

to cling to, else they wither and die. But though gentle and submissive, her feelings find ready and forcible utterance when the occasion demands. Her age knew nothing of that self-repression which modern society imposes especially on the fairer sex, and which accounts for the number of icebergs one meets on the social high seas of the present period. In the days of the *Odyssey* it was different; noble blood had not then been thinned by luxury and licentiousness, and the passions and sentiments were strong in the offspring of princes. But this is only one of the jewels that civilization has dropped on the path of progress. Penelope's emotions are all strong. In her anger and indignation at the suitors, she will burst forth like a mountain storm, the whirlwinds of her passion tearing away the obstacles which calmer reason may oppose, as when nearly distracted by the news of Telemachus' departure she bids a servant haste and inform Laertes of the fact, and implore his aid. In a calmer mood, she would at once see that the old man could be of no assistance. Her maid, Euryclea, who is not overcome by passion, reminds her of the uselessness of such a proceeding, and advises her to supplicate the gods instead, who will render her assistance in the trying hour. Her grief is always most poignant, and torrents of tears are continually furrowing her fair cheeks. But when some new and awful danger presents itself, as when she hears of the suitors' plot to assassinate Telemachus, her agony is such that she casts herself on the floor as though deranged, and finally faints away. When her joy rises highest, as when she meets Telemachus returned, and again when she is assured that the slayer of the suitors is her own Ulysses returned after so many years of cruel separation, her feelings so overcome her that she loses the power of speech and swoons away. All her emotions and passions, then, are strongly marked. But stronger, greater than all, transcending all other was her love for her husband and her son.

This deep affection for Ulysses, which springs naturally from her loving heart is, moreover, in keeping with the noble object on which it is lavished. He was a right royal hero, indeed, a favourite in the camp and at the court. When Telemachus went in search of him, old Nestor told the

young prince that Ulysses and he had never been divided in council, and that they bore a brotherly affection for each other; not only this, but that no man was ever loved by an immortal, as was Ulysses by Athené. When the youth proceeded to the Spartan court, Menelaus, speaking of his father, said that of all the griefs he bore, the murder of Agamemnon, and the pollution of that prince's home, and the death of all the Grecian chiefs who left their bones to moulder around the walls of Troy, none preyed upon him so much as did his ignorance of Ulysses' fate. Eumæus and his other faithful servants are always loud in his praise as a kind master; and the joy of his old dog Argus on seeing him returned, forms one of the most beautiful and affecting passages in the poem: He was remarkable for his delicacy towards women, and his good-fellowship among men. In addition to these good qualities, he was one of the most pious of the chiefs; and possessed to an extraordinary degree the two great requisites in those days for a man, namely, wisdom in council, and strength on the field of battle. But above all, his home affections, his love for his wife and child, shone resplendent. Even Calypso failed to retain him in her halls. No wonder that Penelope should love such a man. This love is the source of all her grief. She could have become the spouse of almost any prince of Greece; but she could not bear the thought of being the wife of any other than Ulysses,

"His country's buckler and the Grecian boast."

The continued presence of the suitors and their importunities puzzle her as to how she may delay a marriage with one of them. Her ignorance of Ulysses' whereabouts, and the waste of her son's substance keep the cup of her agony full to the brim. She has her own *Odyssey* at home, one of awful, smothered suffering, and deep-seated despair. Her continual grief might, in another poet, be tedious, and even in Homer would be such, were it not supported by a queenly dignity which renders it the more affecting. The poet, also, seeing that nature could not endure such a continuance of poignant grief, introduces Minerva as casting sweet sleep over Penelope, and sending her dreams of good omen, whenever she becomes completely exhausted. But in