

Ah shun the horrid gulf! by Scylla fly;
'Tis better six to lose, than all to die.

I then : O nymph propitious to my pray'r,
Goddeſs divine, my guardian pow'r, declare 140
Is the foul fiend from human vengeance freed?
Or if I riſe in arms, can Scylla bleed?

Then ſhe : O worn by toils, oh broke in fight!
Still are new toils and war thy dear delight?
Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind, 145
And never, never be to heav'n reſign'd?

How vain thy efforts to avenge the wrong?
Deathleſs the peſt! impenetrably ſtrong!
Furious and fell! tremend'ous to behold!
Ev'n with a look ſhe withers all the bold! 150

She mocks the weak attempts of human might;
O fly her rage! thy conqueſt is thy fight.

If but to ſeize thy arms thou mak'ſt delay, }
Again the Fury vindicates her prey, }

Her ſix mouths yawn, and ſix are ſnatch'd away. }
From her foul womb Crataeis gave to air 155

This dreadful peſt! to her direct thy pray'r,
To curb the monster in her dire abodes,

And guard thee through the tumult of the floods.
Thence to Trinacria's ſhore you bend your way, 160

Where graze thy herds, illuſtrious ſource of day!
Sev'n herds, ſev'n flocks enrich the ſacred plains,

Each herd, each flock full fifty heads contains;
The wond'rous kind a length of age ſurvey,

By breed increaſe not, nor by death decay. 165
Two ſiſter-goddeſſes poſſeſs the plain,

The conſtant guardians of the woolly train;
Lampetie fair, and Phacathuſa young,

From Phoebus and the bright Neaera ſprung:
Here watchful o'er the flocks, in ſhady bow'rs 170

And flow'ry meads, they waſte the joyous hours.
Rob not the god! and ſo propitious gales

Attend thy voyage, and impell thy ſails;

But if thy impious hands the flocks destroy,
 The gods, the gods avenge it, and ye die ! 175
 'Tis thine alone (thy friends and navy lost)
 Through tedious toils to view thy native coast.

She ceas'd : and now arose the morning ray ;
 Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.
 Then to my mates I measur'd back the plain, 180
 Climb'd the tall bark, and rush'd into the main ;
 Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew
 To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.
 Up-sprung a brisker breeze ; with fresh'ning gales
 The friendly goddess stretch'd the swelling sails : 185
 We drop our oars ; at ease the pilot guides ;
 The vessel light along the level glides ;
 When rising sad and slow, with pensive look,
 Thus to the melancholy train I spoke :

O friends, oh ever partners of my woes ! 190
 Attend while I what heav'n foredooms disclose ;
 Hear all ! fate hangs o'er all ! on you it lies
 To live, or perish ; to be safe, be wise !

In flow'ry meads the sportive Sirens play,
 Touch the soft lyre, and tune the vocal lay : 195
 Me, me alone, with fetters firmly bound,
 The gods allow to hear the dang'rous sound.
 Hear and obey ; if freedom I demand,
 Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, be added band to band.

While yet I speak the winged galley flies, 200
 And lo ! the Siren shores like mists arise.
 Sunk were at once the winds ; the air above,
 And waves below, at once forgot to move :
 Some daemon calm'd the air, and smooth'd the deep,
 Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to sleep.
 Now ev'ry sail we furl, each oar we ply ; 206
 Lash'd by the stroke the frothy waters fly.
 The ductile wax with busy hands I mold,
 And cleft in fragments, and the fragments roll'd :
 Th' aerial region now grew warm with day, 210
 The wax dissolv'd beneath the burning ray ;

Then ev'ry ear I barr'd against the strain,
 And from access of frenzy lock'd the brain.
 Now round the mast my mates the setters roll'd,
 And bound me limb by limb, with fold on fold. 215
 Then bending to the stroke, the active train
 Plunge all at once their oars, and cleave the main.

While to the shore the rapid vessel flies,
 Our swift approach the Siren quire descries;
 Celestial music warbles from their tongue, 220
 And thus the sweet deluders tune the song :

O stay, oh pride of Greece ! Ulysses, stay !
 O cease thy course, and listen to our lay !
 Blest is the man ordain'd our voice to hear ;
 The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear. 225
 Approach ! thy soul shall into raptures rise !
 Approach ! and learn new wisdom from the wise !

We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
 Atchiev'd at Ilion in the field of fame ;
 Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies. 230
 O stay, and learn new wisdom from the wise !

Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main ;
 My soul takes wing to meet the heav'nly strain ;
 I give the sign, and struggle to be free :
 Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea ; 235
 New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,
 Till dying off, the distant sounds decay :
 Then scudding swiftly from the dang'rous ground,
 The deafen'd ear unlock'd, the chains unbound.

Now all at once tremend'ous scenes unfold ; 240
 Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd !
 Tumultuous waves embroil'd the bellowing flood ;
 All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood !
 No more the vessel plow'd the dreadful wave,
 Fear seiz'd the mighty, and unnerv'd the brave ; 245
 Each dropp'd his oar : but swift from man to man
 With look serene I turn'd, and thus began :
 O friends ! oh often try'd in adverse storms !
 With ills familiar in more dreadful forms !

Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay, 250
Yet safe return'd——Ulysses led the way.

Learn courage hence ! and in my care confide :
Lo ! still the same Ulysses is your guide !
Attend my words ! your oars incessant ply ;
Strain ev'ry nerve, and bid the vessel fly. 255
If from yon' jussling rocks and wavy war
Jove safety grants, he grants it to your care.
And thou whose guiding hand directs our way,
Pilot, attentive listen and obey !

Bear wide thy course, nor plow those angry waves 260
Where rolls yon' smoke, yon' tumbling ocean raves ;
Steer by the higher rock ; lest whirl'd around
We sink, beneath the circling eddy drown'd.

While yet I speak, at once their oars they seize, '
Stretch to the stroke, and brush the working seas. 265
Cautious the name of Scylla I suppress ;
That dreadful sound had chill'd the boldest breast.

Mean time, forgetful of the voice divine,
All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine ; '
High on the deck I take my dang'rous stand, 270
Two glitt'ring jav'lins lighten in my hand ;
Prepar'd to whirl the whizzing spear I stay,
'Till the fell fiend arise to seize her prey.
Around the dungeon, studious to behold
The hideous pest, my lab'ring eyes I roll'd ; 275
In vain ! the dismal dungeon dark as night
Veils the dire monster, and confounds the sight.

Now thro' the rocks, appal'd with deep dismay,
We bend our course, and stem the desp'rate way ;
Dire Scylla there a scence of horror forms, 280
And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms.
When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves
The rough rock roars ; tumultuous boil the waves ;
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze ; 285
Eternal mists obscure th' aerial plain,
And high above the rock she spouts the main ;

When in her gulfs the rushing sea subsides,
 She drains the ocean with the reflux tides :
 'The rock rebellows with a thund'ring sound ; 290
 Deep, wond'rous deep, below appears the ground.

Struck with despair, with trembling hearts we view'd
 The yawning dungeon, and the tumbling flood ;
 When lo ! fierce Scylla stoop'd to seize her prey,
 Stretch'd her dire jaws, and swept six men away ; 295
 Chiefs of renown ! loud echoing shrieks arise ;
 I turn and view them quiv'ring in the skies ;
 They call, and aid with out-stretch'd arms implore :
 In vain they call ! those arms are stretch'd no more.
 As from some rock that over-hangs the flood, 300
 The silent fisher casts th' insidious food,
 With fraudulent care he waits the sly prize,
 And sudden lifts it quiv'ring to the skies :
 So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,
 So pant the wretches, struggling in the sky ; 305
 In the wide dungeon she devours her food,
 And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.
 Worn as I am with griefs, with care decay'd,
 Never, I never scene so dire survey'd !
 My shiv'ring blood congeal'd, forgot to flow, 310
 Aghast I stood, a monument of woe !

Now from the rocks the rapid vessel flies,
 And the hoarse din like distant thunder dies :
 To Sol's bright isle our voyage we pursue ;
 And now the glitt'ring mountains rise to view. 315
 There sacred to the radiant god of day
 Graze the fair herds, the flocks promiscuous stray :
 Then suddenly was heard along the main
 To low the ox, to bleat the woolly train ;
 Strait to my anxious thoughts the sound convey'd 320
 The words of Circe and the Theban shade ;
 Warn'd by their awful voice these shores to shun,
 With cautious fears oppress'd, I thus began :

O friends ! oh ever exercis'd in care !
 Hear heav'n's commands, and reverence what ye hear !

To fly these shores the prescient Theban shade 326
 And Circe warns ; O be their voice obey'd !
 Some mighty woe relentless heav'n forebodes :
 Fly the dire regions, and revere the gods !

While yet I spoke, a sudden sorrow ran 330 }
 Thro' ev'ry breast, and spread from man to man,
 'Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began :

O cruel thou ! some Fury fure has steel'd
 That stubborn soul, by toil-untaught to yield !
 From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes ; 335

And, cruel, enviest thou a short repose ?
 Shall must we restless rove, new seas explore,
 The sun descending, and so near the shore ?
 And lo ! the night begins her gloomy reign,
 And doubles all the terrors of the main. 340

Oft in the dead of night loud winds arise,
 Lash the wild surge, and bluster in the skies ;
 Oh should the fierce south-west his rage display !
 And toss with rising storms the wat'ry way,
 'Tho' gods descend from heav'n's acreal plain. 345
 To lend us aid, the gods descend in vain :

Then while the night displays her awful shade,
 Sweet time of slumber ! be the night obey'd !
 Haste ye to land : and when the morning ray
 Sheds her bright beams, pursue the destin'd way. 350
 A sudden joy in ev'ry bosom rose ;
 So will'd some daemon, minister of woes !

To whom with grief—O swift to be undone,
 Constrain'd I act what wisdom bids me shun.
 But yonder herds and yonder flocks forbear ; 355
 Attest the heav'n's, and call the gods to hear :
 Content, in innocent repast display,
 By Circe giv'n, and fly the dang'rous prey.

Thus I : and while to shore the vessel flies,
 With hands uplifted they attest the skies ; 360
 Then where a fountain's gurgling waters play,
 They rush to land, and end in feasts the day :

They feed ; they quaff ; and now (their hunger fled)
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.
Nor cease the tears, till each in slumber shares 365
A sweet forgetfulness of human cares.

Now far the night advanc'd her gloomy reign,
And setting stars roll'd down the azure plain :
When, at the voice of Jove, wild whirlwinds rise,
And clouds and double darkness veil the skies ; 370
The moon, the stars, the bright ethereal host,
Seem as extinct, and all their splendors lost ;
The furious tempest roars with dreadful sound :
Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.
All night it rag'd ; when morning rose ; to land 375
We haul'd our bark, and moor'd it on the strand,
Where in a beauteous grotto's cool recess
Dance the green Nereids of the neighb'ring seas.

There while the wild winds whistled o'er the main,
Thus careful I address the list'ning train : 380

O friends be wise ! nor dare the flocks destroy
Of these fair pastures : if ye touch, ye die.
Warn'd by the high command of heav'n, be aw'd ;
Holy the flocks, and dreadful is the god !
That god who spreads the radiant beams of light, 385
And views wide earth and heav'n's unmeasur'd height.

And now the moon had run her monthly round,
The south-east blust'ring with a dreadful sound ;
Unhurt the bees, untouch'd the woolly train
Low thro' the grove, or range the flow'ry plain : 390
Then fail'd our food ; then fish we make our prey,
Or fowl, that screaming haunt the wat'ry way.
'Till now from sea or flood no succour found,
Famine and meager want besieg'd us round.
Pensive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd, 395
From the loud storms to find a sylvan shade ;
There o'er my hands the living wave I pour ;
And heav'n, and heav'n's immortal thrones adore,
To calm the roarings of the stormy main,
And grant me peaceful to my realms again. 400

Then o'er my eyes the gods soft slumber shed,
While thus Eutylochus arising said :

O friends ! a thousand ways frail mortals lead :
To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread ;
But dreadful most, when by a slow decay 405
Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.

Why cease ye then t' implore the powers above,
And offer hecatombs to thund'ring Jove ?
Why seize ye not yon' beeves and fleecy prey ?
Arise unanimous ; arise and slay ! 410

And if the gods ordain a safe return,
To Phoebus shrines shall rise, and altars burn.
But should the pow'rs that o'er mankind preside,
Decree to plunge us in the whelming tide,
Better to rush at once to shades below, 415
Than linger life away, and nourish woe !

Thus he : the beeves around securely stray,
When swift to ruin they invade the prey :
They seize ; they kill !—but for the rite divine,
The barley fail'd, and for libations, wine. 420
Swift from the oak they strip the shady pride,
And verdant leaves the flow'ry cake supply'd.

With pray'r they now address th' ethereal train,
Slay the selected beeves, and flea the slain :
The thighs, with fat involv'd, divide with art, 425
Strow'd o'er with morsels cut from ev'ry part.
Water, instead of wine, is brought in urns,
And pour'd profanely as the victim burns.
The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails dress'd,
They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast. 430

'I was then soft slumber fled my troubled brain ;
Back to the bark I speed along the main.
When lo ! an odour from the feast exhales,
Spreads o'er the coast, and scents the tainted gales ;
A chilly fear congeal'd my vital blood, 435
And thus obtesting heav'n I mourn'd aloud :

O fire of men and gods, immortal Jove !
Oh all ye blissful pow'rs that reign above !

Why were my cares beguil'd in short repose ?
O fatal slumber, paid with lasting woes ! 440

A deed so dreadful all the gods alarms,
Vengeance is on the wing, and heav'n in arms !

Mean-time Lampetie mounts th' aerial way,
And kindles into rage the god of day.

Vengeance, ye pow'rs, he cries, and thou whose hand
Aims the red bolt, and hurls the writhen brand ! 446

Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,
When thro' the ports of heav'n I pour the day,
Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray.

Vengeance, ye gods ! or I the skies forego, 450
And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.

To whom the thund'ring pow'r : O source of day !
Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,
Still may thy beams through heav'n's bright portals rise,
The joy of earth, and glory of the skies : 455

Lo ! my red arm I bare, my thunders guide,
To dash th' offenders in the whelming tide.

To fair Calypso from the bright abodes,
Hermes convey'd the councils of the gods.

Mean-time from man to man my tongue exclaims,
My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames. 461

In vain ! I view perform'd the direful deed,
Beeves, slain by heaps, along the ocean bleed.

Now heav'n gave signs of wrath ; along the ground }
Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound 465 }

Roar'd the dead limbs ; the burning entrails groan'd. }
Six guilty days my wretched mates employ

In impious feasting, and unhallow'd joy ;

The seventh arose, and now the fire of gods

Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing floods :

With speed the bark we climb ; the spacious sails 471

Loos'd from the yards invite th' impelling gales :

Past sight of shore, along the surge we bound,

And all above is sky, and ocean all around !

When lo ! a murky cloud the thund'rer forms 475

Full o'er our heads, and blackens heav'n with storms.

