



# **A TRUE STORY**

**LUCIAN**

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**BY  
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## BOOK 1

Men interested in athletics and in the care of their bodies think not only of condition and exercise but also of relaxation in season; in fact, they consider this the principal part of training. In like manner students, I think, after much reading of serious works may profitably relax their minds and put them in better trim for future labour. It would be appropriate recreation for them if they were to take up the sort of reading that, instead of affording just pure amusement based on wit and humour, also boasts a little food for thought that the Muses would not altogether spurn; and I think they will consider the present work something of the kind. They will find it enticing not only for the novelty of its subject, for the humour of its plan and because I tell all kinds of lies in a plausible and specious way, but also because everything in my story is a more or less comical parody of one or another of the poets, historians and philosophers of old, who have written much that smacks of miracles and fables. I would cite them by name, were it not that you yourself will recognise them from your reading. One of them is Ctesias, son of Ctesiochus, of Cnidos, who wrote a great deal about India and its characteristics that he had never seen himself nor heard from anyone else with a reputation for truthfulness. Iambulus also wrote much that was strange about the countries in the great sea: he made up a falsehood that is patent to everybody, but wrote a story that is not uninteresting for all that.<sup>1</sup> Many others, with the same intent, have written about imaginary travels and journeys of theirs, telling of huge beasts, cruel men and strange ways of living. Their guide and instructor in this sort of charlatanry is Homer's Odysseus, who tells Alcinous and his court about winds in bondage, one-eyed men, cannibals and savages; also about animals with many heads, and transformations of his comrades wrought with drugs. This stuff, and much more like it, is what our friend humbugged the illiterate Phaeacians with! Well, on reading all these authors, I did not find much fault with them for their lying, as I saw that this was already a common practice even among

<sup>1</sup> The writings of Ctesias and Iambulus are lost; also those of Antonius Diogenes, whose story, *On the Wonders beyond Thule*, was according to Photius (*Bibb.*, cod. 166, 111 b) the fountain-head of Lucian's tale.

men who profess philosophy.<sup>2</sup> I did wonder, though, that they thought that they could write untruths and not get caught at it. Therefore, as I myself, thanks to my vanity, was eager to hand something down to posterity, that I might not be the only one excluded from the privileges of poetic licence, and as I had nothing true to tell, not having had any adventures of significance, I took to lying. But my lying is far more honest than theirs, for though I tell the truth in nothing else, I shall at least be truthful in saying that I am a liar. I think I can escape the censure of the world by my own admission that I am not telling a word of truth. Be it understood, then, that I am writing about things which I have neither seen nor had to do with nor learned from others--which, in fact, do not exist at all and, in the nature of things, cannot exist.<sup>3</sup> Therefore my readers should on no account believe in them.

Once upon a time, setting out from the Pillars of Hercules and heading for the western ocean with a fair wind, I went a-voyaging. The motive and purpose of my journey lay in my intellectual activity and desire for adventure, and in my wish to find out what the end of the ocean was, and who the people were that lived on the other side. On this account I put aboard a good store of provisions, stowed water enough, enlisted in the venture fifty of my acquaintances who were like-minded with myself, got together also a great quantity of arms, shipped the best sailing-master to be had at a big inducement, and put my boat--she was a pinnace--in trim for a long and difficult voyage. Well, for a day and a night we sailed before the wind without making very much offing, as land was still dimly in sight; but at sunrise on the second day the wind freshened, the sea rose, darkness came on, and before we knew it we could no longer even get our canvas in. Committing ourselves to the gale and giving up, we drove for seventy-nine days. On the eightieth day, however, the sun came out suddenly and at no great distance we saw a high, wooded island ringed about with sounding surf, which, however, was not rough, as already the worst of the storm was abating.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A slap at Plato's Republic (x. 614 A seq.), as the scholiast says.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the protestations of Ctesias and of Antonius Diogenes (Phot. cod. 72, 49-50; 166, 109 b).

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph is based on Iambulus (Diod. 2. 55).

Putting in and going ashore, we lay on the ground for some time in consequence of our long misery, but finally we arose and told off thirty of our number to stay and guard the ship and twenty to go inland with me and look over the island. When we had gone forward through the wood about three furlongs from the sea, we saw a slab of bronze, inscribed with Greek letters, faint and obliterated, which said: "To this point came Hercules and Dionysus." There were also two footprints in the rock close by, one of which was a hundred feet long, the other less--to my thinking, the smaller one was left by Dionysus, the other by Hercules.<sup>5</sup> We did obeisance and went on, but had not gone far when we came upon a river of wine, just as like as could be to Chian.<sup>6</sup> The stream was large and full, so that in places it was actually navigable. Thus we could not help having much greater faith in the inscription on the slab, seeing the evidence of Dionysus' visit. I resolved to find out where the river took its rise, and went up along the stream. What I found was not a source, but a number of large grapevines, full of clusters; beside the root of each flowed a spring of clear wine, and the springs gave rise to the river. There were many fish to be seen in it, very similar to wine in colour and in taste. In fact, on catching and eating some of them, we became drunk, and when we cut into them we found them full of lees, of course. Later on, we bethought ourselves to mix with them the other kind of fish, those from the water, and so temper the strength of our edible wine.

Next, after crossing the river at a place where it was fordable, we found something wonderful in grapevines. The part which came out of the ground, the trunk itself, was stout and well-grown, but the upper part was in each case a woman, entirely perfect from the waist up. They were like our pictures of Daphne turning into a tree when Apollo is just catching her. Out of their finger-tips grew the branches, and they were full of grapes. Actually, the hair of their heads was tendrils and leaves and clusters! When we came up, they welcomed and greeted us, some of them speaking Lydian, some Indian, but the most part Greek. They even kissed us on the lips, and everyone that was kissed at once became reeling drunk. They did not suffer us, however, to gather any of the fruit, but cried out in pain when it was

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Herod. 4, 82; a footprint of Hercules, two cubits long.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ctesias (Phot. cod. 72, 46 a).

plucked. Some of them actually wanted us to embrace them, and two of my comrades complied, but could not get away again. They were held fast by the part which had touched them, for it had grown in and struck root. Already branches had grown from their fingers, tendrils entwined them, and they were on the point of bearing fruit like the others any minute. Leaving them in the lurch, we made off to the boat, and on getting there, told the men we had left behind about everything, including the affair of our comrades with the vines. Then, taking jars, we furnished ourselves not only with water but with wine from the river, encamped for the night on the beach close by, and at daybreak put to sea with a moderate breeze.

About noon, when the island was no longer in sight, a whirlwind suddenly arose, spun the boat about, raised her into the air about three hundred furlongs and did not let her down into the sea again; but while she was hung up aloft a wind struck her sails and drove her ahead with bellying canvas. For seven days and seven nights we sailed the air, and on the eighth day we saw a great country in it, resembling an island, bright and round and shining with a great light. Running in there and anchoring, we went ashore, and on investigating found that the land was inhabited and cultivated. By day nothing was in sight from the place, but as night came on we began to see many other islands hard by, some larger, some smaller, and they were like fire in colour. We also saw another country below, with cities in it and rivers and seas and forests and mountains. This we inferred to be our own world.

We determined to go still further inland, but we met what they call the Vulture Dragoons, and were arrested. These are men riding on large vultures and using the birds for horses. The vultures are large and for the most part have three heads: you can judge of their size from the fact that the mast of a large merchantman is not so long or so thick as the smallest of the quills they have.<sup>7</sup> The Vulture Dragoons are commissioned to fly about the country and bring before the king any stranger they may find, so of course they arrested us and brought us before him. When he had looked us over and drawn his conclusions from our clothes, he said: "Then you are Greeks, are you, strangers?" and when we assented, "Well, how did you get here, with so much air to cross?" We told him all, and he began and told us about

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Odyss.* 9, 322f.



himself: that he too was a human being, Endymion by name, who had once been ravished from our country in his sleep, and on coming there had been made king of the land. He said that his country was the moon that shines down on us.<sup>8</sup> He urged us to take heart, however, and suspect no danger, for we should have everything that we required. "And if I succeed," said he, "in the war which I am now making on the people of the sun, you shall lead the happiest of lives with me." We asked who the enemy were, and what the quarrel was about. "Phaethon," said he, "the king of the inhabitants of the sun--for it is inhabited,<sup>9</sup> you know, as well as the moon--has been at war with us for a long time now. It began in this way. Once upon a time I gathered together the poorest people in my kingdom and undertook to plant a colony on the Morning Star, which was empty and uninhabited. Phaethon out of jealousy thwarted the colonisation, meeting us half-way at the head of his Ant Dragoons. At that time we were beaten, for we were not a match for them in strength, and we retreated: now, however, I desire to make war again and plant the colony. If you wish, then, you may take part with me in the expedition and I will give each of you one of my royal vultures and a complete outfit. We shall take the field to-morrow." "Very well," said I, "since you think it best."

