

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

ADVENTURES WITH AEOLUS, THE LAESTRYGONS, AND CIRCE.

Ulysses arrives at the island of AEolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again and rejected. Then they sail to the Laestrygons, where they lose eleven ships, and, with only one remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and, by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares, at her instigation, for his voyage to the infernal shades.

"AT length we reach'd AEolias's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,
A floating isle! high-raised by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.
Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred,
And six fair daughters, graced the royal bed;

These sons their sisters wed, and all remain
Their parents' pride, and pleasure of their reign.
All day they feast, all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and music through the isle resound;
At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.
This happy port affords our wandering fleet
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.
Full oft the monarch urged me to relate
The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate;
Full oft I told: at length for parting moved;
The king with mighty gifts my suit approved.
The adverse winds in leathern bags he braced,
Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast.
For him the mighty sire of gods assign'd
The tempest's lood, the tyrant of the wind;
His word alone the listening storms obey,
To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.
These in my hollow ship the monarch hung,
Securely fetter'd by a silver thong:
But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
He charged to fill, and guide the swelling sails:
Rare gift! but O, what gift to fools avails!

"Nine prosperous days we plied the labouring oar;
The tenth presents our welcome native shore:

The hills display the beacon's friendly light,
And rising mountains gain upon our sight.
Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress'd,
Complied to take the balmy gifts of rest:
Then first my hands did from the rudder part
(So much the love of home possess'd my heart):
When lo! on board a fond debate arose;
What rare device those vessels might inclose?
What sum, what prize from AEolus I brought?
Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought:

"Say, whence ye gods, contending nations strive
Who most shall please, who most our hero give?
Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils:
Whilst we, the wretched partners of his toils,
Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,
And only rich in barren fame return.
Now AEolus, ye see, augments his store:
But come, my friends, these mystic gifts explore,'
They said: and (oh cursed fate!) the thongs unbound!
The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round;
Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
The ocean widen'd and the shores withdrew.
Roused from my fatal sleep I long debate
If still to live, or desperate plunge to fate;
Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,

Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

"Meanwhile our vessels plough the liquid plain,
And soon the known AEolian coast regain;
Our groan the rocks remurmur'd to the main.
We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd;
That done, two chosen heralds straight attend
Our second progress to my royal friend;
And him amidst his jovial sons we found;
The banquet steaming, and the goblets crown'd;
There humbly stoop'd with conscious shame and awe,
Nor nearer than the gate presumed to draw.
But soon his sons their well-known guest descried,
And starting from their couches loudly cried:
'Ulysses here! what demon could'st thou meet
To thwart thy passage, and repel thy fleet?
Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
For Greece, for home and all thy soul held dear?'
Thus they, In silence long my fate I mourn'd;
At length these words with accents low return'd:
'Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft
Of all the blessing of your godlike gift!
But grant, oh grant, our loss we may retrieve;
A favour you, and you alone can give.'

"Thus I with art to move their pity tried,
And touch'd the youths; but their stern sire replied:
'Vile wretch, begone! this instant I command
Thy fleet accursed to leave our hallow'd land.
His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes,
Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.'

"Thus fierce he said: we sighing went our way,
And with desponding hearts put off to sea.
The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,
But mourn in vain; no prospect of return
Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
The next proud Lamos' stately towers appear,
And Laestrygonia's gates arise distinct in air.
The shepherd, quitting here at night the plain,
Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain;
But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,
So near the pastures, and so short the way,
His double toils may claim a double pay,
And join the labours of the night and day.

"Within a long recess a bay there lies,
Edged round with cliffs high pointing to the skies;
The jutting shores that swell on either side
Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.

Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat,
And bound within the port their crowded fleet:
For here retired the sinking billows sleep,
And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
I only in the bay refused to moor,
And fix'd without, my halsers to the shore.

"From thence we climb'd a point, whose airy brow
Commands the prospect of the plains below;
No tracks of beasts, or signs of men, we found,
But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.
Two with our herald thither we command,
With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
They went, and kept the wheel's smooth-beaten road
Which to the city drew the mountain wood;
When lo! they met, beside a crystal spring,
The daughter of Antiphates the king;
She to Artacia's silver streams came down;
(Artacia's streams alone supply the town);
The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
The people were? who monarch of the place?
With joy the maid the unwary strangers heard
And show'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
They went; but as they entering saw the queen
Of size enormous, and terrific mien
(Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height),

A sudden horror struck their aching sight.
Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
To wreak his hunger on the destined prey;
One for his food the raging glutton slew,
But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.

"Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies,
And fills the city with his hideous cries;
A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
And, pouring down the mountains, crowd the shore.
Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow
And dash the ruins on the ships below;
The crackling vessels burst; hoarse groans arise,
And mingled horrors echo to the skies;
The men like fish, they struck upon the flood,
And cramm'd their filthy throats with human food.
Whilst thus their fury rages at the bay,
My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh;
And charged my men, as they from fate would fly,
Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas;
Clear of the rocks the impatient vessel flies;
Whilst in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.
With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
While kindling transports glow'd at our success;

But the sad fate that did our friends destroy,
Cool'd every breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

"Now dropp'd our anchors in the Aeaean bay,
Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the Day!
Her mother Perse, of old Ocean's strain,
Thus from the Lun descended, and the Main
(From the same lineage stern Aeaetes came,
The far-famed brother of the enchantress dame);
Goddess, the queen, to whom the powers belong
Of dreadful magic and commanding song.
Some god directing to this peaceful bay
Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
And now the third succeeding morning shone.
I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land;
To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
Or cheerful voice of mortal strike the ear?
From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
A stream of curling smoke ascending blue,
And spiry tops, the tufted trees above,
Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

"Thither to haste, the region to explore,
Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore

I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
And send our spies the dubious coast to view.
As down the hill I solitary go,
Some power divine, who pities human woe,
Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
To cool his fervour in the crystal flood;
Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay,
Stretch'd forth and panting in the sunny ray.
I launch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
Transpierced his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries:
Through the wide wound the vital spirit flies.
I drew, and casting on the river's side
The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I tied
With twining osiers which the bank supplied.
An ell in length the pliant wisp I weaved,
And the huge body on my shoulders heaved:
Then leaning on my spear with both my hands,
Upbore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
With weighty steps, till at the ship I threw
The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew:

"Cheer up, my friends! it is not yet our fate
To glide with ghosts through Pluto's gloomy gate.
Food in the desert land, behold! is given!
Live, and enjoy the providence of heaven.'

"The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
And on the future banquet feast their eyes,
As huge in length extended lay the beast;
Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.
There, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
They sate indulging in the genial rite.
When evening rose, and darkness cover'd o'er
The face of things, we slept along the shore.
But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
My men I summon'd, and these words address'd:
"Followers and friends, attend what I propose:
Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes!
We know not here what land before us lies,
Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.
Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)
If any counsel, any hope remain.
Alas! from yonder promontory's brow
I view'd the coast, a region flat and low;
An isle encircled with the boundless flood;
A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise,
And all around it only seas and skies!"

"With broken hearts my sad companions stood,

Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,
And horrid Laestrygons, the men of blood.
Presaging tears apace began to rain;
But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
In equal parts I straight divide my band,
And name a chief each party to command;
I led the one, and of the other side
Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide.
Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
And fortune casts Eurylochus to go;
He march'd with twice eleven in his train;
Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

"The palace in a woody vale they found,
High raised of stone; a shaded space around;
Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tamed,) familiar to the dome.
With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet.
As from some feast a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
(Such as the good man ever used to give,)
Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near;
They gaze with wonder not unmix'd with fear.
Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,

And heard a voice resounding through the wood:
Placed at her loom within, the goddess sung;
The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung.
O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
Immortal labour! worthy hands divine.
Polites to the rest the question moved
(A gallant leader, and a man I loved):

"What voice celestial, chanting to the loom
(Or nymph, or goddess), echoes from the room?
Say, shall we seek access?' With that they call;
And wide unfold the portals of the hall.

"The goddess, rising, asks her guests to stay,
Who blindly follow where she leads the way.
Eurylochus alone of all the band,
Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
On thrones around with downy coverings graced,
With semblance fair, the unhappy men she placed.
Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat,
And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat:
But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
With drugs of force to darken all the soul:
Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
And drank oblivion of their native coast.
Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,

To hogs transforms them, and the sty receives.
No more was seen the human form divine;
Head, face, and members, bristle into swine:
Still cursed with sense, their minds remain alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
Meanwhile the goddess in disdain bestows
The mast and acorn, brutal food! and strows
The fruits and cornel, as their feast, around;
Now prone and grovelling on unsavoury ground.

