

the taunting voice came, and in his rage almost destroyed the Greeks; for one piece of rock fell very near their vessel, and they were forced to redouble their efforts to row out of reach and prevent disaster.

The Greeks now sailed on until they reached the Æolian Islands, where dwelt Æolus, king and father of the winds. He had heard of Ulysses' prowess, received him kindly, and at parting gave him a leather bag containing all the contrary winds, which Ulysses was thus at liberty to retain imprisoned until he had safely reached home (p. 214).

Day and night Ulysses' barks now bounded over the blue waves. On the ninth evening the shores of Ithaca were discerned by the eager eyes on board, and all made their preparations for landing early the next morning. For the first time since he had left the Æolian shores, Ulysses now indulged in sleep; and while he was lost in oblivion his sailors opened the leather bag, intending to rob their master of a portion of his treasure, for they imagined that Æolus had given him much gold.

The bag was no sooner opened, than the contrary winds, weary and cramped with their uncomfortable position, sprang out with a rush and a roar, and in a few moments stirred up a terrible storm, which tore the ships from their anchors, and soon drove them far out to sea.

After untold suffering, the Greeks landed again upon the Æolian Isle, and Ulysses sought the king, to beseech his aid once more; but this time the god received him coldly, and bade him depart, as his cruelty to Polyphemus had awakened the gods' wrath.

“Hence with thee! Leave our island instantly,
Vilest of living men! It may not be
That I receive or aid as he departs
One who is hated by the blessed gods,—
And thou art hated by the gods. Away!”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Sorrowfully now the Greeks embarked; but, instead of being hurried along by favorable winds, they were obliged to row against wind and waves, and only after many days came to the land of the Læstrygonians, where fresh losses awaited them. These people were cannibals, who were in the habit of slaying all the strangers who visited their shores, to satisfy their horrible appetites. When they saw the vessels enter their harbor, they sunk some of them by casting huge rocks at them from their tall cliffs, and speared and devoured the unfortunate crews.

Ulysses, ever cautious, had lingered without the harbor; and when, from afar, he saw his companions' horrible fate, he bade his men strike the waves with their “sounding oars” and escape.

The Greeks went on again until they came to Ææa, an island inhabited by the golden-haired enchantress Circe, sister of Æetes, and aunt of Medea. Here Ulysses' crew was divided into two parties, one of which, led by Eurylochus, set out to explore the island, while the other, headed by Ulysses, remained to guard the ships. Through a dense forest, peopled with strangely gentle wild beasts, Eurylochus led his force, until they came in sight of the beautiful palace home of Circe. From afar they could hear her sweet voice raised in song, as she wove a beautiful web for her own adornment: so they pressed eagerly on, and entered the palace hall, Eurylochus alone lingering on the porch, fearing lest some fraud might suddenly be revealed.

Circe received her self-invited guests most graciously, seated them on tapestry-covered couches, and bade her numerous handmaidens speedily set before them all manner of good cheer,—an order which was immediately carried out. The men feasted greedily, for they had fasted for many days, and Circe watched them with ill-concealed disgust. Suddenly she started from her seat, waved her wand over their heads, and bade them assume the form of swine (which obscene animals their gluttony suggested), and hie them to their sties.

"Then instantly
She touched them with a wand, and shut them up
In sties, transformed to swine in head and voice,
Bristles and shape, though still the human mind
Remained to them. Thus sorrowing they were driven
Into their cells, where Circe flung to them
Acorns of oak and ilex, and the fruit
Of cornel, such as nourish wallowing swine."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Eurylochus, meanwhile, vainly awaited their return, and finally resolved to go back alone to the ships and report what had happened. Sword in hand, Ulysses then set out alone to rescue his comrades; but he had not gone far before he met a youth,—Mercury in disguise,—who warned him not to approach any nearer Circe, and told him of his companions' transformation.

