

TELEMACHUS.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS, in the camp of the allies, gains the friendship of Philoctetes, who was not at first favourably disposed to him, on his father's account. Philoctetes relates his adventures; and introduces a particular account of the death of Hercules, by the poisoned garment which the Centaur Nessus had given to Dejanira; he relates how he obtained from that hero his poisoned arrows, without which the city of Troy could not be taken; how he was punished for betraying his secret, by various sufferings in the island of Lemnos; and how Ulysses employed Neoptolemus to engage him in the expedition against Troy, where he was cured of his wound.

TELEMACHUS, in the mean time, was displaying his courage among the perils of war. As soon as he had quitted Salentum, he applied himself with great diligence to gain the esteem of the old commanders, whose reputation and experience were consummate. Nestor, who had before seen him at Pylos, and who had always loved Ulysses, treated him as if he had been his son; he gave him many lessons of instruction, and illustrated his precepts by examples. He related all the adventures of his youth, and told him the most remarkable achievements which he had seen performed by the heroes of the preceding age; for the memory of Nestor, who had lived to see three generations, contained the history of ancient times, with the same fidelity as an inscription upon marble or brass.

Philoctetes did not at first regard Telemachus with the same kindness: the enmity, which he had so long cherished in his breast against Ulysses, prejudiced him against his son, and he could not see without pain that the gods appeared to interest themselves in

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SUMARIO.

TELEMACHO, en el campo de los aliados, se hace querer de Filotetes, antes animado contra el por motivo de Ulises su padre. Filotetes le cuenta sus aventuras, con las particularidades de la muerte de Hercules, ocasionada por la túnica envenenada que el Centauro Neso habia dado á Dejanira. Le explica como logró de aquel heroe sus fatales saetas, sin las quales la ciudad de Troya no podia ser tomada; como fue castigado por haber revelado su secreto, por todos los males que padeció en la isla de Lemno, y como Ulises se valió de Néoptolemo para llevarle al sitio de Troya, donde curaron su herida los hijos de Esculapio.

TELEMACHO en los riesgos de la guerra daba á conocer su valor. Partido de Salento, se aplicó todo á procurar ganarse el afecto de los capitanes ancianos, los quales se tenian en gran precio, y habian alcanzado perfecta experiencia. Nestor, que ya antes le habia visto en Pilo, y siempre habia querido á Ulises, le trataba como á su propio hijo: dabale muchos documentos, que autorizaba con diversos exemplos, y contábale los sucesos de su juventud, y las mas notables acciones, que habia visto obrar á los héroes de los tiempos pasados. La memoria del sabio viejo, que habia vivido tres siglos, era como una historia de los tiempos antiguos, entallada en el mármol, ó grabada con buril en el bronce.

No tuvo Filotetes al principio la misma inclinacion de amar á Telémaco. El odio, que en su pecho habia largo tiempo alimentado contra Ulises, le hacia aborrecer tambien á su hijo; y no podia verlo, sin que se afligiera de ello algun tanto, representándose aquella

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his fortunes, and to intend him a glory equal to that of the heroes by whom Troy had been overthrown. But the unaffected modesty of Telemachus at length surmounted his resentment, and he could not but love that virtue which appeared so amiable and sweet. He frequently took him aside, and talked to him with the most unreserved confidence: « My son » said he, « for I now make no scruple to call you so, I must confess that your father and I have been long enemies to each other. I acknowledge also that my enmity was not softened by mutual danger and mutual success, for it continued unabated after we had laid Troy in ruins; and when I saw you, I found it difficult to love even virtue in the son of Ulysses; I have often reproached myself for this reluctance, which, however, I still felt: but virtue, when it is gentle, placid, ingenious, and unassuming, must at last compel affection and esteem. » Philoctetes, in the course of these conversations, was insensibly led to acquaint Telemachus with what had given rise to the animosity between him and Ulysses.

