in leading two scholars to the same conclusions, and which are of that character which will lead any one to any conclusion however preposterous, which he may have made up his mind to consider himself as having established. A writer in the *Spectator* of Jan. 2, 1892, whose name I do not know, concluded an article by saying,

That the finest poem of the world was created out of the contributions of a multitude of poets revolts all our literary instincts.

Of course it does, but the Wolfian heresy, more or less modified, is still so generally accepted both on the continent and in England that it will not be easy to exterminate it.

Easy or no this is a task well worth attempting, for Wolf's theory has been pregnant of harm in more ways than are immediately apparent. Who would have thought of attacking Shakspeare's existence—for if Shakspeare did not write his plays he is no longer Shakspeare—unless men's minds had been unsettled by Wolf's virtual denial of Homer's? Who would have reascribed picture after picture in half the galleries of Europe, often wantonly, and sometimes in defiance of the [Pg 3] clearest evidence, if the unsettling of questions concerning authorship had not been found to be an easy road to reputation as a critic? Nor does there appear to be any end to it, for each succeeding generation seems bent on trying to surpass the recklessness of its predecessor.

And more than this, the following pages will read a lesson of another kind, which I will leave the reader to guess at, to men whom I will not name, but some of whom he may perhaps know, for there are many of them. Indeed I have sometimes thought that the sharpness of this lesson may be a more useful service than either the establishment of the points which I have set myself to prove, or the dispelling of the nightmares of Homeric extravagance which German professors have evolved out of their own inner consciousness.

Such language may be held to come ill from one who is setting himself to maintain two such seeming paradoxes as the feminine authorship, and Sicilian origin, of the *Odyssey*. One such shock would be bad enough, but two, and each so far-reaching, are intolerable. I feel this, and am oppressed by it. When I look back on the record of Iliadic and Odyssean controversy for nearly 2500 years, and reflect that it is, I may say, dead against me; when I reflect also upon the complexity of academic interests, not to mention the commercial interests vested in well-known school books and so-called education—how can I be other than dismayed at the magnitude, presumption, and indeed utter hopelessness, of the task I have undertaken?

How can I expect Homeric scholars to tolerate theories so subversive of all that most of them have been insisting on for so many years? It is a matter of Homeric (for my theory affects Iliadic questions nearly as much as it does the *Odyssey*) life and death for them or for myself. If I am right they have invested their reputation for sagacity in a worthless stock. What becomes, for example, of a great part of Professor Jebb's well-known *Introduction to Homer*—to quote his shorter title—if the *Odyssey* was written all of it at Trapani, all of it by one hand, and that hand a woman's? Either my own work is rubbish, in which case it should not be [Pg 4] hard to prove it so without using discourteous language, or not a little of theirs is not worth the paper on which it is written. They will be more than human, therefore, if they do not handle me somewhat roughly.

As for the *Odyssey* having been written by a woman, they will tell me that I have not even established a *primâ facie* case for my opinion. Of course I have not. It was Bentley who did this, when he said that the *Iliad* was written for men, and the *Odyssey* for women.^[1] The history of literature furnishes us with no case in which a man has written a great masterpiece for women rather than men. If an anonymous book strikes so able a critic as having been written for women, a *primâ facie* case is established for thinking that it was probably written by a woman. I deny, however, that the *Odyssey* was written for women; it was written for any one who would listen to it. What Bentley meant was that in the *Odyssey* things were looked at from a woman's point of view rather than a man's, and in uttering this obvious truth, I repeat, he established once for all a strong *primâ facie* case for thinking that it was written by a woman.

If my opponents can fasten a cavil on to the ninth part of a line of my argument, they will take no heed of, and make no reference to, the eight parts on which they dared not fasten a misrepresentation however gross. They will declare it fatal to my theory that there were no Greek-speaking people at Trapani when the *Odyssey* was written. Having fished up this assertion from the depths of their ignorance of what Thucydides, let alone Virgil, has told us,—or if they set these writers on one side, out of their still profounder ignorance of what there was or was not at Trapani in the eleventh century before Christ—they will refuse to look at the internal evidence furnished by the *Odyssey* itself. They will ignore the fact that Thucydides tells us that "Phocians of those from Troy," which as I will show (see Chapter XII.) can only mean Phocæans, settled at Mount Eryx, and ask me how I can place Phocæans on Mount Eryx when Thucydides says it was [Pg 5] Phocians who settled there? They will ignore the fact that even though Thucydides had said "Phocians" without qualifying his words by adding

"of those from Troy," or "of the Trojan branch," he still places Greek-speaking people within five miles of Trapani.

As for the points of correspondence between both Ithaca and Scheria, and Trapani, they will remind me that Captain Fluelen found resemblances between Monmouth and Macedon, as also Bernardino Caimi did between Jerusalem and Varallo-Sesia; they will say that if mere topographical resemblances are to be considered, the Channel Islands are far more like the Ionian group as described in the *Odyssey* than those off Trapani are, while Balaclava presents us with the whole Scherian combination so far more plausibly than Trapani as to leave no doubt which site should be preferred. I have not looked at the map of Balaclava to see whether this is so or no, nor yet at other equally promising sites which have been offered me, but am limiting myself to giving examples of criticisms which have been repeatedly passed upon my theory during the last six years, and which I do not doubt will be repeatedly passed upon it in the future.

On the other hand I may comfort myself by reflecting that however much I may deserve stoning there is no one who can stone me with a clear conscience. Those who hold, as most people now do, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* belong to ages separated from one another by some generations, must be haunted by the reflection that though the diversity of authorship was prominently insisted on by many people more than two thousand years ago, not a single Homeric student from those days to the end of the last century could be brought to acknowledge what we now deem self-evident.

Professor Jebb, writing of Bentley,^[2] says

He had not felt what is now so generally admitted, that the *Odyssey* bears the marks of a later time than the *Iliad*.

How came so great a man as Bentley not to see what is so obvious? Truly, as has been said by Mr. Gladstone, if [Pg 6] Homer is old, the systematic and comprehensive study of him is still young.^[3]

I shall not argue the question whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are by the same person, inasmuch as if I convince the reader that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman and in Sicily, it will go without saying that it was not written by Homer; for there can be no doubt about the sex of the writer of the *Iliad*. The same canons which will compel us to ascribe the *Odyssey* to a woman forbid any other conclusion than that the *Iliad* was written by a man. I shall therefore proceed at once to the question whether the *Odyssey* was written by a man or by a woman.

It is an old saying that no man can do better for another than he can for himself, I may perhaps therefore best succeed in convincing the reader if I retrace the steps by which I arrived at the conclusions I ask him to adopt.

I was led to take up the *Odyssey* by having written the libretto and much of the music for a secular oratorio, *Ulysses*, on which my friend Mr. H. Festing Jones and I had been for some time engaged. Having reached this point it occurred to me that I had better after all see what the *Odyssey* said, and finding no readable prose translation, was driven to the original, to which I had not given so much as a thought for some five and thirty years.

The Greek being easy, I had little difficulty in understanding what I read, and I had the great advantage of coming to the poem with fresh eyes. Also, I read it all through from end to end, as I have since many times done.

Fascinated, however, as I at once was by its amazing interest and beauty, I had an ever-present sense of a something wrong, of a something that was eluding me, and of a riddle which I could not read. The more I reflected upon the words, so luminous and so transparent, the more I felt a darkness behind them, that I must pierce before I could see the heart of the writer—and this was what I wanted; for art is only interesting in so far as it reveals an artist.

[Pg 7]

In the hope of getting to understand the poem better I set about translating it into plain prose, with the same benevolent leaning, say, towards Tottenham Court Road, that Messrs. Butcher and Lang have shewn towards Wardour Street. I admit, however, that Wardour Street English has something to say for itself. The "Ancient Mariner," for example, would have lost a good deal if it had been called "The Old Sailor," but on the whole I take it that a tale so absolutely without any taint of affectation as the *Odyssey* will speed best being unaffectedly told.

When I came to the Phæacian episode I felt sure that here at any rate the writer was drawing from life, and that Nausicaa, Queen Arete, and Alcinous were real people more or less travestied, and on turning to Colonel Mure's work^[4] I saw that he was of the same opinion. Nevertheless I found myself continually aghast at the manner in which men were made to speak and act—especially, for example, during the games in honour of *Ulysses* described in Book viii. Colonel Mure says (p. 407) that "the women engross the chief part of the small stock of common sense allotted to the community." So they do, but it never occurred to me to ask myself whether men commonly write brilliant books in which the women are made more sensible than the men. Still

dominated by the idea that the writer was a man, I conjectured that he might be some bard, perhaps blind, who lived among the servants much as the chaplain in a great house a couple of hundred years ago among ourselves. Such a bard, even though not blind, would only see great people from a distance, and would not mix with them intimately enough to know how they would speak and act among themselves. It never even crossed my mind that it might have been the commentators who were blind, and that they might have thus come to think that the poet must have been blind too.

The view that the writer might have lived more in the steward's room than with the great people of the house served (I say it with shame) to quiet me for a time, but by and by it[Pg 8] struck me that though the men often both said and did things that no man would say or do, the women were always ladies when the writer chose to make them so. How could it be that a servant's hall bard should so often go hopelessly wrong with his men, and yet be so exquisitely right with every single one of his women? But still I did not catch it. It was not till I got to Circe that it flashed upon me that I was reading the work, not of an old man, but of a young woman—and of one who knew not much more about what men can and cannot do than I had found her know about the milking of ewes in the cave of Polyphemus.

The more I think of it the more I wonder at my own stupidity, for I remember that when I was a boy at school I used to say the *Odyssey* was the *Iliad's* wife, and that it was written by a clergyman. But however this may be, as soon as the idea that the writer was a woman—and a young one—presented itself to me, I felt that here was the reading of the riddle that had so long baffled me. I tried to divest myself of it, but it would not go; as long as I kept to it, everything cohered and was in its right place, and when I set it aside all was wrong again; I did not seek my conclusion; I did not even know it by sight so as to look for it; it accosted me, introduced itself as my conclusion, and vowed that it would never leave me; whereon, being struck with its appearance, I let it stay with me on probation for a week or two during which I was charmed with the propriety of all it said or did, and then bade it take rank with the convictions to which I was most firmly wedded; but I need hardly say that it was a long time before I came to see that the poem was all of it written at Trapani, and that the writer had introduced herself into her work under the name of Nausicaa.

I will deal with these points later, but would point out that the moment we refuse to attribute the *Odyssey* to the writer of the *Iliad* (whom we should alone call Homer) it becomes an anonymous work; and the first thing that a critic will set himself to do when he considers an anonymous work is to determine the sex of the writer. This, even when women are posing as men, is seldom difficult—indeed it is done almost[Pg 9] invariably with success as often as an anonymous work is published—and when

any one writes with the frankness and spontaneity which are such an irresistible charm in the *Odyssey*, it is not only not difficult but exceedingly easy; difficulty will only arise, if the critic is, as we have all been in this case, dominated by a deeply-rooted preconceived opinion, and if also there is some strong *à priori* improbability in the supposition that the writer was a woman.

It may be urged that it is extremely improbable that any woman in any age should write such a masterpiece as the *Odyssey*. But so it also is that any man should do so. In all the many hundreds of years since the *Odyssey* was written, no man has been able to write another that will compare with it. It was extremely improbable that the son of a Stratford wool-stapler should write *Hamlet*, or that a Bedfordshire tinker should produce such a masterpiece as *Pilgrim's Progress*. Phenomenal works imply a phenomenal workman, but there are phenomenal women as well as phenomenal men, and though there is much in the *Iliad* which no woman, however phenomenal, can be supposed at all likely to have written, there is not a line in the *Odyssey* which a woman might not perfectly well write, and there is much beauty which a man would be almost certain to neglect. Moreover there are many mistakes in the *Odyssey* which a young woman might easily make, but which a man could hardly fall into—for example, making the wind whistle over waves at the end of Book ii., thinking that a lamb could live on two pulls a day at a ewe that was already milked (ix. 244, 245, and 308, 309), believing a ship to have a rudder at both ends (ix. 483, 540), thinking that dry and well-seasoned timber can be cut from a growing tree (v. 240), making a hawk while still on the wing tear its prey—a thing that no hawk can do (xv. 527).

I see that Messrs. Butcher and Lang omit ix. 483 in which the rudder is placed in the bows of a ship, but it is found in the text, and is the last kind of statement a copyist would be inclined to intercalate. Yet I could have found it in my heart to conceive the text in fault, had I not also found the writer explaining in Book v. 255 that Ulysses gave his raft a rudder[Pg 10] "in order that he might be able to steer it." People whose ideas about rudders have become well defined will let the fact that a ship is steered by means of its rudder go without saying. Furthermore, not only does she explain that Ulysses would want a rudder to steer with, but later on (line 270) she tells us that he actually did use the rudder when he had made it, and, moreover, that he used it τεχνήντως, or skilfully.

Young women know that a horse goes before a cart, and being told that the rudder guides the ship, are apt—and I have more than once found them do so—to believe that it goes in front of the ship. Probably the writer of the *Odyssey* forgot for the moment at which end the rudder should be. She thought it all over yesterday, and was not going to think it all over again to-day, so she put the rudder at both ends, intending

to remove it from the one that should prove to be the wrong one; later on she forgot, or did not think it worth while to trouble about so small a detail.

So with Calypso's axe (v. 234-36). No one who was used to handling an axe would describe it so fully and tell us that it "suited Ulysses' hands," and was furnished with a handle. I have heard say that a celebrated female authoress was discovered to be a woman by her having spoken of a two-foot *ruler* instead of a two-foot *rule*, but over minuteness of description is deeper and stronger evidence of unfamiliarity than mistaken nomenclature is.

Such mistakes and self-betrays as those above pointed out enhance rather than impair the charm of the *Odyssey*. Granted that the *Odyssey* is inferior to the *Iliad* in strength, robustness, and wealth of poetic imagery, I cannot think that it is inferior in its power of fascinating the reader. Indeed, if I had to sacrifice one or the other, I can hardly doubt that I should let the *Iliad* go rather than the *Odyssey*—just as if I had to sacrifice either Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, I should sacrifice Mont Blanc, though I know it to be in many respects the grander mountain of the two.^[51]

[Pg 11]

It should go, however, without saying that much which is charming in a woman's work would be ridiculous in a man's, and this is eminently exemplified in the *Odyssey*. If a woman wrote it, it is as lovely as the frontispiece of this volume, and becomes, if less vigorous, yet assuredly more wonderful than the *Iliad*; if, on the other hand, it is by a man, the half Bayeux tapestry, half Botticelli's Venus rising from the sea, or Primavera, feeling with which it impresses us gives place to astonishment how any man could have written it. What is a right manner for a woman is a wrong one for a man, and *vice versa*. Jane Austen's young men, for example, are seldom very interesting, but it is only those who are blind to the exquisite truth and delicacy of Jane Austen's work who will feel any wish to complain of her for not understanding young men as well as she did young women.

The writer of a *Times* leading article (Feb. 4th, 1897) says:

The sex difference is the profoundest and most far-reaching that exists among human beings.... Women may or may not be the equals of men in intelligence;... but women in the mass will act after the manner of women, which is not and never can be the manner of men.

And as they will act, so will they write. This, however, does not make their work any the less charming when it is good of its kind; on the contrary, it makes it more so.

Dismissing, therefore, the difficulty of supposing that any woman could write so wonderful a poem as the *Odyssey*, is there any *à priori* obstacle to our thinking that such a woman may have existed, say, B.C. 1000? I know of none. Greek literature does not begin to dawn upon us till about 600 B.C. Earlier than this date we have hardly anything except the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and that charming writer Hesiod. When, however, we come to the earliest historic literature we find that famous poetesses abounded.

Those who turn to the article "Sappho" in Smith's *Dictionary of Classical Biography* will find Gorgo and Andromeda mentioned as her rivals. Among her fellows were Anactoria of Miletus, Gongyle of Colophon, Eunice of Salamis, Gyrinna, Atthis, and Mnasicida, "Those," says the writer, "who [Pg 12] attained the highest celebrity for their works were Damophyllia the Pamphylian, and Erinna of Telos." This last-named poetess wrote a long poem upon the distaff, which was considered equal to Homer himself—the *Odyssey* being probably intended.

Again, there was Baucis, who wrote Erinna's Epitaph. Turning to Müller's work upon the Dorians, I find reference made to the amatory poetesses of Lesbos. He tells us also of Corinna, who is said to have competed successfully with Pindar, and Myrto, who certainly competed with him, but with what success we know not. Again, there was Diotima the Arcadian; and looking through Bergk's *Poetæ Lyrici Græci* I find other names of women, fragments of whose works have reached us through quotation by extant writers. Among the Hebrews there were Miriam, Deborah, and Hannah, all of them believed to be centuries older than the *Odyssey*.

If, then, poetesses were as abundant as we know them to have been in the earliest known ages of Greek literature over a wide area in Greece, Asia Minor, and the islands of the *Ægæan*, there is no ground for refusing to admit the possibility that a Greek poetess lived in Sicily B.C. 1000, especially when we know from Thucydides that the particular part of Sicily where I suppose her to have lived was colonised from the North West corner of Asia Minor centuries before the close of the Homeric age. The civilisation depicted in the *Odyssey* is as advanced as any that is likely to have existed in Mitylene or Melos 600—500 B.C., while in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the status of women is represented as being much what it is at the present, and as incomparably higher than it was in the Athenian civilisation with which we are best acquainted. To imagine a great Greek poetess at Athens in the age of Pericles would be to violate probability, but I might almost say in an age when women were as free as they are represented to us in the *Odyssey* it is a violation of probability to suppose that there were no poetesses.

We have no reason to think that men found the use of their tongue sooner than women did; why then should we suppose that women lagged behind men when the use of the pen had[Pg 13] become familiar? If a woman could work pictures with her needle as Helen did,^[6] and as the wife of William the Conqueror did in a very similar civilisation, she could write stories with her pen if she had a mind to do so.

The fact that the recognised heads of literature in the Homeric age were the nine Muses—for it is always these or "The Muse" that is involved, and never Apollo or Minerva—throws back the suggestion of female authorship to a very remote period, when, to be an author at all, was to be a poet, for prose writing is a comparatively late development. Both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* begin with an invocation addressed to a woman, who, as the head of literature, must be supposed to have been an authoress, though none of her works have come down to us. In an age, moreover, when men were chiefly occupied either with fighting or hunting, the arts of peace, and among them all kinds of literary accomplishment, would be more naturally left to women. If the truth were known, we might very likely find that it was man rather than woman who has been the interloper in the domain of literature. Nausicaa was more probably a survival than an interloper, but most probably of all she was in the height of the fashion.

[1]See Introduction to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, by R. C. Jebb, 1888, p. 106.

[2]*Bentley*, Macmillan, 1892, p. 148.

[3]*Homer*, Macmillan, 1878, p. 2.

[4]*Language and Literature of Ancient Greece*, Longman, 1850, Vol. I, p. 404.

[5]Shakespeare, of course, is the whole chain of the Alps, comprising both Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa.

[6]*Iliad*, III. 126.

[Pg 14]

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF THE ODYSSEY.

It will help the reader to follow the arguments by which I shall sustain the female authorship of the *Odyssey*, the fact of its being written at Trapani on the west coast of Sicily, and its development in the hands of the writer, if I lay before him an abridgement of the complete translation that I have made, but not yet published. If space permitted I should print my translation in full, but this is obviously impossible, for what I give here is only about a fourth of the whole poem. I have, therefore, selected those parts that throw most light upon the subjects above referred to, with just so much connecting matter as may serve to make the whole readable and intelligible. I am aware that the beauty of the poem is thus fatally marred, for it is often the loveliest passages that serve my purpose least. The abridgement, therefore, that I here give is not to be regarded otherwise than as the key-sketch which we so often see under an engraving of a picture that contains many portraits. It is intended not as a work of art, but as an elucidatory diagram.

As regards its closeness to the text, the references to the poem which will be found at the beginning of each paragraph will show where the abridgement has been greatest, and will also enable the reader to verify the fidelity of the rendering either with the Greek or with Messrs. Butcher and Lang's translation. I affirm with confidence that if the reader is good enough to thus verify any passages that may strike him as impossibly modern, he will find that I have adhered as severely to the intention of the original as it was possible for me to do while telling the story in my own words and abridging it.

One of my critics, a very friendly one, has told me that I have "distorted the simplicity of the *Odyssey* in order to put[Pg 15] it in a ludicrous light." I do not think this. I have revealed, but I have not distorted. I should be shocked to believe for one moment that I had done so. True, I have nothing extenuated, but neither have I set down aught in malice. Where the writer is trying to make us believe impossibilities, I have shown that she is doing so, and have also shown why she wanted us to believe them; but until a single passage is pointed out to me in which I have altered the intention of the original, I shall continue to hold that the conception of the poem which I lay before the reader in the following pages is a juster one than any that, so far as I know, has been made public hitherto; and, moreover, that it makes both the work and the writer a hundred times more interesting than any other conception can do.

I preface my abridgement with a plan of Ulysses' house, so far as I have been able to make it out from the poem. The reader will find that he understands the story much better if he will study the plan of the house here given with some attention.

I have read what Prof. Jebb has written on this subject,^[1] as also Mr. Andrew Lang's Note 18 at the end of Messrs. Butcher and Lang's translation of the *Odyssey*. I have also read Mr. Arthur Platt's article on the slaying of the suitors,^[2] and find myself in far closer agreement with Mr. Lang than with either of the other writers whom I have named. The only points on which I differ from Mr. Lang are in respect of the inner court, which he sees as a roofed hall, but which I hold to have been open to the sky, except the covered cloister or μέγαρον σκιάεντα, an arrangement which is still very common in Sicilian houses, especially at Trapani and Palermo. I also differ from him in so far as I see no reason to think that the "stone pavement" was raised, and as believing the ὀρσοθύρα to have been at the top of Telemachus's tower, and called "in the wall" because the tower abutted on the wall. [Pg 16] These are details: substantially my view of the action and scene during the killing of the suitors agrees with Mr. Lang's. I will not give the reasons which compel me to differ from Prof. Jebb and Mr. Platt, but will leave my plan of the house and the abridged translation to the judgement of the reader.

A was the body of the house, containing the women's apartments and other rooms. It had an upper story, in which was Penelope's room overlooking the court where the suitors passed the greater part of their time.

It also contained the store-room, which seems to have been placed at the far end of the house, perhaps in a basement. The store-room could be reached by a passage from a doorway A', and also by back-passages from a side-entrance A'', which I suppose to have been the back door of the house. The women's apartments opened on to the passage leading from A' to the store-room.

B and B' were the Megaron or Megara, that is to say inner court, of which B' was a covered cloister with a roof supported by bearing-posts with cross-beams and rafters. The open part of the court had no flooring but the natural soil. Animals seem to have been flayed and dressed here, for Medon, who was certainly in the inner court while the suitors were being killed, concealed himself under a freshly-flayed ox (or heifer's) hide (xxii. 363).

B' was called the μέγαρον σκιάεντα or "shaded" part of the court, to distinguish it from that which was open to the sun. The end nearest the house was paved with stone, while that nearest the outer court (and probably the other two sides) were floored with ash. The part of the cloister that was paved with stone does not appear to have been raised above the level of the rest; at one end of the stone pavement there was a door a, opening on to a narrow passage; this door, though mentioned immediately

after the ὀψοθύρα or trap door (xxii. 126), which we shall come to presently, has no connection with it. About the middle of the pavement, during the trial of the axes, there was a seat *b*, from which Ulysses shot through the axes, and from which he sprang when he began to shoot the suitors;[Pg 17] against one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloister, there was *c*, a spear-stand.

The House of Ulysses.

All the four sides of the cloisters were filled with small tables at which the suitors dined. A man could hold one of these tables before him as a shield (xxii. 74, 75).

