

XI.

THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

“ Now when we came down to the ship and to the sea, we in the first place launched our ship into the sacred sea, put mast and sail in the black ship, then took the sheep and drove them in, and we ourselves embarked in sadness, letting the big tears fall. And for our aid behind our dark-bowed ship came a fair wind to fill our sail, a welcome comrade, sent us by fair-haired Circe, the mighty goddess, human of speech. So when we had done our work at the several ropes about the ship we sat us down, while wind and helmsman kept her steady; and all day long the sail of the running ship was stretched. Then the sun sank, and all the ways grew dark.

“ And now she reached earth's limits, the deep stream of the Ocean, where the Cimmerian people's land and city lie, wrapt in a fog and cloud. Never on them does the shining sun look down with his beams, as he goes up the starry sky or as again toward earth he turns back from the sky, but deadly night is spread abroad over these hapless men. On coming here, we beached our ship and set the sheep ashore, then walked along the Ocean-stream until we reached the spot foretold by Circe.

“ Here Perimedes and Eurylochus held fast the victims, while drawing my sharp blade from my thigh, I dug a pit, about a cubit either way, and round its

edges poured an offering to all the dead, — first honey-mixture, next sweet wine, and thirdly water, and over all I strewed white barley-meal; and I made many supplications to the strengthless dead, vowing when I returned to Ithaca to take the barren cow that was my best and offer it in my hall, heaping the pyre with treasure; and to Teiresias separately to sacrifice a sheep, for him alone, one wholly black, the choicest of my flock. So when with prayers and vows I had implored the peoples of the dead, I took the sheep and cut their throats over the pit, and forth the dark blood ran. Then gathered there spirits from out of Erebus of those now dead and gone, — brides, and unwedded youths, and worn old men, delicate maids with hearts but new to sorrow, and many pierced with brazen spears, men slain in fight, wearing their blood-stained armor. In crowds around the pit they flocked from every side, with awful wail. Pale terror seized me. Nevertheless, inspiriting my men, I bade them take the sheep now lying there slain by the ruthless sword, and flay and burn them, and call upon the gods, — on powerful Hades and on dread Persephone, — while I myself, drawing my sharp sword from my thigh, sat still and did not let the strengthless dead approach the blood till I had made inquiry of Teiresias.

“First came the spirit of my man, Elpenor. He had not yet been buried under the broad earth; for we left his body at the hall of Circe, unwept, unburied, since other tasks were urgent. I wept to see him and pitied him from my heart, and speaking in winged words I said:

“‘Elpenor, how came you in this murky gloom? Faster you came on foot than I in my black ship.’

“So I spoke, and with a groan he answered:

‘High-born son of Laërtes, ready Odysseus, Heaven’s cruel doom destroyed me, and excess of wine. After I went to sleep on Circe’s house, I did not notice how to go down again by the long ladder, but I fell headlong from the roof; my neck was broken in its socket, and my soul came down to the house of Hades. Now I entreat you by those left behind, not present here, by your wife, and by the father who cared for you when little, and by Telemachus whom you left at home alone, — for I know, as you go hence out of the house of Hades, you will touch with your stanch ship the island of Aeaëa, — there then, my master, I charge you, think of me. Do not, in going, leave me behind, unwept, unburied, deserting me, lest I become a cause of anger to the gods against you; but burn me in the armor that was mine, and on the shore of the foaming sea erect the mound of an unhappy man, that future times may know. Do this for me, and fix upon my grave the oar with which in life I rowed among my comrades.’

“So he spoke, and answering him said I: ‘Unhappy man, this will I carry out and do for you.’

“In such sad words talking with one another, there we sat, — I on the one side, holding my blade over the blood, while the spectre of my comrade, on the other, told of his many woes.

“Now came the spirit of my dead mother, Anticleia, daughter of brave Autolycus, whom I had left alive on setting forth for sacred Ilios. I wept to see her and pitied her from my heart; but even so, I did not let her — deeply though it grieved me — approach the blood till I had made inquiry of Teiresias.