Night dwells o'er all the deep : and now out flies
The gloomy west, and whistles in the skies.

The mountain billows roar : the furious blast
Howls o'er the shroud, and rends it from the mast : 480
The mast gives way, and crackling as it bends,
Tears up the deck ; then all at once descends :
The pilot by the tumbling ruin slain,
Dash'd from the helm falls headlong in the main.

Then Jove in anger bids his thunders roll, 485

And forky lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,
Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapped in flames :
Full on the bark it fell ; now high, now low,
Toss'd and re-toss'd, it reel'd beneath the blow ; 490
At once into the main the crew it hook :

Sulphureous odours rose, and smould'ring smoke.

Like fowl that haunt the floods, they sink, they rise, }

Now lost, now seen, with shrieks and dreadful cries ; }

And strive to gain the bark ; but Jove denies. 495 }

Firm at the helm I stand, when fierce the main

Rush'd with dire noise, and dash'd the sides in twain ;

Again impetuous drove the furious blast,

Snap't the strong helm, and bore to sea the mast.

Firm to the mast with cords the helm I bind 500 }

And ride aloft, to providence resign'd, }

Through tumbling billows, and a war of wind. }

Now sunk the west, and now a southern breeze,

More dreadful than the tempest, lash'd the seas ;

For on the rocks it bore where Scylla raves, 505

And dire Charybdis rolls her thund'ring waves.

All night I drove ; and at the dawn of day

Fast by the rocks beheld the desp'rate way :

Just when the sea within her gulf subsides,

And in the roaring whirlpools rush the tides. 510

Swift from the float I vaulted with a bound,

The lofty fig-tree seiz'd, and clung around.

So to the beam the bat tenacious clings,

And pendant round it clasps his leathern wings.

Book XII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 239

High in the air the tree its boughs display'd, 515

And o'er the dungeon cast the dreadful shade ;

All unsustain'd between the waves and sky,

Beneath my feet the whirling billows fly.

What time the judge forsakes the noisy bar

To take repast, and stills the wordy war ; 520

Charybdis rumbling from her inmost caves,

The mast refunded on her refluxent waves.

Swift from the tree, the floating mast to gain,

Sudden I drop'd amidst the flashing main ;

Once more undaunted on the ruin rode, 525

And oar'd with lab'ring arms along the flood.

Unseen I pass'd by Scylla's dire abodes :

So Jove decreed, (dread fire of men and gods)

Then nine long days I plow'd the calmer seas,

Heav'd by the surge and wafted by the breeze. 530

Weary and wet th' Ogygian shores I gain,

When the tenth sun descended to the main.

There in Calypso's ever-fragrant bow'rs

Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguil'd the hours.

My following fates to thee, oh king ! are known,

And the bright partner of thy royal throne. 536

Enough : in misery can words avail ?

And what so tedious as a twice-told tale ?

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The arrival of Ulysses in Ithaca.

Ulysses takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures. On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock. In the mean time, Ulysses awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast round him. He breaks into loud lamentations; 'till the goddess appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places. He then tells a feigned story of his adventures, upon which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suitors. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XIII.

HE ceas'd; but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear
A pause of silence hush'd the shady rooms:
The grateful conf'rence then the king resumes.

Whatever toils the great Ulysses past, 5
Beneath this happy roof they end at last;
No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
Smooth seas, and gentle winds, invite him home.
But hear me, princes! whom these walls inclose,
For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows 10
With wines unmix'd, (an honour due to age,
To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage.)
Though labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
Ly heap'd already for our god-like guest;
Without new treasures let him not remove, 15
Large, and expressive of the public love:
Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
A gen'ral tribute, which the state shall owe.

This sentence pleas'd: then all their steps address
To sep'rate mansions, and retir'd to rest. 20

Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
And shed her sacred light along the skies.
Down to the haven and the ships in haste
They bore the treasures, and in safety plac'd.

The king himself the vases rang'd with care : 25
 Then bad his followers to the feast repair.
 A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
 Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
 To Jove th' eternal, (pow'r above all pow'rs ! 30
 Who wings the winds, and darkens heav'n with show'rs)
 The flames ascend : 'till ev'ning they prolong
 The rites, more sacred made by heav'nly song :
 For in the midst, with public honours grac'd,
 Thy lyre divine, Demodocus ! was plac'd.
 All, but Ulysses, heard with fix'd delight : 35
 He sat, and ey'd the sun, and wish'd the night ;
 Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
 His native home deep imag'd in his soul.
 As weary plowman spent with stubborn toil,
 Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil, 40
 Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
 When home, with feeble knees, he bends his way
 To late repast, (the day's hard labour done :)
 So to Ulysses welcome set the sun.
 Then instant, to Alcinous and the rest, 45
 (The Scherian states) he turn'd, and thus address :
 O thou, the first in merit and command !
 And you the peers and princes of the land !
 May ev'ry joy be yours ! nor this the least,
 When due libation shall have crown'd the feast, 50 }
 Safe to my home to send your happy guest.
 Compleat are now the bounties you have giv'n,
 Be all those bounties but confirm'd by heav'n !
 So may I find, when all my wand'rings cease,
 My consort blameless, and my friends in peace. 55
 On you be ev'ry bliss, and ev'ry day
 In home-felt joys delighted roll away ;
 Your selves, your wives, your long descending race,
 May ev'ry god enrich with ev'ry grace !
 Sure fixt on virtue may your nation stand, 60
 And public evil never touch the land !

His words well weigh'd, the gen'ral voice approv'd
Benign, and instant his dismissal mov'd.
The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
To fill the goblet high with rosy wine : 65
Great Jove the father first (he cry'd) implore;
Then send the stranger to his native shore.

The luscious wine th' obedient herald brought ;
Around the mansion flow'd the purple draught :
Each from his seat to each immortal pours, 70
Whom glory circles in th' Olympian bow'rs.
Ulysses sole with air majestic stands,
The bowl presenting to Arete's hands;
Then thus: O queen farewell ! be still possess'd
Of dear remembrance, blessing still and blest ! 75
'Till age and death shall gently call thee hence,
(Sure fate of ev'ry mortal excellence !)
Farewell ! and joys successive ever spring
To thee, to thine, the people and the king !

Thus he : then parting prints the sandy shore 80
To the fair port : a herald march'd before,
Sent by Alcinous : of Arete's train
Three chosen maids attend him to the main ;
This does a tunic and white vest convey,
A various casket that of rich inlay, 85
And bread and wine the third. The chearful mates
Safe in the hollow deck dispose the cates :
Beneath the seats, soft painted robes they spread,
With linen cover'd, for the hero's bed.
He climb'd the lofty stern ; then gently prest 90
The swelling couch, and lay compos'd to rest.

Now plac'd in order, the Phaeacian train
Their cables loose, and launch into the main :
At once they bend and strike their equal oars,
And leave the sinking hills, and less'ning shores. 95
While on the deck the chief in silence lyes,
And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.
As fiery courfers in the rapid race,
Urg'd by fierce drivers through the dusty space,

Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain ; 100
 So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.
 Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
 And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies ;
 Lest swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies : 105
 Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
 A man, in wisdom equal to a god !
 Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
 In storms by sea, and combats on the shore ;
 All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast, 110
 Wrapt in a pleasing, deep, and death like rest.

But when the morning-star with early ray
 Flam'd in the front of heav'n, and promis'd day ;
 Like distant clouds the mariner descries.
 Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise. 115
 Far from the town a spacious port appears,
 Sacred to Phorcy's pow'r, whose name it bears :
 Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
 The roaring winds tempestuous rage restrain ;
 Within, the waves in softer murmers glide, 120
 And ships secure without their haulsers ride.
 High at the head a branching olive grows,
 And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
 Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
 Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas ; 125
 Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
 And massy beams in native marble shone ;
 On which the labours of the nymphs were roll'd,
 Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
 Within the cave the clust'ring bees attend 130
 Their waxen works, or from the roof depend :
 Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide ;
 Two marble doors unfold on either side ;
 Sacred the south, by which the gods descend,
 But mortals enter at the northern end. 135

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land,
 (The crooked keel divides the yellow sand)

Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
 And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.
 His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid 140
 In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,
 Secure from theft : then launch'd the bark again,
 Resum'd their oars, and measur'd back the main.
 Nor yet forgot old Ocean's dread supreme
 The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme. 145
 Before the throne of mighty Jove he stood ;
 And fought the secret counsels of the god.

Shall then no more, O fire of gods ! be mine
 The rights and honours of a pow'r divine ?
 Scorn'd ev'n by man, and (oh severe disgrace !) 150
 By soft Phaeacians, my degenerate race !
 Against yon' destin'd head in vain I swore,
 And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd his shore :
 To reach his natal shore was thy decree ;
 Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee ? 155
 Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
 From all th' eluded dangers of the deep !
 Lo where he lyes, amidst a shining store
 Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore :
 And bears triumphant to his native isle 160
 A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil.

To whom the father of th' immortal pow'rs,
 Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with show'rs :
 Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain ?
 Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main ! 165
 Rever'd and awful ev'n in heav'n's abodes,
 Ancient and great ! a god above the gods !
 If that low race offend thy pow'r divine,
 (Weak, daring creatures !) is not vengeance thine ?
 Go then, the guilty at thy will chastise. 170
 He said : the shaker of the earth replies ;

This then I doom ; to fix the gallant ship
 A mark of vengeance on the sable deep :
 To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
 No more unlicens'd thus to brave the main. 175

Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
 If such thy will.——We will it; Jove-replies:
 Ev'n when with transport black'ning all the strand,
 The swarming people hail their ship to land,
 Fix her for ever, a memorial-stone. 180
 Still let her seem to sail, and seem alone;
 The trembling clouds shall see the sudden shade
 Of whelming mountains overhang their head!

With that, the god whose earthquakes rock the ground
 Fierce to Phaeacia cros'd the vast profound. 185
 Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,
 The winged pinnace shot along the sea.
 The god arrests her with a sudden stroke,
 And roots her down an everlasting rock.
 Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprise; 190
 All press to speak, all question with their eyes.
 What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!
 And yet it swims, or seems to swim, the main!
 Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:
 'Till great Alcinous rising own'd the sign. 195

Behold the long destin'd day! (he cries)
 Oh certain faith of ancient prophecies!
 These ears have heard my royal fire disclose
 A dreadful story, big with future woes;
 How mov'd with wrath that careless we convey 200
 Promiscuous ev'ry guest to ev'ry bay,
 Stern Neptune rag'd; and how by his command
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand;
 (A monument of wrath!) and mound on mound
 Should hide our walks or whelm beneath the ground. 205

The fates have follow'd as declar'd the fear.
 Be humbled, nations! and your monarch hear.
 No more unlicens'd brave the deeps, no more
 With ev'ry stranger pass from shore to shore;
 On angry Neptune now for mercy call: 210
 To his high name let twelve black oxen fall:
 So may the god reverse his purpos'd will,
 Nor o'er our city hang the dreadful hill.

The monarch spoke: they trembled and obey'd,
 Forth on the sands the victim oxen led: 215
 The gather'd tribes before the altars stand,
 And chiefs and rulers, a majestic band.
 The king of ocean all the tribes implore;
 The blazing altars redden all the shore.

Mean-while Ulysses in his country lay, 220
 Releas'd from sleep, and round him might survey
 The solitary shore, and rolling sea. }
 Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost
 The dear remembrance of his native coast:
 Besides, Minerva, to secure her care, 225
 Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air:
 For so the gods ordain'd, to keep unseen
 His royal person from his friends and queen,
 Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford
 An ample vengeance to their injur'd lord. 230

Now all the land another prospect bore,
 Another port appear'd, another shore,
 And long continu'd ways, and winding floods,
 And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown woods.
 Pensive and slow, with sudden grief oppress'd, 235
 The king arose, and beat his careful breast,
 Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,
 And fought, around, his native realm in vain:
 Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in woe,
 And as he spoke the tears began to flow. 240

Ye gods! (he cry'd) upon what barren coast,
 In what new region is Ulysses tost?
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,
 Or men whose bosom tender pity warms?
 Where shall this treasure now in safety ly? 245
 And whither, whither its sad owner fly?
 Ah why did I Alcinous' grace implore?
 Ah why forsake Phaeacia's happy shore?
 Some juster prince perhaps had entertain'd,
 And safe restor'd me to my native land. 250

Is this the promis'd, long-expected coast,
 And this the faith Phaeacia's rulers boast?
 Oh righteous gods! of all the great, how few
 Are just to heav'n, and to their promise true!
 But he, the pow'r to whose all-seeing eyes 255
 The deeds of men appear without disguise,
 'Tis his alone t' avenge the wrongs I bear:
 For still th' oppress'd are his peculiar care.

To count these presents, and from thence to prove
 Their faith, is mine: the rest belongs to Jove. 260

Then on the sands he rang'd his wealthy store,
 The gold, the vests, the tripods number'd o'er:
 All these he found, but still in error lost
 Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,
 Sighs for his country, and laments again 265
 To the deaf rocks, and hoarse-responding main.

When lo! the guardian goddess of the wise,
 Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes;
 In show a youthful swain of form divine,
 Who seem'd descended from some princely line. 270
 A graceful robe her slender body dress'd,
 Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
 Her decent hand a shining jav'lin bore,
 And painted sandals on her feet she wore.

To whom the king: Whoe'er of human race 275
 Thou art, that wander'st in this desert place;
 With joy to thee, as to some god, I bend;
 To thee my treasures and myself commend.
 O tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,
 What air I breathe, what country I survey? 280
 The fruitful continent's extremest bound,
 Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround?

From what far clime, said she, remote from fame,
 Arriv'st thou here a stranger to our name?
 Thou see'st an island not to those unknown 285
 Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
 Nor those that plac'd beneath his utmost reign
 Behold him sinking in the western main.

The rugged soil allows no level space
For flying chariots or the rapid race; 290
Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain :
The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice :
Woods crown our mountains, and in ev'ry grove 295
The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove :
Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
And rising springs eternal verdure yield.
Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd,
Where Troy's majestic ruins strow the ground. 300
At this the chief with transport was possest,
His panting heart exulted in his breast :
Yet well dissembling his untimely joys,
And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold, 305
His ready tale th' inventive hero told :
Oft have I heard in Crete this island's name ;
For 'twas from Crete, my native soil, I came,
Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
And left my children and my friends behind. 310
From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochns, I slew :
(With brutal force he seiz'd my Trojan prey,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day)
Unseen I 'scap'd ; and, favour'd by the night, 315
In a Phoenician vessel took my flight,
For Pyle or Elis bound : but tempests tost,
And raging billows drove us on your coast.
In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land. 320
But ere the rosy morn renew'd the day,
While in th' embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,
Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore, 325
A hapless exile on a foreign shore.

Thus while he spoke, the blue-ey'd maid began
 With pleasing smiles to view the god-like man :
 Then chang'd her form ; and now, divinely bright,
 Jove's heav'nly daughter stood confess'd to sight ; 330
 Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom,
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.