In the cloisters there were also

d, an open hearth or fire-place in the wall at right angles to the one which abutted on the house. So, at least, I read τοίχου τοῦ ἐτέρου (xxiii. 90).

e, the table at which the wine was mixed in the mixing-bowl—as well, of course, as the other tables above mentioned.

f, a door leading into *g*, the tower in which Telemachus used to sleep [translating ἄγχι παρ' ὀρσοθύρην (xxii. 333) not "near the ὀρσοθύρα," but "near towards the ὀρσοθύρα"].

At the top of this tower there was a trap-door *g'* (ὀρσοθύρα), through which it was possible to get out on to the roof of the tower and raise an alarm, but which afforded neither ingress nor egress.

C was the outer court or αὐλή, approached by *C'*, the main entrance, or πρῶται θύραι, a covered gateway with a room over it. This covered gateway was the αἰθούση ἐρίδουπος, or reverberating portico which we meet with in other Odyssean houses, and are so familiar with in Italian and Sicilian houses at the present day. It was surrounded by *C''*, covered sheds or barns in which carts, farm implements, and probably some farm produce would be stored. It contained

h, the prodomus, or vestibule in front of the inner court, into which the visitor would pass through

i, the πρόθυρον or inner gateway (the word, πρόθυρον, however, is used also for the outer gateway), and

k, the tholus or vaulted room, about the exact position of which all we know is that it is described in xxii. 459, 460, as close up against the wall of the outer court. I suspect, but cannot prove it, that this was the room in which Ulysses built his bed (xxiii. 181-204).

D was the τυκτὸν δάπεδον or level ground in front of Ulysses' house, on which the suitors amused themselves playing at quoits and aiming a spear at a mark (iv. 625, 627).

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The only part of the foregoing plan and explanatory notes that forces the text is in respect of the main gateway, which I place too far from the mouth of the λαύρα for one man to be able to keep out all who would bring help to the suitors; but considering how much other impossibility we have to accept, I think this may be allowed to go with the rest. A young woman, such as I suppose the writer of the *Odyssey* to have been, would not stick at such a trifle as shifting the gates a little nearer the λαύρα if it suited her purpose.

In passing, I may say that Agamemnon appears to have been killed (*Od.* iv. 530, 531) in much such a cloistered court as above supposed for the house of Ulysses. A banquet seems to have been prepared in the cloister on one side the court, while men were ambuscaded in the one on the opposite side.

Lastly, for what it may be worth. I would remind the reader that there is not a hint of windows in the part of Ulysses' house frequented by the suitors.

THE STORY OF THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

The council of the gods—Telemachus and the suitors in the house of Ulysses.

Tell me, oh Muse, of that ingenious hero who met with many adventures while trying to bring his men home after the Sack of Troy. He failed in this, for the men perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun, and he himself, though he was longing to get back to his wife, was now languishing in a lonely island, the abode of the nymph Calypso. Calypso wanted him to marry her, and kept him with her for many years, till at last all the gods took pity upon him except Neptune, whose son Polyphemus he had blinded.

Now it so fell out that Neptune had gone to pay a visit ²¹to the Ethiopians, who lie in two halves, one half looking on to the Atlantic and the other on to the Indian Ocean. The other gods, therefore, held a council, and Jove made them a speech about the folly of Ægisthus in wooing Clytemnestra and [Pg 19] murdering Agamemnon: finally, yielding to Minerva, he consented that Ulysses should return to Ithaca.

"In that case," said Minerva, "we should send Mercury to ⁸⁰Calypso to tell her what, we have settled. I will also go to Ithaca and embolden Ulysses' son Telemachus to

dismiss the suitors of his mother Penelope, who are ruining him by their extravagance. Furthermore, I will send him to Sparta and Pylos to seek news of his father, for this will get him a good name."

The goddess then winged her way to the gates of Ulysses' house, disguised as an old family friend, and found the suitors playing draughts in front of the house and lording it in great style. Telemachus, seeing her standing at the gate, went up to her, led her within, placed her spear in the spear-stand against a strong bearing-post, brought her a seat, and set refreshments before her.

Meanwhile the suitors came trooping into the sheltered cloisters that ran round the inner court; here, according to their wont, they feasted: and when they had done eating they compelled Phemius, a famous bard, to sing to them. On this Telemachus began talking quietly to Minerva: he told her how his father's return seemed now quite hopeless, and concluded by asking her name and country.

Minerva said she was Mentès, chief of the Taphians, and was on her way to Temesa^[3] with a cargo of iron, which she should exchange for copper. She told Telemachus that her ship was lying outside the town, under Mt. Neritum,^[4] in the harbour that was called Rheithron.^[5] "Go," she added, "and ask old Laertes, who I hear is now living but poorly in the country and never comes into the town; he will tell you that I am an old friend of your father's."

She then said, "But who are all these people whom I see^[Pg 20] behaving so atrociously about your house? What is it all about? Their conduct is enough to disgust any right-minded person."

"They are my mother's suitors," answered Telemachus, and come from the neighbouring islands of Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, as well as from Ithaca itself. My mother does not say she will not marry again and cannot bring her courtship to an end. So they are ruining me."

Minerva was very indignant, and advised him to fit out a ship and go to Pylos and Sparta, seeking news of his father. "If," she said, "you hear of his being alive, you can put up with all this extravagance for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, return at once, send your mother to her father's, and by fair means or foul kill the suitors."

Telemachus thanked her for her advice, promised to take it, and pressed her to prolong her visit. She explained that she could not possibly do so, and then flew off into the air, like an eagle.

Phemius was still singing: he had chosen for his subject 325the disastrous return of the Achæans from Troy. Penelope could hear him from her room upstairs, and came down into the presence of the suitors holding a veil before her face, and waited upon by two of her handmaids, one of whom stood on either side of her. She stood by one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters, and bade Phemius change his theme, which she found too painful as reminding her of her lost husband.

Telemachus reasoned with her, and ended by desiring her 345to go upstairs again. "Go back," he said, "within the house and see to your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others, for it is I who am master here."

On this Penelope went back, with her women, wondering 360into the house, and as soon as she was gone Telemachus challenged the suitors to meet him next day in full assembly, that he might formally and publicly warn them to leave his house.

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Antinous and Eurymachus, their two leaders, both 383rejoined; but presently night fell, and the whole body of suitors left the house for their own several abodes. When they were gone, his old nurse Euryclea conducted Telemachus by torch light to his bedroom, in a lofty tower, which overlooked the outer courtyard and could be seen from far and near.

Euryclea had been bought by Laertes when she was quite 430young; he had given the worth of twenty oxen for her, and she was made as much of in the house as his own wife was, but he did not take her to his bed, for he respected his wife's displeasure. The good old woman showed Telemachus to his room, and waited while he undressed. She took his shirt from him, folded it carefully up, and hung it on a peg by his bed side. This done, she left him to dream all night of his intended voyage.

BOOK II.

Assembly of the people of Ithaca—Telemachus starts for Pylos.

Next morning, as soon as he was up and dressed, Telemachus sent the criers round the town to call the people in assembly. When they came together he told them of his misfortune in the death of his father, and of the still greater one that the suitors were making havoc of his estate. "If anybody," he concluded, "is to eat me out 46of house

and home I had rather you did it yourselves; for you are men of substance, so that if I sued you household by household I should recover from you; whereas there is nothing to be got by suing a number of young men who have no means of their own." 85

To this Antinous rejoined that it was Penelope's own fault. She had been encouraging the suitors all the time by sending flattering messages to every single one of them. He explained how for nearly four years she had tricked them about the web, which she said was to be a pall for Laertes. "The answer, therefore," said he, "that we make you is this: 'Send your mother away, and let her marry the man of her own and of her father's choice;' for we shall not go till she has married some one or other of us."

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Telemachus answered that he could not force his mother to leave against her will. If he did so he should have to refund to his grandfather Icarius the dowry that Ulysses had received on marrying Penelope, and this would bear hardly on him. Besides it would not be a creditable thing to do.

On this Jove sent two eagles from the top of a mountain,^[6] who flew and flew in their own lordly flight till they reached the assembly, over which they screamed and fought, glaring death into the faces of those who were below. The people wondered what it might all mean, till the old Soothsayer Halitherses told them that it foreshadowed the immediate return of Ulysses to take his revenge upon the suitors.

Eurymachus made him an angry answer. "As long," he concluded, "as Penelope delays her choice, we can marry no one else, and shall continue to waste Telemachus's estate."

Telemachus replied that there was nothing more to be said, and asked the suitors to let him have a ship with a crew of twenty men, that he might follow the advice given him by Minerva.

Mentor now upbraided his countrymen for standing idly by when they could easily coerce the suitors into good behaviour, and after a few insolent words from Leocritus the meeting dispersed. The suitors then returned to the house of Ulysses.

But Telemachus went away all alone by the sea side to pray. He washed his hands in the grey waves, and implored Minerva to assist him; whereon the goddess came up to him in the form of Mentor. She discoursed to him about his conduct generally, and wound up by saying that she would not only find him a ship, but would come with him herself. He was therefore to go home and get the necessary provisions ready.

He did as she directed him and went home, where, after 296an angry scene with the suitors, in which he again published his intention of going on his voyage, he went down into the store[Pg 23] room and told Euryclea to get the provisions ready; at the same time he made her take a solemn oath of secrecy for ten or twelve days, so as not to alarm Penelope. Meanwhile Minerva, still disguised as Mentor, borrowed a ship from a neighbour. Noëmon, and at nightfall, after the suitors had left as usual, she and Telemachus with his crew of twenty volunteers got the provisions on board and set sail, with a fair wind that whistled over the waters.

BOOK III.

Telemachus at the house of Nestor.

They reached Pylos on the following morning, and found Nestor, his sons, and all the Pylians celebrating the feast of Neptune. They were cordially received, especially by Nestor's son Pisistratus, and were at once invited to join the festivities. After dinner Nestor asked them who they were, and Telemachus, emboldened by Minerva, explained that they came from Ithaca under Neritum,^[7] and that he was seeking news of the death of his father Ulysses.

When he heard this, Nestor told him all about his own 102adventures on his way home from Troy, but could give him no news of Ulysses. He touched, however, on the murder of Agamemnon by Ægisthus, and the revenge taken by Orestes.^[8]

Telemachus said he wished he might be able to take a like 201revenge on the suitors of his mother, who were ruining him; "but this," he exclaimed, "could not happen, not even if the gods wished it. It is too much even to think of."

Minerva reproved him sharply. "The hand of heaven," she 229said, "can reach far when it has a mind to save a man." Telemachus then changed the conversation, and asked Nestor how Ægisthus managed to kill Agamemnon, who was so much the better man of the two. What was Menelaus doing?

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"Menelaus," answered Nestor, "had not yet returned 253from his long wanderings. As for Clytemnestra, she was 266naturally of a good disposition, but was beguiled by Ægisthus, who reigned seven years in Mycene after he had killed Agamemnon. In the eighth year, however, Orestes came from Athens and killed him, and on the very day

when 311 Orestes was celebrating the funeral feast of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, Menelaus returned. Go then to Sparta, and see if he can tell you anything."

By this time the sun had set, and Minerva proposed 329 that she and Telemachus should return to their ship, but Nestor would not hear of their doing so. Minerva therefore consented that Telemachus should stay on shore, and explained that she could not remain with him inasmuch as she must start on the following morning for the Cauconians, to recover a large debt that had been long owing to her.

Having said this, to the astonishment of all present she 371 flew away in the form of an eagle. Whereon Nestor grasped Telemachus's hand and said he could see that he must be a very important person. He also at once vowed to gild the horns of a heifer and sacrifice her to the goddess. He then took Telemachus home with him and lodged him in his own house.

Next day Nestor fulfilled his vow; the heifer was brought 404 in from the plains, her horns were gilded, and Nestor's wife Eurydice and her daughters shouted with delight at seeing her killed.

After the banquet that ensued Nestor sent Telemachus 477 and his son Pisistratus off in a chariot and pair for Lacedæmon, which they reached on the following morning, after passing a night in the house of Diocles at Pheræ.

BOOK IV.

Telemachus at the house of Menelaus—The suitors resolve to lie in wait for him as he returns, and murder him.

When the two young men reached Lacedæmon they drove straight to Menelaus's house [and found him celebrating [Pg 25] the double marriage of his daughter Hermione and his son Megapenthes.]^[9]

Menelaus (after a little demur on the part of his *major domo* 22 Eteoneus, for which he was severely reprimanded by his master) entertained his guests very hospitably, and overhearing Telemachus call his friend's attention to the splendour of the house, he explained to them how much toil and sorrow he had endured, especially through the murder of his brother Agamemnon, the plundering of his house by Paris when he carried off Helen, and the death of so many of his brave comrades at Troy. "There is

one man, however," he added, "of whom I cannot even think without loathing both food and sleep. I mean Ulysses."

When Telemachus heard his father thus mentioned he could not restrain his tears, and while Menelaus was in doubt what to say or not say, Helen came down (dinner being now half through) with her three attendant maidens, Adraste, Alcippe, and Phylo, who set a seat for her and brought her her famous work box which ran on wheels, that she might begin to spin.

"And who pray," said she to her husband, "may these two gentlemen be who are honouring us with their presence? Shall I guess right or wrong, but I really must say what I think. I never saw such a likeness—neither in man nor woman. This young man can only be Telemachus, whom Ulysses left behind him a baby in arms when he set out for Troy."

"I too," answered Menelaus, "have observed the likeness. It is unmistakeable."

On this Pisistratus explained that they were quite right, whereon Menelaus told him all he had meant doing for Ulysses, and this was so affecting that all the four who were at table burst into tears. After a little while Pisistratus complimented Menelaus on his great sagacity (of which indeed his father Nestor had often told him), and said that he did not like weeping when he was getting his dinner; he therefore [Pg 26] proposed that the remainder of their lamentation should be deferred until next morning. Menelaus assented to this, and dinner was allowed to proceed. Helen mixed some Nepenthe with the wine, and cheerfulness was thus restored.

Helen then told how she had met Ulysses when he entered Troy as a spy, and explained that by that time she was already anxious to return home, and was lamenting the cruel calamity which Venus had inflicted on her in separating her from her little girl and from her husband, who was really not deficient either in person or understanding.

Menelaus capped her story with an account of the adventures of the Achæans inside the wooden horse. "Do you not remember," said he, "how you walked all round it when we were inside, and patted it? You had Deiphobus with you, and you kept on calling out our names and mimicking our wives, till Minerva came and took you away. It was Ulysses' presence of mind that then saved us."

When he had told this, Telemachus said it was time to go to rest, so he and Pisistratus were shown to their room in the vestibule, while Menelaus and Helen retired to the interior of the house. [\[10\]](#)

When morning came Telemachus told Menelaus about the 306 suitors, and asked for any information he could give him concerning the death of his father. Menelaus was greatly shocked, but could only tell him what he had heard from Proteus. He said that as he was coming from Egypt he had been detained some weeks through, the displeasure of the gods, in the island of Pharos, where he and his men would have been starved but for the assistance given him by a goddess Idothea, daughter to Proteus, who taught him how to ensnare her father, and compel him to say why heaven was detaining him.

"Idothea," said Menelaus, "disguised me and my three 410 chosen comrades as seals; to this end she had brought four [Pg 27] fresh-flayed seal-skins, under which she hid us. The strong smell of these skins was most distressing to us—Who would go to bed with a sea monster if he could help it? but Idothea put some ambrosia under each man's 443 nostrils, and this afforded us great relief. Other seals (Halsoidne's chickens as they call them) now kept coming up by hundreds, and lay down to bask upon the beach.

"Towards noon Proteus himself came up. First he counted 450 all his seals to see that he had the right number, and he counted us in with the others; when he had so done he lay down in the midst of them, as a shepherd with his sheep, and as soon as he was asleep we pounced upon him and gripped him tight; at one moment he became a lion, the next he was running water, and then again he was a tree; but we never loosed hold, and in the end he grew weary, and told us what we would know.

"He told me also of the fate of Ajax, son of Oïleus, and 499 of my brother Agamemnon. Lastly he told me about Ulysses, who he said was in the island of the nymph Calypso, unable to get away inasmuch as he had neither ship nor crew.

"Then he disappeared under the sea, and I, after 570 appeasing heaven's anger as he had instructed me, returned quickly and safely to my own country."

Having finished his story Menelaus pressed Telemachus 587 to remain with him some ten or twelve days longer, and promised to give him a chariot and a pair of horses as a keepsake, but Telemachus said that he could not stay. "I could listen to you," said he, "for a whole twelve months, and never once think about my home and my parents; but my men, whom I have left at Pylos, are already impatient for me to return. As for any present you may make me, let it be a piece of plate. I cannot take horses to Ithaca; it contains no plains nor meadow lands, and is more fit for breeding goats than horses. None of our islands are suited for chariot races, and Ithaca least among them all."

Menelaus smiled, and said he could see that Telemachus 600 came of good family. He had a piece of plate, of very great value, which was just the thing, and Telemachus should have it.

[Pg 28]

[Guests now kept coming to the king's house, bringing 621 both wine and sheep, and their wives had put them up a provision of bread. Thus, then, did they set about cooking their dinner in the courts.]^[111]

Meanwhile, the suitors in Ithaca were playing at quoits, 625 aiming spears at a mark, and behaving with all their old insolence on the level ground in front of Ulysses' house. While they were thus engaged Noëmon came up and asked Antinous if he could say when Telemachus was likely to be back from Pylos, for he wanted his ship. On this everything came out, and the suitors, who had no idea that Telemachus had really gone (for they thought he was only away on one of his farms in Ithaca), were very angry. They therefore determined to lie in wait for him on his return, and made ready to start.

Medon, a servant, overheard their plot, and told all to 675 Penelope, who, like the suitors, learned for the first time that her son had left home and gone to Pylos. She bitterly upbraided her women for not having given her a call out of her bed when Telemachus was leaving, for she said she was sure they knew all about it. Presently, however, on being calmed by Euryclea, she went upstairs and offered sacrifice to Minerva. After a time she fell into a deep slumber, during which she was comforted by a vision of her sister Iphthime, which Minerva had sent to her bedside.

When night fell the suitors set sail, intending to 842 way-lay Telemachus in the Strait between Same and Ithaca.

BOOK V.

Ulysses in the island of Calypso—He leaves the island on a raft, and after great suffering reaches the land of the Phæacians.

The gods now held a second council, at which Minerva and 28 Jove both spoke.

When Jove had done speaking he sent Mercury to Calypso [Pg 29] to tell that Ulysses was to return home, reaching the land of the Phæacians in twenty days. The Phæacians would load him with presents and send him on to Ithaca.

Mercury, therefore, flew over the sea like a cormorant ⁴³that fishes every hole and corner of the deep. In the course of time he reached Calypso's cave and told his story. Calypso was very angry, but seeing there was no help for it promised obedience. As soon as Mercury was gone she went to look for Ulysses, whom she found weeping as usual and looking out ever sadly upon the sea; she told him to build himself a raft and sail home upon it, but Ulysses was deeply suspicious and would not be reassured till she had sworn a very solemn oath that she meant him no harm, and was advising him in all good faith.

The pair then returned to Calypso's cave. "I cannot ¹⁹²understand," she said, "why you will not stay quietly here with me, instead of all the time thinking about this wife of yours. I cannot believe that I am any worse looking than she is. If you only knew how much hardship ²⁰⁶you will have to undergo before you get back, you would stay where you are and let me make you immortal."

"Do not be angry with me," answered Ulysses, "you are ²¹⁵infinitely better looking than Penelope. You are a goddess, and she is but a mortal woman. There can be no comparison. Nevertheless, come what may, I have a craving to get back to my own home."

The next four days were spent in making the raft. Calypso ²²⁸lent him her axe and auger and shewed him where the trees grew which would be driest and whose timber would be the ²⁴⁰best seasoned, and Ulysses cut them down. He made the raft about as broad in the beam as people generally make a good big ship, and he gave it a rudder—that he might ²⁵⁵be able to steer it.

Calypso then washed him, gave him clean clothes, and he ²⁶⁴set out, steering his ship skilfully by means of the ²⁷⁰rudder. He steered towards the Great Bear, which is also called the Wain, keeping it on his left hand, for so Calypso had advised him.

[Pg 30]

All went well with him for seventeen days, and on the ²⁷⁸eighteenth he caught sight of the faint outlines of the Phæacian coast lying long and low upon the horizon.

Here, however, Neptune, who was on his way home from the ²⁸²Ethiopians, caught sight of him and saw the march that the other gods had stolen upon him during his absence. He therefore stirred the sea round with his trident, and raised a frightful hurricane, so that Ulysses could see nothing more, everything being dark as night; presently ²⁹⁴he was washed overboard, but managed to regain his raft.

He was giving himself up for lost when Ino, also named ³³³Leucothea, took pity on him and flew on to his raft like a sea gull; she reassured him and gave him her veil, at the same time telling him to throw it back into the sea as soon as he reached land, and to turn his face away from the sea as he did so.

The storm still raged, and the raft went to pieces under ³⁵¹its fury, whereon Ulysses bound Ino's veil under his arms and began to swim. Neptune on seeing this was satisfied and went away.

As soon as he was gone Minerva calmed all the winds ³⁶⁹except the North, which blew strong for two days and two nights, so that Ulysses was carried to the South again. On the morning of the third day he saw land quite close, but was nearly dashed to pieces against the rocks on trying to leave the water. At last he found the mouth of ⁴⁵¹a river, who, in answer to Ulysses's prayer, stayed his flow, so that Ulysses was able to swim inland and get on shore.

Nearly dead with exhaustion and in great doubt what to ⁴⁵⁶do, he first threw Ino's veil into the salt waters of the river, and then took shelter on the rising ground, inland. Here he covered himself with a thick bed of leaves and fell fast asleep.

BOOK VI.

The meeting between Ulysses and Nausicaa.

While Ulysses was thus slumbering, Minerva went to the land of the Phæacians, on which Ulysses had been cast.

[Pg 31]

Now the Phæacians used to live in Hypereia near the ⁴lawless Cyclopes, who were stronger than they were and plundered them; so their king Nausithous removed them to Scheria, ^[12]where they were secure. Nausithous was now dead, and his son Alcinous was reigning.

Alcinous had an only daughter, Nausicaa, who was in her ¹⁵bedroom fast asleep. Minerva went to her bedside and appeared to her in a dream, having assumed the form of one Captain Dymas's daughter, who was a bosom friend of Nausicaa's. She reminded her of her approaching marriage (for which, however, the bridegroom had not yet been decided upon), and upbraided her for not making due preparation by the washing of her own and of the family linen. She proposed, therefore, that on the

following morning Nausicaa should take all the unwashed clothes to the washing cisterns, and said that she would come and help her: the cisterns being some distance from the town, she advised Nausicaa to ask her father to let her have a waggon and mules.

Nausicaa, on waking, told her father and mother about 50her dream, "Papa, dear,"^[13] said she, "could you manage to let me have a good big waggon? I want to take all our dirty clothes to the river and wash them. You are the chief man here, so it is only proper that you should have 60a clean shirt when you attend meetings of the council. Moreover you have five sons, two of them married, while the other three are good looking young bachelors; you know they always like to have clean linen when they go out to a dance."

Her father promised her all she wanted. The waggon 71was made ready, her mother put her up a basket of provisions, and Nausicaa drove her maids to the bank of the river, where were the cisterns, through which there flowed enough clear water to wash clothes however dirty they might be. They washed their clothes in the pits by treading upon them, laid them out to dry upon the sea-beach, had their dinner as the clothes were drying, and then began to play at ball while Nausicaa sang to them.

In the course of time, when they were thinking about[Pg 32] 110starting home, Minerva woke Ulysses, who was in the wood just above them. He sat up, heard the voices and laughter of the women, and wondered where he was.

