

TELEMACHUS.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS being persuaded, by several dreams, that his father Ulysses was no longer alive, executes his design of seeking him among the dead: he retires from the camp, and is followed by two Cretians as far as a temple near the celebrated cavern of Acherontia; he enters it, and descends through the gloom to the borders of the Styx, where Charon takes him into his boat; he presents himself before Pluto, who, in obedience to superior powers, permits him to seek his father: he passes through Tartarus, and is witness to the torments that are inflicted upon ingratitude, perjury, impiety, hypocrisy, and above all upon bad kings.

ADRASTUS, whose troops had been considerably diminished by the battle, retired behind mount Aulon; where he expected a reinforcement, and watched for another opportunity of surprising the allies. Thus, a hungry lion, who has been repulsed from the fold, retires into the gloomy forest, enters again into his den, and waits for some favourable moment, when he may destroy the whole flock.

Telemachus, having established an exact discipline among the troops, turned his mind entirely to the execution of a design, which, though he had formed a considerable time, he had wholly concealed from the commanders of the army. He had been long disturbed in the night by dreams, in which he saw his father Ulysses. The vision never failed to return at the end of the night; just before the approach of Aurora, with her prevailing fires, to chase from heaven the doubtful radiance of the stars, and from earth the pleasing delusions of sleep. Sometimes he thought he saw Ulysses naked upon the banks of a river, in a

TELÉMACO.

LIBRO XVIII.

SUMARIO.

TELÉMACO, persuadido por varios sueños que su padre Ulises ya no vive, executa su designio de irle á buscar á los infiernos. Sale furtivamente del campo, seguido por dos Cretenses hasta un templo junto á la famosa caverna de Achéroncia. Entra en ella, por medio de las tinieblas, llega á la orilla del Estige, y Caron le recibe en su barco. Vase á presentar delante de Pluton, que halla dispuesto á darle licencia para buscar á su padre. Atraviesa el Tártaro, donde vé los tormentos que sufren los ingratos, los perjuros, los hipócritas, y, sobre todo, los malos reyes.

EN este tiempo Adrasto, cuyas milicias en el primer combate se habian disminuido notablemente, se habia retirado detras del monte Aulon, esperando socorros de varias gentes, para procurar sorprender otra vez á sus enemigos; como un leon hambriento, que rechazado de una majada, se vuelve á los bosques oscuros, y se entra en su caverna, donde afila los dientes, esperando oportuno lance para destrozár el ganado.

Despues de haberse aplicado Telémaco á dar á todo el ejército una perfecta norma de militar disciplina, no pensó en nada mas que en efectuar una idea, que habia concebido en su ánimo, y que no declaró á ninguno de los capitanes. Ya hacia largo tiempo, que todas las noches se hallaba inquieto de ciertos sueños, que le representaban á su padre Ulises. Esta imagen de Ulises volvía siempre al fenecer la noche, ántes que llegara la aurora con sus recientes luces á despejar del cielo las estrellas, y de la tierra el apacible sueño, y las apariencias ligeras, que les acompañan. Ahora le parecia que lo veía desnudo en una isla afor-

flowery meadow of some blissful island, surrounded by nymphs, who threw clothes to cover him within his reach: sometimes he thought he saw him in a palace, that shone with ivory and gold; where a numerous audience, crowned with flowers, listened to his eloquence with delight and admiration: he sometimes appeared suddenly among the guests at a magnificent banquet, where joy shone upon every countenance; and the soft melody of a voice, accompanied by the lyre, gave sweeter music than the lyre of Apollo, and the voices of the Nine.

From these pleasing dreams, Telemachus always awaked dejected and sorrowful, and while one of them was recent upon his mind, he cried out, « O my father! O my dear father Ulysses! the most frightful dreams would be more welcome to me than these. These representations of felicity convince me, that thou art already descended to the abodes of those happy spirits whom the gods reward, for their virtue, with everlasting rest: I think I behold the fields of Elysium! How dreadful is the loss of hope! Must I then, O my father, see thee no more for ever! Must I no more embrace him, to whom I was so dear, and whom I seek with such tender solicitude and persevering labour? Shall I no more drink wisdom from his lips! Shall I kiss those hands, those dear, those victorious hands, which have subdued so many enemies, no more! Shall they never punish the presumptuous suitors of Penelope! and shall the glory of Ithaca be never restored! « You, ye gods, who are unpropitious to Ulysses, have sent these dreams, to expel the last hope from my breast, and leave me to despair and death! I can no longer endure this dreadful suspense. Alas! what have I said? of the death of my father I am but too certain. I will then seek his shade in the world below. To those awful regions, Theseus descended in safety; yet Theseus, with the most horrid impiety, sought only to violate the deities of the place: my motive, the love of my father, is consistent with my duty to the gods. Hercules also descended and returned: I pretend not, indeed, to his prowess; but, without it, I dare to imitate his example.

