

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ULYSSES OF ITHACA

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LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ULYSSES OF ITHACA

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Translated from the German by

GEORGE P. UPTON

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*M*ERCURY DESCENDING TO EARTH

LIFE STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ULYSSES OF ITHACA

*Translated from the German of
Karl Friedrich Becker*

BY

GEORGE P. UPTON

*Author of "Musical Memories," "Standard Operas," etc.
Translator of "Memories," "Immensee," etc.*

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS



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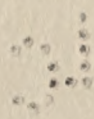
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Translator's Preface

MANY years ago Karl Friedrich Becker wrote a series of romances of the ancient world for German boys and girls, of which "Ulysses" and "Achilles" in the present series of "Life Stories for Young People" form an important part. They became great favorites in their day and still preserve their interest, so that in a sense they may be called classics. The masterly manner in which the author has presented the old gods and heroes from the human point of view and the atmosphere of the old days of mythology, as well as the thrill of the adventurous narrative and the deep human interest of the story, should commend them also to American boys and girls. None of the ancient stories is more entrancing than that of Ulysses and the vicissitudes he had to endure in his effort to return to Ithaca after the Trojan war, and of the patience, sweetness, and faithfulness of Penelope, as she waited year after year for the return of her lord, while her life was made wretched by the unwelcome and often brutal solicitations of her numerous suitors, as well as of her final happiness when Ulysses returned and wreaked deserved vengeance upon her persecutors. Incidentally also the reader will enjoy the charming descriptions of

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

his adventures with Calypso and the beautiful Nausicaa, his escape from the monstrous Cyclops, the fascinating Circe, and his thrilling experiences in passing Scylla and Charybdis. It is a story replete with interest, delightfully told.

G. P. U.

CHICAGO, *July*, 1912

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Ulysses of Ithaca

Chapter I

*Penelope waiting for Ulysses — The Suitors —
Telemachus, encouraged by Athene, sets sail*

WORLD-RENOWNED Troy had fallen. After a siege of ten long years the united forces of the Greeks had sacked and burned the city. The princes, having thus satisfied their thirst for revenge, now longed for home, and putting to sea with their ships, soon sailed away with their companions. Some reached home in safety, others were tossed to and fro upon stormy seas, wandered about for years, and never succeeded in reaching their native land. Agamemnon, the bravest of the surviving heroes, met a still more terrible fate. Joyfully he had gazed once more upon his ancestral home, and thanking the gods for his safe return, hastened impetuously to the arms of his beloved spouse Clytemnestra, not knowing that the faithless one had wed another during his absence. The false one received him with feigned tenderness and presented him with a refreshing draught; he disrobed, drank with deep emotion from the old familiar goblet, and stretched his weary limbs luxuriously upon the soft cushions.

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Alas! while the unsuspecting hero slept, the despoiler of his fortune and his spouse suddenly fell upon him with a sword and slew him.

How different is the story of the noble Penelope, the beautiful wife of Ulysses! He was king of the isle of Ithaca, off the western coast of Greece, and had been drawn into the war against Troy. Ever since her husband had set sail, a number of the young princes of Ithaca and the neighboring islands had beset her with proposals for her hand. She was young and beautiful and had great wealth in sheep and cattle, goats and swine, so that whoever wed her might hope, by taking Ulysses' place as chief of the island, to rule over the minor princes. This was a tempting prospect and the young men used every means in their power to persuade the beautiful queen to return to her father's house as a widow, so that they might formally demand her hand according to ancient custom. Ulysses, they said, would never return. But it was not easy for the suitors to banish the image of her beloved husband from the heart of this devoted wife. She could not so lightly break the tie in which she had found her youthful happiness. He will surely return, she thought, and though she wept day and night for fear and longing, this hope cheered her anxious soul. Year after year passed and still the war went on. At last news reached Ithaca that Troy had fallen and the heroes were returning. Fresh hope now filled the heart of the faithful wife, but another year passed, and still another, and no ship brought back her lord.

PENELOPE WAITING FOR ULYSSES

Penelope talked with every stranger who came to Ithaca and asked for news of the hero. His companions were said to have returned long ago — Nestor to Pylos, Menelaus to Sparta; no one knew what had become of Ulysses or whether he was dead or living. For nine years longer the poor woman nursed her grief, until nineteen years had passed since she had seen her lord. He had left her with a nursling, now grown into a handsome lad, who was her only consolation, but much too impotent to cope with the presumptuous rabble, which became each year more insistent and at length hit upon a cruel means of forcing the poor lady to return to her father's house. They leagued themselves with the princes of the neighborhood, over a hundred in number, and agreed that they would all assemble each morning at Ulysses' palace, there to consume the produce of his herds and granaries and to drink his wines, until his heir, Telemachus, for fear of becoming impoverished, should be compelled to thrust his faithful mother from the door and thus force her into another marriage. Thenceforth the great halls of Ulysses' palace were filled from morning till night with these uninvited guests, who compelled the king's servants to do their bidding. They took what they wanted and mocked the owners with loud shouts and laughter. The herds were diminishing perceptibly, the abundance of grain and wine disappearing, and there was no one able to check the robbers. Penelope sat in her upper chamber at her loom and wept; Telemachus was derided

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whenever he showed himself among the insolent crowd.

A god had brought this woe upon Ulysses' house. Poseidon, ruler of the sea, was angry at the hero, who had sorely offended him. Therefore he drove him from south to north and from east to west upon the broad seas, dashed his ships to pieces, killed his companions, and forced him through whirlpools and canyons to strange peoples. And now, while his insolent neighbors were consuming his substance, he was held a prisoner upon a lonely island far from home, where reigned Calypso, a daughter of the gods. She desired him for her husband, but Ulysses brooded continually upon his dear country, his wife, and son. He went daily to the shore, and seated himself mournfully by the surf, wishing for nothing more ardently than that he might see the smoke ascending from his own hearth before he died.

The gods in high Olympus were touched, especially his friend Athene. One day, when they were all assembled in their vast halls and the unfriendly Poseidon happened to be absent among the Ethiopians, Athene seized the opportunity to relate the story of the sad plight of Ulysses and Penelope to father Jupiter. The king of the gods was filled with compassion and gladly granted his daughter's request that she might be permitted to visit Telemachus in disguise, to breathe courage into his soul, and that Hermes should be sent to the isle of Ogygia to transmit the command of the gods to

PENELOPE WAITING FOR ULYSSES

Calypso to release immediately her prisoner. Athene straightway prepared for the journey. She bound her golden sandals upon her feet, took her mighty lance in her hand, and descending like the wind upon Ithaca, stood suddenly before Telemachus' lofty gateway, in the guise of Mentor, the Taphian king. Here she saw with amazement the wild company of wanton suitors feasting and drinking, gambling and shouting, and the servants of Telemachus waiting upon them, carving the meat, washing the tables, and pouring wine and mixing it with water after the ancient custom. Among them, taking no part in their revels, sat Telemachus, with a heavy heart. He no sooner saw the stranger at the gate than he went to meet him, gave him his hand, and, greeting him kindly, took his lance. He then conducted the unknown guest into the dwelling, but not among the revellers, so that his meal should not be disturbed by their riotous behavior. The stranger was placed upon a dais, with a footstool under his feet. Telemachus seated himself beside him, and at a sign a servant immediately brought a golden ewer and a silver basin, bathed their hands, and placed a polished table before them. The stewardess brought bread and meat, while a lusty servant poured the wine.

Not until the stranger had been refreshed with food and drink did Telemachus ask his name and the object of his journey. "I am Mentor, the son of Alcimus, and rule the Taphians," said the disguised goddess. "I have come hither on my way

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to Temesa, in a ship which lies at anchor in the bay, and as Ulysses and I are old friends, I wished in passing to pay thee a visit."

Thereupon Telemachus told the story of his wrongs to his guest. The goddess listened attentively, just as though she had not known it all before. She advised him to adopt a manly attitude in public assemblage, boldly to forbid the suitors the house, and, above all, to set out for Sparta and Pylos, where lived the valiant heroes Nestor and Menelaus, Ulysses' companions in the siege of Troy. There he might learn where they had parted from his father and where he was now most likely to be found; "for a divine inspiration tells me that he is not dead," added Mentor. "He is indeed far away, shipwrecked and held by cruel captors, but thou shalt certainly see him again if thou wilt follow my advice."

The youth began to love and revere his father's old friend. In accordance with the ancient rites of hospitality, he offered him a gift at his departure, which was declined on the plea of haste. He promised to come again on his return voyage, however when he would take the gift with him. Upon this, he disappeared suddenly like a bird, and for the first time Telemachus suspected that he had been entertaining a divinity. He pondered all that the stranger had said, and determined to follow the divine counsel. He began at once to protest against the suitors' demeanor, and they, never having seen him appear so manly before, were astonished at his

PENELOPE WAITING FOR ULYSSES

boldness. Antinous and Eurymachus, however, the most insolent among them all, mocked at his words and soon had them all laughing at him. They spent the evening in song and dance, and when night came dispersed as usual to their own dwellings.

Telemachus also went to his sleeping chamber, accompanied by his faithful old nurse, Euryclea, carrying a flaming torch before him. He threw off his soft flowing garment and tossed it to the old dame who, folding it carefully, hung it on the wooden peg by his bed. Telemachus threw himself upon his couch and wrapped himself in the woollen covers. The old dame retired, barring the doors.

As soon as morning dawned Telemachus sprang from his couch, dressed himself, laced his sandals, and girded on his sword. Thus apparelled, the stately youth sallied forth. He sent out heralds to summon the populace to assemble, and when the crowd had gathered in close ranks, he went among them bearing his lance and accompanied by two swift-footed dogs. Then to the amazement of all, Telemachus stepped forth, caused the heralds to bring him the sceptre, as a sign that he wished to speak, and began as follows: "I have called you, people of Ithaca, because the deep distress of my house impels me. My father, as you know, is far away, perhaps forever lost to me. I am forced to endure every day a swarm of unmannerly guests intrenching themselves in my house, who pretend to court my mother, while they maliciously consume my substance and will soon make a beggar of the king's

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son. Unhappy one! I need a man such as Ulysses was to purge my house of this plague. Therefore I pray you to resent the wrong. Be ashamed before your neighbors and fear the vengeance of the gods. Did my good father ever intentionally offend you, and am I not already unhappy enough in losing him?"

At these words tears overcame him and he dashed the sceptre to the ground. Pity and compassion seized upon the assemblage. All were silent except the most determined of the suitors, Antinous, who answered insolently: "Bold-tongued youth, what sayest thou? Wouldst thou make us hateful in the eyes of the people? Who but thyself is to blame for thy troubles? Why dost thou not send away thy mother and why does she not go willingly? Has she not mocked us with subterfuges and kept us in suspense for more than three years? Did she not say: 'Delay the wedding until I shall have finished weaving the shroud for my old father-in-law, Laertes, that the women may not censure me if the old man, who in life possessed such riches, should be carried out unclothed'? And what did the crafty lady do? She wove day after day, but the garment was never finished, and at length we learned the secret from one of her women. By lamp-light she undid the work of the day. Then we compelled her to finish it, and now we demand that she shall keep her promise. Thou must immediately command her to return to her father's house and take for her husband whoever pleases her or

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one whom her father shall select for her. If thou doest this, none of us will molest thee further; but we shall not retire until she has chosen a bridegroom from among the Achaians.”

Telemachus spurned the proposal with righteous indignation. Once more he besought the suitors to spare his house and threatened them with the vengeance of the gods. But they only mocked at him and everyone who took his part. He then proposed that a ship should be fitted out, so that he might sail to Pylos and Sparta to seek his father, and if in a year's time he should have heard nothing of him, he promised that his mother should wed with whom she would.

This proposal was received with scorn, and the assembly broke up. Sadly Telemachus wandered down to the sea, bathed his hands in the dark waters, and prayed to the goddess who had appeared to him the day before. Behold, as he stood there alone, Mentor, his father's old friend, came toward him. He also had been amongst the people and had heard with anger the defiant language of the suitors. Indeed he had arisen to speak for Telemachus, but their mocking cries prevented him; and now he reappeared, as Telemachus believed, to assist him in carrying out his plans.

Mentor, or rather Athene, encouraged him, urged him not to delay the journey, and even offered to supply a ship and crew. Telemachus went straight home, confided his plan to his old nurse Euryclea, and ordered her to provide wine in jars,

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meal in skins, and whatever else was needful for the voyage. The tender-hearted old dame wept bitterly when she saw the delicate youth prepare to start on such a long and dangerous journey. She begged him a thousand times to give it up and await his father's arrival at home. He was manfully resolute, however, and the nurse was obliged to promise to keep his departure a secret — not even to tell his mother until she should have missed him.

Athene, in Mentor's shape, was meanwhile employed in hiring a ship and oarsmen, so that by evening everything was in readiness. When the suitors had retired and everyone was asleep, Mentor took Telemachus secretly away. The youths carried the provisions down to the ship, raised the mast, and bound it fast with ropes. Then the rowers came aboard and loosed the ship from shore. Athene had seated herself by the side of Telemachus. The oars splashed gayly on the quiet surface of the sea. The silent night encompassed them, and only the twinkling stars illumined with a faint light the dark waters through which the vessel was being swiftly propelled.

Chapter II

Telemachus visits Nestor and Menelaus — The Suitors prepare an Ambush

AT sunrise the travellers saw Pylos before them, a little town on the western coast of Peloponnesus, or the present peninsula of Morea. It was the home of the venerable Nestor, who lived amongst his subjects like a father with his children. His descendants were numerous and all the people revered his opinion, and loved him for his kindness and benignity, and the recital of his adventures whiled away many an hour for the eager youths who hung upon his words.

On the morning when Telemachus and his companions were nearing Pylos, Nestor had summoned his people to the shore to offer up a great sacrifice to Poseidon. These thousands of festive people, ranged in nine columns each composed of five hundred men, made a wonderful picture. Each column had contributed nine bulls which, having been offered up, were now smouldering on the altars, while the people were feasting upon the residue.

Athene and young Telemachus disembarked, and, leaving the ship in the care of the rowers, set out on foot toward the scene of festivity. The divine

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guide encouraged the timid youth to address the old man boldly and instructed him what to say and how to conduct himself.

Scarcely had the men of Pylos caught sight of them when a group of youths hastened forward to welcome them, holding out their hands in friendly greeting, according to the hospitable custom of ancient times. Pisistratus, Nestor's youngest son, was the most cordial of them all. He took both strangers by the hand and led them to soft seats upon sheepskins beside his father and his brother, Thrasymedes, bringing meat and wine to refresh the weary guests. He then filled a golden goblet, quaffed it in Athene's honor, and spoke to her as follows: "Dear guest, join us, I pray thee, in our joyful sacrifice; it is offered to Poseidon, ruler of the sea. Pour out this wine to the mighty god and pray to him for our welfare! No man can do without the gods! And when thou hast offered sacrifice and drunk of the wine, then give thy friend the goblet that he also may pray for us. Thou art the older, therefore I have offered the cup first to thee."

Athene was pleased with these modest and courteous words. She took the cup, poured a few drops on the ground, and prayed: "Hear me, Poseidon; deign to prosper every good work which we shall undertake. Crown Nestor and his sons with honor and graciously reward the men of Pylos for the holy sacrifice which they have offered before thee to-day. And graciously prosper my friend and me in the enterprise which has brought us hither!" Thus

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

she prayed, and while still speaking, by reason of her divine power, she secretly granted the prayer. Then Telemachus received the cup from her hand and drank, also offering sacrifice and prayer for the feasting people.

Not until the guests had partaken of food did the venerable Nestor consider it proper to inquire the name and business of the strangers. Telemachus told him the object of their journey and conjured the old man to tell him all he knew about his noble father, urging him not to conceal anything, however terrible, that would give him certainty as to his fate. Then Nestor began, with the garrulity of old age, to relate the adventures of the heroes and the story of his own return. But Telemachus could draw no comfort from these tales, for what he most wished to learn was what Nestor knew no better than himself. The old man advised him to go to Menelaus at Sparta, who of all the heroes had been longest on the way, and having only lately reached home, would certainly be able to give him news of Ulysses' fate. Mentor approved of this proposal, and the journey to Sparta was determined upon. As by this time night was beginning to fall, the goddess reminded her young friend that it was time to set out. The sons of Nestor filled the cups once more and the customary offerings were made to Poseidon and the immortal gods. Then Mentor and Telemachus arose to go down to their vessel.

“The gods forbid!” cried Nestor, when he saw them about to depart. “Shall my guests spend the

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day with me and go away to pass the night in a musty vessel, as though I were a poor man, who had no cloaks nor warm covers in my house? No, my friends, I have plenty of soft cushions and fine garments, and the son of my old friend Ulysses shall not thus depart so long as I live! And even when I am gone, there will always be sons to pay honor to the stranger within my gates."

"Well said," answered Mentor. "Telemachus must accept thy hospitality. Let him go with thee to lodge in thy palace, but I must hasten to the shore to pass the night with the young sailors and look after their welfare. Very early in the morning I must pay a visit to the valiant Cauconians to settle an old debt. In the meanwhile do thou send Telemachus with thy sons to Sparta and provide him with a chariot and fleet horses for the journey."

With these words Mentor turned and in the shape of an eagle swung himself up into the air. All were amazed, but Nestor immediately recognized the goddess; for he knew how many times in the past she had aided Ulysses. "Take courage," he said to Telemachus, "for thou seest that the gods are with thee. And thou, divine Athene, have mercy upon us all and crown us with fame and renown! Behold! I vow to thee each year a bull, broad of forehead and without blemish, which has never been under the yoke."

The people dispersed, and Nestor returned to his dwelling with his sons and their guest. On their arrival wine was again offered up and drunk,

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

and then Pisistratus conducted Telemachus to a couch beside his own in the pillared hall. The other sons, being married, had their quarters in the interior of the house.

As soon as morning dawned the sons and their venerable father arose and assembled on the stone seats before the portal to discuss the proposed journey. Nestor presently sent some of his sons to select the offering which he had promised Athene. One was sent to the vessel to fetch all of Telemachus' rowers except two, another to order a goldsmith to gild the horns of the victim, a third to command the shepherd to seek out and bring up an ox of the promised quality, and another finally to notify the maidens to prepare a banquet.

It was not long before the goldsmith appeared, also the rowers, and the shepherd soon brought the desired animal. When the goldsmith had finished gilding the horns of the ox, two of the sons led it into the circle. Nestor, having sprinkled himself with water, cut off the animal's forelock and cast it with prayer on the flaming altar, strewing consecrated barley upon the ground. And now the mighty Thrasymedes advanced and struck a heavy blow with a sharp axe, which sundered the tendons of the animal's neck and it fell stunned to the ground. Perseus caught the gushing blood in a vessel, while Pisistratus completed the slaughter of the victim. The others now came up to carve the beef. They cut off the shanks, wrapped them well in strips of fat, and laid them on the altar fire to send up deli-

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cious odors to the goddess, sprinkled wine upon and roasted the other pieces for the offering, turning them upon spits. Other youths cut up the remainder and roasted it carefully for the feast.

When all was prepared Telemachus appeared in the midst of the company beautiful as a god. He had bathed, anointed himself with oil, and wrapped himself in a rich mantle. The company sat down in a circle to enjoy the magnificent feast, and when they had eaten their fill, Nestor reminded his sons that it was time to depart. They quickly harnessed two horses to a chariot, while a servant stowed away bread, wine, and meat for the journey. Telemachus took his place on the seat with Pisistratus beside him holding the reins and whip. They travelled rapidly all day and at eve reached Pheræ, the dwelling of the good Diocles, who hospitably entertained them. On the second day they arrived at the castle of Menelaus in Lacedæmon, having recognized his dominions by the broad fields of wheat. Pisistratus drew up his prancing steeds before the gateway of the castle, and the two strangers sprang hurriedly out.

They heard sounds of revelry within. The voice of a singer was accompanied by the sweet tones of a stringed instrument, and through the open gateway they saw a crowd of guests in the centre of which two dancers were moving in time to the music. This was a great day in Menelaus' palace. The old hero was celebrating the marriage of two of his children. There was so much noise and confusion

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

within that the clatter of the chariot had not been noticed. A servant by chance saw the strangers at the gate. "Two strange youths of kingly mien are without. Shall I unharness their horses," he asked, "or shall I bid them drive on to seek hospitality elsewhere?"

"What!" cried Menelaus angrily, "how canst thou ask such childish questions. Have we not ourselves received many gifts and been kindly entertained amongst strangers? Go quickly, take out the horses, and bring the men in to the feast!"

The servant obeyed, and Telemachus and Pisistratus were conducted into the hall. They were astonished at the splendor of the palace, for Menelaus had returned with great possessions. Maid servants conducted them to the bath, and when they had anointed themselves, they donned their tunics and cloaks and took their places on raised seats beside the host. Servants appeared at once with small tables and food. One poured water over their hands from a golden ewer into a silver basin, while another brought wine, meat, and bread. "Now eat and drink with us," cried Menelaus; "afterward shall you tell me who you are, for I perceive that ye are no common men." With these words he placed a fine fat piece of roast, his own special portion, upon their plates, and the youths found it a delicious morsel.

Menelaus gazed at them intently. He remarked with satisfaction that they were astonished at the magnificence of his hall and of the utensils, and he

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saw how they called each other's attention secretly to new objects. This induced him to speak of his travels, of the perils to which he had been exposed for eight years after the Trojan war, and of the persons he had met who had presented him with the costly objects by which he was now surrounded. In his recital he often referred to the hardships of the Trojan war, while the mention of the ignominious death of his brother, Agamemnon, caused him to shed bitter tears. "But," he continued, "I would bear all this with patience if only I might have kept my friend, dearer to me than all the rest, the noble Ulysses, with whom I have shared good and evil days! Or if I but knew that he was safe and could have him near me! I would endow him with a city that we might live side by side and commune with each other daily until death should part us. But the gods alone know whether he is alive or dead. Perhaps his old father, his chaste wife, and his son Telemachus are even now mourning him as dead!"