He resolved on going to see, but remembering that he had 127no clothes on, he held a bough of olive before him, and then, all grim, naked, and unkempt as he was, he came out and drew near to the women, who all of them ran away along the beach and the points that jutted into the sea. Nausicaa, however, stood firm, and Ulysses set himself to consider whether he should go boldly up to her and embrace her knees, or speak to her from a respectful distance.

On the whole he concluded that this would be the most 145prudent course; and having adopted it, he began by asking Nausicaa to inform him whether she was a goddess or no. If she was a goddess, it was obvious from her beauty that she could only be Diana. If on the other hand she was a mortal, how happy would he be whose proposals in the way of settlements had seemed most advantageous, and who should take her to his own home. Finally he asked her to be kind enough to give him any old wrapper which she might have brought with her to wrap the clothes in, and to show him the way to the town.

Nausicaa replied that he seemed really to be a very ¹⁸⁶sensible person, but that people must put up with their luck whatever it might happen to be. She then explained that he had come to the land of the Phæacians, and promised to conduct him to their city.

Having so said, she told her maids not to be such ¹⁹⁸cowards. "The man," she said, "is quite harmless; we live away from all neighbours on a land's end, with the sea roaring on either side of us, and no one can hurt us. See to this poor fellow, therefore, and give him something to eat."

When they heard this the maids came back and gave ²¹¹Ulysses a shirt and cloak; they also gave him a bottle of oil and told him to go and wash in the river, but he said, "I will not wash myself while you keep standing there. I cannot bring myself to strip before a number of good-looking young women." So they went and told their mistress.

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When Ulysses had done washing, Minerva made him look much ²²⁴grander and more imposing, and gave him a thick head of hair which flowed down in hyacinthine curls about his shoulders, Nausicaa was very much struck with the change in his appearance. "At first," she said, "I thought him quite plain, but now he is of godlike beauty. I wish I might have such a man as that for my husband, if he would only stay here. But never mind this; girls, give him something to eat and drink."

The maids then set meat and drink before Ulysses, who was ²⁴⁷ravenously hungry. While he was eating, Nausicaa got the clothes folded up and put on to the cart; after which she gave him his instructions. "Follow after the cart," she said, "along with the maids, till you get near the houses. As for the town, you will find it lying between two good harbours, and approached by a narrow neck of ²⁶³land, on either side of which you will see the ships drawn up—for every man has a place where he can let his boat lie. You will also see the walls, and the temple of Neptune standing in the middle of the paved market-place, with the ship-brokers' shops all round it.

"When you get near the town drop behind, for the people ²⁷³here are very ill-natured, and they would talk about me. They would say, 'Who is this fine looking stranger that is going about with Nausicaa? Where did she find him? I suppose she is going to marry him. Is he a sailor whom she has picked up from some foreign vessel, or has a god come down from heaven in answer to her prayers and he is going to marry her? It would be a good thing if she would go and find a husband somewhere else, for she will have nothing to say to any of the many excellent Phæacians who are in love with her.' This is what people would say, and I could not blame them, for I should be

scandalised myself if I saw any girl going about with a stranger, while her father and mother were yet alive, without being married to him in the face of all the world.

"Do then as I say. When you come to the grove of Minerva 289a little outside the town, wait till you think I and the[Pg 34] maids must have got home. Then come after us, ask which is Alcinous's house, and when you reach it go straight through the outer and inner courts till you come to my mother. You will see her sitting with her back to a bearing-post, and spinning her purple yarn by the fire. My father will be sitting close by her; never mind about him, but go and embrace my mother's knees for if she looks favourably on your suit, you will probably get what you want."

Nausicaa then drove on, and as the sun was about setting 316they came to the grove of Minerva, where Ulysses sat down and waited. He prayed Minerva to assist him, and she heard his prayer, but she would not manifest herself to him, for she did not want to offend her uncle Neptune.

BOOK VII.

The splendours of the house of King Alcinous—Queen Arete wants to know where Ulysses got his shirt and cloak, for she knows them as her own work—Ulysses explains.

When Nausicaa reached home her brothers attended to the waggon and mules, and her waiting-woman Eurymedusa lit the fire and brought her supper for her into her own room.

Presently Ulysses considered it safe to come on, and 14entered the town enveloped in a thick mist which Minerva shed round him for his protection from any rudeness that the Phæacians might offer him. She also met him outside the town disguised as a little girl carrying a pitcher.

Ulysses saw her in spite of the mist, and asked her 21to show him the way to the house of Alcinous; this, she said, she could easily do, and when they reached the house she told Ulysses all about the king's family history, and advised him how he should behave himself.

"Be bold," she said; "boldness always tells, no matter 50where a man comes from. First find the mistress of the house. She is of the same family as her husband, and her descent is in this wise. Eurymedon was king of the giants, but he and his people were

overthrown, and he lost his own[Pg 35] life. His youngest daughter was Peribœa, a woman of surpassing beauty, who gave birth by Neptune to Nausithous, king of the Phæacians. He had two sons, 62Rhexenor and Alcinous; Rhexenor died young, leaving an only daughter, Arete, whom her uncle Alcinous married, and whom he honours as no other woman in the whole world is honoured by her husband. All her family and all her neighbours adore her as a friend and peacemaker, for she is a thoroughly good woman. If you can gain her good offices all will go well with you."

Minerva then left him and went to Marathon and Athens, 78where she visited the house of Erechtheus, but Ulysses went on to the house of Alcinous, and he pondered much as he paused awhile before he reached the threshold of bronze, for the splendour of the palace was like that of the sun and moon. The walls on either side were of bronze from end to end, and the cornice was of blue enamel. The doors were of gold and hung on pillars of silver that rose from a floor of bronze, while the lintel was of silver and the hook of the door was of gold.

On either side there were gold and silver mastiffs which 91Vulcan with his consummate skill had fashioned expressly to keep watch over the palace of King Alcinous, so they were immortal and could never grow old. Seats were ranged here and there all along the wall, from one end to the other, with coverings of fine woven work, which the women of the house had made. Here the chief persons of the Phæacians used to sit and eat and drink, for there was abundance at all seasons; and there were golden figures of young men with lighted torches in their hands, raised on pedestals to give light to them that sat at meat.

There are fifty women servants in the house, some of 103whom are always grinding rich yellow grain at the mill, while others work at the loom and sit and spin, and their shuttles go backwards and forwards like the fluttering of aspen leaves, while the linen is so closely woven that it will turn oil. As the Phæacians are the best sailors in the world, so their women excel all others in weaving, for Minerva has taught them all manner of useful arts, and they are very intelligent.

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Outside the gate of the outer court there is a large garden^[14] of about four acres, with a wall all round it. It is full of beautiful trees—pears, pomegranates, and the most delicious apples. There are luscious figs also, and olives in full growth. The fruits never rot nor fail all the year round, neither winter nor summer, for the air is so soft that a new crop ripens before the old has dropped. Pear grows on pear, apple on apple, and fig on fig, and so also with the grapes, for there is an excellent vineyard; on the level ground of a part of this, the grapes are being made into raisins; on another part they

are being gathered; some are being trodden in the wine-tubs; others, further on, have shed their blossom and are beginning to show fruit; others, again, are just changing colour. In the furthest part of the ground there are beautifully arranged beds of flowers that are in bloom all the year round. Two streams go through it, the one turned in ducts throughout the whole garden, while the other is carried under the ground of the outer court to the house itself, and the townspeople drew water from it. Such, then, were the splendours with which heaven had endowed the house of King Alcinous.

So here Ulysses stood for a while and looked about ¹³³him, but when he had looked long enough he crossed the threshold and went within the precincts of the house. He passed through the crowd of guests who were nightly visitors at the table of King Alcinous, and who were then making their usual drink offering to Mercury before ¹³⁷going for the night. He was still shrouded in the mist of invisibility with which Minerva had invested him, and going up to Arete he embraced her knees, whereon he suddenly became visible. Every one was greatly surprised at seeing a man there, but Ulysses paid no attention to this, and at once implored the queen's assistance; he then sat down among the ashes on the hearth.

Alcinous did not know what to do or say, nor yet did any ¹⁵⁴one else till one of the guests Echeneüs told him it was not ^[Pg 37] creditable to him that a suppliant should be left thus grovelling among the ashes. Alcinous ought to give him a seat and set food before him. This was accordingly done, and after Ulysses had finished eating Alcinous made a speech, in which he proposed that they should have a great banquet next day in their guest's honour, and then provide him an escort to take him to his own home. This was agreed to, and after a while the other guests went home to bed.

When they were gone Ulysses was left alone with Alcinous ²³⁰and Arete sitting over the fire, while the servants were taking the things away after supper. Then Arete said, "Stranger, before we go any further there is a question I should like to put to you. Who are you? and who gave you those clothes?" for she recognised the shirt and cloak Ulysses was wearing as her own work, and that of her maids.

Ulysses did not give his name, but told her how he had ²⁴⁰come from Calypso's island, and been wrecked on the Phæacian coast. "Next day," he said, "I fell in with your daughter, who treated me with much greater kindness than one could have expected from so young a person—for young people are apt to be thoughtless. It was she who gave me the clothes."

Alcinous then said he wished the stranger would stay with ³⁰⁸them for good and all and marry Nausicaa. They would not, however, press this, and if he insisted on going they would send him, no matter where. "Even though it be further than Eubœa, which

they say is further off than any other place, we will send you, and you shall be taken so easily that you may sleep the whole way if you like."³¹⁸

To this Ulysses only replied by praying that the king ³²⁹might be as good as his word. A bed was then made for him in the gate-house and they all retired for the night.

BOOK VIII.

The Phæacian games and banquet in honour of Ulysses.

When morning came Alcinous called an assembly of the Phæacian, and Minerva went about urging every one to come [Pg 38] and see the wonderful stranger. She also gave Ulysses a more imposing presence that he might impress the people favourably. When the Phæacians were assembled Alcinous said:—

"I do not know who this stranger is, nor where he comes ²⁸from; but he wants us to send him to his own home, and no guest of mine was ever yet able to complain that I did not send him home quickly enough. Let us therefore fit out a new ship with a crew of fifty-two men, and send him. The crew shall come to my house and I will find them in food which they can cook for themselves. The aldermen and councillors shall be feasted inside the house. I can take no denial, and we will have Demodocus to sing to us."

The ship and crew were immediately found, and the sailors ⁴⁶with all the male part of the population swarmed to the house of Alcinous till the yards and barns and buildings were crowded. The king provided them with twelve sheep, eight pigs and two bullocks, which they killed and cooked.

The leading men of the town went inside the inner ⁶²courtyard; Pontonous, the *major domo*, conducted the blind bard Demodocus to a seat which he set near one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters, hung his lyre on a peg over his head, and shewed him how to feel for it with his hands. He also set a table close by him with refreshments on it, to which he could help himself whenever he liked.

As soon as the guests had done eating Demodocus began ⁷²to sing the quarrel between Ulysses and Achilles before Troy, a lay which at the time was famous. This so affected Ulysses that he kept on weeping as long as the bard sang, and though he was able to conceal his tears from the company generally, Alcinous perceived his distress,

and proposed that they should all now adjourn to the athletic sports—which were to consist mainly of boxing, wrestling, jumping, and foot racing.

Demodocus, therefore, hung the lyre on its peg and 105 was led out to the place where the sports were to be held. The whole town flocked to see them. Clytoneüs won the foot race, Euryalus took the prize for wrestling, Amphialus was the best jumper, and Alcinous' son Laodamas the best boxer.

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Laodamas and Euryalus then proposed that Ulysses should 131 enter himself for one of the prizes. Ulysses replied that he was a stranger and a suppliant; moreover, he had lately gone through great hardships, and would rather be excused.

Euryalus on this insulted Ulysses, and said that he 138 supposed he was some grasping merchant who thought of nothing but his freights. "You have none of the look," said he, "of an athlete about you."

Ulysses was furious, and told Euryalus that he was a 164 good-looking young fool. He then took up a disc far heavier than those which the Phæacians were in the habit of throwing. ^[15] The disc made a hurtling sound as it passed through the air, and easily surpassed any throw that had been made yet. Thus encouraged he made another long and very angry speech, in which he said he would compete with any Phæacian in any contest they chose to name, except in running, for he was still so much pulled down that he thought they might beat him here. "Also," he said, "I will not compete in anything with Laodamas. He is my host's son, and it is a most unwise thing for a guest to challenge any member of his host's family. A man must be an idiot to think of such a thing."

"Sir," said Alcinous, "I understand that you are 236 displeased at some remarks that have fallen from one of our athletes, who has thrown doubt upon your prowess in a way that no gentleman would do. I hear that you have also given us a general challenge. I should explain that we are not famous for our skill in boxing or wrestling, but are singularly fleet runners and bold mariners. We are also much given to song and dance, and we like warm baths and frequent changes of linen. So now come forward some of you who are the nimblest dancers, and show the stranger how much we surpass other nations in all graceful accomplishments. Let some one also bring Demodocus's lyre from my house where he has left it."

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The lyre was immediately brought, the dancers began to 256dance, and Ulysses admired the merry twinkling of their feet.

While they were dancing Demodocus sang the intrigue 266between Mars and Venus in the house of Vulcan, and told how Vulcan took the pair prisoners. All the gods came to see them; but the goddesses were modest and would not 324come.

Alcinous then made Halios and Laodamas have a game at 370ball, after which Ulysses expressed the utmost admiration of their skill. Charmed with the compliment Ulysses had paid his sons, the king said that the twelve aldermen (with himself, which would make thirteen) must at once give Ulysses a shirt and cloak and a talent of gold, so that he might eat his supper with a light heart. As for Euryalus, he must not only make a present, but apologise as well, for he had been rude.

Euryalus admitted his fault, and gave Ulysses his sword 398with its scabbard, which was of new ivory. He said Ulysses would find it worth a great deal of money to him.

Ulysses thanked him, wished him all manner of good 412fortune, and said he hoped Euryalus would not feel the want of the sword which he had just given him along with his apology.

Night was now falling, they therefore adjourned to the 417house of Alcinous. Here the presents began to arrive, whereon the king desired Arete to find Ulysses a chest in which to stow them, and to put a shirt and clean cloak in it as his own contribution; he also declared his intention of giving him a gold cup. ^[16] Meanwhile, he said that Ulysses had better have a warm bath.

The bath was made ready. Arete packed all the gold and 423presents which the Phæacian aldermen had sent, as also the shirt and tunic from Alcinous. Arete told Ulysses to see to the fastening, lest some one should rob him while he was asleep on the ship; Ulysses therefore fastened the 445lid on to [Pg 41] the chest with a knot which Circe had taught him. He then went into the bath room—very gladly, for he had not had a bath since he left Calypso, who as long as he was with her had taken as good care of him as though he had been a god.

As he came from the bath room Nausicaa was standing by 457one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters and bade him farewell, reminding him at the same time that it was she who had been the saving of him—a fact which Ulysses in a few words gracefully acknowledged.

He then took his seat at table, and after dinner, at his 469request, Demodocus sang the Sack of Troy and the Sally of the Achæans from the Wooden Horse. This again so

affected him that he could not restrain his tears, which, however, Alcinous again alone perceived.

The king, therefore, made a speech in which he said ⁵³⁶that the stranger ought to tell them his name. He must have one, for people always gave their children names as soon as they were born. He need not be uneasy about his escort. All he had to do was to say where he wanted to go, and the Phæacian ships were so clever that they would take him there of their own accord. Nevertheless he remembered hearing his father Nausithous say, that one day Neptune would be angry with the Phæacians for giving people escorts so readily, and had said he would wreck one of their ships as it was returning, and would also bury their city under a high mountain.

BOOK IX.

The voyages of Ulysses—The Cicons, Lotus eaters, and the Cyclops Polyphemus.

Then Ulysses rose. "King Alcinous," said he, "you ask my name and I will tell you. I am Ulysses, and dwell in Ithaca, an island which contains a high mountain called Neritum. In its neighbourhood there are other islands near to one another, Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus. It lies on the horizon all highest up in the sea towards the West, while the other islands lie away from it to the East. This is the island which I would reach, for however fine a house a man [Pg 42] may have in a land where his parents are not, there will still be nothing sweeter to him than his home and his own father and mother.

"I will now tell you of my adventures. On leaving Troy ³⁷we first made a descent on the land of the Cicons, and sacked their city but were eventually beaten off, though we took our booty with us.

"Thence we sailed South with a strong North wind behind ⁶²us, till we reached the island of Cythera, where we were driven off our course by a continuance of North wind which prevented my doubling Cape Malea.

"Nine days was I driven by foul winds, and on the tenth ⁸²we reached the land of the Lotus eaters, where the people were good to my men but gave them to eat of the lotus, which made them lose all desire to return home, so that I had a great work to get those who had tasted it on board again.

"Thence we were carried further, till we came to the land 105 of the savage Cyclopes. Off their coast, but not very far, there is a wooded island abounding with wild goats. It is untrodden by the foot of man; even the huntsmen, who as a general rule will suffer any hardship in forest 120 or on mountain top, never go there; it is neither tilled nor fed down, but remains year after year uninhabited save by goats only. For the Cyclopes have no ships, and cannot therefore go from place to place as those who have ships can do. If they had ships they would have colonised the island, for it is not at all a bad one and would bring forth all things in their season. There is meadow land, well watered and of good quality, that stretches down to the water's edge. Grapes would do wonderfully well there; it contains good arable land, which would yield heavy crops, for the soil is rich; moreover it has a convenient port—into which some god must have taken us, for the night was so dark that we could see nothing. There was a thick darkness all round the ships, neither was there any moon, for the sky was covered with clouds. No one could see the island, nor yet waves breaking upon the shore till we found ourselves in the harbour. Here, then, we moored our ships and camped down upon the beach.



THE CAVE OF POLYPHEMUS

The Cave of Polyphemos.



SIG. SUGAMELI AND THE AUTHOR. IN THE CAVE OF POLYPHEMUS

Sig. Sugameli and the Author, in the Cave of Polyphemos.

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"When morning came we hunted the wild goats, of which we 152killed over a hundred, ^[17] and all day long to the going down of the sun we feasted on them and the store of wine we had taken from the Cicons. We kept looking also on the land of the Cyclopes over against us, which was so near that we could see the smoke of their stubble fires, and almost fancy we heard the bleating of their sheep and goats.

"We camped a second night upon the beach, and at day 169break, having called a council, I said I would take my own ship and reconnoitre the country, but would leave the other ships at the island. Thereon I started, but when we got near the main land we saw a great cave in the cliff, not far from the sea, and there were large sheep yards in front of it. On landing I chose twelve men and went inland, taking with me a goat skin full of a very wondrous wine that Maron, priest of Apollo, had given me when I spared his life and that of his family at the time that we were sacking the city of the Cicons. The rest of my crew were to wait my return by the sea side.

"We soon reached the cave, and finding that the owner was 216not at home we examined all that it contained; we saw vessels brimful of whey, and racks loaded with cheeses: the yards also were full of lambs and kids. My men implored me to let them steal some cheeses, drive off some of the lambs and kids, and sail away, but I would not, for I hoped the owner might give me something.

"We lit a fire in the cave, sacrificed some of the 233cheeses to the gods, and ate others ourselves, waiting till the owner should return. When he came we found him to be a huge monster, more like a peak standing out against the sky on[Pg 44] some high mountain than a human being. He brought in with him a great bundle of firewood, which he flung down upon the floor with such a noise that we were scared and hid ourselves. He drove all his female goats and ewes into the cave, but left the males outside; and then he closed the door with a huge stone which not even two and twenty waggons could carry. He milked his 245goats and ewes all orderly, and gave each one her own young [for these had been left in the yards all day]; then he drank some of the milk, and put part by for his supper. Presently he lit his fire and caught sight of us, whereon he asked us who we were.

"I told him we were on our way home from Troy, and begged 256him in heaven's name to do us no hurt; but as soon as I had answered his question he gripped up two of my men, dashed them on the ground, and ate them raw, blood, bones, and bowels, like a savage lion of the wilderness. Then he lay down on the ground of the cave and went to sleep: on which I should have crept up to him and plunged my sword into his heart while he was sleeping had I not known that if I did we should never be able to shift the stone. So we waited till dawn should come.

"When day broke the monster again lit his fire, milked 307his ewes all orderly, and gave each one her own young. Then he gripped up two more of my men, and as soon as he had eaten them he rolled the stone from the mouth of the cave, drove out his sheep, and put the stone back again. He had, however, left a large and long piece of olive wood in the cave, and when he had gone I and my men sharpened this at one end, and hid it in the sheep dung of which there was much in the cave. In the evening he returned, milked his ewes, and ate two more men; whereon I went up to him with the skin of wondrous wine that Maron had given me and gave him a bowl full of it. He asked for another, and then another, so I gave them to him, and he was so much delighted that he enquired my name and I said it was Noman.

"The wine now began to take effect, and in a short time 371he fell dead drunk upon the ground. Then my men and I put the sharp end of the piece of olive wood in the fire till it was[Pg 45] well burning, and drove it into the wretch's eye, turning it round and round as though it were an auger. After a while he plucked it out, flung it from him, and began crying to his neighbours for help. When they came, they said, 'What ails you? Who is harming you?' and he answered, 'No man is harming me.' They then said that he must be ill, and had better pray to his father Neptune; so they went away, and I laughed at the success of my stratagem.

"Then I hid my men by binding them under the sheep's bellies. The Cyclops, whose name was Polyphemus, groped his way to the stone, rolled it away, and sat at the mouth of the cave feeling the sheep's backs as they went out; but the men were under their bellies so he did not find one of them. Nor yet did he discover me, for I was ensconced in the thick belly-fleece of a ram which by some chance he had brought in with the ewes. But he was near finding me, for the ram went last, and he kept it for a while and talked to it.

"When we were outside, I dropped from under the ram and unbound my companions. We drove the ewes down to my ship, got them on board, and rowed out to sea. When we were a little way out I jeered at the Cyclops, whereon he tore up a great rock and hurled it after us; it fell in front of the ship and all but hit the rudder; the wash, moreover, that it made nearly carried us back to the land, but I kept the ship off it with a pole.

"When we had got about twice as far off as we were before, I was for speaking to the Cyclops again, and though my men tried to stay me, I shouted out to him 'Cyclops, if you would know who it is that has blinded you, learn that it is I, Ulysses, son of Laertes, who live in Ithaca.'

"Alas,' he cried in answer, 'then the old prophecy about me is coming true. I knew that I was to lose my sight by the hand of Ulysses, but I was looking for some man of great stature and noble mien, whereas he has proved to be a mere whippersnapper. Come here, then, Ulysses that I may offer you gifts of hospitality and pray my father Neptune, who shall heal my eye, to escort you safely home.

"I wish,' said I, 'that I could be as sure of killing you body and soul as I am that not even Neptune will be able to cure your eye.'

"Then he prayed to Neptune saying 'Hear me Neptune, if I am indeed your son, and vouchsafe me that Ulysses son of Laertes may never reach his home. Still, if he must do so, and get back to his friends, let him lose all his men, and though he get home after all, let it be late, on another man's ship, and let him find trouble in his house.'

"So saying he tore up a still larger rock and flung it this time a little behind the ship, but so close that it all but hit the rudder: the wash, however, that it made carried us forward to the island from which we had set out.

"There we feasted on the sheep that we had taken, and mourned the loss of our comrades whom Polyphemus had eaten.

BOOK X.

Æolus—the Læstrygonians—Circe.

"So we sailed on and reached the island where dwells Æolus with his wife and family of six sons and six daughters, who live together amid great and continuous plenty. I staid with him a whole month, and when I would go, he tied all the winds up (for he was their keeper) in a leather sack, which he gave me; but he left the West wind free, for this was the one I wanted.