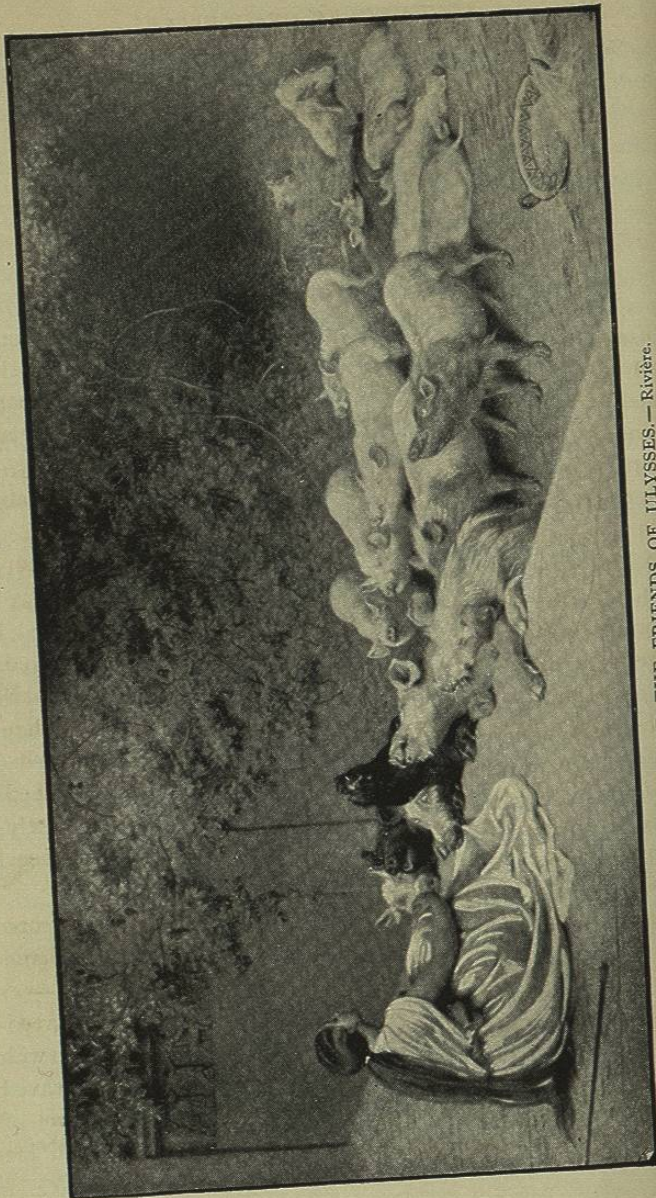
As Ulysses would not be dissuaded from his purpose, Mercury gave him some moly, an herb warranted to preserve him from Circe's magic spells, and sundry important directions, which were all duly listened to and observed.

Pressing onward, Ulysses reached the palace, entered the banquet room, drank Circe's mixture, which was rendered ineffective by the moly's power, and, when she waved her wand over his head and bade him join his fellows, drew his sword and rushed upon her, threatening to take her life if she did not immediately restore his friends to their human forms, and promise to do them no further harm.

Circe, terrified at the threat, agreed to comply with all his demands; and in a few moments Ulysses was again surrounded by his companions, who were touchingly grateful for their rescue. Circe now prepared a second feast, and entertained them all so well, that Ulysses lingered there for one whole year.

"And there from day to day
We lingered a full year, and banqueted
Nobly on plenteous meats and delicate wines."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).



CIRCE AND THE FRIENDS OF ULYSSES.—Rivière.

At the end of that time, Ulysses' companions began to long for their own homes, and prevailed upon their chief to leave the fair enchantress Circe. At first she was loath to let him go; but, seeing that her efforts to detain him longer would be of no avail, she bade him seek the Cimmerian shores, and there consult the seer Tiresias. This land, which lay on the confines of Pluto's dark realm, was inhabited by shadows, the spirits of the dead, condemned to sojourn there a while ere they were admitted into Hades.