“Now came the spirit of Teiresias of Thebes, holding his golden sceptre. He knew me, and said to

me : ‘ High-born son of Laërtes, ready Odysseus, why now, unhappy man, leaving the sunshine, have you come here to see the dead and this forbidding place ? Nay, draw back from the pit and turn your sharp blade from the blood, that I may drink and speak what will not fail.’

“ So he spoke, and drawing back I thrust my silver-studded sword into its sheath. And after he had drunk of the dark blood, then thus the blameless seer addressed me :

“ ‘ You are looking for a joyous journey home, glorious Odysseus, but a god will make it hard ; for I do not think you will elude the Land-shaker, who bears a grudge against you in his heart, angry because you blinded his dear son. Yet even so, by meeting hardship you may still reach home, if you will curb the passions of yourself and crew when once you bring your stanch ship to the Thrinacian island, safe from the dark blue sea, and find the pasturing kine and sturdy sheep of the Sun, who all things oversees, all overhears. If you leave these unharmed and heed your homeward way, you still may come to Ithaca, though you shall meet with hardship. But if you harm them, then I predict the loss of ship and crew ; and even if you yourself escape, late shall you come, in evil plight, with loss of all your crew, on the vessel of a stranger. At home you shall find trouble, — bold men devouring your living, wooing your matchless wife, and offering bridal gifts. Nevertheless, on your return, you surely shall avenge their crimes. But after you have slain the suitors in your halls, whether by stratagem or by the sharp sword boldly, then journey on, bearing a shapely oar, until you reach the men who know no sea and do not eat food mixed

with salt. These therefore have no knowledge of the red-cheeked ships, nor of the shapely oars which are the wings of ships. And I will give a sign easy to be observed, which shall not fail you: when another traveler, meeting you, shall say you have a winnowing fan on your white shoulder, there fix in the ground your shapely oar, and make fit offerings to lord Poseidon — a ram, a bull, and the sow's mate, a boar, — and turning homeward offer sacred hecatombs to the immortal gods who hold the open sky, all in the order due. Upon yourself death from the sea shall very gently come and cut you off bowed down with hale old age. Round you shall be a prosperous people. I speak what shall not fail.'

"So he spoke, and answering him said I: 'Teiresias, these are the threads of destiny the gods themselves have spun. Nevertheless, declare me this, and plainly tell: I see the spirit of my dead mother here; silent she sits beside the blood and has not, although I am her son, deigned to look in my face or speak to me. Tell me, my master, how may she know that it is I?'

"So I spoke, and straightway answering me said he: 'A simple saying I will tell and fix it in your mind: whomever among those dead and gone you let approach the blood, he shall declare the truth. But whomsoever you refuse, he shall go back again.'

"So saying, into the house of Hades passed the spirit of the great Teiresias, after telling heaven's decrees; but I still held my place until my mother came and drank of the dark blood. She knew me instantly, and sorrowfully said in winged words:

"'My child, how came you in this murky gloom, while still alive? Awful to the living are these sights.

Great rivers are between, and fearful floods, — mightiest of all the Ocean-stream, not to be crossed on foot, but only on a strong-built ship. Are you but now come here, upon your way from Troy, wandering a long time with your ship and crew? Have you not been in Ithaca, nor seen your wife at home?’

“So she spoke, and answering her said I: ‘My mother, need brought me to the house of Hades, here to consult the spirit of Teiresias of Thebes. I have not yet been near Achaea nor once set foot upon my land, but have been always wandering and meeting sorrow since the first day I followed royal Agamemnon to Ilios, famed for horses, to fight the Trojans there. But now declare me this and plainly tell: what doom of death that lays men low o’erwhelmed you? Some long disease? Or did the huntress Artemis attack and slay you with her gentle arrows? And tell me of my father and the son I left; still in their keeping are my honors? Or does at last an alien hold them, while people say that I shall come no more? Tell me, moreover, of my wedded wife, her purposes and thoughts. Is she abiding by her child and keeping all in safety? Or was she finally married by some chief of the Achaeans?’

