

## VI.

### THE LANDING IN PHAEACIA.

THUS long-tried royal Odysseus slumbered here, heavy with sleep and toil; but Athene went to the land and town of the Phaeacians. This people once in ancient times lived in the open Highlands, near that rude folk the Cyclops, who often plundered them, being in strength more powerful than they. Moving them thence, godlike Nausithoüs, their leader, established them at Scheria, far from toiling men. He ran a wall around the town, built houses there, made temples for the gods, and laid out farms; but Nausithoüs had met his doom and gone to the house of Hades, and Alcinöus now was reigning, trained in wisdom by the gods. To this man's dwelling came the goddess, clear-eyed Athene, planning a safe return for brave Odysseus. She hastened to a chamber, richly wrought, in which a maid was sleeping, of form and beauty like the immortals, Nausicaä, daughter of generous Alcinöus. Near by two damsels, dowered with beauty by the Graces, slept by the threshold, one on either hand. The shining doors were shut; but Athene, like a breath of air, moved to the maid's couch, stood by her head, and thus addressed her, — taking the likeness of the daughter of Dymas, the famous seaman, a maiden just Nausicaä's age, dear to her heart. Taking her guise, thus spoke clear-eyed Athene:

“Nausicaä, how did your mother bear a child so

heedless? Your gay clothes lie uncared for, though the wedding time is near, when you must wear fine clothes yourself and furnish them to those that may attend you. From things like these a good repute arises, and father and honored mother are made glad. Then let us go a-washing at the dawn of day, and I will go to help, that you may soon be ready; for really not much longer will you be a maid. Already you have for suitors the chief ones of the land throughout Phaeacia, where you too were born. Come, then, beg your good father early in the morning to harness the mules and cart, so as to carry the men's clothes, gowns, and bright-hued rugs. Yes, and for you yourself it is more decent so than setting forth on foot; the pools are far from the town."

Saying this, clear-eyed Athene passed away, off to Olympus, where they say the dwelling of the gods stands fast forever. Never with winds is it disturbed, nor by the rain made wet, nor does the snow come near; but everywhere the upper air spreads cloudless, and a bright radiance plays over all; and there the blessed gods are happy all their days. Thither now came the clear-eyed one, when she had spoken with the maid.

Soon bright-throned morning came, and waked fair-robed Nausicaä. She marveled at the dream, and hastened through the house to tell it to her parents, her dear father and her mother. She found them still in-doors: her mother sat by the hearth among the waiting-women, spinning sea-purple yarn; she met her father at the door, just going forth to join the famous princes at the council, to which the high Phaeacians summoned him. So standing close beside him, she said to her dear father:

“Papa dear, could you not have the wagon harnessed for me, — the high one, with good wheels, — to take my nice clothes to the river to be washed, which now are lying dirty? Surely for you yourself it is but proper, when you are with the first men holding councils, that you should wear clean clothing. Five good sons too are here at home, — two married, and three merry young men still, — and they are always wanting to go to the dance wearing fresh clothes. And this is all a trouble on my mind.”

Such were her words, for she was shy of naming the glad marriage to her father; but he understood it all, and answered thus:

“I do not grudge the mules, my child, nor anything beside. Go! Quickly shall the servants harness the wagon for you, the high one, with good wheels, fitted with rack above.”

Saying this, he called to the servants, who gave heed. Out in the court they made the easy mule-cart ready; they brought the mules, and yoked them to the wagon. The maid took from her room her pretty clothing, and stowed it in the polished wagon; her mother put in a chest food the maid liked, of every kind, put dainties in, and poured some wine into a goat-skin bottle, — the maid, meanwhile, had got into the wagon, — and gave her in a golden flask some liquid oil, that she might bathe and anoint herself, she and the waiting-women. Nausicaä took the whip and the bright reins, and cracked the whip to start. There was a clatter of the mules, and steadily they pulled, drawing the clothing and the maid, — yet not alone; beside her went the waiting-women too.

When now they came to the fair river's current, where the pools were always full, — for in abundance

clear water bubbles from beneath to cleanse the foulest stains, — they turned the mules loose from the wagon, and let them stray along the eddying stream, to crop the honeyed pasturage. Then from the wagon they took the clothing in their arms, carried it into the dark water, and stamped it in the pits with rivalry in speed. And after they had washed and cleansed it of all stains, they spread it carefully along the shore, just where the waves washed up the pebbles on the beach. Then bathing and anointing with the oil, they presently took dinner on the river bank and waited for the clothes to dry in the sunshine. And when they were refreshed with food, the maids and she, they then began to play at ball, throwing their wimples off. White-armed Nausicaä led their sport; and as the huntress Artemis goes down a mountain, down long Taygetus or Erymanthus, exulting in the boars and the swift deer, while round her sport the woodland nymphs, daughters of ægis-bearing Zeus, and glad is Leto's heart, for all the rest her child o'ertops by head and brow, and easily marked is she, though all are fair; so did this virgin pure excel her women.