tunada, á la margen de un rio, en un prado adornado de flores, y rodeado de Ninfas que le servian ropas con que cubrirse: ahora le parecia oirlo hablar en un palacio de marfil y oro, todo resplandeciente, donde con gran gusto le oian, y admiraban diferentes hombres todos coronados de flores. Frequentemente le parecia repentinamente mirar á Ulises en algunos convites, donde la alegría brillaba entre las delicias, y donde se escuchaba la harmonía suave de una voz acordada con una lira, que excedia á la lira de Apolo, y á las voces de todas las musas en la dulzura.

Telémaco se entristecía de estos apacibles sueños. ¡ Padre mio! ¡ querido padre mio! exclamaba: mas gratos me serian estos sueños, si ellos fueran mas espantosos. Estas representaciones de felicidad me hacen comprender, que habeis baxado ya á la mansion de las almas dichosas, que son remuneradas de los dioses por su virtud con un eterno descanso. Ya me parece que se abren los campos Elisios, y se me representan á la vista. ¡ O que violenta pena el no tener mas esperanza! ¡ jamas estrecharé entre mis brazos á quien me amaba tanto, á quien voy buscando con tan gran cuidado! ¡ Nunca, pues, oiré hablar á aquella boca, de donde salian palabras tan sabias y juiciosas! ¡ Nunca besaré aquellas preciosas, y victoriosas manos que han abatido á tantos enemigos! ¡ No castigarán ellas á los necios amantes de Penélope, ni podrá nuestra patria recobrase mas de aquel estado misero en que ha caido! Vos me enviáis estos sueños funestos, ó dioses enemigos de mi padre, para sacarme del corazon toda mi esperanza. Esto es acabarme la vida; porque no puedo vivir en tanta incertidumbre. ¿ Pero qué digo? ¡ Ah que demasiado me aseguro, que ya Ulises no vive! Ya me prevengo á buscar su espíritu, hasta en el abismo. Allá baxó Teséo: Teséo, aquel malvado que queria ultrajar los dioses infernales; y no tengo yo otro motivo, que allá me guie que el de la piedad, y el amor á un padre. Allá tambien el gran Alcides: yo no soy Hércules; mas no es pequeña gloria tener bastante esfuerzo para imitarlo. Pudo tambien Orfeo mover el corazon de aquel dios, que los hombres llaman inexorable, contándole sus

Orpheus, by the recital of his misfortunes, softened into pity that deity, who was thought to be inexorable; and obtained permission for the return of Eurydice to the world of life; I am more worthy of compassion than Orpheus; the loss that I have sustained is greater than his; for what is a youthful beauty, to whom a thousand youthful beauties are equal, in comparison of the great Ulysses, unrivalled and alone the admiration and the pride of Greece! The attempt shall be made; and if I perish, I perish. Why should death be dreadful, when life is wretched! I come, then, O Pluto! O Proserpine! to prove, whether ye are, indeed, without pity. O my father! having traversed the earth and the seas, in vain, to find thee: I will now seek thee among the gloomy dwellings of the dead. If the gods will not permit me to possess thee upon the earth, and enjoy with thee the light of heaven; they may, perhaps, vouchsafe me the sight of thy shade, by the dim twilight of the realms of darkness!

He immediately rose from the bed, which he had bedewed with his tears; and hoped that the cheerful light of the morning would have dissipated the melancholy that he suffered from the dreams of the night: he found, however, that the shaft which had pierced him, was still in the wound; and that he carried it with him, whithersoever he went.