That night we stopped there as his guests, but at daybreak we arose and took our posts, for the scouts signalled that the enemy was near. The number of our army was a hundred thousand, apart from the porters, the engineers, the infantry and the foreign allies; of this total, eighty thousand were Vulture Dragoons and twenty thousand Grassplume-riders. The Grassplume is also a very large bird, which instead of plumage is all shaggy with grass and has wings very like lettuce-leaves. Next to these the Millet-shooters and the Garlic-fighters were posted. Endymion also had allies who came from the Great Bear--thirty thousand Flea-archers and fifty thousand Volplaneurs. The Flea-archers ride on great fleas, from which they get their name; the fleas are as large as twelve elephants. The Volplaneurs are infantry, to be sure, but they fly in the air without wings. As to the manner

<sup>8</sup> The story of Antonius Diogenes included a description of a trip to the moon (Phot. 111 a). Compare also Lucian's own *Icaromenippus*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Lactantius 3, 23, 41: "Seneca says that there have been Stoics who raised the question of ascribing to the sun a population of its own."

of their flight, they pull their long tunics up through their girdles, let the baggy folds fill with wind as if they were sails, and are carried along like boats. For the most part they serve as light infantry in battle. It was said, too, that the stars over Cappadocia would send seventy thousand Sparrowcorns and five thousand Crane Dragoons. I did not get a look at them, as they did not come, so I have not ventured to write about their characteristics, for the stories about them were wonderful and incredible.<sup>10</sup>

These were the forces of Endymion. They all had the same equipment--helmets of beans (their beans are large and tough); scale-corselets of lupines (they sew together the skins of lupines to make the corselets, and in that country the skin of the lupine is unbreakable, like horn); shields and swords of the Greek pattern. When the time came, they took position thus; on the right wing, the Vulture Dragoons and the king, with the bravest about him (we were among them); on the left, the Grassplumes; in the centre, the allies, in whatever formation they liked. The infantry came to about sixty million, and was deployed as follows. Spiders in that country are numerous and large, all of them far larger than the Cyclades islands. They were commissioned by the king to span the air between the Moon and the Morning Star with a web, and as soon as they had finished and had made a plain, he deployed his infantry on it. Their leaders were Owlett son of Fairweather, and two others.

As to the enemy, on the left were the Ant Dragoons, with whom was Phaethon. They are very large beasts with wings, like the ants that we have, except in size: the largest one was two hundred feet long.<sup>11</sup> They themselves fought, as well as their riders, and made especially good use of their feelers. They were said to number about fifty thousand. On their right were posted the Sky-mosquitoes, numbering also about fifty thousand, all archers riding on large mosquitoes. Next to them were the Sky-dancers, a sort of light infantry, formidable however, like all the rest, for they slung radishes at long range, and any man that they hit could not hold out a moment, but died, and his wound was malodorous. They were said to anoint their missiles with mallow poison. Beside them were posted the Stalk-

<sup>10</sup> Compare the reticence of Herodotus (1, 193), Thucydides (3, 113, 6), and Tacitus (*Germ.* 46).

<sup>11</sup> Herodotus (3, 102) tells of ants bigger than foxes.

mushrooms, heavy infantry employed at close quarters, ten thousand in number. They had the name Stalk-mushrooms because they used mushrooms for shields and stalks of asparagus for spears. Near them stood the Puppycorns, who were sent him by the inhabitants of the Dog-star, five thousand dog-faced men who fight on the back of winged acorns.<sup>12</sup> It was said that there were tardy allies in Phaethon's case, too--the slingers whom he had summoned from the Milky Way, and the Cloud-centaurs. The latter to be sure, arrived just after the battle was over (if only they had not!); but the slingers did not put in an appearance at all. On account of this, they say, Phaethon was furious with them and afterwards ravaged their country with fire.

This, then, was the array with which Phaethon came on. Joining battle when the flags had been flown and the donkeys on both sides had brayed (for they had donkeys for trumpeters), they fought. The left wing of the Sunites fled at once, without even receiving the charge of the Vulture Horse, and we pursued, cutting them down. But their right wing got the better of the left on our side, and the Sky-mosquitoes advanced in pursuit right up to the infantry. Then, when the infantry came to the rescue, they broke and fled, especially as they saw that the forces on their left had been defeated. It was a glorious victory, in which many were taken alive and many were slain; so much blood flowed on the clouds that they were dyed and looked red, as they do in our country when the sun is setting, and so much also dripped down on the earth that I wonder whether something of the sort did not take place in the sky long ago, when Homer supposed that Zeus had sent a rain of blood on account of the death of Sarpedon.<sup>13</sup>

When we had returned from the pursuit we set up two trophies, one on the spider-webs for the infantry battle and the other, for the sky battle, on the clouds. We were just doing this when the scouts reported that the Cloud-centaurs, who should have come to Phaethon's aid before the battle, were advancing on us. Before we knew it, they were coming on in plain sight, a most unparalleled spectacle, being a combination of winged horses and men. In size the men were as large as the Colossus of Rhodes from the waist

<sup>12</sup> Herodotus (4, 191) tells of dog-headed men and of headless men with eyes in their breasts.

<sup>13</sup> *Il.* 16, 459.

up, and the horses were as large as a great merchantman. Their number, however, I leave unrecorded for fear that someone may think it incredible, it was so great. Their leader was the Archer from the Zodiac. When they saw that their friends had been defeated, they sent word to Phaethon to advance again, and then, on their own account, in regular formation fell on the disordered Moonites, who had broken ranks and scattered to pursue and to plunder. They put them all to flight, pursued the king himself to the city and killed most of his birds; they plucked up the trophies and overran the whole plain woven by the spiders, and they captured me with two of my comrades. By this time Phaethon too was present, and other trophies were being set up by their side.

As for us, we were taken off to the sun that day, our hands tied behind our backs with a section of spider-web. The enemy decided not to lay siege to the city, but on their way back they built a wall through the air, so that the rays of the sun should no longer reach the moon. The wall was double, made of cloud, so that a genuine eclipse of the moon took place, and she was completely enshrouded in unbroken night. Hard pressed by this, Endymion sent and begged them to pull down the construction and not let them lead their lives in darkness. He promised to pay tribute, to be an ally and not to make war again, and volunteered to give hostages for all this. Phaethon and his people held two assemblies; on the first day they did not lay aside a particle of their anger, but on the second day they softened, and the peace was made on these terms:<sup>14</sup>

On the following conditions the Sunites and their allies make peace with the Moonites and their allies, to wit:

That the Sunites tear down the dividing-wall and do not invade the moon again, and that they make over the prisoners of war, each at a set ransom;

That the Moonites permit the stars to be autonomous, and do not make war on the Sunites;

That each country aid the other if it be attacked;

<sup>14</sup> Compare the Athenian-Spartan treaty, Thuc. 5, 18.

That in yearly tribute the King of the Moonites pay the King of the Sunites ten thousand gallons of dew, and that he give ten thousand of his people as hostages;

That the colony on the Morning Star be planted in common, and that anyone else who so desires may take part in it;

That the treaty be inscribed on a slab of electrum and set up in mid-air, on the common confines. Attested under hand and seal.

*(For the Sunites)*

*(For the Moonites)*

Firebrace

Darkling

Parcher

Moony

Burns

Allbright

On those terms peace was made, and then the wall was torn down at once and we prisoners were restored. When we reached the moon we were met and tearfully welcomed by our comrades and by Endymion himself. He wanted me to stay with him and join the colony, promising to give me his own son in marriage--there are no women in their country. But I was not to be persuaded; I asked him to let me go down to the sea. When he perceived that he could not prevail on me, he let us go after entertaining us for seven days.