But when Nausicaä thought to turn toward home once more, to yoke the mules and fold up the clean clothes, then a new plan the goddess formed, clear-eyed Athene; for she would have Odysseus wake and see the bright-eyed maid, who might to the Phaeacian city show the way. Just then the princess tossed the ball to one of her women, and missing her it fell in the deep eddy. Thereat they screamed aloud. Royal Odysseus woke, and sitting up debated in his mind and heart:

“Alas! To what men's land am I come now?”

Lawless and savage are they, with no regard for right, or are they kind to strangers and reverent toward the gods? It was as if there came to me the delicate voice of maids — nymphs, it may be, who haunt the craggy peaks of hills, the springs of streams and grassy marshes; or am I now, perhaps, near men of human speech? Suppose I make a trial for myself, and see.”

So saying, royal Odysseus crept from the thicket, but with his strong hand broke a spray of leaves from the close wood, to be a covering round his body for his nakedness. He set off like a lion that is bred among the hills and trusts its strength; onward it goes, beaten with rain and wind; its two eyes glare; and now in search of oxen or of sheep it moves, or tracking the wild deer; its belly bids it make trial of the flocks, even by entering the guarded folds; so was Odysseus about to meet those fair-haired maids, all naked though he was, for need constrained him. To them he seemed a loathsome sight, befouled with brine. They hurried off, one here, one there, over the stretching sands. Only the daughter of Alcinoüs stayed, for in her breast Athene had put courage and from her limbs took fear. Steadfast she stood to meet him. And now Odysseus doubted whether to make his suit by clasping the knees of the bright-eyed maid, or where he stood, aloof, in winning words to make that suit, and try if she would show the town and give him clothing. Reflecting thus, it seemed the better way to make his suit in winning words, aloof; for fear if he should clasp her knees, the maid might be offended. Forthwith he spoke, a winning and shrewd speech:

“I am your suppliant, princess. Are you some god

or mortal? If one of the gods who hold the open sky, to Artemis, daughter of mighty Zeus, in beauty, height, and bearing I find you likest. But if you are a mortal, living on the earth, most happy are your father and your honored mother, most happy your brothers also. Surely their hearts ever grow warm with pleasure over you, when watching such a blossom moving in the dance. And then exceeding happy he, beyond all others, who shall with gifts prevail and lead you home. For I never before saw such a being with these eyes — no man, no woman. I am amazed to see. At Delos once, by Apollo's altar, something like you I noticed, a young palm-shoot springing up; for thither too I came, and a great troop was with me, upon a journey where I was to meet with bitter trials. And just as when I looked on that I marveled long within, since never before sprang such a stalk from earth; so, lady, I admire and marvel now at you, and greatly fear to touch your knees. Yet grievous woe is on me. Yesterday, after twenty days, I escaped from the wine-dark sea, and all that time the waves and boisterous winds bore me away from the island of Ogygia. Now some god cast me here, that probably here also I may meet with trouble; for I do not think trouble will cease, but much the gods will first accomplish. Then, princess, have compassion, for it is you to whom through many grievous toils I first am come; none else I know of all who own this city and this land. Show me the town, and give me a rag to throw around me, if you had perhaps on coming here some wrapper for your linen. And may the gods grant all that in your thoughts you long for: husband and home and true accord may they bestow; for a better and higher gift than this there cannot be, when

with accordant aims man and wife have a home. Great grief it is to foes and joy to friends; but they themselves best know its meaning."

Then answered him white-armed Nausicaä: "Stranger, because you do not seem a common, senseless person, — and Olympian Zeus himself distributes fortune to mankind and gives to high and low even as he wills to each; and this he gave to you, and you must bear it therefore, — now you have reached our city and our land, you shall not lack for clothes nor anything besides which it is fit a hard-pressed suppliant should find. I will point out the town and tell its people's name. The Phaeacians own this city and this land, and I am the daughter of generous Alcinoüs, on whom the might and power of the Phaeacians rests."

She spoke, and called her fair-haired waiting-women: "My women, stay! Why do you run because you saw a man? You surely do not think him evil-minded. The man is not alive, and never will be born, who can come and offer harm to the Phaeacian land: for we are very dear to the immortals; and then we live apart, far on the surging sea, no other tribe of men has dealings with us. But this poor man has come here having lost his way, and we should give him aid; for in the charge of Zeus all strangers and beggars stand, and a small gift is welcome. Then give, my women, to the stranger food and drink, and bathe him in the river where there is shelter from the breeze."

She spoke; the others stopped and called to one another, and down they brought Odysseus to the place of shelter, even as Nausicaä, daughter of generous Alcinoüs, had ordered. They placed a robe and tunic there for clothing, they gave him in the golden

flask the liquid oil, and bade him bathe in the stream's currents. Then to the waiting-women said royal Odysseus :

“ Women, stand here aside, while by myself I wash the salt from off my back and with the oil anoint me ; for it is long since ointment touched my skin. But before you I will not bathe ; for I am ashamed to bare myself among you fair-haired maids.”