« It is necessary, » said he, « that I should tell my story from the beginning. I was the inseparable companion of Hercules, the great example of divine virtue, the destroyer of monsters, whose prowess was a blessing to the earth; and compared with whom, all other heroes are but as reeds to the oak, or sparrows to the eagle. Love, a passion that has produced every species of calamity, was the cause of his misfortunes; and his misfortunes were the cause of mine. To this shameful passion the virtues of Hercules were opposed in vain; and, after all his conquests, he was himself the sport of Cupid. He never remembered, without a blush of ingenuous shame, his having laid by his dignity, to spin in the chamber of Omphale, like the most abject and effeminate of men: he has frequently deplored this part of his life, as having sullied his virtue, and obscured the glory of his labours.

grande gloria, que se dexaba ver, que propicios los dioses disponian para aquel jóven, queriendole igualar con los héroes, que habian arruinado á la soberbia Troya. Pero venció por fin la moderacion de Telémaco los enojos de Filotetes, y no pudo éste hacer menos, que amar aquella virtud tan suave, y tan modesta. Tomaba muchas veces á Telémaco á solas, y le decia: Confiesoos hijo mio, no tengo ya reparo de llamaros con este nombre, que vuestro padre y yo hemos sido enemigos largo tiempo. Confiesoos igualmente, que desde que arruinamos la ciudad de Troya, no se habia todavia aplacado mi corazon; y que desde que os vi, he habido de pasar harta pena para llegar á amaros: mas quando es apacible la virtud, llana, ingénu y modesta, todo lo vence. Despues le descubrió la resolucion que tenia de referirle qual habia sido el motivo, que en su corazon encendió un odio tenaz contra Ulyses.

Conviene, dixo, que yo tome mi historia de muy arriba. Seguia yo por todo el grande Hércules, que descargó á la tierra de tantos monstruos, y en cuyo parangon no eran los otros héroes sino ligeras cañas, respecto de una elevada encina, ó como páxarillos, en cotejo de la aguilta. De amor se originaron sus desgracias, y por conseqüencia las mias, que es quanto se puede decir de una pasion, que causa los desórdenes mas espantosos. Hércules se hizo esclavo de esa vergonzosa aficion, y el tirano Cupido hacia burla de él. No podia aquel héroe grande acordarse, sin colorirse con la vergüenza, por haberse olvidado tanto de su gloria, que en aquel tiempo, en que fue arrebatado de un ciego afecto, habia llegado hasta á hilar al lado de Onfale, Reyna de Lidia, como el hombre mas vil y afeminado. Cien veces me confesó que esta postrera parte de su vida habia obscurecido su virtud, y casi totalmente ofuscado la gloria de sus trabajos. Sin embargo, ó Dioses! tal es la debilidad é inconstancia de los hombres, que todo lo esperan de sus propias fuerzas, y á nada resisten.

Yet, such is the weakness and inconsistency of man, who thinks himself all-sufficient, and yet yields without a struggle, the great Hercules was again taken in the snare of love, and sunk again into a captivity which he had so often remembered with indignation and contempt. He became enamoured of Deianira, and would have been happy if he had continued constant in his passion for this woman, whom he made his wife; but the youthful beauty of Iole, to whom the graces had given all their charms, soon seduced him to a new passion. Deianira became jealous, and unhappily recollected the fatal garment, which had been given her by Nessus, the Centaur, when he was dying, as a certain means of reviving the love of Hercules; if he should ever neglect her for another. This garment had imbibed the blood of the Centaur, to which the arrow that slew him had communicated its poison: for the arrows of Hercules were dipped in the blood of the Lernæan Hydra, which gave them a malignity so powerful, that the slightest wound they could make was mortal.

« As soon as Hercules had put on the garment, he felt the poison burn even to the marrow in the bone: he cried out, in his agony, with a voice more than human; the sound was returned by mount Oeta, the echo deepened in the vallies, and the sea itself seemed to be moved. The roar of the most furious bulls when they fight, was not so dreadful as the cries of Hercules. Lycas, who brought him the garment from Deianira, happening unfortunately to approach him: he seized him in the distraction of his torments, and whirling him round, as a slinger whirls a stone that he would dismiss with all his strength, he threw him from the top of the mountain; and falling into the sea, he was immediately transformed to a rock; which still retains the figure of a man, and which still beaten by the surge, alarms the pilot, while he is yet distant from the shore.