In the interval, while I was living on the moon, I observed some strange and wonderful things that I wish to speak of. In the first place there is the fact that they are not born of women but of men: they marry men and do not even know the word woman at all! Up to the age of twenty-five each is a wife, and thereafter a husband. They carry their children in the calf of the leg instead of the belly. When conception takes place the calf begins to swell. In course of time they cut it open and deliver the child dead, and then they bring it to life by putting it in the wind with its mouth open. It seems to me that the term "belly of the leg"<sup>15</sup> came to us Greeks from there, since the leg performs the function of a belly with them. But I will tell you something

<sup>15</sup> *I.e.* calf of the leg.

else, still more wonderful. They have a kind of men whom they call the Arboreals, who are brought into the world as follows: Exsecting a man's right genital gland, they plant it in the ground. From it grows a very large tree of flesh, resembling the emblem of Priapus: it has branches and leaves, and its fruit is acorns a cubit thick. When these ripen, they harvest them and shell out the men. Another thing, they have artificial parts that are sometimes of ivory and sometimes, with the poor, of wood, and make use of them in their intercourse. When a man grows old, he does not die, but is dissolved like smoke and turns into air. They all eat the same food; they light a fire and cook frogs on the coals--they have quantities of frogs, that fly about in the air--and while they are cooking, they sit about them as if at table, snuff up the rising smoke and gorge themselves.<sup>16</sup> This is the food they eat, and their drink is air, which is squeezed into a cup and yields a liquid like dew. They are not subject to calls of nature, which, in fact, they have no means of answering. Another important function, too, is not provided for as one would expect, but in the hollow of the knee.

A man is thought beautiful in that country if he is bald and hairless, and they quite detest longhaired people. It is different on the comets, where they think long-haired people beautiful--there were visitors in the moon who told us about them.<sup>17</sup> Another point--they have beards that grow a little above the knee, and they have no toe-nails, but are all single-toed. Over each man's rump grows a long cabbage-leaf, like a tail, which is always green and does not break if he falls on his back. Their noses run honey of great pungency, and when they work or take exercise, they sweat milk all over their bodies, of such quality that cheese can actually be made from it by dripping in a little of the honey. They make oil from onions, and it is very clear and sweet-smelling, like myrrh. They have many water-vines, the grapes of which are like hailstones, and to my thinking, the hail that falls down on us is due to the bursting of the bunches when a wind strikes and shakes those vines. They use their bellies for pockets, putting into them anything they have use for, as they can open and shut them. These parts do not seem to have any intestines in them or anything else, except that they are all shaggy and hairy inside, so that the children enter them when it is cold.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Herod. 1, 202; 4, 75; Strabo 15, 1, 57.

<sup>17</sup> The point of this is that κομήτης, whence our word cornet, means *long-haired*.

The clothing of the rich is malleable glass<sup>18</sup> and that of the poor, spun bronze; for that region is rich in bronze, which they work like wool by wetting it with water. I am reluctant to tell you what sort of eyes they have, for fear that you may think me lying on account of the incredibility of the story, but I will tell you, notwithstanding. The eyes that they have are removable, and whenever they wish they take them out and put them away until they want to see: then they put them in and look. Many, on losing their own, borrow other people's to see with, and the rich folk keep a quantity stored up.<sup>19</sup> For ears they have plane-leaves, except only the acorn-men, who have wooden ones. In the royal purlieus I saw another marvel. A large looking-glass is fixed above a well, which is not very deep. If a man goes down into the well, he hears everything that is said among us on earth, and if he looks into the looking-glass he sees every city and every country just as if he were standing over it. When I tried it I saw my family and my whole native land, but I cannot go further and say for certain whether they also saw me. Anyone who does not believe this is so will find, if ever he gets there himself, that I am telling the truth.

To go back to my story, we embraced the king and his friends, went aboard, and put off. Endymion even gave me presents—two of the glass tunics, five of bronze, and a suit of lupine armour—but I left them all behind in the whale. He also sent a thousand Vulture Dragoons with us to escort us for sixty miles. On our way we passed many countries and put in at the Morning Star, which was just being colonised. We landed there and procured water. Going aboard and making for the zodiac, we passed the sun to port, hugging the shore. We did not land, though many of my comrades wanted to; for the wind was unfavourable. But we saw that the country was green and fertile and well-watered, and full of untold good things. On seeing us, the Cloud-centaurs, who had entered the service of Phaethon, flew up to the ship and then went away again when they found out that the treaty protected us. The Vulture Dragoons had already left us.

<sup>18</sup> Lucian's glass clothing (ὕαλινη) is a punning parody on wooden clothing (ξύλινη), i.e. cotton (Herod. 7, 65).

<sup>19</sup> Compare the story of the Graeae.

Sailing the next night and day we reached Lamp-town toward evening, already being on our downward way. This city lies in the air midway between the Pleiades and the Hyades, though much lower than the Zodiac. On landing, we did not find any men at all, but a lot of lamps running about and loitering in the public square and at the harbour. Some of them were small and poor, so to speak: a few, being great and powerful, were very splendid and conspicuous. Each of them has his own house, or scone, they have names like men, and we heard them talking. They offered us no harm, but invited us to be their guests. We were afraid, however, and none of us ventured to eat a mouthful or close an eye. They have a public building in the centre of the city, where their magistrate sits all night and calls each of them by name, and whoever does not answer is sentenced to death for deserting. They are executed by being put out. We were at court, saw what went on, and heard the lamps defend themselves and tell why they came late. There I recognised our own lamp: I spoke to him and enquired how things were at home, and he told me all about them.

That night we stopped there, but on the next day we set sail and continued our voyage. By this time we were near the clouds. There we saw the city of Cloudcuckootown,<sup>20</sup> and wondered at it, but did not visit it, as the wind did not permit. The king, however, was said to be Crow Dawson. It made me think of Aristophanes the poet, a wise and truthful man whose writings are distrusted without reason. On the next day but one, the ocean was already in plain sight, but no land anywhere except the countries in the air, and they began to appear fiery and bright. Toward noon on the fourth day the wind fell gently and gave out, and we were set down on the sea. When we touched the water we were marvellously pleased and happy, made as merry as we could in every way, and went over the side for a swim, for by good luck it was calm and the sea was smooth.

It would seem, however, that a change for the better often proves a prelude to greater ills. We had sailed just two days in fair weather and the third day was breaking when toward sunrise we suddenly saw a number of sea-monsters, whales. One among them, the largest of all, was fully one hundred and fifty miles long. He came at us with open mouth, dashing up

<sup>20</sup> The capital of Birdland in Aristophanes' play, *The Birds*.



the sea far in advance, foam-washed, showing teeth much larger than the emblems of Dionysus in our country,<sup>21</sup> and all sharp as calthrops and white as ivory. We said good-bye to one another, embraced, and waited. He was there in an instant, and with a gulp swallowed us down, ship and all. He just missed crushing us with his teeth, but the boat slipped through the gaps between them into the interior. When we were inside, it was dark at first, and we could not see anything, but afterwards, when he opened his mouth, we saw a great cavity, flat all over and high, and large enough for the housing of a great city. In it there were fish, large and small, and many other creatures all mangled, ships' rigging and anchors, human bones, and merchandise. In the middle there was land with hills on it, which to my thinking was formed of the mud that he had swallowed. Indeed, a forest of all kinds of trees had grown on it, garden stuff had come up, and everything appeared to be under cultivation. The coast of the island was twenty-seven miles long. Sea-birds were to be seen nesting on the trees, gulls and kingfishers.<sup>22</sup>

At first we shed tears for a long time, and then I roused my comrades and we provided for the ship by shoring it up and for ourselves by rubbing sticks together, lighting a fire and getting dinner as best we could. We had at hand plenty of fish of all kinds, and we still had the water from the Morning Star. On rising the next day, whenever the whale opened his mouth we saw mountains one moment, nothing but sky the next, and islands frequently, and we perceived by this that he was rushing swiftly to all parts of the sea. When at length we became wonted to our abiding-place, I took seven of my comrades and went into the forest, wishing to have a look at everything. I had not yet gone quite five furlongs when I found a temple of Poseidon, as the inscription indicated, and not far from it a number of graves with stones on them. Near by was a spring of clear water. We also heard the barking of a dog, smoke appeared in the distance, and we made out something like a farmhouse, too.

<sup>21</sup> On the size of these, see Lucian's *Syrian Goddess*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> This story of the whale is no longer considered a parody on Jonah's adventure, as there were other versions of the tale afloat in antiquity.