O still the same Ulysses ! she rejoin'd,
 In useful craft successfully refin'd !
 Artful in speech, in action, and in mind ! 335
 Suffic'd it not, that thy long labours past,
 Secure thou seest thy native shore at last ?
 But this to me ? who, like thyself, excel
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well ;
 To me, whose wit exceeds the pow'rs divine, 340
 No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
 Know'st thou not me ? who made thy life my care,
 Thro' ten years wand'ring, and thro' ten years war ;
 Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
 To raise his wonder, and engage his aid ; 345
 And now appear thy treasures to protect,
 Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
 And tell what more thou must from fate expect. }
 Domestic woes far heavier to be born !
 The pride of fools, and slaves insulting scorn. 350
 But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state :
 Yield to the force of unresisted fate,
 And bear unmov'd the wrongs of base mankind,
 The last and hardest conquest of the mind.

Goddess of wisdom ! Ithacus replies, 355
 He who discerns thee must be truly wise,
 So seldom view'd, and ever in disguise ! }
 When the bold Argives led their warring pow'rs
 Against proud Ilion's well defended tow'rs,
 Ulysses was thy care, celestial maid ! 360
 Grac'd with thy sight, and favour'd with thy aid.
 But when the Trojan piles in ashes lay,
 And bound for Greece we plow'd the wat'ry way ;

Our fleet dispers'd, and driv'n from coast to coast,
 Thy sacred presence from that hour I lost ; 365
 'Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
 And heard thy counsels on Phacacia's shore.
 But, by th' almighty author of thy race,
 Tell me, oh tell ! is this my native place ?
 For much I fear, long tracts of land and sea 370
 Divide this coast from distant Ithaca ;
 The sweet delusion kindly you impose,
 To sooth my hopes, and mitigate my woes.

Thus he. The blue-ey'd goddess thus replies :
 How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise ! 375
 Who vers'd in fortune fear the flatt'ring show,
 And taste not half the bliss the gods bestow.
 The more shall Pallas aid thy just desires,
 And guard the wisdom which herself inspires.
 Others, long absent from their native place, 380
 Strait seek their home, and fly with eager pace
 To their wives arms, and children's dear embrace :
 Not thus Ulysses ; he decrees to prove
 His subjects faith, and queen's suspected love ;
 Who mourn'd her lord twice ten revolving years, 385
 And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
 But Pallas knew (thy friends and navy lost,)
 Once more 'twas giv'n thee to behold thy coast :
 Yet how could I with adverse fate engage,
 And mighty Neptune's unrelenting rage ? 390
 Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
 The pleasing prospect of thy native shore.
 Behold the port of Phorcys ! fenc'd around
 With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd :
 Behold the gloomy grot ! whose cool recess 395
 Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas ;
 Whose now-neglected altars, in thy reign
 Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain :
 Behold ! where Neritus the clouds divides,
 And shakes the waving forests on his sides. 400

So spake the goddess, and the prospect clear'd,
 The mists dispers'd, and all the coast appear'd.
 The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
 And on his knees salutes his mother earth :
 Then with his suppliant hands upheld in air, 405
 Thus to the sea-green sisters sends his pray'r :

All hail ! ye virgin-daughters of the main !
 Ye streams, beyond my hopes beheld again !
 To you once more your own Ulysses bows ;
 Attend his transports, and receive his vows ! 410
 If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
 The growing virtues of my youthful son,
 To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
 And grateful off'rings on your altars laid.

Then thus Minerva : From that anxious breast 415
 Dismiss those cares, and leave to heav'n the rest.
 Our task be now thy treasur'd stores to save,
 Deep in the close recesses of the cave :
 Then future means consult. ——— She spoke, and trod
 The shady grot, that bright'ned with the god. 420
 The closest caverns of the grot she sought ;
 The gold, the brass, the robes Ulysses brought ;
 These in the secret gloom the chief dispos'd :
 The entrance with a rock the goddess clos'd.

Now seated in the olive's sacred shade 425
 Confer the hero and the martial maid.
 The goddess of the azure eyes began :
 Son of Laertes ! much experienc'd man !
 The suitor-train thy earliest care demand,
 Of that luxurious race to rid the land : 430
 Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
 And proud addresses to the matchless queen.
 But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
 And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away :
 Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives 435
 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

To this Ulysses : Oh celestial maid !
 Prais'd be thy counsel, and thy timely aid :

Else had I seen my native walls in vain,
 Like great Atrides just restor'd and slain. 340
 Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,
 And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.
 Then, then be present, and my soul inspire;
 As when we wrapt Troy's heav'n-built walls in fire:
 Though leagu'd against me hundred heroes stand, 445
 Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand.

She answer'd : In the dreadful day of fight
 Know I am with thee, strong in all my might.
 If thou but equal to thyself be found,
 What gasping numbers then shall press the ground ! 450
 What human victims stain the feastful floor !
 How wide the pavements float with guilty gore !
 It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
 And secret walk unknown to mortal eyes.
 For this, my hand shall wither ev'ry grace, 455
 And ev'ry elegance of form and face ;
 O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
 Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,
 Disfigure ev'ry limb with coarse attire,
 And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire ; 460
 Add all the wants and the decays of life,
 Estrange thee from thy own, thy son, thy wife ;
 From the loath'd object ev'ry sight shall turn,
 And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

Go first the master of thy herds to find, 465
 True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind :
 For thee he sighs ; and to the royal heir
 And chaste Penelope extends his care.
 At the Cōracian rock he now resides,
 Where Arethusa's fable water glides ; 470
 The fable water and the copious mast
 Swell the fat herd ; luxuriant, large repast !
 With him rest peaceful in the rural cell,
 And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.
 Me into other realms my cares convey, 475
 To Sparta, still with female beauty gay :

For know, to Sparta, thy lov'd offspring came,
To learn thy fortunes from the voice of fame.

At this the father, with a father's care :

Must he too suffer ? he, oh goddess ! bear 480 }
Of wand'rings and of woes a wretched share ?
Through the wild ocean plow the dang'rous way,
And leave his fortunes and his house a prey ?
Why wouldst not thou, oh all-enlighten'd mind !
Inform him certain, and protect him kind ? 485

To whom Minerva : Be thy soul at rest ;
And know, whatever heav'n ordains is best.

To fame I sent him to acquire renown

To other regions is his virtue known.

Secure he sits, near great Atrides plac'd ; 490

With friendships strengthen'd, and with honours grac'd.

But lo ! an ambush waits his passage o'er :

Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore :

In vain ! far sooner all the murd'rous brood

This injur'd land shall fatten with their blood. 495

She spake : then touch'd him with her pow'rful wand ;

The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand :

A swift old age o'er all his members spread ;

A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head ;

Nor longer in the heavy eye ball shin'd 500

The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.

His robe, which spots indelible besmear,

In rags dishonest flutters with the air :

A stag's torn hide is lapt around his reins ;

A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains ; 505

And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,

Wide patch'd, and knotted to a twiss'd thong.

So look'd the chief, so mov'd ! to mortal eyes

Object uncouth ! a man of miseries !

While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air, 510

To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

THE
ODYSSEY

OF

HOMER

BOOK XIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The conversation with Eumæus.

Ulysses arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus, where he is received, entertained, and lodged, with the utmost hospitality. The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire book.

T H
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XIV.

BUT he, deep-musing, o'er the mountains stray'd,
Through mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests over-hung.
Eumæus at his sylvan lodge he sought, 5
A faithful servant, and without a fault.
Ulysses found him, busied as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate.
Around the mansion in a circle shone 10
A rural portico of rugged stone :
(In absence of his lord, with honest toil
His own industrious hands had rais'd the pile :)
The wall was stone from neighb'ring quarries born,
Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke 15
Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak ;
Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
Twelve ample cells, the lodgment of his herd.
Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd ;
The males without (a smaller race) remain'd ; 20
Doom'd to supply the suitors wasteful feast,
A stock by daily luxury decreast ;
Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend.

And oh, ye gods ! with all your blessings grace
(He thus broke forth) this friend of human race !

The swain reply'd: It never was our guise 65
To slight the poor, or aught humane despise.
For Jove unfolds our hospitable door ;
'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor:
Little, alas ! is all the good I can,
A man oppress'd, dependent, yet a man : 70
Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
Slave to the insolence of youthful lords !
Far hence is by unequal gods remov'd
That man of bounties, loving and lov'd !
To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is ow'd ; 75
And more, had fate allow'd, had been bestow'd :
But fate condemn'd him to a foreign shore !
Much have I sorrow'd, but my master more.
Now cold he lies, to death's embrace resign'd :
Ah perish Helen ! perish all her kind ! 80
For whose curs'd cause, in Agamemnon's name,
He trod so fatally the paths of fame.

His vest succinct then girding round his waste,
Forth rush'd the swain with hospitable haste,
Strait to the lodgments of his herd he run, 85
Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun :
Of two, his cutlash launch'd the spouting blood ;
These quarter'd, sing'd, and fix'd on forks of wood,
All hasty on the hissing coals he threw ;
And smoking back the tasteful viands drew, 90
Broachers and all ; then on the board display'd,
The ready meal before Ulysses laid,
(With flour imbrown'd) next mingled wine yet new,
As luscious as the bee's nectareous dew :
Then sat companion of the friendly feast, 95
With open look, and thus bespoke his guest :

Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
Such food as falls to simple servants share :
The best our lords consume ; those thoughtless peers,
Rich without bounty, guilty without fears ! 100

Yet sure the gods their impious acts detest,
 And honour justice and the righteous breast.
 Pirates and conquerors, of harden'd mind,
 The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,
 To whom offending men are made a prey 105
 When Jove in vengeance gives a land away;
 Ev'n these, when of their ill-got spoil possess,
 Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast;
 Some voice of God close whisp'ring from within,
 'Wretch! this is villany, and this is sin.' 110
 But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
 That tells, The great Ulysses is no more:
 Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
 Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise:
 Constant as Jove the night and day bestows, 115
 Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.
 None match'd this hero's wealth of all who reign
 O'er the fair islands of the neighb'ring main,
 Nor all the monarchs whose far-dreaded sway
 The wide-extended continents obey: 120
 First on the main land, of Ulysses' breed
 Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean's margin feed;
 As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear'd;
 As many lodgments for the tusked herd;
 Those foreign keepers guard: and here are seen 125
 Twelve herds of goats that graze our utmost green;
 To native pastors is their charge assign'd,
 And mine the care to feed the bristly kind:
 Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
 All to the suitors wasteful board prefer'd. 130
 Thus he, benevolent: his unknown guest
 With hunger keen devours the sav'ry feast;
 While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast.
 Silent and thoughtful while the board he ey'd,
 Eumæus pours on high the purple tide; 135
 The king with smiling looks his joy express'd,
 And thus the kind inviting host address'd:

Say now, what man is he, the man deplor'd,
So rich, so potent, whom you stile your lord;
Late with such affluence and possessions blest, 140
And now in honour's glorious bed at rest?
Whoever was the warrior, he must be

To fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me;
Who (so the gods and so the fates ordain'd)
Have wander'd many a sea and many a land. 145

Small is the faith the prince and queen ascribe
(Reply'd Eumæus) to the wand'ring tribe:
For needy strangers still to flatt'ry fly,
And want too oft betrays the tongue to lye.
Each vagrant traveller that touches here 150

Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,
To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
Such thou may'st be. But he whose name you crave
Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave, 155

Or food for fish, or dogs, his reliques ly,
Or torn by birds are scatter'd through the sky.
So perish'd he; and left (for ever lost)

Much woe to all, but sure to me the most.
So mild a master never shall I find: 160
Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
Less soft my mother, less my father kind.

Not with such transport would my eyes run o'er,
Again to hail them in their native shore,
As lov'd Ulysses once more to embrace, 165
Restor'd and breathing in his natal place.

That name, for ever dread, yet ever dear,
Ev'n in his absence I pronounce with fear;
In my respect he bears a prince's part,
But lives a very brother in my heart. 170

Thus spoke the faithful swain; and thus rejoind
The master of his grief, the man of patient mind:
Ulysses, friend, shall view his old abodes,
(Distrustful as thou art) nor doubt the gods.

Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr'd, 175
 And what I speak attesting heav'n has heard.
 If so, a cloak and vesture be my meed:
 Till his return no title shall I plead,
 Though certain be my news, and great my need. }
 Whom want itself can force untruths to tell, 180
 My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove!
 And ev'ry god inspiring social love!
 And witness ev'ry household-pow'r that waits
 Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates! 185
 Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
 His ancient realms Ulysses shall survey,
 In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
 And the lost glories of his house return.

Nor shall that meed be thine, nor ever more 190
 Shall lov'd Ulysses hail this happy shore,
 (Reply'd Eumæus :) to the present hour
 Now turn thy thought, and joys within our pow'r.
 From sad reflection let my soul repose;
 The name of him awakes a thousand woes. 195
 But guard him, gods! and to these arms restore!
 Not his true consort can desire him more;
 Not old Laertes, broken with despair;
 Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir.
 Alas, Telemachus! my sorrows flow 200
 Afresh for thee, my second cause of woe!
 Like some fair plant set by a heav'nly hand,
 He grew, he flourish'd, and he blest the land;
 In all the youth his father's image shin'd,
 Bright in his person, brighter in his mind. 205
 What man or god deceiv'd his better sense,
 Far on the swelling seas to wander hence?
 To distant Pylos, hapless! 'is he gone,
 To seek his father's fate, and find his own!
 For traitors wait his way, with dire design 210
 To end at once the great Arcean line.

But let us leave him to their wills above;
 The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
 And now, my venerable guest! declare
 Your name, your parents, and your native air? 217
 Sincere from whence begun your course relate,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?

Thus he; and thus (with prompt invention bold)
 The cautious chief his ready story told:

On dark reserve what better can prevail, 220
 Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,
 Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place
 Confer, and wines and cates the table grace;
 But most the kind inviter's chearful face? }
 Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd, 225
 Till the whole circle of the year goes round;
 Not the whole circle of the year would close
 My long narration of a life of woes.

But such was heav'n's high will! Know then I came
 From sacred Crete, and from a fire of fame: 230

Castor Hylacides (that name he bore)
 Belov'd and honour'd in his native shore;
 Blest in his riches, in his children more. }

Sprung of a hand-maid, from a bought embrace,
 I shar'd his kindness with his lawful race; 235

But when that fate which all must undergo
 From earth remov'd him to the shades below,
 The large domain his greedy sons divide,
 And each was portion'd as the lots decide.
 Little, alas! was left my wretched share, 240
 Except a house, a covert from the air.