"Eurylochus, with pensive steps and slow.
Aghast returns; the messenger of woe,
And bitter fate. To speak he made essay,
In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey.
His swelling heart denied the words their way:
But speaking tears the want of words supply,
And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.
Affrighted, anxious for our fellows' fates,
We press to hear what sadly he relates:

"We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command)
Through the lone thicket and the desert land.
A palace in a woody vale we found
Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.
A voice celestial echoed through the dome,
Or nymph or goddess, chanting to the loom.

Access we sought, nor was access denied:
Radiant she came: the portals open'd wide:
The goddess mild invites the guests to stay:
They blindly follow where she leads the way.
I only wait behind of all the train:
I waited long, and eyed the doors in vain:
The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate,
And not a man appears to tell their fate.'

"I heard, and instant o'er my shoulder flung
The belt in which my weighty falchion hung
(A beamy blade): then seized the bended bow,
And bade him guide the way, resolved to go.
He, prostrate falling, with both hands embraced
My knees, and weeping thus his suit address'd:

"O king, beloved of Jove, thy servant spare,
And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear!
Never, alas! thou never shalt return,
Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn.
With what remains from certain ruin fly,
And save the few not fated yet to die.'

"I answer'd stern: 'Inglorious then remain,
Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.
Alone, unfriended, will I tempt my way;

The laws of fate compel, and I obey.'

This said, and scornful turning from the shore
My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er.
Till now approaching nigh the magic bower,
Where dwelt the enchantress skill'd in herbs of power,
A form divine forth issued from the wood
(Immortal Hermes with the golden rod)
In human semblance. On his bloomy face
Youth smiled celestial, with each opening grace.
He seized my hand, and gracious thus began:
'Ah whither roam'st thou, much-enduring man?
O blind to fate! what led thy steps to rove
The horrid mazes of this magic grove?
Each friend you seek in yon enclosure lies,
All lost their form, and habitants of sties.
Think'st thou by wit to model their escape?
Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape,
Fall prone their equal: first thy danger know,
Then take the antidote the gods bestow.
The plant I give through all the direful bower
Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
Now hear her wicked arts: Before thy eyes
The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise;
Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
For temper'd drugs and poison shall be vain.
Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,

Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword,
And menace death: those menaces shall move
Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms;
So shall thy tedious toils a respite find,
And thy lost friends return to human kind.
But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
The powers below, the blessed in the sky;
Lest to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
Or magic bind thee cold and impotent.

"Thus while he spoke, the sovereign plant he drew
Where on the all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,
And show'd its nature and its wondrous power:
Black was the root, but milky white the flower;
Moly the name, to mortals hard to find,
But all is easy to the ethereal kind.
This Hermes gave, then, gliding off the glade,
Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.
While, full of thought, revolving fates to come,
I speed my passage to the enchanted dome.
Arrived, before the lofty gates I stay'd;
The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd;
She leads before, and to the feast invites;
I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat
Received my limbs: a footstool eased my feet,
She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul;
The poison mantled in the golden bowl.
I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heaven.
Then waved the wand, and then the word was given.
'Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful she began:)
Go, be a beast!--I heard, and yet was man.

"Then, sudden whirling, like a waving flame,
My beamy falchion, I assault the dame.
Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries,
She faints, she falls; she lifts her weeping eyes.

"What art thou? say! from whence, from whom you came?
O more than human! tell thy race, thy name.
Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain!
Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain.
Or art thou he, the man to come (foretold
By Hermes, powerful with the wand of gold),
The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;
The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
Ulysses? Oh! thy threatening fury cease;
Sheathe thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace!
Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
And love, and love-born confidence, be thine.'

"And how, dread Circe! (furious I rejoin)
Can love, and love-born confidence, be mine,
Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own?
O thou of fraudulent heart, shall I be led
To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed;
That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent,
And magic bind me, cold and impotent?
Celestial as thou art, yet stand denied;
Or swear that oath by which the gods are tied,
Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,
Swear by the vow which never can be vain.'