He determined, therefore, to descend into hell, by a celebrated avenue, not far from the camp. This avenue was near a city called Acherontia, from a dreadful cavern that led down to the banks of Acheron, an infernal river, which the gods themselves attest with reverence and dread. The city was built upon the summit of a rock, like a nest upon the top of a tree. At the foot of the rock was the cavern, which no man ventured to approach: the shepherds were always careful to turn their flocks another way; and the sulphureous vapour that exhaled, by this aperture, from the Stygian fens, contaminated the air with a pestilential malignity: the neighbouring soil produced neither herb, nor flower: and in this place, the gentle gales of the zephyr, the rising beauties of the spring,

desgracias, y alcanzó de él, que permitiera á Euridice volver al mundo. Yo merezco mas compasion que Orfeo, porque mi pérdida es mucho mayor. ¿Quién podrá cotejar una juventud, que es como las demas, con el sabio Ulyses, admirado de toda Grecia? Vamos, pues, muramos, si es que importa: ¿Para qué tener miedo á la muerte, quando se padecen viviendo tantas penas? Probaré dentro de bien poco, ó Pluton, ó Proserpina, si sois tan desapiadados, como se dice. Despues de haber corrido vanamente la tierra y mar, para encontraros, quiero reconocer, ó amado Ulyses, ó padre mio, si por ventura estais en las habitaciones obscuras de los muertos. Ya que no me conceden los dioses poseeros sobre la tierra y á la luz del sol, me permitiran por ventura ver vuestra ánima en el reyno lóbrego de las tinieblas y de la noche.

Diciendo estas palabras, bañaba con lágrimas Telémaco todo su lecho; levantándose luego de dormir, con la luz del dia procuraba buscar algún alivio á aquel penetrante dolor, que tales sueños le ocasionaban. Pero él era una flecha, que le habia pasado los senos delicados del corazon, la qual llevaba consigo adonde quiera que iba.

Estádo angustiado de una tan grande pena, se dispuso á baxar al infierno por un lugar célebre, poco léjos del campo. Llamábase aquel lugar Aqueroncia; porque se hallaba en él una caverna horrible, por donde se baxaba á la tierra del rio Aqueronte, por quien temian jurar los dioses. Estaba la ciudad plantada sobre una roca, como un nido sobre la copa de un árbol. Al pie de la roca se hallaba la caverna, á la qual temerosos los hombres no se osan llegar, y los pastores cuidaban de alejar de ella su ganado. Apeataban el ayre los vapores sulfúreos de la laguna Estigia, que por aquella boca se exálaban continuamente. Al contorno de ella no crecia la yerba ni flores; nunca se percibian allí los suaves zéfiros, ni dexaba allí ver la primavera sus recientes bellezas, ni sus preciosos dones

and the rich gifts of autumn, were alike unknown. The ground was thirsty and sterile; and presented nothing to the eye but a few naked shrubs, and the cyprus clothed with a funereal green. In the fields that surrounded it, even at a distance, Ceres denied her golden harvests to the plough; Bacchus never gave the delicious fruit which he seemed to promise; for the grapes withered, instead of ripening, upon the tree. The Naiads mourned: and the waters of their urn flowed not with a gentle and translucent wave, but were bitter to the taste, and impenetrable to the eye. Thorns and brambles here covered the ground; and as there was no grove for shelter, there were no birds to sing: their strains of love were warbled beneath a milder sky; and here nothing was to be heard but the hoarse croaking of the raven, and the boding screams of the owl. The very herbage of the field was bitter; and the flocks of these joyless pastures felt not the pleasing impulse that makes them bound upon the green: the bull turned from the heifer, and the dejected shepherd forgot the music of his pipe.

A thick black smoke frequently issued from the cavern, in a cloud that covered the earth with untimely darkness in the midst of the day; at these seasons, the neighbouring people doubled their sacrifices, to propitiate the infernal gods; yet the infernal gods were frequently inexorable; and would accept no sacrifice, but youth in its sweetest bloom, and manhood in its ripest vigour, which they cut off by a fatal contagion.

In this place, Telemachus resolved to seek the way that led down to the dark dominions of Pluto. Minerva, who watched over him with incessant care, and covered him with her ægis, had rendered Pluto propitious: and at her request, Jupiter himself had commissioned Mercury, who descends daily to the infernal regions, to deliver a certain number of the dead to Charon, to tell the sovereign of the shades, it was his pleasure that Telemachus should be permitted to enter his dominions.