But what by niggard fortune was deny'd,
 A willing widow's copious wealth supply'd.
 My valour was my plea, a gallant mind,
 That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind, 245 }
 (The sex is ever to a soldier kind)

Now wasting years my former strength confound,
 And added woes have bow'd me to the ground;

Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,
 And mark the ruins of no vulgar man. 250
 Me Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,
 And the fair ranks of battle to deform;
 Me Mars inspir'd to turn the foe to flight,
 And tempt the secret ambush of the night.
 Let ghastly death in all his forms appear; 255
 I saw him not; it was not mine to fear.
 Before the rest I rais'd my ready steel;
 The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.
 But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
 The rural labour or domestic care. 260
 To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
 And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
 Were arts the gods made grateful to my mind;
 Those gods, who turn (to various ends design'd)
 The various thoughts and talents of mankind. 265 }
 Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain,
 Nine times commander or by land or main,
 In foreign fields I spread my glory far,
 Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war:
 Thence charg'd with riches, as increas'd in fame, 270
 To Crete return'd, an honourable name.
 But when great Jove that direful war decreed,
 Which rous'd all Greece, and made the mighty bleed;
 Our states myself and Idomen employ
 To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy. 275
 Nine years we warr'd, the tenth saw Ilion fall;
 Homeward we sail'd, but heav'n dispers'd us all.
 One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay;
 So will'd the god who gives and takes away.
 Nine ships I mann'd, equip'd with ready stores, 280
 Intent to voyage to th' Egyptian shores;
 In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
 Six days consum'd; the sev'nth we plow'd the main.
 Crete's ample fields diminish in our eye;
 Before the Boreal blasts the vessels fly; 285

Safe through the level seas we sweep our way;
 The steer-man governs, and the ships obey.
 The fifth fair morn we stem th' Egyptian tide,
 And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride:
 To anchor there my fellows I command, 290
 And spies-commission to explore the land.
 But sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
 The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies,
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise. 295
 The red'ning dawn reveals the circling fields
 Horrid with bristly spears and glancing shields.
 Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
 We turn'd to flight: the gath'ring vengeance spread }
 On all parts round; and heaps on heaps ly dead. 300 }
 I then explor'd my thought, what course to prove.
 (And sure the thought was dictated by Jove;
 Oh had he left me to that happier doom,
 And sav'd a life of miseries to come!)
 The radiant helmet from my brows unlac'd, 305
 And low on earth my shield and javelin cast;
 I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
 Approach his chariot; and his knees embrace.
 He heard, he sav'd, he plac'd me at his side;
 My state he pity'd, and my tears he dry'd, 310
 Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express,
 And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
 Pious! to guard the hospitable rite,
 And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.
 In Egypt thus with peace and plenty blest, 315
 I liv'd (and happy still had liv'd) a guest:
 On sev'n bright years successive blessings wait;
 The next chang'd all the colour of my fate.
 A false Phoenician of insidious mind,
 Vers'd in vile arts, and foe to humankind, 320
 With semblance fair invites me to his home;
 I seiz'd the proffer (ever fond to roam :)

Domestic in his faithless roof I stay'd,
 'Till the swift sun his annual circle made.
 To Lybia then he meditates the way, 325
 With guileful art a stranger to betray,
 And sell to bondage in a foreign land :
 Much doubting, yet compell'd I quit the strand.
 Through the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
 Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales : 330
 But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
 And far from ken of any other coast,
 When all was wild expanse of sea and air,
 Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare :
 He hung a night of horrors o'er their head, 335
 (The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread)
 He launch'd the fiery bolt; from pole to pole
 Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll ;
 In giddy rounds the whirling ship is tost,
 And all in clouds of smothering sulphur lost. 340
 As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
 The fable crows with intercepted flight
 Drop endlong ; scarr'd, and black with sulph'rous hue,
 So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.
 Such end the wicked found ! but Jove's intent 345
 Was yet to save th' oppress'd and innocent.
 Plac'd on the mast (the last recourse of life)
 With winds and waves I held unequal strife ;
 For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
 The tenth soft wafts me to Thesprotia's shore, 350
 The monarch's son a shipwreck'd wretch reliev'd,
 The sire with hospitable rites receiv'd,
 And in his palace like a brother plac'd,
 With gifts of price and gorgeous garments grac'd.
 While here I sojourn'd, oft I heard the same 355
 How late Ulysses to the country came ;
 How lov'd, how honour'd in this court he stay'd,
 And here his whole collected treasure lay'd :
 I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
 Of steel elab'rate, and refulgent ore, 360

And brass high-heap'd amidst the regal dome ;
 Immense supplies for ages yet to come !
 Mean-time he voyag'd to explore the will
 Of Jove on high Dodona's holly hill,
 What means might best his safe return avail, 365
 To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail ?
 Full oft has Phidon, whilst he pour'd the wine,
 Attesting solemn all the pow'rs divine,
 That soon Ulysses would return, declar'd,
 The sailors waiting, and the ships prepar'd. 370
 But first the king dismiss'd me from the shores,
 For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores,
 To good Acastus' friendly care consign'd :
 But other counsels pleas'd the sailors mind :
 New frauds were plotted by the faithless train, 375
 And misery demands me once again.
 Soon as remote from shore they plow the wave,
 With ready hands they rush to seize their slave ;
 Then with these tatter'd rags they wrapt me round,
 (Strip'd of my own) and to the vessel bound. 380
 At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
 The ship arriv'd : forth-issuing on the sand,
 They sought repast, while, to th' unhappy kind,
 The pitying gods themselves my chains unbind.
 Soft I descended, to the sea apply'd 385
 My naked breast, and shot along the tide.
 Soon past beyond their sight, I left the flood,
 And took the spreading shelter of the wood.
 Their prize escap'd the faithless pirates mourn'd ;
 But deem'd enquiry vain, and to their ship return'd. 390
 Screen'd by protecting gods from hostile eyes,
 They led me to a good man and a wife ;
 To live beneath thy hospitable care,
 And wait the woes heav'n dooms me yet to bear.
 Unhappy guest ! whose sorrows touch my mind ! 395
 (Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)
 For real suff'rings since I grieve sincere,
 Check not with fallacies the springing tear ;

Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
 For him, whom heav'n has destin'd to destroy. 400
 Oh ! had he perish'd on some well-fought day,
 Or in his friends embraces dy'd away !
 That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise :
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone, 405
 Had with transmissive honours grac'd his son.
 Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost !
 While pensive in this solitary den,
 Far from gay cities, and the ways of men, 410
 I linger life ; nor to the court repair,
 But when the constant queen commands my care ;
 Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
 Some guest arrives, with rumours of her lord ;
 And these indulge their want, and those their woe, 415
 And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
 By many such have I been warn'd ; but chief
 By one Ætolian robb'd of all belief,
 Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
 For murder banish'd from his native home. 420
 He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crète
 Staid but a season to resist his fleet ;
 A few revolving months should waft him o'er,
 Fraught with bold warriors and a boundless store.
 O thou ! whom age has taught to understand, 425
 And heav'n has guided with a fav'ring hand !
 On god or mortal to obtrude a lie
 Forbear, and dread to flatter, as to die.
 Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
 But dear respect to Jove, and charity. 430
 And why, oh swain of unbelieving mind !
 (Thus quick reply'd the wisest of mankind)
 Doubt you my oath ? yet more my faith to try,
 A solemn compact let us ratify,
 And witness ev'ry pow'r that rules the sky ! 435 }

If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
 Be then my prize a tunic and a vest;
 And, where my hopes invite me, strait transport
 In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.
 But if he greets not thy desiring eye,
 Hurl me from yon' dread precipice on high;
 The due reward of fraud and perjury.

440 }
 445 }

Doubtless, oh guest! great laud and praise were mine,
 (Reply'd the swain for spotless faith divine.)

If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd,
 I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood.
 How would the gods my righteous toils succeed,
 And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed?
 No more——th' approaching hours of silent night
 First claim refection, then to rest invite;
 Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
 And here, unenvy'd, rural dainties taste.

445
 450

Thus commun'd these; while to their lowly dome
 The full-fed swine return'd with ev'ning home;
 Compell'd, reluctant, to their sev'ral styes,
 With din obstrep'rous, and ungrateful cries,
 Then to the slaves:——Now from the herd the best
 Select, in honour of our foreign guest:
 With him, let us the genial banquet share,
 For great and many are the griefs we bear;
 While those who from our labours heap their board,
 Blaspheme their feeder, and forget their lord.

455
 460

Thus speaking, with dispatchful hand he took
 A weighty ax, and cleft the solid oak;
 This on the earth he pil'd; a boar full-fed
 Of five years age, before the pile was led:
 The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
 Observant of the gods, begins the rite;
 First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
 And suppliant stands, invoking ev'ry pow'r
 To speed Ulysses to his native shore:
 A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
 Down drop'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.

465
 470 }

The scorching flames climb round on ev'ry side :
 Then the sing'd members they with skill divide ; 475
 On these, in rolls of fat involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part.
 Some in the flames, bestrow'd with flour, they threw :
 Some cut in fragments from the forks they drew :
 These while on sev'ral tables they dispose, 480
 As priest himself the blameless rustic rose :
 Expert the destin'd victim to dis-part
 In seven just portions, pure of hand and heart.
 One sacred to the Nymphs apart they lay ;
 Another to the winged son of May : 485
 The rural tribe in common share the rest,
 The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
 Who sat delighted at his servant's board ;
 The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.
 Oh be thou dear (Ulysses cry'd) to Jove, 490
 As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love !
 Be then thy thanks, (the bounteous swain reply'd)
 Enjoyment of the good the gods provide.
 From God's own hand descend our joys and woes ;
 These he decrees, and he but suffers those : 495
 All pow'r is his, and whatsoe'er he wills,
 The will itself, omnipotent, fulfills.
 This said, the first-fruits to the gods he gave ;
 Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave :
 In great Ulysses' hand he plac'd the bowl ; 500
 He sat, and sweet refection cheer'd his soul.
 The bread from canisters Meisaulius gave,
 (Eumaeus' proper treasure bought this slave.
 And led from Taphos, to attend his board, 505
 A servant added to his absent lord.)
 His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
 And from the banquet take the bowls away.
 And now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
 And each betakes him to his couch to rest.
 Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er 510
 The face of things ; the winds began to roar !

The driving storm the wat'ry west-wind pours,
 And Jove descends in deluges of show'rs.
 Studious of rest and warmth, Ulysses lyes,
 Foreseeing from the first the storm would rise ; 715
 In meer necessity of coat and cloak,
 With artful preface to his host he spoke :

Hear me, my friends ! who this good banquet grace ;
 'Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place ;
 And wine can of their wits the wise beguile, 320
 Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
 The grave in merry measures frisk about,
 And many a long repented word bring out.
 Since to be talkative I now commence,
 Let wit cast off the sullen yoke of sense. 325
 Once I was strong, (would heav'n restore those days !)
 And with my betters claim'd a share of praise.
 Ulysses, Menelaus led forth a band,
 And join'd me with them, ('twas their own command)
 A deathful ambush for the foe to lay. 530

Beneath Troy walls by night we took our way:
 There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
 We made the osier-fringed bank our bed.
 Full soon th' inclemency of heav'n I feel ;
 Nor had these shoulders cov'ring, but of steel. 535
 Sharp blew the north ; snow-whit'ning all the fields
 Froze with the blast, and gath'ring glaz'd our shields.
 There all but I, well fenc'd with cloak and vest,
 Lay cover'd by their ample shields at rest :

Fool that I was ! I left behind my own ; 540
 The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
 And trusted to my coat and shield alone.
 When now was wasted more than half the night,
 And the stars faded at approaching light ;
 Sudden I jogg'd Ulysses, who was laid 545
 Fast by my side, and thiv'ring thus I said :

Here longer in this field I cannot ly,
 The winter pinches, and with cold I die,

And die agham'd (oh wisest of mankind !)
The only fool who left his cloak behind. 550

He thought, and answer'd; hardly waking yet,
Sprung in his mind the momentary wit ;
(That wit, which or in council or in fight,
Still met th' emergence, and determin'd right)
Hush thee, he cry'd, (soft-whisp'ring in my ear) 555
Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear—

And then (supporting on his arm his head)
Hear me, companions ! (thus aloud he said)
Methinks too distant from the fleet we ly :
Ev'n now a vision stood before my eye, 560 }
And sure the warning vision was from high :
Let from among us some swift courier rise,
Haste to the gen'ral, and demand supplies.

Up-started Thoas strait, Andraemon's son :
Nimble he rose, and cast his garment down ; 565
Instant the racer vanish'd off the ground ;
That instant in his cloak I wrapp'd me round :
And safe I slept, till brightly dawning shone
The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.

Oh were my strength as then, as then my age ! 570
Some friend wou'd fence me from the winter's rage.
Yet tatter'd as I look, I challeng'd then
The honours and the offices of men :
Some master, or some servant would allow
A cloak and vest—but I am nothing now ! 575

Well hast thou spoke (rejoin'd th' attentive swain)
Thy lips let fall no idle word, or vain !
Nor garment shalt thou want, nor aught beside,
Meet, for the wand'ring suppliant to provide.
But in the morning take thy clothes again, 580
For here one vest suffices ev'ry swain ;
No change of garments to our hinds is known :
But when return'd, the good Ulysses' son
With better hand shall grace with fit attires
His guest, and send thee where thy soul desires. 585

The honest herdsman rose, as this he said,
And drew before the hearth the stranger's bed :
The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat's rough hide
He spreads, and adds a mantle thick and wide ;
With store to heap above him, and below, 590
And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
There lay the king, and all the rest supine ;
All, but the careful master of the swine :
Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care ;
Well arm'd, and fenc'd against nocturnal air : 595
His weighty faulchion o'er his shoulder ty'd :
His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supply'd :
With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.
There to the tusky herd he bends his way, 600
Where, screen'd from Boreas, high o'er-arch'd they lay.

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XV.

A 2

THE ARGUMENT.

The return of Telemachus.

The goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca. Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaus, and arrive at Pylos, where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer. The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumaeus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures. In the mean time Telemachus arrives on the coast, and sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumaeus.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XV.

NOW had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
 Fam'd for the dance, where Menelaus reigns ;
 Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir,
 His instant voyage challeng'd all her care.
 Beneath the royal portico display'd, 5
 With Nestor's son, Telemachus was laid :
 In sleep profound the son of Nestor lyes ;
 Not thine, Ulysses ! care unscal'd his eyes :
 Restless he griev'd, with various fears oppress'd,
 And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast. 10
 When, O Telemachus ! (the goddess said)
 Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd :
 Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
 The robbers prize, the prey to lawless might.
 On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam, 15
 Ev'n now the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
 Hence to Atreides, and his leave implore
 To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore :
 Fly, whilst thy mother virtuous yet withstands
 Her kindred's wishes, and her sire's commands ; 20
 Through both, Eurymachus pursues the dame,
 And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.
 Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain ;
 Thou know'st the practice of their female train,

Lost in the children of the present spouse, 25
 They flight the pledges of the former vows;
 Their love is always with the lover past;
 Still the succeeding flame expells the last.
 Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
 Till heav'n decrees to bless thee in a bride. 30
 But now thy more attentive ears incline,
 Observe the warnings of a pow'r divine:
 For thee their snares the suitor-lords shall lay
 In Samos' sands, or streights of Ithaca;
 To seize thy life shall lurk the murd'rous band, 35
 Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
 No—sooner far their riot and their lust
 All-cov'ring earth shall bury deep in dust!
 Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
 Nor let the night retard thy full career; 40
 Thy heav'nly guardian shall instruct the gales
 To smoothe thy passage, and supply thy sails:
 And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
 Send to the town thy vessel with thy friends,
 But seek thou first the master of the swine, 45
 (For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline)
 There pass the night: while he his course pursues
 To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
 That thou safe sailing from the Pylian strand,
 Art come to bless her in thy native land. 50
 Thus spoke the goddess, and resum'd her flight
 To the pure regions of eternal light.
 Mean while Pisistratus gently shakes,
 And with these words the slumb'ring youth awakes:
 Rise, son of Nestor! for the road prepare, 55
 And join the harness'd couriers to the car.
 What cause, he cry'd, can justify our flight,
 To tempt the dangers of forbidding night?
 Here wait we rather, till approaching day
 Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way. 60
 Nor think of flight before the Spartan king
 Shall bid farewell, and bounteous presents bring;

Gifts, which to distant ages safely stor'd,
The sacred act of friendship shall record. 64.

Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and sought his guest.
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloak,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke: 70

Hail, great Atrides ! 'favour'd of high Jove !
Let not thy friends in vain for licence move.
Swift let us measure back the wat'ry way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.

If with desire so strong thy bosom glows, 75
Ill, said the king, should I thy wish oppose ;
For oft in others freely I reprove.
The ill tim'd efforts of officious love :

Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn : 80

Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend ;
True friendship's laws are by this rule express'd,
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
Yet stay, my friends ! and in your chariot take 85
The noblest presents that our love can make :

Mean time commit we to our womens care,
Some choice domestic viands to prepare ;
The trav'ler rising from the banquet gay,
Eludes the labours of the tedious way. 90

Then if a wider course shall rather please,
Through spacious Argos, and the realms of Greece,
Atrides in his chariot shall attend,
Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.

No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove 95
Without some pledge, some monument of love:
These will the chaldron, these the tripod give,
From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive,
Or bowl emboss'd, whose golden figures live. }

To whom the youth, for prudence fam'd, reply'd :
 O monarch, care of heav'n ! thy peoples pride ! 101
 No friend in Ithaca my place supplies,
 No pow'rful hands are there, no watchful eyes :
 My stores expos'd and fenceless house demand
 The speediest succour from my guardian hand ; 105
 Left in a search too anxious and too vain
 Of one joy lost, I lose what yet remain.

His purpose when the gen'rous warrior heard,
 He charg'd the household eates to be prepar'd.
 Now with the dawn, from his adjoining home, 110
 Was Boethoedes Eteoneus come ;
 Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
 And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays :
 Mean-time the king, his son, and Helen, went
 Where the rich wardrobe breath'd a costly scent.. 115
 The king selected from the glitt'ring rows
 A bowl ; the prince a silver beaker chose.
 The beauteous queen revolv'd with careful eyes
 Her various textures of unnumber'd dyes,
 And chose the largest ; with no vulgar art 120
 Her own fair hands embroider'd ev'ry part :
 Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
 Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
 Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
 And thus the king Ulysses' heir address : 125

Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thund'ring Jove
 With happiest omens thy desires approve !
 This silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
 Enchas'd with gold, this valu'd gift be thine ;
 To me this present, of Vulcanian frame, 130
 From Sidon's hospitable monarch came ;
 To thee we now consign the precious load,
 The pride of kings, and labour of a god.
 Then gave the cup ; while Megapenthe brought
 The silver vase with living sculpture wrought. 135
 The beauteous queen, advancing next, display'd
 The shining veil, and thus endearing said :

Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
Long since, in better days, by Helen wove :
Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay, 140
To deck thy bride, and grace thy nuptial day.

Mean-time, may'st thou, with happiest speed regain
Thy stately palace, and thy wide domain.

She said, and gave the veil : with grateful look
The prince the variegated present took. 145.

And now, when through the royal dome they pass'd,
High on a throne the king each stranger plac'd.

A golden ew'r th' attendant damsel brings
Replete with water from the crystal springs ;
With copious streams the shining vase supplies 150.
A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
The glitt'ring canisters are crown'd with bread ;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour ; rich repast ! 155.

Whilst Eteoneus portions out the shares,
Atides' son the purple draught prepares.

And now (each sated with the genial feast,
And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceast)
Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend, 160.

The horses join, the polish'd car ascend.

Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,

And the wide portal echoes to the sound.

The king precedes : a bowl with fragrant wine
(Libation destin'd to the pow'rs divine) 165.

His right-hand held : before the steeds he stands,
Then, mix'd with pray'rs, he utters these commands :

Farewel and prosper, youths ! Let Nestor know
What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
For all the proofs of his paternal care, 170.

Through the long dangers of the ten-years war.

Ah doubt not our report (the prince rejoin'd).

Of all the virtues of thy gen'rous mind !

And oh ! return'd might we Ulysses meet !

To him thy presents shew, thy words repeat : 175

How will each speech his grateful wonder raise !
 How will each gift indulge us in thy praise !

Starce ended thus the prince, when on the right :
 Advanc'd the bird of Jove ; auspicious sight !
 A milk white fowl his clinching talons bore, 180
 With care domestic pamp'ring at the floor.
 Peasants in vain with threat'ning cries pursue ;
 In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
 Full dexter to the car : the prosp'rous sight
 Fill'd ev'ry breast with wonder and delight. 185

But Nestor's son the chearful silence broke,
 And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke :
 Say if to us the gods these omens send,
 Or fates peculiar to thyself portend ? 189

Whilst yet the monarch paus'd, with doubts oppress'd,
 The beauteous queen reliev'd his lab'ring breast.

Hear me, she cry'd, to whom the gods have giv'n
 To read this sign, and mystic sense of heav'n.
 As thus the plummy sov'reign of the air
 Left on the mountain's brow his callow care, 195
 And wander'd through the wide ethereal way
 To pour his wrath on yon' luxurious prey ;
 So shall thy god-like father, toss'd in vain
 Through all the dangers of the boundless main,
 Arrive, (or is perchance already come) 200
 From slaughter'd gluttons to release the dome.

Oh ! if this promis'd bliss by thund'ring Jove,
 (The prince reply'd) stand fix'd in fate above ;
 To thee, as to some god, I'll temples raise,
 And crown thy altars with the costly blaze. 205

He said ; and bending o'er his chariot, flung
 Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong :
 The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
 Till night descending intercepts the way.
 To Diocles, at Phaerae they repair, 210
 Whose boasted fire was sacred Alpheus' heir ;
 With him all night the youthful strangers stay'd,
 Nor found the hospitable rites unpay'd.

But soon as morning from her orient bed
 Had ting'd the mountains with her earliest red, 215
 They join'd the steeds, and on the chariot sprung;
 The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came; when thus begun
 To Nestor's heir Ulysses god-like son:
 Let not Pisistratus in vain be prest, 220
 Nor unconsenting hear his friend's request;
 His friend by long hereditary claim,
 In toils his equal, and in years the same.
 No farther from our vessel, I implore, 225
 The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore.
 Too long thy father would his friend detain;
 I dread his profer'd kindness urg'd in vain.

The hero paus'd, and ponder'd this request,
 While love and duty war'd within his breast:
 At length resolv'd he turn'd his ready hand, 230
 And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
 There, while within the poop with care he stor'd
 The regal presents of the Spartan lord;
 With speed begone, (said he) call ev'ry mate,
 Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate: 235
 'Tis true, the fervour of his gen'rous heart
 Brooks no repulse, nor could'st thou soon depart:
 Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find
 In words alone the Pylian monarch kind.
 But when arriv'd he thy return shall know, 240
 How will his breast with honest fury glow?
 This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
 And soon he reach'd the palace of his sire.

Now (cry'd Telemachus) with speedy care
 Hoise ev'ry sail, and ev'ry oar prepare. 245
 Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
 And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Mean-time the prince with sacrifice adores
 Minerva, and her guardian aid implores;
 When lo! a wretch ran breathless to the shore, 250
 New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore.

A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
 Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,
 'Till, urg'd by wrongs, a foreign realm he chose,
 Far from the hateful cause of all his woes. 255
 Neleus his treasures one long year detains;
 As long he groan'd in Phylachus his chains:
 Mean-time, what anguish and what rage combin'd,
 For lovely Pero rack'd his lab'ring mind!
 Yet 'scap'd he death; and, vengeful of his wrong,
 To Pylos drove the lowing herds along: 260
 Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the fair
 'To Bias' arms) he sought a foreign air:
 Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
 There form'd his empire, there his palace rose. 265
 From him Antiphates and Manius came:
 The first begot Oicleus great in fame,
 And he Amphiaræus, immortal name!
 The people's saviour, and divinely wife,
 Belov'd by Jove and him who gilds the skies, 270
 Yet short his date of life! by female pride he dies.
 From Mantius Clitus, whom Aurora's love
 Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above;
 And Polyphides, on whom Phœbus shone
 With fullest rays, Amphiaræus now gone; 275
 In Hyperesia's groves he made abode,
 And taught mankind the counsels of the god.
 From him sprung Theoclymenus, who found
 (The sacred wine yet foaming on the ground)
 Telemachus: whom, as to heav'n he press'd 280
 His ardent vows, the stranger thus address'd:
 O thou that dost thy happy course prepare
 With pure libations and with solemn pray'r!
 By that dread pow'r to whom thy vows are paid,
 By all the lives of these, thy own dear head, 285
 Declare sincerely to no foe's demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.
 Prepare then, said Telemachus, to know
 A tale from falsehood free, not free from woe.

From Ithaca, of royal birth, I came, 290
 And great Ulysses (ever honour'd name !)
 Was once my sire: though now for ever lost
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
 Whose fate enquiring, through the world we rove;
 The last, the wretched proof of filial love. 295

The stranger then: Nor shall I aught conceal,
 But the dire secret of my fate reveal.
 Of my one tribe an Argive wretch I slew;
 Whose pow'rful friends the luckless deed pursue
 With unrelenting rage, and force from home 300
 The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam,
 But bear, oh bear me o'er yon' azure flood;
 Receive the suppliant! spare my destin'd blood!

Stranger (reply'd the prince) securely rest
 Affianc'd in our faith; henceforth our guest. 305
 Thus affable, Ulysses' god-like heir
 Takes from the stranger's hand the glitt'ring spear:
 He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
 And by his side the guest accepted plac'd.
 The chief his orders gives: th' obedient band 310
 With due observance waits the chief's command:
 With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
 The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.
 Minerva calls; the ready gales obey
 With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea. 315
 Crunus they pass'd, next Chalcis roll'd away,
 When thick'ning darkness clos'd the doubtful day;
 The silver Phæa's glitt'ring rills they lost,
 And skim'd along by Elis' sacred coast.
 Then cautious thro' the rocky reaches wind, 320
 And turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Mean-time the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
 Sat in the cottage, at their rural feast:
 The banquet past, and satiate ev'ry man,
 To try his host Ulysses thus began: 325

Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your guest;
 The last I purpose in your walls to rest:

To-morrow for myself I must provide,
And only ask your counsel, and a guide :
Patient to roam the street, by hunger led, 330
And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.
There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
Ulysses' wand'rings to his royal mate ;
Or mingling with the suitors haughty train,
Not undeserving, some support obtain. 335
Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
Patron of industry and manual arts :
Few can with me in dext'rous works contend,
The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend ;
To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame ; 340
Or foam the goblet with a purple stream.
Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
Whom fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.

Alas ! (Eumæus with a sigh rejoind)
How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind ? 345
If on that godless race thou wouldst attend,
Fate owes thee sure a miserable end !
The wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
And pull descending vengeance from on high.
Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast : 350
A blooming train in rich embroid'ry drest,
With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends,
And smiling round celestial youth attends.
Stay then : no eye askance beholds thee here ;
Sweet is thy converse to each social ear ; 355
Well pleas'd, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
Till good Telemachus accepts his guest
With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.

To him the man of woes : O greacious Jove ! 360
Reward this stranger's hospitable love,
Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,
Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve,
Of all the ills unhappy mortals know,
A life of wand'rings is the greatest woe : 365

On all their weary ways wait care and pain,
 And pine and penury, a meagre train.
 To such a man since harbour you afford,
 Relate the farther fortunes of your lord ;
 What cares his mother's tender breast engage, 370
 And fire, forsaken on the verge of age ;
 Beneath the sun prolong they yet their breath,
 Or range the house of darkness and of death ?

To whom the swain : Attend what you enquire.
 Laertes lives, the miserable sire 375
 Lives, but implores of ev'ry pow'r to lay
 The burden down, and wishes for the day.
 Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
 Torn from th' embraces of his tender wife,
 Sole, and all comfortless he wastes away, 380
 Old-age untimely posting ere his day.
 She too, sad mother ! for Ulysses lost
 Pin'd out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost.
 (So dire a fate, ye righteous gods ! avert,
 From ev'ry friendly, ev'ry feeling heart !)
 While yet she was, tho' clouded o'er with grief, 385
 Her pleasing converse minister'd relief :
 With Climene, her youngest daughter, bred,
 One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.
 But when the softly-stealing pace of time 390
 Crept on from childhood into youthful prime,
 To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair ;
 Me to the fields, to tend the rural care ;
 Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
 Nor less the darling object of her love. 395
 Her hapless death my brighter days o'ercaft,
 Yet providence deserts me not at last ;
 My present labours food and drink procure,
 And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.
 Small is the comfort from the queen to hear 400
 Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear ;
 Blank and discountenanc'd the servants stand,
 Nor dare to question where the proud command :

No profit springs beneath usurping pow'rs ;
 Want feeds not there where luxury devours, 405
 Nor harbours charity where riot reigns :
 Proud are the lords, and wretched are the swains.

The suff'ring chief at this began to melt ;
 And, oh Eumæus ! thou (he cries) hast felt
 The spite of fortune too ! her cruel hand 410
 Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land !
 Snatch'd from thy parents arms, thy parents eyes,
 To early wants ! a man of miseries !
 Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
 Sunk the fair city by the rage of war, 415
 Where once thy parents dwelt ? or did they keep,
 In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep ?
 So left perhaps to tend the fleecy train,
 Rude pyrates seiz'd, and shipp'd thee o'er the main ?
 Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board, 420
 The worthy purchase of a foreign lord.

If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
 A story fruitful of events, attend :
 Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy,
 And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ : 425
 Long nights the now-declining year bestows ;
 A part we consecrate to soft repose,
 A part in pleasing talk we entertain ;
 For too much rest itself becomes a pain.
 Let those whom sleep invites, the call obey, 430
 Their cares resuming with the dawning day :
 Here let us feast, and to the feast be join'd
 Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind ;
 Review the series of our lives, and taste
 The melancholy joy of evils past : 435
 For he who much has suffer'd, much will know ;
 And pleas'd remembrance builds delight on woe.