“So I spoke, and straight my honored mother answered: ‘Indeed she stays with patient heart within your hall, and wearily the nights and days are wasted with her tears. Nobody yet holds your fair honors; in peace Telemachus farms your estate, and sits at equal feasts where it befits the lawgiver to be a guest; for all give him a welcome. Your father stays among the fields, and comes to the town no more. Bed has he none, bedstead, nor robes, nor bright-hued rugs; but through the winter he sleeps in the house where

servants sleep, in the dust beside the fire, and wears upon his body sorry clothes. Then when the summer comes and fruitful autumn, wherever he may be about his slope of vineyard-ground a bed is piled of leaves fallen on the earth. There lies he in distress, woe waxing strong within, longing for your return; and hard old age comes on. Even so I also died and met my doom: not that at home the sure-eyed huntress attacked and slew me with her gentle arrows; nor did a sickness come, which oftentimes by sad decay steals from the limbs the life; but longing for you — your wise ways, glorious Odysseus, and your tenderness, — took joyous life away.’

“As she thus spoke, I yearned, though my mind hesitated, to clasp the spirit of my mother, even though dead. Three times the impulse came; my heart urged me to clasp her. Three times out of my arms like a shadow or a dream she flitted, and the sharp pain about my heart grew only more; and speaking in winged words, I said:

“‘My mother, why not stay for me who long to clasp you, so that in the very house of Hades, throwing our arms round one another, we two may take our fill of piercing grief? Or is it a phantom high Persephone has sent, to make me weep and sorrow more?’

“So I spoke, and straight my honored mother answered: ‘Ah, my own child, beyond all men ill-fated! In no wise is Persephone, daughter of Zeus, beguiling you, but this is the way with mortals when they die: the sinews then no longer hold the flesh and bones together; for these the strong force of the blazing fire destroys, when once the life leaves the white bones, and like a dream the spirit flies away. Nay now, press quickly on into the light, and of all this take heed, to tell your wife hereafter.’

“So we held converse there; but now the women came — for high Persephone had sent them, — who were great men’s wives and daughters. Round the dark blood in throngs they gathered, and I considered how to question each. Then to my mind this seemed the wisest way: I drew my keen-edged blade from my stout thigh and did not let them all at once drink the dark blood, but one by one they came, and each declared her lineage, and I questioned all.

“There I saw Tyro first, of noble ancestry, who told of being sprung from gentle Salmoneus; told how she was the wife of Cretheus, son of Aeolus. She loved a river-god, divine Enipeus, who flows the fairest of all streams on earth. So she would walk by the fair currents of Enipeus, and in his guise the Land-shaker, who girds the land, lay with her at the outpouring of the eddying stream. The upheaving water compassed them, high as a hill and arching, and hid the god and mortal woman. He loosed the maiden’s girdle and cast on her a sleep. Then when the god had done the deeds of love, he held her hand and spoke and thus addressed her:

“‘Be happy, lady, in my love! In the revolving year you shall bear noble children; for the embraces of immortals are not barren. Rear them yourself, and cherish them. And now go home. Hold fast, and speak it not: I am Poseidon, the shaker of the earth.’

“Saying this, he plunged into the surging sea. She then, conceiving, bore Pelias and Neleus, who both became strong ministers of mighty Zeus. Pelias dwelt in the open country of Iolcus, rich in flocks; the other at sandy Pylos. And sons to Cretheus also this queen of women bore, — Aeson, and Pheres, and Amythaon the charioteer.

“ And after her I saw Antiope, Asopus' daughter, who boasted she had been embraced by Zeus himself. And so she bore two sons, Amphion and Zethus, who first laid the foundations of seven-gated Thebes, and fortified it; because unfortified, they could not dwell in open Thebes, for all their power.

“ And after her I saw Alceme, wife of Amphitryon, her who bore dauntless Hercules, the lion-hearted, yielding to the embrace of mighty Zeus; and Megara, harsh Creon's daughter, whom the tireless son of Amphitryon took to wife.