Telemachus hid his tears behind his cloak. Menelaus saw this and was uncertain whether to question him or to leave him to his grief. Just then his spouse, the once beautiful Helen, entered the hall accompanied by her maidens, one of whom brought her a chair, another carried the soft woollen carpet for her feet, a third her silver work basket. She seated herself near the strangers, observed them attentively, and then said to her husband: "Hast thou inquired the names of our guests? I should

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

say that two people were never more alike than this youth is unto the noble Ulysses."

"Indeed it is true," answered the hero. "He has the hands, the feet, the eyes, and hair of Ulysses. And just now while I was speaking of our old friend, the hot tears sprang from the youth's lids and he hid his face in the folds of his purple mantle."

"Thou art quite right, Menelaus, godlike ruler," interrupted Pisisstratus. "This is truly the son of Ulysses, but he is a modest youth and did not wish to make himself known at once with boastful speech. My father, Nestor, hath sent me with him thither that thou mightest give him tidings of his noble father and advice, for he is sore beset at home and there is none among the people to rise up and avert disaster from him."

Menelaus would now have rejoiced over the youth had not sad memories of his lost friend overwhelmed him. He wept, Helen also, and Telemachus still sobbed, while young Pisisstratus was much moved. For a while they gave themselves up to their grief until Menelaus proposed that they should talk the matter over on the morrow and should now banish these sorrowful thoughts and return to the feast. This sensible advice was approved by all. A servant at once laved the hands of the guests, and they began once more to eat and drink. Helen, who was an adept at various arts, secretly poured a magic powder into the wine. It was a wonderful spice given her by an Egyptian princess, which had the property of deadening every discomfort or sorrow

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and cheering the soul, even though a father and mother, brother or sister, or even one's own son had been killed before one's eyes. They all drank of it and became gay. Helen told many amusing tales of the craftiness of Ulysses which she had herself experienced. For while she was still in Ilium he had come into the city in disguise to spy out the plans of the Trojans. No one recognized him, and only to Helen did he discover himself and confide the plans of the Greeks. Menelaus also told how they had been concealed within the wooden horse and would scarcely have withstood Helen's call had Ulysses not restrained them. While the evening was thus being passed in confidential talk, Helen had a couch prepared in the hall with cushions and soft covers for the guests and a herald conducted them thither with a torch. Menelaus and his spouse, however, slept in the interior of the palace.

Not until morning did the host ask his guests their business. Telemachus told him the story of the insolent suitors, and begged Menelaus for some news of his father. "Ah!" cried the hero when he had heard the tale, "it shall be as though the doe had left her young in the lion's cave and had gone away to graze upon the hills. When the lion returns and finds the strange brood, he destroys them. Thus will Ulysses return to his house and make a terrible end of those trespassers! Could they but see him in the majesty of his power as he once threw Philomelides in Lesbos, then truly they would have

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

little stomach for courting. But, dear youth, as thou hast asked me, I will tell thee what the old prophet Proteus in Egypt once told me of him. On my return voyage angry gods detained me for twenty days on an island at the mouth of the Nile, for I had carelessly forgotten to make the customary offering of atonement. Our food was nearly gone, my companions lost courage, and I should perhaps have perished with them had a goddess not taken pity on me. Idothea, the lovely daughter of Proteus, looked upon us with compassion, and once when I had wandered far from the others, she came and spoke to me. Then I told her my plight, and begged her to tell me some means of gaining the favor of the heavenly powers to discern which of the gods was hindering my journey and how I might reach home through the endless leagues of ocean.

“Gladly, oh stranger,” said she, “will I tell thee of an unfailing means. Thou knowest that my father, the old sea god, Proteus, is omniscient, and if thou canst surprise him by some cunning scheme he might easily tell thee all that thou wishest to know.” “Good,” said I; “but tell me what means I can employ to ensnare him.” “Listen,” answered the goddess; “every day when the sun is at the zenith the god rises from the sea, and comes on shore to sleep in the cool grottoes. With him come also the seals to sun themselves upon the shore. Therefore, if thou wouldst approach him unseen thou must conceal thyself in the skin of a seal and take thy

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place amongst the others. I will help thee. Come here early to-morrow morning with three picked companions, and I will furnish you all with glossy skins. When my father comes up, the first thing he does is to count his seals as a shepherd counts his sheep; then he lies down amongst them. As soon as thou seest that he has fallen asleep it is time to use force. You must all seize him and hold him fast, not letting go, no matter how he struggles to free himself. He will use all his arts of transformation to get away, now as fire, now as water, and now as some rapacious animal. But ye must not cease to contend with him until he shall have reassumed his proper form. Then loose the bonds, and let him tell thee what thou wishest to know.'

"As soon as Idothea had said this she disappeared into the depths of the sea. I went to my ship and spent the night in anxious vigil, and in the morning I picked out three men of proven strength and bravery to accompany me in this wonderful adventure. We went to the appointed place, and behold! the nymph kept her word. She arose out of the sea with four fresh sealskins, enveloped us each in one of them, and showed us where to lie down. Friends, you cannot imagine our plight. The oily smell of the skins would certainly have overcome us had not Idothea rubbed sweet-smelling ambrosia upon them to smother the horrible odors. Thus unpleasantly masquerading we passed the whole morning, until at last, in the heat of the noon-day, the troop of seals rose out of the water, and

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after them came the gray god of the sea. He looked about, examined and counted his seals, ourselves with the rest, and then laid himself down in their midst. Very soon we sprang up with loud cries and held him down with all our strength. Everything transpired as his daughter had warned us. He suddenly transformed himself into a lion to frighten us, but we were not to be thus outwitted and only held the tighter. Then he became a panther, then a dragon, and finally, a bristly boar. While we thought we were grasping the bristles he tried to escape us as water, and scarcely had we dammed up the water when he rose into the air in the form of a tree. At last the old magician became weary of these changes, resumed his true shape, and said: 'Son of Atreus, what mortal has discovered to thee the art of holding me — and what dost thou want of me?'

"I told him my perplexities. He bade me return to Egypt and there propitiate the offended gods with rich offerings. He promised that my return voyage should be successful. I asked one last question of the god: What had become of my friends, and had they all reached home safely? He then began a long story which caused me to weep bitter tears. He spoke of Ajax and his sad fate. He told me of my dear brother Agamemnon's horrible death. My heart was broken; I no longer wished to live. But the venerable god comforted me and commanded me to hasten home to avenge this wrong. Finally I asked the fate of my dear friend

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Ulysses and whether he still lived. Proteus answered: 'Ulysses lives, but is held a prisoner far from here on an island, by the nymph Calypso. He weeps tears of home-sickness and longing, and would gladly intrust himself to the unknown waters, but he has no ship and no men, and the nymph who loves him will never let him go.' Thus Proteus prophesied to me, then suddenly sank into the sea. I followed Proteus' commands and arrived safely at home. Now thou knowest all that I can tell thee. Remain thou with me for a while, then I will send thee home with worthy gifts, — three splendid horses and a cunningly carved chariot, — and in addition I will present thee with a beautiful goblet in which thou canst make offerings to the gods, so that thou shalt always remember me."

Telemachus declined the invitation, for he could not desert his companions whom he had left in Pylos, anxiously awaiting his return. In the morning the king had prepared for the two youths a bountiful farewell repast of freshly killed goats and lambs. Telemachus would scarcely have enjoyed this early meal if he had known what the wicked suitors at home were preparing for him. They learned with deep concern that Telemachus had really had the courage to undertake the journey. Who could tell but he might return with help from Nestor or Menelaus and put them all to death? Until now no one had given the boy credit for much courage, but now — was it not as though the father's spirit had been awak-

TELEMACHUS VISITS NESTOR

ened in the son? Antinous, the most insolent of them all, cried: "No! we must not allow the youth to defy us! He must be crushed before he can harm us. Give me a ship and man it with twenty brave warriors. I will row out to meet him and waylay him in the straits between Ithaca and Samos. If I meet him he will never see this house again alive, and then all will be ours."

All applauded the wicked Antinous and conferred as to how they might most surely destroy the youth, and when all was arranged the ship rowed away to the appointed place to await Telemachus. Medon the herald had overheard the plot, and hastened to acquaint Penelope with the sad news. Her heart was already heavy with anxiety, and at this fresh misfortune her knees began to tremble and she sank unconscious on the threshold of her chamber. Her maidens wept over her, and at last tears sprang to the eyes of the beautiful queen. She moaned aloud and could not compose herself. At first she thought of sending for her father-in-law, Laertes; but the old man was as powerless as she. Then she considered other succor, but all was useless. At last to her oppressed heart came the comforting inspiration of calling upon a god for protection. She prayed fervently to Athene, and when she had finished she felt renewed strength and composure. She sank down upon her couch in a deep sleep.

Athene heard her prayer, and desiring not to leave the good lady comfortless, sent her a pleas-

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ant dream. Penelope's sister appeared to the sleeper, and asked the cause of her grief. Penelope was comforted in telling her woes, and the dream figure put courage into her soul with the consoling words: "Be comforted, sister, and pluck these cowardly fears from thy heart. Thy son will return. He has a guide and companion such as many a one might wish for. Pallas Athene herself is with him, and she has compassion on him and on thee and has also sent me to tell thee this." Penelope wished to ask other things, but the dream figure vanished. She then awoke, was comforted, and no longer bemoaned the fate of the two loved ones whom she had thought were lost.

Chapter III

*Calypso allows Ulysses to go home — Poseidon
sends a storm — Ulysses is wrecked upon
the Island of Scheria*

ATHENE was busy preparing Ulysses' return. Hermes, messenger of the gods, bound on the golden sandals which enabled him to soar like a bird through the air, took up his magic serpent staff with which he could both kill and restore people to life, and flew swiftly away across the sea. He soon stood upon Calypso's distant island, enchanted with the lovely dwelling so charmingly nestling among the trees. Singing birds had made their nests in the dark recesses of the foliage, and the entrance to the grotto was framed in vines from which hung bunches of purple grapes. Round about stretched rich meadows intersected by gleaming brooks, and many-colored flowers peeped out of the rich verdure.

Hermes paused to admire the lovely spot, then entered the grotto to seek Ulysses. The poor fellow who could find no peace of mind in this beautiful isle, and who was vexed by the advances of the goddess, used to go down every day and seat himself beside the surf to gaze out over the dark waters

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in the direction in which his beloved fatherland lay. The nymph, however, sat at her loom weaving herself a garment with a golden shuttle and singing gayly at her work. She recognized Hermes at once and was surprised to see him. He delivered to her the strict command of Jupiter to release Ulysses, as the gods had determined upon his return. This frightened the goddess, and she began to complain of the jealousy and cruelty of the gods. She promised to obey, however, through fear of the anger and vengeance of Jupiter.

In the meanwhile Hermes had been hospitably entertained, for even the gods regale one another, though they do not eat mortal food. Their food is called ambrosia and they drink a divine liquid which the poets call nectar. After feasting, Hermes repeated the message and left the island.

When Calypso had spent her grief in a flood of tears she went out to seek Ulysses. She found him sitting pensively on the shore. "My dear friend," she said, "thou must not pass thy life here in melancholy and grieving. I will have compassion on thee and let thee go. But thou must build a craft for thyself. Go to the forest, select trees, cut and trim them with the axe which I shall give thee, and fashion for thyself a strong raft. I can give thee no rowers, but I will plentifully provide thee with food, drink, and clothes, and will give thee a gentle wind to bear thee out into the sea. If the gods are willing thou shalt soon reach thy dear native land in safety."

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Ulysses sprang up. Her words gave him a thrill of joyful surprise. He could scarcely believe his good fortune. "Swear to me," he cried hastily, "that thou speakest the truth and art not contriving fresh affliction for me!" The goddess smiled, and to please him swore the most terrible oath of the gods, by the earth, the heavens, and the river Styx, and now at last the hero believed her.

The following morning he hastened into the forest, and after four days of incessant labor his raft was finished and furnished with mast, rudder, and yard-arms. Calypso supplied the sail and filled the raft with skins and baskets of sweet water, wine, and delicious food, and on the fifth day she accompanied him to the beach and he joyfully embarked. A gentle breeze filled his sail and he steered boldly across the boundless waters, guided by the sun by day and the stars by night. He journeyed swiftly for seventeen days, happy in the thought that he was approaching nearer to his beloved wife and native land. But lo, on the eighteenth day, when in sight of the island of Corfu, Poseidon caught sight of the bold man and his anger blazed up anew. "Aha!" said he, "the gods have doubtless taken him under their protection while I have been away, but in spite of this he shall suffer disaster and sorrow enough before he reach the land which is appointed for his refuge."

The angry words had scarcely been spoken before dark clouds began to gather at his bidding. He dipped his trident into the sea and it was disturbed

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to its depths. Then he called upon the winds to come out of their caves and strive together, and dark night descended upon the waters. Ulysses trembled. He was alone upon the broad ocean. Land had disappeared, and as far as the eye could see there were only the dark waves which rose in their might, then dashed upon him, carrying him first heavenwards, then down into the depths of an abyss. Clinging desperately to his raft, he was tossed to and fro. A terrific blast swept away mast and sail and then came a great wave, like a mountain, which broke over the raft and submerged it. Ulysses lost his hold, but when he arose he saw it floating near him and managed to climb upon it, thus escaping certain death. But the storm still raged and there seemed no hope of rescue.

However, he was destined to be saved. Leucothea, the sea goddess, discovered him in the midst of the angry waves and took pity on him. She swung herself up out of the sea on to the raft and seated herself. "Poor man," said she, "thou must surely have sorely offended Poseidon, but he shall not destroy thee. Thou shalt be cast on the shores of Scheria. Take this girdle and tie it about thee; then cast off thy heavy garments, leave thy float, and save thyself by swimming. The girdle will bear thee safely to the shore, but when thou art once there, do not fail to throw it behind thee into the sea."

With these words she disappeared in the waters. Ulysses was still in doubt, for he feared the vision

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was a malicious deception of Poseidon's. He would not leave the raft so long as it held together, but he kept the girdle to try its power in case of need.

He did not have long to wait, for a sudden shower of water dashed the raft in pieces. The logs separated and the poor sailor fell between them into the sea. It was now life or death. He swam toward the largest piece of the raft, caught hold of it, and swung himself astride the log like a horseman, holding fast by his knees. Riding thus, he drew off his heavy tunic and threw it into the sea, tied on the girdle, and sprang confidently into the water to try his luck. As he was struggling in the water Poseidon saw him and said: "This time thou mayst escape death, but I hope that thou wilt not soon forget the horrors of this day."

Poseidon departed and by degrees the wild waves subsided. The terrible storm had lasted two days and two nights, and in all this time poor Ulysses had had nothing to eat or drink. He kept on swimming, sustained by the divine girdle. He was again filled with hope and joy when he saw the waves subsiding and the rocky coast of Scheria (or Corfu) close before him. But he was not yet safe, for the surf kept dashing him back from the steep walls of rock. This was worse than his battle with the waves; and with torn hands he was obliged to swim nearly around the island before he could find a landing place.

At length he came to a spot where a little island stream flowed into the sea. The beach was low

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and it was protected from the winds. Ulysses took courage, and praying to the divinity of the stream he said: "Hear me, oh ruler, whoever thou art, and take pity on me! Thou seest I have escaped Poseidon's wrath, and now I put myself under thy protection."

The river god heard him, and Ulysses soon sank upon his knees on the green grass and kissed the blessed earth. But now his strength was spent and he sank into a state of deep unconsciousness. Voice and breath left him; he was utterly exhausted.

As soon as he recovered himself he gratefully remembered Leucothea and her command. He arose, unbound the wet girdle, and with averted face cast it into the sea. Then fearfully and timidly he began to explore the island. Night was approaching and no one was to be seen. Naked as he was, where should he find shelter? It was damp and cold on the beach, and in the wood which he saw before him there might be savage animals. Still he walked on toward it and discovered a few wild olive trees whose thick boughs made a welcome shelter against sun, rain, and wind. On the ground lay a great mass of dry leaves which he heaped together and then crept under, his body hidden by the foliage. A deep sleep fell upon him in his bed of leaves, and for a time his hardships were forgotten.

Chapter IV

Nausicaa

SCHERIA was inhabited by a peaceful people, who cared more for commerce and navigation than for agriculture and the chase. They had built a town near the harbor, and had dockyards where busy workmen were to be seen building ships. Order, morality, and prosperity reigned and the people were ruled by gentle King Alcinous who had a magnificent palace in the city, where the nobles gathered daily to offer sacrifice and to feast with their king.

While the weary Ulysses was sleeping his friend Athene was planning a means of making him acquainted with the foremost people of the island. The king had a young and pretty daughter named Nausicaa, who was dreaming sweetly one morning when Athene appeared in her dreams in the form of one of her youthful companions and began to scold her. "Lazy girl! when wilt thou think of washing the fine garments which are lying soiled about the house? Thou wilt soon be a bride, and what if thy garments are not in order? Arise quickly! Let thy father provide thee with a cart and donkeys to take us to the washing place. I will go with thee,

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and we will take our maidens and wash and dry so that father and mother shall be delighted with our industry.”

Nausicaa, upon awaking, determined to obey the admonition. She begged her father for the cart and, when it was ready, filled it with the soiled garments. Her mother provided victuals and a skin of wine, and when all was ready the pretty washer maiden seated herself on the cart, took up the reins and whip, and drove out of the city, followed by her companions. The washing place was beside a clear stream whose waters filled little canals and basins which had been excavated for the purpose. The clothes were thrown into one of these basins, the maidens undressed and sprang into the water, where they trod the garments with their feet. After being thus cleansed the clothes were spread out to dry on a beach of clean pebbles by the side of the stream.

The maidens then bathed, anointed themselves, with oil, and opened the baskets and wine skin to enjoy an out-of-door breakfast. Next they seated themselves in a circle. Nausicaa began to sing and the maidens to dance and amuse themselves playing ball. When they had had enough of the games they gathered up the garments, folded them neatly, and packed them away in the cart, harnessed the donkeys, and made ready to depart. Before she mounted, the sportive Nausicaa threw the ball once more toward one of her companions. But it fell into the river far away, making the frolicsome

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girls clap their hands and shriek with laughter, which awoke the echoes along the shore. And behold Athene had so arranged that these gay sounds should awaken the snoring Ulysses. He raised himself, listening, rubbing his eyes and brushing the leaves from his hair and beard.

“Those are human voices,” he thought; “but alas, what kind of people may they be? Perchance rough barbarians who will not understand my language and know nothing of the gods or of hospitality. But stay—are they not the voices of laughing maidens? I will come out and take a look at them.”

He crawled out of the thicket, shook off the dry leaves, and as he was stark naked, broke off a thick bough with which to cover himself. Thus he appeared like some wild forest monster. The maidens, who saw him coming from a distance, were afraid, cried out, and ran away. But Nausicaa was an intrepid girl, and Athene secretly encouraged her. She stood still and quietly waited for the man to approach.

He came nearer, but did not presume to embrace her knees after the manner of a petitioner, but made plea at a respectful distance. “Humbly I approach thee, goddess or virgin, for I know not who thou art,” said he. “Thy stature and thy splendid form tell me that if a goddess thou must be Artemis. Art thou a mortal maiden, then are thy parents and thy brethren fortunate; for truly their hearts must leap within them to see thee in the dance. But happier than all others I count the man from whose

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hands thy father shall accept the suitor's gifts and who shall take thee to his house, a bride. Truly I have never seen a human creature so like a slender palm tree. Yesterday I was cast by the sea upon this coast. I know it not, and no one here knows me. I do not presume, noble maiden, to embrace thy knees, but I beg thee have compassion on me; for after unspeakable trials thou art the first person whom I have met. Show me the city where the men of this land live, and give me some rags to cover myself. May the gods reward thee a thousand times. May they give thee all that thy heart desires, a husband, a house, and blessed harmony of life. For certainly nothing is so desirable as that husband and wife shall live in peace and united in tender love."

This speech pleased pretty Nausicaa and she pitied the stranger. She told him her name and all about her father and mother and promised him hospitality. Then she recalled her maidens, commanded them to conduct the guest to the bath and to refresh him with food and drink. But the man was too fearsome a sight. One pushed forward the other until they at last plucked up heart and led Ulysses to the river. Nausicaa sent him some of the freshly washed clothes and the remains of their oil. The maidens placed all these things beside the stream and withdrew while Ulysses made his toilet.

The bath was very necessary, for he was covered with mud from head to foot, but after it he was

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like one new born. Graced with the new garments he appeared in renewed youth amongst the maidens, who were astonished at his glowing countenance. He seemed to have grown taller and handsomer. His matted hair now fell in shining ringlets over his forehead and neck, and his whole appearance gave such an impression of nobility and charm that Nausicaa could not help a secret wish that he might remain in Scheria and take her to wife.

The maidens placed before him what was left of the food and wine, and truly the poor man had fasted long enough. When he had eaten the company prepared to return. Nausicaa mounted her cart, and the maidens followed her on foot. As long as the road led through the fields Ulysses accompanied them, but when they neared the city Nausicaa bade him wait in a poplar grove until she should reach home; then he was to follow and appear at her father's house.