"Nine days did we sail, and on the tenth we could see our native land with the stubble fires burning thereon. I had never let the rudder out of my hands till then, but being now close in shore I fell asleep. My men, thinking I had treasure in the sack, opened it to see, on which the winds came howling out and took us straight back to the Æolian island. So I went to the house of Æolus and prayed him to help me, but he said, 'Get you gone, abhorred of heaven: him whom heaven hates will I in no wise help.' So I went full sadly away.

"Six days thence did we sail onward, worn out in body and mind, and on the seventh we reached the stronghold of king Lamus, the Læstrygonian city Telepylus, where the shepherd [Pg 47] who drives his flock into the town salutes another who is driving them out, and the other returns his salute. A man in that country could earn double wages if he could do without sleep, for they work much the same by night as they do by day. Here we landed, and I climbed a high rock to look round, but could see no signs of men or beast, save only smoke rising from the ground.

"Then I sent two of my crew with an attendant, to see what manner of men the people might be, and they met a young woman who was coming down to fetch water from the spring Artacia, whence the people drew their water. This young woman took my men to the house of her father Antiphates, whereon they discovered the people to be giants and ogres like Polyphemus. One of my men was gripped up and eaten, but the other two escaped and reached the ships. The Læstrygonians raised a hue and cry after them, and rushing to the harbour, within which all my ships were moored except my own, they dashed my whole fleet in pieces with the rocks that they threw. I and my own ship alone escaped them, for we were outside, and I bade the men row for their lives.

"On and on did we sail, till we reached the island of Circe, where heaven guided us into a harbour. Here I again climbed a rock and could see the smoke from Circe's house rising out of a thick wood; I then went back to the ship, and while on my way

had the good fortune to kill a noble stag, which gave us a supply of meat on which we feasted all the rest of the day. Next morning I held a council and told my men of the smoke that I had seen.

"Eurylochus and twenty-two men then went inland to reconnoitre, and found Circe's house made of squared stones and standing on high ground in the middle of the forest. This forest was full of wild beasts, poor dazed creatures whom Circe had bewitched, but they fawned upon my men and did not harm them. When the men got to the door of her house they could hear her singing inside most beautifully, so they called her down, and when she came she asked them in, gave them a drugged drink, and then turned them into pigs—all except Eurylochus who had remained outside.

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"Eurylochus made all haste back to tell me, and I started for Circe's house. When I was in the wood where the wild beasts were, Mercury met me and gave me an herb called Moly, which would protect me from Circe's spells; he also told me how I should treat her. Then I went to her house, and called her to come down.

"She asked me in, and tried to bewitch me as she had the others, but the herb which Mercury had given me protected me; so I rushed at her with my drawn sword. When she saw this, she said she knew I must be Ulysses, and that I must marry her at once. But I said, 'Circe, you have just turned my men into pigs, and have done your best to bewitch me into the bargain; how can you expect me to be friendly with you? Still, if you will swear to take no unfair advantage of me, I will consent.' So she swore, and I consented at once.

"Then she set the four maid servants of her house to wash me and feast me, but I was still moody and would not eat till Circe removed her spells from off my men, and brought them back safe and sound in human form. When she had done this she bade me go back to my ship and bring the rest of my men—which I presently did, and we staid with her for a whole twelve months, feasting continually and drinking an untold quantity of wine. At last, however, my men said that if I meant going home at all it was time I began to think of starting.

"That night, therefore, when I was in bed with Circe, I told her how my men were murmuring, and asked her to let me go. This she said she would do; but I must first go down into the house of Hades, and consult the blind Theban prophet Tiresias. And she directed me what I should do.

"On the following morning I told my men, and we began to get ready; but we had an accident before we started, for there was a foolish and not very valiant young man

in my ship named Elpenor, who had got drunk and had gone on to the roof of Circe's house to sleep off his liquor in the cool. The bustle my men made woke him, and in his flurry he forgot all about coming down by the staircase, and fell right off the roof; whereby he broke his neck and was killed. We started,[Pg 49] however, all the same, and Circe brought us a lamb and a black sheep to offer to the Shades below. She passed in and out among us, but we could not see her; who, indeed, can see the gods, when they are in no mind to be seen?

BOOK XI.

Ulysses in the house of Hades.

"When we were at the water side we got the lamb and the ewe on board and put out to sea, running all that day before a fair wind which Circe had sent us, and at nightfall entering the deep waters of the river Oceanus. Here is the land of the Cimmerians, who dwell in darkness which the sun's rays never pierce; we therefore made our ships fast to the shore and came out of her, going along the beach till we reached the place of which Circe had told us.

"Perimedes and Eurylochos then held the victims, while I followed the instructions of Circe and slaughtered them, letting their blood flow into a trench which I had dug for it. On this, the ghosts came up in crowds from Erebus, brides, young bachelors, old men, maids who had been crossed in love, and warriors with their armour still smirched with blood. They cried with a strange screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear, but I would let none of them taste of the blood till Tiresias should have come and answered my questions.

"The first ghost I saw was that of Elpenor whose body was still lying unburied at Circe's house. Then I said, 'How now, Elpenor? you have got here sooner by land than I have done by water.' The poor fellow told me how he had forgotten about the stairs, and begged me to give him all due rites when I returned to Circe's island—which I promised faithfully that I would do.

"Then I saw the ghost of my mother Anticlea, but in all sadness I would not let her taste of the blood till Tiresias should have come and answered my questions.

"Presently Tiresias came with his golden sceptre in his hand, bade me let him taste of the blood, and asked me why I had come.

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"I told him I would learn how I was to get home to Ithaca, and he said I should have much difficulty; 'Still,' he continued, 'you will reach your home if you can restrain your men when you come to the Thrinacian island, where you will find the cattle of the Sun. If you leave these unharmed, after much trouble you will yet reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, you will lose your men, and though you may get home after all, it will be late, [on another man's ship,^[18] and you will find your house full of riotous men who are wasting your substance and wooing your wife.

"When you have got back you will indeed kill these men either by treachery or in fair fight, and you must then take an oar, which you must carry till you have reached a people who know nothing about the sea and do not mix salt with their bread. These people have never heard of ships, nor of oars that are the wings with which ships fly; I will tell you how you may know them; you will meet a man by the way who will ask you whether it is a winnowing shovel that you have got upon your shoulder; when you hear this you must fix your oar in the ground, and offer sacrifice to Neptune, a ram, a bull and a boar; then go home again, and offer hecatombs to the gods that dwell in heaven.^[19] As for your own end, death shall come to you very gently from the sea, and shall take you when you are full of years and peace of mind, and your people shall bless you.]"¹³⁷

"Having thus said he went back within the house of Hades. ¹⁵⁰Then I let my mother's ghost draw near and taste of the blood, whereon she knew me, and asked me what it was that had brought me though still alive into the abode of death. So I told her, and asked her how she had come by her end. 'Tell me, also,' I continued, 'about my father, and the son whom I left behind me. Is my property still safe in their hands, or does another hold it who thinks that I shall not return? Of what mind, again, is my wife? ¹⁷⁷Does she still live with her son and keep watch over his estate, or is she already married to the best man among the Achæans?'

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"Your wife,' answered my mother, 'is still at home, ¹⁸⁰but she spends her life in tears both night and day. Telemachus holds your estate, and sees much company, for he is a magistrate and all men invite him. Your father lives a poor hard life in the country and never goes near the town. As for me, I died of nothing but sheer grief on your account. And now, return to the upper world as fast as you can, that you may tell all that you have seen to your wife.'

"Then Proserpine sent up the ghosts of the wives and 225daughters of great kings and heroes of old time, and I made each of them tell me about herself. There were Tyro, Antiope, Alcmena, Epicaste the mother of Œdipus, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phædra, Procris, Ariadne, and hateful Eriphyle; with all these did I discourse, nor can I tell you with how many more noble women, for it is now late, and time to go to rest."

Here Ulysses ceased, and from one end of the covered 333cloisters to the other his listeners sat entranced with the charm of his story.

Then Arete said, "What think you of this man now, 336Phæacians, both as regards his personal appearance and his abilities? True he is my guest, but his presence is an honour to you all. Be not niggardly, therefore, in the presents that you will make him, for heaven has endowed you all with great abundance." Alcinous also spoke urging Ulysses to tell still more of his adventures, and to say whether he met any of the heroes who had fought together with him at Troy. Thus pressed Ulysses resumed his story.

"When Proserpine," said he, "had dismissed the female 385ghosts, the ghost of Agamemnon drew near, surrounded by those of the men who had fallen with him in the house of Ægisthus. He was weeping bitterly, and I asked him how he met his end; whereon he detailed to me the treachery of Clytemnestra, which he said threw disgrace upon all women even on the good ones. 'Be sure,' he continued, 'that you 433never be too open with your wife; tell her a part only, and keep the rest to yourself. Not that you need have any fear about Penelope for she is an admirable woman. You will[Pg 52] meet your son, too, who by this time must be a 449grown man. Nevertheless, do not let people know when you are coming home, but steal a march upon them. And now give me what news you can about my son Orestes.' To which I answered that I could tell him nothing.

"While we were thus holding sad talk with one another, 465the ghost of Achilles came up and asked me for news of his father Peleus, and of his son. I said I could tell him nothing about Peleus, but his son Neoptolemus was with me in the wooden horse, and though all the others were trembling in every limb and wiping the tears from their cheeks, Neoptolemus did not even turn pale, nor shed a single tear. Whereon Achilles strode away over a meadow full of asphodel, exulting in the prowess of his son.

"Other ghosts then came up and spoke with me but that of 541Ajax alone held aloof, for he was still brooding over the armour of Achilles which had been awarded to me and not to him. I spoke to him but he would not answer; nevertheless I should have gone on talking to him till he did, had I not been anxious to see yet other ghosts.

"I saw Minos with his golden sceptre passing sentence on 568the dead; Orion also, driving before him over a meadow full of asphodel the ghosts of the wild beasts whom he had slain upon the mountains. I saw Tityus with the vulture ever digging its beak into his liver, Tantalus also, in a lake whose waters reached his neck but fled him when he would drink, and Sisyphus rolling his mighty stone uphill till the sweat ran off him and the steam rose from him.

"Then I saw mighty Hercules. The ghosts were screaming 601round him like scared birds, flying all whithers. He looked black as night with his bare bow in his hand and his arrow on the string, glaring round as though ever on the point of taking aim. About his breast there was a wondrous golden belt marvellously enriched with bears, wild boars, and lions with gleaming eyes; there were also war, battle, and death.

"And I should have seen yet others of the great dead had 630not the ghosts come about me in so many thousands that I feared Proserpine might send up the Gorgon's head. I therefore[Pg 53] bade my men make all speed back to their ship; so they hastened on board and we rowed out on to the waters of Oceanus, where before long we fell in with a fair wind.

BOOK XII.

The Sirens—Scylla and Charybdis—the cattle of the Sun.

"As soon as we were clear of the river Oceanus, we got out into the open and reached the Ææan island, where there is dawn and sunrise. There we landed, camped down upon the beach, and waited till morning came. At daybreak I sent my men to fetch the body of Elpenor, which we burned and buried. We built a barrow over him, and in it we fixed the oar with which he had been used to row.

"When Circe heard that we had returned, she came down 16with her maids, bringing bread and wine. 'To-day,' she said, 'eat and drink, and to-morrow go on your way.'

"We agreed to this, and feasted the live-long day to the 23going down of the sun, but at nightfall Circe took me aside, and told me of the voyage that was before us. 'You will first,' said she, 'come to the island of the two Sirens, who sit in a field of flowers, and warble all who draw near them to death with the sweetness of their song. Dead men's bones are lying strewn all round them; still, if you would hear them, you can stop your men's ears with wax and bid them bind you to a cross-plank on the mast.

"As regards the next point that you will reach I can give you no definite instructions as to which of two courses you must take. You must do the best you can. I can only put the alternatives before you. I refer to the cliffs which the gods call "the wanderers," and which close in on anything that would pass through them—even upon the doves that are bringing ambrosia to Father Jove. The sea moreover is strewn with wreckage from ships which the waves and hurricanes of fire have destroyed.

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"Of the two rocks, ^[201] the one rises in a peak to ⁷³heaven, and is overhung at all times with a dark cloud that never leaves it. It looks towards the West, and there is a cave in it, higher than an arrow can reach. In this sits Scylla yelping with a squeaky voice like that of a young hound, but she is an awful monster with six long necks and six heads with three rows of teeth in each; whenever a ship passes, she springs out and snatches up a man in each mouth.

"The other rock is lower, but they are so close that ¹⁰¹you can shoot an arrow from the one to the other. [On it there is a fig-tree in full leaf]. ^[211] Underneath it ¹⁰³is the terrible whirlpool of Charybdis, which sucks the water down and vomits it out again three times a day. If you are there when she is sucking, not even Neptune can save you; so hug the Scylla side, for you had better lose six men than your whole crew.

"You will then arrive at the Thrinacian island, where ¹²⁷you will see the cattle of the Sun (and also his sheep) in charge of the two nymphs Lampetie and Phaëthusa. If ¹³²you leave these flocks unharmed, after much trouble you will yet reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, you will lose your men, and though you may get home after all, it will be late.'

"Here she ended, and at break of day we set out, with a ¹⁴²fair wind which Circe sent us. I then told my men about the two Sirens, but had hardly done so before we were at the island itself, whereon it fell a dead calm. I kneaded wax and stopped the men's ears; they bound me to a cross-plank on the mast; I heard the Sirens sing, and when I struggled to free myself they bound me still tighter. So we passed the island by.

"Shortly after this I saw smoke and a great wave ahead, ²⁰¹and heard a dull thumping sound. The sea was in an uproar, and my men were so frightened that they loosed hold of their[Pg 55] oars, till I put heart into them, bade them row their hardest, and told the steersman to hug the Scylla side. But I said nothing about Scylla, though I kept straining my eyes all over her rock to see if I could espy her.

"So there we were, with Scylla on the one hand and dread ²³⁴Charybdis on the other. We could see the sea seething as in a cauldron, and the black ooze at the bottom with

a wall of whirling waters careering round it. While my men were pale with fear at this awful sight, Scylla shot out her long necks and swooped down on six of them. I could see their poor hands and feet struggling in the air as she bore them aloft, and hear them call out my name in one last despairing cry. This was the most horrid sight that I saw in all my voyages.

"Having passed the cliffs, ^[221] and Scylla and Charybdis, ²⁶⁰we came to the Thrinacian island, and from my ship I could hear the cattle lowing, and the sheep bleating. Then, remembering the warning that Tiresias and Circe had given me, I bade my men give the island a wide berth. But Eurylochus was insolent, and sowed disaffection among them, so that I was forced to yield and let them land for the night, after making them swear most solemnly that they would do the cattle no harm. We camped, therefore, on the beach near a stream.

"But in the third watch of the night there came up a ³¹²great gale, and in the morning we drew our ship ashore and left her in a large cave wherein the sea nymphs meet and hold their dances. I then called my men together, and again warned them.

"It blew a gale from the South for a whole month, except ³²⁵when the wind shifted to the East, and there was no other wind save only South and East. As long as the corn and wine which Circe had given us held out, my men kept their word, but after a time they began to feel the pangs of hunger, and I went apart to pray heaven to take compassion upon us. I washed my hands and prayed, and when I had done so, I fell asleep.

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"Meanwhile Eurylochus set my men on to disobey me, and ³³⁹they drove in some of the cattle and killed them. When I woke, and had got nearly back to the ship, I began to smell roast meat and knew full well what had happened.

"The nymph Lampetie went immediately and told the Sun ³⁷⁴what my men had done. He was furious, and threatened Jove that if he was not revenged he would never shine in heaven again but would go down and give his light among the dead. 'All day long,' said he, 'whether I was going up heaven or down, there was nothing I so dearly loved to look upon as those cattle.'

"Jove told him he would wreck our ship as soon as it was ³⁸⁵well away from land, and the Sun said no more. I know all this because Calypso told me, and she had it from Mercury.

"My men feasted six days—alarmed by the most awful 397prodigies; for the skins of the cattle kept walking about, and the joints of meat lowed while they were being roasted. On the seventh day the wind dropped and we got away from the island, but as soon as we were out of sight of land a sudden squall sprang up, during which Jove struck our ship with his thunderbolts and broke it up. All my men were drowned, and so too should I have been, had I not made myself a raft by lashing the mast (which I found floating about) and the ship's keel together.

["The wind, which during the squall came from the West, 426now changed to the South, and blew all night, so that by morning I was back between Scylla and Charybdis again. My raft got carried down the whirlpool, but I clung on to the boughs of the fig tree, for a weary weary while, during which I felt as impatient as a magistrate who is detained in court by troublesome cases when he wants to get home to dinner. But in the course of time my raft worked its way out again, and when it was underneath me I dropped on to it and was carried out of the pool. Happily for me Jove did not let Scylla see me.]"^[23]

"Thence I was born along for nine days in the sea, and 447was[Pg 57] taken to the Ogygian island of Calypso. I told you about this yesterday and will not repeat it, for I hate saying the same thing twice over."

BOOK XIII.

Ulysses is taken back to Ithaca by the Phæacians.

Thus did Ulysses speak, and Alcinous immediately proposed that they should make him still further presents. The expence, however, of these, he said, should be borne by a levy or rate upon the public at large. The guests assented, and then went home to bed.

Next morning they brought their presents of hardware down 18to the ship, and Alcinous saw them so stowed that they should not incommode the rowers. There was then a second banquet at Alcinous's house, but Ulysses kept looking at the sun all the time, longing for it to set that he might start on his way. At last he rose and addressed the Phæacians; after thanking them, he concluded by saying that he hoped he should find his wife on his return living among her friends in peace and quietness,^[24] and 43that the Phæacians would continue to give satisfaction to their

wives and children. He also bade farewell to Arete, and wished her all happiness with her children, her people, and with King Alcinous.

When Ulysses reached the ship, a rug and sail were spread ⁷³for him, on which he lay down, and immediately fell into a deep sleep—so deep as to resemble death itself. The ship sped on her way faster than a falcon's flight and ⁸⁰with the break of day they reached Ithaca.

Now in Ithaca there is a sheltered harbour in which a ⁹⁶ship can ride without being even moored. At the head of this there is a large olive tree, near which there is a cave sacred to the Naiads, where you may find their cups and amphoræ of stone, and the stone looms whereon they weave their robes of sea-purple—very curious. The wild bees, too, build their nests in it. There is water in it all the year round, and it has two entrances, one looking North, by which mortals can go down [Pg 58] into the cave, and the other towards the South, but men cannot enter by it—it is the way taken by gods.

The sailors knew this harbour, and took the ship into it. ¹¹²They were rowing so hard that they ran half her length on to the shore, and when they had got out of her they took Ulysses off, still fast asleep on his rug and sail, and laid him down on the ground. Hard by him they also laid all the presents the Phæacians had made him; they left them by the roots of the olive tree, a little out of the path, that no passer by might steal them, and then went back to Scheria.

Neptune now saw what the Phæacians had done, and went to ¹²⁵consult Jove how he should be revenged. It was arranged that he should go to Scheria, turn the ship into stone just as it was coming into port, and root it in the sea. ¹⁶³So he did this, and the Phæacians said, "Alack, who has rooted the ship in the sea just as it was coming in? We could see all of it a minute ago."

Then Alcinous told them how Neptune had long ago ¹⁷¹threatened to do this to some Phæacian ship on its return from giving an escort, and also to bury their city under a high mountain as a punishment for giving escorts so freely. The Phæacians, therefore, made ready great sacrifices to Neptune, that he might have mercy upon them.

While they were thus standing round the altar of the god, ¹⁸⁵Ulysses woke in his own land, but he had been away so long that he did not know it. Minerva, too, had shed a thick mist round him so that he might remain unseen while she told him how things were going on; for she did not want his wife or anyone else to know of his return until he had taken his revenge upon the suitors. Therefore she made everything look strange to him—the long straight paths, the harbours with their shipping, the steep precipices, and the trees.

Ulysses now stood up and wondered where he was. He did not believe he was in Ithaca and complained bitterly of the Phæacians for having brought him wrong. Then he counted all the tripods, cauldrons, gold, and raiment, that they had given him, to see if he had been robbed; but everything was there, and he was in dismay as to what he should do with them.[Pg 59] As he was thus in doubt Minerva came up to him disguised as a young shepherd, so he asked her what country he was in, and she answered that he was in Ithaca.

Ulysses said he had heard that there was such a place; he told Minerva a long lying story as to how he had come to be where she saw him, and on this the goddess assumed the form of a woman, fair, stately, and wise, and laughed at him for not knowing her. Ulysses answered that she was not an easy person to recognise for she was continually changing her appearance. Moreover, though she had been very good to him at Troy, she had left him in the lurch ever since, until she had taken him into the city of the Phæacians. "Do not," he said, "deceive me any further, but tell me whether or no this is really Ithaca."

"You are always cunning and suspicious," replied the goddess, "and that is why I cannot find it in my heart to leave you. Any one else on returning from a long voyage would at once have gone up to his house to see his wife and children, but you do not seem to care about knowing anything about them, and only think of testing your wife's fidelity. As for my having left you in the lurch, I knew all the time that you would get home safely in the end, and I did not want to quarrel with my uncle Neptune. I will now prove to you that you are in Ithaca—Here is the harbour of the old merman Phorcys, with the large olive tree at the head of it; near it is the cave which is sacred to the Naiads; here, again, is the overarching cavern in which you have sacrificed many a hecatomb to the nymphs, and this is the wooded mountain of Neritum."351

The goddess then dispersed the mist and let the prospect be seen. Ulysses was thus convinced, and Minerva helped him to hide the treasure which the Phæacians had given him, by concealing it in the cave. Having done this she bade Ulysses consider how he should kill the wicked suitors. "They have been lording it," she said, "in your house this three years, [25] [Pg 60]paying court to your wife and making her gifts of wooing, while she, poor woman, though she flatters them, and holds out hopes to every man of them by sending him messages, is really plunged in the deepest grief on your account, and does not mean a word of what she says."

"Great heavens," replied Ulysses, "what a narrow escape I have had from meeting the fate of Agamemnon. Stand by me, goddess, and advise me how I shall be revenged."

"I will disguise you," said Minerva, "as a miserable old 397 beggar so that no one shall know you. "When I have done so, go to your swineherd, who has been always loyal to you and yours. You will find him with his pigs by the fountain Arethusa near the rock that is called Raven. Meantime I will go to Sparta and fetch Telemachus, who is gone thither to try and get news of you."

"But why," Ulysses answered, "did you not tell him, for 416 you knew all about it?"

"Do not be uneasy about him," she answered, "he is in the 420 midst of great abundance. I sent him, that he might get himself a good name by having gone."

Minerva then disguised Ulysses beyond all possible 429 recognition, and the two separated—she going to Sparta, and Ulysses to the abode of his swineherd.

BOOK XIV.

Ulysses in the hut of Eumæus.

Ulysses followed a steep path that led from the harbour through the forest and over the top of the mountain, till he reached the hut of Eumæus, who was the most thrifty servant he had, and had built a number of fine yards and pigstyes during his master's absence.

Ulysses found him sitting at the door of his hut, which 5 had been built high up in a place that could be seen from far; he had his four fierce dogs about him, and was cutting himself out a pair of sandal shoes.

The dogs flew at Ulysses, and it was all Eumæus could do 29 to check them; "They were like," said he, "to have made an [Pg 61] end of you, which would have got me into a scrape, and I am in sorrow enough already through the loss, which I deplore without ceasing, of the best of masters. But come in, have something to eat, and then tell me your story."

On this he brought him inside, threw some brushwood on 48 the floor, and spread a goat's skin over it for Ulysses to lie on. "I cannot do much for you," he said; "servants go in fear when they have young lords over them, as I now have, for my good old master went to Troy with Agamemnon and I shall never see him again."