Ulysses embarked, and, according to Circe's directions, let his vessel drift along until its prow grated on a pebbly beach, where he landed. Then, walking straight before him, he came to a spot whence he could hear the roar of the Phlegethon as it joined the Acheron, and here he dug a trench with his sword.

The trench finished, he killed two black victims, furnished by Circe, and made their blood flow into the trench. Immediately all the spirits crowded about him, eager to drink the fresh blood; but Ulysses, with drawn sword, forced them back, until at last Tiresias, the blind seer, approached.

He was allowed to stoop down and drink; and, as soon as he had done so, he recovered the power of human speech, and warned Ulysses of the many trials still awaiting him. Then, his prophecy concluded, he vanished; but Ulysses lingered a little longer to allow his mother to drink some blood, and explain how she came to be here in the spirit land.

Many others came and conversed with him; but at last he was forced to depart, and return to Ææa, where he lingered to perform the funeral rites for Elpenor,—one of his followers, a youth who had fallen asleep on one of the palace turrets, and by an inadvertent movement had fallen to the ground, where he had been found dead.

These obsequies over, the Greeks, favored by a fresh wind, left Circe's isle, and sailed along until they drew near the rocky ledge where the Sirens had their abode. These maidens were wont to sit on the rocks and sing entrancing

Ulysses visits
Cimmeria.



SIREN.—(Acropolis Museum, Athens.)

songs, which allured the mariners until they turned aside from their course, and their vessels were dashed to pieces on the rocks.

According to Circe's advice, Ulysses bade his men bind him fast to the mast, disregard his cries and gestures of command, and keep on their course until the dangerous rocks were lost to view; but, before he allowed them to execute these orders, he stopped their ears with melted wax, so they could not hear a sound, for he alone could hear the Sirens' song and live.

The men then bound him hand and foot to the mast, returned to their oars, and rowed steadily on. Soon the Sirens' melody fell upon Ulysses' charmed ears; but, although he commanded and implored his men to set him free and alter their course, they kept steadily on until no sound of the magic song could reach them, when they once more set their leader free.

Now, although this danger had been safely passed, Ulysses was troubled in spirit, for he knew he would soon be obliged to steer his course between two dread monsters, Charybdis and Scylla. Charybdis and Scylla, who lay so close together, that, while striving to avoid one, it was almost impossible not to fall an easy prey to the other.

Charybdis' den lay under a rock crowned with a single wild fig tree; and three times daily she engulfed the surrounding waters, drawing even large galleys into her capacious jaws.

As for Scylla, she too dwelt in a cave, whence her six ugly heads protruded to devour any prey that came within reach.

"No mariner can boast
That he has passed by Scylla with a crew
Unharm'd; she snatches from the deck, and bears
Away in each grim mouth, a living man."
HOMER (BRYANT'S TR.).

This selfsame Scylla, once a lovely maiden, had won the heart of the sea god Glaucus (p. 393), but coquettishly tormented him until he implored Circe to give him some love potion strong enough to compel her love.

Circe, who had long nursed a secret passion for Glaucus, was angry at him, and jealous of her rival, and, instead of a love potion, prepared a loathsome drug, which she bade him pour into the water where Scylla was wont to bathe. Glaucus faithfully did as she commanded; but when Scylla plunged into the water, her body, and not her feelings, changed, and she became a loathsome monster, a terror to gods and men.

When in sight of the fig tree, Ulysses, cased in armor, stood on the prow to attack Scylla should she attempt to seize one of his crew. The sound of the rushing waters whirling around Charybdis made all on board tremble with fear, and the pilot steered nearer still to dread Scylla's den.

Suddenly a piercing cry was heard, as the monster seized six of the men and devoured them. The rest passed on unharmed; but since then, in speaking of conflicting dangers, it has been customary to use the expression, "falling from Charybdis into Scylla."

Only too glad to effect an escape at any price, the Greeks again rowed on until they sighted Trinacria, the island of the sun, where Phaetusa and Lampetia watched over the Cattle of the sun. The men wished to land here to rest; but Ulysses reminded them that Tiresias, the blind seer, had warned them to avoid it, lest by slaying any of the sacred animals they should incur divine wrath.