« After the fate of Lycas, I thought I could trust Hercules no more; and, therefore, endeavoured to

Ay! el grande Hercules recayó sin embargo en los lazos de amor, que tan frecuentemente habia detestado. Aficiónose de Deyanira, y hubiera sido llenamente feliz, si hubiera sido constante, amando á una muger, que fué su esposa. Bien presto le llevó el corazon la juventud del Iole, que llevaba en el rostro á todos los alhagos de la belleza. Ardió Deyanira de zelos, y acordóse de aquella fatal túnica que le dexó al morir el Centauro Neso, como un medio seguro de reavivar la Hama en el seno de Hércules, siempre que mostrara no tener de ella cuenta, por haberse preudado de alguna otra muger. ¡ Ay de mí! que empapada aquella túnica en la apesada sangre del Centauro, ocultaba el veneno de las flechas, con que el héroe grande habia atravesado aquel monstruo. Bien sabeis que las flechas de Hércules se habian teñido con la sangre de la Hidra Lernea, y que con ellas quitó la vida al pérfido Centauro, como tambien que la sangre de la Hidra habia envenenado de manera las flechas, que no tenian cura sus heridas.

Habiéndose Hércules vestido aquella túnica, percibió luego el fuego abrasador, que se le introducía en los huesos. Levantaba horrosos gritos, que estremecian al monte Oeta: hacia retumbar los mas profundos valles, y hasta el mar se sentia con ellos conmovido. Los mas furiosos toros, que combatiendo, hubieran levantado sus feroces bramidos, no hubieran hecho tan espantoso estruendo. Habiéndose arriesgado á acercarse á él el miserable Lycas, que de parte de Deyanira le ofreció aquella túnica, arrebatado de su dolor, le hizo volar al ayre, como una piedra desprendida con fuerza de la honda de un diestro tirador. Así Lycas escapó de la mano poderosa de Alcides: desde lo alto del monte cayó en las aguas del golfo, donde en el mismo punto se transformó en escollo, que conservando aun su primera figura, tiene semejanza de un hombre, y que siendo azotado continuamente del furor de las hondas, amedrenta de léjos á los pilotos mas experimentados.

Después de la desgracia de Lycas, creí que no podia fiarme mas de Hércules, y solo pensé en ocultarme

conceal myself in the caverns of the rock. From this retreat I saw him, with one hand, root up the lofty pines that towered to the sky, and oaks which had repelled the storms of successive generations; and with the other, endeavour to tear off the fatal garment which adhered like another skin, and seemed to be incorporated with his body: in proportion as he tore it off, he tore off also the flesh: his blood followed in a torrent, and the earth was impurpled round him. But his virtue at length surmounted his sense of pain, and he cried out, « Thou art witness, O Philoctetes! to the torments which the gods inflict upon me, and they are just: I have offended heaven, and violated the vows of connubial love: after all my conquests, I have meanly given up my heart to forbidden beauty: I perish, and am content to perish, that divine justice may be satisfied. But alas! my dear friend! whither art thou fled! Transported by excess of pain, I have, indeed, destroyed unhappy Lycas, by an act of cruelty for which I abhor myself: he was a stranger to the poison that he brought me; he committed no crime, he deserved no punishment. But could the sacred ties of friendship be forgotten! could I attempt the life of Philoctetes! my love for him can cease only with my life; into his breast will I breathe my departing spirit, and to his care will I confide my ashes. Where art thou, then, my dear Philoctetes? where art thou, Philoctetes, the only object of my hope on earth?»

« Struck with this tender expostulation, I rushed towards him, and he stretched out his arms to embrace me: yet, before I reached him, he drew them back, lest he should kindle in my bosom the fatal fires that consumed his own. — « Alas, » said he, « even this consolation is denied me! » He then turned from me; and collecting all the trees that he had rooted up, into a funeral pile, upon the summit of the mountain, he ascended it with a kind of dreadful tranquillity: he spread under him the skin of the Nemean lion, which, while he was traversing the earth from one extremity