Above Ortygia lyes an isle of fame,
 Far hence remote, and Syria is the name ;
 (There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace 440
 The sun's diurnal, and his annual race)

Not large, but fruitful; stor'd with grafs to keep
 The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep;
 Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
 And her rich vallies wave with golden corn. 445
 No want, no famine the glad natives know,
 Nor sink by sickness to the shades below;
 But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
 Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along,
 They bend the silver bow with tender skill, 450
 And void of pain, the silent arrows kill.
 Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
 Where two fair cities rise with equal pride,
 But both in constant peace one prince obey,
 And Ctefius there, my father, holds the sway. 455
 Freight'd, it seems, with toys of ev'ry sort
 A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port;
 What-time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
 Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land.
 This nymph, where anchor'd the Phoenician train,
 To wash her robes descending to the main, 460
 A smooth-tongu'd sailor won her to his mind;
 (For love deceives the best of woman-kind).
 A sudden trust from sudden liking grew;
 She told her name, her race, and all she knew. 465
 I too (she cry'd) from glorious Sidon came,
 My father Arybas, of wealthy fame;
 But snatch'd by pyrates from my native place,
 The Taphians sold me to this man's embrace.

Haste then (the false-designing youth reply'd) 470
 Haste to thy country, love shall be thy guide:
 Haste to thy father's house, thy father's breast,
 For still he lives, and lives with riches blest.

"Swear first (she cry'd) ye sailors! to restore
 "A wretch in safety to her native shore." 475
 Swift as she ask'd, the ready sailors swore.
 She then proceeds: Now let our compact made
 Be nor by signal nor by word betray'd,

B h 2.

Nor near me any of your crew descry'd
 By road frequented, or by fountain-side. 480
 Be silence still our guard. The monarch's spies
 (For watchful age is ready to surmise)
 Are still at hand; and this reveal'd must be
 Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
 Your vessel loaded, and your traffic past, 485
 Dispatch a wary messenger with haste:
 Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
 And more, the infant offspring of the king.
 Him, child-like wand'ring forth, I'll lead away,
 (A noble prize!) and to your ship convey. 390
 Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the road.
 A year they traffic, and their vessel load.
 Their stores compleat, and ready now to weigh,
 A spy was sent, their summons to convey:
 An artist to my father's palace came, 495
 With gold and amber chains, elab'rate frame:
 Each female eye the glitt'ring links employ,
 They turn, review, and cheapen ev'ry toy.
 He took th' occasion as they stood intent,
 Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went. 500
 She strait pursu'd, and seiz'd my willing arm;
 I follow'd smiling, innocent of harm.
 Three golden goblets in the porch she found,
 (The guests not enter'd, but the table crown'd)
 Hid in her fraudulent bosom, these she bore. 505
 Now set the sun, and darken'd all the shore.
 Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
 Prepar'd to launch the freighted vessel rides;
 Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
 With level oar along the glassy deep. 510
 Six calmy days and six smooth nights we sail,
 And constant Jove supply'd the gentle gale.
 The sev'nth, the fraudulent wretch, (no cause descry'd)
 Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow, dy'd.
 Down dropt the caitiff-corse, a worthless load, 515
 Down to the deep; there roll'd the future food
 Of fierce sea-wolves, and monsters of the flood.

An helpless infant I remain'd behind ;
 Thence born to Ithaca by wave and wind ;
 Sold to Laertes, by divine command ; 520
 And now adopted to a foreign land.

To him the king : Reciting thus thy cares,
 My secret soul in all thy sorrows shares :
 But one choice blessing (such was Jove's high will)
 Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draughts of ill : 525
 Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
 The gods have, in a master, giv'n a friend.
 Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
 (For she needs little) daily bread and wine.
 While I, so many wand'rings past and woes, 530
 Live but on what thy poverty bestows.

So past in pleasing dialogue away
 The night ; then down to short repose they lay ;
 'Till radiant rose the messenger of day. }
 While in the port of Ithaca, the band 435
 Of young Telemachus approach'd the land ;
 Their sails they loos'd, they lash'd the mast aside,
 And cast their anchors, and the cables ty'd :
 Then on the breezy shore descending, join
 In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine. 440
 When thus the prince : Now each his course pursue ;
 I to the fields, and to the city you,
 Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
 My swains to visit, and the works survey.
 Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies 545
 Our debt of safe return, in feast and sacrifice.

Then Theoclymenus : But who shall lend,
 Mean-time, protection to thy stranger friend ?
 Strait to the queen and palace shall I fly,
 Or yet more distant, to some lord apply ? 550
 The prince return'd . Renown'd in days of yore
 Has stood our father's hospitable door ;
 No other roof a stranger should receive,
 Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.

B. b 3.

But in my absence riot fills the place, 555
 Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face,
 From noiseful revel far remote she flies,
 But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.

No—let Eurymachus receive my guest,
 Of nature courteous, and by far the best ; 560
 He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
 And emulates her former husband's fame :
 With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
 And the hop'd nuptials turn to joy or woe.

Thus speaking, on the right up-soar'd in air 565
 The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger ;
 His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove ;
 'The clotted feathers scatter'd from above
 Between the hero and the vessel pour
 Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine show'r. 570

Th' observing augur took the prince aside,
 Seiz'd by the hand, and thus prophetic cry'd :
 Yon bird that dexter cuts th' aerial road,
 Rose ominous, nor flies without a god :
 No race but thine shall Ithaca obey, 575

To thine, for ages, heav'n decrees the sway.
 Succeed the omen, gods ! (the youth rejoin'd)
 Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind,
 And soon each envy'd happiness attend
 The man, who calls Telemachus his friend. 580

Then to Piræus——Thou whom time has prov'd
 A faithful servant, by thy prince belov'd !
 Till we returning shall our guest demand,
 Accept this charge, with honour, at our hand.

To this Piræus : Joyful I obey, 585
 Well pleas'd the hospitable rites to pay.
 The presence of thy guest shall best reward
 (If long thy stay) the absence of my lord.

With that, their anchors he commands to weigh,
 Mount the tall bark, and launch into the sea. 590
 All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
 And plac'd in order, spread their equal oars.

Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes ;
Pois'd in his hand the pointed jav'lin shakes.
They part ; while lefs'ning from the hero's view, 595
Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew :
The hero trod the margin of the main,
And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain.

17

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus.

Telemachus arriving at the lodge of Eumæus, sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return. Minerva appearing to Ulysses, commands him to discover himself to his son. The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XVI.

S O O N as the morning blush'd along the plains,
Ulysses, and the monarch of the swains,
Awake the sleeping fires, their meal prepare,
And forth to pasture send the bristly care.
The prince's near approach the dogs descry, 5
And fawning round his feet, confess their joy.
Their gentle blandishment the king survey'd,
Heard his resounding step, and instant said :

Some well-known friend (Eumaeus) bends this way ;
His steps I hear ; the dogs familiar play. 10

While yet he spoke, the prince advancing drew
Nigh to the lodge, and now appear'd in view.
Transported, from his seat Eumaeus sprung,
Drop'd the full bowl, and round his bosom hung :
Kissing his cheek, his hand, while from his eye 15
The tears rain'd copious in a show'r of joy.
As some fond sire who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
(Child of his age) with strong paternal joy
Forward he springs, and clasps the favourite boy : 20
So round the youth his arms Eumaeus spread,
As if the grave had giv'n him from the dead.

And is it thou ? my ever dear delight !
O art thou come to bless my longing fight !

Never, I never hop'd to view this day, 25
 When o'er the waves you plow'd the desp'rate way.

Enter my child ! beyond my hopes restor'd,
 O give these eyes to feast upon my lord.
 Enter, oh seldom seen ! for lawless pow'rs
 Too much detain thee from these sylvan bow'rs. 30

The prince reply'd ; Eumæus, I obey ;
 To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.
 But say, if in the court the queen reside
 Severely chaste, or if commenc'd a bride ?

Thus he : and thus the monarch of the swains ; 34
 Severely chaste Penelope remains,
 But lost to ev'ry joy, she wastes the day
 In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.

He ended, and (receiving as they pass
 The javelin, pointed with a star of brass) 40
 They reach'd the dome ; the dome with marble shin'd.
 His seat Ulysses to the prince resign'd.

Not so——(exclaims the prince with decent grace)
 For me, this house shall find an humbler place :
 T' usurp the honours due to silver hairs 45
 And rev'rend strangers, modest youth forbears.
 Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
 And bids the rural throne with officers rise.

There sate the prince : the feast Eumæus spread ;
 And heap'd the shining canisters with bread. 50
 Thick o'er the board the plenteous viands lay,
 The frugal remnants of the former day.

Then in a bowl he tempers gen'rous wines,
 Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.
 And now, the rage of thirst and hunger fled, 55
 Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said :

Whence, father, from what shore this stranger, say ?
 What vessel bore him o'er the wat'ry way ?
 To human step our land impervious lies,
 And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise. 60

The swain returns : A tale of sorrows hear ;
 In spacious Crete he drew his natal air :

Long doom'd to wander o'er the land and main,
 For heav'n has wove his thread of life with pain.
 Half-breathless 'scaping to the land, he flew 65
 From Thesprot mariners, a murd'rous crew !
 To thee, my son, the suppliant I resign ;
 I gave him my protection, grant him thine.

Hard task, he cries, thy virtue gives thy friend,
 Willing to aid, unable to defend. 70

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
 'Midst the swell'd insolence of lust and pride ?
 Ev'n I unsafe : the queen in doubt to wed,
 Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed !
 Perhaps she weds regardless of her fame, 75
 Deaf to the mighty Ulyssæan name.

However, stranger ! from our grace receive
 Such honours as besit a prince to give ;
 Sandals, a sword, and robes, respect to prove,
 And safe to sail with ornaments of love. 80

Till then, thy guest amid the rural train
 Far from the court, from danger far, detain.
 'Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
 And clothe the naked from th' inclement sky.
 Here dwell in safety from the suitors wrongs, 85
 And the rude insults of ungovern'd tongues.
 For should'st thou suffer, pow'rless to relieve
 I must behold it, and can only grieve.

The brave encompass'd by an hostile train,
 O'erpower'd by numbers, is but brave in vain. 90

To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
 With warmth replies the man of mighty woes :
 Since audience mild is deign'd, permit my tongue
 At once to pity and resent thy wrong.

My heart weeps blood, to see a soul so brave
 Live to base insolence of pow'r a slave. 95

But tell me, dost thou, prince, dost thou behold
 And hear their midnight revels uncontroul'd ?

Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise,
 Or priests in fabled oracles advise ? 100

Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy pow'r,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour ?
 O that I were from great Ulysses sprung,
 Or that these wither'd nerves like thine were strung ;
 Or heav'n's ! might he return ! (and soon appear 105
 He shall, I trust ; a hero scorns despair)
 Might he return, I yield my life a prey
 To my worst foe, if that avenging day
 Be not their last : but should I lose my life
 Oppress'd by numbers in the glorious strife, 110
 I chuse the nobler part ; and yield my breath,
 Rather than bear dishonour worse than death ;
 Than see the hand of violence invade
 The rev'rend stranger, and the spotless maid ;
 Than see the wealth of kings consum'd in waste, 115
 The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.

Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye ;
 Sincere the youthful hero made reply :
 Nor leagu'd in factious arms my subjects rise,
 Nor priests in fabled oracles advise ; 120
 Nor are my brothers, who should aid my pow'r,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour.
 Ah me ! I boast no brother ; heav'n's dread king
 Gives from our stock an only branch to spring :
 Alone Laertes reign'd Arceſius' heir, 125
 Alone Ulysses drew the vital air,
 And I alone the bed connubial grac'd,
 The unblest offspring of a fire unblest !
 Each neighb'ring realm conducive to our woe
 Sends forth her peers, and ev'ry peer a foe : 130
 The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
 And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills.
 Ev'n Ithaca and all her lords invade
 Th' imperial scepter, and the regal bed :
 The queen averse to love, yet aw'd by pow'r, 135
 Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour :
 Mean-time their licence uncontroll'd I bear ;
 Ev'n now they envy me the vital air :
 But heav'n will sure revenge, and gods there are. }

But go, Eumæus! to the queen impart
Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart
Yet secret go; for num'rous are my foes,
And here at least I may in peace repose.

To whom the swain: I hear, and I obey:—
But old Laertes weeps his life away, 145
And deems thee lost: shall I my speed employ.
To bless his age, a messenger of joy?
The mournful hour that tore his son away
Sent the sad fire in solitude to stray;
Yet buff'd with his slaves, to ease his woe, 150
He dress'd the wine, and bade the garden blow,
Nor food nor wine refus'd: but since the day
That you to Pylos plow'd the wat'ry way,
Nor wine nor food he tastes; but sunk in woes,
Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows. 155
Shut from the walks of men, to pleasure lost,
Pensive and pale, he wanders half a ghost.

Wretched old man! (with tears the prince returns)
Yet cease to go——what man so blest but mourns?
Were ev'ry wish indulg'd by fav'ring skies, 160
This hour should give Ulysses to my eyes.
But to the queen with speed dispatchful bear
Our safe return, and back with speed repair:
And let some hapd-maid of her train resort
To good Laertes in his rural court. 165

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay
He brac'd his sandals on, and strode away:
Then from the heav'ns the martial goddess flies
Through the wide fields of air, and cleaves the skies;
In form a virgin in soft beauty's bloom, 170
Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.
Alone to Ithacus she stood display'd,
But unapparent as a viewless shade
Escap'd Telemachus: (the pow'rs above,
Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move.) 175
The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
Of pow'r divine, and howling, trembling fled.

The goddess beck'ning waves her deathless hands;
Dauntless the king before the goddess stands.

Then why (she said) O favour'd of the skies ! 180
Why to thy god-like son this long disguise ?
Stand forth reveal'd : with him thy cares employ
Against thy foes : be valiant, and destroy !
Lo I descend in that avenging hour,
To combat by thy side, thy guardian pow'r. 185

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold :
Imperial robes his manly limbs infold ;
At once with grace divine his frame improves ;
At once with majesty enlarg'd he moves :
Youth flush'd his red'ning cheek, and from his brows
A length of hair in sable ringlets flows ; 190
The black'ning chin receives a deeper shade :
Then from his eyes up-sprung the warrior-maid.

The hero re-ascends : the prince o'er-aw'd
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a god. 195
Then with surprise (surprise chastis'd by fears)
How art thou chang'd ! (he cry'd) a god appears !
Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace !
Far other glories lighten from thy face !
If heav'n be thy abode, with pious eare 200
Lo ! I the ready sacrifice prepare ;
Lo ! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
To win thy grace : O save us, pow'r divine !

Few are my days, Ulysses made reply,
Nor I, alas ! descendent of the sky. 205
I am thy father. O my son ! my son !
That father for whose sake thy days have run
One scene of woe ; to endless cares consign'd,
And outrag'd by the wrongs of base mankind.

