

length in epic poems now lost, we cannot say; but the existence of this great series of mythical tales, scarcely noticed in the poems to which we give the name "Homeric," is at once proof of the slender value of arguments drawn from the silence of the authors of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. In these dynastic legends, again, the tendency of myths to reproduce themselves, with differences only of names and of local colouring, becomes especially manifest. The mythical history of Perseus is, in all its essential features, the history of the Attic hero Theseus, and of the Theban *Œdipus*; and they all reappear with heightened colours in the myths of Herakles. But neither Thebans nor Athenians could penetrate through the thin veil which scarcely concealed the substantial identity of all these legends; and thus the Argives of Peloponnesus, having already one solar hero in Perseus, repeated his career in the legend of his alleged descendant Herakles.

The life of Perseus, like that of Theseus, Herakles, *Œdipus*, and *Odysseus*, is one of toil. His adversaries are dragons and Gorgons, the beings who dwell on the confines of light and darkness, or in the deep abysses of night. The doubtful gloaming is the home of the Graiai, and the mortal Medusa is the night which comes to an end on the rising of the sun, while her deathless sisters are the powers of the eternal darkness which no sun ever penetrates. The mysterious beauty of the former would naturally be expressed by phrases suggestive of a rivalry between the goddess of the night and the goddess of the dawn, and this would lead to the idea of the curse which imparted to the face of Medusa its deadly power.

But the sun which scatters the darkness is also the child of the darkness; and so the phrase went that the child was to be the destroyer of his parents; and oracles, it was said, warned the latter of the doom which would overtake them. This is followed in all cases by the exposure and the rescue of the babe; and Danaë (XXIV.), a name which carries us to other names of the morning, plays the part of *Iokastê* in the story of *Œdipus*, of