“ The mother of Oedipus I saw, fair Epicaste, who did a monstrous deed through ignorance of heart, in marrying her son. He, having slain his father, married her; and soon the gods made the thing known to men. In pain at pleasant Thebes he governed the Cadmeians, through the gods' destroying purpose; and she went down to Hades, the strong gaoler, fastening a fatal noose to the high rafter, abandoned to her grief. To him she left the many woes which the Avengers of a mother bring.

“ Beautiful Chloris too I saw, whom Neleus once married for her beauty after making countless gifts, the youngest daughter of that Amphion, son of Iasus, who once held powerful sway at Minyan Orchomenus. She was the queen of Pylos, and bore Neleus famous children, Nestor and Chromius and Periclymenus the headstrong. And beside these she bore that stately Pero, the marvel of mankind, whom all her neighbors wooed. But to none would Neleus give her save to him who should drive from Phylace the crook-horned, broad-browed kine of haughty Iphiclus, and dangerous kine were they. A blameless seer alone would undertake to drive them; but cruel doom of God

prevented, harsh bonds and clownish herdsmen. Yet after days and months were spent, as the year rolled and other seasons came, then haughty Iphiclus released him on his telling all the oracles. The will of Zeus was done.

“Leda I saw, the wife of Tyndarēus, who bore to Tyndareus two stalwart sons: Castor, the horseman, and Polydeuces, good at boxing. These in a kind of life the nourishing earth now holds; and even beneath the ground they have from Zeus the boon that to-day they be alive, to-morrow dead; and they are allotted honors like the gods.

“Iphimedeia I saw, wife of Aloëus, who said that she had lain beside Poseidon. She bore two children, but short-lived they proved,—Otus, the god-like, and the far-famed Ephialtes,—whom the fruitful earth made grow to be the tallest and most beautiful of men, after renowned Orion; for at nine years they were nine cubits broad, and in height they reached nine fathoms. Therefore they even threatened the immortals with raising on Olympus the din of furious war. Ossa they strove to set upon Olympus, and upon Ossa leafy Pelion, that so the heavens might be scaled. And this they would have done, had they but reached the period of their vigor; but the son of Zeus whom fair-haired Leto bore destroyed them both before below their temples the downy hair had sprung and covered their chins with the fresh beard.

“Phaedra and Procris, too, I saw, and beautiful Ariadne, daughter of wizard Minos, whom Theseus tried to bring from Crete to the slopes of sacred Athens. But he gained naught thereby; before she came, Artemis slew her in sea-girt Dia, prompted by the report of Dionysus.

“Maera and Clymene I saw, and odious Eriphyle who took a bribe of gold as the price of her own husband. But all I cannot tell, nor even name the many heroes' wives and daughters whom I saw; ere that, the immortal night would wear away. Already it is time to sleep, at the swift ship among the crew or here. My journey hence rests with the gods and you.”

As thus he ended, all were hushed to silence, held by the spell throughout the dusky hall. White-armed Arete was the first to speak: “Phaeacians, how seems to you this man in beauty, height, and balanced mind within? My guest indeed he is, but each one shares the honor. Be not in haste then to dismiss him, nor stint your gifts to one so much in need. By favor of the gods great wealth is in your houses.”

Then also spoke the old lord Echeon, who was the oldest of Phaeacian men: “My friends, not wide of the mark, nor of her reputation, speaks the wise queen; therefore give heed. Yet word and work rest with Alcinous here.”

Then answered him Alcinous and said: “Even as she speaks that word shall be, if I be now the living lord of oar-loving Phaeacians! But let our guest, however much he longs for home, consent to stay at all events until to-morrow, till I shall make our gift complete. To send him hence shall be the charge of all, especially of me; for power within this land rests here.”

Then wise Odysseus answered him and said: “Mighty Alcinous, renowned of all, if you should bid me stay a year and then should send me forth, giving me splendid gifts, that is what I would choose; for much more to my profit would it be with fuller hands to reach my native land. Then should I be regarded

more and welcomed more by all who saw me coming home to Ithaca."