"The goddess swore: then seized my hand, and led
To the sweet transports of the genial bed.
Ministrant to the queen, with busy care
Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare;
Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady woods,
Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods.
One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view:
White linen lay beneath. Another placed
The silver stands, with golden flaskets graced:
With dulcet beverage this the beaker crown'd,
Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around:

That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
The water pours; the bubbling waters boil;
An ample vase receives the smoking wave;
And, in the bath prepared, my limbs I lave:
Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,
And take the painful sense of toil away.
A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,
Fresh from the bath, and dropping balmy dew;
Then led and placed me on the sovereign seat,
With carpets spread; a footstool at my feet.
The golden ewer a nymph obsequious brings,
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs;
With copious water the bright vase supplies
A silver laver of capacious size.
I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
They heap the glittering canisters with bread:
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast!
Circe in vain invites the feast to share;
Absent I ponder, and absorb'd in care;
While scenes of woe rose anxious in my breast,
The queen beheld me, and these words address'd:

"Why sits Ulysses silent and apart,
Some hoard of grief close harbour'd at his heart
Untouch'd before thee stand the cates divine,

And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.
Can yet a doubt or any dread remain,
When sworn that oath which never can be vain?'

"I answered: 'Goddess! human is my breast,
By justice sway'd, by tender pity press'd:
Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
Me would'st thou please? for them thy cares employ,
And them to me restore, and me to joy.'

"With that she parted: in her potent hand
She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
Then, hastening to the sties, set wide the door,
Urged forth, and drove the bristly herd before;
Unwieldy, out they rush'd with general cry,
Enormous beasts, dishonest to the eye.
Now touch'd by counter-charms they change again,
And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.
Those hairs of late that bristled every part,
Fall off, miraculous effect of art!
Till all the form in full proportion rise,
More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
Clung to their master in a long embrace:
Sad, pleasing sight! with tears each eye ran o'er,

And sobs of joy re-echoed through the bower;
E'en Circe wept, her adamant heart
Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

"Son of Laertes! (then the queen began)
Oh much-enduring, much experienced man!
Haste to thy vessel on the sea-beat shore,
Unload thy treasures, and the galley moor;
Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,
And in our grottoes stow thy spoils and arms,'

"She said. Obedient to her high command
I quit the place, and hasten to the strand,
My sad companions on the beach I found,
Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.

"As from fresh pastures and the dewy field
(When loaded cribs their evening banquet yield)
The lowing herds return; around them throng
With leaps and bounds their late imprison'd young,
Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,
And echoing hills return the tender cry:
So round me press'd, exulting at my sight,
With cries and agonies of wild delight,
The weeping sailors; nor less fierce their joy
Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.

'Ah master! ever honour'd, ever dear!
(These tender words on every side I hear)
What other joy can equal thy return?
Not that loved country for whose sight we mourn,
The soil that nursed us, and that gave us breath:
But ah! relate our lost companions' death.'

"I answer'd cheerful: 'Haste, your galley moor,
And bring our treasures and our arms ashore:
Those in yon hollow caverns let us lay,
Then rise, and follow where I lead the way.
Your fellows live; believe your eyes, and come
To taste the joys of Circe's sacred dome.'

"With ready speed the joyful crew obey:
Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.

"Whither (he cried), ah whither will ye run?
Seek ye to meet those evils ye should shun?
Will you the terrors of the dome explore,
In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,
Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour
In dreadful watch around the magic bower?
Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed;
The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.'

"I heard incensed, and first resolved to speed
My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground.
But all at once my interposing train
For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
'Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,
To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades
Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.'

"This with one voice declared, the rising train
Left the black vessel by the murmuring main.
Shame touch'd Eurylochus' alter'd breast:
He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest.

"Meanwhile the goddess, with indulgent cares
And social joys, the late transform'd repairs;
The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews:
Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews:
Brightening with joy, their eager eyes behold,
Each other's face, and each his story told;
Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
And with their sobs the vaulted roof resound.
When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries:
'Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise,

Let this short memory of grief suffice.
To me are known the various woes ye bore.
In storms by sea, in perils on the shore;
Forget whatever was in Fortune's power,
And share the pleasures of this genial hour.
Such be your mind as ere ye left your coast,
Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.
Exiles and wanderers now, where'er ye go,
Too faithful memory renews your woe:
The cause removed, habitual griefs remain,
And the soul saddens by the use of pain.'