The men, however, worn out with the toil of many days' rowing, entreated so piteously to be allowed to rest, voluntarily pledging themselves to be content with their own provisions and not to slay a single animal, that Ulysses reluctantly yielded to their entreaties, and all went ashore.

After they had duly rested, they were still detained by unfavorable winds, until all their provisions were exhausted, and the few birds and fishes they managed to secure no longer sufficed to still the pangs of hunger.

Led by Eurylochus, some of the men, during one of Ulysses' temporary absences, caught and slew some of the sun god's

cattle. To the general amazement and terror, the meat lowed while roasting on the spit, and the empty skins moved and crawled as if alive. All these sounds and sights could not, however, deter the sailors, who were bound to have a good feast, which they kept up for seven days, ere Ulysses could make them leave the Trinacrian shores.

In the mean while, Lampetia had hastened to Apollo to apprise him of the crime committed by Ulysses' men. In anger he appeared before the assembled gods and demanded amends, threatening to withdraw the light of his countenance if he were not properly indemnified. Jupiter, to appease his hot anger, immediately promised that all the offenders should perish.

“ Still shine, O Sun! among the deathless gods
And mortal men, upon the nourishing earth.
Soon will I cleave, with a white thunderbolt,
Their galley in the midst of the black sea!”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

This promise he immediately fulfilled by drowning all except Ulysses, who alone had not partaken of the sacred flesh, and who, after clinging to the rudder for nine long days, a plaything for the wind and waves, was washed ashore on the Island of Ogygia, where the fair sea nymph Calypso had taken up her abode.

There he was kindly and most hospitably entertained during eight long years; but he could not depart, as he had no vessel or crew to bear him away. At last Minerva, who had always befriended him, prevailed upon Jupiter to allow him to return to Ithaca. Mercury was sent to Ogygia to bid Calypso furnish all things necessary for his comfort, and aid in the construction of a huge raft, whereon our hero found himself afloat after many years of reluctant lingering on the land.

All seemed well now; but Neptune suddenly became aware that his old enemy, the torturer of Polyphemus, was about to escape from his clutches. With one blow of his trident he stirred

up one of those sudden tempests whose fury nothing can withstand, shattered Ulysses' raft, and buffeted him about on the waves, until the goddess Leucothea (p. 174), seeing his distress, helped him to reach the Phæacian shore.

Too weary to think of aught but rest, Ulysses dragged himself into a neighboring wood, where he fell asleep on a bed of dry leaves. While he was thus resting, Minerva visited Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinous, King of the Phæacians, in a dream, and bade her go down to the shore and wash her linen robes in readiness for her wedding day, which the goddess assured her was near at hand. Nausicaa obeyed, and drove with her maidens down to the shore, where, after their labors were duly finished, they all indulged in a game of ball, with the usual accompaniment of shrill cries and much laughter. Their cries awoke Ulysses, who came on the scene just in time to save their ball from the waves, and claimed Nausicaa's protection for a shipwrecked mariner.

She graciously permitted him to follow her to her father's palace, and presented him to Alcinous and Arete, who bade him welcome, and invited him to join in the games then taking place. He did so, and displayed such strength and skill that his identity was revealed. Alcinous then promised to send him safely home in a Phæacian bark, which reached Ithaca in safety, and deposited Ulysses, asleep, on his native shore.

When Neptune discovered that the Phæacians had outwitted him, he was so angry that he changed the returning vessel into a rock, which blocked the harbor and put an end to further maritime excursions on their part.

“ He drew near
And smote it with his open palm, and made
The ship a rock, fast rooted in the bed
Of the deep sea.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Disguised as a beggar by Minerva's kindly care, Ulysses sought the lowly dwelling of Eumæus, his swineherd, and from him



PENELOPE.
(Vatican, Rome.)