Thus she wished to avoid gossip so that no one might say: "Ah, see what a stately stranger Nausicaa has picked out for herself. She wishes him for her husband. She can really not wait until she is wooed. Of course it is better to choose a stranger, for the noble youths among our own people are certainly not good enough for her." "No, stranger, not thus shall they speak," she added, blushing. "I have myself often found fault with girls who have been seen with a man without the knowledge of their parents and before the nuptials were celebrated."

Nausicaa gave Ulysses one more direction. When

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he entered the royal hall he was first to embrace the knees of the queen and to make his plea for protection to her. If she favored him then he might hope to see his home again. Not until then was he to approach the king.

Ulysses carefully noted all these directions and remained in the grove until he was sure the maidens had arrived at their destination. Meanwhile he prayed to his protector, Athene, that she might grant that he find pity and favor with the men of this unknown people.

Chapter V

Ulysses visits the King of the Phæacians

THE sun had set and darkness had fallen when the hero set out for the city of the Phæacians. As soon as he came near the first houses, his friend Athene met him disguised as a young girl returning with a pitcher of water from the well.

“Daughter, canst thou show me the way to the palace of Alcinous, thy king?” Ulysses addressed her. “I am come from a distant country and am a stranger here.”

“Very willingly, good father, will I show thee the house,” answered the friendly girl. “The king lives very near my father. Come with me and I will guide thee that thou needst not inquire of another. People are not overfriendly to strangers here.”

Ulysses thanked the maiden and followed her unseen by anyone. He was astonished at the great market place and harbor, the large ships and high walls. When they had been walking for a while the girl stopped and said: “See, good father, here is the king’s house. Thou wilt find the princes at their meal. Walk boldly in and fear nothing, for

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a bold front is always successful. But I must tell thee one thing more. When thou enterest thou shalt go straight to the queen, Arete. She is very wise and is honored far and wide above all women. The king also reverences her and she rules everything, judging even the men's quarrels with wisdom. She is greeted everywhere by old and young like a goddess. If she is gracious to thee, then mayest thou hope to return to thy native land."

With these words Athene left him, and Ulysses went into the courtyard of the castle and paused in amazement on the threshold of the house. Everything that he saw was very beautiful. The walls looked like bronze, the doorway like silver, and the ring on the gate was of gold. At the back of the open hall were rows of seats disposed against the walls, on which sat the nobles at the banquet. Beside them stood beautifully clothed youths holding torches to light the feast. Fifty maidens served in the palace, some of them grinding grain on the handmills, others embroidering or spinning; for the women of the Phæacians were as famous for their wonderful weaving as the men were as navigators.

When the hero entered the king's hall it was already late and the company was about to break up. The guests were standing with their goblets in their hands ready to drink a last offering to Hermes. Just then they saw a stranger cross the hall and kneel before the queen. All listened attentively to what he was about to say. He clasped Arete's knees, as was the custom of supplicants,

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and spoke: "O Arete, daughter of the immortal hero Rhexenor, I embrace thy knees and the king's, thy husband's, and all the guests. I am a man overwhelmed with misfortune. May the gods prosper thee and give thee long life and to thy children great honor and wealth! Only help me to return to my home, for it is many years since I have seen my people."

With these words he arose and seated himself in the ashes beside the hearth, as was customary for one asking help. At first the spectators were dumb with surprise, but in a few moments an old man broke the silence. "Alcinous," he said, "thou must not allow a stranger to sit amongst the ashes. Come, lead him to a couch and let the heralds mix wine for him as an offering to Jupiter, and let the servants bring the stranger food."

The king immediately arose, took Ulysses by the hand, and led him to a seat beside his own. What a contrast to the previous evening when the poor man, deprived of his clothes, dripping and exhausted by his struggle with the waves, had staggered on land and raked together a bed of leaves in which to warm himself. Now he was luxuriously feasting, by torchlight, in a magnificent hall.

"Come," cried the king to the herald, "mix another bowl of wine and fill the cups of the guests that we may drink once more to Jupiter, the protector of those seeking aid."

The herald did the king's bidding and all poured the libation to Jupiter on the ground, then drank

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off the remainder, and arose from their seats. The king commanded them to come again the following day to discuss how they might assist the stranger to return to his home, unless — this had just occurred to him — he might be a god in disguise who took pleasure in mingling with mortals.

Ulysses modestly denied this flattering suggestion. "No, indeed," said he, "I am the most miserable and unfortunate of men. But now let me eat a little more, for unhappy as I am, hunger is stronger than my sorrows, and an empty stomach gives a mortal no peace. But to-morrow, noble lords, ye shall do to me even as the king hath said and send me home, since for many years I have been consumed with longing for my wife and home."

The princes listened to the stranger with respect, for his speech and noble mien betrayed the man of intellect and ability. When the guests had gone, Ulysses was left alone with the king and queen. Servants removed the remains of the feast, and now the queen, who had remained silent before the men, began to question her guest. She had been watching him, half in admiration and half with distrust, for she recognized the garments which he wore, having woven them herself. "I must ask thee," said she, "who thou art and whence thou comest. Who gave thee these garments? Thou sayest that thou comest to us from across the sea."

"Ah, Queen," answered Ulysses, "it is too long a story to tell thee all my history. Far out in the sea lies the isle Ogygia, where lives the beautiful and

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powerful goddess Calypso. A frightful storm which destroyed my ship cast me on that shore, and for seven years the lovely goddess held me captive there. She promised me immortal youth if I would abide with her and be her husband, but she could not persuade me. At last she changed her mind and only twenty days ago released me, gave me rich gifts and a successful voyage until I came in sight of the blue hills of this isle. Then Poseidon's wrath overtook me, and a terrible storm broke up my ship. Naked, I managed by constant swimming to reach these shores. Last night I passed miserably in a thicket, but a sweet sleep held me fast bound for nearly twenty hours. I did not awaken until afternoon; then I heard voices, and saw thy daughter and her maidens not far away. I approached her in my distress, and behold, I found a sensible and noble-minded maiden. She refreshed me with food and wine, bathed and anointed me, and gave me these garments; then bade me come hither."

"All that is very good," said Alcinous, "but the naughty girl has neglected a part of her duty. She should have brought thee straight to us, and she was here long before thou camest."

"She did indeed offer to conduct me hither," said the hero, "but I did not consider it fitting and did not wish thee to misjudge me. Therefore I remained modestly behind, for we men are very suspicious creatures."

"I am not so hasty in my judgments," interrupted Alcinous. "However, all things should be

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done in order, and I perceive that thou art an excellent man. If such a one as thou should request my daughter's hand, I would gladly take him for a son-in-law. If thou wilt remain here I will give thee houses and lands, but Jupiter would not wish that I should force thee to stay with us. No, if thou so desirest I will despatch thee to-morrow on thy way. Our rowers shall take thee safely back to thy home, however far away it may be."

"O Father Jupiter," cried Ulysses at these words, "let all come to pass as this noble man hath said."

And now the queen commanded the maids to prepare a bed with soft cushions and fine covers for the stranger in the hall. They went out with torches, and when all was in readiness called the stranger to his well-earned rest.

Chapter VI

Ulysses among the Phæacians

AT daybreak King Alcinous and his guest arose. They went to the market place and seated themselves upon two hewn stones, such as were ranged about for the princes when they were gathered together for conference. No one had yet arrived, but Athene, disguised as a herald, was already going from house to house inviting the chiefs to a counsel. They appeared in groups and occupied the seats, while the populace crowded about to catch a glimpse of the stranger. He stood among them like a god, for Athene had made him seem taller and his glances fierier, that he might awaken admiration and love in the Phæacians. When they had all come together the king began to speak.

“Hear me,” he said, “ye noble lords of Phæacia! This stranger here—I know not whether he comes to us from the east or from the west—implores us to speed him on his way. Let us quickly settle the matter, for never has anyone come to me with a plea which has not been granted. Then arise, youths, and assemble twenty-two of your number, launch a stanch ship, and provide all that is neces-

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sary for the voyage. Then come to my palace and I will set food and drink before you. And ye, princes, grant me another favor. Follow me to my stately hall that we may once more entertain the stranger worthily. And that song may not be lacking for our friend, call the divine singer Demodocus.”

The company separated to carry out the king's commands, and when all was ready they repaired to the palace, which was filled with guests. Alcinous caused twelve sheep, eight swine, and two oxen to be brought from his stables, which the youths began to prepare, while the herald returned with the minstrel who was to entertain the guests.

He was blind, but his mind was stored with splendid tales which he could recite most eloquently, accompanying himself upon the harp. The herald led him gently by the arm into the midst of the company, where he placed a chair for him near a pillar. He then hung the harp upon a nail and guided the blind man's hand to the place. Next he placed a table before him with meat, brought the bread basket, mixed the wine for him, and waited upon the other guests likewise. As soon as the company had satisfied their appetites, the minstrel took down his harp and began to prelude; then his song rang out like unto distant cries of battle and clang of swords and thundering of hoofs. He sang of the heroic deeds of the Trojan war, and the song found an echo deep in the hearts of his Greek hearers. Then the lines changed, and he celebrated the prow-

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ess of two heroes whose fame outshone all others — Achilles and Ulysses.

It was like a sword-thrust to our hero. His heart was torn with memories. He pulled his mantle over his head and hid his face, that the Phæacians might not see his tears. Alcinous, who sat beside him, heard his sobs and at the minstrel's next pause tactfully said: "Friends, I think we have had enough of feasting and song. Let us go forth and practise some games, that our guest may see and admire the skill of our people."

The company at once arose and followed the king, the blind minstrel being guided by a faithful servant. The market place was full of life. The nobles seated themselves, the people stood round about, and the youths who were to show their skill in wrestling, boxing, running, and throwing entered the great arena.

First there was a race between three sons of the king, Laodamas, Halius, and Clytonæus, which was won by the latter. Then came the wrestlers, the strongest of whom was Euryalus. Next came jumping, then disk throwing, and at last boxing. In this dangerous sport the handsome Laodamas was the victor.

"Listen, friends," cried the bold young man; "let us inquire if our guest be not skilled in games. Truly he has a noble figure. See his powerful chest, his thighs, his arms, and his strong neck. His build proclaims the man of skill, and he is in the prime of his powers." "It is a good idea! Go and challenge him," answered Euryalus, the wrestler.

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Laodamas followed the behest, but Ulysses declined. "Ah," said he, "my misfortunes are nearer to my heart than feats of strength, and my only thought is of how I may quickly reach home. Ye do not know all that I have suffered."

"Very good, my friend," mocked the hasty Euryalus; "one can see that thou art not an expert. No warrior art thou, but perchance an agent on a merchant vessel, who ships the goods and reckons up the profits."

"That was an unseemly speech," answered the noble Ulysses. "Truly the gods have distributed their gifts in various ways. Many a man of insignificant stature is distinguished for his intellect, while perhaps another with a godlike form is poor in good sense. Thus it is with thee. Thou art beautiful to look upon, but hast little wit. Truly, wert thou not so young a fool, thou hadst angered me with thine impertinent speech. No, believe me, I am no novice at boxing. I have measured myself with the bravest before calamity bowed me down; for I have suffered all that a man can, on the field of battle as well as in storms at sea. But even so, I will not leave thy challenge unanswered. Give me the disk."

He took the heaviest of the metal plates, swung it by the strap a few times in a circle, and then cast it high in the air, so that it fell far beyond the marks of the other throwers. One of the spectators ran forward and put a stake in the place where the disk lay, and when he returned he cried aloud: "Hail

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to thee, stranger. In this contest thou mayest be sure none shall equal thee.”

“See if ye can throw as far, ye youths,” cried Ulysses. “And if anyone is anxious to contend with me, either in boxing, wrestling, or in running, let him come. Phæacians, I am ready! Come who will, excepting Laodamas. He is my host, and it were unseemly to challenge him who hath fed and sheltered me. But I will not refuse any of the others, and truly I need not fear. I am expert in all feats of strength, but in spanning the bow I still have to find my master. Amongst a crowd of the enemy I can single out my man, and my arrow will lay him low. But one man excelled me when we lay before Troy, Philoctetes; but amongst all the rest I was the foremost. With the lance I aimed better than another with the arrow. In running, one of you could perhaps outdo me; for the stormy sea and long fasts have much weakened me.”

The Phæacians all were silent. Not one dared challenge the hero. Then the king began to speak. “Worthy stranger, we believe thy words, for thou dost not speak through love of boasting, but because the youth has bitterly offended thee. Listen to me, that thou mayest yet speak well of us at home. In boxing and wrestling we do not excel, but Jupiter has granted us to be fleet in the race above all peoples and masters upon the sea. We also love much feasting, harping, and the dance, beautiful garments and warm baths. Come then, ye who are skilled in the dance, show yourselves, that the

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stranger may tell of your art. Let some one fetch Demodocus' harp."

The young dancers took their places and began the dance with measured steps and wondrous leaping, while Ulysses admired their flying feet. The strains of the harp formed a lovely accompaniment to the movements of the dancers, and the old minstrel soon struck up a comic song which compelled the listeners to break into shouts of laughter. When the choral dance had lasted a while, Laodamas and Halios danced alone, to the admiration of all. One threw a ball almost to the clouds, and the other, leaping, caught it ere his foot had touched the earth. Ulysses was delighted with the agility and grace of the youths and paid them compliments which delighted their father's heart. And as he had determined to dismiss the stranger royally, he proposed to the assembly that each of the twelve chiefs of the Phæacians should make the guest a present of gold, together with a fine embroidered robe. The impertinent Euryalus was obliged to beg the guest's pardon and to offer him a propitiatory gift.

All agreed to the king's proposal, and the youth brought a brazen sword with a silver hilt and scabbard of ivory as his offering. He approached Ulysses abashed, and with eyes cast down addressed him. "Be not angry, oh stranger. Let the winds scatter the offensive words which I have spoken. May the gods grant thee a speedy return to thy house and thy people, after thy long wanderings."

"My dear fellow," answered Ulysses, "mayest

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thou also enjoy the favor of the gods. And mayest thou never regret the gift which thou hast offered me." He hung the sword over his shoulder, and all irritation was forgotten.

In the meanwhile evening had descended. Servants brought the gifts to the market place, and they were carried into the palace. There also the princes gathered, taking their usual places in the hall. Alcinous requested the queen to have a warm bath prepared for their guest, while he selected the gifts which he intended to present to him.

A great kettle of water was brought, the maids piled up wood and kindled a fire under it, while the queen herself brought in the costly presents and packed them deftly away in a chest, which Ulysses bound and tied with a cunning knot taught him by the powerful Circe. He then went out to the bath, luxuriating in the steaming tub. When he had dried himself, the maids anointed him with oil, and draped him with a magnificent tunic and cloak. Just as he was about to reënter the festal hall he felt soft hands upon his arm. It was the lovely Nausicaa, whom he had not seen since the previous day. She had learned of the preparations for his departure, and her heart desired to look once more upon the splendid man who had approached her with such dignity the day before. So she stole down the stairs and awaited him at the door. He came, a noble virility shining from his countenance, his bearing breathing dignity and power.

"Hail to thee, oh guest," she whispered. "When

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thou art again in thine home, think sometimes of the girl in Scheria to whom thou once didst owe thy life." She looked down and could scarcely keep back the tears.

The stranger answered: "If the gods will but grant me a safe return I shall remember thee and praise thy name like a goddess' each day, for thou hast saved my life, gentle maiden."

Nausicaa went sorrowfully back to her chamber, while Ulysses entered the hall and took his seat. The servants brought roasted meat and began to fill the goblets of the guests from great pitchers of milk. A herald guided the venerable minstrel to his place. Ulysses beckoned to the herald, then cut a fat morsel from the piece of meat before him, saying: "Take this to Demodocus. Poor though I am, I should like to do him honor, for one should always respect the minstrels. The muse herself has taught them and showers her favors upon them." Demodocus accepted the gift with pleasure.

When all had appeased their hunger, Ulysses turned again to the minstrel and begged him, as he knew all the adventures of the Trojan war, to sing the one of the wooden horse with which Ulysses had deceived the Trojans. So the man sang the curious tale, never dreaming that the hero whose cunning he was celebrating was at his side. During the recital the hero often sighed and wiped away a tear. Alcinous noticed his emotion and again tactfully bade the singer pause, saying: "Our guest has been listening in tears; a deep sorrow seems to

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gnaw at his heart. Let the singer be silent, then, that all may be joyful. The stranger who cometh to us with confidence must be dear to us as a brother. And now tell us, friend, without evasion, what we would know of thee. Speak! What is thy name, who are thy parents, and where thy native land? For this we must know, if we would guide thee thither, which we shall gladly do, although an ancient oracle has warned us that jealous Poseidon will sometime sink our ship on its return from such a voyage. Tell us, too, where thou hast been and of the people thou hast met. Tell us all this and also why thou weepest while the minstrel sings of Troy.”

Chapter VII

*Ulysses tells his Story — The Lotus-Eaters,
Polyphemus, Circe, Scylla, and Charybdis —
The Visit to Hades*

THE company sat in silent expectation, gazing intently at the stranger, who began as follows: "The land of the Phæacians is indeed a delightful land, and I know no greater pleasure than to sit in the banquet hall, while heralds move from table to table filling the cups, and the minstrel sings splendid songs of the heroic deeds of brave men. For harp and voice are the ornaments of the feast. But ye ask me for my unhappy history. Where shall I begin the tale, for the immortal gods have heaped much misery upon me? Let my name come first, that ye may know me and keep me in remembrance. I am Ulysses, son of Laertes, well known to men through many exploits."

The Phæacians were transfixed with astonishment, and the old minstrel bemoaned the loss of his eyesight that he was unable to see the man whose heroic deeds he had so often sung. He, the most famous among all the Trojan warriors, had eaten and drunk with them, and was now going to tell

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them of all the wonderful deeds which he had done and the hardships he had suffered.

“Yes, I am Ulysses,” continued the hero. “The sunny isle of Ithaca is my home. I will not speak of the unhappy war. When it was ended I turned with my comrades to Ismarus, the city of the Ciconians, destroyed it, slew the fleeing men, while we divided the women and other booty amongst us. I now counselled that we should hasten from the place, but my foolish comrades did not obey me. As long as they had enough plunder, wine, sheep, and goats, they caroused upon the shore and thus brought the first misfortune upon us.

“The conquered Ciconians summoned their allies in the interior, who responded in great numbers, fell upon us, and horribly revenged themselves. The fierce battle at the ships began early in the morning. At first we defied the overwhelming numbers of the enemy, but as the sun set we were obliged to give way. Each of my ships lost six men, and it was only with difficulty that I escaped in swift boats with the others. Happy in our escape we sailed toward the west, keeping near to the coast of Greece. Then a terrible storm arose, breaking the masts and tearing the sails. With difficulty we put to shore to mend them, and on the third morning when we set out with renewed hope, a fresh storm descended upon us from the heights of Malea and drove us far out into the open sea.

“For nine days we drifted before the awful north wind, and on the tenth day were driven on the coast

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of the lotus-eaters. They are an amiable people and most fortunate, for they possess a fruit called the lotus, which is their daily food and is sweeter than honey. Whoever eats of it forgets his home and desires to remain there forever. We landed to take on fresh water and the lotus did not fail in its effects. I had to drive my companions back to the ships, bind them with ropes, and throw them under the rowers' benches, and if I had not put off again quickly, not a single man would have followed me.

"We now rowed out again over the boundless sea and landed on a wooded island near the coast of Sicily, which was uninhabited except by countless herds of goats roaming the lowlands. They were without fear, so that we had easy hunting, and provided ourselves plentifully with game. When we had refreshed ourselves with food and sleep I was anxious to row across to the next island, which seemed to be very large and fruitful. We could hear voices there and see cattle climbing about the hills. It is the home of the giant race of Cyclops, a savage people who know nothing of agriculture, have no laws, nor fear gods nor men. I said to my companions: 'Remain here with your ships. I will row across in mine with twelve picked companions and examine the land.' I embarked, taking with me a large skin of excellent wine, for I divined that I might fall in with savage people who could not be won by reason or fair words, and therefore I furnished myself with this sweet, beguiling drink.

"On our arrival I carefully concealed my vessel

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in a hidden cave and landed with my people and my wine skin. Not far away I saw a tremendous cave in the rock surrounded by a wall of great stones and shaded by a row of gigantic firs and oaks. It was the dwelling of the most terrible of the giants, where he spent the night with his goats and sheep; for the care of his flocks was his sole occupation. He was the son of Poseidon and his name was Polyphemus. Like all the Cyclops, he had a single but horrible eye in the middle of his forehead. His arms were powerful enough to move rocks, and he could sling granite blocks through the air like pebbles. He wandered about alone among the mountains, none of the other Cyclops holding intercourse with him. He was savage and delighted only in mischief and destructiveness.

“I, unhappy man, not knowing this, went with my companions straight to the open cave and entered it. We did not find him there, as the sun had not yet gone down and he was still grazing his herds on distant hills. The stalls were full of lambs and young kids. There were baskets and tubs of cheese and milk; also curds in great vessels and milking pails. My companions wanted very much to fill a few baskets with cheese, drive away a number of lambs and kids, and quickly make away with them in the ships before the dread king of the cave should return. But I forbade this, for I was too curious to see the man and hoped, besides, to receive a gift from him, as is the custom among hospitable people. But how mistaken I was!

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“We seated ourselves in the cave, lighted a fire for an offering, and passed the time eating cheese until the Cyclops should come home. Toward evening he appeared with his whole herd before the mouth of the cave. We drew back in affright, and he did not see us at first. He bore on his shoulders a tremendous load of wood, which he dropped upon the ground with a clatter which made the rocks tremble and caused us to flee into the innermost recesses of the cave. He then drove the goats and sheep inside, and barred the entrance with a piece of rock that two and twenty wagons could not have moved from the spot. We were prisoners in the power of the monster.

