

THE "HADES" OF HOMER AND THE "HADES" OF VIRGIL.

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In the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* there is given a description of the visit which Ulysses made to Hades. Virgil devotes the sixth book of the *Æneid* to the narration of the descent of Æneas to the *abodes of the dead*. The object of this paper is simply to examine and compare the descriptions which Homer and Virgil give of Hades. Even a casual examination of the account which the poets in question respectively give of the peculiar experiences of the two renowned heroes who visited the realm of Pluto, will suffice to convince any one that the ideas of Homer regarding the dead are vague, indefinite, and to a large extent removed from what is material; while the conceptions of Virgil indicate a very large advancement, and are characterized by a large admixture of what is material, elaborate, and well defined. The many ages that intervened between the respective poets afforded scope enough for the development of minuter details and more diversified views regarding Hades, as well as for enlarging and embellishing the mythological beliefs of a primitive age. It were merely to be expected, therefore, that in Virgil's time the Greeks and Romans would be in possession of more refined and elaborate theories regarding the dead, and Hades, the abode of the dead.

The word Hades, or certain forms of it, occurs very frequently in the poems of Homer. Though it is maintained that the term *Hades* is employed by Homer to designate the god who rules over the infernal regions, it is possible that a double signification ought to be attached to the term. When we consider that such phrases as this are of frequent occurrence, *Ψυχὴ δ' Ἀϊδοσδὲ κατ' ἄλγεα*, we may suppose that Homer