(356)

learned all he wished to know about his wife and son. He heard that Penelope was fairly besieged with suitors, who were even now feasting and reveling in his palace, whence they refused to depart until she had made choice of a second husband; and also that Telemachus, now a young man, indignant and displeased with the suitors' conduct, and guided and accompanied by his tutor Mentor, had set out in search of the father whom he could not believe dead.

Ulysses' return
to Ithaca.

Mentor was Minerva in disguise, who guided the young man to the courts of Nestor and Menelaus, and finally in a dream bade him return to Ithaca, where he would find the parent he sought. The young prince immediately obeyed, and landed near Eumæus' hut, escaping a clever ambushade posted by the suitors at the entrance of the port.

Minerva now permitted the father and son to recognize each other, in spite of their twenty years' separation, and together they planned how best to punish the insolent suitors. They finally agreed that Telemachus should return to the palace and make no mention of his father's return; while Ulysses, still in the guise of a beggar, should enter his home and claim the usual hospitality.

All was executed as they had planned. No one recognized the long-expected hero in the miserable old beggar — no one save his aged nurse Euryclea, and his faithful old dog Argus, who died for joy at his long-lost master's feet.

“While over Argus the black night of death
Came suddenly as soon as he had seen
Ulysses, absent now for twenty years.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Penelope, hearing that a stranger was within her gates, sent for him, to inquire whether he knew aught of her husband. She too failed to pierce his disguise, and languidly continued a piece of work which she cleverly used to baffle her suitors; for once, when urged to marry, she had replied that she would do so as soon as her work was finished.

Penelope's
web.

As she was a diligent worker, the suitors expected soon to hear her decision, little knowing that she raveled at night all the web so carefully woven during the day.

"Three full years
She practiced thus, and by the fraud deceived
The Grecian youths."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

At last the subterfuge was discovered, and the unfortunate Penelope was forced to finish her work; but ere it was quite done, she found another expedient to postpone Ulysses' bow. her choice of a husband. She brought Ulysses' bow, and announced that she would marry the man who could bend it and send an arrow through twelve rings which she pointed out.

"I bring to you
The mighty bow that great Ulysses bore.
Whoe'er among you he may be whose hand
Shall bend this bow, and send through these twelve rings
An arrow, him I follow hence, and leave
This beautiful abode of my young years,
With all its plenty,— though its memory,
I think, will haunt me even in my dreams."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

The suitors all vainly strove to bend the mighty bow, which was then seized by the disguised Ulysses, while the youths Death of the suitors. laughed aloud in scorn, until Telemachus bade them let the old man try his strength. To the amazement of all, Ulysses easily performed the required feat; and then, turning his aim toward Antinous, the handsomest and most treacherous of all the suitors, he pierced his heart.

A scene of wild commotion ensued, in which Ulysses, Telemachus, Eumæus, and Minerva disguised as Mentor, opposed and slew all the wooers. Penelope, unconscious of all this bloodshed, slept in her room, until she was gently awakened by Euryclea, who announced the return of her long-absent husband.

"Awake, Penelope, dear child, and see
With thine own eyes what thou hast pined for long.
Ulysses has returned; thy lord is here,
Though late, and he has slain the arrogant crew
Of suitors, who disgraced his house, and made
His wealth a spoil, and dared insult his son."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

But Penelope had too long believed her husband dead to credit this marvelous news; and it was only after Ulysses had given her an infallible proof of his identity, by telling her a secret which was shared by her alone, that she received him.

Ulysses was now safe at home, after twenty years of warfare and adventure, and at first greatly enjoyed the quiet and peace of his home life; but after a while these tame joys Ulysses' last journey. grew wearisome, and he decided to renew his wanderings. He therefore prepared a fleet, and sailed "out into the West," whence he never returned. The Greeks, however, averred that he had gone in search of the Isles of the Blest, where he dwelt in perfect peace, and enjoyed the constant society of heroes as brave and renowned as himself.

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides: and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

TENNYSON.