Advancing eagerly, we came upon an old man and a boy very busily at work in a garden which they were irrigating with water from the spring. Joyful and fearful at the same instant, we stopped still, and they too, probably feeling the same as we, stood there without a word. In course of time the old man said: "Who are you, strangers? Are you sea-gods, or only unlucky men like us? As for ourselves, though we are men and were bred on land, they have become sea-creatures and swim about with this beast which encompasses us, not even knowing for certain what our condition is--we suppose that we are dead, but trust that we are alive." To this I replied: "We too are men, my good sir--newcomers, who were swallowed up yesterday, ship and all: and we set out just now with the notion of finding out how things were in the forest, for it appeared to be very large and thick. But some divinity, it seems, brought us to see you and to discover that we are not the only people shut up in this animal. Do tell us your adventures--who you are and how you got in here." But he said he would neither tell us nor question us before giving us what entertainment he could command, and he took us with him to the house. It was a commodious structure, had bunks built in it and was fully furnished in other ways. He set before us vegetables, fruit and fish and poured us out wine as well. When we had had enough, he asked us what had happened to us. I told him about everything from first to last--the storm, the island, the cruise in the air, the war and all the rest of it up to our descent into the whale.

He expressed huge wonder, and then told us his own story, saying: "By birth, strangers, I am a Cypriote. Setting out from my native land on a trading venture with my boy whom you see and with many servants besides, I began a voyage to Italy, bringing various wares on a great ship, which you no doubt saw wrecked in the mouth of the whale. As far as Sicily we had a fortunate voyage, but there we were caught by a violent wind and driven out into the ocean for three days, where we fell in with the whale, were swallowed up crew and all, and only we two survived, the others being killed. We buried our comrades, built a temple to Poseidon and live this sort of life, raising vegetables and eating fish and nuts. As you see, the forest is extensive, and besides, it contains many grape-vines, which yield the sweetest of wine. No doubt you noticed the spring of beautiful cold water, too. We make our bed of leaves, burn all the wood we want, snare the birds

that fly in, and catch fresh fish by going into the gills of the animal. We also bathe there when we care to. Another thing, there is a lake not far off, twenty furlongs in circumference, with all kinds of fish in it, where we swim and sail in a little skiff that I made. It is now twenty-seven years since we were swallowed. Everything else is perhaps endurable, but our neighbours and fellow-countrymen are extremely quarrelsome and unpleasant, being unsociable and savage." "What!" said I, "are there other people in the whale, too?" "Why, yes, lots of them," said he; "they are unfriendly and are oddly built. In the western part of the forest, the tail part, live the Broilers, an eel-eyed, lobster-faced people that are warlike and bold, and carnivorous. On one side, by the starboard wall, live the Mergoats,<sup>23</sup> like men above and catfish below: they are not so wicked as the others. To port there are the Crabclaws and the Codheads, who are friends and allies with each other. The interior is inhabited by Clan Crawfish and the Solefeet, good fighters and swift runners. The eastern part, that near the mouth, is mostly uninhabited, as it is subject to inundations of the sea. I live in it, however, paying the Solefeet a tribute of five hundred oysters a year. Such being the nature of the country, it is for you to see how we can fight with all these tribes and how we are to get a living." "How many are there of them in all?" said I. "More than a thousand," said he. "What sort of weapons have they?" "Nothing but fishbones," he said. "Then our best plan," said I, "would be to meet them in battle, as they are unarmed and we have arms. If we defeat them, we shall live here in peace the rest of our days."

This was resolved on, and we went to the boat and made ready. The cause of war was to be the withholding of the tribute, since the date for it had already arrived. They sent and demanded the tax, and he gave the messengers a contemptuous answer and drove them off. First the Solefeet and Clan Crawfish, incensed at Scintharus--for that was his name--came on with a great uproar. Anticipating their attack, we were waiting under arms, having previously posted in our front-a squad of twenty-five men in ambush, who had been directed to fall on the enemy when they saw that they had gone by, and this they did. Falling on them in the rear, they cut them down, while we ourselves, twenty-five in number (for Scintharus and his son were

<sup>23</sup> According to Herodotus (2, 46), μένδης was Egyptian for goat; but there is nothing goatish in the Tritonomendetes as Lucian describes them.

in our ranks), met them face to face and, engaging them, ran our hazard with strength and spirit. Finally we routed them and pursued them clear to their dens. The slain on the side of the enemy were one hundred and seventy; on our side, one--the sailing-master, who was run through the midriff with a mullet-rib. That day and night we bivouacked on the field and made a trophy by setting up the dry spine of a dolphin. On the following day the others, who had heard of it, appeared, with the Broilers, led by Tom Cod, on the right wing, the Codheads on the, left, and the Crabclaws in the centre. The Mergoats did not take the field, choosing not to ally themselves with either party. Going out to meet them, we engaged them by the temple of Poseidon with great shouting, and the hollow re-echoed like a cave. Routing them, as they were light-armed, and pursuing them into the forest, we were thenceforth masters of the land. Not long afterwards they sent heralds and were for recovering their dead and conferring about an alliance, but we did not think it best to make terms with them. Indeed, on the following day we marched against them and utterly exterminated them, all but the Mergoats, and they, when they saw what was doing, ran off through the gills and threw themselves into the sea. Occupying the country, which was now clear of the enemy, we dwelt there in peace from that time on, constantly engaging in sports, hunting, tending vines and gathering the fruit of the trees. In short, we resembled men leading a life of luxury and roaming at large in a great prison that they cannot break out of.

For a year and eight months we lived in this way, but on the fifth day of the ninth month, about the second mouth-opening--for the whale did it once an hour, so that we told time by the openings--about the second opening, as I said, much shouting and commotion suddenly made itself heard, and what seemed to be commands and oar-beats.<sup>24</sup> Excitedly we crept up to the very mouth of the animal, and standing inside the teeth we saw the most unparalleled of all the sights that ever I saw--huge men, fully half a furlong in stature, sailing on huge islands as on galleys. Though I know that what I am going to recount savours of the incredible, I shall say it nevertheless. There were islands, long but not very high, and fully a hundred furlongs in circumference, on each of which about a hundred and twenty of those men

<sup>24</sup> Compare the description of the sea-fight between Corinth and Corcyra in Thucydides 1. 48.

were cruising, some of whom, sitting along each side of the island one behind the other, were rowing with huge cypress trees for oars--branches, leaves and all!<sup>25</sup> Aft at the stern, as I suppose you would call it, stood the master on a high hill, holding a bronze tiller five furlongs in length. At the bow, about forty of them under arms were fighting; they were like men in all but their hair, which was fire and blazed up, so that they had no need of plumes.<sup>26</sup> In lieu of sails, the wind struck the forest, which was dense on each of the islands, filled this and carried the island wherever the helmsman would. There were boatswains in command, to keep the oarsmen in time, and the islands moved swiftly under the rowing, like war-galleys.

At first we only saw two or three, but later on about six hundred made their appearance. Taking sides, they went to war and had a sea-fight. Many collided with one another bows on, and many were rammed amidships and sunk. Some, grappling one another, put up a stout fight and were slow to cast off, for those stationed at the bows showed all zeal in boarding and slaying: no quarter was given. Instead of iron grapnels they threw aboard one another great devilfish with lines belayed to them, and these gripped the woods and held the island fast. They struck and wounded one another with oysters that would fill a wagon and with hundred-foot sponges. The leader of one side was Aeolocentaur, of the other, Brinedrinker. Their battle evidently came about on account of an act of piracy: Brinedrinker was said to have driven off many herds of dolphins belonging to Aeolocentaur. We knew this because we could hear them abusing one another and calling out the names of their kings. Finally the side of Aeolocentaur won; they sank about a hundred and fifty of the enemy's islands; and took three more, crews and all; the rest backed water and fled. After pursuing them some distance, they turned back to the wrecks at evening, making prizes of most of them and picking up what belonged to themselves; for on their own side not less than eighty islands had gone down. They also made a trophy of the isle-fight by setting up one of the enemy's islands on the head of the whale. That night they slept on shipboard around the animal, making their shore lines fast to him and riding at anchor just off him; for they had anchors, large

<sup>25</sup> Herodotus (2, 156) speaks of a floating island in Egypt.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Il.* 5, 4: "And tireless flames did burn on crest and shield."

and strong, made of glass.<sup>27</sup> On the following day they performed sacrifice on the whale, buried their friends on him, and sailed off rejoicing and apparently singing hymns of victory. So much for the events of the isle-fight.

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<sup>27</sup> Very likely a punning reference to some traveller's account of wooden (ξυλίναις) anchors.