en las retiradas cavernas. Veíale arrancar sin trabajo con la una mano los altos árboles, y las viejas encinas que muchos años habian despreciado el furor de las vientos, y de las tempestades, mientras que con la otra procuraba en vano desasirse la fatal túnica. Se habia pegado ella á sus espaldas, y como incorporádose con sus miembros: quanto rompía de ella, otro tanto destrozaba su piel y su carne, y brotaba de aquellos trozos en gran copia la sangre, como en arroyos, que regaban la tierra mas vecina. Finalmente: quedando contrastada del dolor su virtud, tú ves, mi querido Filotetes, exclamó, los males que los dioses me hacen padecer: ellos son justos, porque han sido de mí ofendidos, que he violado el amor conyugal. Despues de haber vencido á tantos enemigos, me he dexado vencer vilmente del amor de una extraña beldad. Yo muero, yo muero contentísimo para aplacar la cólera de los dioses. ¡ Mas ay de mí! ¿ Donde huyes, amantísimo amigo? El exceso de mi dolor me ha hecho executar, es así, una crueldad contra el mísero Licas, la qual yo mismo llevo ahora mal. No supo el veneno que me ofrecia, ni era digno de la desgracia, que ha tenido á mis manos. ¿ Pero piensas tú que me puedo olvidar de aquel amor que tengo obligación de tenerle, y que te quiera quitar la vida? No, no: jamas será verdad, que dexé de amar Hércules á Filotetes. Filotetes acogerá en su seno mi espíritu, que está á punto de volar á otra esfera: Filotetes recogerá mis cenizas. ¿ Dónde estas, pues, mi amado Filoteles? ¡ Filotetes, la única esperanza que me queda sobre la tierra!

A éstas palabras me dí priesa de correr á encontrarle, y él extendió los brazos para apretarme amorosamente; pero le detuvo el temor de encender en mi seno aquel fuego cruel, de que él mismo se sentia abrasar. ¡ Ay de mí! dixo: yo no oso abrazarte, ni aun se me concede este ligero alivio. Hablando de esta forma, juntó todos los árboles que habia abatido antes: construyó de ellos una pira en la cumbre del monte, y subió sobre ella tranquilamente: tendió la piel del leon Neméo, con la qual tanto tiempo habia cubierto sus hombros, quando andaba por todo el mundo á destrozár

to the other, destroying monsters, and succouring distress, he had worn as a mantle; and reclining upon his club, he commanded me to set fire to the wood.

This command, though I trembled with horror, I could not refuse to obey; for his misery was so great, that life was no longer a bounty of heaven: and I feared, that in the extremity of his torment, he might do something unworthy of the virtue which had astonished the world. «When he perceived that the pile had taken fire, «Now,» said he, «my dear Philoctetes! I know that thy friendship is sincere: for my honour is dearer to thee than my life; may thy reward be from heaven! I give thee all I can bestow: these arrows, dipped in the blood of the Lernaean Hydra, I valued more than all that I possessed; and they are thine. Thou knowest, that the wounds which they make are mortal; they rendered me invincible, and so they will render thee; nor will any man dare to lift up his hand against thee. Remember that I die faithful to our friendship, and forget not how close I held thee to my heart. If thou art, indeed, touched with my misfortunes, there is still one consolation in thy power; promise to acquaint no man with my death, and never to reveal the place where thou shalt hide my ashes.» I promised, in an agony of tenderness and grief, and I consecrated my promise by an oath. A beam of joy sparkled in his eyes; but a sheet of flame immediately surrounded him, stifled his voice, and almost hid him from my sight: I caught, however, a glimpse of him through the flame, and I perceived that his countenance was as serene as if he had been surrounded with festivity and joy at the banquet of a friend, covered with perfume, and crowned with flowers.

«The flames quickly consumed his terrestrial and mortal part: of that nature which he had received from his mother Alcmena, there were no remains; but he preserved, by the decree of Jove, that pure and immortal essence, that celestial flame, the true prin-

los monstruos, y librar á los infelices: apoyóse sobre su clava, y mandóme aplicar fuego á la pira.