So he spoke ; the women went away, and told it to the maid. And now with water from the stream royal Odysseus washed his skin clean of the salt which clung about his back and his broad shoulders, and wiped from his head the foam brought by the barren sea ; and when he had thoroughly bathed and oiled himself and had put on the clothing which the chaste maiden gave, Athene, the daughter of Zeus, made him taller than before and stouter to behold, and she made the curling locks to fall around his head as on the hyacinth flower. As when a man lays gold on silver, — some skillful man whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athene have trained in every art, and he fashions graceful work ; so did she cast a grace upon his head and shoulders. He walked apart along the shore, and there sat down, beaming with grace and beauty. The maid observed ; then to her fair-haired waiting-women said :

“ Hearken, my white-armed women, while I speak. Not without purpose on the part of all the gods that hold Olympus is this man's meeting with the godlike Phaeacians. A while ago, he really seemed to me ill-looking, but now he is like the gods who hold the open sky. Ah, might a man like this be called my husband, having his home here, and content to stay ! But give, my women, to the stranger food and drink.”



She spoke, and very willingly they heeded and obeyed, and set beside Odysseus food and drink. Then long-tried royal Odysseus eagerly drank and ate, for he had long been fasting.

And now to other matters white-armed Nausicaä turned her thoughts. She folded the clothes and laid them in the beautiful wagon, she yoked the stout-hoofed mules, mounted herself, and calling to Odysseus thus she spoke and said :

“ Arise now, stranger, and hasten to the town, that I may set you on the road to my wise father’s house, where you shall see, I promise you, the best of all Phaeacia. Only do this, — you seem to me not to lack understanding : while we are passing through the fields and farms, here with my women, behind the mules and cart, walk rapidly along, and I will lead the way. But as we near the town, — round which is a lofty rampart, a beautiful harbor on each side and a narrow road between, — there curved ships line the way ; for every man has his own mooring-place. Beyond is the assembly near the beautiful grounds of Poseidon, constructed out of blocks of stone deeply imbedded. Further along, they make the black ships’ tackling, cables and canvas, and shape out the oars ; for the Phaeacians do not care for bow and quiver, only for masts and oars of ships and the trim ships themselves, with which it is their joy to cross the foaming sea. Now the rude talk of such as these I would avoid, that no one afterwards may give me blame. For very forward persons are about the place, and some coarse man might say, if he should meet us : ‘ What tall and handsome stranger is following Nausicaä ? Where did she find him ? A husband he will be, her very own. Some castaway, perhaps, she rescued from his

vessel, some foreigner ; for we have no neighbors here. Or at her prayer some long-entreated god has come straight down from heaven, and he will keep her his forever. So much the better, if she has gone herself and found a husband elsewhere ! The people of our own land here, Phaeacians, she disdains, though she has many high-born suitors.' So they will talk, and for me it would prove a scandal. I should myself censure a girl who acted so, who, heedless of friends, while father and mother were alive, mingled with men before her public wedding. And, stranger, listen now to what I say, that you may soon obtain assistance and safe conduct from my father. Near our road you will see a stately grove of poplar trees, belonging to Athene ; in it a fountain flows, and round it is a meadow. That is my father's park, his fruitful vineyard, as far from the town as one can call. There sit and wait a while, until we come to the town and reach my father's palace. But when you think we have already reached the palace, enter the city of the Phaeacians, and ask for the palace of my father, generous Alcinöus. Easily is it known ; a child, though young, could show the way ; for the Phaeacians do not build their houses like the dwelling of Alcinöus their prince. But when his house and court receive you, pass quickly through the hall until you find my mother. She sits in the firelight by the hearth, spinning sea-purple yarn, a marvel to behold, and resting against a pillar. Her handmaids sit behind her. Here too my father's seat rests on the selfsame pillar, and here he sits and sips his wine like an immortal. Passing him by, stretch out your hands to our mother's knees, if you would see the day of your return in gladness and with speed, although you come from far. If

she regards you kindly in her heart, then there is hope that you may see your friends and reach your stately house and native land."

Saying this, with her bright whip she struck the mules, and fast they left the river's streams; and well they trotted, well they plied their feet, and skillfully she reined them that those on foot might follow,— the waiting-women and Odysseus,— and moderately she used the lash. The sun was setting when they reached the famous grove, Athene's sacred ground, where royal Odysseus sat him down. And thereupon he prayed to the daughter of mighty Zeus:

"Hearken, thou child of ægis-bearing Zeus, unwearied one! Oh hear me now, although before thou didst not hear me, when I was wrecked, what time the great Land-shaker wrecked me. Grant that I come among the Phaeacians welcomed and pitied by them."

So spoke he in his prayer, and Pallas Athene heard, but did not yet appear to him in open presence; for she regarded still her father's brother, who stoutly strove with godlike Odysseus until he reached his land.