Then answered him Alcinoüs and said: "Odysseus, we judge you by your looks to be no cheat or thief; though many are the men the dark earth breeds, and scatters far and wide, who fashion falsehoods out of what no man can see. But you have a grace of word and a noble mind within, and you told your tale as skillfully as if you were a bard, relating all the Argives' and your own sore troubles. But now declare me this and plainly tell: did you see any of the god-like comrades who went with you to Ilios and there met doom? The night is very long; yes, vastly long. The hour for sleeping at the hall is not yet come. Tell me the wondrous story. I could be well content till sacred dawn, if you were willing in the hall to tell us of your woes."

Then wise Odysseus answered him and said: "Lord Alcinoüs, renowned of all, there is a time for stories and a time for sleep; yet if you wish to listen longer, I would not shrink from telling tales more pitiful than these, the woes of my companions who died in after-time, men who escaped the grievous war-cry of the Trojans to die on their return through a wicked woman's will.

"When, then, chaste Persephone had scattered here and there those spirits of tender women, there came the spirit of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, sorrowing. Around thronged other spirits of men who by his side had died in the house of Aegisthus and there had met their doom. He knew me as soon as he had drunk of the dark blood; and then he cried aloud and let the big tears fall, and stretched his hands forth eagerly to grasp me. But no, there was no strength or

vigor left, such as was once within his supple limbs. I wept to see him, and pitied him from my heart, and speaking in winged words I said :

“ ‘ Great son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, what doom of death that lays men low o’erwhelmed you? Was it on shipboard that Poseidon smote you, raising unwelcome blasts of cruel wind? Or did fierce men destroy you on the land, while you were cutting off their kine or their fair flocks of sheep, or while you fought to win their town and carry off their women?’ ”

“ So I spoke, and straightway answering me said he : ‘ No, high-born son of Laërtes, ready Odysseus, on shipboard Poseidon did not smite me, raising unwelcome blasts of cruel wind, nor did fierce men destroy me on the land ; it was Aegisthus, plotting death and doom, who slew me, aided by my accursed wife, when he had bidden me home and had me at the feast, even as one kills the ox before the manger. So thus I died a lamentable death, and all my men, with no escape, were slain around me ; like white-toothed swine at some rich, powerful man’s wedding, or banquet, or gay festival. You have yourself been present at the death of many men, — men slain in single combat and in the press of war ; yet here you would have felt your heart most touched with pity, to see how round the mixing-bowl and by the loaded tables we lay about the hall, and all the pavement ran with blood. Saddest of all, I heard the cry of Priam’s daughter, Cassandra, whom crafty Clytaemnestra slew beside me ; and I, on the ground, lifted my hands and clutched my sword in dying. But she, the brutal woman, turned away and did not deign, though I was going to the house of Hades, to draw with her

hand my eyelids down and press my lips together. Ah, what can be more horrible and brutish than a woman when she admits into her thoughts such deeds as these! And what a shameless deed she plotted to bring about the murder of the husband of her youth! I used to think how glad my coming home would be, even to my children and my slaves; but she, intent on such extremity of crime, brought shame upon herself and all of womankind who shall be born hereafter, even on well-doers too.'

"So he spoke, and answering him said I: 'Alas! The house of Atreus far-seeing Zeus has sorely plagued with women's arts, from the beginning: for Helen's sake how many of us died; and Clytaemnestra devised a plot while you were far away.'

"So I spoke, and straightway answering me said he: 'Never be you, then, gentle to your wife, nor speak out all you really mean; but tell a part and let a part be hid. And yet on you, Odysseus, no violent death shall ever fall from your wife's hand; for truly wise and of an understanding heart is the daughter of Icarius, heedful Penelope. As a young bride we left her, on going to the war. A child was at her breast, an infant then, who now perhaps sits in the ranks of men, and happy too; for his dear father, coming home, will see him, and he will meet his father with embrace, as children should. But my wife did not let me feast my eyes upon my son; before he came, she slew me. Nay, this I will say farther; mark it well. By stealth, not openly, bring in your ship to shore, for there is no more faith in woman. But now declare me this and plainly tell if you hear my son is living still — at Orchomenus, perhaps, or sandy Pylos, or at the home of Menelaus in broad Sparta; for surely nowhere on the earth has royal Orestes died.'