He then went out and killed two sucking pigs, singed 72 them, cut them up, put the pieces of meat on skewers to roast on the embers, and brought them smoking hot,

skewers and all, to Ulysses, who floured them. "Eat," said the swineherd, "a dish of servant's pork; the fuller grown meat has to go down to the suitors." He then explained how rich Ulysses was.

"And who, pray," said Ulysses, "was this noble master of 115 yours? You say that he fell at Troy, and in that case I might be able to give you news of him."

"That," answered Eumæus, "may not be: people are always 121 coming and flattering my poor mistress with false hopes, but they are all liars. My master Ulysses is dead and gone, and I shall never see another like him. I cannot bear even to mention his name."

"My friend," replied Ulysses, "do not be too hard of 148 belief. I swear by this hearth to which I am now come, that Ulysses will return before the present month is over. If he comes you shall give me a shirt and cloak, but I will take nothing till then."

"My friend," said Eumæus, "say not another word. You 165 will never get your shirt and cloak. Now, moreover, I am as anxious about his son Telemachus as I have been about Ulysses himself; for he is gone to Pylos, and the suitors are lying in wait for him on his return. Let us, however, say no more about him now; tell me, rather, about yourself who you are, and how you came here."

Then Ulysses told him a long lying story about his 191 adventures in Crete: how he was compelled to go to Troy in joint [Pg 62] command with Idomeneus over the Cretan forces; how he made a descent on Egypt, got taken prisoner, acquired wealth, and afterwards was inveigled into going to Libya; how on the voyage thither, after leaving Crete, the ship was wrecked and he was cast on the coast of Thesprotia. "Here it was," he continued, "that I heard of Ulysses from King Pheidon, who was expecting him back daily from Dodona, where he had been to consult the oracle; he told me Ulysses was to return to Ithaca immediately, but there was a ship bound for Dulichium, and the king sent me on board it before Ulysses returned from Dodona. The sailors on this ship resolved to sell me as a slave, and bound me; but they landed on the coast of Ithaca, where I gave them the slip, and found my way to your hut."

"Poor man," answered the swineherd, "but you will never 360 get me to believe about Ulysses. Why should you tell me such lies? I have heard these stories too often, and will never believe them again."

Ulysses tried still further to convince him, but it was 390 no use, and presently the under swineherds came back with the pigs that had been out feeding, and Eumæus told them to kill the best pig they had, and get supper ready, which they accordingly did. He was a good man and mindful of his duties to the gods, so when the pig was

killed he threw some of its bristles into the fire and prayed heaven for the return of Ulysses. Then they supped and went to bed.

Now it was a wild rough night, and after they had lain 457down, Ulysses, fearing that he might be cold, told another lying story of an adventure he had had at Troy in company with Ulysses, by means of which Eumæus was induced to cover him over with a spare cloak of his own. Then the swineherd went out to pass the night with the pigs—and Ulysses was pleased at seeing how well he looked after his property, though he believed his master to be absent. First he slung his sword over his shoulders, and put on a thick cloak to keep out the wind; he also took the skin of a well-fed goat, and a javelin in case of attack from men or dogs. Thus equipped he went to his rest where the pigs were camped under an overhanging rock that sheltered them from the North Wind.

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BOOK XV.

Telemachus returns from Pylos, and on landing goes to the hut of Eumæus.

Minerva now went to Lacedæmon and found Telemachus and Pisistratus fast asleep. She appeared to Telemachus in a dream, and told him that he was to return at once to Ithaca, for his mother was about to marry Eurymachus, and would probably go off with some of his property. She also 17told him how the suitors were lying in wait for him in the straits between Ithaca and Samos. She said that as soon as he reached Ithaca he was to leave the ship before 29sending it on to the town, and go to the swineherd's hut. "Sleep there," she said, "and in the morning send the swineherd to tell Penelope that you have returned safely."

Then she went away and Telemachus woke up. He kicked 43Pisistratus to wake him, and said that they must start at once. Pisistratus answered that this was impossible; it was still dark, and they must say good bye to Menelaus, who, if Telemachus would only wait, would be sure to give them a present.

At break of day, seeing Menelaus up and about, Telemachus 56flung on his shirt and cloak, and told him that they must go.

Menelaus said he would not detain them, but on the score 67alike of propriety and economy, they must have something to eat before starting, and also receive the

presents that were waiting Telemachus's acceptance. "I will tell the servants," said he, "to get something ready for you of what there may be in the house, and if you would like to make a tour of the principal cities of the Peloponese, I will conduct you. No one will send us away empty handed. Every one will give us something."

But Telemachus said he must start at once, for he had left property behind him that was insecurely guarded.

When Menelaus heard this he told his wife and servants to get dinner ready at once. Eteoneus, who lived at no great distance, now came up, and Menelaus told him to light the fire and begin cooking; and he did as he was told.

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Menelaus then went down into his store room together with Megapenthes, and brought up a double cup and a silver mixing bowl, while Helen fetched a dress of wondrous beauty, the work of her own hands. Menelaus presented the cup and mixing bowl, and then Helen said, "Take this, my son, as a keepsake from the hand of Helen, and let your bride wear it on her wedding day. Till then let your dear mother keep it for you. Thus may you go on your way with a light heart."

Telemachus thanked her; Pisistratus stowed the presents in the chariot, and they all sat down to dinner. Eteoneus carved, and Megapenthes served round the wine. When they had done eating the two young men prepared to set out.

As they were on the point of starting, an eagle flew upon their right hand, with a goose in its talons which it had carried off from the farm yard. This omen was so good that every one was delighted to see it, and Pisistratus said, "Say, king Menelaus, is the omen for us or for yourself?"

Menelaus was in doubt how to answer, but Helen said that as the eagle had come from a mountain and seized the goose, so Ulysses should return and take vengeance on the suitors. Telemachus said he only hoped it might prove so, and the pair then drove on. They reached Pylos on the following day, and Telemachus urged Pisistratus to drive him straight to his ship, for fear Nestor should detain him if he went to his house.

"I know," said Pisistratus, "how obstinate he is. He would come down to your ship, if he knew you were there, and would never go back without you. But he will be very angry." He then drove to the ship, and Telemachus told the crew to get her under way as fast as they could.

Now as he was attending to every thing and sacrificing ²²²to Minerva, there came to him a man of the race of Melampus who was flying from Argos because he had killed a man. His name was Theoclymenus and he came of an old and highly honourable family, his father and grandfather having been celebrated prophets and divines. He besought Telemachus to take him to Ithaca and thus save him from enemies who were in pursuit. Telemachus consented, took Theoclymenus on board, and laid his spear down on the deck.

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Then they sailed away, and next day they got among the ²⁹⁷flying islands, ^[261]whereon Telemachus wondered whether he should be taken or should escape.

All this time Ulysses was in the hut with Eumæus, and ³⁰¹after supper Ulysses said he should like to go down to the town next day, and see if the suitors would take him into their service. Eumæus at once explained to him that any such idea was out of the question. "You do not know," he said, "what men these suitors are; their insolence reaches heaven; the young men who wait on them have good looking faces and well kempt heads; the tables are always clean and loaded with abundance. The suitors would be the death of you; stay here, then, where you are in nobody's way, till Telemachus returns from Pylos."

Ulysses thanked Eumæus for his information, and then ³⁴⁰began to ask whether his father and mother were still living; he was told that Anticlea was dead, ^[271]and that Laertes, though still alive, would be glad to follow her. Eumæus said he had been brought up in their service, and was better off formerly, for there was no getting a good word out of his mistress now, inasmuch as the suitors had turned the house upside down. "Servants," he said, "like to have a talk with their mistress and hear things from her own lips; they like being told to eat and drink, and being allowed to take something back with them into the country. This is what will keep servants cheerful and contented."

On being further questioned by Ulysses, Eumæus told ³⁸⁰how he had been kidnapped as a child by some Phœnician traders who had seduced his nurse (also a Phœnician) and persuaded her to go away with them, and bring him with her.

"I was born," he said, "in the island of Syra over ⁴⁰³against Ortygia, where the sun turns. ^[281]It is not populous, but contains two cities which occupy the whole land between them, and my father was king over them both. A few days after my [Pg 66] nurse had kidnapped me, and while we were on our voyage, Diana killed her, and she was flung overboard, but I was taken to Ithaca where Laertes bought me."

Ulysses and Eumæus spent the greater part of the night ⁴⁹³talking with one another, and at dawn Telemachus's crew drew near to land, furling their sails and rowed into the harbour. There they threw out their mooring stones, made their ship fast, landed, and ate their dinner on the shore. When they had done, Telemachus said, "Now take the ship on to the city; I will go to look after my farm and will come down in the evening. Tomorrow morning I will give you all a hearty meal to reward you for your trouble."

"But what," said Theoclymenus, "is to become of me? To ⁵⁰⁸whose house am I to go?"

"At any other time," answered Telemachus, "I should take ⁵¹²you to my own house, but you would not find it convenient now, for I shall not be there, and my mother will not see you. I shall therefore send you to the house of Eurymachus, who is one of the first men we have, and is most eager in his suit for my mother's hand."

As he spoke a hawk flew on Telemachus's right hand, with ⁵²⁵a dove whose feathers it was plucking while it flew. Theoclymenus assured Telemachus that this was an omen which boded most happily for the prosperity of his house. It was then settled that Theoclymenus should go to the house of Piræus the son of Clytius.

The crew now loosed the ship from her moorings and went ⁵⁴⁷on as they had been told to do, while Telemachus wended his way in all haste to the pig farm where Eumæus lived.

BOOK XVI.

Ulysses and Telemachus become known to one another.

Ulysses and Eumæus prepared their meal at daybreak. When Telemachus was reaching the hut, Ulysses observed that the dogs did not bark, though he heard footsteps, and enquired whether the visitor was some acquaintance ³⁰of the [Pg 67] swineherd's. He had hardly done speaking when Telemachus entered, and was welcomed by Eumæus.

"Is my mother still at the house," said he, "or has she ³³left it with another husband, and the bed of Ulysses is festooned with cobwebs?"

"She is still there," answered Eumæus, "spending her time ³⁶in tears both night and day."

Eumæus set refreshments before him and when he had done 49eating he asked who the stranger might be.

When Telemachus heard that Ulysses was a ship-wrecked 68suppliant he was much displeased. "I am as yet too young," he said, "to be able to hold my own in the house; what sufficient support, then, can I give this man? Still, as he has come to you I will send him clothes and all necessary food; and let him stay with you; I will not have him go near the suitors, for harm would be sure to come of it."

Ulysses expressed his surprise and indignation about the 90suitors, whereon Telemachus explained still further, and wound up by telling Eumæus to go at once and inform Penelope of his return. Eumæus asked if he should turn a little out of his way and tell Laertes, but Telemachus said he was not to do so. Penelope would send him word all in due course.

As soon as Eumæus was gone Minerva came to the hut. 157Ulysses knew her, and so did the dogs, for they went whining away to the other end of the yards, but Telemachus did not see her. She made a sign to Ulysses that he was to come outside, and when he had done so she told him he was to reveal himself to his son—whereon she struck him with her wand, endowed him with a noble presence, and clothed him in goodly raiment.

Then he went back into the hut and told his son who he 178was; but for a long while Telemachus would not believe. At last, however, when he was convinced, the pair flung their arms about each other's necks, and wept like eagles or vultures who had been robbed of their young. Indeed they would have wept till sundown had it not occurred to Telemachus to ask his father in what ship he had come to Ithaca, and whose crew it was that had brought him.

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Ulysses told him about the Phæacians, and how he had 225hidden the presents they had given him. "I am now come," he said, "by Minerva's advice, to consult with you as to how we shall take vengeance on the suitors. I would therefore learn how many there are of them, and consider whether we two can kill them, or whether we must get help from outside."

Telemachus said it was hopeless to think of attacking the 240suitors without assistance. There were fifty-two from Dulichium, with six followers, twenty-four from Same, twenty from Zacynthus, and twelve from Ithaca.

Ulysses explained that he could rely on help from Jove 258 and from Minerva, and thought that this would be enough. "They will not be long in joining us," said he, "when the fight has begun in good earnest. Go, then, tomorrow to the town, and join the suitors; let the swineherd bring me later, disguised as a poor miserable beggar. Never mind how much violence you may see the suitors do me. Look on and say nothing, beyond asking them in a friendly way to leave me alone. Also, find some pretext for removing the armour from the walls. Say it is taking harm with the smoke, and that the sight of armour sometimes sets men fighting, so that it is better away—but leave two swords, shields and spears for you and me to snatch 295 up."

As they were thus conversing, the ship that had brought 321 Telemachus from Pylos reached the harbour of Ithaca, and the crew took the presents which Menelaus had given him to the house of Clytius. They sent a man to tell Penelope that Telemachus was at the farm, and had sent the ship on to allay her anxiety. This man and the swineherd met at the house of Ulysses, and the man said, in the presence of the maids, "Madam, your son is returned from Pylos;" but Eumæus stood by her, and told her all that her son had bidden him. Then he went back to his pig-farm.

The suitors were very angry, and were about sending 342 a ship to fetch those who had been lying in wait for Telemachus, when Amphinomus, a suitor, happened to turn round and saw their ship coming into harbour. So he laughed and said, "We have no need to send, for the men are here." On this they all [Pg 69] went to meet the ship, and Antinous said that as Telemachus had escaped them in spite of their great vigilance, they must kill him, either at the farm or as he was coming thence. Otherwise he would expose their plot, and they would have the people rise against them. "If," he concluded, "this does not please you, and you would let him live, we cannot eat up his estate any longer, but must go home, urge our suit each from his own house, and let the one among us take Penelope who will give most for her, or whose lot it may happen to be."

Amphinomus, who came from the well-grassed and 394 grain-growing island of Dulichium, then spoke. He was a man of good natural disposition, and his conversation was more pleasing to Penelope than that of any of the other suitors; "I will only consent to kill Telemachus," said he, "if the gods give us their approval. It is a serious thing to kill a man who is of royal race. If they sanction it, I will be with you; otherwise I am for letting it alone."

The rest assented, and they went back to the house. 406 But Medon told Penelope of this new plot, so she went attended by her gentlewomen, stood by one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloister, and bitterly rebuked Antinous for his

ingratitude in forgetting how Ulysses in old days had saved the life of his father Eupeithes.

Eurymachus then made a fair but false speech vowing 431 eternal friendship to Telemachus, and Penelope returned to her own room to mourn her husband till Minerva closed her eyes in slumber.

In the evening Eumæus got back to his hut just as the 452 others had killed a yearling pig and were getting supper ready. Meanwhile Minerva had again disguised Ulysses as an old beggar.

"What news from the town, Eumæus?" said Telemachus. "Have 460 the suitors got back with their ship?"

"I did not ask," answered Eumæus, "for when I had 464 given my message I turned straight home; but I met the messenger from your own crew, who told your mother of your return before I could do so. As I was coming here, and was on the hill of Mercury above the town, I saw a ship with many men [Pg 70] and much armour coming into port; so I suppose it was the suitors, but I cannot be sure."

Telemachus gave his father a look, but so that the 476 swineherd could not see him. Then they all got their supper and went to bed.

BOOK XVII.

Telemachus goes to the town, and is followed by Eumæus and Ulysses, who is maltreated by the suitors.

When morning came Telemachus told Eumæus that he would now go to the town and show himself to his mother, who would never be comforted till she saw him with her own eyes. "As for this miserable stranger," he continued, "take him to the town, that he may beg there and get what he can; if this does not please him, so much the worse for him, but I like to say what I mean."

Ulysses said he should be glad to go, for a beggar could 16 do much better in town than country; but he must warm himself first, and wait till the sun had got some heat in it; his clothes were very bad, and he should perish with cold, for the town was some way off.

Telemachus then left, and when he reached the house he ²⁶set his spear against a strong bearing post, crossed the stone pavement and went inside. He found Euryclea putting the sheep skins on to the seats. She and all the other maids ran up to him as soon as they saw him, and kissed him on the head and shoulders. Then Penelope came weeping from her room, embraced him, and told him to tell her all that he had seen.

Telemachus bade her go back to her room and pray to ⁴⁵Minerva that they might be revenged on the suitors. "I must go," said he, "to the place of assembly, to look after a guest whom I have brought with me, and whom I have left with Piræus."

Penelope did as her son had said, while Telemachus went ⁶¹to the place of assembly, and his two dogs with him. The suitors, who had not yet gone to the house of Ulysses for the day, gathered round him, and made him fair speeches, but [Pg 71] he knew their falsehood and went to sit with his old friends Mentor, Antiphus and Halitherses. Presently Piræus came up, bringing Theoclymenus with him, and said, "I wish you would send some of your women to my house to take away the presents that Menelaus gave you."

Telemachus said he did not know what might happen; if ⁷⁷the suitors killed him, he had rather Piræus kept the presents than that the suitors should have them. If, on the other hand, he killed the suitors he should be much obliged if Piræus would let him have the presents.

Then he took Theoclymenus to his own house, where they ⁸⁴had a bath, and refreshments were set before them. Penelope sat near them, spinning, while they were at table, and then said she should go up stairs and lie down on that couch which she had never ceased to water with her tears from the day her husband left her. "But you had not the patience," she added, "to tell me, before the suitors came, whether you had been able to hear anything about your father."

Telemachus told her how good Nestor had been to him, ¹⁰⁷and how he had sent him on to Menelaus, who had assured him that Ulysses was still alive, but was detained by Calypso, from whom he could not get away for want of a ship. Penelope was very much agitated, but Theoclymenus reassured her by telling her about the omen which had greeted Telemachus on his return to Ithaca.

While they were thus conversing, the suitors were ¹⁶⁶playing at quoits and aiming javelins at a mark on the level ground in front of Ulysses' house. But when it was near dinner time and the flocks were coming in from all the country round with their shepherds as usual [to be milked], Medon, who was a great favourite with the suitors,

called them to come in and set about getting their dinner ready. They therefore came in and began to butcher some sheep, goats, pigs, and a heifer.

Meanwhile Eumæus told Ulysses that it was time to make 182a start, for the day was well up and if he waited till afternoon he would find the cold more severe. "At any rate," said Ulysses, "let me have a staff if you have one, for the path is rugged." Eumæus gave him one, and they set out along the [Pg 72] steep path leading to the town. When they were nearly there they came to the fountain which Ithacus, Neritus, and Polyctor had made, and from which the people drew their water; here they fell in with Melantheus^[29] son of Dolius, who was bringing goats for the suitors' dinner, he and his two under shepherds.

Melanthius heaped all kinds of insult on Ulysses and 215Eumæus, and tried to kick Ulysses off the path, but could not do so. Ulysses restrained himself, and prayed to the nymphs, whereon Melanthis said he would put him on board ship and sell him in some foreign country. He then hurried on, leaving the swineherd and his master to follow at their own pace.

When they got near the house they could hear the sound of 260Phemius's lyre, and his voice as he sang to the suitors. They could also smell the savour of roast meats.^[30] Eumæus said that he would go in first, but that Ulysses had better follow him soon, for if he was seen standing about in the outer court people might throw things at him.

As they were thus talking the old hound Argus who was 290lying on the dunghill, very full of fleas, caught sight of Ulysses, recognised him, wagged his tail, and tried to come to him, but could not do so. Thereon Ulysses wiped a tear from his eyes, and asked Eumæus whether the dog was of any use, or whether he was kept only for his good looks. Eumæus said what a noble hound Argus had been, but the dog, having seen his master, died just as Eumæus went inside the house.

Telemachus saw him enter and beckoned him to a seat 328at his own table. Ulysses followed him shortly, and sat down on the floor of ash wood inside the door way, leaning against a bearing-post of well-squared Cyprus wood. Telemachus noted him and said to Eumæus, "Take the stranger this handful of bread and meat, tell him also to go round and beg from the others, for a beggar must not be shamefaced." Eumæus gave him both the message and the bread and meat.

Then Ulysses began to go round begging, for he wanted to 360exploit the suitors. He went from left to right, and some took [Pg 73] compassion on him while others begun asking who he might be; Melanthis then said that he had come with the swineherd.

Antinous, therefore, asked Eumæus what he meant by bringing such a man to plague them.

"I did not ask him to come," answered Eumæus. "Who was 380 likely to ask a man of that sort? One would ask a divine, a physician, a carpenter, or a bard. You are always hardest of all the suitors on Ulysses' servants, and especially upon me, but I do not care so long as I have Penelope and Telemachus on my side."

"Hush," said Telemachus, "Antinous has the bitterest 392 tongue of them all, and he makes the others worse." Then he turned towards Antinous and said, "Give him something: I do not grudge it. Never mind my mother or any of the servants—not you—but you are fonder of eating than of giving."

Antinous said, "You are a swaggering upstart; if all the 405 suitors will give him as much as I will, he will not come near the house again this three months."

As he spoke he menaced Ulysses with the footstool 409 from under his table. The other suitors all gave him something; and he was about to leave, when he determined to again beg from Antinous and trumped him up a story of the misfortunes that had befallen him in Egypt.

"Get out," said Antinous, "into the open part of the 445 court, [\[31\]](#) and away from my table, or I will give you Egypt over again."

Ulysses drew back, and said, "Your looks are better than 453 your understanding. I can see that if you were in your own house you would not spare a poor man so much as a pinch of salt."

Antinous scowled at him. "Take that," he cried, "and be 458 off out of the court." As he spoke he threw a footstool at him which hit him on the right shoulder, but Ulysses stood firm as a rock, and prayed that if there was a god, or an avenger of beggars, Antinous might be a corpse before he was a bridegroom.

"Have a care," replied Antinous, "and hold your peace, or 477 we will flay you alive."

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The others reproved Antinous. "You did ill," they said, 481 "to strike the man. Who knows but he may be one of the gods who go about the world in disguise to redress wrong, and chastise the insolence of mankind?"

Penelope from her room upstairs heard what had been going 491 on, and spoke with her women bitterly about the suitors. The housekeeper Eurynome answered that if her prayers were heard, not a single one of them would live till morning. "Nurse," replied

Penelope, "I hate them all, but Antinous is the worst." Then she sent for Eumæus and said, "Tell the stranger that I want to see him; he looks like a man who has travelled, and he may have seen or heard something of Ulysses."

"He has been three days and three nights at my hut, 515Madam," replied Eumæus, "and the most accomplished bard could not have given me better entertainment. He told me that Ulysses was among the Thesprotians and would return shortly, bringing much treasure with him."

"Then call him to me," said Penelope, "and as for the 528others, let them dine at their own expense for the future or how they best may, so long as they leave off coming here."

Telemachus, who was down below, gave a great sneeze as 541she spoke, which echoed over the whole house. Penelope explained to Eumæus that this was a most favourable omen, and added that if she was satisfied of the truth of what the stranger told her she would give him a shirt and cloak.

Eumæus gave Penelope's message to Ulysses, but he feared 551the violence of the suitors, and told him to say that she must wait till nightfall, when the suitors would be gone. "Then," he said, "let her set me down in a warm seat by the fire, and I will tell her about her husband; for my clothes are in a very bad state; you know they are, for your's was the first house I came to."

Penelope was displeased at his delay, and asked Eumæus 574whether his fears were reasonable, or whether it was only that he was shamefaced. Eumæus explained that he was quite reasonable, whereon Penelope was satisfied; he then went back to where the suitors were, and told Telemachus that he would return to his pigs.

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Telemachus said that he had better get something to eat 598first, and was to come back to the town on the following morning, bringing the pigs that were to be killed for dinner. It was now afternoon, and the suitors had turned to their singing and dancing.

BOOK XVIII.

The fight between Ulysses and Irus—The suitors make presents to Penelope—and ill-treat Ulysses.