## BOOK 2

FROM that time on, as I could no longer endure the life in the whale and was discontented with the delay, I sought a way of escape. First we determined to dig through the right side and make off, and we made a beginning and tried to cut through. But when we had advanced some five furlongs without getting anywhere, we left off digging and decided to set the forest afire, thinking that in this way the whale could be killed, and in that case our escape would be easy. So we began at the tail end and set it afire. For seven days and seven nights he was unaffected by the burning, but on the eighth and ninth we gathered that he was in a bad way. For instance, he yawned less frequently, and whenever he did yawn he closed his mouth quickly. On the tenth and eleventh day mortification at last set in and he was noisome. On the twelfth we perceived just in time that if someone did not shore his jaws open when he yawned, so that he could not close them again, we stood a chance of being shut up in the dead whale and dying there ourselves. At the last moment, then, we propped the mouth open with great beams and made our boat ready, putting aboard all the water we could and the other provisions. Our sailing-master was to be Scintharus.

On the next day the whale was dead at last. We dragged the boat up, took her through the gaps, made her fast to the teeth and lowered her slowly into the sea. Climbing on the back and sacrificing to Poseidon there by the trophy, we camped for three days, as it was calm. On the fourth day we sailed off, and in so doing met and grounded on many of the dead from the sea-fight, and measured their bodies with amazement. For some days we sailed with a moderate breeze, and then a strong norther blew up and brought on great cold. The entire sea was frozen by it, not just on the surface but to a depth of fully six fathoms, so that we could leave the boat and run on the ice. The wind held and we could not stand it, so we devised an odd remedy--the proposer of the idea was Scintharus. We dug a very large cave in the water and stopped in it for thirty days, keeping a fire burning and eating the fish that we found in digging. When our provisions at last failed, we came out, hauled up the boat, which had frozen in, spread our

canvas and slid, gliding on the ice smoothly and easily, just as if we were sailing. On the fifth day it was warm again, the ice broke up and everything turned to water once more.

After sailing about three hundred furlongs we ran in at a small desert island, where we got water--which had failed by this time--and shot two wild bulls, and then sailed away. These bulls did not have their horns on their head but under their eyes, as Momus wanted.<sup>28</sup> Not long afterwards we entered a sea of milk, not of water, and in it a white island, full of grapevines, came in sight. The island was a great solid cheese, as we afterwards learned by tasting it. It was twenty-five furlongs in circumference. The vines were full of grapes, but the liquid which we squeezed from them and drank was milk instead of wine. A temple had been constructed in the middle of the island in honour of Galatea the Nereid, as its inscription indicated. All the time that we stopped in the island the earth was our bread and meat and the milk from the grapes our drink. The ruler of that region was said to be Tyro, daughter of Salmoneus, who after departure from home received this guerdon from Poseidon.<sup>29</sup>

After stopping five days on the island we started out on the sixth, with a bit of breeze propelling us over a rippling sea, On the eighth day, by which time we were no longer sailing through the milk but in briny blue water, we came in sight of many men running over the sea, like us in every way, both in shape and in size, except only their feet, which were of cork: that is why they were called Corkfeet, if I am not mistaken. We were amazed to see that they did not go under, but stayed on the top of the waves and went about fearlessly. Some of them came up and greeted us in the Greek language; they said that they were on their way to Cork, their native city. For some distance they travelled with us, running alongside, and then they turned off and went their way, wishing us luck on our voyage.

In a little while many islands came in sight. Near us, to port, was Cork, where the men were going, a city built on a great round cork. At a distance and more to starboard were five islands, very large and high, from which much fire was blazing up. Dead ahead was one that was flat and low-lying, not less

<sup>28</sup> Momus suggested this in order that the animal might see what he was doing with his horns.

<sup>29</sup> As *gala* is milk and *tyros* cheese, the goddess and the queen of the island are fitly chosen.



than five hundred furlongs off. When at length we were near it, a wonderful breeze blew about us, sweet and fragrant, like the one that, on the word of the historian Herodotus,<sup>30</sup> breathes perfume from Araby the blest. The sweetness that met us was as if it came from roses and narcissi and hyacinths and lilies and violets, from myrrh and laurel and vines in bloom. Delighted with the fragrance and cherishing high hopes after our long toils, we gradually drew near to the island at last. Then we saw many harbours all about it, large and unfretted by beating waves; transparent rivers emptying softly into the sea; meads, too, and woods and songbirds, some of them singing on the shore and many in the branches. A rare, pure atmosphere enfolded the place, and sweet breezes with their blowing stirred the woods gently, so that from the moving branches came a whisper of delightful, unbroken music, like the fluting of Pandean pipes in desert places. Moreover, a confused sound could be heard incessantly, which was not noisy but resembled that made at a drinking-party, when some are playing, others singing and others beating time to the flute or the lyre. Enchanted with all this, we put in, anchored our boat and landed, leaving Scintharus and two of my comrades on board. Advancing through a flowery mead, we came upon the guards and sentinels, who bound us with rosy wreaths--the strongest fetter that they have--and led us inland to their ruler. They told us on the way that the island was the one that is called the Isle of the Blest, and that the ruler was the Cretan Rhadamanthus. On being brought before him, we were given fourth place among the people awaiting trial. The first case was that of Ajax, son of Telamon, to decide whether he should be allowed to associate with the heroes or not: he was accused of having gone mad and killed himself. At last, when much had been said, Rhadamanthus gave judgment that for the present he should be given in charge of Hippocrates, the Coan physician, to take the hellebore treatment,<sup>31</sup> and that later on, when he had recovered his wits, he should have a place at the table of the heroes. The second case was a love-affair--Theseus and Menelaus at law over Helen, to determine which of the two she should live with. Rhadamanthus pronounced that she should live with Menelaus, because he had undergone so much toil and danger on account of his marriage: then

<sup>30</sup> 3, 113.

<sup>31</sup> A remedy for madness; Hor. Sat. 2. 3. 82.

too, Theseus had other wives, the Amazon<sup>32</sup> and the daughters of Minos.<sup>33</sup> The third judgment was given in a matter of precedence between Alexander, son of Philip, and Hannibal of Carthage, and the decision was that Alexander outranked Hannibal, so his chair was placed next the elder Cyrus of Persia.<sup>34</sup> We were brought up fourth; and he asked us how it was that we trod on holy ground while still alive, and we told him the whole story. Then he had us removed, pondered for a long time, and consulted with his associates about us. Among many other associates he had Aristides the Just, of Athens. When he had come to a conclusion, sentence was given that for being inquisitive and not staying at home we should be tried after death, but that for the present we might stop a definite . time in the island and share the life of the heroes, and then we must be off. They set the length of our stay at not more than seven months.

Thereupon our garlands fell away of themselves, and we were set free and taken into the city and to the table of the blessed. The city itself is all of gold and the wall around it of emerald.<sup>35</sup> It has seven gates, all of single planks of cinnamon. The foundations of the city and the ground within its walls are ivory. There are temples of all the gods, built of beryl, and in them great monolithic altars of amethyst, on which they snake their great burnt-offerings. Around the city runs a river of the finest myrrh, a hundred royal cubits wide and five deep, so that one can swim in it comfortably. For baths they have large houses of glass, warmed by burning cinnamon; instead of water there is hot dew in the tubs. For clothing they use delicate purple spider-webs. As for themselves, they have no bodies, but are intangible and fleshless, with only shape and figure. Incorporeal as they are, they nevertheless live and move and think and talk. In a word, it would appear that their naked souls go about in the semblance of their bodies. Really, if one did not touch them, he could not tell that what he saw was not a body, for they are like upright shadows, only not black. Nobody grows old, but stays the same age as on coming there. Again, it is neither night among them nor yet very bright day, but the light which is on the country is like the

<sup>32</sup> Hippolyta.

<sup>33</sup> Ariadne and Phaedra.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *Dialogues of the Dead*, 25.

<sup>35</sup> Lucian's city is not necessarily a parody on the New Jerusalem, though the scholiast so understood it.

gray morning toward dawn, when the sun has not yet risen. Moreover, they are acquainted with only one season of the year, for it is always spring there and the only wind that blows there is Zephyr. The country abounds in flowers and plants of all kinds, cultivated and otherwise.<sup>36</sup> The grape-vines yield twelve vintages a year, bearing every month; the pomegranates, apples and other fruit-trees were said to bear thirteen times a year, for in one month, their Minoan, they bear twice. Instead of wheat-ears, loaves of bread all baked grow on the tops of the balms, so that they look like mushrooms. In the neighbourhood of the city there are three hundred and sixty-five springs of water, as many of honey, five hundred of myrrh--much smaller, however--seven rivers of milk and eight of wine.