Then, rushing to his arms, he kiss'd his boy 210
With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.
Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew :
He strain'd him close as to his breast he grew.
Ah me ! (exclaims the prince with fond desire)
Thou art not—no, thou canst not be my sire. 215

Heav'n such illusion only can impose,
By the false joy to aggravate my woes.
Who but a god can change the gen'ral doom,
And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom?
Late, worn with years, in weeds obscene you trod, 220
Now, cloth'd in majesty, you move a god!

Forbear, he cry'd; for heav'n reserve that name,
Give to thy father but a father's claim:
Other Ulysses shalt thou never see;
I am Ulysses, I (my son) am he. 225
Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean tost,
'Tis giv'n at length to view my native coast.
Pallas, unconquer'd maid, my frame surrounds
With grace divine: her pow'r admits no bounds:
She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed; 230
Now strong as youth, magnificent I tread.
The gods with ease frail men depress or raise,
Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase.

He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew,
Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew;
Nor less the father pour'd a social flood; 235
They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.
As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,
Or parent vultur, mourns her ravish'd young;
They cry, they scream, their unfledg'd brood a prey 240
To some rude churl; and born by stealth away;
So they aloud: and tears in tides had run,
Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun:
But checking the full torrent in its flow,
The prince thus interrupts the solemn woe: 245
What ship transported thee, O father, say?
And what blest hands have oar'd thee on the way?

All, all, (Ulysses instant made reply)
I tell thee all, my child, my only joy!
Phaeacians bore me to the port assign'd, 250
A nation ever to the stranger kind;
Wrapt in th' embrace of sleep, the faithful train
O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign:

Embroider'd vestures, gold, and brass are laid
 Conceal'd in caverns in the sylvan shade. 255
 Hither, intent the rival rout to slay,
 And plan the scene of death, I bend my way :
 So Pallas wills——But thou, my son, explain
 The names and numbers of th' audacious train ;
 'Tis mine to judge if better to employ 260
 Assistant force, or singly to destroy.

O'er earth (returns the prince) resounds thy name,
 Thy well-try'd wisdom, and thy martial fame :
 Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost ;
 Can we engage, not decads, but an host ? 265
 Can we alone in furious battle stand
 Against that num'rous and determin'd band ?
 Hear then their numbers : from Dulichium came
 Twice twenty six, all peers of mighty name ;
 Six are their menial train : twice twelve the boast 270
 Of Samos : twenty from Zacynthus coast :
 And twelve our country's pride ; to these belong
 Medon and Phemius skill'd in heav'nly song.
 Two few'rs from day to day the revels wait,
 Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state. 275
 With such a foe th' unequal fight to try,
 Were by false courage unreveng'd to die.
 Then what assistant pow'rs you boast, relate,
 Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate.

Mark well my voice, (Ulysses strait replies :) 280
 What need of aids, if favour'd by the skies ;
 If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
 By mighty Pallas, and by thund'ring Jove ?

Sufficient they (Telemachus rejoind)
 Against the banded pow'rs of all mankind : 285
 They, high enthron'd above the rolling clouds,
 Wither the strength of man, and awe the gods.

Such aids expect, he cries, when strong in might
 We rise terrific to the task of fight.
 But thou, when morn salutes th' aerial plain, 290
 The court revisit and the lawless train :

Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads,
 An aged mendicant in tatter'd weeds.
 There, if base scorn insult my rev'rend age,
 Bear it, my son ! repress thy rising rage : 295
 If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel ;
 Bear it, my son ! howe'er thy heart rebel.
 Yet strive by pray'r and counsel to restrain
 Their lawless insults, tho' thou strive in vain :
 For wicked ears are deaf to wisdom's call, 300
 And vengeance strikes whom heav'n has doom'd to fall.
 Once more attend : when * she, whose pow'r inspires
 The thinking mind, my soul to vengeance fires,
 I give the sign ; that instant, from beneath,
 Aloft convey the instruments of death, 305
 Armour and arms ; and, if mistrust arise,
 Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise :
 " These glitt'ring weapons, ere he sail'd to Troy
 " Ulysses view'd with stern heroic joy ;
 " Then, beaming o'er th' illumin'd wall they shone : 310
 " Now dust dishonours all their lustre gone.
 " I bear them hence (so Jove my soul inspires)
 " From the pollution of the fuming fires ;
 " Lest when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
 " Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood : 315
 " Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite
 " The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight."
 Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive :
 For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
 Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield, 320
 A pointed javelin, and a fenceful shield.
 But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
 By that regard a son his father owes ;
 The secret, that thy father lives, retain
 Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train ; 325
 Hide it from all ; ev'n from Eumæus hide,
 From my dear father, and my dearer bride.

* Minerva.

One care remains, to note the loyal few
 Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew ;
 And noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove 330
 Who loves his prince ; for sure you merit love.

To whom the youth : To emulate I aim
 The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.
 But re-consider, since the wisest err,
 Vengeance resolv'd 'tis dang'rous to defer. 335

What length of time must we consume in vain,
 Too curious to explore the menial train ?
 While the proud foes, industrious to destroy
 Thy wealth in riot, the delay enjoy.

Suffice it in this exigence alone 340
 To mark the damsels that attend the throne :
 Dispers'd the youth resides ; their faith to prove
 Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.

While in debate they waste the hours away,
 Th' associates of the prince repass'd the bay ; 345
 With speed they guide the vessel to the shores ;
 With speed debarking land the naval stores ;
 Then faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,
 And trust the presence to his friendly care.

Swift to the queen a herald flies t' impart 350
 Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart ;
 Lest a sad prey to ever musing cares,
 Pale grief destroy what time a while forbears.

Th' uncautious herald with impatience burns,
 And cries aloud, Thy son, oh queen, returns : 355
 Eumæus sage approach'd th' imperial throne,
 And breath'd his mandate to her ear alone,
 Then measur'd back the way.—The suitor band
 Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded stand ;
 And issuing from the dome, before the gate, 360
 With clouded looks, a pale assembly sate.

At length Eurymachus : Our hopes are vain ;
 Telemachus in triumph sail the main.
 Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display ;
 Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news convey ! 365

Scarce had he spoke, when turning to the strand
Amphinomus survey'd th' associate band ;
Full to the bay within the winding shores
With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.
O friends ! he cry'd, elate with rising joy, 370
See to the port secure the vessel fly !
Some god has told them, or themselves survey
The bark escap'd ; and measure back their way.

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
They moor the vessel and unlade the stores : 375
Then moving from the strand, apart they sate,
And full and frequent, form'd a dire debate.

Lives then the boy ? he lives, (Antinous cries)
The care of gods and fav'rite of the skies.
All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels 380
Aurora flam'd above the eastern hills,
And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
Took in the ocean with a broad survey :
Yet safe he sails ! the pow'rs coelestial give
To shun the hidden snares of death, and live. 385
But die he shall, and thus condemn'd to bleed
Be now the scene of instant death decreed :
Hope ye success ? undaunted crush the foe.
Is he not wise ? know this, and strike the blow.
Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws 390
The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause ?
Strike, ere the states conven'd the foe betray,
Our murd'rous ambush on the wat'ry way.
Or chuse ye vagrant from their rage to fly
Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky ? 395
The brave prevent misfortune ; then be brave,
And bury future danger in his grave.
Returns he ? ambush'd we'll his walk invade,
Or where he hides in solitude and shade :
And give the palace to the queen a dow'r, 400
Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.
But if submissive you resign the sway,
Slaves to a boy, go, flatter and obey.

Retire we instant to our native reign,
 Nor be the wealth of kings consum'd in vain. 405
 Then wed whom choice approves : the queen be giv'n
 To some blest prince, the prince decreed by heav'n.

Abash'd, the suitor-train his voice attends ;
 'Till from his throne Amphinomus descends,
 Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign; 410
 A land of plenty, blest with ev'ry grain :
 Chief of the numbers who the queen address,
 And tho' displeasing, yet displeasing least.
 Soft were his words ; his actions wisdom sway'd ;
 Graceful a while he paus'd, then mildly said : 415

O friends forbear ! and be the thought withstood :
 'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood !
 Consult we first th' all-seeing pow'rs above,
 And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.
 If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies ; 420
 If they forbid, I war not with the skies.

He said : the rival train his voice approv'd,
 And rising instant to the palace mov'd.
 Arriv'd, with wild tumultuous noise they sate
 Recumbent on the shining thrones of state. 425

Then Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
 The murd'rous council to the queen relates.
 Touch'd at the dreadful story she descends ;
 Her hasty steps a damsel-train attends.
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 430
 Sudden before the rival pow'rs she stands :
 And veiling decent with a modest shade
 Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said :

O void of faith ! of all bad men the worst !
 Renown'd for wisdom, by th' abuse accurst ! 435
 Mistaking fame proclaims thy gen'rous mind !
 Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.
 Wretch ! to destroy a prince that friendship gives,
 While in his guest his murd'rer he receives :
 Nor dread superior Jove, to whom belong 440
 The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.

Hast thou forgot (ungrateful as thou art)
 Who sav'd thy father with a friendly part ?
 Lawless he ravag'd with his martial pow'rs
 The Taphian pyrates on Thesprotia's shores ; 445
 Enrag'd, his life, his treasures they demand ;
 Ulysses sav'd him from th' avenger's hand.
 And would thou evil for his good repay ?
 His bed dishonour, and his house betray ?
 Afflict his queen ? and with a murd'rous hand 450
 Destroy his heir ?——but cease, 'tis I command.

Far hence those fears, (Eurymachus reply'd)
 O prudent prince ! bid thy soul confide.
 Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
 While I behold the golden light of day ? 455
 No : by the righteous pow'rs of heav'n I swear,
 His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.
 Ulysses, when my infant days I led,
 With wine suffic'd me, and with dainties fed :
 My gen'rous soul abhors th' ungrateful part, 460
 And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.
 Then fear no mortal arm : if heav'n destroy,
 We must resign ; for man is born to die.

Thus smooth he ended, yet his death conspir'd :
 Then sorrowing, with sad step the queen retir'd, 465
 With streaming eyes all comfortless deplor'd,
 Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord ;
 Nor ceas'd, till Pallas-bid her sorrows fly,
 And in soft slumber seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the ev'ning hour, 470
 Came late-returning to his sylvan bow'r.
 Ulysses and his son had drest with art
 A yearling boar, and gave the gods their part.
 Holy repast ! That instant from the skies
 The martial goddess to Ulysses flies : 475
 She waves her golden wand, and re-assumes
 From ev'ry feature ev'ry grace that blooms ;
 At once his vestures change ; at once she sheds
 Age o'er his limbs, that trembles as he treads.

Left to the queen the swain with transport fly, 480
 Unable to contain th' unruly joy.

When near he drew ; the prince breaks forth ; Proclaim
 What tidings, friend ! what speaks the voice of fame ?
 Say, if the suitors measure back the main,
 Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain ? 485

Whether, he cries, they measure back the flood,
 Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
 Escap'd my care : where lawless suitors sway,
 Thy mandate born, my soul disdain'd to stay.
 But from th' Hermaean height I cast a view, 390
 Where to the port a bark high-bounding flew :
 Her freight a shining band ; with martial air
 Each pois'd his shield, and each advanc'd his spear ;
 And if aright these searching eyes survey,
 Th' eluded suitors stem the wat'ry way. 495

The prince, well pleas'd to disappoint their wiles,
 Steals on his fire a glance, and secret smiles.
 And now a short repast prepar'd, they fed,
 'Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled :
 Then to repose withdrawn, apart they lay, 500
 And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day.

THE
O D Y S S E Y
O F

H O M E R.

B O O K XVII.

D d

THE ARGUMENT.

Telemachus, returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumaeus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumaeus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K X V I I .

SOON as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn ;
In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part ;
His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart ;
Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine,
And thus he greets the master of the swine :

My friend, adieu : let this short stay suffice ;
I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.
But thou attentive, what we order heed ;
This hapless stranger to the city lead ;
By public bounty let him there be fed,
And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.
To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes
My will may covet, but my pow'r denies.
If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
The pain of anger punishes the fault.
The very truth I undisguis'd declare :
For what so easy as to be sincere ?

To this Ulysses : What the prince requires
Of swift removal seconds my desires.
To want like mine the peopled town can yield
More hopes of comfort than the lonely field.
Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands.

D d. 2

Adieu ! but since this ragged garb can bear
 So ill th' inclemencies of morning air,
 A few hours space permit me here to stay ;
 My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
 With riper beams when Phoebus warms the day. 30

Thus he : nor aught Telemachus reply'd,
 But left the mansion with a lofty stride :
 Schemes of revenge his pond'ring breast elate,
 Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
 Arriving now before th' imperial hall, 35
 He props his spear against the pillar'd wall ;
 Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds ;
 The marble pavement with his step resounds :
 His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
 With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds : 40
 She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
 And reach'd her master with a long embrace.

All-crouded round the family appears,
 With wild entrancement and ecstatic tears.
 Swift from above descends the royal fair ; 45
 (Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air)
 Hangs o'er her son ; in his embraces dies ;
 Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes :
 Few words she spoke, tho' much she had to say, 50
 And scarce those few, for tears, could force their way :

Light of my eyes ! he comes ! unhop'd-for joy !
 Has heav'n from Pylos brought my lovely boy ?
 So snatch'd from all our cares !—Tell, hast thou known
 Thy father's fate ? and tell me all thy own. 55

Oh dearest, most rever'd of womankind !
 Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind,
 (Reply'd the prince) nor be our fates deplor'd,
 From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.
 Go bathe, and rob'd in white, ascend the tow'rs ; 60
 With all thy handmaids thank th' immortal pow'rs ;
 To ev'ry god vow hecatombs to bleed,
 And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed :

While to th' assembled council I repair ;
 A stranger sent by heav'n attends me there ; 65
 My new accepted guest I haste to find,
 Now to Piræus' honour'd charge consign'd.

The matron heard ; nor was his word in vain :
 She bath'd ; and rob'd in white, with all her train,
 To ev'ry god vow'd hecatombs to bleed, 70
 And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
 Arm'd with his lance the prince then pass'd the gate ;
 Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await :
 Pallas his form with grace divine improves :
 The gazing croud admires him as he moves. 75
 Him, gath'ring round, the haughty suitors greet.
 With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
 Their false addresses gen'rous he deny'd,
 Pass'd on, and fate by faithful Mentor's side ;
 With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage, 80
 (His father's counsellors, rever'd for age)
 Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
 Much ask'd the seniors ; till Piræus came.
 The stranger guest pursu'd him close behind ;
 Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd. 85
 He, (when Piræus ask'd for slaves to bring
 The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
 Thus thoughtful answer'd : Those we shall not move,
 Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove ;
 We know not yet the full event of all : 90
 Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
 Us and our house if treason must o'erthrow,
 Better a friend possess them, than a foe :
 If death to these, and vengeance heav'n decree,
 Riches are welcome then, not else, to me. 95
 Till then, retain the gifts — The hero said,
 And in his hand the willing stranger led.
 Then disarray'd, the shining bath they sought,
 With unguents smooth, of polish'd marble wrought ;
 Obedient handmaids with assistant toil 100
 Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil :

Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
 And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew.
 The golden ew'r a nymph attendant brings,
 Replenish'd from the pure translucent springs ; 105
 With copious streams that golden ew'r supplies
 A silver laver of capacious size.
 They wash ; the table, in fair order spread,
 Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.
 Full opposite, before the folding gate, 110
 The pensive mother sits in humble state ;
 Lowly she sate, and with dejected view,
 The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.
 The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,
 'Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceast. 115

When thus the queen : My son ! my only friend !
 Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend ?
 (The couch deserted now a length of years,
 The couch for ever water'd with my tears)
 Say, wilt thou not, (e'er yet the suitor-crew 120
 Return, and riot shakes our walls anew)
 Say, wilt thou not the least account afford,
 The least glad tidings of my absent lord ?