“We were able to watch him unobserved for a while as he seated himself comfortably on the ground to milk the animals, then poured the milk into tubs, and last stirred the fire. The flames leapt up and he discovered us huddled together in a corner. For a moment he stared, then thundered at us in a fearful voice: ‘Ho, strangers! Whence come ye? Are ye traders or robbers who roam the seas, not sparing human life?’

“Our knees trembled at the sound of the monster’s voice. However, I quickly recovered myself and answered boldly: ‘We are Greeks returning from Troy, cast upon this coast by storms. As we have been overtaken by misfortune we beseech thee to shelter us and to please the gods by sending us on our way with gifts. Honor the gods, excellent sir, for Jupiter is the avenger of all wrongs committed against the traveller.’

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“‘Oho! Thou foolish stranger,’ roared the Cyclops. ‘Thou seemest to know the Cyclops ill. Nobody here honors the gods, and we know naught of thy Jupiter, for we ourselves are much greater. But tell me, where didst thou land with thy vessel?’

“I perceived his cunning and determined that he should not outwit me. ‘My ship,’ said I aloud. ‘Ah, had we it still we should not be here. The waves destroyed it, and had we not been able to swim, we should all have perished.’

“Instead of answering, the cruel Cyclops stretched out both his arms, seized two of my companions, and dashed them upon the ground so that blood and brains spattered in all directions. He tore them apart and ate them. We shrieked aloud when we saw this horrid deed and prayed to Jupiter. But our lamentations did not affect the Cyclops. He drank a tub of milk and stretched himself out to sleep.

“‘What shall I do?’ I said to myself when the monster began to snore. ‘Shall I plunge my sword into his heart before he awakens. But no! if I kill him, who shall open the door for us?’ No one but the giant himself would be able to move away the mighty stone. We should only be preparing for ourselves a miserable death by slow starvation. We needed to invent some better plan, and so we awaited the break of day in fear and uncertainty.

“With the dawn the Cyclops awoke and went about his usual business. He put fresh wood on the fire, milked his herd, and put the nurslings to

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suck. Then he again seized two of my dear companions and killed and ate them as he had done the others. Next, he pushed back the stone, drove out the flocks, and deftly rolled the great rock back in its place.

“Thus we were again imprisoned for the whole day. I now conceived a plan to avenge our lost comrades and to free ourselves — I would put out his great eye with a red-hot stake! I found just the piece for the purpose. It was the giant’s own club of green olivewood, as long and as thick as a mast. I hewed off a piece from the end, my companions helped to smooth it, and I sharpened the point and hardened it in the glowing coals. When my weapon was ready I carefully concealed it under the pile of straw on the ground. Hereupon we drew lots to find out which of my companions should help me thrust the stake into the eye of the sleeping giant, and we fearfully awaited his return. At last he came, driving in his flocks, and this time he left none of the animals outside, either because he was suspicious of us or because a god had so decreed. He set up the great stone, milked his sheep and goats, ate two more of my poor companions, and put fresh wood on the fire. I now brought out the wine skin and went boldly up to him.

“‘See, Cyclops,’ said I, filling a jug; ‘here is something to drink; try it. Wine tastes good after human flesh. Take it that thou mayest see what good drink we had upon our lost vessel.’ He took the jug and drank. How delighted he was! He

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emptied the vessel and said, smiling: 'Fill again from thy wine skin and tell me thy name, that I may make thee a gift. What a delicious draught! We have wine here, but compared with thine it is but water. Do but give me more.'

"I filled his jug three times and he gulped it down eagerly. I soon saw with delight that his senses were becoming clouded. Then an excellent idea occurred to me. 'Thou wouldst know my name,' said I. 'My name is Nobody. My father and mother call me Nobody and so do all people.'

"'Good,' said he. 'Then Nobody shall be the last one I shall devour. Take that as thy guest gift from me.'

"With these words he fell upon his back overpowered by sleep. He tossed about until deep snores showed that he had at last lost consciousness. Our time had come! I quickly drew forth the stake, plunged the end into the fire, turned it about until it was glowing, and then called upon my companions to assist me. A god put courage into our hearts. We all took hold and in an instant had plunged the fiery pole into the sleeper's great eye. As when a smith dips glowing iron into cold water, thus hissed the Cyclops' eye as the torch penetrated it. But we pushed it in the deeper and turned it round and round until the blood gushed out and flowed over forehead and cheeks. With a horrible roar the giant jumped up and we all fled into the corners of the cave. Bewildered by the pain, he pulled the glowing brand from his eye and threw it

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against the rocky wall, raving like a crazy man. The other Cyclops were aroused by his desperate cries and gathered about the cave.

“‘What has happened to thee, Polyphemus,’ they cried, ‘to make thee roar thus? Has someone stolen thy cattle or a murderer attacked thee?’

“‘Woe is me!’ roared the Cyclops. ‘Nobody has craftily throttled me. Nobody has attacked me.’

“‘Well, if nobody is attacking thee we are of no use. We can do naught against inward pains; for those thou must call on thy father Poseidon.’ Speaking thus they went away.

“How my heart laughed for joy that my false name had fooled them. But the greatest danger lay still before us. We might escape the fingers of the blind giant in the recesses of the cave, but he now seated himself before the entrance, rolled back the stone halfway, and stretched out his hands to catch us should we try to steal out among the sheep and goats.

“However, I conceived a plan to outwit him in this also. Among the goats were powerful animals, with very thick wool. I put three of them side by side and bound them together with withes. The middle one carried one of my companions under his body bound securely, while the other two protected him on either side. A great woolly one, king of all, I kept back for myself. Thus prepared, we awaited the morning.

“At last the flock set out and crowded past their waiting master, who carefully felt of each woolly



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back to see if one of us should not be riding on it. It never occurred to him that we might be hanging underneath. At length the first three came up, carrying their man successfully past, then the second, and so on. I was last. I crawled underneath, nestling into the thick wool as deeply as I could with hands and feet. Then the animal struggled forward as fast as he was able with his unaccustomed burden, while I held on desperately by his curly wool. The Cyclops recognized his favorite at once in caressing him, and spoke sadly to him. 'Dear little one, art thou the last to-day to leave the cave? Thou, who art always the first to trot so gayly at the head of all the others. Art perchance sad also, and dost feel sorry for thy master's eye, which the villain Nobody has put out? But only wait, he shall not escape his deserts. If thou couldst but speak, my little one, thou wouldst tell me at once where the wretch is hiding. Then shouldst thou see how his blood and marrow would splash about the cave. That would be revenge sweet to my heart.'

"Thus spake the Cyclops and released the goat. I let him carry me but a short distance, then let go, jumped up, and released my companions, of whom, alas! but six alone were left. Our rescuers we quietly drove before us, taking them as a thank offering. The Cyclops carefully closed his door again and whistled for his flock. We laughed in our hearts, and slunk quickly away with the stolen animals to our ship and put off. We rowed as fast

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as we could, and when the boat was as far from land as a man's voice will carry, it occurred to me to shout a mocking farewell to the monster.

“Ho, Cyclops! Take notice that thou hast entertained no ordinary mortal. In truth thou hast not eaten my friends for nothing. Thou art repaid at last for thine inhuman crimes.’

“How enraged he was. He tore off a piece of rock and cast it in the direction from which the voice had come. He aimed well, for it fell into the water close beside our vessel, so that we rocked in the trough of the sea. The waves nearly beat us back to shore again, but I urged on my men and they regained the high seas.

“I could still see the giant feeling of his bloody forehead, and could not resist calling again, although my men begged me to desist. ‘Listen once more, Cyclops. If thou art asked who hath so shamefully blinded thee, know that it was Ulysses, son of Laertes!’

“‘Cursed guest!’ sputtered the furious Cyclops. ‘Thus hath the prophecy been fulfilled! I have heard thy name and have always feared a great giant of superhuman powers. And now that it should be such a midget — such a tiny weakling who has outwitted me! Woe is me! But listen, Ulysses,’ he called directly afterward; ‘come back and let us make peace. I will entertain thee royally and pray Poseidon, my father, that he grant thee safe conduct. He will certainly restore my eye; then all shall be forgiven thee.’

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“‘Ha!’ I shouted back. ‘Would that I could but send thee so certainly to Hades that neither Poseidon nor any god could replace thine eye!’ And now I heard him praying loudly to his father to send misfortunes on my head. Alas, the god heard him only too well.

In the meanwhile we kept on rowing, but were still in danger, for suddenly another rock came flying and splashed like the first one into the sea close to our boat. At last after hard rowing we reached our little island and divided our booty with our companions. Our friends had given us up for lost and had been sitting on the shore day and night, mourning for us. They gave me the big goat, which had carried me out of the cave, for my share. I immediately sacrificed him to Jupiter, and we ate and drank joyfully together. When the sun sank into the sea we laid down on the beach to sleep.

“When we had recovered from our fright and had refreshed ourselves with food and drink, we launched our boats and put out to sea. We travelled until we reached an island of peculiar formation. It floated about on the water and was surrounded by a wall of brass. It was the famous isle where lives Æolus, the king of the winds. The gods have given him charge over all the winds, that he may cause them to blow or to cease at his will.

“I was hospitably received and delightfully entertained there for a whole month. In the palace lived the king’s six sons with their beautiful wives. I had to tell them all about Troy and all that had hap-

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pened to me in my unfortunate journey. And when I begged for safe conduct, Æolus gave me a present which would have made me supremely happy had it not been for the foolishness of my companions. He confined all the winds in a leather bag, binding it securely with a silver rope. Thus I was fitted out so that I might make use of the winds should the vengeful Poseidon again lead me from my course. I laid the bag in the bottom of the ship without saying anything to my companions of its contents, and we sailed away with a gentle wind from Æolus' isle and crossed almost the whole Mediterranean without accident, sailing nine days and nights, when suddenly on the tenth evening the shores of my native island loomed out of the darkness. Yes, it was really old Ithaca! I saw the watch-fires, the end of my wanderings had come. And now, weary as I was, sweet sleep overcame me, for I had labored at the mast day and night in order to reach home safely and quickly.

“While I slept my companions began to talk of our return, to recall all that they had undergone, and to complain that they were returning poor, in spite of it all. They looked at me enviously, at my rich booty from Troy, and the number of my guest gifts. ‘Everywhere that he goes,’ they said, ‘he is honored and receives gifts, but we get nothing. What can he have hidden in that bag? Æolus has certainly given him a costly present of gold or silver.’

“Curiosity incited them to examine the bag, which

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the king had bound up so tightly for good reasons. They had scarcely loosened the cord when a furious east wind broke loose, which drove us backward in the direction we had just come. We wretched ones, who had hoped to land on Ithaca in a few hours, found ourselves once more on Æolus' isle. We were exhausted on landing, and after taking the food and drink I set out, with one of my men and the herald, for Æolus' palace. There I found the family assembled at table, and all were astonished at my reappearance. I told them my story and begged for help once more. But the king cried in a terrible voice: 'Unhappy one, fly from my house. Far be it from me to shelter a man who is thus pursued by the anger of the gods.'

"Sorrowfully I rejoined my companions and with heavy hearts we put out on the treacherous sea. We rowed continuously for six days, and at last on the seventh we saw the coast of the Læstrygones. We found a sheltered harbor where we made fast our ships. Then I mounted a hill to see if I could discover traces of people. In the distance I saw smoke rising and sent two of my men with a herald to explore the country. They entered a wood where they found wagon tracks that led to a town, and there they met a maiden, the buxom daughter of the king, Antiphates, just going to the well to draw water. She answered their inquiries by pointing out her father's lofty dwelling. But when they entered the great palace they were terrified to behold the queen, a giantess, tall as a tree, who at

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once called her husband, an uncouth barbarian of gigantic stature. Without a word, like the Cyclops he seized one of them for his evening meal. The other two fled in horror to the ships. We saw them running, and soon a crowd of giants, summoned by the king's roars, started in pursuit. While we were trying to loose the ships tremendous stones began to hurtle through the air upon us, dashing men and ships in pieces. I had tied my ship behind a cliff where it was safe from the stones. I quickly cut the ropes, called to my remaining companions, and we rowed away as fast as we could. With horror we saw the Læstrygones spearing our poor comrades to carry them home to their cruel meal.

“The current now carried us to the island of *Ææa*. We stole into a sheltering bay and rested for two days and nights, weak from hunger and overwork. But on the third day when rosy-fingered Eos began to paint the sky, I seized lance and sword and climbed to the top of the rock. The gods took pity on me and sent a great stag with branching antlers across my path. Like lightning I planted my spear in its side, and the animal sank in the dust with a cry. Bracing my foot against its side I drew out my spear, bound its feet together, threw the animal over my shoulder and, staggering under the unwonted burden, returned with it to the ship.

“‘Come friends,’ I cried ‘we shall not descend to the kingdom of Hades until our day of doom dawns. As long as there is food and drink let us be merry and refresh our weary bodies.’”

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“The sight of the stately animal put new life into my fainting comrades. They sprang up, washed their hands, and began to prepare the meat. We sat down to an excellent evening repast and our courage returned. A sweet sleep refreshed us, and at daybreak we determined to set out and see whom we could find on the island. But my companions grew panic-stricken when they thought of the Cyclops and the cannibal Læstrygones. ‘Very well,’ I said, ‘divide yourselves into two parties. I will lead one and the hero Eurylochus shall lead the other.’ We then drew lots from a brass helmet to see who should explore and who should remain to guard the ship. The lot fell to the brave Eurylochus and he hastened to set out with twenty-two men.

“In a distant valley they found the stately palace of Circe, the Sun-god’s daughter, a sorceress skilled in all the arts. Her dwelling was surrounded by lions and wolves, which were men transformed into animals by her magic. They were unfortunates who had been cast upon her coast by storms. Their human reason had not been taken from them, so that they did not attack the approaching men, but came up to them like friendly dogs. Inside the palace sat the beautiful Circe at her loom, singing. ‘Listen,’ said one of the men, ‘what lovely singing. Let us go in.’ The goddess who had overheard the words, left her work and opened the door. ‘Come in, strangers,’ she said sweetly, ‘that I may entertain ye.’ The friends obeyed and went inside.

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Only the cautious Eurylochus remained without and hid himself from the sorceress as though he divined mischief.

“The strangers were invited to sit on soft cushioned chairs and Circe passed food and mixed sweet wine for them, but in the wine she secretly put evil herbs, and when the poor fellows had drunk of the mixture Circe touched them all with her magic wand and in an instant they were changed into grunting swine. She then drove them out and put them into pens and laughingly shut them in. Eurylochus, horrified, saw all this from his hiding place, then hastened away to bring me the news. In broken words he related the horrible fate of our friends.

“I immediately sprang up. ‘Guide me thither,’ I cried, impatiently. ‘I will avenge the unfortunates if I cannot save them.’ But he fell at my feet and begged me with tears not to sacrifice myself. ‘Let us flee from the cursed island,’ he cried, ‘that we, at least, may escape the same awful fate.’

“‘Stay thou,’ I answered scornfully, ‘and eat and drink thy fill here by the shore, but I must needs go.’ With these words I hurried along the beach until I saw the dwelling of Circe in the distance. All at once a shining youth came toward me. I recognized Hermes by his staff and his glorious appearance.

“‘Friend,’ said he, taking me by the hand, why art thou wandering alone among these wild hills? Dost thou know what awaits thee? Thy friends

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are shut up in Circe's pens transformed into swine. Dost intend to release them? Poor man, thou wilt scarcely succeed. I fear she will but pen thee up with the rest.' I did not know what to answer, and could only gaze perplexed at the youthful god.

"Listen," he said. "I wish thee well and I can help thee. Therefore let me warn thee to beware of Circe's tricks. On thy arrival she will mix for thee a sweet wine with a certain poison which puts all who partake of it in her power. But here is the antidote. Pour it secretly into the wine before thou drinkest, and her herbs cannot harm thee. When thou hast partaken of the mixture she will touch thee with her magic wand in the vain endeavor to transform thee. Take advantage of this moment to overcome her. Fall upon her with drawn sword as though thou wouldst pierce her, and thou shalt see her supplicating for mercy at thy feet. Grant what she asks, but let her swear a solemn oath that she will not further harm thee. Then she shall be appeased, and by degrees, in confidential talk, thou shalt persuade her to release thy friends also."

"The god gave me the wholesome herb, then hastened back to high Olympus. I gazed gratefully after him, carefully stowed away his gift, and committed his advice to memory. Deep in thought I suddenly found myself at Circe's dwelling and heard the heavenly singing. I called, and the goddess immediately appeared. She led me to the silver-mounted seat and went to prepare the wine in which she mixed her magic herbs. As soon as she

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handed me the cup, I quickly poured Hermes' antidote into it, and drank off the potion without fear.

"At once she pointed the magic wand at my head saying: 'Now, my little beast, follow thy friends into the pig-pen.' I pushed back my chair, sprang from behind the table, and fell upon the false one with drawn sword. She shrieked and threw herself upon the ground to clasp my knees. 'Who art thou and whence comest thou who art the first to withstand my magic? Never has a mortal resisted its power. Art thou perhaps the crafty Ulysses who, Hermes once told me, should visit me on his long wanderings and set at naught my sorcery? But look not so fiercely upon me. Put up thy sword. Sit down peaceably beside me that we may hold friendly converse.'

"'O goddess,' I answered, 'how can I trust one who has robbed me of my friends? I know not what schemes thou entertainest against me. If I am to trust thee, swear to me the great oath of the gods that thou wilt not practise thine arts against me, sleeping nor waking.'

"She at once complied and I was reassured. And now she drew me down upon her couch and fondled me, while her maidens, beautiful daughters of the river and forest gods, prepared a delicious repast for me and one of them heated water for the bath. When it was ready she washed my head and shoulders herself and clothed me in rich garments. Then she led me to a table covered with delicacies. I did

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not partake, but leant my head upon my hand and sank into sorrowful musings. Circe urged me in vain to eat. 'O goddess,' I sighed, 'how can I enjoy a feast in the house where my unhappy companions are prisoners? Until I see them freed from the terrible enchantment, thou wilt exert thyself in vain to cheer me with thy embraces and thine entertainment.'

"The goddess was touched. She went out into the pens, freed the swine, and anointed each one with a healing salve. And, oh joy! the animals stood up, the bristly hide and the long snouts disappeared, and my companions stood before me, younger and handsomer than before. They shouted for joy and fell at our feet. Then their beautiful liberator led them into the banquet hall.

"'Listen, Ulysses,' said Circe to me, 'remain with me for a while and rest after all the hardships thou hast undergone. Go and beach thy ship upon the sands. Hide thy weapons and goods in the thicket, and then bring all thy worthy comrades here that I may entertain them.'

"Confiding in the sacred oath of the goddess I set out at once to fetch my companions. They rejoiced to see me returning in safety, and came running to meet me like young foals to their mother. I related my adventure, and commanded them to draw the ship on the beach and to bury the tools and follow me to the palace where they might rest and feast to their heart's content.

"Then arose the prudent Eurylochus, still half-

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paralyzed with fear, and said to them: 'Poor fellows, where are we going? The crafty sorceress will soon have transformed us all into swine, wolves, or lions. Did not Ulysses lead us into the Cyclops' cave. Let us stay here, and let him go where he will.' I grew crimson with anger on hearing him speak thus. I had already drawn my sword to cut off his head when my companions prevented me. 'Let him go,' said they; 'we will all follow thee.'

"I then guided them to Circe's palace, and even Eurylochus followed us at a distance. How happy they all were to find their companions, in fine garments, sitting at the festive board. They fell upon one another's necks, and even Circe was touched at the sight. She said to us: 'Dear comrades, stay with me until ye shall have forgotten all your troubles and regained your old-time courage.'

"Thankfully we accepted her invitation, and day by day we feasted and drank. But at length, when a year had gone by, the longing for home awakened in our breasts, and my companions urged me to think of our native land. All day I mused upon their demand, and as darkness fell I clasped the knees of the goddess and besought her to send us back to our homes. She answered graciously that she did not wish to detain me against my will, but that I must first accomplish a mission for her before I could take the direct path homewards. I gave my promise and heard with horror the following commission: 'I wish to send thee to the underworld to

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inquire of the spirit of old Tiresias, who conferred upon Persephone, Queen of Hades, alone of all the shades, power to wander there a living person, while the other souls are only floating shadows.'

"I wrung my hands and groaned. Weeping I sat beside the goddess and cried: 'Who shall show me the way thither? Never did a living man descend into Hades, and nevermore shall a living man return from thence into the light.'

"'Fear not for thy life, nor for a guide,' she continued. 'Spread thy sail and let the north wind guide thee.' She then gave me full directions as to all that I should see and do upon this visit to the lower regions.

"As she ended dawn was gilding the morning sky. Sorrowfully I arose and went to arouse my companions and advise them of our speedy departure. We went down to the ship with heavy hearts. There we found the sacrificial sheep, which I was to carry with me, bound and ready; a black male sheep and a female. Circe had also provided flour, wine, and honey. We launched the ship, raised the mast, and reluctantly embarked. A favorable wind bore us straight toward the ends of the earth.

"We reached the shores of the Cimmerians, where the sun no longer sheds its light. There we beached our ship, took the sacrificial gifts, and descended to the place which Circe had shown me. We found all as she had foretold. I now began to dig a pit with my sword, an ell square, and into it

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I poured an offering for the dead as I had been instructed; first of honey and milk, then of sweet wine, and at last of water, strewing white flour over all. Then the two sheep were handed me, and I cut their throats with my sword so that the dark blood ran into the pit. Immediately the departed souls floated up in crowds from the lower world and pressed upon me. But I held them back with my sword, and commanded my companions to burn the sheep which had been skinned meanwhile. While the offering was being consumed we prayed to all the gods of the lower world, and I did not forget to make promises to them and to Tiresias, provided that I should reach Ithaca in safety.