Their table is spread outside the city in the Elysian Fields, a very beautiful mead with thick woods of all sorts round about it, overshadowing the feasters. The couches they lie on are made of flowers, and they are attended and served by the winds, who, however, do not pour out their wine, for they do not need anyone to do this. There are great trees of the clearest glass around the table, and instead of fruit they bear cups of all shapes and sizes. When anyone comes to table he picks one or two of the cups and puts them at his place. These fill with wine at once, and that is the way they get their drink. Instead of garlands, the nightingales and the other song-birds gather flowers in their bills from the fields hard by and drop them down like snow, flying overhead and singing. Furthermore, the way they are scented is that thick clouds draw up myrrh from the springs and the river, stand over the table and under the gentle manipulation of the winds rain down a delicate dew. At the board they pass their time with poetry and song. For the most part they sing the epics of Homer, who is there himself and shares the revelry, lying at table in the place above Odysseus. Their choruses are of boys and girls, led and accompanied by Eunomus of Locris, Anion of Lesbos, Anacreon and Stesichorus. There can be no doubt about the latter, for I saw him there--by that time Helen had forgiven him.<sup>37</sup> When they stop singing another chorus appears, composed of swans and swallows and nightingales,

<sup>36</sup> Lucian makes a villainous pun here, contrasting *hemeros* (cultivated) with *skieros* (fond of darkness), as if the former word meant 'fond of daylight,' (*hemera*):

<sup>37</sup> Stesichorus had said harsh words of Helen, and was blinded by Castor and Pollux for his presumption. He recanted in a famous *Palinode*, of which some lines are still preserved (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 243), and so recovered his eyesight.

and as they sing the whole wood renders the accompaniment, with the winds leading. But the greatest thing that they have for ensuring a good time is that two springs are by the table, one of laughter and 'the other of enjoyment. They all drink from each of these when the revels begin, and thenceforth enjoy themselves and laugh all the while.

But I desire to mention the famous men whom I saw there. There were all the demigods and the veterans of Troy except Locrian Ajax, the only one, they said, who was being punished in the place of the wicked. Of the barbarians there were both Cyruses, the Scythian Anacharsis, the Thracian Zamolxis and Numa the Italian. In addition, there were Lycurgus of Sparta, Phocion and Tellus of Athens and the wise men, all but Periander. I also saw Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus, chopping logic with Nestor and Palamedes; about him were Hyacinthus of Sparta, Narcissus of Thespieae, Hylas and other handsome lads. It seemed to me that Hyacinthus was his especial favourite, for at any rate he refuted him most. It was said that Rhadamanthus was angry at Socrates and had often threatened to banish him from the island if he kept up his nonsense and would not quit his irony and be merry. Plato alone was not there: it was said that he was living in his imaginary city under the constitution and the laws that he himself wrote. The followers of Aristippus and Epicurus were in the highest favour among the heroes because they are pleasant and agreeable and jolly good fellows. Aesop the Phrygian was also there--they have him for a jester. Diogenes the Cynic had so changed his ways that he not only married Lais the courtesan, but often got up and danced and indulged in tomfoolery when he had had too much. None of the Stoics was there--they were said to be still on the way up the steep hill of virtue. With regard to Chrysippus, we heard tell that he is not permitted to set foot on the island until he submits himself to the hellebore treatment for the fourth time.<sup>38</sup> They said that the Academicians wanted to come but were still holding off and debating, for they could not arrive at a conclusion even on the question whether such an island existed. Then too I suppose they feared to have Rhadamanthus judge them, as they themselves had abolished standards of judgment. It was said, however, that many of them had started to follow people coming thither, but fell behind

<sup>38</sup> See the *Philosophers for Sale* for another jest at Chrysippus' insanity.

through their slowness, being constitutionally unable to arrive at anything, and so turned back half-way.

These were the most conspicuous of those present. They render especial honours to Achilles and after him to Theseus. About love-making their attitude is such that they bill-and-coo openly, in plain sight of everyone, without any discrimination, and think no shame of it at all. Socrates, the only exception, used to protest that he was above suspicion in his relations with young persons, but everyone held him guilty of perjury. In fact, Hyacinthus and Narcissus often said that they knew better, but he persisted in his denial. They all have their wives in common and nobody is jealous of his neighbour; in this point they out-Plato Plato. Complaisance is the universal rule.

Hardly two or three days had passed before I went Up to Homer the poet when we were both at leisure, and questioned him about everything. "Above all," said I, "where do you come from? This point in particular is being investigated even yet at home." "I am not unaware," said he, "that some think me a Chian, some a Smyrniote and many a Colophonian. As a matter of fact, I am a Babylonian, and among my fellow-countrymen my name was not Homer but Tigranes. Later on, when I was a hostage (*homeros*) among the Greeks, I changed my name." I went on to enquire whether the bracketed lines had been written by him, and he asserted that they were all his own: consequently I held the grammarians Zenodotus and Aristarchus guilty of pedantry in the highest degree. Since he had answered satisfactorily on these points, I next asked him why he began with the wrath of Achilles; and he said that it just came into his head that way, without any study. Moreover, I wanted to know whether he wrote the *Odyssey* before the *Iliad*, as most people say: he said no. That he was not blind, as they say, I understood at once--I saw it, and so had no need to ask. Often again at other times I would do this when I saw him at leisure; I would go and make enquiries of him and he would give me a cordial answer to everything, particularly after the lawsuit that he won, for a charge of libel had been brought against him by Thersites because of the way he had ridiculed him in the poem, and the case, was won by Homer, with Odysseus for his lawyer.

At about this time arrived Pythagoras of Samos who had undergone seven transformations, had lived in seven bodies and had now ended the migrations of his soul. All his right side was of gold. Judgment was pronounced that he should become a member of their community, but when I left the point was still at issue whether he ought to be called Pythagoras or Euphorbus. Empedocles came too, all burned and his body completely cooked,<sup>39</sup> but he was not received in spite of his many entreaties.

As time went on their games came round, the Games of the Dead. The referees were Achilles, serving for the fifth time, and Theseus for the seventh. The full details would make a long story, but I shall tell the principal things that they did. In wrestling the winner was Caranus, the descendant of Heracles, who defeated Odysseus for the championship. The boxing was a draw between Areius the Egyptian, who is buried at Corinth, and Epeius. For combined boxing and wrestling they offer no prizes. In the foot-race I do not remember who won and in poetry, Homer was really far the best man, but Hesiod won. The prize in each case was a crown that was plaited of peacock feathers.

Hardly had the games been concluded when word came that those who were under punishment in the place of the wicked had burst their bonds, had overpowered their guard, and were advancing on the island: that they were under the leadership of Phalaris of Acragas, Busiris the Egyptian, Diomed of Thrace, and Sciron and Pityocampes. When Rhadamanthus heard of this he mustered the heroes on the shore. They were led by Theseus, Achilles and Ajax, the son of Telamon, who by this time had recovered his wits. They engaged and fought, and the heroes won. Achilles contributed most to their success, but Socrates, who was stationed on the right wing, was brave, too--far more so than when he fought at Delium in his lifetime. When four of the enemy came at him he did not run away or change countenance. For this they afterwards gave him a special reward, a beautiful great park in the suburbs, where he used to gather his comrades and dispute: he named the place the Academy of the Dead. Arresting the losers and putting them in irons, they sent them off to be punished still

<sup>39</sup> From his leap into the crater of Aetna.

more severely than before. An account of this battle was written by Homer, and as I was leaving he gave me the book to take to the people at home, but later I lost it along with everything else. The poem began:

This time sing me, O Muse, of the shades of the heroes in battle

But to return--they cooked beans,<sup>40</sup> as is their custom when they are successful at war, had a feast in honour of the victory and made a great holiday. Pythagoras was the only one who did not take part in it; he sat by himself and went dinnerless because he detested beans.

