generation to generation. In this particular case there is a definite clue as to which Crete, Bronze Age of Eighth Century, is before hi.s mind's eye. In Book XIX the "Cretan" Odysseus prefaces his tale to Penelope with a description of his homeland:

In the midst of the wine-dark sea there lies a land called Crete, a rich &
lovely land, washed by the waves on every side, densely peopled & boasting ninety cities. Each of the several races of the island has its own language. First there are the Achaians; then the genuine Cretans (Eteocretans), proud of their native stock; next the Kydonians; the Dorians with their three tribes; & finally the noble Pelasgians. One of the ninety towns is a great city called Knossos, & there for nine years King Minos ruled & enjoyed the friendship of almighty Zeus. (XIX 172-77)

The Crete of the Bronze Age was a populous place, even after the ascendancy of "Achaian" (Mycenaean Greev7B r

at home (258), a fugitive who has secretly killed the son of Idomeneus in defense of his booty from Troy (263). Having bought passage on a Phoenician ship, he was blown off course & was abandoned by the crew, who nonetheless have

which his Cretan double so quickly tired of; is this a sort of veiled warning for the future? On the other hand, in the social structure of Dorian Crete, like the Spartan, the warriors ate in a common mess, even slept apart from their spouses in dormitories up to a certain' age, with little opportunity for developing a real sense of

obliga.ted to deal generously with any guest-friends of her husband. There are new first-hand details about Cretan geography in this speech -- the difficult harbor at Amnisos, by the cave of Eilythyia, for example -- designed to establishthe wanderer's veracity in the same way as his eyewitness report on Odysseus' dress & companions, reminiscent in their particularity of Menelaos' description of his shipwreck site on Crete (III.291-96). For Menelaos too, the husband of Helen who started the whole Trojan War, was delayed in his return home by a sojourn on Crete during which he made a fortune for himself by pirateering against Egypt. This must have been a regular pattern. · Penelope is most interested in his recent news of her husband: here he repeats the story of their nearly crossing paths in Thesprotia, of Odysseus' pilgrimage to Dodona & his imminent return. He adds among the lies some.details which are in fact true of the real escapades of Odysseus, for instance the sojourn among the Phaiacians. But this Cretan prince is an

booty; lost his men & ships in Egypt, but spending some years there acquired another fortune; fell afoul of those rival cors<1irs, the Phoenicians, & was perhaps enslaved in Cyprus; ended up in Thesprotia. Thus, says Woodhouse, would the promise of the poem's exordium that Odysseus should "see the townlands & learn the minds of many distant men" (I.3) be fulfilled in iJ. way belied by the mythologized Phaiacian account. Odysseus the naturalized Cretan would have experienced many a true-life adve1;1ture, & voluntarily postponed his return in