

reaches the top than the stone rolls again to the bottom. And, yet, though social sins are not unpunished, and the penalty of sin in so few cases described, Minos is said to deal out justice in the most awful grandeur :—

"High on a throne tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burnished gold,
Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand,
Through the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band,
Still as he pleads, the fatal lots he rolls,
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls."

But nothing further is heard of them after their absolution or condemnation. Their punishment or reward is not even alluded to. They seem to fade away into the dark uncertainty and gloom which pervade all here.

In fact, in Homer's Hell everything is indistinct, the place itself, the occupants, their judgment, their punishment or award, all is cloudy, misty; so much so, indeed, that we are inclined to accept Mr. Gladstone's view of this Hell, which is that the Greeks having lost to a great extent the true idea of after-life, which they had once possessed when they were one common people with the Chosen of God, retained of it only this misty, shadowy, indistinct notion represented to us by Homer.

We enter Virgil's Hell only after an oblation of brute blood, as in Homer, but the blood is offered, not for the purpose of vivifying the shades, but of invoking the gods below, Hecate, Proserpine and Pluto. Just as Homer has painted it, the shades of those whose bones yet bleach in the sun, are driven back from the ferry by that sordid old god, Charon, and are forbidden to mingle with the other shades; on the other side of the Acheron, the shades hold spectral bouts and hunt the timid game, and Tityus, Sisyphus and Tantalus are yet in Tartarus with the Titans.

But immediately we enter Virgil's Hell, we perceive a vast difference from that of Homer. Hell is planned in such a manner that we can understand it, and its terrifying grandeur fills us with awe. From the very entrance he peoples it with hideous forms—

"Just in the gate, and in the jaws of hell,
Revengeful cares and sullen sorrows dwell,
And pale diseases, and repining age,
Want, Fear, and Famine's unresisted rage,
Here Toils and Death, and Death's half-brother, Sleep

(Forms terrible to view), their sentry keep;
With anxious Pleasures of a guilty mind;
Deep Frauds before, and open Force behind;
The Furies' iron-beds; and strife that shakes,
Her hidden tresses and unfolds her snakes."

Then, having crossed the Acheron, Cerberus, the three-headed monster, threatens us, and can only be appeased by drugs. Now Virgil lays out his Hell, setting apart the Mournful Fields for lovers, vast other fields for warriors, and then divides the path into two, one leading to the terrible depths of Tartarus, the other to the abode of Pluto. The hissing Phlegethon rushes in its mad current round Tartarus, and a mighty tower ascending towards the skies forms the entrance, and upon it Tisiphone keeps guard to register the doomed souls who pass within. These are the horrid realms of unrelenting Fate, and over them rules awful Rhadamanthus. The locality assigned this worthy by Virgil is quite different from that wherein Homer places him, the latter, we remember, having placed him in the Elysian Plain. In this Hell also the crimes against one's fellow-man and those against one's self find their punishment as well as sins against the deity. After enumerating the most revolting social sins, the poet gives us an idea of these fearful depths:

"Had I a hundred mouths, a hundred tongues,
And throats of brass, inspired with iron lungs,
I could not half those horrid crimes repeat,
Nor half the punishments those crimes have met."

The realm of Pluto corresponds in some respects to our heaven. Here are the good rewarded; this is the home of happy souls. All the delights imaginable are theirs; they have their own blue sky and starry firmament; their own waving fields; their chariots, horses and arms, and all the pleasures which they had on earth. In this lovely realm is the Elysian Grove, bounded by the gliding Lethe, in whose waters the happiest souls taste oblivion of the past, and hope of another mortal life.

Virgil professed a peculiar philosophy. He taught that a common, universal soul animated all things: that the soul by contact with the body, and by sin, became polluted; and that it required one thousand years' suffering in the nether world to wash out the stains of sin, when it was again fitted for another mortal body. What an empty philosophy! The highest