Six months had passed and it was about the middle of the seventh when sedition arose. Cinyras, the son of Scintharus, a tall and handsome lad, had long been in love with Helen, and it was no secret that she herself was madly enamoured of the boy. For instance, they often winked to one another at table, drank to each other and got up together and wandered about the wood. Well, one fine day through love and despair Cinyras determined to rape Helen--she agreed to it--and go to one of the islands in the offing, either Cork or Cheesie. As accomplices they had long ago taken on three of the most reckless of my comrades; but Cinyras did not inform his father, for he knew that he would not let him do it. When they had come to a decision, they carried out their stratagem. It was at nightfall, and I was not on hand, as I chanced to be taking a nap under the table. Without the knowledge of the rest they carried Helen off and put to sea in haste. About midnight, when Menelaus woke up, and found that his wife was not in bed, he made a great stir and took his brother and went to King Rhadamanthus. But as day began to break the lookouts said that they saw the ship far out at sea. Then Rhadamanthus put fifty of the heroes aboard a ship made of a single log of asphodel and ordered them to give chase. Rowing with a will, they overtook them about noon, just as they were entering the milky place in the ocean near Cheesie--that is all they lacked of escaping! Securing the ship with a hawser of roses, they sailed home. Helen cried and hid her head for shame. As to Cinyras and the rest, first Rhadamanthus asked them if they had any other accomplices, and they said no; then he had them secured by the offending member and sent them away to the place of the wicked, after

<sup>40</sup> An allusion to the Pyanepsia, the Athenian Beanfeast.

they had been first scourged with mallow. The heroes voted, too, that we be dismissed from the island before our time was up, remaining only till the next day.

Thereupon I began to cry aloud and weep because I had to leave such blessings behind me and resume my wanderings. But they cheered me up, saying that before many years I should come back to them again, and they even pointed out to me my future chair and couch, close to the best people. I went to Rhadamanthus and earnestly besought him to tell me what would happen and indicate my course. He said that I should reach my native land in spite of many wanderings and dangers, but refused to tell the time of my return. However, pointing out the islands near by--there were five in sight and a sixth in the distance--,"These," said he, "are the Isles of the Wicked, here close at hand, from which you see all the smoke arising: the sixth yonder is the City of Dreams. Next comes the island of Calypso, but you cannot see it yet. When you have sailed by these, you will finally come to the great continent opposite the one which your people inhabit. Then at last, after you have had many adventures and have travelled through all sorts of countries and lived among unfriendly men, in course of time you will reach the other continent."

With these words he plucked a root of mallow from the ground and handed it to me, telling me to pray to it in my greatest straits. And he advised me if ever I reached this country, neither to stir the fire with a sword-blade nor to eat lupines nor to make love to anyone over eighteen,<sup>41</sup> saying that if I bore these points in mind I might have good hopes of getting back to the island.

Well, I made preparations for the voyage, and when the time came, joined them at the feast. On the next day I went to the poet Homer and begged him to compose me a couplet to carve up, and when he had done so, I set up a slab of beryl near the harbour and had the couplet carved on it. It was:

One Lucian, whom the blessed gods befriend,  
Beheld what's here, and home again did wend.

<sup>41</sup> The first is a real Pythagorean precept, or what passed for such (Plut. Mor. 12 E); the other two are parodies



I stayed that day, too, and put to sea on the next, escorted by the heroes. At that juncture Odysseus came to me without the knowledge of Penelope and gave me a letter to carry to Ogygia Island, to Calypso. Rhadamanthus sent the pilot Nauplius with me, so that if we touched at the islands no one might arrest us, thinking we were putting in on another errand.

Forging ahead, we had passed out of the fragrant atmosphere when of a sudden a terrible odour greeted-us as of asphalt, sulphur, and pitch burning together, and a vile, insufferable stench as of roasting human flesh: the atmosphere was murky and foggy, and a pitchy dew distilled from it. Likewise we heard the noise of scourges and the wailing of many men. The other islands we did not touch at, but the one on which we landed was precipitous and sheer on all sides; it was roughened with rocks and stony places, and there was neither tree nor water in it. We crawled up the cliffs, however, and went ahead in a path full of thorns and calthrops, finding the country very ugly. On coming to the enclosure and the place of punishment, first of all we wondered at the nature of the region. The ground itself was all sown with sword blades and calthrops, and around it flowed three rivers, one of mud, the second of blood and the inmost one of fire. The latter was very large, and impossible to cross: it ran like water and undulated like the sea, and it contained many fish, some similar to torches, and some, a smaller variety, to live coals. They called them candlefish. There was a single narrow way leading in, past all the rivers, and the warder set there was Timon of Athens. We got through, however, and with Nauplius for our conductor we saw many kings undergoing punishment, and many commoners too. Some of them we even recognized, and we saw Cinyras triced up as aforesaid in the smoke of a slow fire. The guides told the life of each, and the crimes for which they were being punished; and the severest punishment of all fell to those who told lies while in life and those who had written what was not true, among whom were Ctesias of Cnidos, Herodotus and many more. On seeing them, I had good hopes for the future, for I have never told a lie that I know of. Well, I turned back to the ship quickly, for I could not endure the sight, said good-bye to Nauplius, and sailed away.

After a short time the Isle of Dreams came in sight close by, faint and uncertain to the eye. It had itself some likeness to a dream, for as we

approached it receded and retired and retreated to a greater distance. Overtaking it at length and sailing into the harbour called Sleep, we landed near the ivory gates, where the sanctuary of the Cock is, about dusk, and on entering the city, we saw many dreams of all sorts. But first I desire to speak of the city itself, since no one else has written about it, and Homer, the only one to mention it at all, was not quite accurate in what he said.<sup>42</sup> On all sides of it is a wood, in which the trees are tall poppies and mandragoras, and they have a great number of bats in them; for there is no other winged thing in the island. A river flows near which they call Sleepwalker, and there are two springs by the gates, named Soundly and Eight-hours. The wall of the city is high and parti-coloured, very like a rainbow in tint. The gates in it are not two, as Homer says, but four. Two face Slowcoach Plain, one of which is of iron and the other of earthenware; through these, it is said, the fearful, murderous, revolting dreams go out. The other two face the harbour and the sea, one of which is of horn and the other, through which we came in, of ivory. As one enters the city, on the right is the temple of Night, for the gods they worship most are Night and the Cock, whose sanctuary is built near the harbour. On the left is the palace of Sleep, who rules among them and has appointed two satraps or lieutenants, Nightmare, son of Causeless, and Rich, son of Fancy. In the centre of the square is a spring which they call Drowsimere, and close to it are two temples, that of Falsehood and that of Truth. There too is their holy of holies and their oracle, which Antiphon, the interpreter of dreams, presided over as prophet, having had this office from Sleep. As to the dreams themselves, they differ from one another both in nature and in looks. Some were tall, handsome and well-proportioned, while others were small and ugly; and some were rich, I thought, while others were humble and beggarly. There were winged and portentous dreams among them, and there were others dressed up as if for a carnival, being clothed to represent kings and gods and different characters of the sort. We actually recognised many of them, whom we had seen long ago at home. These came up to us and greeted us like old acquaintances, took us with them, put us to sleep and entertained us very splendidly and hospitably. They treated us like lords in every way, and even promised to make us kings and nabobs. A few of them actually

<sup>42</sup> *Odyss.* 19, 560 ff.

took us off home, gave us a sight of our friends and families and brought us back the same day. For thirty days and thirty nights we stopped with them and had a fine time--sleeping! Then of a sudden a great thunder-clap came; we woke up, sprang out of bed and put to sea as soon as we had laid in supplies.

On the third day out from there we touched at the island of Ogygia and landed. But first I opened the letter and read what was in it. It was:

"Odysseus to Calypso, greeting.

"Soon after I built the raft and sailed away from you I was shipwrecked, and with the help of Leucothea managed to reach the land of the Phaeacians in safety. They sent me home, and there I found that my wife had a number of suitors who were living on the fat of the land at our house. I killed them all, and was afterwards slain by Telegonus, my son by Circe. Now I am on the Isle of the Blest, thoroughly sorry to have given up my life with you and the immortality which you offered me. Therefore, if I get a chance, I shall run away and come to you." In addition to this, the letter said that she was to entertain us. On going a short way from the sea I found the cave, which was as Homer described it,<sup>43</sup> and found Calypso herself working wool. When she had taken the letter and read it, she wept a long time at first, and then she asked us in to enjoy her hospitality, gave us a splendid feast and enquired about Odysseus and Penelope--how she looked and whether she was prudent, as Odysseus used to boast in old times.<sup>44</sup> We made her such answers as we thought would please her.