“I gazed upon the approaching shades with silent awe. I saw armed men with deep wounds, old dames and blooming maidens, careworn old men and vigorous youths. They crowded about the pit on all sides with horrible cries, and I had hard work to keep them from the blood with my sword.

“The spirits seemed speechless except Tiresias. He bade me turn away the sharp sword, that he might drink of the blood and prophesy of my fate. When he had drunk he leaned upon his golden staff and began: ‘Noble Ulysses, thou art anxious to return to thy home, but one of the gods will put difficulties in thy way. Dost thou not know how deeply thou didst offend Poseidon in blinding the eye of his son? Still all may be well with thee if only thou layest not thine hands upon the steers of Helios upon the island of Thrinakia. If thou



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shouldst kill one of them thou mayest scarcely expect to be saved, and if thou shouldst ever see thy native land again, it would only be after many years of hardship and without any of thy companions. Others shall feast upon thy substance, woo thy spouse, and seek to lay deadly traps for thy son. But at last a divinity shall take pity on thee that thou mayest slay the presumptuous guests in thy palace. The deed will compel thee to leave thine ancestral home and to settle far inland. Then let it be a token for thee that, when on thy pilgrimage with thine oar upon thy shoulder, thou shalt meet a man who shall call the oar a shovel, that it is the place which the gods have set apart for the haven of thine old age. Far from the sea, death shall come gently upon thee.'

“‘So that is to be my fate, O Tiresias,’ I said. ‘But tell me, do I not see my old mother amongst the spirits? She deigns not to speak to her son, nor looks into my face. What shall I do to make her know me?’

“‘If thou wouldst question any of these spirits, let them drink of the blood,’ answered Tiresias; ‘then mind and speech shall return to them.’

“I waited until my mother should approach, and as soon as she had drunk she recognized me with joy and astonishment. I recounted to her all my sufferings and questioned her in what manner she had died and how my father, wife, and dear son at home were faring. She told me that all were alive and longed for me every day, that my father,

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grown weak with age, lived in the palace no longer, but cultivated his vineyards in the country.

“She departed and in her place came other women, wives of famous heroes I had known. They, too, drank of the blood and told me of their fate. My heart swelled as I beheld the spirits of dear friends floating near who had once been my companions before Troy — Agamemnon, Achilles, Patroclus, and the excellent Ajax, all of whom death had overtaken before they saw their native land again. I was most astonished to see Agamemnon here. I questioned him and, lamenting, he told me his sad fate. He inquired about his living son, Orestes, but alas, I could tell him nothing of the Greeks. But I was able to tell Achilles of many glorious deeds done by his son Neoptolemus, of whose bravery in war I had often been witness after his father’s death. Even in the pale world of shades Achilles rejoiced in his son’s valor, and floated proudly down to the fields of asphodel where dwell the spirits of brave heroes.

“I saw also the heroes of ancient times. Minos, the wise ruler and lawgiver of Crete, was even now holding judgment over the souls of the dead in Hades; and Orion, the great hunter, with his mighty bow drove innumerable game before him. Tityus, that gigantic son of earth, who had once dared to dishonor the divine Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis, lay fast bound upon the ground in punishment, two vultures on either side tearing at his entrails which ever grew again and were anew destroyed.

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Not less terrible was the penalty of Sisyphus, a king who had practised many cruelties during his lifetime. He was obliged to push a heavy block of marble up a steep hill, and as often as he had nearly reached the top it would glide from his hands and roll thundering down to the bottom of the valley. Then, bathed in cold perspiration and in a cloud of dust, he would begin the difficult task over again.

“I saw Tantalus also, that celebrated king whom Jupiter allowed to sit at his own table and feast with the gods. His vain heart was unworthy of the honor. He misused their confidence and betrayed their secrets; and for this he was undergoing a terrible martyrdom in Hades. A burning thirst consumes him continually, and though he stands up to his throat in water, and delicious pear, fig, and apple trees hang their sweet fruits above his head, he can never satisfy his vehement desires; for as often as he bends down to the water the pool suddenly dries up, and as often as he raises his hand to pluck of the juicy fruit, a furious wind quickly tosses the branches toward the clouds. I saw also the shade of Hercules. He lives in Olympus with the gods and is married to Hebe, enjoying the pleasures of the gods in return for all his labor on earth. Only his shade is in Hades. Theseus and Pirithous also glided by at a distance.

“I did not venture to remain much longer in this dread place, but full of what I had seen and heard, hastened back to the ship with my companions. We all went aboard and Oceanus bore us back the

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way we had come. Circe had scarcely heard of our arrival when she visited us and sent us plenty of bread, meat, and wine. When it began to grow dark she seated herself by my side, apart from the others, and gave me much wise advice for my coming voyage. She warned me against the Sirens who entice travellers with sweet songs, only to devour them like beasts of prey. 'As it is impossible to resist their entrancing singing,' she said, 'take this piece of wax and knead it into a paste with which to stop the ears of thy companions; but cause thyself to be bound to the mast, and when, carried away by the magic singing, thou wouldst set thyself free, let them bind thee the faster.

“Another and greater danger awaits thee in the fearful abyss where dwell Scylla and Charybdis. There the sea is forced between two high rocks scarcely an arrow's flight apart. Deep at the foot of one lurks Charybdis, the monster, gulping down endless streams of water with all ships and men who approach too near, and long afterwards spitting them out again dashed to pieces in the turmoil. Beware of that side and keep closer to the right, where the other monster, Scylla, dwells. When thou passest by thou wilt be obliged to pay her a terrible toll, for with each of her six jaws she will snatch one of thy men from the rower's bench. But it is better to lose six men than to see thy whole ship go down in Charybdis' whirlpool. Finally I warn thee of the sacred oxen of Helios on the island Thrinakia. Shouldst thou harm one of them, I prophesy destruc-

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tion for thee and thy ship and thy friends; and even if thou shouldst thyself escape, thou shalt return home only after many years, unhappy and without any companions.'

"Thus spake the glorious goddess, and as rosy Eos appeared we hastened to our ships to take advantage of a favorable wind. As soon as I thought we were nearing the Sirens I kneaded the wax and stopped the ears of my friends; but me they bound fast to the mast. Thus we rowed on. The Sirens heard us coming and began their enchanting song. As I listened I was seized with an overmastering desire to hear more and struggled to loosen my bonds. I begged my friends with signs and gestures to aid me, but they only tied me faster, until the magical sounds grew fainter and fainter and the danger was left far behind.

"We next saw mist and rolling surf and heard hollow reverberations in the distance. The arms of the rowers became paralyzed and the ship stood still. I hastened among them and admonished them to row as fast as possible, but commanded the steersman to keep as far to the right as possible, that we might not be engulfed by Charybdis. I wisely kept silent about the fearful Scylla, or not a man would have rowed another stroke. As I stood on the high deck, armed with two spears and looking down into the foaming gulf, I heard a cry of pain on my right, and behold, the fearful monster had seized with her six jaws the bravest and strongest of my companions. They called loudly for help, but I could do naught

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for them. At last we had passed through the awful gulf and feasted our eyes on the green hills of Thrinakia. We could hear the lowing of the splendid oxen of Helios and the cheerful sound of bleating herds of sheep. Helios, the Sun-god, had placed these herds in the care of two nymphs, and delighted in watching them as often as he guided his golden chariot over Thrinakia's hills. They never increased or diminished, neither did they grow old.

“‘Friends,’ said I, ‘this is the fatal island, and I already see the pleasant flocks of Helios, to touch which means death. Let us heed the warning of Tiresias and the divine Circe and avoid the island, for they have told us that the most terrible fate awaits us there.’

My companions were displeased with my speech and began to murmur. Eurylochus was their spokesman. ‘Cruel, but too courageous Ulysses,’ said he, ‘thou art never weary, but we are worn out with our labors and thou begrudgest us rest. Thou wouldst have us row blindly out into the night. Let us land, take food, and rest beside the ship. Early in the morning we can set out again.’

“All applauded Eurylochus’ speech, and I perceived that the god was bent on my destruction. I said to them: ‘Ye can easily force me, a single man among many, to obedience. Only swear that ye will not touch one of those animals, but will be satisfied with the food which the immortal Circe has given us.’ They promised hastily and the steersman put to land.

We disembarked and ate our supper. Then we

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bewailed the terrible death of our companions, and it was late before sweet slumber came to dry our tears. But alas, what an awakening we were to have. During the night a frightful storm arose and thick black clouds veiled land and sea. When morning dawned we drew our ship into a rocky cove and sheltered ourselves as best we could.

“‘Friends,’ I said, ‘we shall not get away from this island to-day, but we have a store of food and drink. Swear to me once more that none of you will touch the sacred cattle.’”

“They all promised, but for four long weeks the south wind and the rough east wind alternated with each other and our departure was delayed. When all the store of food had been eaten my companions scoured the beach to find shellfish or would shoot a bird for food. But all these were not enough to appease their gnawing hunger. I, too, wandered about the island far from the ship, washed my hands in the sacred sea, and prayed to the gods that one of them might show me the way to return. When I had prayed thus a deep sleep overcame me, and I sank down upon the shore.

“When my companions found themselves alone they determined to break their oath. ‘If Jupiter has destined us to death, let us be suddenly dashed to pieces in the ship rather than die miserably of hunger here,’ said Eurylochus. ‘Come let us take some of the oxen and sacrifice them, and vow a temple in Ithaca to the offended Sun-god as soon as we are safe at home.’”

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“Just as the fat shanks were steaming on the hastily prepared altar I awoke and came hastening to the scene. Ye gods! what were my feelings when I smelled the unexpected odors from afar. It was vain to blame myself or my companions. The nymphs had carried the news to Helios, and the god threatened that unless he should receive sufficient reparation he would no longer light the world for gods and men. Upon this, Jupiter promised him to destroy my ship as soon as I should put to sea again. Alas, what woes were still in store for me!

“For six days my comrades feasted, but on the seventh, when the fury of the storm had spent itself, we hastily embarked and sailed rapidly toward our native coast. We had not gone far when a terrific west wind arose, piling up black thunder clouds. Our little vessel was tossed hither and thither until, with a loud crash, the mainmast broke off, carrying the steersman with it into the sea. Then came a frightful bolt of lightning which split the ship in two and all the rowers were precipitated into the water, where they tossed about and then sank. I had clung tightly to the keel, and when the broken mast with its sail ropes floated near enough, I bound it fast to the keel. I tried to keep myself afloat on this miserable raft, but despaired of ever reaching land, especially as a south wind suddenly arose, which carried me straight toward the straits of Scylla. The current bore me toward the whirlpool of Charybdis, so that only a miracle

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could save me. On a cliff directly overhanging the gulf I saw a fig tree, and just as the whirlpool was about to suck me down I seized hold of its slender stem, clinging to it like a bat, for I found no place for my feet. My raft had been swallowed up, but I knew that the monster would soon cast it out again, and sure enough, presently my faithful raft came floating safely along. I essayed a sudden leap, grasped the raft desperately, and was carried out again by the current into the open sea. The storm had subsided and I paddled about for nine days with my hands, almost perishing with hunger. On the tenth day I was fortunate enough to reach land. It was Ogygia, Calypso's island, where I was held in captivity for nine years, as I have told you."

Chapter VIII

Ulysses is taken sleeping to Ithaca by the Phæacians — Athene counsels him — He comes to Eumæus

ALL eyes were fastened upon the speaker and all listened with delight to the wonderful adventures of Ulysses. "We should pay even greater honor to the hero who has suffered so much," cried Alcinous. "Let each of the twelve princes add a tripod of bronze and a silver basin to his gift." All agreed and the company broke up for the night.

At daybreak they reassembled, each bringing his gift. Alcinous himself went aboard the vessel and carefully fitted it out with all that was necessary. Then all repaired once more to the king's palace for a farewell banquet and sacrificial offering. Ulysses, longing for home, spake to the king. "Most honored hero and mighty King Alcinous, and ye princes of the Phæacians, speed me now upon my way, for I have all that heart can wish. May the gods bless your gifts and my return and send you good fortune."

After the last rites of hospitality had been com-

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pleted Ulysses turned to Arete, and putting his cup into her hand he said: "Farewell forever, O Queen, until old age and death, the lot of all mankind, shall overtake thee. Mayest thou be happy in thy palace for many years amongst thy children, thy husband, and thy people."

After taking leave he hurried to the ship and laid himself down to rest, while the rowers took their places and bent to their task. Ulysses sank into a slumber, forgetting all his woes. As the morning star arose the ship landed in one of Ithaca's bays. Even the shock of landing did not awaken the hero, and the Phæacian youths carried him gently on shore. They took out all the presents and piled them beside him beneath an olive tree. They then reëmbarked and steered gayly homeward. But the unfortunates could not escape the wrath of Poseidon. He saw them returning, and transformed their ship into a rock in the midst of the sea and surrounded the city of Phæacia with high cliffs.

In the meantime Ulysses awoke and did not recognize his home, for Athene had surrounded him with a thick fog. "Woe is me," he cried. "In what strange country have the deceitful Phæacians left me? What shall I do? I will first examine the gifts and see if all are here." He counted them and found none missing. As he was strolling along, Athene in the form of a lovely little shepherd boy came toward him. Ulysses was overjoyed. "A greeting to thee, the first being I have met in this strange land," he said. "I humbly beg of thee

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to tell me where I am. What country is this and by what people inhabited? Is it an island or a promontory of the mainland?"

"Thou must have come from afar," interrupted the youth, "if thou knowest not this land; for in truth it is famous enough. To be sure it is rough and mountainous and not fit for horses, but grain and wine flourish here and it supports quantities of cattle and sheep. It is well watered by brooks and covered with magnificent forests. Indeed the fame of Ithaca has even reached Troy, and that they say is far from the Achaian land."

The crafty one hid his feelings, for he did not wish to be known. "Indeed," he said, "I have often heard the name in Crete, my home. I am a refugee. The Phæacians kindly brought me hither with these, my goods; for I have slain a king's son who wished to take from me my booty from the Trojan wars. Therefore I had to leave wife and child and —"

"Silence!" interrupted Athene, smiling and changing into a beautiful maiden of heroic stature. "Thou art still the same resourceful Ulysses as of yore, whom I have always protected. Spare me thy jests, for we know each other. I am Pallas Athene, and am now come to give thee counsel how thou mayest punish the insolent suitors in thy house. For they have wooed thy virtuous spouse for three years with marriage gifts, but she repulses them all and cherishes thy image alone in her heart and longs unspeakably for thy return."

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“It is difficult indeed to recognize thee in human form, oh goddess,” cried Ulysses. “True, thou hast often appeared to me in battle and in times of need, but it has seemed to me that lately thou hadst deserted me and that I should never see thee again. But tell me, how can this be Ithaca? I do not recognize it.”

“I had not forgotten thee,” answered the goddess. “But I did not wish to oppose the mighty Poseidon, my great uncle, who pursued thee with his revenge. I knew too that total destruction was not to be thy destiny. Now I will show thee the land.” And Athene dissipated the mists so that the country lay clear before them.

Ulysses fell upon his face and joyfully kissed the sacred mother earth and with uplifted hands prayed to the nymphs, the protecting goddesses of the place whereon he stood.

“And now, Ulysses,” said Athene, “let us hide thy valuables so that no one shall rob thee of them.” She entered the nymphs’ grotto and Ulysses handed her each piece, which she carefully stowed away and then rolled a stone before the low entrance. Next they sat down under the old olive tree and Athene gave him much advice.

Although she promised him assistance she counselled him to proceed very cautiously as the suitors numbered over one hundred. Above all, nobody must know of his arrival until he had secretly learned who his friends were and had assured himself of sufficient adherents. To this end she wished to

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transform him so that no one should recognize him or suspect the presence of the great king. She touched him gently with her staff and immediately he became like an old man with shrunken flesh and deep wrinkles, white hair and pale, watery eyes. His long flowing robes were changed into a coarse and ragged shirt, and his cloak became a shabby deerskin. In order to complete the beggar's garb she supplied him with a large wallet and put a knotty stick into his hand.

In this apparel she bade him first visit the good swineherd, who was an enemy of the suitors and was truly devoted to his master. From him he could soon learn further particulars. In the meanwhile she would hasten to meet young Telemachus, returning from Sparta, for whom the suitors were lying in wait with their ships. She would bring their schemes to naught and hoped soon to guide the youth into his father's arms. They parted, and Ulysses climbed the steep path which led to the dwelling of the good swineherd, Eumæus. He was chief of all the king's herdsmen and had four men under him, who took care of all the flocks.

The estimable swineherd was sitting at the door of his hut cutting out sandals to wear when he should go into the city. By his side lay four savage-looking dogs. When the beasts saw Ulysses with his beggar's pack in the distance, they sprang up barking and ran furiously toward him. He quickly laid by his staff and bowed himself down, but still they would have seized him had not the swineherd

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followed quickly to enforce his commands with stones and calls.

“In truth the beasts came near devouring thee and thou hadst caused me shame and sorrow, old man,” he cried. “I have already troubles enough, for I sit here grieving bitterly for my dear master, whose fat swine I am obliged to send daily to the impious men in his palace, while he, perhaps, goes hungry or wanders like a beggar among strangers, if perchance he still sees the light of the sun. But come into my hut, that I may set bread and wine before thee and thou canst tell me who and whence thou art.”

Thus speaking he preceded Ulysses into the hut, where he prepared him a couch of straw covered with goatskins. Ulysses was touched by his kindness and said: “May Jupiter send thee what thou most wishest for, friend, in return for thy kindness to me.”

“One should not despise any guest, oh stranger, however humble,” answered the swineherd, “for all strangers are under the protection of Jupiter. In my house the hospitality is very scanty, for, as thou knowest, a servant has not much to give. To be sure, were my old master living and at home I should be better off. He would have taken good care of me and have made provision for my old age in return for my long and faithful service. But my good master is gone. O that Helen’s race might be destroyed root and branch for bringing death to so many brave men!”

With these words he tucked up his long garment,

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went to one of the sties, and took out two sucking pigs. After killing them he slowly roasted them on the spit at the fire, laid the pieces before Ulysses, mixed wine in a wooden tankard, and set it before him. "There, stranger," said he, "eat and drink of the best we shepherds have. The suitors who fear neither gods nor men eat the fattened pork. The gods have always been displeased at deeds of violence. Even robbers often fear the gods, but these fear and reverence nothing, and the divinities have delayed their punishment thus far. The cursed ones must have secret information that Ulysses has perished miserably, else would they not waste his substance so recklessly. No king hereabouts was so richly blessed with property as Ulysses. He owned twelve herds of cattle and as many of sheep and goats. Each of the shepherds must now send a daily contribution from the fattened flocks to the palace, and soon all will be dissipated."

The listener was indignant at what he had heard, but concealed his feelings, and when he had finished eating he said: "What would you think, friend, if I should bring thee good news? Tell me the name of thy rich and powerful master. I have travelled so far that perchance I can tell thee somewhat of him."

"Spare thyself the trouble," answered the swineherd. "He will not return. Who knows on what rocky coast his bones are bleaching? Woe, woe is me! Neither father nor mother was as dear to me as my kind master."

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"Listen, my dear fellow," answered Ulysses. "I will swear to thee a sacred oath that Ulysses shall return. When he has come thou shalt give me a fine tunic and a cloak in return for my good news. I do not ask for them now, needy as I am, for I despise the wretch who lies for gain, even though want incites him. But hear me. All that I now foretell shall come to pass. When the present moon has waned and the new one begins to increase, Ulysses will be at home and shall have punished all who have not respected his wife and son."

"Silence, old man," interrupted the swineherd. "Drink and talk of something else, and may the gods forgive thee the oath. Sadness fills my heart. I am troubled about the son also, the splendid Telemachus, whom an evil spirit has persuaded to wander abroad to seek news of his father. I hear that the shameless suitors are lying in wait for him to kill him on his return, that the race of Arkisios may perish. But now, old man, tell me of thy own troubles."

"It would take me a year to unfold my tale of woe," answered the artful Ulysses, and began to tell many stories of his adventures and feats of bravery. When he had finished, "Unhappy man," said the swineherd, "thou hast touched my heart. But why dost thou tell me lies about Ulysses who never will return? Thou wilt not thus acquire my favor; for if I show thee honor and kindness I do it only in honor of Jupiter and for sympathy for thy troubles."

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“Thou hast an incredulous heart in thy breast,” cried Ulysses angrily; “for thou dost not even believe my oath. But listen to me; we will make a bargain. I will stay here until Ulysses comes, and when he is here thou shalt send me home to Dulichium, well fitted out with cloak and tunic. If he cometh not, then shalt thou and thy grooms bind me and throw me down from this rock.”

“The gods forbid that I should ever do such a thing,” answered the swineherd. “Never could I pray to Jupiter again should I thus abuse the laws of hospitality.”

During this conversation evening had descended, and the under herders came in with their beasts. There was a tremendous grunting, and it was a long time before all the bristly creatures were safe in their sties. When they were taken care of, the swineherd ordered the men to bring in a fatted five-year-old to regale the guest.