Telemachus withdrew, secretly, from the camp in the night; and going on by the light of the moon, he

el otoño. La seca tierra estaba sin cultura, y solamente se advertían, junto con algunos arbolillos sin hojas, algunos funestos cipreses. Por todo su circuito, aun lejos de la caverna, negaba sus doradas cosechas la tierra al pobre labrador. Parecía que en vano prometían las vides en aquel sitio sus dulces frutos: los racimos en vez de madurar se secaban. Eran sucias todas las fuentes, y eran siempre amargas, siempre turbias sus aguas. No llegaba á cantar algun páxaro en aquella tierra erizada de zarzales y espinas, ni hallaban bosquecillos en ella adonde retirarse. Iban los páxaros á cantar sus amores baxo un cielo mas apacible; y en aquel parage tan solo se sentían los buhos, y el graznar de los cuervos. La misma yerba era allí amarga, y los ganados que la pacían, no sentían aquel gustoso recreo que les hace pastar por la campaña. Huía el toro de la vaca; y abatido el pastor, no se acordaba de gayta ni flauta.

Salía de aquella caverna de quando en quando un humo espeso y obscuro, que á la hora de medio dia formaba cierta especie de noche. Entónces los pueblos vecinos, para aplacar los dioses del infierno, redoblaban los sacrificios; pero frecuentemente las victimas, que aquellos crueles dioses tenían gusto de sacrificar con un funesto contagio, eran los hombres en la flor de su edad, y en su mas tierna juventud.

Allí Telémaco resolvió buscar el camino que llevaba al infierno. Minerva, que tenía cuidado continuo de él, y le cubria con la Egide, habia hecho á Pluton propicio á sus designios; y el mismo Júpiter movió de los ruegos de la diosa, habia ordenado á Mercurio, que para entregar á Pluton cierto número de hombres baxa cada dia al infierno, que dixera á aquel dios que permitiera al hijo de Ulises poder entrar en su Reyno.

Alejóse Telémaco á la noche del campo sin ser notado. Caminaba á la luz de la luna, é invocaba á

invoked that powerful divinity, who, in heaven, the radiant planet of the night, upon earth the chaste Diana and the tremendous Hecate in hell: the goddess heard his prayer, and accepted it: for she knew that his heart was upright, and his intention pious. As he drew near to the cavern, he heard the subterraneous empire roar: the earth trembled under his feet, and the heavens seemed to rain down fire upon his head. A secret horror thrilled to his heart, and his limbs were covered with a cold sweat: yet, his fortitude sustained him; and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, «Great Gods,» said he, «I accept these omens, and believe them to be happy; fulfil them, and confirm my hope!» «His breast glowed with new ardour as he spoke, and he rushed forward to the mouth of the pit.

The thick smoke which rendered it fatal to all that approached it, immediately disappeared; and the pestilential stench was, for a while, suspended. He entered the cavern alone; for who would have dared to follow him? Two Cretans, to whom he had communicated his design, and who accompanied him part of the way, remained, pale and trembling, in a temple at some distance, putting up prayers for his deliverance, but despairing of his return.

Telemachus, in the mean time, plunged into the tremendous darkness before him, having his sword drawn in his hand. In a few minutes he perceived a feeble and dusky light, like that which is seen at midnight upon the earth: he could also distinguish airy shades that fluttered round him, which he dispersed with his sword: and soon after he discovered the mournful banks of the Styx, whose waters, polluted by the marsh they cover, move slowly in a sullen stream, that returns in perpetual eddies upon itself. Here he perceived an innumerable multitude of those, who, having been denied the rites of sepulture, presented themselves to inexorable Charon in vain. Charon, whose old age, though vigorous and immortal, is always gloomy and severe, kept them back with

aquella poderosa deidad, que siendo astro brillante en el cielo, es juntamente casta Diana en la tierra, y Ecate formidable en el abismo. Escuchó la diosa favorablemente sus votos, porque salian de un puro corazon, y porque era llevado Telémaco del amor y piedad, que á un padre son debidas. Apenas se halló cerca de la entrada de la caverna, quando sintió bramar el infierno. Temblábale la tierra baxo los pies, y todo el cielo se armó de relámpagos, y de rayos, los quales parecia que de lo alto se baxaban á tierra. Sintió entónces palparle en el pecho el corazon, y cubrióse su cuerpo de un hielo; pero mantúvose con su esfuerzo. Levantó los ojos al cielo, y levantó las manos gritando: Acepto, ó grande dios, estos agüeros que tengo para mí por felices: conducid á buen término vuestra obra, dixo: y apresurando el paso, osadamente prosiguió adelante.