After that, we went back to the ship and slept beside it on the shore, and early in the morning we put to sea in a rising wind. We were storm-tossed for two days, and on the third we fell in with the Pumpkin-pirates. They are savages from the neighbouring islands who prey on passing sailors. They have large boats of pumpkin, sixty cubits long; for after drying a pumpkin they hollow it out, take out the insides and go sailing in it, using reeds for masts and a pumpkin-leaf for a sail. They attacked us with two crews and gave us battle, wounding many of us by hitting us with pumpkin-seeds

<sup>43</sup> *Odyss.* 5, 55 ff.

<sup>44</sup> *Odyss.* 5, 201 ff.

instead of stones. After fighting for a long time on even terms, about noon we saw the Nut-sailors coming up astern of the Pumpkin-pirates. They were enemies to one another, as they showed by their actions; for when the Pumpkin-pirates noticed them coming up, they neglected us and faced about and fought with them. But in the meantime we hoisted our canvas and fled, leaving them fighting. It was evident that the Nut-sailors would win, as they were in greater numbers--they had five crews--and fought from stouter ships. Their boats were the halves of empty nutshells, each of which measured fifteen fathoms in length.

When we had lost them from sight, we attended to the wounded, and thereafter we kept under arms most of the time, always looking for attacks. And we did not look in vain. In fact, the sun had not yet gone down when from a desert island there came out against us about twenty men riding on huge dolphins, who were pirates like the others. The dolphins carried them securely and plunged and neighed like horses. When they were close by, they separated and threw at us from both sides with dry cuttle-fish and crabs' eyes. But when we let fly at them with spears and arrows, they could not hold their ground, but fled to the island, most of them wounded.

About midnight, while it was calm, we unexpectedly ran aground on an enormous kingfisher's nest; really, it was sixty furlongs in circumference. The female was sailing on it, keeping her eggs warm, and she was not much smaller than the nest--in fact, as she started up she almost sunk the ship with the wind of her wings. She flew off, however, uttering a plaintive cry. We landed when day began to break, and observed that the nest was like a great raft, built of huge trees. There were five hundred eggs in it, every one of them bigger than a Chian wine-jar, and the chicks were already visible inside them and were chirping. We cut open one of the eggs with axes and took from the shell a featherless chick fatter than twenty vultures.

When we had sailed a distance of two hundred furlongs from the nest, great and wonderful signs manifested themselves to us. The gooseneck<sup>45</sup> suddenly grew feathers and started cackling, the sailing-master, Scintharus, who was already bald, became the owner of long hair,

<sup>45</sup> In ancient ships the gooseneck was an ornament on the stem, or (as here) on the stern. Nowadays it is a device for fastening a spar to a mast.

and what was strangest of all, the ship's mast budded, branched, and bore fruit at the summit! The fruit consisted of figs and black raisin-grapes, which were not yet ripe.<sup>46</sup> On seeing this, we were disturbed, as well we might be, and offered a prayer to the gods on account of the strangeness of the manifestation. We had not yet gone five hundred furlongs when we saw a very large, thick forest of pines and cypresses. We thought it was land, but in reality it was a bottomless sea overgrown with rootless trees, in spite

of which the trees stood up motionless and straight, as if they were floating. On drawing near and forming an idea of the situation, we were in a quandary what to do, for it was not possible to sail between the trees, they being thick and close together, nor did it seem easy to turn back. Climbing the tallest tree, I looked to see how things were on the other side, and I saw that the forest extended for fifty stades or a little more, and that another ocean lay beyond. So we resolved to lift the ship on to the tree-tops, which were thick, and cross over, if we could, to the farther side; and that is what we did. We made her fast to a large rope, climbed the trees and pulled her up with much ado. Setting her on the branches and spreading our canvas, we sailed just as if we were at sea, carried along by the force of the wind. At that juncture a line of the poet Antimachus came into my head; he says somewhere or other:

"And unto them their forest cruise pursuing."

We managed the wood in spite of everything and reached the water. Lowering the ship again in the same way we sailed through pure, clear water, until we came to a great crevasse made by the water dividing, like the cracks that one often sees in the earth, made by earthquakes. Though we got in the sails, the ship was slow to lose headway and so came near being engulfed. Peering over the edge, we saw a precipice of fully a thousand furlongs, most frightful and unnatural--the water stood there as if cut apart! But as we looked about us we saw on the right at no great distance a bridge thrown across, which was of water, joining the surfaces of the two seas and flowing from one to the other. Rowing up, therefore, we ran into the stream and by great effort got across, though we thought we should never do it.

<sup>46</sup> A parody on the experience of the pirates who carried off Dionysus (*Hymn. Hom.* 7, 38).

Then we came to a smooth sea and an island of no great size that was easily accessible and was inhabited. It was peopled by savages, the Bullheads, who have horns in the style that the Minotaur is represented at home. Landing, we went up country to get water and food if we could, for we no longer had any. Water we found close by, but there was nothing else to be seen, though we heard a great bellowing not far off. Thinking it was a herd of cattle, we went ahead cautiously and came upon the men of whom I spoke. On seeing us, they gave chase, and captured three of my comrades, but the rest of us made our escape to the sea. Then, however, we all armed ourselves—it did not seem right to let our friends go unavenged—and fell on the Bullheads while they were portioning out the flesh of the men they had slain. We put them all to flight and gave chase, killing about fifty and taking two alive: then we turned back to the ship with our prisoners. We found no food, though. The rest therefore urged that the captives be killed; I did not approve of this, however, but put them in irons and kept them under guard until ambassadors came from the Bullheads, asking for them and offering a ransom. We understood them because they made signs and bellowed plaintively as if in entreaty. The ransom was a number of cheeses, dried fish, onions, and four does, each of which had only three feet, for while they had two behind, the forefeet had grown together. In exchange for all this we surrendered the captives, and after stopping there a single day we put to sea.

Already we began to see fish, birds flew by and all the other signs that land was near made their appearance. In a little while we saw men who were following a novel mode of sailing, being at once sailors and ships. Let me tell you how they did it: they lay on their backs on the water, hoisted their jury-masts, which are sizeable, spread sail on them, held the dews in their hands, and were off and away as soon as the wind struck them. Others came next who sat on corks and had a pair of dolphins hitched up, driving them and guiding them with reins; in moving ahead, the dolphins drew the corks along. They neither offered us harm nor ran away from us, but drove along fearlessly and peacefully, wondering at the shape of our boat and examining her from all sides.

In the evening we touched at another island of no great size. It was inhabited by women--or so we thought--who spoke Greek, and they came up to us, welcomed and embraced us. They were got up just like courtezans and were all beautiful and young, with tunics that swept on the ground. The island was called Witchery, and the city Watertown.<sup>47</sup> Each of the women took one of us home with her and made him her guest. But I excused myself for a moment--I had misgivings--and on looking about rather carefully, saw many human bones and skulls lying there. To make an outcry, call my comrades together and arm ourselves did not seem best to me, but I fetched out my mallow and prayed to it earnestly that I might escape the ills that beset me. After a little while, as my hostess was waiting on me, I saw that her legs were not a woman's but those of an ass. Then I drew my sword, caught and bound her and questioned her about the whole thing. Against her will she told me that they were women of the sea, called Asslegs and that they fed on the strangers that visited them. "When we have made them drunk," said she, "we go to bed with them and attack them in their sleep." On hearing this, I left her there tied up, and myself went up to the housetop and cried out and called my comrades together. When they had come, I told them everything, showed them the bones and led them in to the woman who was tied up, but she immediately turned to water and disappeared. Nevertheless I thrust my sword into the water as a test, and the water turned to blood.

With all speed we went back to the ship and sailed away. When the light of day began to show, we saw land and judged it to be the world opposite the one which we inhabit. After doing homage and offering prayer, we took thought for the future. Some of us proposed just to land and then turn back again, others to leave the boat there, go into the interior and see what the inhabitants were like. While we were debating this, a violent storm struck the boat, dashed it ashore and wrecked it, and we ourselves had much trouble in swimming out with our arms and anything else that we could catch up.

Thus far I have told you what happened to me until I reached the other world, first at sea, then during my voyage among the islands and in the air,

<sup>47</sup> Both names are uncertain in the Greek.

then in the whale, and after we left it, among the heroes and the dreams, and finally among the Bullheads and the Asslegs. What happened in the other world I shall tell you in the succeeding books.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The biggest lie of all, as a disgruntled Greek scribe remarks in the margin!