While the men were outside he chopped wood and laid it on the fire and made all ready. When the meal was prepared, the good swineherd made a fair division. He divided each part seven times. The first part was taken out for the nymphs and Hermes; the others were for his guest, his four servants, and himself. The old man received a large piece of the fat back, the piece of honor which is generally given to the guest. Ulysses was delighted and said: “Good Eumæus, mayest thou be as beloved of Jupiter as thou art of me, whom thou hast so honorably entertained.”

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“Eat, my unhappy friend,” answered the kindly man, “and make the most of what thou hast, for the gods give and take as it pleases them.”

After supper was over and night had fallen, an awful west wind whistled through the hut. The rain fell in torrents. Ulysses shivered miserably in his rags and it did not seem to occur to the swineherd to offer him a warm cloak. The hero contrived a jest to see if he could not get it by craft. “Listen, Eumæus and ye shepherds,” said he. “The wine has made me merry and I must tell ye an amusing tale. Perhaps it is not fitting that I should tell it, but as I have begun I will finish it. I have just been wishing that I were as young and strong as when I lay with your master before Troy. And then I recollected a trick by which Ulysses once helped me in great straits.

“One night we had planned an ambush close to the city wall — Menelaus, Ulysses, and I — but we had taken but a few men with us. Night was approaching and we lay down in a thicket amongst reeds and swamp grass. All at once the sky became overcast and a cruel north wind began to blow. Snow fell, and our shields were soon encrusted with ice. I was worse off than the others, for they had their cloaks in which to wrap themselves and were covered with their shields. Thus they slept without feeling the storm. I alone had not brought my cloak, and was obliged to lie in the rain in my thin tunic. My teeth chattered and I shook as though in a fever.

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“At length, past midnight, when I could no longer endure it, I nudged Ulysses who lay beside me, and said: ‘Noble Ulysses, I am nearly dying of cold, for I left my cloak behind. Do thou devise something for me.’ ‘Keep quiet,’ he said softly. Then raising his voice he awakened the others. ‘Listen, friends,’ he said, ‘I have just had a memorable dream. There are so few of us and we are so far from the ships, someone should run to Agamemnon and tell him to send us aid.’ Thoas, Andræmon’s son, obligingly set out, leaving his purple cloak upon the ground. Ulysses tossed it to me and I laughingly wrapped myself therein and slept till morning. You see, friends, I was thinking that were I now as young and strong as then that perhaps someone would give me a robe for the night, either out of good-will or for fear of my strength. But of course the humble man in beggar’s garb is despised.”

The men laughed and the swineherd praised the stranger’s cunning. “Thou hast spoken well,” he said, “and hast drawn a very good comparison. Therefore I will give thee what thou desirest. Take this cloak, but in the morning thou must give it back, for we shepherds have few clothes. If Telemachus should return he will doubtless give thee garments and send thee back to thy home.”

While speaking he prepared a couch of sheep and goat skins by the hearth for the guest and placed a cloak over it to cover him. The servants lay

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down beside Ulysses, but the swineherd did not sleep within, but carefully guarding his herds he bivouacked nightly in a cleft by the rock which sheltered him from the north wind. Ulysses was much pleased with the good man's faithful service.

Chapter IX

Telemachus leaves Sparta and lands in Ithaca

IN the meanwhile Athene had not ceased planning for her favorites. That same night she went to Menelaus' palace in Sparta to admonish Telemachus to return home and to warn him of the dangers lying in wait for him. "When thou art near the shores of Ithaca," she said, "let thy companions row immediately to the city, but do thou go alone to the hut of old Eumæus, who is honestly devoted to thee, to spend the night. Let him hasten to the city to tell Penelope of thy safe arrival." With these words the goddess disappeared. When morning dawned Telemachus arose and met Menelaus, who was also abroad, and immediately begged to be allowed to depart.

"Far be it from me, dear youth, to keep thee here against thy will," answered Menelaus. "But wait at least until I can give thee parting gifts and have the women prepare a good meal, that thou mayest set out strengthened and refreshed."

Menelaus bade the maids prepare a repast in haste and himself went into the treasury to select a gift for the departing guests. Helen also opened her chest, which held beautifully embroidered gar-

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ments worked by her own hands. She took out the largest and finest one for Telemachus. Menelaus followed her with a golden goblet and a silver pitcher. He presented them, saying: "May Jupiter grant thee a prosperous voyage. Behold I am giving thee the most valuable thing that I possess. It was a present from the Sidonian king when I passed through Phœnicia. Truly it is as cunning a piece of work as though made by Hephæstos himself."

"I, too, desire to make thee a present," said Helen, holding out the magnificent robe. "Let it adorn the bride on thy wedding day. Until then let thy worthy mother keep it in her chest. Fare thee well, and return in peace to thy stately palace and land of thy fathers."

Telemachus received the splendid gifts with gratitude and gave them to Pisistratus, who in silent admiration stowed them away in the chariot. Then they all went into the hall and sat down to the banquet. As soon as it was over, the two youths hastened to depart, and Menelaus accompanied them to their chariot with a goblet of wine, drinking to their health and giving them a final hand clasp with the words: "Farewell, youths. Bear my greeting to father Nestor who truly loved me like a father when we were fighting before Troy."

After taking leave of their fathers' friends the two youths travelled rapidly until they reached Pylos. Then Telemachus said to Pisistratus: "I wish thou wouldst grant a request, good host. Drive

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me directly to my ship on the beach, so that the venerable Nestor may not detain me with his kindly hospitality; for I am in great haste." Pisistratus agreed to this, and Telemachus' companions were overjoyed to see him again and at once prepared for departure. When all was ready, Telemachus placed himself at the rudder and with a silent prayer poured a libation to Athene into the sea, and they rowed away into the silent night.

In the meanwhile the beggar Ulysses sat in the hut of good Eumæus partaking of his humble fare. "Listen, Eumæus," he began. "I have been a burden to thee long enough, and intend to go into town early to-morrow morning. All I ask is that thou wilt give me a guide to show me the way to Ulysses' palace. I desire to bring tidings to Penelope and to mix with the suitors and see whether they are inclined to treat me kindly."

"What art thou thinking of, old man?" cried Eumæus angrily. "Thou wouldst fare ill shouldst thou fall among that company, whose high-handed manners are beyond belief. Thou art not in my way. Wait at least until Ulysses' son comes back, and he will doubtless give thee a good cloak and coat and provide a vessel to take thee where thou wishest to go."

"Excellent swineherd," answered the crafty Ulysses, "may Jupiter love thee as I do for giving me rest and shelter in thy hut after all my sorrows. If I am to stay, then tell me somewhat of the mother of the famous Ulysses; also of his aged father."

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Upon this the old man began to talk of Laertes and the good mother, who had long ago succumbed to sorrow and been laid in the grave. The servants had long since betaken themselves to rest, and when midnight came the host said: "Now we too will sleep a little. But it is sweet to pour out one's troubles, and thou art a sensible man to whom it is a pleasure to talk. There is always time enough for sleep."

During this same night the ship which carried Telemachus had approached the island in safety, having escaped the vigilance of the spies, and landed on the northern coast. With the first rays of the rising sun Telemachus disembarked with his companions and offered sacrifice. The good youth little suspected how near his father was. He bound on the shining sandals and took the heavy lance, prepared to separate from his companions whom he ordered to row to the city. He appointed a meeting the next day in his father's palace to offer them the journey's meed — a stately banquet of meat and wine.

Telemachus had but one more care. In Pylos a soothsayer from Argos, Theoclymenus, had joined his company and requested passage in the ship. They had gladly brought him to Ithaca, but he wanted to go farther, and Telemachus was so afraid of the suitors that he scarcely dared bring a guest with him to his house. They therefore consulted together as to where the stranger should be entertained. Telemachus proposed Eurymachus, the most

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insolent of the suitors, as host, as he was the most important man on the island and could best entertain and send him on his way. "He is now, as my father is away," he continued, "almost the supreme ruler here and is determined to marry my mother, so that he may acquire, together with the property of my family, also the title of king and the principal seat in the folks' assembly, which of right belongs to our house. Now Jupiter only knows whether or not he will gain his ends."

As he said this, behold, to their right a vulture, holding a dove in its talons, flew past. It was tearing the dove in its flight, so that its feathers fell to the earth between Telemachus and his ship. Then Theoclymenus took the youth quickly aside and said softly: "Friend, what thou hast just spoken shall never be fulfilled. This token of the gods tells me that rule over the princes of Ithaca shall always remain with thy house."

The heart of Telemachus was filled with joy at this prophecy. He bade the stranger farewell, and one of his men conducted him to the dwelling of Eurymachus, while Telemachus went to the hut of the swineherd, as Athene had commanded him.

Chapter X

Arrival of Telemachus — Ulysses reveals himself to his Son

WHEN Telemachus reached the enclosure of the chief herder, the sun was already high in the heavens. The shepherds had scattered with their flocks and herds in fields and forest, and the excellent Eumæus was lying with Ulysses before the blazing fire where they had just roasted a piece of meat for their breakfast. "Listen, I hear footsteps," said Ulysses, "and the dogs do not bark. It must be one of thy comrades or acquaintances."

Scarcely were the words spoken when Telemachus appeared in the gateway, the dogs leaping about him in joyful welcome. The swineherd was so astonished that he let fall his cup and hurried out to meet the new arrival. He threw his arms about him, wept over him, and gazed upon him in delight as though he had arisen from the dead. It was a long time before he could speak, and then he broke out tenderly: "Hast thou really come, Telemachus? Art thou here, my sweet life? I feared never to see thee again, when I heard that thou hadst sailed for Pylos. But enter, dear son, that I may

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delight in thee; for not often dost thou visit the shepherd, preferring to mingle with the swarm of suitors in the city."

"How canst thou talk thus, old man?" interrupted the youth. "But never mind. I have come to thee to find out whether my mother has listened to one of the suitors and left my poor house."

"No, indeed," answered Eumæus. "She still sits and weeps away her days and nights in thy palace. Thou wilt find her as thou didst leave her."

The two now entered the hut, and the unknown beggar whose heart was beating with joy at the sight of his handsome son controlled himself with difficulty. With the deference of the poor he arose from his couch to give place to the stranger, but Telemachus prevented him, saying: "Sit still, stranger. I will find a seat somewhere." Eumæus brought out the remains of the meal and they all sat down to eat and drink. At length Telemachus said: "Now, father Eumæus, do thou go to the city for me and bring the news secretly to Penelope that I am safely returned from Pylos. But take care that no suitor hears it, for many enemies are plotting against me."

"Be it so," said the herdsman, putting on his sandals and taking up his staff. Ulysses was still looking after him, when he saw through the half-opened gate the figure of a tall, slender maiden, beckoning to him. The dogs slunk into the corners, but Telemachus did not perceive the apparition. Ulysses divined that it was the goddess and went out to the gateway.

ARRIVAL OF TELEMACHUS

“Noble son of Laertes,” Athene addressed him, “the time has now come for thee to reveal thyself to thy son. Take counsel with him how ye may make an end of the suitors. I shall soon be with you.”

While speaking she touched him with her golden staff and instantly his beggar’s dress was transformed into a fine purple cloak and his wrinkled face into a fresh manly countenance and the bald head was covered with shining brown locks. He reëntered the hut, from which he had just issued in rags, looking like a king. Telemachus gazed at him in astonishment and said, uncertainly: “Stranger, how changed thou art. Ah, I feel that a god approaches. Be merciful to us, thou holy one. Gladly will we sacrifice to thee and bring thee gifts.”

“No,” cried Ulysses, “I am not a god. I am the father for whom thou hast mourned so long. I am Ulysses.” Joyfully he clasped his son in his arms and kissed him.

“Doubt no longer, dear son,” continued Ulysses. “It was not I who worked the miracle, but Athene, who is with me. The gods can do all things; they can glorify or disfigure a mortal according to their pleasure. Yes, it is I, Ulysses, who have been wandering afar for twenty years, and thou art my beloved son. I have found my greatest happiness in holding thee here in my arms.”

He could say no more for sobbing. Father and son wept for some time, closely clasping each other. Ever and anon they would gaze silently at each other, then break out in tears of joy and gratitude.

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At length began tender questionings, but the answers had to be left for leisure days. Now they must discuss the great question. A long time was spent in consultation and Ulysses instructed his son how to proceed and how to receive him when he should arrive at the palace. In the meanwhile the vessel which had brought Telemachus had sailed round the island and entered the harbor near the city. The men beached the ship. One faithful youth took Telemachus' gifts away with him, another ran to Ulysses' palace to bring the queen news of her son's return. But he was so imprudent as to cry out the news to her before all the suitors, who gnashed their teeth with rage over the failure of their schemes and stole away to concoct secretly new ones.

Soon afterward honest Eumæus also arrived with his secret message, but found he was too late, and at once set out again for his home, where he arrived in the evening. Athene had again clothed the king in his beggar's rags, so that Eumæus had no idea of what had taken place during his absence. He quickly selected a year-old pig for the evening meal, waited upon his guests carefully, and they all retired early to rest and received the good gift of sleep.

Chapter XI

*Ulysses and the Goatherd — the Dog Argos —
Ulysses in the Hall among the Suitors*

AT daybreak Telemachus arose, put on his sandals, and took up his lance. "Now fare thee well, father," he said to Eumæus. "I am going to the city, for my mother will not cease worrying until she sees me. I charge thee bring thy guest to my house, where he may try his luck, and help shall not fail him."

"It is well," said Ulysses. "In the city, where there are many rich people, a beggar can make his way better than in the country. The morning air is cold and my rags are thin, so let me warm myself a while at the fire and then I shall be ready."

Telemachus walked quickly away. He reached town before the suitors had arrived at his house, placed his lance, according to custom, outside the door against a pillar, and entered the hall. There the old servant Euryclea was dusting and arranging the cushions. When she saw the youth she hastened to him weeping; the other maids also welcomed him and kissed his face and shoulders. Penelope also came and embraced her beloved son with tears. She held him for a long time in her arms and begged him to tell her what he had heard on his journey.

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“Mother,” said he, “do not make me speak of new troubles, for I have scarce escaped death. But now bathe thyself and put on clean garments, then ascend to the housetop and vow a thank-offering to the gods if they will avenge the shame of our house. I am going to the market place to fetch the stranger who accompanied me on my return.”

He went, and his mother obeyed his behests. When Telemachus crossed the market place he found all the suitors assembled there. They greeted him pleasantly, but their hearts were full of mischief. He did not join them, but seated himself with the few older men who had remained true to his father, and answered their curious questions. As soon as he caught sight of the seer Theoclymenus, he arose and went to him and took him to his house, before the rough crowd had arrived. While Telemachus was entertaining his guest, Penelope came in with her women and sat down to spin and listen to the tale of her son’s adventures. He did not dare to betray the secret of his father’s arrival, so that Penelope’s longing remained unsatisfied until the cheering assurance came from the strange seer that unfailing signs portended the early return of her beloved husband.

In the midst of her joy over this the queen was disturbed by the hubbub of the brawling suitors, who had been amusing themselves by throwing quoits outside the palace and now burst into the hall to feast and drink as usual. She went straight to her chamber, and the stranger, too, left the hall.

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The servants began slaughtering the beeves, goats, swine, and sheep in the courtyard and preparing delicious dishes for the suitors.

Ulysses had remained until noon in the herdsman's hut. The road to the city was long, and the circuitous mountain path led past a well where the maidens were accustomed to draw water. An altar had been erected on the height where passing travellers made offerings to the nymphs of the spring. At this well the goatherd Melantheus met with the two wayfarers. He was an impudent fellow, unfaithful to his master, and ready for any mischief that the suitors should devise. He was an arch enemy of the swineherd, as of all honest people. Hardly had he caught sight of him accompanied by a ragged beggar than he called out with coarse raillery: "It is a true saying that one beggar leads the other. How the gods do pair like with like. Where art thou going with the hungry one, thou ignoble swineherd? Shall he stand at the door of the palace in his hideous garb to disgust the gay guests, to rub his shoulders at the doorposts, and beg for crumbs? If thou wouldst give him to me, to sweep out the stalls and make beds for the young kids, he might get some flesh on his bones. But of course, beggars' bread is easily gained. I tell thee, if thou bringest the nasty fellow to the palace, bones and joints in scores will fly at his head."

With these insulting words he gave poor Ulysses a sharp kick. Ulysses reflected for a moment whether he should dash the wretch to the ground

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— an easy task for him — or pretend to be weak and fearful. He chose the latter course and took the insult humbly. But Eumæus defied the goat-herd to his face and prayed to the holy nymphs of the well that they should cause Ulysses to return and punish the wretch. To avoid the fellow the two companions let him go ahead with his goats. “Thou dog,” he called back, “some day I shall pack thee aboard ship and sell thee as a slave.”

When Ulysses and the swineherd approached the royal palace, the beggar exclaimed with profound emotion: “Ah! one can see that this must be the stately dwelling of Ulysses. Inside, sounds of festivity, and outside the defiant battlements the impregnable wall. A rich and mighty king must live here.”

“Do thou enter first,” he said to Eumæus. “I will soon follow.” Thus they passed into the courtyard. Behold, in the corner on the dunghill lay a dog called Argos. He was thin and wasted and swarming with vermin. A year before his departure for Troy, Ulysses had trained this dog for the chase. He had often played with him as a puppy, but when he had gone, Argos had been neglected. Now he was too weak to crawl, but when he saw Ulysses near to him he raised himself painfully and wagged his tail. When he tried to run to his master his legs gave way and down he sank. Ulysses recognized the faithful animal and turned aside to brush away a tear. Then he said to Eumæus: “Tell me, Eumæus. The animal there

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on the dunghill is well built. Was he not fleet of foot?"

"Yes," answered the swineherd; "he, too, misses his good master. Thou shouldst have seen him twenty years ago. He was his master's favorite, for he had trained him, and no prey was so swift that Argos could not overtake it. But no one tends him now, and he has to pick up a miserable living in the courtyard. Servants are careless when the master is abroad."

The swineherd entered the house and was spied by Telemachus, who called him to his side where he was served with bread and meat. But Ulysses remained a while without to watch the faithful dog draw his last breath. Then he, too, entered the house and seated himself near the door in the hall.

At first the feasters did not notice him, but Telemachus sent him food. He laid it down upon the dirty wallet and ate, while the minstrel sang sweet songs to the music of his harp. When the singer had finished, Ulysses went among the suitors to collect alms, that he might discover which ones were kindly disposed and which were hard and cruel. Many gave to him pityingly and asked one another in surprise who the old man was and whence he came. "The swineherd brought him here," cried Melantheus. "Who he is I know not."

"Swineherd," grumbled Antinous, "why didst thou bring this fellow to the city? I thought there were plenty of us already to eat up the absent master's substance, and we could do without beggars."

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“Not seemly is thy speech, Antinous, although thou art noble,” answered the swineherd. “Thou wert always hard on Ulysses’ servants, and especially on me. However, I take no notice so long as Penelope and Telemachus live in this palace.”

“Hush, Eumæus,” interrupted Telemachus. “Thou knowest Antinous. If that is thy only scruple, Antinous, that the alms which thou givest the poor come from my store, do not refrain from giving. Neither my mother nor I begrudge them. But that is not thy real meaning. Thou wouldst rather use it all thyself.”

“Thou insolent young cub,” interrupted Antinous. “If each of the suitors would send him what I do, he would not enter the house again in three months.” He accompanied these words with a motion toward a footstool under the table, and was just going to throw it at the beggar’s head when a neighbor seized his arm.

Ulysses desired to tempt the ungovernable man further. He went up to him and begged an alms, and even tried to touch his heart by relating his wanderings and hardships. But Antinous harshly bade him begone, and Ulysses retired with the words: “Truly, Antinous, thy body and thy mind are not in harmony.”

“Was there ever such an insolent beggar!” cried Antinous angrily. “Now truly, thou shalt not leave the hall unpunished,” and with all his might he threw the footstool, which struck Ulysses’ shoulder. He stood firm as a rock, only shaking his head in silence,

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then returned to the gate and sat down, opening his wallet.

Telemachus could hardly contain himself, and even Penelope, who could hear all from her balcony, pitied the stranger whom she could not see. She desired Eumæus to conduct the strange man to her, that she might talk with him and supply him with fine raiment.

But he replied: "I should like nothing better than to see the queen, for I have much to tell her, but I fear the cruel suitors. Bid the noble Penelope wait for me in her apartments until the sun is set. Then she may question me about her husband's return." And he remained quietly sitting on the doorstep, while his guests, having no idea that he was really their host, amused themselves, after the banquet was over, with singing and dancing. How he longed to have them go, that he might at last see his dear wife once more. But before he did so he was to have another strange adventure.

Chapter XII

Ulysses and Irus, the Beggar

A BEGGAR called Irus entered the hall. He was tall and thin, in spite of being well fed, and was a favorite with the suitors; for he was useful to them in many ways. He was greatly astonished to find his place already occupied and looked at the old man angrily and disdainfully, and relying on his own size and the support of the suitors, he began, masterfully: "Get out of here or I will throw thee out! Up at once! In a hurry now! Listen, thou villain! If thou dost not move quickly there will be trouble between us!"

Ulysses greeted him with dark looks and began: "Miserable creature, what have I done to thee? I do not begrudge thee thy part, and there is room for both of us here. Do not talk of fighting between us, for old as I am I should probably spill thy blood and rid me of thee for a long time to come."

"Ha," cried Irus, angrily. "He talks like a washerwoman. I have a great mind to crack thy jaw. Come here and gird thyself, that all may see how I shall use thee!"

Thus far the suitors had paid no heed to the beg-

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gar's quarrel, but now Antinous pricked up his ears and cried laughingly: "Here is an amusing comedy. The stranger there and Irus have challenged each other." All sprang from their seats laughing and formed a circle about the two.