Disipóse al instante aquel espeso humo que hacia funesta la entrada de la caverna á todos los vivientes que se le acercaban, y cesó por algun espacio el pestilente hedor que de allí salia. Entró por ella solo Telémaco; porque ¿quién hubiera tenido aliento para seguirle? Dos Cretenses, que hasta cierta distancia de la caverna le habian acompañado, y á quienes habia él descubierto su pensamiento, se quedaron temblando harto á la larga, y casi medio muertos, rogando por él en un templo, y sin esperanza ninguna de volverle á ver.

Entre tanto se entró el hijo de Ulises en aquellas horribles tinieblas con la espada en la mano; y apenas dió algunos pasos, comenzó á vislumbrar una escaza luz, y entre obscura, como la que suele de noche verse en el mundo. Reparó entónces unas ligeras sombras que le andaban volando al rededor, y las iba ahuyentando con la espada. Luego se le puso delante un pantanoso rio, cuyas cenagosas corrientes no hacen otro que andar dando giros, y continuos círculos. Sobre su margen vió una tropa sin número de muertos, que tenian sus cuerpos sin sepultura, los quales infructuosamente se oponian delante del desapiadado Caronte. Este dios, cuya vejez eterna es siempre melancólica y enfadosa pero robusta, los amenaza y desecha, y admite sin tardanza en su barca al jóven Griego.

menaces and reproach; but he admitted the young Greek into his bark, as soon as he came up. The ear of Telemachus, the moment he entered, was struck with the groans of inconsolable grief.

« Who art thou, » said he to the complaining ghost, « and what is thy misfortune? » — « I was, » replied the phantom, « Nabopharzan, the king of Babylon the great. All the nations of the east trembled at the sound of my name; and I compelled the Babylonians to worship me in a temple of marble, where I was represented by a statue of gold, before which the most costly perfumes of Ethiopia were burnt night and day. No man contradicted me without instant punishment; and every invention was upon the stretch, to discover some new pleasure, that might heighten the luxury of my life. I was then in the full bloom and vigour of youth; and life, with all its pomp and pleasures, was still before me: But alas! a woman whom I loved with a passion that she did not return, too soon convinced me, that I was not a god: she gave me poison, and I now am nothing. Yesterday they deposited my ashes, with great solemnity, in a golden urn: they wept, they tore their hair, and seemed ready to throw themselves on the funeral pile, that they might perish with me; they are now surrounding the superb mausoleum, in which they placed my remains, with all the external parade of sorrow; but secretly, and in sincerity, I am regretted by none. Even my family hold my memory in abhorrence; and here I have been already treated with the most mortifying indignity! »

An object so deplorable, touched the breast of Telemachus with pity: « And was you then truly happy, » said he, « during your reign? Did you, taste that sweet tranquillity, without which the heart shrinks and withers like a blighted flower: nor, even in prosperity, can expand to delight? » — « Far from it, » replied the monarch; « I knew it not, even in idea. A peace like this, indeed, has been extolled by the sages, as the only good; but it never made my felicity: my heart was perpetually agitated by new desires, and throbbing with fear and hope; I wished that passion should perpetually succeed to pas-

Entrando en ella, percibió los gemidos Telémaco de una alma.

¿Qué desgracia es la vuestra? ¿Quién erais en el mundo? Fui, respondió aquella alma, Nabofarzan, Rey de la soberbia Babilonia. A mi nombre tan solamente temblaban todos los pueblos orientales, y me hacia adorar de los habitadores de aquella gran ciudad en un templo de mármol, donde delante de una estatua de oro, que era retrato mio, se quemaban de dia y de noche los mas preciosos aromas de la Etiopia. No hubo alguno que me contradixese, sin pagar de contado su libertad. Inventábase cada dia algun nuevo placer, para hacerme la vida mas deliciosa y mas apacible; y a mas de eso me hallaba en la flor de mi juventud, y de mi robustez. ¡Infelice de mi! ¿Qué prosperidad me quedaba, que no hubiera ya disfrutado en el trono? Pero una muger que no correspondia á mi amor, me ha hecho conocer quán lejos iba de la verdad, figurándome que era dios. Ella me atosigó, y ya soy sombra vana, soy nada. Ayer con pompa se colocaron mis tristes cenizas en una urna de oro. Hubo quien me lloró, quien mesó sus cabellos, quien mostró querer arrojar para morir conmigo, al fuego de la pyra; pero no hay alguna que tenga pesar de mi muerte. Mi familia misma se horroriza con mi memoria, y ya padezco aquí muchas horribísimas injurias.