No pudieron mis manos temerosas y sorprendidas de un repentino horror, negarle este obsequio cruel: porque ya la vida no le era dádiva y gracia del cielo: tanto el vivir le era funesto, y de extremada pena. Temi tambien, que del dolor excesivo se dexase de suerte arrebatarse, que hiciera alguna cosa indigna de aquella virtud, que habia dexado asombrado al mundo. Quando vió que la llama ya se empezaba á prender en la pira: Ahora sí, mi querido Filoctetes, exclamó, que hago prueba de tu verdadera amistad; porque eres mas amante de mi honor, que de mi misma vida; ruego á los dioses que te den ellos el galardón. Para tí dexo esas flechas, teñidas en la sangre de la Hidra de Lerna, que son lo mas precioso que tengo acá en el mundo. Bien sabes, que sus heridas son incurables; así te harán invencible, como lo he sido yo, ni habrá alguno que se atreva á pelear contigo. Acuerdate que muero fiel á nuestra amistad, y no olvides jamas quan crecido sea el amor que te he tenido siempre. Si es verdad que tu corazón siente alguna piedad de mis males, bien puedes darme por último un consuelo; prométeme no descubrir jamas á persona ni mi muerte, ni el sitio en donde se ocultaren mis cenizas. ¡Ay de mí! yo se lo prometí, y aun á mas de eso se lo juré, bafiando con mis lágrimas la pira. Brilló en aquel momento en sus ojos un rayo de alegría: pero en otro instante, un tropel de llamas, que le embistió de todos los costados, le ahogó dentro las fauces la voz, y me le hizo casi del todo perder de vista. Yo sin embargo le miraba aun al traves de las llamas con rostro tan sereno, como si estuviera en medio de la tropa de sus amigos cubierto de perfumes, y coronado de flores, entre las alegrías de un regalado convite.

Luego le consumieron las llamas todo lo que tenía de terreno y mortal en sí mismo; y bien presto no le quedó nada de lo que de su madre Alcmena habia recibido en su nacimiento; mas conservó por orden del padre omnipotente aquella delicada é inmortal

ciple of life which he had received from the father of the gods; therefore, he drank immortally under the golden roofs of Olympus, and they gave him Hebe to wife; the lovely Hebe, the goddess of Youth, who had filled the bowl of nectar to Jupiter, before that honour was bestowed upon Ganymede.

« In the mean time, the arrows that had been given me as a pledge of superior prowess and fame, proved an inexhaustible source of misfortune. When the confederate princes of Greece undertook to revenge the wrong done to Menelaus by Paris, who had basely stolen away Helen, and to lay the kingdom of Priam in ruins, they learned from the oracle of Apollo, that in this enterprise they would never succeed, if they did not take with them the arrows of Hercules.

« Your father Ulysses, whose penetration and activity rendered him superior in every council, undertook to persuade me to accompany them to the siege of Troy; and to take the arrows of Hercules, which he believed to be in my possession, with me. It was now long since Hercules had appeared in the world; no exploit of the hero was related; and monsters and robbers began to appear with impunity. The Greeks knew not what opinion to form concerning him; some affirmed that he was dead; others, that he was gone to subdue the Scythians under the frozen bear; but Ulysses maintained that he was dead, and engaged to make me confess it. He came to me, while I was still lamenting the loss of my illustrious friend with inconsolable sorrow; he found it extremely difficult to speak to me, for I avoided the sight of mankind; I could not think of quitting the deserts of mount Oeta, where I had been witness to the death of Alcides: and was wholly employed in forming his image in my mind, and weeping at the remembrance of his sufferings, which every view of these mournful places renewed. But, upon the lips of your father, there was a sweet and irresistible eloquence: he seemed to take an equal part in my affliction, and when I wept, he wept with me; he gained upon my heart by an insensible approach, and he obtained my confidence even

naturaléza; aquel fuego celeste, que es verdadera causa de la vida, y que le habia dado el mismo Jove. De esta manera fué Hércules á vivir inmortal felizmente en el cielo entre les dioses, donde le dieron ellos por esposa á la apreciable Ebe, que es la diosa de la juventud, y servia el néctar á Jupiter, antes que Ganímedes mereciere este honor.

Respecto á mí, las flechas que él me dió para que me sirvieran de exceder á los heroes en la gloria, me fueron el origen de males y dolores infinitos. Dispusieron de allí á poco los Reyes coligados abatir la potencia de Priamo, y tomar venganza por Menelao del infame Paris, que le habia robado su esposa. Declaróles el Oraculo de Apolo, que no tenian que tener esperanza de concluir felizmente la guerra menos que no tuvieran las flechas de Hércules.