"Listen," said Antinous. "Here is a delicious morsel of tripe for the victor, and in future he shall drink and eat with us and be the only beggar allowed to enter here henceforth." This proposal met with universal approval.

Slowly Ulysses arose, pretending to be stiff in every joint. Said he: "It is hard that an old man weakened by want should be obliged to contend with a younger. But hunger forces me to try my luck. Only swear to me that no one shall assist Irus or mix in the fight."

Ulysses made ready by tucking up his rags, revealing naked shoulders, arms, and legs — and how powerful they were! The suitors were astonished. Irus also had misgivings and would have been glad to recall his rash words. As he hesitated the servants led him forward, trembling. Antinous forced him to the fore and the fight began. Ulysses reflected whether he should break the wretch's skull with his fist or only lay him low with a moderate blow. He wisely decided on the latter, so that the suitors should not become suspicious.

Irus let fly and struck his adversary's shoulder. But immediately he received a fearful stroke on his jaw from below, so that blood streamed from his mouth. With a shriek he sank down, pressed both

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hands over his face, and drummed with his feet for pain. The suitors set up a shout of laughter, but Ulysses drew the conquered man out into the courtyard by his heels and laid him in a corner. He replaced his old rags, took up his wallet, and returned to his place on the threshold. They all came up laughing, to shake hands with him, and Antinous laid the roasted tripe on his wallet, while Amphinomus brought him bread and wine and drank to him with a hearty handshake and a toast for better times.

Before all this had come to pass Athene had inspired Penelope with the idea of appearing among the suitors and putting a stop to their plundering by means of cunning words. The goddess wished to give the unrecognized beggar the happiness of seeing his excellent wife in all her majesty and the pure light of her innocence and faithfulness. Invested with divine beauty by the goddess, Penelope descended clad in a charming robe, her face covered with a long veil and accompanied by two serving maids. As she entered the hall, all gazed at her admiringly, each wishing that she might choose him for her husband.

“By all the gods, noble Penelope,” cried Eurymachus, “if all the sons of Greece could see thee, thy palace would be even more full of suitors than it is now — thou art so far superior to all other women in beauty and in nobility of soul.”

“Alas, Eurymachus,” she answered, “the gods destroyed my beauty when my dear husband sailed

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against Troy. If only he were restored to me, I should lead a glorious life; but now I mourn in sorrow, anxiety, and solitude. When he gave me his hand for the last time he said: 'Dear wife, I am going to a long war in a distant country. The gods alone know whether I shall return. Take care of the house and our property, consider my father and mother, and bring up our son carefully. When he has grown to manhood, if I have not returned, make room for him in the house and do thou wed with another.' Alas, I did not think that it would ever be; but to my sorrow fate has decreed that the fatal day of my espousals draws near. And what manner of wooing is this? It is customary for the suitors of a rich man's daughter themselves to bring the beeves and fatted calves for the feast and to invite the bride's friends and to bring her rich gifts. But who has ever heard of their squandering the substance of the bride whom they are wooing?"

The suitors were ashamed and promised to bring the beautiful Penelope handsome presents next day, and she did indeed receive richer gifts than ever a bride before. When she had retired, the suitors continued their sport.

As night fell the maids appeared to light the lamps. That meant, in ancient times, to burn shavings in a brazier on high pedestals and then to renew the shavings when they had burned low. Ulysses said to them: "Go ye rather to the apartments of the amiable queen. Turn the spindle and comb the wool and bring her cheer. Leave the blazing

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torches to me." They only laughed at him, but when he threatened to tell Telemachus, they ran hastily away and left him. He tended the lights, meanwhile observing carefully all that the suitors did and said.

Although he had seemed to gain their favor by his successful fight, still they could not long desist from teasing and mockery. "Look, friends," laughingly cried Eurymachus, "this beggar must be some good. See the glow which surrounds his bald head. Such a halo belongs only to the immortals."

The laughter of the crowd encouraged Eurymachus to continue his raillery. "Listen, old man. If thou wert not accustomed to a lazy, wandering life, I might have work for thee. How sayest thou? Wilt be my servant? Plough, plant trees, and carry leaves for bedding? I would pay thee well, give thee good raiment and sandals for thy feet. But doubtless thou wouldst rather idle about and fill thy hungry stomach at thy leisure."

"O Eurymachus," Ulysses proudly answered, "were we both ploughing or mowing in the field, working against each other, it were a question which would earn the prize. And truly were we to go into battle and were I armed with helmet and harness, with sword and shield in my hands, thou shouldst see me at the front. Because thou art the strongest among many weaklings, thou thinkest thyself great and powerful. But I believe if Ulysses should appear, both leaves of the door would be too narrow for thee."

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“Hear how saucy the fellow is getting,” cried Eurymachus. “I will teach thee then to defy me!” And he seized his footstool and cast it at Ulysses, who, however, quickly bent down and threw himself at Amphinomus’ feet. The stool flew over him and hit the arm of the servant, whose wine-jar fell from his hand, while he tumbled over backwards.

Angrily and noisily the suitors crowded forward, threatening the stranger. But Telemachus rose up and admonished them to be still and quietly leave the palace, as it was time for sleep. Biting their lips in anger, the suitors were astonished at the courage of the usually mild Telemachus. The gentle Amphinomus supported him and spoke conciliatingly, and so they all went to their homes, after making the final sacrifice to the gods.

Chapter XIII

Ulysses and Penelope

ULYSSES remained behind, and as soon as the suitors had gone, he made a sign to Telemachus to assist him in carrying all the weapons to the upper rooms. And behold, as they carried the swords and shields up the stairs, the dark passageway was filled with a mysterious light. "It is from the gods. Athene is with us," said the wise man. "Thus are the immortals wont to manifest themselves."

When all the weapons had been disposed of, the father bade his son go to bed, while he betook himself to the hall to await Penelope. She came from her chamber like the goddess Aphrodite. Her maidens placed a seat for her by the hearth and mended the fire. When the bright flames shot up and they saw the old beggar still there, they began to scold, and one even to threaten him with a firebrand if he did not leave at once. But the queen reproved the maid as she deserved. At the same time she ordered a seat for the guest placed opposite her own by the fireside, and when he was seated, began to question him.

He was unwilling to deceive his dear wife, but

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she was so determined to learn his name and origin that he was obliged to spin the same web of lies with which he had deceived the swineherd. He also told how he had seen Ulysses, twenty years before, in Crete, when he had called for him and Idomeneus on the journey to Troy. At this point the crafty Penelope, wishing to test his veracity, asked: "Worthy guest, if thou hast entertained my husband in thy father's house, tell me how he was apparelled and who was with him then."

"I remember perfectly," answered the beggar. "He wore a magnificent cloak of dark, shaggy wool, fastened with a golden bar across the breast. It bore a splendid embroidery of gold—a young roebuck seized by a dog—and most lifelike were the rigid dog and the struggling buck trying to free itself with its feet. A fine tunic of shining white wool peeped from under the purple mantle. He was a stately hero, and the women looked upon him with pleasure. I cannot remember all his attendants. Only the herald I remember, for he was a humpback, and I think they called him Eurybates. The hero loved him above all the others for his devotion."

"Yes, he was very fond of him," said Penelope, sobbing. During the whole recital her tears had been flowing. "Yes, stranger, thou hast spoken the truth. I wove those clothes myself and fastened that clasp on them for an ornament. Ah! how handsome my good lord looked in those garments. Alas, how I have hoped for his return,

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how I have wept for him, and what I have suffered daily from the suitors thou canst not imagine."

Ulysses controlled himself with almost super-human power. "Weep no more, most excellent of women. Let me rather finish my tale, for I still have much of comfort to tell thee. He for whom thou mournest will surely soon be here. I swear by Jove and by this hospitable hearth that I have told the truth and that all shall come to pass as I have said."

"Come, ye maidens! Honor this man in my house. Prepare a bed and covers for him, that he may rest in quiet and comfort," said Penelope. "To-morrow morning ye shall bathe and anoint him, that he may take his place worthily among the men and partake of the feast at Telemachus' side. And woe to them who shall insult or mock at him!"

"Worthy lady," answered Ulysses, "I have not been used to fine beds or soft covers since I left Crete; so let me remain here by the fire. And none of the maids shall touch me, unless it be that among thy household is some faithful old woman who hath suffered as much as I. Her I would allow to wash my feet."

"Dear guest," answered Penelope, "I have such a faithful soul. She nursed my dear husband and was his servant from childhood. She shall wash thy feet. Good Euryclea, come hither and perform the long-neglected task. Think that it might be thy dear master whom thou didst so love to serve."

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These memories caused the old nurse to shed bitter tears. "Alas," she said, "the gods are my witnesses that I loved my noble master like a son. And now I will take good care of thee, as my mistress has commanded; and gladly too, for I must confess, stranger, from the first moment when I looked upon thee, it seemed to me that I had never seen a man so like Ulysses in voice and figure as thou art."

"All who have known us both, good dame, say the same, and everywhere men have called me Ulysses, in sport," answered the crafty one.

The old woman now brought the tub with warm water. Meanwhile the beggar had turned his back to the blaze, for he had suddenly bethought him that he was in danger of discovery. Since early youth he had had a deep scar above his right knee, where a furious boar had wounded him in the hunt. Euryclea knew this scar too well; therefore he placed himself in the shadow that she might not see it. But in spite of this she discovered it as soon as her hand touched it, and in joyful surprise she let fall his leg, overturning the tub of water. Fortunately Penelope had gone out for a moment and did not hear the old woman's cry of joy. Ulysses sprang up quickly, putting his hand over her mouth and whispering hurriedly: "Foster mother, wilt thou ruin me? Be silent, if life is dear to thee, that no one in this palace may learn that Ulysses has returned."

"Thou knowest my heart is true and faithful," answered the worthy Euryclea. Then Penelope

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returned and seated herself opposite the beggar once more. "Alas," said she, "it seems as though I never should find rest. Every night I am disturbed by dreams in which I see my husband and which seem to promise his return. As long as my son was a child I had to keep our home; but now that he has grown to be a man, I am afraid that he is angry with me that I do not wed another and go away. For he suffers most from the squandered riches and I can never hope to replace his wasted fortune. My parents also urge me to yield myself. Last night I had a strange dream. In the courtyard are twenty geese which I feed and take pleasure in. In my dream an eagle came flying from the mountains, killed them all, and flew away. And when I lamented and my women came to comfort me, behold it returned, perched on the housetop, and spoke with human voice: 'Courage, daughter of Icarius, this is no empty dream, for it shall be fulfilled. The geese are the suitors and I am thy husband come to avenge thee and me.' I was so frightened that I awoke. Quickly I went to the window, and there were my geese feeding from the trough as usual."

"In truth, noble queen," replied Ulysses, "the dream is plain enough. Believe me, destruction shall suddenly overtake the suitors."

"Alas, good stranger, all dreams are not to be trusted," answered Penelope. "To-morrow is the fateful day which I have appointed for the contest. I have determined to propose a trial of skill, and shall

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be obliged to take the winner for my husband. The favorite bow of Ulysses shall be brought forth, and the suitors shall try their skill at bending it. And alas, I must leave the palace of my glorious husband with the successful one.”

The stranger signified his approval, while he inwardly rejoiced at the opportunity this would give him to overcome all the suitors. The noble Penelope ascended to her chamber, but Ulysses remained by the fireside in the hall.

Chapter XIV

Penelope arranges the Decisive Contest

ULYSSES turned restlessly upon his couch, when suddenly his divine friend Athene stood beside him, asking gently: "Why is thine heart so heavy? Surely thou canst trust the goddess who has protected thee in all dangers? If fifty companies of suitors fought against thee, thou shouldst lightly overcome them all. Sleep, for the goddess bids thee hope."

He slept, but before dawn heart-rending sobs and cries awakened him. It was Penelope's voice, weeping and crying out Ulysses' name a hundred times. A vivid dream had roused her: Ulysses in full armor lay beside her. Now was her rest gone and her tears flowed afresh. The heart of the valiant Ulysses was ready to break. He arose. It was dark and the stars were shining. He went to the window, and raising his hands, prayed: "Father Jupiter, if thou art gracious to me, grant me now a sign, that I may have faith."

And listen! A long peal of thunder echoed from the eastern sky, and at the same moment he heard the servant who was grinding corn say to herself: "Holy Father Jupiter, thou thunderest loudly,

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though the heavens are clear and starry! It must be that thou givest a sign. Oh, that thou wouldst hear my prayer, that this might be the last night on which I shall toil for the miserable suitors, who devour by day with laughter what we poor slaves must prepare in the sweat of our brows during the night. Oh, that they might all die and this be their last banquet!”

When Ulysses heard this his courage suddenly rose. He paced the great hall, turning over plans in his mind and awaiting morning impatiently. When it came, everyone about the house was busy. Telemachus went to the market place and Euryclea called the maids together to plan their work for them. “For,” said she, “the suitors will assemble early to-day to celebrate the feast of the new moon.” The swineherd came in early, driving his contribution for the day — three fat pigs — and he at once sought the stranger from Crete. Ulysses went to meet him and pressed his hand kindly.

“How dost thou fare? Dost stand in better repute with the company?”

“Oh, that the gods might destroy them for all the grievous mischief which they hourly commit,” replied Ulysses.

The goatherd Melantheus now came along and could not pass the stranger without threatening and insulting him. Next came Philoëtus, a master-herdsman. He, too, like good Eumæus, hated the suitors at heart and would long ago have gone away

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had not love for Ulysses' house detained him, and a fear lest the herds might fall into bad hands. He saw the beggar standing in the courtyard, and going to the swineherd he asked him softly: "Good Eumæus, who is the strange man there? He appears like a king, although bowed down by misery." Speaking thus, he approached Ulysses, offering his hand and speaking cordial words to him.

While they were talking together, the suitors, who had assembled as usual in the market place, were making new plots against the life of Telemachus, whose bold tongue was becoming daily more threatening. Amphinomus tried to dissuade them, and for the present they agreed to let him go. The noisy crew now stormed into the palace. In the hall each laid aside his mantle. Then they offered up fat goats, young lambs, and fatted boars and beeves; others mixed the wine. While they were eating Telemachus placed a table for the old man at the door and gave him food and drink. In the midst of their sport the suitors could scarcely curb their insolence. A young fellow, son of a rich father in Same, now called out loudly to the company: "Listen, ye generous suitors, the stranger at the door has indeed had his portion of the feast, but I shall now present him with a special gift. He may give it to the maid who prepared his bath or any of the servants. See this splendid bull's hoof. May it agree with him!"

He threw it swiftly at Ulysses' head, who jumped aside and avoided it cleverly. The suitors roared

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with laughter, in which Ulysses joined while nursing rage in his heart. Telemachus sprang up like a flame, crying angrily: "It is fortunate for thee, Ktesippus, that thou didst not strike the stranger, or I should have pierced thee with my lance, that thy father might have celebrated thy burial feast instead of thy wedding. And I advise no one to try anything more of that kind, for I will not permit it. That you consume my flocks and herds is bad enough, and ye may even murder me, as ye design—do so! I would rather die than see strangers abused in my house! Even my noble mother's maidens have ye not spared!"

All were silent until Agelaus began: "Friends, I am glad that ye do not reply, for Telemachus is not entirely wrong. But I should like to give thee some advice, Telemachus. Now that thou art grown and able to manage thy house, thou shouldst speak with thy mother and urge her to proceed to the choice of a husband as soon as possible, for there is certainly no longer any hope that thy father will return. When she has left thy house thou canst enjoy thy substance in peace, and none of us will further disturb thee in the possession of thy herds and acres."

"Now, by Jupiter," replied Telemachus, "I do not prevent my mother's choice. She may take whom she will. But far be it from me to drive my mother from the house by any hasty word or to compel her to a choice!"

Athene touched the suitors with madness. They

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laughed until their faces were distorted, while Ulysses, Telemachus, and the servants looked on with horror. But Theoclymenus, the stranger seer from Pylos, cried aloud as in an ecstasy of prophecy: "Unhappy men, what has come over you? Your eyes are veiled, your heads are bruised, and your cheeks wet with unnatural tears. Ha, I see blood! It drips from the walls! It stands in pools! The courtyard is full of shadows, hastening out into the darkness of the spirit land. The sun is extinguished — a horrible darkness reigneth!"

The wild laughter arose once more. The suitors only grew noisier in their rash blindness. The early meal was partaken of in a wild turmoil, and not one suspected what awaited them in the evening.

When afternoon came the noble Penelope remembered her purpose of inviting the suitors to a trial of skill, and ascended to the chamber where the treasures of her dear lord were kept. His favorite bow, of pliant horn, was hanging there, dusty and unsightly, for it had not been touched for twenty years. Penelope's tears fell upon her dear lord's weapon as she took it down from the wall and brushed away the dust. She sat down, laid it across her knees, and sobbed aloud. When her grief had spent itself she left the chamber with the bow in her hands, followed by her maidens carrying the heavy quiver, full of arrows.

She entered the portal of the hall of columns modestly wrapped in her long veil. Beside her stood an attendant maiden. She spoke: "Come,

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ye brave suitors who gather in my house daily to dance and feast and who pretend to woo me. Hear me and listen to the trial which he must stand who would become my husband. Here are the bow and arrows of my dear lord, Ulysses, and here the rings. Him will I follow as spouse who can most easily bend the bow and shoot through the twelve rings. My dear son shall lose his patrimony through no fault of mine.”

She gave the weapon to Eumæus to carry into the hall, and when the good man held the well-known bow in his hands, he began to weep and kiss the weapon. Philætius also wept, for at the sight of the bow the memory of his beloved master overcame him. Antinous snarled at the faithful creatures and bade them quickly bring in the bow.

The company now betook themselves to the hall, where Telemachus deftly planted the axes in the ground, so that they formed rings at regular distances from one another. He then went to the threshold and took up the weapon. “It is a splendid sport,” said he. “I have a great mind to try it myself.” He lifted the bow to bend it, but in vain. After resting a moment he tried again, but neither did he succeed this time. He drew it for the third time and would certainly have succeeded, but his father made a secret sign to him. He leant the bow against the wall in pretended discouragement and said: “Either I am a miserable weakling or else too young. But the rest of you must now try it and end the contest.”

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Leiodes stepped forward, but his arms fell when he tried to draw the bow. One after another tried it, and one after another set it down unbent. They rubbed the horn with fat and warmed it at the fire to render it more pliable, and still it was not bent. By chance the two herdsmen went out together and Ulysses quickly followed them and drew them aside. "Friends, a word," he whispered. "Ye are both honest fellows and faithful, and long to have your master back. And now, if he should come and needed your assistance, would ye defend the suitors or brave Ulysses? Show me your hearts."

"If Jupiter would but grant me this wish," cried the herdsman, "thou shouldst see what my arms can do!" "And mine!" added the honest swineherd. "Oh, that it might come true!" "It has come true!" said Ulysses with majesty. "Your master is here and counts on you. I am Ulysses! Do ye remember the wound I once received from the wild boar? Here is the scar." They recognized the mark and fell upon his neck and kissed his cheeks and shoulders joyfully. But Ulysses commanded them to control their joy before they should be discovered.

"Listen to my plan," he said hurriedly, "and learn what you must do. It must be now or never. The gods will assist me, and you, honest friends, when all is finished, shall be to me as Telemachus' brothers. I will bestow riches and lands upon you. Only do as I tell you. When we go back I shall demand the bow, and no doubt the suitors

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will object. But do thou, Eumæus, pay no attention, but go and fetch it. Then go out and tell the old nurse, to shut up all the women in their quarters. Thou, Philœtius, hasten thou to close the doors of the house and put up the bars that none of the suitors may escape. I will now go in. Follow me, but singly and quietly.”

When Ulysses reëntered the hall and seated himself in his old place by the door, the bow had just reached the hands of Eurymachus, who was sitting by the hearth seeking to make it more pliant with grease and the warmth of the fire. He then made trial of it ten times, but could not draw. At last, much discomfited, he laid it down. The boastful Antinous, who was no longer anxious to try his skill, proposed to wait until the morrow, this being a feast day. “Then,” said he, “we will make sacrifice to Apollo and try the bow once more. Now fill up the cups, for to-day is a feast day and we must drink a double portion.”

This speech pleased everyone and the servants did as they were bid. When drinking had been resumed, Ulysses arose and began: “Listen to me, ye suitors of the esteemed princess, and especially ye two lords, Antinous and Eurymachus, I would make a proposal to you in jest. As ye do not care to bend the bow on this day of the feast, let me try it and see if any of my youthful strength remains, or if old age and hardships have sapped it.”

As he had expected, murmurs arose on all sides and Antinous answered for the rest: “Miserable

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stranger, hast thou taken leave of thy senses? The wine hath led thee to these unseemly words! Take care that thou be not put aboard a ship and sent to King Echetus, the scourge of strangers! There wouldst thou hardly escape with nose and ears uncut. Thou hadst better keep quiet and take what is given thee, and leave such business to younger men."

Penelope had remained in the hall with her ladies to await the result of the contest and now she spoke. "Antinous, I think thou art not just. Why should we omit the strangers who are our guests? Perchance thou thinkest that if this man should draw the bow that he would wed me? Let not this scruple disturb thee, for that is impossible."

"Oh, it is truly not that, noble Queen," said Eury-machus. "But we fear the tongues of men, should a miserable wandering beggar man draw the bow which all we younger men have been unable to bend. It would be an eternal disgrace for us."

Telemachus now arose and spoke with dignity and emphasis. "Mother, thou hast spoken well. But no one in this house but I has a right to the bow, and I shall give it to whom I will, and woe to him who would hinder me. But do thou go up to thy chamber, attend to thy duties there, and direct the women servants. This is men's business and mine most of all, for I am the head of the house."