Movido á compasion Telémaco de tal espectáculo, le dixo: ¿Erais vos verdaderamente feliz miéntras en el mundo reynabais? ¿Percibiais aquella apacible paz, sin la qual siempre está acongojado el corazon humano, y siempre descontento entre las delicias? No, le respondió el Babilonio; antes ni aun entiendo lo que quereis decir. Los sabios exágeran esa paz, como el único bien que se puede en el mundo gozar; pero por quanto á mí, yo no la he probado jamas. Mi corazon era continuamente combatido de nuevos deseos, ya del temor, y ya de la esperanza; yo me procuraba divertir á mí mismo, teniendo en movimiento casi

sion, with a tumultuous rapidity which excluded thought; and practised every artifice to effect it: this was my expedient to avoid the pangs of reflection; such was the peace I procured, I thought all other a fable and a dream; and such were the pleasures I regret!»

During this relation, Nabopharsan wept with the effeminate pusillanimity of a man enervated by good fortune; unacquainted with adversity, and, therefore, a stranger to fortitude. There were with him some slaves, who had been put to death to honour his funeral; and whom Mercury had delivered to Charon with their king; giving them, at the same time, an absolute power over him, who had been their tyrant upon earth. The shades of these slaves no longer feared the shade of Nabopharzan; they held him in a chain, and treated him with the most cruel indignity. «As men,» said one of them, «had we not the same nature with thee? How couldst thou be so stupid as to imagine thyself a god, and forget that thy parents were mortal? — «His unwillingness to be taken for a man,» said another, «was right; for he was a monster, without humanity.» — «Well,» said another, «what are become of your flatterers now? Poor wretch! there is now nothing that thou canst either give or take away; thou art now become the slave even of thy slaves. The justice of the gods is slow; but the criminal is, at last, certainly overtaken?»

Nabopharzan, stung with these insults, threw himself upon his face in an agony of rage and despair; but Charon bade the slaves pull him up by his chain: «He must not,» said he, «be allowed the consolation even of hiding his shame; of which all the ghosts that throngs the borders of the Styx must be witnesses; that the gods who so long suffered this impious tyrant to oppress the earth, may at last be justified. Yet this, O scourge of Babylon! is but the beginning of sorrows; the judgment of Minos, impartial and inexorable, is at hand!»

continuo mis desconcertadas pasiones, y mantener la embriaguez, para que fuera perpetua. Me hubiera sido demasiado amargo qualquier pequeño espacio de tranquilidad, que me hubiera dexado conocer mi estado. Tal fué la paz de que gocé en el mundo: qualquiera otra la miraba yo como fabula ó como sueño, y tales son los bienes, que me pesa de haber perdido.

Hablando de esta suerte el Babilonio, lloraba como un hombre vil, enervado de la felicidad, y no acostumbrado á sufrir con firmeza de ánimo una desventura. Cercanos á él estaban algunos esclavos, que habian sido muertos, para honrar las exéquias de su cadáver. Habíalos Mercurio entregado á Caronte junto con su Rey, y les habia dado absoluto poder sobre aquel principe, á quien ellos sirviéron en el mundo. Las almas de los esclavos no tenían ya miedo á la de Nabofarzan: teníanla en cadenas, y le hacian los mas crueles oprobrios. ¿No eramos acaso hombres como tú, le decian ellos; pues cómo eras tan insensato, que te pudieras tener por dios? ¿No era por ventura razon que te acordaras, de que igualmente tú eras de la casta de los demas hombres? Tenia motivo, decia otro, para insultarle, por no haber querido ser tenido por hombre; pues eras un monstruo, sin sentimiento de humanidad. Bien, proseguia otro, ¿en dónde estan ahora los que te adulaban? Ahora ya no tienes cosa que dar: desdichado de ti, no puedes hacer ya mal alguno: he aquí que has parado en esclavo de tus mismos esclavos. Los dioses van despacio en hacer justicia; pero la hacen al cabo.