Ulises vuestro padre, que era el mas advertido en dar consejos, y el mas industrioso en ponerlos por obra, tomó el encargo de persuadirme, que fuera al asedio de Troya en su compañía, y que llevara las flechas, que se persuadia de cierto estar en mi poder. Ya habia mucho tiempo que Hércules no se veia en el mundo; no se oia ya hablar de alguna nueva empresa de aquel héroe, y comenzaban de nuevo a parecer los monstruos y los malvados. No sabian los Griegos qué creerse: unos decian que habia muerto; y otros aseguraban que habia ido al elado Septentrion á alguna grande hazaña; pero Ulises mantuvo que habia muerto, y se metió en la idea de hacermelo decir. Vino pues á encontrarme en tiempo en que yo aun no podia consolarme de la pérdida del grande Alcides. Pasó mucho trabajo para acercarse á mí, porque aborrecia la vista de qualquier hombre. Sentia sumo disgusto en que otro me quisiera sacar de los desiertos del monte Oeta, donde habia visto morir á mi amantísimo amigo: ni me aplicaba á otro, que á representarme de nuevo con el pensamiento la imágen de aquel héroe, y llorar á la vista de aquellos sitios tan funestos, y melancolicos. Pero vuestro padre tenia en sus labios el arte poderosa, y suave de persuadir. Mostró un dolor, poco ménos que igual al mio: derramó lagrimas: supo ganarse insensiblemente mi corazon, y adquiri-

before I knew it. He interested my tenderness for the Grecian princes, who had undertaken a just war, in which, without me, they could not be successful: he could not, however, draw from me the secret that I had sworn to keep; but though I did not confess it, he had sufficient evidence that Hercules was dead, and he pressed me to tell him where I had concealed his ashes.

« I could not think of perjury without horror: and yet, alas! I eluded the vow that I had made to Hercules and to heaven. I discovered the place where I had deposited the remains of the hero by striking it with my foot; and the gods have punished me for the fraud. I then joined the confederates, who received me with as much joy as they would have received Hercules himself. When we were on shore at the island of Lemnos, I was willing to show the Greeks what my arrows would do; and, therefore, prepared to shoot a deer, which I saw rush into the forest; but, by some accident, I let the shaft slip out of my hand, and falling on my foot, it gave me a wound, of which I still feel the effects. I was immediately seized with the same pains that had destroyed Hercules, and the echoes of the island repeated my complaints day and night. A black and corrupted blood flowed incessantly from my wound, infected the air, and filled the camp with an intolerable stench: the whole army was struck with horror at my condition, and concluded it to be the just punishment of the gods.

« Ulysses, who had engaged me in the expedition, was the first to abandon me, as I have since learned, because he preferred victory and the common interest of Greece, to private friendship and the punctilios of decorum. The horror of my wound, the infection that it spread, and the dreadful cries that it forced from me, produced such an effect upon the army, that it was no longer possible to sacrifice in the camp. But when the Greeks abandoned me by the counsel of Ulysses, I considered his policy as the most aggravated

rirse mi confianza, y me movió á compasion de los Reyes de Grecia, que iban á pelear por una causa justa, y que sin mí no podian tener feliz suceso. No pudo sin embargo jamas sacarme de la boca el secreto de la muerte de Hércules, que yo habia jurado no declarar: pero Ulises no la dudaba, y requeriamme con instancia, para que le dixera el lugar en que habia ocultado sus cenizas.

« Desdichado de mí! Temí hacerme perjuro, diciéndole un secreto, que habia ofrecido al cielo no descubrir jamas; y fui de ánimo ligero, que me induxe á burlar, y á hacer vano mi juramento, no teniendo osadía de violarlo. Pero los dioses me diéron el castigo de mi culpa. Herí con el pie aquel lugar en que habia ocultado las cenizas de Hércules, fui despues á encontrar los Reyes coligados, y ellos me recibieron con la alegría misma, con que hubieran podido recibir á Alcides. Al pasar por la Isla de Lemnos quise mostrar á todos los Griegos lo que podian obrar mis flechas, poniendome en parage de atravesar un ciervo, que se emboscaba. Inadvertido me dexé caer la flecha del arco, ya flechado, sobre un pie, y ella me hizo una herida, cuyo dolor aun siento; y percibi al instante aquellas mismas ansias, que habia padecido primero Hércules mismo. Llenaba noche y dia toda la isla con mis suspiros; y la negra y podrida sangre, que brotaba en la llaga, inficionaba el ayre, y esparcia un hedor en todo el campo Griego, que bastaria á ahogar los hombres mas robustos. Horroricé á todo el ejército viéndome en aquella suma desdicha, y concluyéron todos, que mi mal era pena enviada de los dioses justicieros á castigar mi culpa.