"Her kind entreaty moved the general breast;
Tired with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.
We plied the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
Till the full circle of the year came round.
But when the seasons following in their train,
Brought back the months, the days, and hours again;
As from a lethargy at once they rise,
And urge their chief with animating cries:

"Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot?
And is the name of Ithaca forgot?
Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,
Or the loved palace glitter in our eyes?
"Melting I heard; yet till the sun's decline

Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine
But when the shades came on at evening hour,
And all lay slumbering in the dusky bower,
I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,
The tender moment seized, and thus I said:
'Be mindful, goddess! of thy promise made;
Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd?
Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return:
If but a moment parted from thy eyes,
Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies.'

"Go then (she cried), ah go! yet think, not I,
Not Circe, but the Fates, your wish deny.
Ah, hope not yet to breathe thy native air!
Far other journey first demands thy care;
To tread the uncomfortable paths beneath,
And view the realms of darkness and of death.
There seek the Theban bard, deprived of sight;
Within, irradiate with prophetic light;
To whom Persephone, entire and whole,
Gave to retain the unseparated soul:
The rest are forms, of empty ether made;
Impassive semblance, and a flitting shade.'

"Struck at the word, my very heart was dead:

Pensive I sate: my tears bedew'd the bed:
To hate the light and life my soul begun,
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun:
Composed at length the gushing tears suppress'd,
And my toss'd limbs now wearied into rest.
'How shall I tread (I cried), ah, Circe! say,
The dark descent, and who shall guide the way?
Can living eyes behold the realms below?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow?'

"Thy fated road (the magic power replied),
Divine Ulysses! ask no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display,
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old Ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends;
The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods:
There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
And enter there the kingdoms void of day,
Where Phlegethon's loud torrents, rushing down,
Hiss in the flaming gulf of Acheron;
And where, slow rolling from the Stygian bed,
Cocytus' lamentable waters spread:
Where the dark rock o'erhangs the infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.

First draw thy falchion, and on every side
Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide:
To all the shades around libations pour,
And o'er the ingredients strew the hallow'd flour:
New wine and milk, with honey temper'd bring,
And living water from the crystal spring.
Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore,
With promised offerings on thy native shore;
A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
And heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile:
These to the rest; but to the seer must bleed
A sable ram, the pride of all thy breed.
These solemn vows and holy offerings paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead,
Be next thy care the sable sheep to place
Full o'er the pit, and hellward turn their face:
But from the infernal rite thine eye withdraw,
And back to Ocean glance with reverend awe.
Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades
Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
Let the flay'd victims in the flame be cast,
And sacred vows and mystic song applied
To grisly Pluto and his gloomy bride.
Wide o'er the pool thy falchion waved around
Shall drive the spectres from unbidden ground:

The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear,
Till awful from the shades arise the seer.
Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
The turns of all thy future fate display,
Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.'

"So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone
The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.
The goddess with a radiant tunic dress'd
My limbs, and o'er me cast a silken vest.
Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
The nymph, that added lustre to the day:
A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold;
Her waist was circled with a zone of gold.
Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew;
Rouse man by man, and animate my crew.
'Rise, rise, my mates! 'tis Circe gives command:
Our journey calls us; haste, and quit the land.'
All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
For Fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

"A youth there was, Elpenor was he named,
Not much for sense, nor much for courage famed:
The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul,
Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
He, hot and careless, on a turret's height

With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night:
The sudden tumult stirred him where he lay,
And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way;
Full headlong from the roof the sleeper fell,
And snapp'd the spinal joint, and waked in hell.

"The rest crowd round me with an eager look;
I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke:
'Already, friends! ye think your toils are o'er,
Your hopes already touch your native shore:
Alas! far otherwise the nymph declares,
Far other journey first demands our cares;
To tread the uncomfortable paths beneath,
The dreary realms of darkness and of death;
To seek Tiresias' awful shade below,
And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.'

"My sad companions heard in deep despair;
Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair;
To earth they fell: the tears began to rain;
But tears in mortal miseries are vain,
Sadly they fared along the sea-beat shore;
Still heaved their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.
The ready victims at our bark we found,
The sable ewe and ram together bound.
For swift as thought the goddess had been there,

And thence had glided, viewless as the air:
The paths of gods what mortal can survey?
Who eyes their motion? who shall trace their way?"