Now there came a common tramp to Ulysses' house, begging—a great hulking fellow with no stay in him—whose name was Arnæus; but people called him Irus, because he would run errands for any one who would send him on them. This man began to threaten Ulysses, and said the suitors had urged him to turn him away from the house.

Ulysses said there was room enough for both of them, and ¹⁴that it should be a case of live-and-let-live between them. "If, however," he continued, "it comes to blows, I will deluge your mouth and chest with blood, and I shall have the place to myself, for you will not come back again."

Irus retorted angrily, and Antinous, hearing them ³⁴wrangle, told the other suitors that Irus and the stranger were about to have a fight. "It is the finest piece of sport," he said, "that heaven ever sent into this house. We are to have goat's paunches stuffed with blood and fat for supper; whichever of the two beats in this fight shall have his pick of the lot of them."

The preliminaries being arranged, and fair play bargained ⁵⁸for by Ulysses, he began to strip. When Irus saw his muscles his heart misgave him; but Antinous kept him up to it, and the fight began. ^[32] Ulysses forthwith nearly killed Irus and dragged him by the heels into the outer court, where he put his staff in his hand and propped him up against the wall more dead than alive. Antinous then gave Ulysses a great goat's paunch, and Amphinomus drank his health.

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Ulysses made Amphinomus a very grave and impressive ¹²⁴speech, warning him to leave the house, inasmuch as Ulysses would return shortly. "You seem," said he, "to be a man of good understanding, as indeed you may well be, seeing whose son you are. I have heard your father well spoken of; he is Nisus of Dulichium, a man both brave and wealthy. They tell me you are his son and you seem to be a considerable person; listen, therefore, and take heed to what I am saying. Man is the vainest of all creatures that live and move upon the earth: as long as heaven vouchsafes him health and strength he thinks that he shall come to no harm hereafter, and even when the blessed gods bring sorrow upon him, he bears it as he needs must and makes the best of it, for God Almighty gives men their daily minds day by day. I know all about it, for I was a rich man once, and did much wrong in the stubbornness of my pride and in the confidence that my father and my brothers would support me; therefore let a man fear God in all things always, and take the good that heaven may see fit to send him without vainglory." But Amphinomus, though his heart boded ill, would not be persuaded.

Minerva then put it in Penelope's mind to get some 158 presents out of the suitors. "I hate them," said she to Eurynome, "but still for once in a way I will see them; I want to warn my son against them."

"Certainly, my dear child," answered Eurynome, "but you 169 must wash your face first. You cannot be seen with the stain of tears upon your cheeks."

"Eurynome," replied her mistress, "do not try to persuade 177 me. Heaven robbed me of all my beauty on the day when my husband sailed for Troy; but send Autonoë and Hippodamia to attend me, for I cannot think of seeing the suitors unattended." The old woman then went through the house to fetch the women; and as soon as she was gone, Minerva sent Penelope into a deep sleep during which she endowed her with the most dazzling beauty, washing her face with the ambrosial loveliness which Venus wears when she goes out dancing with the Graces, and giving her a statelier and more imposing presence. When the two maids came, the noise of their [Pg 77] coming woke her. "What a delicious sleep," she exclaimed, "has overshadowed me. Would that it had been the sleep of death, which had thus ended all my sorrows."

She then went down stairs, and the suitors were dazzled 206 with her beauty. She began by upbraiding Telemachus for having allowed the fight to take place. Telemachus admitted his fault, but pleaded the extreme difficulty of his situation and the fact that after all Ulysses had thrashed Irus.

Enrymachus broke in upon their conversation by telling 243 Penelope how very beautiful she was; and Penelope answered that heaven had robbed her of all her beauty on the day when her husband sailed for Troy. "Moreover," she added, "I have another great sorrow—you suitors are not wooing me in the usual way. When men are suing for the hand of one who they think will make them a good wife, they generally bring oxen and sheep for her relations to feast upon, and make rich presents to the lady herself, instead of sponging upon other people's property."

When Ulysses heard her say this, he was delighted at 281 seeing his wife trying to get presents out of the suitors, and hoodwinking them.

Then Antinous said, "Penelope, take all the presents 284 you can get, but we will not go till you have married the best man among us." On this they all made Penelope magnificent presents, and she went back to her own room, followed by the women, who carried the presents for her.

The suitors now turned to singing and dancing, lighted 304 by large braziers that were placed in the court, ^[331] 307 and also by torches, which the maids held up by turns. Ulysses after a while told them to go inside, saying that he would hold the torches

himself. The maids laughed at 317this, and Melanthe, who was one of them, began to gibe at him. She was daughter to Dolius but Penelope had brought her up from childhood, and used to give her toys; she showed no consideration, however, for Penelope's sorrows, but misconducted herself with Eurymachus. "Are you drunk?" she said to Ulysses, "or are you always like this?"

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Ulysses scowled at her, and said he would tell 337 Telemachus, who would have her cut up into mincemeat. The women, therefore, were frightened and went away, so Ulysses was left holding up the flaming torches—looking upon all the suitors and brooding over his revenge.

Presently Eurymachus began to jeer at him, and taunt 346him by saying he preferred begging to working. Ulysses answered, "If you and I, Eurymachus, were matched one against the other in early summer, when the days are at their longest—give us each a good scythe, and see whether you or I will mow the stronger or fast the longer, from dawn till dark when the mowing grass is about. Or let us be in a four acre field with a couple of tawny full fed oxen each, and see which of us can drive the straighter furrow. Again, let war break out this day—give me armour and you will find me fighting among the foremost. You are insolent and cruel, and think yourself a great man because you live in a little world, and that a bad one."

Eurymachus was furious, and seized a stool; but Ulysses 394sat down by the knees of Amphinomus of Dulichium, for he was afraid; the stool hit the cupbearer and knocked him down, whereon there was a general uproar, amid which Telemachus said that he would compel no man, but he thought it would be better if they would all go home to bed. To this they assented, and shortly afterwards left the house.

BOOK XIX.

Ulysses converses with Penelope, and is recognised by Euryclea.

Ulysses and Telemachus were left alone in the cloister, and Ulysses said, "We must take the armour down from the walls; if the suitors are surprised, say what I told you when we were in Eumæus's hut."

Telemachus called Euryclea, and bade her shut the women 15up in their room, for he was going to take the armour down into the store room. "Who," asked Euryclea, "will

show you[Pg 79] a light if the women are all shut up?" "The stranger," answered Telemachus; "I will not have people doing nothing about my premises."

He and Ulysses then began removing the armour, and 31Minerva went before them, shedding a strange lambent light that played on walls and rafters. Telemachus was lost in wonder, but Ulysses said, "Hush, this is the manner of the gods. Get you to bed, and leave me to talk with your mother and the maids." So Telemachus crossed the court and went to the room in which he always slept, leaving Ulysses in the cloister.

Penelope now came down, and they set a seat for her by 53the fire; the maids also were let out, and came to take away the meats on which the suitors had been feasting, and to heap fresh wood upon the braziers after they had emptied the ashes on to the ground. ^[34] Melanthe again began scolding at Ulysses for stopping in the house to spy on the women. Penelope heard her and said, "Bold hussey, I hear you, and you shall smart for it; I have already told you that I wish to see the stranger and enquire from him about my husband. Eurynome, bring a seat for him, and spread a fleece on it."

Eurynome did as she was told, and when Ulysses had sat 100down Penelope wanted to know who he was. Ulysses implored her not to ask this, for it would make him weep, and she or the servants might then think he had been drinking.

"Stranger," answered Penelope, "heaven robbed me of all 123my beauty when the Argives set out for Troy and Ulysses with them." She then told about the suitors, and her web, and said that she was now at the very end of her resources. Her parents were urging her to marry again, and so also was her son, who chafed under the heavy burden of expense which her long courtship had caused him. "In spite of all this, however," she continued, "I want to know who you are; for you cannot be the son of a rock or of an oak."

Thus pressed, Ulysses said that his name was Æthon and[Pg 80] 164that he came from Crete, where he had entertained Ulysses and his men for many days when they were on their way to Troy. Penelope wept bitterly as she listened, and it was all Ulysses could do to restrain his own tears—but he succeeded. "I will now prove you," said she; "tell me how my husband was dressed. Tell me also what manner of man he was, and about the men who were with him."

"I will tell you," replied Ulysses, "as nearly as I can 220remember after so long a time. He wore a mantle of purple wool, double lined, and it was fastened by a gold brooch with two catches for the pin. On the face of this there was a device that shewed a dog holding a spotted fawn between its fore paws, and watching it as it lay panting on the

ground. Every one marvelled at the way in which these things had been done in gold—the dog looking at the fawn and strangling it, while the fawn was struggling 231 convulsively to escape. As for his shirt, it fitted him like the skin of an onion, and glistened in the sunlight to the admiration of all the women who beheld it. He had a servant with him, a little older than himself, whose 246 shoulders were hunched; he was dark, and had thick curly hair. His name was Eurybates."

Penelope was deeply moved. "You shall want for nothing," 249 said she, "It was I who gave him the clothes and the brooch you speak of, but I shall never see him again."

"Be not too dejected, Madam," answered Ulysses; "when I 261 was with the Thespotians I heard for certain that he was alive and well. Indeed he would have been here ere now, had he not deemed it better to amass great wealth before returning. Before this month is out I swear most solemnly that he will be here."

"If you say truly," replied Penelope, "you shall indeed 308 be rewarded richly, but he will not come. Still, you women, take the stranger and wash him; make him a comfortable bed, and in the morning wash him again and anoint him, that he may sit at the same table with Telemachus; if any of the suitors molests him, he shall 322 rue it, for fume as he may, he shall have no more to do in this house. How indeed, Sir, can you know how much I surpass all other women in goodness and discretion unless I see that you are well clothed and fed?"

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"Make me no bed, Madam, said Ulysses, "I will lie on the 336 bare ground as I am wont to do. Nor do I like having my feet washed. I will not allow any of your serving women to touch my feet; but if you have any respectable old woman who has gone through as much as I have, I will let her wash them."

"Stranger," answered Penelope, "your sense of propriety 349 exceeds that of any foreigner who has ever come here. I have exactly the kind of person you describe; she was Ulysses' nurse from the day of his birth, and is now very old and feeble, but she shall wash your feet. Euryclea, come and wash the stranger's feet. He is about the same age as your master would be."

Euryclea spoke compassionately to Ulysses, and ended by 361 saying that he was very like her master. To which Ulysses replied that many other people had observed the likeness.

Then the old woman got a large foot bath and put some 386 cold water into it, adding hot water until it was the right heat. As soon, however, as she got Ulysses' leg in her

hands, she recognised a scar on it as one which her master had got from being ripped by a boar when he was hunting on Mt. Parnassus with his mother's father 394Autolycus, whom Mercury had endowed with the gift of being the most accomplished thief and perjurer in the whole world, for he was very fond of him. She immediately dropped the leg, which made a loud noise against the side 468of the bath and upset all the water. Her eyes filled with tears, and she caught Ulysses by the beard and told him that she knew him.

She looked towards Penelope to tell her; but Minerva had 476directed Penelope's attention elsewhere, so that she had observed nothing of what had been going on. Ulysses gripped Euryclea's throat, and swore he would kill her, nurse to him though she had been, unless she kept his return secret—which she promised to do. She also said that if heaven delivered the suitors into his hands, she would give him a list of all the women in the house who had misconducted themselves.

"You have no need," said Ulysses, "I shall find that out 499for myself. See that you keep my counsel and leave the rest to heaven."

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Euryclea now went to fetch some more water, for the 503 first had been all spilt. When she had brought it, and had washed Ulysses, he turned his seat round to the fire to dry himself, and drew his rags over the scar that Penelope might not see it.

Then Penelope detailed her sorrows to Ulysses. Others, 508she said, could sleep, but she could not do so, neither night nor day. She could not rest for thinking what her duty might be. Ought she to stay where she was and stand guard over her son's estate, or ought she to marry one of the suitors and go elsewhere? Her son, while he was 530a boy, would not hear of her doing this, but now that he was grown up and realised the havoc that the suitors were making of his property, he was continually urging her to go. Besides, she had had a strange dream about 538an eagle that had come from a mountain and swooped down on her favourite geese as they were eating mash out of a tub, ^[35] and had killed them all. Then the eagle came back and told her he was Ulysses, while the geese were the suitors; but when she woke the geese were still feeding at the mash tub. Now, what did all this mean?

Ulysses said it could only mean the immediate return of 554her husband, and his revenge upon the suitors.

But Penelope would not believe him. "Dreams," she said, 559"are very curious things. They come through two gates, one of horn, and the other of ivory. Those that come through the gate of ivory have no significance. It is the others that alone are true, and

my dream came through the gate of ivory. Tomorrow, therefore, I shall set Ulysses' bow before the suitors, and I will leave this house with him who can draw it most easily and send an arrow through the twelve holes whereby twelve axeheads are fitted into their handles."

"You need not defer this competition," said Ulysses, "for ⁵⁸²your husband will be here before any one of them can draw the bow and shoot through the axes."

"Stranger," replied Penelope, "I could stay talking with ⁵⁸⁸you the whole night through, but there is a time for everything, [Pg 83] and I will now go to lie down upon that couch which I have never ceased to water with my tears from the day my husband set out for the city with an ill-omened name. You can sleep within the house, either on the ground or on a bedstead, whichever you may prefer."

Then she went upstairs and mourned her dear husband till ⁶⁰⁰Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes.

BOOK XX.

Ulysses converses with Eumæus, and with his herdsman Philœtius—The suitors again maltreat him—Theoclymenus foretells their doom and leaves the house.

Ulysses made himself a bed of an untanned ox-hide in the vestibule and covered himself with sheep skins; then Eurynome threw a cloak over him. He saw the women who misbehaved themselves with the suitors go giggling out of the house, and was sorely tempted to kill them then and ⁶there, but he restrained himself. He kept turning round and round, as a man turns a paunch full of blood and fat before a hot fire to cook it, and could get no rest till Minerva came to him and comforted him, by reminding him that he was now in Ithaca.

"That is all very well," replied Ulysses, "but suppose I ³⁶do kill these suitors, pray consider what is to become of me then? Where am I to fly to from the revenge their friends will take upon me?"

"One would think," answered Minerva, "that you might ⁴⁴trust even a feeble aid than mine; go to sleep; your troubles shall end shortly."

Ulysses then slept, but Penelope was still wakeful, and ⁵⁴lamented her impending marriage, and her inability to sleep, in such loud tones that Ulysses heard her, and thought she was close by him.

It was now morning and Ulysses rose, praying the while 91 to Jove. "Grant me," he cried, "a sign from one of the people who are now waking in the house, and another sign from outside it."

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Forthwith Jove thundered from a clear sky. There came 102 also a miller woman from the mill-room, who, being weakly, had not finished her appointed task as soon as 110 the others had done; as she passed Ulysses he heard her curse the suitors and pray for their immediate death. Ulysses was thus assured that he should kill them.

The other women of the house now lit the fire, and 122 Telemachus came down from his room.

"Nurse," said he, "I hope you have seen that the stranger 129 has been duly fed and lodged. My mother, in spite of her many virtues, is apt to be too much impressed by inferior people, and to neglect those who are more deserving."

"Do not find fault, child," said Euryclea, "when there is 134 no one to find fault with. The stranger sat and drank as much wine as he liked. Your mother asked him if he would take any more bread, but he said he did not want any. As for his bed, he would not have one, but slept in the vestibule on an untanned hide, and I threw a cloak over him myself."

Telemachus then went out to the place of assembly, and 144 his two dogs with him. "Now, you women," said Euryclea, "be quick and clean the house down. Put the cloths on the seats, sponge down the tables; wash the cups and mixing bowls, and go at once, some of you, to fetch water from the fountain. It is a feast day, and the suitors will be here directly." So twenty of them went for water, and others busied themselves setting things straight about the house.

The men servants then came and chopped wood. The women 160 came back from the fountain, and Eumæus with them, bringing three fine pigs, which he let feed about the yards. When he saw Ulysses he asked him how he was getting on, and Ulysses prayed that heaven might avenge him upon the suitors.

Then Melanthius came with the best goats he had, and made 172 them fast in the gate-house. When he had done this he giped at Ulysses, but Ulysses made him no answer.

Thirdly came Philoetius with a barren heifer and some fat 185 goats for the suitors. These had been brought over for him by the boatmen who plied for all comers. When he saw [Pg 85] Ulysses, he asked Eumæus who he was, and said he was very like his

lost master. Then he told Ulysses how well his old master had treated him, and how well also he had served his old master. Alas! that he was no longer living. "We are fallen," said he, "on evil times, and I often think that though it would not be right of me to drive my cattle off, and put both myself and them under some other master while Telemachus is still alive, yet even this would be better than leading the life I have to lead at present. Indeed I should have gone off with them long ago, if I did not cling to the hope that Ulysses may still return."

"I can see," said Ulysses, "that you are a very honest 226and sensible person. Therefore I will swear you a solemn oath that Ulysses will be here immediately, and if you like you shall see him with your own eyes kill the suitors."

While they were thus conversing the suitors were again 240plotting the murder of Telemachus, but there appeared an unfavourable omen, so Amphinomus said they had better go to the house and get dinner ready, which they accordingly did. When they were at table, Eumæus gave them their cups, Philœtius handed round the bread and Melantheus poured them out their wine. Telemachus purposely set Ulysses at a little table on the part of the cloister that was paved with stone, and told the suitors that it should be worse for any of them who molested him. "This," he said, "is not a public house, but it is mine, for it has come to me from Ulysses."

The suitors were very angry but Antinous checked them. 268"Let us put up with it," said he; "if Jove had permitted, we should have been the death of him ere now." Meanwhile, it being the festival of Apollo, the people of the town were bearing his holy hecatomb about the streets.

The servants gave Ulysses an equal portion with what 279they gave the others, for Telemachus had so bidden them. Presently one of the suitors named Ctesippus observed this and said, "I see the stranger has as good a portion as any one else. I will give him a better, that he may have something to give the bath-woman or some other of 296the servants in the house"—and with this he flung a cow's heel at Ulysses' head.

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Ulysses smiled with a grim Sardinian^[36] smile, and bowed 302his head so that the heel passed over it and hit the wall. Telemachus rebuked Ctesippus very fiercely, and all were silent till Agelaus tried to calm them saying, "What Telemachus has said is just: let us not answer. Nevertheless I would urge him to talk quietly with his mother and tell her that as long as there was any chance of Ulysses coming back there was nothing unreasonable in her deferring a second marriage; but there is now no hope of

his return, and if you would enjoy your own in peace, tell her to marry the best man among us and the one who will make her the most advantageous offer."

"Nay," answered Telemachus, "it is not I that delay her 328marriage. I urge her to it, but I cannot and will not force her."

Then Minerva made the suitors break out into a forced 345hysterical laughter, and the meats which they were eating became all smirched with blood. Their eyes were filled with tears and their hearts were oppressed with terrible forebodings. Theoclymenus saw that all was wrong, and said, "Unhappy men, what is it that ails you? There is a shroud of darkness drawn over you from head to foot, your cheeks are wet with tears; the air is alive with wailing voices; the walls and roof beams drip blood; the gate of the cloisters, and the yard beyond them are full of ghosts trooping down into the night of hell; the sun is blotted out from heaven, and a blighting gloom is over all the land."

The suitors laughed at him, and Eurymachus said, "If you 358find it so dark here, we had better send a man with you to take you out into the open."

"I have eyes," he answered, "that can guide, and feet 363that can take me from the doom that I see overhanging every single one of you." On this he left them and went back to the house of Piræus.

Then one of the suitors said, "Telemachus, you are very 375unfortunate in your guests. You had better ship both the[Pg 87] stranger and this man off to the Sicels and sell them." Telemachus made no answer, but kept his eye on his father for any signal that he might make him.

Penelope had had a seat placed for her overlooking the 387cloister, and heard all that had passed. The dinner had been good and plentiful and there had been much laughter, for they had slaughtered many victims, but little did they guess the terrible supper which the goddess and a strong man were preparing for them.

BOOK XXI.

The trial of the bow and of the axes.

Then Minerva put it in Penelope's mind to let the suitors compete for the bow and for a prize of iron. So she went upstairs and got the key of the store room, where Ulysses' treasures of gold, copper, and iron were kept, as also the mighty bow which Iphitus son of Eurytus had given him, and which had been in common use by Eurytus as long

as he was alive. Hither she went attended by her women, and when she had unlocked the door she took the bow down from its peg and carried it, with its quiverfull of deadly arrows, to the suitors, while her maids brought the chest in which were the many prizes of iron that Ulysses had won. Then, still attended by her two maidens, she stood by one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloister, and told the suitors she would marry the man among them who could string Ulysses' bow most easily, and send an arrow through the twelve holes by which twelve axe-heads were fastened on to their handles.

So saying she gave the bow into the hands of Eumæus and bade him let the suitors compete as she had said. Eumæus wept as he took it, and so did Philœtius who was looking on, whereon Antinous scolded them for a couple of country bumpkins.

Telemachus said that he too should compete, and that if he was successful he should certainly not allow his mother to leave her home with a second husband, while he remained alone. So saying he dug a long trench quite straight, set the axes in a line within it, and stamped the earth about them to keep them steady; every one was surprised to see how accurately he fixed them, considering that he had never seen anything of the kind before.^[37] Having set the axes duly, he stood on the stone pavement, and tried to string the bow, but failed three times. He would, however, have succeeded the fourth time, if Ulysses had not made him a sign that he was not to try any more. So he laid both bow and arrow down and took his seat.

"Then," said Antinous, "begin at the place where the cupbearer begins, and let each take his turn, going from left to right." On this Leiodes came forward. He was their sacrificial priest, and sat in the angle of the wall hard by the mixing bowl; but he had always set his face against the wicked conduct of the suitors. When he had failed to string the bow he said it was so hard to string that it would rob many a man among them of life and heart—for which saying Antinous rebuked him bitterly.

"Bring some fire, Melantheus, and a wheel of fat from inside the house," said he to Melanthius, *[sic]* "that we may warm the bow and grease it." So they did this, but though many tried they could none of them string it. There remained only Antinous and Eurymachus who were their ring leaders.

The swineherd and the stockman Philœtius then went outside the forecourt, and Ulysses followed them; when they had got beyond the outer yard Ulysses sounded them, and having satisfied himself that they were loyal he revealed himself and shewed them the scar on his leg. They were overjoyed, and Ulysses said, "Go back one by one after me, and follow these instructions. The other suitors will not be for letting me have the bow, but do you, Eumæus, when you have got it in your hands,

bring it to me, and tell the women to shut themselves[Pg 89] into their room. If the sound of groaning or uproar reaches any of them when they are inside, tell them to stick to their work and not come out. I leave it to you. Philœtius, to fasten the gate of the outer court securely." He then went inside, and resumed the seat that he had left.

Eurymachus now tried to string the bow but failed. "I do 245not so much mind," he said, "about not marrying Penelope, for there are plenty of other women in Ithaca and elsewhere. What grieves me is the fact of our being such a feeble folk as compared with our forefathers."

Antinous reminded him that it was the festival of Apollo. 256"Who," said he, "can shoot on such a day as this? Let us leave the axes where they are—no one will take them; let us also sacrifice to Apollo the best goats Melanthius can bring us, and resume the contest tomorrow."

Ulysses then cunningly urged that he might be allowed 274to try whether he was as strong a man as he used to be, and that the bow should be placed in his hands for this purpose. The suitors were very angry, but Penelope insisted that Ulysses should have the bow; if he succeeded in stringing it she said it was absurd to suppose that she would marry him; but she would give him a shirt and cloak, a javelin, sword, and a pair of sandals, and she would send him wherever he might want to go.

"The bow, mother, is mine," said Telemachus, "and if I 343choose to give it this man out and out I shall give it him. Go within the house and mind your own proper duties."