Ulises, que me habia persuadido partir para la guerra, fué el primero en dexarme. Bien coroci despues que habia obrado así, porque anteponia el comun interes de Grecia, y la victoria, que pretendian los coligados á todas las razones de la amistad ó de la conveniencia particular. Los Griegos no podian sacrificar mas en el campo: tal turbacion causaban en el ejército la infeccion de mi herida, el horror producido de ella en todos los ánimos de los que la miraban, y la violencia de mis alaridos. Pero en aquel momento,

inhumanity, and the basest breach of faith: I was blinded by prejudice and self-love; and did not perceive that the wisest men were most against me, and that the gods themselves were become my enemies.

« I remained, during almost the whole time that Troy was besieged, alone, without succour, without consolation, without hope; the victim of intolerable anguish, in a desolate island, where I saw no object but the rude productions of uncultivated nature, and heard only the roaring of the surge that was broken against the rocks. In one of the mountains of this desert, I found a cavern; the summit, which towered to the skies, was divided into a fork; and, at the bottom, was a spring of clear water. This cavern, my only dwelling, was the retreat of wild beasts of various kinds, to whose fury I was exposed night and day: I gathered a few leaves into an heap for my bed; and my whole possessions were a wooden vessel of the rudest workmanship, and a few tattered garments, which I wrapped round my wound to staunch the blood, and used also to clean it. In this place, forsaken of man, and hateful to the gods, I sometimes endeavoured to suspend the sense of my misery by shooting at the pigeons and other birds that flew round the rock: When I had brought one to the ground, I crawled with great pain and difficulty to take it up, that it might serve me for food; and thus, my own hands provided me subsistence.

« The Greeks, indeed, left me some provisions, when they quitted the island; but these were soon exhausted. I dressed such as I procured, at a fire which I kindled by striking a flint; and this kind of life; rude and forlorn as it was, would not have been displeasing to me, the ingratitude and perfidy of man having reconciled me to solitude, if it had not been for the pain that I endured from my wound, and the

en que por consejo de Ulises me vi desamparado de todos los Griegos, me pareció esta política llena de la mas horrorosa inhumanidad, y de la traicion mas malvada. ¡ Desdichado de mí! Estaba ciego, y no prevenia, que era mucha razon, que los hombres mas sábios se me hicieran contrarios, á imitacion de los dioses, á quienes con mis culpas habia provocado á indignacion.

Casi todo aquel tiempo que duro él asedio de Troya, quedé solo, sin socorro, sin esperanza, sin alivio; abandonado á dolores horribles en aquella isla despo- blada é inculta, donde no escuchaba otro, que el es- truendo que las ondas hacian, viniéndose a romper contra los escollos. Hallé en aquel desierto una ca- verna, formada de una peña, que levantaba al cielo dos puntas semejantes á dos cabezas; de cuyos peñas- cos brotaba una apacible fuente de cristalinas aguas. Era aquella caverna albergue de las fieras; y por eso continuamente estaba yo arriesgado a quedar hecho presa de su furor. Recogí algunas hojas para echarme en ellas; y todas las riquezas, que me habian quedado era un vaso grosero de madera, sin primor trabajado, y algunos destrozados, que me servian de abrigar mi herida, para restañar la sangre, que de ella me corria, y limpiarla de su hediondez. Allí desamparado de los hombres, y dexado a la cólera de los dioses, pasaba el tiempo en atravesar las ligeras palomas con mis sae- tas, y las diversas aves que volaban en torno de aquella roca. Quando habia muerto alguna ave para que me sirviera de alimento, y conservar la vida, era me- nester, que á pesar del dolor, fuera arrastrando sobre mis pies; y manos á recoger la presa; y de esta suerte me servian mis manos lo que era necesario á mi sustento.