“So he spoke, and answering him said I: ‘O son of Atreus, why question me of this? Whether he be alive or dead I do not know. To speak vain words is ill.’

“In such sad words talking with one another mournfully we stood, letting the big tears fall. And now there came the spirit of Achilles, son of Peleus, and of Patroclus too, of gallant Antilochus, and of Ajax who was first in beauty and in stature of all the Danaäns after the gallant son of Peleus. But the spirit of swift-footed Æacides knew me, and sorrowfully said in winged words:

“‘High-born son of Laërtes, ready Odysseus, rash as you are, what will you undertake more desperate than this! How dared you come down hither to the house of Hades, where dwell the senseless dead, spectres of toil-worn men?’

“So he spoke, and answering him said I: ‘Achilles, son of Peleus, foremost of the Achaeans, I came for consultation with Teiresias, hoping that he might give advice for reaching rugged Ithaca. I have not yet been near Achaea nor once set foot upon my land, but have had constant trouble; while as for you, Achilles, no man was in the past more fortunate, nor in the future shall be; for formerly, during your life, we Argives gave you equal honor with the gods, and now you are a mighty lord among the dead, when here. Then do not grieve at having died, Achilles.’

“So I spoke, and straightway answering me said he: ‘Mock not at death, glorious Odysseus. Better to be the hireling of a stranger, and serve a man of mean estate whose living is but small, than be the ruler over all these dead and gone. No, tell me tales of my proud son, whether or not he followed to the

war to be a leader ; tell what you know of gallant Peleus, whether he still has honor in the cities of the Myrmidons ; or do they slight him now in Hellas and in Phthia, because old age has touched his hands and feet ? I am myself no longer in the sunlight to defend him, nor like what I once was when on the Trojan plain I routed a brave troop in succoring the Argives. If once like that I could but come, even for a little space, into my father's house, frightful should be my might and my resistless hands to any who are troubling him and keeping him from honor.'

“ So he spoke, and answering him said I : ‘ Indeed, of gallant Peleus I know nothing. But about your dear son Neoptolemus, I will tell you all the truth, as you desire ; for it was I, in my trim hollow ship, who brought him from Scyros to the mailed Achaeans. And when encamped at Troy we held a council, he always was the first to speak, and no word missed its mark ; godlike Nestor and I alone surpassed him. Moreover, on the Trojan plain, when we Achaeans battled, he never tarried in the throng nor at the rallying-place, but pressed before us all, yielding to none in courage. Many a man he slew in mortal combat. Fully I cannot tell, nor even name the host he slew in fighting for the Argives ; but how he vanquished with his sword the son of Telephus, Eurypylus the hero ! Many of that Ceteian band fell with their leader, destroyed by woman's bribes. So goodly a man as he I never saw, save kingly Memnon.

“ ‘ Then when we entered the horse Epeius made, — we chieftains of the Argives, — and it lay all with me to shut or open our close ambush, other captains and councilors of the Danaäns would wipe away a tear, and their limbs shook beneath them ; but watch-

ing him, at no time did I see his fair skin pale, nor from his cheeks did he wipe tears away. Often he begged to leave the horse; he fingered his sword-hilt and his bronze-tipped spear, longing to vex the Trojans. Yet after we overthrew the lofty town of Priam, he took his share of spoil and an honorable prize, and went on board unharmed, not hit by brazen point nor wounded in close combat, as for the most part happens in war; hap-hazard Ares rages.'

"So I spoke, and the spirit of swift-footed Aeacides departed with long strides across the field of asphodel, pleased that I said his son was famous.