Penelope went back, with her women, wondering into the 354house, and going upstairs into her room she wept for her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes.

Eumæus was about to take the bow to Ulysses, but the 359suitors frightened him and he was for putting it down, till Telemachus threatened to stone him back to his farm if he did not bring it on at once; he therefore gave the bow to Ulysses. Then he called Euryclea aside and told her to shut the women up, and not to let them out if they heard any groans or uproar. She therefore shut them up.

At this point Philœtius slipped out and secured the main[Pg 90] 388gate of the outer court with a ship's cable of Byblus fibre that happened to be lying beside it. This done, he returned to his seat and kept his eye on Ulysses, who was examining the bow with great care to see whether it was sound in all its parts.

"This man," said the suitors, "is some old bow-fancier; 397perhaps he has got one like it at home, or wants to make one, so cunningly does the old rascal handle it."

Ulysses, having finished his scrutiny, strung the bow as easily as a bard puts a new string on to his lyre. He tried the string and it sang under his hand like the cry of a swallow. He took an arrow that was lying out of its quiver by his table, placed the notch on the string, and from his seat sent the arrow through the handle-holes of all the axes and outside into the yard.

"Telemachus," said he, "your guest has not disgraced you. It is now time for the suitors to have their supper, and to take their pleasure afterwards with song and playing on the lyre." So saying he made a sign to Telemachus, who girded on his sword, grasped his spear, and stood armed beside his father's seat.

BOOK XXII.

The killing of the suitors.

Ulysses tore off his rags, and sprang on the broad pavement, with his bow and his quiver full of arrows. He shed the arrows on to the ground at his feet and said, "The contest is at an end. I will now see whether Apollo will vouchsafe me to hit another mark which no man has yet aimed at."

He took aim at Antinous as he spoke. The arrow struck him in the throat, so that he fell over and a thick stream of blood gushed from his nostrils. He kicked his table from him and upset the things on it, whereby the bread and meats were all soiled as they fell over on to the ground. The suitors were instantly in an uproar, and looked towards the walls for armour, but there was none. "Stranger," they cried, "you shall pay dearly for shooting people down in this way. You are a doomed man." But they did not yet understand that Ulysses had killed Antinous on purpose.

Ulysses glared at them and said, "Dogs, did you think that I should not return from Troy? You have wasted my substance, you have violated the women of my house, you have wooed my wife while I was still alive, you have feared neither god nor man, and now you shall die."

Eurymachus alone answered. "If you are Ulysses," said he, "we have done you great wrong. It was all Antinous's doing. He never really wanted to marry Penelope: he wanted to kill your son and to be chief man in Ithaca. He is no more; then spare the lives of your people and we will pay you all."

Ulysses again glared at him and said, "I will not stay 60my hand till I have slain one and all of you. You must fight, or fly as you can, or die—and fly you neither can nor shall."

Eurymachus then said, "My friends, this man will give us 68no quarter. Let us show fight. Draw your swords and hold the tables up in front of you as shields. Have at him with a rush, and drive him from the pavement and from the door. We could then get through into the town and call for help."

While he spoke and was springing forward, Ulysses sent 79an arrow into his heart and he fell doubled up over his table. The cup and all the meats went over on to the ground as he smote the earth with his forehead in the agonies of death.

Amphinomus then made for Ulysses to try and dislodge 89him from the door, but Telemachus got behind him, and struck him through. He left his spear in the body and flew back to his father's side; "Father," said he, "let me bring armour for you and me, as well as for Eumæus and Philœtius." "Run and fetch it," answered Ulysses, "while my arrows hold out; be quick, or they may get me away from the door when I am single-handed."

Telemachus went to the store-room and brought four 108shields, eight spears, and four helmets. He armed himself, as[Pg 92] did also Eumæus and Philœtius, who then placed themselves beside Ulysses. As long as his arrows held out Ulysses shot the suitors down thick and threefold, but when they failed him he stood the bow against the end wall of the house hard by the door way, and armed himself.

Now there was a trap-door (see plan, and f on [p. 17](#)) 126on the wall, while at one end of the pavement there was an exit, closed by a good strong door and leading out into a narrow passage; Ulysses told Philœtius to stand by this door and keep it, for only one person could attack it at a time. Then Agelaus shouted out, "Go up, somebody, to the trap-door and tell the people what is going on; they would come in and help us."

"This may not be," answered Melanthius, "the mouth of the 135narrow passage is dangerously near the entrance from the street into the outer court. One brave man could prevent any number from getting in, but I will bring you arms from the store-room, for I am sure it is there that they have put them." As he spoke he went by back passages to 143the store-room, and brought the suitors twelve shields and the same number of helmets; when Ulysses saw the suitors arming his heart began to fail him, and he said to Telemachus, "Some of the women inside are helping the suitors—or else it is Melanthius."

Telemachus said that it was his fault, for he had left 153the store-room door open. "Go, Eumæus," he added, "and close it; see whether it is one of the women, or Melanthius, son of Dolius."

Melanthius was now going back for more armour when Eumæus 160saw him and told Ulysses, who said, "Follow him, you and Philœtius; bind his hands and feet behind him, and throw him into the store-room; then string him up to a bearing-post till he is close to the rafters, that he may linger on in agony."

The men went to the store-room and caught Melanthius. 178They bound him in a painful bond and strung him up as Ulysses had told them. Eumæus wished him a good night and the two men returned to the side of Ulysses. Minerva also joined them, having assumed the form of Mentor; but[Pg 93] 205Ulysses felt sure it was Minerva. The suitors were very angry when they saw her; "Mentor," they cried, "you shall pay for this with your life, and we will confiscate all you have in the world."

This made Minerva furious, and she rated Ulysses roundly. 224"Your prowess," said she, "is no longer what it was at Troy. How comes it that you are less valiant now that you are on your own ground? Come on, my good fellow, and see how Mentor will fight for you and requite you for your many kindnesses." But she did not mean to give him the victory just yet, so she flew up to one of the rafters and sat there in the form of a swallow. [\[39\]](#)

The struggle still continued. "My friends," said Agelaus, 241"he will soon have to leave off. See how Mentor has left him after doing nothing for him except brag. Do not aim at him all at once, but six of you throw your spears first."

They did so, but Minerva made all their spears take no 265effect. Ulysses and the other three then threw, and each killed his man. The suitors drew back in fear into a corner, whereon the four sprang forward and regained their weapons. The suitors again threw, and this time Amphimedon really did take a piece of the top skin from Telemachus's wrist, and Ctesippus just grazed Eumæus's shoulder above his shield. It was now the turn of Ulysses and his men, and each of their spears killed a man.

Then Minerva from high on the roof held up her deadly 297ægis, and struck the suitors with panic, whereon Ulysses and his men fell upon them and smote them on every side. They made a horrible groaning as their brains were being battered in, and the ground seethed with their blood. Leiodes implored Ulysses to spare his life, but Ulysses would give him no quarter.

The minstrel Phemius now begged for mercy. He was[Pg 94] 380standing near towards the trap-door, and resolving to embrace Ulysses' knees, he laid his lyre on the ground

between the mixing-bowl and the high silver-studded seat. "Spare me," he cried, "you will be sorry for it afterwards if you kill such a bard as I am. I am an original composer, and heaven visits me with every kind of inspiration. Do not be in such a hurry to cut my head off. Telemachus will tell you that I only sang to the suitors because they forced me."

"Hold," cried Telemachus to his father, "do him no hurt, 354 he is guiltless; and we will spare Medon, too, who was always good to me when I was a boy, unless Eumæus or Philœtius has already killed him, or you happened to fall in with him yourself."

"Here I am, my dear Sir," said Medon, coming out from 361 under a freshly flayed heifer's hide^[40] which had concealed him; "tell your father, or he will kill me in his rage against the suitors for having wasted his substance and been so disrespectful to yourself." Ulysses smiled, and told them to go outside into the outer court till the killing should be over. So they went, but they were still very much frightened. Ulysses then went all over the court to see if there were any who had concealed themselves, or were not yet killed, but there was no one; they were all as dead as fish lying in a hot sun upon the beach.

Then he told Telemachus to call Euryclea, who came at 390 once, and found him all covered with blood. When she saw the corpses she was beginning to raise a shout of triumph, but Ulysses checked her: "Old woman," said he, 411 "rejoice in silence; it is an unholy thing to vaunt over dead men. And now tell me which of the women of the house are innocent and which guilty."

"There are fifty women in the house," said Euryclea; 419 "twelve of these have misbehaved, and have been wanting in respect to me and to Penelope. They showed no disrespect to Telemachus, for he has only lately grown up, and his mother[Pg 95] never permitted him to give orders to the female servants. And now let me go upstairs and tell your wife."

"Do not wake her yet," answered Ulysses, "but send the 430 guilty women to me."

Then he called Telemachus, Eumæus, and Philœtius. 435 "Begin," he said, "to remove the dead bodies, and make the women help you. Also get sponges and clean water to swill down the tables and the seats. When you have thoroughly cleansed the cloisters take the women outside and run them through with your swords."

The women came down weeping and wailing bitterly. 446 First they carried the dead bodies out, and propped them against one another in the gatehouse of the outer court. Ulysses ordered them about and saw that they lost no time. When they had carried the bodies out they cleaned all the tables and seats with sponges and water,

while Telemachus and the two others shovelled up the blood and dirt from the ground and the women carried it all outside. When they had thus thoroughly cleaned the whole court, they took the women out and hemmed them up in the narrow space between the vaulted room and the wall of the outer yard. Here Telemachus determined to hang them, as a more dishonourable death than stabbing. He therefore 462 made a ship's rope fast to a strong bearing-post supporting the roof of the vaulted room, and threw it round, making the women put their heads in the nooses one after another. He then drew the rope high up, so that none of their feet might touch the ground. They kicked convulsively for a while, but not for very long.

As for Melanthius they took him through the cloisters 474 into the outer court. There they cut off his nose and ears; they drew out his vitals and gave them to the dogs, raw; then they cut off his hands and feet. When they had done this they washed their hands and feet, and went back into the house. "Go," said Ulysses, to Euryclea, "and bring me sulphur that I may burn it and purify the cloisters. Go, moreover, and bid Penelope come here with her gentlewomen and the women of the house."

"Let me first bring you a clean shirt and cloak," said [Pg 96] 485 Euryclea, "do not keep those rags on any longer, it is not right."

"Light me a fire," answered Ulysses, and she obeyed and 490 brought him sulphur, wherewith he thoroughly purified both the inner and outer court, as well as the cloisters. Then Euryclea brought the women from their apartment, and they pressed round Ulysses, kissing his head and shoulders, and taking hold of his hands. It made him feel as if he should like to weep, for he remembered every one of them.

BOOK XXIII.

Penelope comes down to see Ulysses, and being at last convinced that he is her husband, retires with him to their own old room—In the morning Ulysses, Telemachus, Philœtius, and Eumæus go to the house of Laertes.

Euryclea now went upstairs and told Penelope what had happened. "Wake up, my dear child," said she, "Ulysses is come home at last and has killed the suitors who were giving so much trouble in the house, eating up his estate and ill-treating his son."

"My good nurse," answered Penelope, "you must be mad. The 19 gods sometimes send very sensible people out of their minds, and make foolish people sensible. This is what they must have been doing to you. Moreover, you have waked me from the

soundest sleep that I have enjoyed since my husband left me. Go back into the women's room; if it had been any one but you, I should have given her a severe scolding."

Euryclea still maintained that what she had said was ²⁵true, and in answer to Penelope's further questions told her as much as she knew about the killing of the suitors. "When I came down," she said, "I found Ulysses standing over the corpses; you would have enjoyed it, if you had seen him all bespattered with blood and filth, and looking just like a lion. But the corpses are now piled up in the gatehouse, and he has sent me to bring you to him."

[Pg 97]

Penelope said that it could not be Ulysses, but must be ⁵⁸some god who had resolved to punish the suitors for their great wickedness. Then Euryclea told her about the scar.

"My dear nurse," answered Penelope, "however wise you may ⁸⁰be, you can hardly fathom the counsels of the gods. Still I will go and find my son that I may see the corpses of the suitors, and the man who has killed them."

On this she came down into the cloister and took her ⁸⁵seat opposite Ulysses, in the fire-light, by the wall at right angles to that by which she had entered, while her husband sat by one of the bearing-posts of the cloister, looking down and waiting to hear what she would say. For a long time she sat as one lost in amazement and said nothing, till Telemachus upbraided her for her coldness. "Your heart," he said, "was always hard as a stone."

"My son," said his mother, "I am stupefied; nevertheless ¹⁰⁴if this man is really Ulysses, I shall find it out; for there are tokens which we two alone know of."

Ulysses smiled at this, and said to Telemachus, "Let your ¹¹⁴mother prove me as she will, she will make up her mind about it presently. Meanwhile let us think what we shall do, for we have been killing all the picked youth of Ithaca."

"We will do," answered Telemachus, "whatever you may ¹²¹think best."

"Then," said Ulysses, "wash, and put your shirts on. Bid the maids also go to their own room and dress. Phemius shall strike up a dance tune, so that any who are passing in the street may think there is a wedding in the house, and we can get away into the woods before the death of the suitors is noised abroad. Once there, we will do as heaven shall direct."

They did as he had said. The house echoed with the sound 141 of men and women dancing, and the people outside said, "So the queen has been getting married at last. She ought to be ashamed of herself, for not staying to protect her husband's property."

Eurynome washed and anointed Ulysses; Minerva also 154 beautified him, making the hair grow thick on the top of his head and flow down in hyacinthine curls. He came from the [Pg 98] bath looking like an immortal god, and sat down opposite his wife. Finding, however, that he could not move her, he said to Euryclea, "Nurse, get a bed ready for me. I will sleep alone, for this woman has a heart as hard as iron."

"My dear," said Penelope, "I have no wish to set myself 173 up, nor to depreciate you, but I am not struck by your appearance, for I well remember what kind of a man you were when you left Ithaca. Nevertheless, Euryclea, take his bed out of the room he built for it, and make it ready for him."

Ulysses knew that the bed could not be moved without 181 cutting down the stem of a growing olive tree on the stump of which he had built it. He was very angry, and desired to know who had ventured on doing this, at the same time describing the bed fully to Penelope.

Then Penelope was convinced that he really was Ulysses, 205 and fairly broke down. She flung her arms about his neck, and said she had only held aloof so long because she had been shuddering at the bare thought of any one deceiving her. Ulysses in his turn melted and embraced her, and they would have gone on indulging their sorrow till morning came, had not Minerva miraculously prolonged the night.

Ulysses then began to tell her of the voyages which, 247 Tiresias had told him he must now undertake, but soon broke off by saying that they had better go to bed. To which Penelope rejoined that as she should certainly have to be told about it sooner or later, she had perhaps better hear it at once.

Thus pressed Ulysses told her. "In the end," said he, 263 "Tiresias told me that death should come to me from the sea. He said my life should ebb away very gently when I was full of years and peace of mind, and that my people should bless me."

Meanwhile Eurynome and Euryclea made the room ready, ^[41] [Pg 99] 288 and Euryclea went inside the house, leaving Eurynome to light Penelope and Ulysses to their bedroom. Telemachus, Philoëtus, and Eumæus now left off dancing, and made the women leave off also. Then they laid themselves down to sleep in the cloisters.

When they were in bed together, Penelope told Ulysses how 300 much she had had to bear in seeing the house filled with wicked suitors who had killed so many oxen and

sheep on her account, and had drunk so many casks of wine. Ulysses in his turn told her the whole story of his adventures, touching briefly upon every point, and detailing not only his own sufferings but those he had inflicted upon other people. She was delighted to listen, and never went to sleep till he ended his story and dropped off into a profound slumber.

When Minerva thought that Ulysses had slept long enough she permitted Dawn to rise from the waters of Oceanus, and Ulysses got up. "Wife," said he to Penelope, "Now that we have at last come together again, take care of the property that is in my house. As for the sheep and goats that the wicked suitors have eaten, I will take many by force from other people, and will compel the men of the place to make good the rest. I will now go out to my father's house in the country. At sunrise it will get noised about that I have been killing the suitors. Go upstairs, therefore, and stay there with your waiting women. See nobody, and ask no questions."

As he spoke he girded on his armour; he roused the others also and bade them arm. He then undid the gate, and they all sallied forth. It was now daylight, but Minerva enshrouded them in darkness, and led them quickly out of the town.

BOOK XXIV.

The Ghosts of the suitors in Hades—Ulysses sees his father—is attacked by the friends of the suitors—Laertes kills Eupheides—Peace is made between him and the people of Ithaca.

Then Mercury took the fair golden wand with which he seals men's eyes in sleep or wakes them just as he pleases, and [Pg 100] led the ghosts of the suitors to the house of Hades whining and gibbering as they followed. As bats fly squealing about the hollow of a great cave when one of them has fallen from the cluster in which they hang—even so did they whine and squeal as Mercury the healer of sorrow led them down into the dark abode of death. When they had passed the waters of Oceanus and the rock Leucas, they came to the gates of the Sun and the land of dreams, whereon they reached the meadow of asphodel where dwell the souls and shadows of men that can labour no more.

Here they came upon the ghosts of Achilles, Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax, and that of Agamemnon joined them. As these were conversing, Mercury came up with the ghosts of the suitors, and Agamemnon's ghost recognised that of Amphimedon who

had been his host when he was in Ithaca; so he asked him what this sudden arrival of fine young men—all of an age too—might mean, and Amphimedon told him the whole story from first to last.

Thus did they converse in the house of Hades deep within 203 the bowels of the earth. Meanwhile Ulysses and the others passed out of the city and soon reached the farm of Laertes, which he had reclaimed with infinite labour. Here was his house with a lean-to running all round it, where the slaves who worked for him ate and slept, while inside the house there was an old Sicel woman, who looked after him in this his country farm.

"Go," said Ulysses to the others, "to the house, and kill 214 the best pig you have for dinner; I wish to make trial of my father and see whether he will know me."

So saying he gave his armour to Eumæus and Philœtius, 219 and turned off into the vineyard, where he found his father alone, hoeing a vine. He had on a dirty old shirt, patched and very shabby; his legs were bound round with thongs of oxhide to keep out the brambles, and he wore sleeves of leather against the thorns. He had a goatskin cap on his head and was looking very woebegone.

When Ulysses saw him so worn, so old and full of sorrow, 232 he stood still under a tall pear tree and began to weep. He [Pg 101] doubted whether to embrace him, kiss him, and tell him all about his having come home, or whether he should first question him and see what he would say. On the whole he decided that he would be crafty with him, so he went up to his father who was bending down and digging about a plant.

"I see, Sir," said Ulysses, "that you are an excellent 244 gardener—what pains you take with it to be sure. There is not a single plant, not a fig-tree, vine, olive, pear, nor flower-bed, but bears the traces of your attention. I trust, however, that you will not be offended if I say that you take better care of your garden than of yourself. You are old, unsavoury, and very meanly clad. It cannot be because you are idle that your master takes such poor care of you; indeed, your face and figure have nothing of the slave about them, but proclaim you of noble birth. I should have said you were one of those who should wash well, eat well, and lie soft at night as old men have a right to do. But tell me, and tell me true, whose bondsman are you, and in whose garden are you working? Tell me also about another matter—is this place that I have come to really Ithaca? I met a man just now who said so, but he was a dull fellow, and had not the patience to hear my story out when I was asking whether an old friend of mine who used to live here was still alive. My friend said he was the son of Laertes son of Arceisius, and I made him large presents on his leaving me."

Laertes wept and answered that in this case he would 280 never see his presents back again, though he would have been amply requited if Ulysses had been alive. "But tell me," he said, "who and whence are you? Where is your ship? or did you come as passenger on some other man's vessel?"

"I will tell you every thing," answered Ulysses, "quite 302 truly. I come from Alybas, and am son to king Apheides. My name is Eperitus; heaven drove me off my course as I was leaving Sicania, and I have been carried here against my will. As for my ship, it is lying over yonder off the 307 open country outside the town. It is five years since Ulysses left me—Poor fellow! we had every hope that we 308 should meet again and exchange presents."

[Pg 102]

Laertes was overcome with grief, and Ulysses was so 315 much touched that he revealed himself. When his father asked for proof, he shewed him the scar on his leg. "Furthermore," he added, "I will point out to you the trees in the vineyard which you gave me, and I asked you all about them as I followed you round the garden. We went over them all, and you told me their names and what they all were. You gave me thirteen pear trees, ten apple trees, and forty fig trees, and you also said you would give me fifty rows of vines; there was corn planted between each row, and the vines yield grapes of every kind when the heat of heaven has beaten upon them." He also told his father that he had killed the suitors.

Laertes was now convinced, but said he feared he should 345 have all the people of Ithaca coming to attack them. Ulysses answered that he need not trouble about this, and that they had better go and get their dinner, which would be ready by the time they got to the house.

When they reached the house the old Sicel woman took 361 Laertes inside, washed him, and anointed him. Minerva also gave him a more imposing presence and made him look taller and stronger than before. "When he came back, Ulysses said, "My dear father, some god has been making you much taller and better looking." To which Laertes answered that if he was as young and hearty as when he took the stronghold Nericum on the foreland, he should have been a great help to him on the preceding day, and would have killed many suitors.

Dolius and his sons, who had been working hard by, now 383 came up, for the old Sicel woman, who was Dolius's wife, had been to fetch them. When they were satisfied that Ulysses was really there, they were overjoyed and embraced him one after the other. "But tell me," said Dolius, "does Penelope know, or shall we send and tell her?" "Old

man," answered Ulysses, "she knows already. What business is that of yours?" Then they all took their seats at table.

Meanwhile the news of the slaughter of the suitors had⁴¹² got noised abroad, and the people gathered hooting and groaning before the house of Ulysses. They took their dead, buried every man his own, and put the bodies of those who came^[Pg 103] from elsewhere on board the fishing vessels, for the fishermen to take them every man to his own place. Then they met in assembly and Eupeithes urged them to pursue Ulysses and the others before they could escape over to the main land.

Medon, however, and Phemius had now woke up, and came to⁴³⁹ the assembly. Medon dissuaded the people from doing as Eupeithes advised, inasmuch as he had seen a god going about killing the suitors, and it would be dangerous to oppose the will of heaven. Halitherses also spoke in the same sense, and half the people were persuaded by him. The other half armed themselves and followed Eupeithes in pursuit of Ulysses.

Minerva then consulted Jove as to the course events⁴⁷² should take. Jove told her that she had had everything her own way so far, and might continue to do as she pleased. He should, however, advise that both sides should now be reconciled under the continued rule of Ulysses. Minerva approved of this and darted down to Ithaca.

Laertes and his household had now done dinner, and⁴⁸⁹ Eupeithes with his band of men were seen to be near at hand. Ulysses and the others put on their armour, and Minerva joined them. "Telemachus," said Ulysses, "now that you are about to fight in a decisive engagement, see that you do no discredit to your ancestors, who were eminent all the world over for their strength and valour."

"You shall see, my dear father," replied Telemachus, "if⁵¹⁰ you choose, that I am in no mind, as you say, to disgrace your family."

"Good heavens," exclaimed Laertes, "what a day I am⁵¹³ enjoying. My son and grandson are vying with one another in the matter of valour." Minerva then came up to him, and bade him pray to her. She infused fresh vigour into him, and when he had prayed to her he aimed his spear at Eupeithes and killed him. Ulysses and his men fell upon the others, routed them, and would have killed one and all of them had not Minerva raised her voice and made every one pause. "Men of Ithaca," she cried, "cease this dreadful war, and settle the matter without further bloodshed."

On this they turned pale with fear, dropped their armour, ^[Pg 104]⁵³³ and fled every man towards the city. Ulysses was swooping down upon them like an eagle, but Jove

sent a thunderbolt of fire that fell just in front of Minerva. "Whereon she said, "Ulysses, stay this strife, or Jove will be angry with you."