A tan pesadas voces, ponía Nabofarzan los ojos en el suelo, se desgreñaba con excesiva rabia y arrebatado de su despecho. Pero volviéndose á los esclavos Caronte: Tiradlo, decia, tiradlo de la cadena: enderezadlo á mal de su grado: no ha de tener ni aun el consuelo mísero de ocultar su vergüenza. Justo es que todas las almas de la Stygia le vean, para disculpar á los dioses, los quales han sufrido tanto tiempo que reynara este impio en el mundo. Esto no es aun, ó Babilonio, sino el principio de tus dolores: prepárate pues, para ser juzgado aca baxo del inflexible Minos. Juez de los infiernos.

The bark now touched the dominions of Pluto; and the ghosts ran down in crowds to the shore, gazing, with the utmost curiosity and wonder, at the living mortal, who stood distinguished among the dead in the boat: but, the moment Telemachus set his foot on the shore, they vanished, like the shades of the night before the first beams of the morning. Then Charon, turning towards him, with a brow less contracted into frowns, and a look less severe than usual, « O favoured of heaven! » said he, « since thou art permitted to enter the realms of darkness, which to all the living, besides thyself, are interdicted; make haste to push forward, whithersoever the Fates have called thee. Proceed, by this gloomy path, to the palace of Pluto, whom thou wilt find sitting upon his throne; and who will permit thee to enter those recesses of his dominion, the secrets of which I am not permitted to reveal! »

Telemachus, immediately pressing forward with an hasty step, discovered the shades gliding about on every side, more numerous than the sands upon the sea-shore; and he was struck with a religious dread, to perceive that, in the midst of the tumult and hurry of his incredible multitude, all was silent as the grave. He sees, at length, the gloomy residence of unrelenting Pluto: his hair stands erect, his legs tremble, and his voice fails him. « Tremendous power! » said he, with faltering and interrupted speech, « the son of unhappy Ulysses now stands before thee. I come to enquire, whether my father is descended into your dominions, or wheter he is still a wanderer upon the earth? »

Pluto was seated upon a throne of ebony: his countenance was pale and severe, his eyes hollow and ardent, and his brow contracted and menacing. The sight of a mortal still breathing the breath of life was hateful to his eyes: as the day is hateful to those animals that leave their recesses only by night. At his side sat Proserpine, who seemed to be the only object of his attention, and to soften him into some degree of complacency, she enjoyed a beauty that was per-

Mientras hablaba así el terrible Caronte, estaba ya la barca cerca de la orilla del imperio de Pluton. Acudieron allá todas las sombras para ver á aquel hombre vivo, que descubrian en la barca entre tantos muertos; pero al punto que Telémaco puso el pie en tierra, se desvanecieron improvisamente, á guisa de las sombras de la noche, que se disipan al albor del día. Caronte mostrándose entonces ménos cejijunto al hijo de Ulises, y mirándole con semblante harto ménos ceñudo de lo que estila, le dixo de este modo: Ya que te es concedido, ó hombre sumamente acepto á los dioses, poder entrar en el Reyno de la noche, inaccesible á los otros hombres, date priesa de ir adonde te llama el destino. Vé al palacio de Pluton por aquel obscuro camino. Allí le hallarás sentado sobre su trono, y él te dará licencia para entrar en aquellos sitios, cuyo secreto yo no puedo descubrir.

Entonces Telémaco se adelantó á grandes pasos. Veia volatear á las sombras por todas partes, en mucho mayor número que los granos de arena de que están cubiertas las riberas del mar; y en la agitación continua de aquella muchedumbre infinita que andaba discurriendo acá y allá, por aquellas vastas campañas, se le apoderó un religioso temor, observando silencio tan profundo. Avescinándose á la lóbrega estancia del duro Pluton, se le erizaron en la cabeza todos los cabellos: sintióse zozobrar las rodillas, desfalleció la voz y apenas fué capaz de pronunciar estas voces: Vos veis, ó dios terrible, al hijo del desgraciado Ulises: vengo á saber de vos, si es que mi padre es muerto, y ha baxado á habitar en vuestro imperio, ó si discurre aun vago por el mundo.

Estaba entonces Pluton sentado sobre un trono de ébano. Era su color pálido y obscuro: los ojos hundidos y centelleantes, arrugado y amenazador el semblante. Le era odiosa la vista de un hombre vivo, como lo es la luz á los ojos de los animales que estan acostumbrados á no salir de sus cuebas sino de noche. Veíase á su lado Proserpina su esposa que era la única á quien él se dignaba de mirar, y por cuyo amor parecia que amainaba algun poco la ferocidad de su co-