"But the other spirits of those dead and gone stood sadly there; each asked for what he loved. Only the spirit of Ajax, son of Telamon, held aloof, still angry at the victory I gained in the contest at the ships for the armor of Achilles. The goddess mother of Achilles offered the prize, and the sons of the Trojans were the judges,—they and Pallas Athene. Would I had never won in such a strife, since thus the earth closed round the head of Ajax, who in beauty and achievement surpassed all other Danaäns save the gallant son of Peleus. To him I spoke in gentle words and said:

"'Ajax, son of gallant Telamon, will you not, even in death, forget your wrath about the accursed armor? To plague the Argives the gods gave it, since such a tower as you were lost thereby. For you as for Achilles, son of Peleus, do we Achaeans mourn unceasingly. None was to blame but Zeus, who, fiercely hating all the host of Danaän spearmen, brought upon you this doom. Nay, king, draw near, that you may listen to our voice and hear our words. Abate your pride and haughty spirit.'

"I spoke; he did not answer, but he went his way

after the other spirits of those dead and gone, on into Erebus. Yet then, despite his wrath, he should have spoken, or I had spoken to him, but that the heart within my breast wished to see other spirits of the dead.

“ There I saw Minos, the illustrious son of Zeus, a golden sceptre in his hand, administering justice to the dead from where he sat, while all around men called for judgment from the king, sitting and standing in the wide-doored hall of Hades.

“ Next I marked huge Orion drive through the field of asphodel the game that in his life he slew among the lonely hills. He held a club of solid bronze that never can be broken.

“ And Tityus I saw, the son of far-famed Gaia, stretched on the plain ; across nine roods he stretched. Two vultures sat beside him, one upon either hand, and tore his liver, piercing the caul within. Yet with his hands he did not keep them off ; for he did violence to Leto, the honored wife of Zeus, as she was going to Pytho through pleasant Panopeus.

“ Tantalus, too, I saw in grievous torment and standing in a pool. It touched his chin. He strained for thirst, but could not take and drink ; for as the old man bent, eager to drink, the water always was absorbed and disappeared, and at his feet the dark earth showed. God made it dry. Then leafy-crested trees drooped down their fruit, — pears, pomegranates, apples with shining fruit, sweet figs, and thrifty olives. But when the old man stretched his hand to take, a breeze would toss them toward the dusky clouds.

“ And Sisyphus I saw in bitter pains, forcing a monstrous stone along with both his hands. Tugging with hand and foot, he pushed the stone upward along

a hill. But when he thought to heave it on clean to the summit, a mighty power would turn it back; and so once more down to the ground the wicked stone would tumble. Again he strained to push it back; sweat ran down from his limbs, and from his head a dust cloud rose.

“And next I marked the might of Hercules, — his phantom form; for he himself is with the immortal gods reveling at their feasts, wed to fair-ankled Hebe, child of great Zeus and golden-sandaled Here. Around him rose a clamor of the dead, like that of birds, fleeing all ways in terror; while he, like gloomy night, with his bare bow and arrow on the string, glared fearfully, as if forever shooting. Terrible was the baldric round about his breast, a golden belt where marvelous devices had been wrought, bears and wild boars and fierce-eyed lions, struggles and fights, murders and blood-sheddings. Let the artificer design no more who once achieved that sword-belt by his art. Soon as he saw, he knew me, and sorrowfully said in winged words:

“‘High-born son of Laërtes, ready Odysseus, so you, poor man, work out a cruel task such as I once endured when in the sunlight. I was the son of Kronian Zeus, yet I had pains unnumbered; for to one very far beneath me I was bound, and he imposed hard labors. He even sent me here to carry off the dog, for nothing he supposed could be a harder labor. I brought the dog up hence, and dragged him forth from Hades. Hermes was my guide, he and clear-eyed Athene.’

“So saying, back he went into the house of Hades, while I still held my place, hoping there yet might come some other heroes who died long ago. And

more of the men of old I might have seen, as I desired, — Theseus and Peirithoüs, famous children of the gods ; but ere they came, myriads of the people of the dead gathered with awful cry. Pale terror seized me ; I thought perhaps the Gorgon head of some fell monster high Persephone might send out of the house of Hades. So, turning to my ship, I called my crew to come on board and loose the cables. Quickly they came, took places at the pins, and down the Ocean-stream the flowing current bore us, with oarage first and then a pleasant breeze.”