Es verdad que al partirse, me dexaron los Griegos alguna provision de viandas, pero la consumí en poco tiempo. Encendia fuego de algunos pedernales; y no obstante, si no me hubiera oprimido el dolor, y no me hubiera continuamente traído á la memoria mi funesta desgracia una tal vida, por mas que fuera horrible, me hubiera parecido suave, léjos de los hombres ingratos, y engañadores. ¡ Qué modo es este

perpetual review of my singular misfortunes. «What!» said I to myself, «seduce a man from his country, upon pretence that he alone can avenge the cause of Greece; and then leave him in an uninhabited island, when he is asleep! for I was asleep when the Greeks deserted me: and you may judge in what an agony of consternation and grief I awaked, and saw their fleet standing from the shore. I looked round me, to find some gleam of comfort; but all was desolation and despair

« This island had neither port nor commerce; and was not only without inhabitants, but without visitors, except such as came by force. As no man set foot on the shore, but those who were driven there by tempests, I could hope for society only by shipwreck; and I knew, that if distress should force any unfortunate mariners upon the island, they would not dare to take me with them when they left it, lest they should incur the resentment, not of the Greeks only, but the gods. I suffered remorse, and pain, and hunger, ten years; I languished with a wound that I could not cure; and hope itself was extinguished in my breast.

« One day, as I returned from seeking some medicinal herbs for my wound, I was surprised to find, at the entrance of my cave, a young man of a graceful appearance, but a lofty and heroic port. I took him, at the first glance, for Achilles, whom he greatly resembled in his features, aspect, and deportment; and I was convinced of my mistake only by his age. I observed that his whole countenance expressed perplexity and compassion: he was touched to see with what pain and difficulty I crawled along; and his heart melted at my complaints; which the echoes of the shore returned.

« I called out, while I was yet at a distance, « O stranger! what misfortune has cast thee upon this island, forsaken of men? I know thy habit to be Grecian! an habit, which, in spite of my wrongs, I love. O! let me hear thy voice; and once more find, upon thy lips, that language which I learned in infancy,

de proceder? decia entre mí mismo: sacar á un hombre del seno de su patria, como al único que pudiera vengar la Grecia, y despues, miéntras duerme, abandonarlo en esta isla desierta? Sabed, pues, que se partiéron los Griegos miéntras que yo dormia. Juzgad cómo quedaria asombrado, y qué lágrimas verteria en despertándome, viendo los baxeles, que sulcando los mares, se iban alejando de Lemnos. ¡ Infelice de mí! buscando á todas partes de aquella isla erizada y horrible, no hallé sino al dolor.

No hay puerto en ella, ni comercio, ni albergue, ni hombre que allá se llegué voluntario: no se advierten allí otros, que los que haya arrojado una tormenta; ni alguno puede esperar compañía, sino la que le ofrecen los naufragios, que indultan á los hombres con pension de vivir muchas veces como fieras. Y aun los que se acercaban á aquel lugar, no osaban recibirme en sus naves para restituirme á la patria; porque temian de provocar no ménos que el enojo de los dioses, el de los Griegos contra sí propios. Hacia ya diez años que padecia el dolor y la hambre: que alimentaba una llaga que me consumia; y que en mi corazon habia fenecido aun la esperanza.

De improviso volviendo de buscar ciertas yervas medicinales que me suavizaban la herida, ví en mi caverna á un jóven agraciado y galan, de un espíritu vivo, y de la estatura de un héroe. Parecióme al mirarle el mismo Aquiles: tan del todo le semejaba en las facciones, en el mirar y andar; solamente la edad me hizo entender que no podia ser él. Advertí que en su rostro se descubrian dos diversos afectos, la compasion, y juntamente la perplexidad. Viendo con qué trabajo, y con qué lentitud me arrastraba á mi propio, se movió á la piedad de mi desgracia, y le enternecieron el corazon los dolorosos y agudos gritos, con los quales hacia resonar la playa.

¡ Qué desventura, le dixé, ó forastero, te ha conducido á esta isla no habitada? Conozco bien el traje de Griego: traje á quien todavia estimo tanto. ¡ O con quánta impaciencia deseo oír tu voz, y hallar en tu boca el idioma que aprendí en mi niñez, y del qual ha tan largo tiempo que no he podido usar en