Ulysses obeyed her gladly. Minerva then assumed the voice 545 and form of Mentor, and presently made a covenant of peace between the two contending parties.

[1] *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. VII. 170-88, and *Introduction to Homer*, 3rd edit. 1888, pp. 57-62, and Appendix, Note 1.

[2] *Journal of Philology*, Vol. XXIV. p. 39, &c.

[3] Temesa was on the West side of the toe of Italy and was once famous for its copper mines, which, however, were worked out in Strabo's time. See *Smith's Dictionary of Ancient Geography*.

[4] Heading Νηρίτω instead of Νηίω, cf. Book xiii. 96, &c., and 351, where the same harbour is obviously intended.

[5] i.e. "flowing," or with a current in it.

[6] The mountain is singular, as though it were an isolated mountain rather than a range that was in the mind of the writer. It is also singular, not plural, in the parallel cases of xv. 175 and xix. 538.

[7] Reading ὑπονηρίτου for ὑπονηίου, cf. i. 186 and also xiii. 351.

[8] The reader will note that the fact of Orestes having also killed his mother is not expressly stated here, nor in any of the three other passages in which the revenge taken by Orestes is referred to—doubtless as being too horrible. The other passages are *Od.* i. 40 and 299 (not given in this summary), and xi. 408, &c.

[9] For fuller translation and explanation why I have bracketed the passage, see [Chapter VI](#).

[10] It is curious that the sleeping arrangements made by Helen for Telemachus and Pisistratus, as also those made for Ulysses by Queen Arete (vii. 336, &c.), though taken almost verbatim from those made by Achilles for Priam and Idicus (*Il.* xxiv. 643-47 and 673-76), should do so well for a building of such a different character as the house of Menelaus must have been from the quarters of Achilles before Troy.

[11] For explanation why I bracket this passage see [Chapter VI](#).

[12] Scheria means "Jutland"—a piece of land jutting out into the sea.

[13] Gr. πάππα φίλ', line 57.

[14] Penelope and Calypso also had gardens: so had Laertes (xxiv. 217). I remember no allusion to them in the *Iliad*.

[15] It is a little odd that this disc should have been brought, considering that none such were used by the Phæacians. We must suppose that Minerva put it in along with the others, and then shed a thick darkness over it, which prevented the attendants from noticing it.

[16] Alcinous never seems to have got beyond saying that he was going to give the cup; he never gives it, nor yet the talent—the familiar ὥς εἰπὼν ἐν χερσὶ τίθει κ.τ.λ. is noticeably absent. He found the chest, and he took a great deal of pains about stowing the presents in the ship that was to take Ulysses to Ithaca (see xiii. 18, &c.), but here his contributions seem to have ended.

[17] Dwellers on the East coast of Sicily believe the island here referred to to be Acitrezza, between Acireale and Catania. I have been all over it and do not believe that it contains more than two acres of land on which any goat could ever have fed. The idea that the writer of the *Odyssey* would make Ulysses and his large body of men spend half a day in killing over a hundred goats on such a site need not be discussed seriously, I shall therefore pass it over without notice when I come to discuss the voyage of Ulysses. That it should be so confidently believed to be the island off the land of the Cyclopes serves as a warning to myself, inasmuch as it shows how easily people can bring themselves to accept any site for any scene if they make up their minds to do so.

[18] See [Chapter xv](#). for reasons why I have bracketed lines 115—137.

[19] Ulysses was to appease Neptune's anger by going as a missionary to preach his name among a people that did not know him.

[20] The want of coherence here is obvious, but as it is repeated when Ulysses ought to come to the wandering cliffs (which he never does) it must be referred to a *lacuna* not in the text, but in the writer's sources of information—of which she seems fully aware.

[21] I suppose this line to have been added when lines 426—446 of this book were added.

[22] The wandering cliffs are certainly intended, for when Ulysses is recapitulating his adventures in Book xxiii. he expressly mentions having reached the πλαγκτὰς πέτρας, just after the Sirens, and before Scylla and Charybdis (xxiii. 327). The writer is determined to have them in her story however little she may know about them.

[23] I incline to think that these lines are an after thought, added by the writer herself.

[24] σὺν ἄρτεμέεσσι φίλοισιν.

[25] Minerva, in her desire to minimise the time during which the suitors had been at Ulysses' house, seems to have forgotten that they had been there ever since Telemachus was quite a child (*Od.* ii. 312-14).

[26] i.e. which seemed to fly past them.

[27] According to tradition, she had hanged herself on hearing a report of the death of her son.

[28] See [Chapter XII](#), near the beginning.

[29] In almost all other places he is called Melanthius.

[30] All this might very well be, if the scene is laid in an open court, but hardly if it was in a hall inside a house.

[31] ἐς μέσσον (line 447).

[32] They might very well fight in the middle of an open court, but hardly in a covered hall. They would go outside.

[33] ἐν μεγάροισιν, but not ἐν μεγάροισι σκιάεσσι.

[34] There is no indication as though they went out to do this; they seem to have emptied the ashes on to the open part of the court.

[35] I have repeatedly seen geese so feeding at Trapani and in the neighbourhood. In summer the grass is all burned up so that they cannot graze as in England.

[36] This is the only reference to Sardinia in either *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.

[37] If Telemachus had never seen anything of the kind before, so probably, neither had the writer of the *Odyssey*—at any rate no commentator has yet been able to understand her description, and I doubt whether she understood it herself. It looks as though the axe heads must have been wedged into the handles or so bound on to them as to let the hole be visible through which the handle would go when the axe was in use. The trial is evidently a double one, of strength as regards the bending of the bow, and accuracy of aim as regards shooting through a row of rings.

[38] It is not expressly stated that the "stone pavement" is here intended. The Greek has simply ἄλτο δ' ἐπὶ μέγαν οὐδόν, but I do not doubt that the stone pavement is intended.

[39] This again suggests, though it does not prove, that we are in an open court surrounded by a cloister, on the rafters of which swallows would often perch. Line 297 suggests this even more strongly, "the roof" being, no doubt, the roof of the cloister, on to which Minerva flew from the rafter, that her ægis might better command the whole court.

[40] Probably the hide of the heifer that Philœtius had brought in that morning (xx. 186).

[41] This room was apparently not within the body of the house. It was certainly on the ground floor, for the bed was fixed on to the stump of a tree; I strongly suspect it to be the vaulted room, round the outside of which the bodies of the guilty maids were still hanging, and I also suspect it was in order to thus festoon the room that Telemachus hanged the women instead of stabbing them, but this is treading on that perilous kind of speculation which I so strongly deprecate in others. If it were not for the gruesome horror of the dance, in lines 129—151, I should not have entertained it.

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CHAPTER III.

THE PREPONDERANCE OF WOMAN IN THE ODYSSEY.

Having in my first chapter met the only *à priori* objections to my views concerning the sex of the writer which have yet been presented to me, I now turn to the evidence of female authorship which is furnished by the story which I have just laid before the reader.

What, let me ask, is the most unerring test of female authorship? Surely a preponderance of female interest, and a fuller knowledge of those things which a woman generally has to deal with, than of those that fall more commonly within the province of man. People always write by preference of what they know best, and they know best what they most are, and have most to do with. This extends to ways of thought and to character, even more than to action. If man thinks the noblest study for mankind to be man, woman not less certainly believes it to be woman.

Hence if in any work the women are found to be well and sympathetically drawn, while the men are mechanical and by comparison perfunctorily treated, it is, I imagine, safe to infer that the writer is a woman; and the converse holds good with man. Man and

woman never fully understand one another save, perhaps, during courtship and honeymoon, and as a man understands man more fully than a woman can do, so does a woman, woman. Granted, it is the delight of either sex to understand the other as fully as it can, and those who succeed most in this respect are the best and happiest whether men or women; but do what we may the barriers can never be broken down completely, and each sex will dwell mainly, though not, of course, exclusively, within its own separate world. When, moreover, we come to think of it, it is not desirable that they should be broken down, for it is on their existence that much of the attraction of either sex to the other depends.

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Men seem unable to draw women at all without either laughing at them or caricaturing them; and so, perhaps, a woman never draws a man so felicitously as when she is making him ridiculous. If she means to make him so she is certain to succeed; if she does not mean it she will succeed more surely still. Either sex, in fact, can caricature the other delightfully, and certainly no writer has ever shown more completely than the writer of the *Odyssey* has done that, next to the glorification of woman, she considers man's little ways and weaknesses to be the fittest theme on which her genius can be displayed. But I doubt whether any writer in the whole range of literature (excepting, I suppose, Shakspeare) has succeeded in drawing a full length, life-sized, serious portrait of a member of the sex opposite to the writer's own.

It is admitted on all hands that the preponderance of interest in the *Iliad* is on the side of man, and in the *Odyssey* on that of woman. Women in the *Iliad* are few in number and rarely occupy the stage. True, the goddesses play important parts, but they are never taken seriously.

Shelley, again, speaking of the "perpetually increasing magnificence of the last seven books" of the *Iliad*, says, "The *Odyssey* is sweet, but there is nothing like this."^[1] The writer of the *Odyssey* is fierce as a tigress at times, but the feeling of the poem is on the whole exactly what Shelley says it is. Strength is felt everywhere even in the tenderest passages of the *Iliad*, but it is sweetness rather than strength that fascinates us throughout the *Odyssey*. It is the charm of a woman not of a man.

So, again, to quote a more recent authority, Mr. Gladstone in his work on *Homer* already referred to, says (p. 28):—

It is rarely in the *Iliad* that grandeur or force give way to allow the exhibition of domestic affection. Conversely, in the *Odyssey* the family life supplies the tissue into which is woven the thread of the poem.

Any one who is familiar with the two poems must know that[Pg 107] what Mr. Gladstone has said is true; and he might have added, not less truly, that when there is any exhibition of domestic life and affection in the *Iliad* the men are dominant, and the women are under their protection, whereas throughout the *Odyssey* it is the women who are directing, counselling, and protecting the men.

Who are the women in the *Odyssey*? There is Minerva, omnipresent at the elbows of Ulysses and Telemachus to keep them straight and alternately scold and flatter them. In the *Iliad* she is a great warrior but she is no woman: in the *Odyssey* she is a great woman but no warrior; we have, of course, Penelope—masterful nearly to the last and tossed off to the wings almost from the moment that she has ceased to be so; Euryclea, the old servant, is quite a match for Telemachus, "do not find fault, child," she says to him, "when there is no one to find fault with" (xx. 135). Who can doubt that Helen is master in the house of Menelaus—of whom all she can say in praise is that he is "not deficient either in person or understanding" (iv. 264)? Idothea in Book iv. treats Menelaus *de haut en bas*, all through the Proteus episode. She is good to him and his men, but they must do exactly what she tells them, and she evidently enjoys "running" them,—for I can think of no apter word. Calypso is the master mind, not Ulysses; and, be it noted, that neither she nor Circe seem to have a manservant on their premises. I was at an inn once and asked the stately landlady if I could see the landlord. She bridled up and answered, "We have no landlord, sir, in this house; I cannot see what use a man is in a hotel except to clean boots and windows." There spoke Circe and Calypso, but neither of them seem to have made even this much exception in man's favour.

Let the reader ask any single ladies of his acquaintance, who live in a house of their own, whether they prefer being waited upon by men or by women, and I shall be much surprised if he does not find that they generally avoid having a man about the house at all—gardeners of course excepted. But then the gardener generally has a wife, and a house of his own.

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Take Nausicaa again, delightful as she is, it would not be wise to contradict her; she knows what is good for Ulysses, and all will go well with him so long as he obeys her, but she must be master and he man. I see I have passed over Ino in Book v. She is Idothea over again, just as Circe is Calypso, with very little variation. Who again is master—Queen Arete or King Alcinous? Nausicaa knows well enough how to answer this question. When giving her instructions to Ulysses she says:

"Never mind my father, but go up to my mother and embrace her knees; if she is well disposed towards you there is some chance of your getting home to see your friends again" (vi. 310-315).

Throughout the Phæacian episode Arête (whose name, by the way, I take to be one of the writer's tolerably transparent disguises, and to be intended to suggest Arête, or "Goodness") is a more important person than Alcinous. I do not believe in her myself; I believe Penelope would have been made more amiable if Arete had been as nice a person as the writer says she was; leaving her, however, on one side, so much more important are wives than husbands in the eyes of the author of the *Odyssey* that when Ulysses makes his farewell speech to the Phæacians, she makes him say that he hopes they may continue to give satisfaction to their wives and children (xiii. 44, 45), instead of hoping that their wives and children will continue to give satisfaction to them. A little lower down he wishes Queen Arete all happiness with her children, her people, and lastly with King Alcinous. As for King Alcinous, it does not matter whether he is happy or no, provided he gives satisfaction to Queen Arete; but he was bound to be happy as the husband of such an admirable woman.

So when the Duke of York was being married I heard women over and over again say they hoped the Princess May would be very happy with him, but I never heard one say that she hoped the Duke would be very happy with the Princess May. Men said they hoped the pair would be very happy, without naming one more than the other.

I have touched briefly on all the more prominent female[Pg 109] characters of the *Odyssey*. The moral in every case seems to be that man knows very little, and cannot be trusted not to make a fool of himself even about the little that he does know, unless he has a woman at hand to tell him what he ought to do. There is not a single case in which a man comes to the rescue of female beauty in distress; it is invariably the other way about.

The only males who give Ulysses any help while he is on his wanderings are Æolus, who does him no real service and refuses to help him a second time, and Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly (x. 305) to protect him against the spells of Circe. In this last case, however, I do not doubt that the writer was tempted by the lovely passage of *Il.* XXIV., where Mercury meets Priam to conduct him to the Achæan camp; one pretty line, indeed (and rather more), of the Iliadic passage above referred to is taken bodily by the writer of the *Odyssey* to describe the youth and beauty of the god.^[2] With these exceptions, throughout the poem Andromeda rescues Perseus, not Perseus Andromeda—Christiana is guide and guardian to Mr. Greatheart, not Mr. Greatheart to Christiana.

The case of Penelope may seem to be an exception. It may be urged that Ulysses came to her rescue, and that the whole poem turns on his doing so. But this is not true. Ulysses kills the suitors, firstly, because they had wasted his substance—this from the first to last is the main grievance; secondly, because they had violated the female servants of his house; and only, thirdly, because they had offered marriage to his wife while he was still alive (xxii. 36-38). Never yet was woman better able to hold her own when she chose, and I will show at full length shortly that when she did not hold it it was because she preferred not to do so.

I have dealt so far with the writer's attitude towards women when in the world of the living. Let us now see what her instinct prompts her to consider most interesting in the kingdom of the dead. When Ulysses has reached the abode of Hades, the first ghost he meets is that of his comrade [Pg 110] Elpenor, who had got drunk and fallen off the roof of Circe's house just as Ulysses and his men were about to set sail. We are expressly told that he was a person of no importance, being remarkable neither for sense nor courage, so that it does not matter about killing him, and it is transparent that the accident is only allowed to happen in order to enable Ulysses to make his little joke when he greets the ghost in Hades to the effect that Elpenor has got there more quickly by land than Ulysses had done by water. Elpenor therefore, does not count.

The order, however, in which the crowd of ghosts approach Ulysses, is noticeable. After the blood of the victims sacrificed by Ulysses had flowed into the trench which he had dug to receive it, the writer says:—

"The ghosts came trooping up from Erebus—brides, young bachelors, old men worn out with toil, maids who had been crossed in love, and brave men who had been killed in battle, with their armour still smirched with blood; they came from every quarter, and flitted round the trench with a strange kind of screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear" (xi. 36-43).

I do not think a male writer would have put the brides first, nor yet the young bachelors second. He would have begun with kings or great warriors or poets, nor do I believe he would make Ulysses turn pale with fear merely because the ghosts screamed a little; they would have had to menace him more seriously.

What does Bunyan do? When Christian tells Pliable what kind of company he will meet in Paradise, he says:—

"There we shall see elders with their golden crowns; there we shall see holy virgins with their golden harps; there we shall see men that by the world were cut in pieces,

burnt in flames, eaten of beasts, drowned in the seas, for the love they bore to the Lord of that place; all well and cloathed with immortality as with a garment."

Men present themselves to him instinctively in the first instance, and though he quits them for a moment, he returns to them immediately without even recognising the existence of women among the martyrs.

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Moreover, when Christian and Hopeful have passed through the river of death and readied the eternal city, it is none but men who greet them.

True, after having taken Christian to the Eternal City, Bunyan conducts Christiana also, and her children, in his Second Part; but surely if he had been an inspired woman and not an inspired man, and if this woman had been writing as it was borne in upon her by her own instinct, neither aping man nor fearing him, she would have taken Christiana first, and Christian, if she took him at all, in her appendix.

Next to Elpenor the first ghost that Ulysses sees is that of his mother Anticlea, and he is sorely grieved that he may not, by Circe's instructions, speak to her till he has heard what the Theban prophet Tiresias had got to tell him. As soon as he has heard this, he enquires how he can make his mother recognise him, and converse with him. This point being answered there follows the incomparably beautiful scene between him and Anticlea, which occupies some seventy or eighty lines, and concludes by his mother's telling him to get home as fast as he can that he may tell of his adventures in Hades—to whom? To the world at large? To his kinsmen and countrymen? No: it is to his wife that he is to recount them and apparently to nobody else (xi. 223, 224). Very right and proper; but more characteristic of a female than of a male writer.

Who follow immediately on the departure of Anticlea? Proserpine sends up "all the wives and daughters of great princes"—Tyro, daughter of Salmoneus, Antiope daughter of Asopus, Alcmena, Epicaste (better known as Jocasta), Chloris wife of Neleus, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phædra, Procris, Ariadne, Mæra, Clymene, and Eriphyle. Ulysses says that there were many more wives and daughters of heroes whom he conversed with, but that time would not allow him to detail them further; in deference, however, to the urgent request of King Alcinous, he goes on to say how he met Agamemnon, Achilles, and Ajax (who would not speak to him); he touched lightly also on Minos, Orion, Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Hercules.

I have heard women say that nothing can be made out of the [Pg 112] fact that the women in Hades are introduced before the men, inasmuch as they would themselves have been more likely to put the men before the women, and can understand that a

male writer would be attracted in the first instance by the female shades. When women know what I am driving at, they generally tell me this, but when I have got another woman to sound them for me, or when I have stalked them warily, I find that they would rather meet the Virgin Mary, Eve, Queen Elizabeth, Cleopatra, Sappho, Jane Austen, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Helen of Troy, Zenobia, and other great women than even Homer and Shakspeare. One comfortable homely woman with whom I had taken great pains said she could not think what I meant by asking such questions, but if I wanted to know, she would as lief meet Mrs. Elizabeth Lazenby as Queen Elizabeth or any one of them. For my own part, had I to choose a number of shades whom I would meet, I should include Sappho, Jane Austen, and the authoress of the *Odyssey* in my list, but I should probably ask first for Homer, Shakspeare, Handel, Schubert, Arcangelo Corelli, Purcell, Giovanni Bellini, Rembrandt, Holbein, De Hooghe, Donatello, Jean de Wespignier and many another man—yet the writer of the *Odyssey* interests me so profoundly that I am not sure I should not ask to see her before any of the others.

I know of no other women writers who have sent their heroes down to Hades, but when men have done so they deal with men first and women afterwards. Let us turn to Dante. When Virgil tells him whom Christ first saved when he descended into Hell, we find that he first rescued Adam. Not a word is there about Eve. Then are rescued Abel, Noah, Abraham, David, Jacob and his sons—and lastly, just before the *et ceteri*—one woman, Rachel. When Virgil has finished, Dante begins meeting people on his own account. First come Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan; when these have been disposed of we have Electra, Hector, Æneas, Cæsar, Camilla, Penthesilea, Latinus, Lavinia, Brutus, Cato's wife Marcia, Julia, Cornelia, Saladin, Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Diogenes, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Thales, Zeno, Dioscorides, Orpheus, Linus, Cicero, Seneca, Euclid, Ptolemy, Hippocrates, [Pg 113] Galen, Avicenna, and Averroes. Seven women to twenty-six men. This list reminds me of Sir John Lubbock's hundred books, I shall therefore pursue Dante no further; I have given it in full because I do not like him. So far as I can see the Italians themselves are beginning to have their doubts about him; "Dante è un falso idolo," has been said to me more than once lately by highly competent critics.

Let us now look to the *Æneid*. When Æneas and the Sibyl approach the river Styx, we read:—

Huc omnis turba ad ripas effusa ruebat
Matres atque viri, defunctaque corpora vitæ
Magnanimûm heroum, pueri, innuptæque puellæ,

Impositique rogis juvenes ante ora parentum.

Æn. vi. 305-308.

The women indeed come first, but the *i* in *virī* being short Virgil could not help himself, and the first persons whom he recognises as individuals are men—namely two of his captains who had been drowned, Leucaspis and Orontes—and Palinurus. After crossing the Styx he first passes through the region inhabited by those who have died as infants; then that by those who have been unjustly condemned to die; then that by suicides; then that of those who have died for love, where he sees several women, and among them Dido, who treats him as Ajax treated Ulysses. The rest of those whom *Æneas* sees or converses with in Hades are all men.

Lucian is still more ungallant, for in his dialogues of the dead he does not introduce a single woman.

One other case alone occurs to me among the many that ought to do so; I refer to Fielding's *Journey to the next World*. The three first ghosts whom he speaks to in the coach are men. When he gets to his journey's end, after a short but most touching scene with his own little daughter who had died a mere child only a few months before Fielding wrote, and who is therefore nothing to the point, he continues: "The first spirit with whom I entered into discourse, was the famous Leonidas of Sparta." Of course; soldier will greet soldier first. In the next paragraph one line is given to [Pg 114] Sappho, who we are told was singing to the accompaniment of Orpheus. Then we go on to Homer,^[3] Virgil, Addison, Shakspeare, Betterton, Booth, and Milton.

Defoe, again, being an elderly married man, and wanting to comfort Robinson Crusoe, can think of nothing better for him than the companionship of another man, whereon he sends him Friday. A woman would have sent him an amiable and good-looking white girl whom the cannibals had taken prisoner from some shipwrecked vessel. This she would have held as likely to be far more useful to him.

So much to show that the mind of man, unless when he is young and lovesick, turns more instinctively to man than to woman. And I am convinced, as indeed every one else is whether he or she knows it or no, that with the above exception, woman is more interested in woman. This is how the Virgin Mary has come to be Queen of Heaven, and practically of more importance than the Trinity itself in the eyes of the common people in Roman Catholic countries. For the women support the theologians more than the men do. The male Jews, again, so I am told, have a prayer in which the men thank God that they were not born women, and the women, that they were not born men. Each sex believes most firmly in itself, nor till we have done away with individualism altogether can we find the smallest reason to complain of this

arrangement. A woman if she attempts an Epic is almost compelled to have a man for her central figure, but she will minimise him, and will maximise his wife and daughters, drawing them with subtler hand. That the writer of the *Odyssey* has done this is obvious; and this fact alone should make us incline strongly towards thinking that we are in the hands not of a man but of a woman.

[1] *Select Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Richard Garnett, Kegan Paul Trench & Co., 1882, p. 149.

[2] *Od.* x. 278, 279; cf. *Il.* XXIV. 347, 348.

[3] Talking of *Homer* Fielding says, "I had the curiosity to ask him whether he had really writ that poem [the *Iliad*] in detached pieces and flung it about all over Greece, according to the report that went of him. He smiled at my question, and asked me whether there appeared any connection in the poem; for if there did he thought I might answer for myself." This was first published in 1743, and is no doubt intended as a reply to Bentley. See Jebb's *Introduction to Homer*, ed. 1888, note 1 on p. 106.

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