Wondering, she withdrew, musing upon the wise words of her son. As she lay upon her couch she wept for her dear lord, until Pallas Athene gently closed her eyes in slumber. Meanwhile the swine-

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herd, who had been awaiting a sign from Ulysses, boldly fetched the bow and handed it to him. The suitors sprang from their seats as though they would lay hands on him, but Telemachus cried in a threatening voice: "Thou hast done well, father — for thou canst not obey all, and I am master here!"

A loud malicious shout of laughter followed these words and their anger was dissipated. The swineherd went directly to carry out the instructions he had received. Philœtius, also, stole forth to close and bar the doors, then returned as quietly and took up his post beside the swineherd.

The eyes of all the suitors were now turned toward the beggar, who was turning the bow over and over and examining it carefully to see whether worms had perhaps eaten into the horn or it had suffered other injury. Many a youth said to his neighbor: "See how the old man examines the bow. Perhaps he has one like it at home or would make one like it. See how he turns it about, the old wiseacre."

Ulysses next pushed his table aside, lifted the mighty bow, and lightly as a minstrel touches the strings of his harp, he picked the taut cord of his bow, which responded with as fine a note as the twittering of sparrows. At that moment a tremendous thunderclap resounded through the house, making all the suitors tremble; but the king exulted in the favorable augury. He placed an arrow on the string, and without leaving his seat or waiting to take aim, he let it fly through the rings nor missed

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a single one. The guests sat in silent astonishment while he spoke to his son.

“Thou seest, Telemachus, thy guest brings thee no disgrace. Indeed, I feel that my strength is still unimpaired. But I think it is supper time. Then let us amuse ourselves with song and lute.”

He accompanied these words with a sign which Telemachus understood. The youth went quickly out and soon returned armed and placed himself, expectant and darkly frowning, by his father's chair, holding sword and shield in readiness for him.

Chapter XV

Ulysses' Revenge

ULYSSES quickly arose. Girding up his rags he threw the arrows to the ground before him and sprang to the doorway, drawing the bow. "Now I will choose a different mark," he cried. "Let us see whether Apollo will now grant me his favor!" With this the death shaft sped through Antinous' neck, just as he had taken up the golden cup to drink. The blood gushed from his mouth as he fell convulsed to the ground, overturning the table with the food and wine. Immediately the hall was in an uproar. The suitors vainly sought their weapons, crying: "Woe to thee, madman! Now thine hour is come and vultures shall feast upon thy flesh!"

The fools! They supposed that the hero had hit Antinous by chance. But he soon undeceived them, crying in thunder tones which caused their hearts and knees to tremble: "Ha! ye dogs! Ye thought that I should ne'er return and therefore have ye squandered my substance, maltreated my servants, and insulted my poor wife for these long years with unprecedented insolence. Ye have feared neither the punishment of the gods nor the disap-

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proval of mankind, but now the day of reckoning has come!"

Horror seized the suitors, while Ulysses again raised the bow and pierced the breast of Eurymachus with his shaft ere he could draw his sword and rush upon him. Telemachus with his spear stood by his father's side to protect him, while he sent arrow after arrow into the crowd and one after another was struck down into the dust.

Telemachus fetched helmets, shields, and spears for both the herdsmen, and they quickly armed themselves. Melantheus, the goatherd, who had more presence of mind than the rest, managed to slip out of the side door unobserved and bring down some of the weapons which Ulysses and Telemachus had wisely hidden in the upper chambers. Ulysses suddenly discovered that half of the front row of men were armed and spears began to hurtle past him.

"What is this?" he cried in dismay to Telemachus. "One of the maids or Melantheus must have brought them weapons. See how they defend themselves."

"Ye gods, it is all my fault," said Telemachus. "I left the door of the armory ajar and the crafty goatherd has taken advantage of it."

"See, there he is sneaking out to fetch snoter spear," cried Ulysses. "Eumæus! Philœtius! Follow him! Bind him! Hang him up, while my son and I fight on!"

When the suitors saw that Ulysses and Telemachus were left alone they took fresh courage,

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and it would have gone hard with the two against the combined onset of their foes, had not Athene in Mentor's form entered at the critical moment armed from head to foot and thrown back the nearest ones with a powerful blow of her shield.

"Mentor, cursed old man," screamed all the suitors, "do not dare to help these two men, for when we shall have conquered them, then woe to thee and thy house! Flee, while there is yet time!"

This angered Pallas Athene, and she spurred Ulysses on with encouraging words. He felt the presence of the goddess and renewed his super-human efforts. The two herdsmen now returned with a fresh supply of lances, and Mentor saw that the rest of the task could be left to the brave men.

At last the greater part of the suitors had fallen. Some had already breathed their last. Most of them were writhing on the spears with which they had been pierced and lay bathed in their own blood. It was a horrible sight. As the four heroes prepared to give the death blow to the few survivors, Leiodes sprang suddenly from behind a column, and clasping Ulysses' knees, called loudly for mercy. "Give me my life," he prayed. "I took no part in the evil deeds of the suitors, for I was their priest and only carried out the holy customs when they sacrificed thy steers."

"If thou hast been their sacrificial priest and prophet, thou must surely have foretold many evil things concerning me and have called down misfortunes upon my head in thy prayers. And for

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this thou shalt die a well-deserved death," replied the king with dark looks. He raised his sword and with a quick stroke severed the head of the still-kneeling priest, so that it rolled in the dust.

He searched all the hiding places, but did not find another living soul, and contemplated with astonishment and horror the frightful work of his hands. Then at last he laid down his sword and lifted the bronze helmet from his perspiring brow. "Be quick, Telemachus, and call my old nurse Euryclea, that I may question her," he said.

Telemachus brought the old woman. She raised her hands and began to rejoice. But Ulysses stopped her and said reprovingly: "Hush, dame! At heart thou mayest exult that justice has been done and punishment meted out, but it is a sin to triumph over fallen men. They have their reward, but it is the gods who through me have accomplished their will. Now tell me of the women in the house, both those who have betrayed me and those who have served faithfully."

"Gladly I obey thee," answered the old nurse. "Fifty women serve in the palace. Twelve have proved unfaithful and left the paths of virtue, neither obeying me, nor even the noble Penelope. But let me slip upstairs and wake the queen. She knows not of thy return, for a divinity has closed her eyes in a leaden sleep. How surprised she will be!"

"Nay, mother, do not wake her yet. First command the twelve refractory women hither." The old woman hastened to obey.

ULYSSES' REVENGE

“When they come,” continued Ulysses to his son and the two herdsmen, “they shall first help us clean the dwelling, and when that is done, take them out to the outer courtyard, drive them all into the narrow passageway, and strike them down with your swords, so that their souls may join the shades of the insolent suitors.”

While he was speaking the women entered, frightened at the sight that met their eyes and trembling for their own lives. “Drag out the dead,” commanded Ulysses. “Lay them outside in the gallery.”

They took hold reluctantly, assisted by the herdsmen, and Ulysses saw that all was properly done and set in order, and then Telemachus and the herdsmen conducted the women to their doom. After this they sought out Melantheus and prepared a terrible death for this base wretch.

The work of slaughter was now complete. The herdsmen washed their hands and feet and went back to the hall. Here Ulysses ordered Euryclea to make a fire, fetch sulphur, and with its fumes to turn away the curse from this house of slaughter. The old servants now came crowding about their master to kiss him joyfully. This touched his heart and he pressed their hands in hearty greeting.

Chapter XVI

Ulysses reveals himself to Penelope

NOW at length Ulysses allowed the old nurse to carry the news to his sleeping spouse. Breathless she entered the chamber where the queen slumbered. "Penelope!" she cried. "Awake, my daughter! This is no time for sleep! He is here! Ulysses has come! All is over! Look down into the court. There they all lie in heaps. And hast thou heard nothing? Come quickly!"

"Oh," cried Penelope, stretching herself and rubbing her eyes; "silly woman, how canst thou wake me thus and with such a fairy tale? Wouldst thou deceive me with false hopes? Oh, I slept so sweetly! How canst thou play such a trick on me? Only thine age protects thee from my anger."

"I am not jesting, my daughter," answered the old woman. "He is here, and with Telemachus' aid has killed all the suitors. It happened whilst thou slept."

"Mother, tell me the truth! How could he come so quickly?" She had sprung up and hung about the old nurse's neck with anxious glances. Euryclea laughed. "He has been in the house since yesterday and thou thyself hast spoken with him."

"What, Euryclea! The ragged old beggar?"

ULYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF

“Indeed, yes. The beggar with the greasy wallet whom the suitors made sport of. If they had but known!”

“Alas, mother, how disappointed I am. That is not my husband. No, that is not Ulysses.”

“Not Ulysses? Child, you are strange. I knew it last evening when I washed his feet and recognized the great scar — you remember it — from the boar’s tusk. But he would not allow me to speak.”

“It cannot be! It cannot be!” repeated Penelope. “But tell me what has happened?”

And then Euryclea had to tell the whole story of what she had seen and heard of the horrible massacre. “Thy long-desired, beloved husband is below and awaits thee, daughter. Come quickly to embrace him.”

“Ah, mother, do not rejoice too soon. Thou knowest how I long for Ulysses, but I know the gods. They often wander about over the earth to reward the good, surprise the wicked, and punish long-continued evils. If the suitors are really killed, it must have been by a god, whom my misery has touched. How could a mere man, even though he were stronger and bolder than Ulysses, undertake so unequal a task? I did indeed admire the stranger’s mind, but he did not remind me of Ulysses. No, that was not my vigorous, impetuous husband. But I will go and view the horrible scene and talk with my son. If the stranger is my husband I shall know him by secret signs. But if he is a god, as I believe, we will sacrifice before him and worship him.”

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They descended and entered the hall, where they found Ulysses sitting by the fire leaning against a pillar. He did not look up, but waited for what his wife would say. She sat opposite him a long time in silence. Sometimes, as she looked earnestly at him, she thought it was he; then when she looked upon his rags, she could not believe it.

“Mother,” cried Telemachus, “hast thou no greeting for my father? Thou hast a heart in thy breast that is indeed harder than a stone.”

“My dear son,” answered his mother, “thou dost me a wrong. I am dumb with astonishment. I cannot grasp the miracle and do not venture to address this wonderful man nor to look in his face. But if he is really my Ulysses, we shall soon recognize each other. We have secret signs between us that none others know.”

“My son,” said Ulysses, smiling gently, “let thy mother study me a while longer. She certainly has reason to doubt me clad in these ugly rags. But now let us consult together how we may conceal the death of the suitors from the people to-day, for they all have relations and retainers who will seek to avenge them. We have killed not one, but one hundred. How shall we save ourselves?”

“Dear father,” replied the modest son, “thou must know, for no mortal is as wise as thou. It shall be as thou sayest. We will follow thee and aid thee as far as we are able.”

“Then I will tell thee, what seems wise to me,” answered the resourceful Ulysses. “Let each one

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go first to the bath and put on his best garments. Let the women also don their holiday robes, as is seemly on the day of their master's return. The gifted minstrel must strike his harp, that all the passers by may suppose that Penelope is celebrating her marriage day. Then early in the morning we will leave the house and flee to Laertes' country-place, where the gods shall give us further counsel."

The household at once carried out all these commands, and soon the hall, which an hour before had resounded with the deadly blows of Ulysses' spear, and had looked like a bloody battlefield, was filled with gay strains of song and music of the lute.

Meanwhile Ulysses, too, had gone to rid himself of his dirt and ugly rags. The old housekeeper conducted him to a warm bath and afterward anointed his head with precious oil. And behold, as he left the bath the goddess Athene suddenly clothed him with beauty, so that he appeared taller and stronger. The bald crown disappeared and his head was once more crowned with shining brown locks. His cheeks became rosy and the fire returned to the dull eyes. Blinded by the miracle, the housekeeper presented him the handsome tunic and cloak, and thus the conqueror reëntered the hall in the guise of a king and hero. Everything was hushed, while all eyes gazed at the newcomer in admiration.

Joyfully Penelope sprang up. Yes, this was her Ulysses, just as he had left her. But was it not a delusion? Doubting she sank back in her chair. But Ulysses stepped before her and held

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out his arms joyously. "Now wilt thou not accept me again for thy husband, dear wife?" he cried. "What! Thou art not ready? Alas, in vain have I longed for thee! Go, Eurynome, make ready my couch, that I may sorrowfully retire to rest."

"Do so, good mother," said Penelope. "Set his bed out of our chamber wherever thou wilt and prepare it with fine soft covers and skins."

It was the test by which the queen could recognize her husband. Ulysses had once built a sleeping chamber about the trunk of a great olive tree which stood in the court and had built the couch hard and fast into the trunk of the tree, so that no one could have carried it out until he should first chop down the tree.

"Someone has destroyed my sleeping chamber, if the bed may be carried out," cried Ulysses. "And I had joined it so well to the trunk of the olive tree."

Penelope burst into tears at these words and she trembled. "Ulysses, my dear Ulysses!" she cried as she threw her arms about his neck and covered his face with a thousand tender kisses. "Now I know it is thee, for no one in this house knoweth the secret but thyself and me. And now welcome, my precious husband, for whom I have wept a thousand sleepless nights, praying to the gods for thy safe return. Welcome! Welcome! But do not be angry with me because I did not know thee at once, nor trust the first assurance like a giddy young girl. There are so many crafty deceivers.



*U*LYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF TO PENELOPE

ULYSSES REVEALS HIMSELF

Ah, hadst thou been able to see the struggle in my heart while I was burning to embrace thee. My seeming coldness was only caused by the innumerable sufferings due to my mighty love.”

Their tears mingled, and Penelope lay upon the heart of her newly found lord in silent rapture, her emotion expressing itself only in deep sighs. Midnight was long past when Eurynome brought her torch to guide them to their rest.

Chapter XVII

*Ulysses goes to Laertes — His Father's Conflict
with the Friends of the slain Suitors — Great
Sacrifice and Festival in Ithaca*

BEFORE dawn, after a few hours of sleep, Ulysses arose and awakened his wife, Telemachus, and the herdsmen. "Come quickly, friends," said he, "that we may reach my father's plantation before daylight. Very soon the news of the death of the suitors will spread throughout the island, and the princes whose sons have not returned at night will set out to seek them. If they all unite and lead their people against us, we shall not be able to withstand them. Therefore we will conceal ourselves in Laertes' distant garden in the country. Some god will then tell us what further course to pursue. But thou, Penelope, do thou remain here until I summon thee. Ascend to the upper chambers with thy maidens and stay quietly there, for their vengeance will not touch thee."

When he had finished speaking, the men took up their weapons and hastened away. With the first rays of the sun they entered the enclosure that surrounded old Laertes' country-seat. His house

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stood in front, surrounded by the farm buildings. The men were away at work, but Laertes was in the orchard, which he loved and where he himself labored every day. Telemachus explained to the servants that he had brought a stranger who wished to speak with the old king.

To Telemachus and the two herdsmen Ulysses spoke aside. "Remain ye here and prepare a select fattened pig for a sacrifice. Meanwhile I will go alone to my father and see if he know me. Then I will bring him here and we will eat together."

Ulysses found his father spading round a pear tree in the well-ordered orchard. He was so busy that he did not perceive the new arrival. Ulysses' heart contracted at the sight. His father was clad in a dirty tunic, coarse and well mended. He had bound pieces of oxhide about hands and ankles to protect them from thorns, and he wore a cap of goatskin to shield his bald head from the cold morning air. He finally rose from his work and saw the well-dressed stranger standing before him.

"Greeting to thee, old man," said Ulysses. "What good care thou takest of thy garden. Thy trees and vines look flourishing. Only thyself, it seems to me, art neglected. What niggardly master keeps thee so poorly and allows thee to go about ragged as a beggar? Tell me, where am I? I would inquire the way to the palace of Ulysses. I wish to see the gallant hero; he was my guest upon his travels, and as my way lay past Ithaca I have laid by my ship to visit my dear friend."

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“Alas, good stranger,” replied Laertes, “thou hast come too soon. Who knows what monster of the deep hath swallowed him or upon what shore his bones are bleaching. It is ten years since Troy was destroyed, and since then we have watched and waited for him daily, and I most of all. For know, that the old man who stands before thee here, dignified by sorrow, is Laertes, father of the noble Ulysses. His mother died of a broken heart, but to me the gods have denied this boon.”

“Worthy king,” replied Ulysses, “weep no more. The gods have rejoicing in store for thee. Living thou shalt behold thy son.”

“Alas, do not encourage false hopes. What knowest thou of him? Speak, man, if thou canst tell aught. Where hast thou seen him and how long since?”

“About five years,” answered Ulysses. “But hast thou heard nothing of the rumors which are abroad? Men say that Ulysses has returned and found his house full of rude guests who squandered his fortune and wooed his wife; that he has destroyed them through craft or violence, and is once more master in his own house.”

“Oh, that it were so,” lamented the old man. “Speak! Art thou a divine messenger and bringest me true tidings?”

“Noble king,” now spake Ulysses with trembling voice, scarce able to control his tears, “is it not true that thou didst once give that fig tree there to thy son when he was a boy?”

ULYSSES GOES TO LAERTES

“Yes —”

“And this splendid row of pear trees also?”

“Yes —”

“And that thou didst often walk among these hedges in friendly talk with him, telling him the name and use of each bush?”

“Yes, yes —!”

“How he will rejoice when he returns to find thee in thy old haunts.”

“But ye gods! How dost thou know this? Thine eyes shine! Thou tremblest? Yes, thou art Ulysses, my son! By Jupiter, it is he!”

“Yes, father, it is thy son. Oh, contain thyself. Take care, father.”

Laertes now cried aloud: “If thou art really my son Ulysses returned, give me a sign, a convincing token, by which I may know thee.”

“Examine this scar which the boar gave me upon Parnassus,” answered Ulysses gayly. “Thou and my loving mother didst send me to grand-sire Autolycus to fetch the gifts which he had promised me.”

The old man’s knees trembled when he recognized the mark. Quickly he embraced his beloved son, who covered his face with kisses. And then Ulysses told his whole story down to the killing of the suitors. When he had finished, Laertes cried: “Now I see that you still reign, ye immortal gods. For at last these horrid deeds have been avenged. But, my son, how wilt thou escape the vengeance which such a bloody exploit will bring upon thee?”

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“Let not that trouble thee,” answered Ulysses. “If the love of the people does not protect me, the spirit of Tiresias has promised me a place of refuge in the interior of the mainland, where a peaceful and happy old age awaits me. But now let us go down to the palace, where Telemachus and my faithful servants await us, and thou shalt clothe thyself as befits a king.”

When all was in readiness, the happy company sat down to eat together. In the meanwhile rumors of the terrible fate which had overtaken the suitors spread through the city. Their fathers and relatives hastened to the crowded market place to inflame the people. Eupithes, father of Antinous, who had cherished the hope above all others that his son was to be the successful wooer of the beautiful Penelope and ruler over all Ithaca, was the leader. He gained over many of the people by his eloquent pleadings, but others held back, especially after listening to Medon and Halitherses.

“Friends,” said the former, “believe me, Ulysses did not do this tremendous deed without the help of the gods. I myself saw the divinity in Mentor’s form standing beside him and turning aside the spears. Even before the shaking of her shield, numbers fell before him. Do not oppose him or ye will fight against offended gods.”

“No, ye Ithacans, do not take up arms against him. Let him alone,” said the cautious old Halitherses. “He has but fulfilled the vengeance of the gods.”

ULYSSES GOES TO LAERTES

Many agreed with this and went quietly home. But the friends of the suitors and followers of Eupithes armed themselves and hastened from the palace to Laertes' gardens, where they found the household under arms and ready to receive them.

"Ah, this is a happy day," cried the valiant Laertes, "when I may fight together with my son and grandson."

Now the goddess Pallas Athene, in Mentor's shape, approached and breathed courage into him.

"Come, noble Laertes," cried the goddess, "thou shalt open this illustrious battle and cast the first lance at the enemy."

With a prayer to Jupiter he hurled the first spear, and see! it pierces the bronze armor and enters Eupithes' breast. At the same moment a fiery bolt sent by Jove and accompanied by a roar of thunder struck the earth between the combatants. This terrible omen, together with the fall of their leader, robbed the enemy of their courage and reason.

Then the goddess stepped forth and called to the combatants in a loud voice: "Men of Ithaca, desist! Give up this unhappy war which displeases the gods! Shed no more blood and depart quickly hence!"

Upon this no one dared speak of revenge, and even the bravest warriors put away their weapons with the resolve never to use them against the man who had right upon his side. Time, by degrees, dulled the hatred even of the fathers of the murdered men.

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The wisdom, magnanimity, and kindness of Ulysses soon won all hearts and at last converted even his bitterest foes into friends.

Ulysses did not forget the vow which he had made in the kingdom of departed souls, to the gods of Hades, to offer in sacrifice a young ox and, to the spirit of Tiresias, a black ram when he should be at home once more. Both victims were brought forth, and while the heralds were preparing the feast for the people, Ulysses gave the death stroke to the animals. While the fat pieces were burning on the altar, he prayed solemnly, with uplifted hands: "Holy gods of Hades, here in my kingdom I thus gratefully fulfil the vow I made in yours. I have surmounted many difficulties and often barely escaped with my life, always trusting in a fortunate outcome. And now, ye gracious gods, I can look back gratefully upon my past. Often will I renew this offering, for one should remember the dead gladly, nor ever shun the goddess of death and fate. But wherever destiny may lead me, oh grant that I may rule the people gloriously and in peace, and that the name of the illustrious Ulysses may live among future generations of men."

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