To her the youth : We reach'd the Pylian plains,
 Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns. 125
 All arts of tenderness to him are known,
 Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own ;
 No father, with a fonder grasp of joy,
 Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.
 But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe, 130
 Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath.
 For farther search, his rapid steeds transport
 My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.
 There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms
 (So heav'n decreed) engag'd the great in arms. 135
 My cause of coming told, he thus rejoind ;
 And still his words live perfect in my mind :

Heav'ns ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane !

So with her young, amid the woodland shades, 140
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades,
 Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,
 And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns;
 Mean-time returning, with remorseless sway
 The monarch-savage rends the panting prey : 145
 With equal fury, and with equal fame
 Shall great Ulysses re-assert his claim.
 O Jove ! supreme ! whom men and gods revere !
 And thou whose lustre gilds the rowling sphere !
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid 150
 The chief adopted by the martial maid !
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when, contending on the Lesbian shore
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor blest'd : 155
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne
 Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.
 Now what you question of my ancient friend,
 With truth I answer ; thou the truth attend.
 Learn what I heard the * sea-born seer relate, 160
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate
 Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,
 The sad survivor of his num'rous train,
 Ulysses lyes ; detain'd by magic charms,
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms. 165
 No sailors there, no vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable sea——
 This told Atrides, and he told no more.
 Thence safe I voyag'd to my native shore.
 He ceas'd ; nor made the pensive queen reply, 170
 But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.
 When Theoclymenus the seer began :
 Oh suff'ring comfort of the suff'ring man !
 What human knowledge could, those kings might tell ;
 But I the secrets of high heav'n reveal. 175

* Oracles

* Proteus.

Before the first of gods be this declar'd,
 Before the board whose blessings we have shar'd ;
 Witness the genial rites, and witness all
 This house holds sacred in her ample wall !
 Ev'n now this instant great Ulysses, laid 180
 At rest, or wand'ring in his country's shade,
 Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view,
 Secret revolves ; and plans the vengeance due.
 Of this sure auguries the gods bestow'd,
 When first our vessel anchor'd in your road. 185

Succeed those omens, heav'n ! (the queen rejoind)
 So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind ;
 And ev'ry envy'd happiness attend
 The man who calls Penelope his friend.

Thus commun'd they : while in the marble court
 (Scene of their insolence) the lords resort ; 190
 Athwart the spacious square each tries his art
 To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
 And from the field the victim flocks they drive : 195
 Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
 And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
 To bid the banquet interrupts their play.
 Swift to the hall they haste ; aside they lay }
 Their garments, and succinct, the victims slay. 200 }
 Then sheep, and goats, and bristly porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide ;
 Along the road conversing side by side,
 Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain : 205
 When thus Eumæus, gen'rous and humane :

To town, observant of our lord's behest,
 Now let us speed, my friend, no more my guest !
 Yet like myself I wish'd thee here prefer'd,
 Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd. 210
 But much to raise my master's wrath I fear ;
 The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made
While the broad beams by Phoebus are display'd,
Or ere brown ev'ning spreads her chilly shade. 215

Just thy advice, (the prudent chief rejoin'd)
And such as suits the dictate of my mind.
Lead on: but help me to some staff to stay
My feeble step, since rugged is the way.

Across his shoulders then the scrip he flung, 220
Wide patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong:
A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way
Cheerly they fare: behind the keepers stay;
These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)
Supply his absence, and attend the herd. 225

And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,
Alas, how chang'd! a man of miseries!
Prompt on a staff, a beggar old and bare,
In rags dishonest flutt'ring with the air!

Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down 230
The cavern'd way descending to the town,
Where from the rock, with liquid lapse, distills
A limpid fount, that, spread in parting rills,
Its current thence to serve the city brings:
An useful work, adorn'd by antient kings. 235

Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor there
In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care,
In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
And shaded with a green surrounding grove;
Where silver alders in high arches twin'd, 240
Drink the cool stream, and tremble to the wind.
Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
A mossy altar, deep embower'd in green;
Where constant vows by travellers are paid,
And holy horrors solemnize the shade 245

Here with his goats, (not vow'd to sacred flame,
But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came;
Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
He ey'd the stranger, and imperious spoke:

The good old proverb how this pair fulfill! 250
 One rogue is usher to another still,
 Heav'n with a secret principle endu'd
 Mankind to seek their own similitude.
 Where goes the swine-herd with that ill-look'd guest,
 That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast? 255
 Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
 From ev'ry great man's gate reptil'd with scorn;
 To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
 'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.
 To beg, than work, he better understands; 260
 Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.
 For any office could the slave be good,
 To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food;
 If any labour those big joints could learn,
 Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn. 265
 To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
 Is all by which that graceless maw is fed.
 Yet hear me! if thy impudence but dare
 Approach yon' walls, I prophecy thy fare:
 Dearly, full dearly shalt thou buy thy bread, 270
 With many a footstool thund'ring at thy head.
 He thus: nor insolent of word alone,
 Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown;
 Spurn'd, but not mov'd: he like a pillar stood,
 Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road: 275
 Doubtful or with his staff to strike him dead,
 Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.
 Short was that doubt; to quell his rage inur'd,
 The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
 But hateful of the wretch Eumæus heav'd 280
 His hands obteasing, and this pray'r conceiv'd:
 Daughters of Jove! who from th' ethereal bow'rs
 Descend to swell the springs, and seed the flow'rs!
 Nymphs of this fountain! to whose sacred names
 Our rural victims mount in blazing flames! 285
 To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
 The yearly firstlings of his flock, and herd!

Succeed my wish ; your votary restore :
 Oh be some god his convoy to our shore !
 Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence, 290
 And humble all his airs of insolence,
 Who, proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
 Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.

What mutters he, (Melanthius sharp rejoins)
 This crafty miscreant big with dark designs ? 295
 The day shall come, nay 'tis already near,
 When, slave ! to sell thee at a price too dear,
 Must be my care ; and hence transport thee o'er,
 (A load and scandal to this happy shore.)
 Oh ! that as surely great Apollo's dart, 300
 Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
 Of the proud son, as that we stand this hour
 In lasting safety from the father's pow'r.

So spoke the wretch ; but shunning farther fray,
 Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way. 305
 Strait to the feastful palace he repair'd,
 Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd ;
 Beneath Eurymachus, his patron-lord,
 He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Mean-time they heard, soft-circling in the sky, 310
 Sweet airs ascend, and heav'nly minstrelsy ;
 (For Phepius to the lyre attun'd the strain :)
 Ulysses heark'ned, then address'd the swain :

Well may this palace admiration claim,
 Great, and respondent to the master's fame ! 315
 Stage above stage th' imperial structure stands,
 Holds the chief honours and the town commands :
 High walls and battlements the courts inclose,
 And the strong gates defy a host of foes,
 Far other cares its dwellers now employ ; 320
 The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy :
 I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
 And hear (what graces ev'ry feast) the lyre.

Then thus Eumæus : Judge we which were best ;
 Amidst yon' revellers a sudden guest 325

Chuse you to mingle, while behind I stay?
 Or I first ent'ring introduce the way?
 Wait for a space without, but wait not long;
 This is the house of violence and wrong:
 Some rude insult thy rev'rend age may bear; 330
 For like their lawless lords the servants are.

Just is, oh friend! thy caution, and address
 (Reply'd the chief) to no unheeding breast;
 The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
 Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind. 335
 The bravely patient to no fortune yields:
 On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
 Storms have I past, and many a stern debate;
 And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
 What cannot Want? the best she will expose, 340
 And I am learn'd in all her train of woes;
 She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms
 The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms!

Thus near the gates, conferring, as they drew,
 Argus, the dog, his antient master knew; 345
 He, not unconscious of the voice and tread,
 Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head.
 Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
 But ah! not fated long to please his lord!
 To him his swiftness and his strength were vain; 350
 The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.
 Till then in ev'ry sylvan chace renown'd,
 With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around;
 With him the youth pursu'd the goat or fawn,
 Or trac'd the mazy lev'ret o'er the lawn. 355
 Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
 Un-hous'd, neglected, in the public way;
 And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
 Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet, 360
 In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet;
 Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes
 Salute his master, and confess his joys.

Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul ;
 Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole, 365
 Stole unperceiv'd ; he turn'd his head, and dry'd
 The drop humane ; then thus impassion'd cry'd :

What noble beast in this abandon'd state
 Lyes here all helpless at Ulysses' gate ?
 His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise ; 370
 If, as he seems, he was in better days,
 Some care his age deserves : or was he priz'd
 For worthless beauty ? therefore now despis'd ?
 Such dogs and men there are, mere things of state,
 And always cherish'd by their friends, the great. 375

Not Argus so, (Eumæus thus rejoin'd)
 But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,
 Who never, never shall behold him more !
 Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore !
 Oh had you seen him, vig'rous, bold and young, 380
 Swift as a stage, and as a lion strong ;
 Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
 None 'scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood ;
 His eye how piercing ! and his scent how true,
 To wind the vapour in the tainted dew ! 385
 Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast ;
 Now years un-nerve him, and his lord is lost !
 The women keep the gen'rous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care :
 The master gone, the servants what restrains ? 390
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns ?
 Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

This said, the honest herdsman strode before :
 The musing monarch pauses at the door. 395
 The dog, whom fate had granted to behold
 His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
 Takes a last look, and having seen him, dies ;
 So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes !

And now Telemachus, the first of all, 400
 Observ'd Eumæus ent'ring in the hall ;

Distant he saw, across the shady dome ;
 Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come,
 There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd,
 In order due, the steward of the feast, 405
 (Who now was busied carving round the board ;)
 Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
 Before him instant was the banquet spread,
 And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses, lowly at the door, 410
 A figure despicable, old, and poor,
 In squalid vests with many a gaping rent,
 Propt on a staff, and trembling as he went.
 Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
 Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight ; 415
 (Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain)
 The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain :

These viands, and this bread, Eumæus ! bear,
 And let yon' mendicant our plenty share :
 Then let him circle round the suitors' board, 420
 And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
 Bold let him ask, encourag'd thus by me ;
 How ill, alas ! do want and shame agree !

His lord's command the faithful servant bears ;
 The seeming beggar answers with his pray'rs : 425
 Blest be Telemachus ! in ev'ry deed
 Inspire him, Jove ! in ev'ry wish succeed !
 This said, the portion from his son convey'd
 With smiles receiving, on his scrip he laid.
 Long as the min'strel swept the sounding wire, 430
 He fed, and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.
 Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
 Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes
 To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
 And learn the gen'rous from th' ignoble heart ; 435
 (Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
 Dooms to full vengeance all th' offending train ;)
 With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
 Humble he moves, imploring all around.

The proud feel pity, and relief bestow, 449
 With such an image touch'd of human woe ;
 Enquiring all, their wonder they confess,
 And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
 The bold Melanthius to their thought replies : 445
 My lords ! this stranger of gigantic port
 The good Eumæus usher'd to your court.
 Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
 Tho' all unknown his clime, or noble race.

And is this present, swineherd ! of thy hand ? 450
 Bring'st thou these vagrants to infect the land ?
 (Returns Antinous with retorted eye)

Objects uncouth ! to check the genial joy.
 Enough of these our court already grace,
 Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face. 455
 Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
 To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin'd :
 Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
 Who calls from distant nations to his own, 460
 The poor, distinguish'd by their wants, alone ?
 Round the wide world are sought those men divine
 Who public structures raise, or who design ;
 Those to whose eyes the gods their ways reveal,
 Or bless with salutary arts to heal ; 465

But chief to poets such respect belongs,
 By rival nations courted for their songs ;
 These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
 Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.
 It is not so with want ! how few that feed 470

A wretch unhappy, merely for his need !
 Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
 To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.

For me, suffice the approbation won
 Of my great mistress, and her god-like son : 475

To him Telemachus : No more incense
 The man by nature prone to insolence :

Injurious minds just answers but provoke——
 Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke :
 Thanks to thy care, whose absolute command. 480
 Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
 Heav'n blefs its owner with a better mind !

From envy free, to charity inclin'd.
 This both Penelope and I afford :
 Then, prince ! be bounteous of Ulysses' board. 485
 To give another's is thy hand so slow ?

So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow ?
 Whence, great Telemachus ! this lofty strain ?
 (Antinous cries with insolent disdain)

Portions like mine if ev'ry suitor gave, 490
 Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the slave.

He spoke, and lifting high above the board
 His pond'rous footstool, shook it at his lord.
 The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread ;
 He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped ; 495 }
 But first before Antinous stopt, and said,
 Bestow, my friend ! thou dost not seem the worst
 Of all the Greeks, but prince-like and the first ;
 Then as in dignity, be first in worth.

And I shall praise thee thro' the boundless earth. 500

Once I enjoy'd in luxury and state
 Whate'er gives man the envy'd name of great ;
 Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days ;
 And hospitality was then my praise ;
 In ev'ry sorrowing soul I pour'd delight, 505
 And poverty stood smiling in my sight.

But Jove, all-governing, whose only will
 Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
 Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
 With roving pyrates o'er the Ægyptian main. 510

By Ægypt's silver flood our ships we moor ;
 Our spies commission'd strait the coast explore ;
 But impotent of mind, with lawless will
 The country savage, and the natives kill.

The spreading clamour to their city flies, 515
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise :
 The red'ning dawn reveals the hostile fields
 Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields :
 Jove thunder'd on their side : our guilty head 519 }
 We turn'd to flight ; the gath'ring veng'ance spread }
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead,
 Some few the foes in servitude detain ;
 Death ill-exchang'd for bondage and for pain !
 Unhappy me a Cyprian took a-board,
 And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord : 525
 Hither, to 'scape his chains, my course I steer,
 Still curst by fortune, and insulted here !

To whom Antinous thus his rage express :
 What god has plagu'd us with this gormaund guest ?
 Unless at distance, wretch ! thou keep behind, 530 }
 Another isle than Cyprus more unkind, }
 Another Ægypt shalt thou quickly find.
 From all thou beg'st, a bold audacious slave ;
 Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
 Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown ; 535
 Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.

The chief, retiring : Souls, like that in thee,
 Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
 Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
 The smallest portion of a wasteful board, 540
 Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps,
 Yet starving want amidst the riot weeps.

The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
 And sowl'ly smiling, this reply returns :
 Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng : 545 }
 And dumb for ever be thy stand'rous tongue ! }
 He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.
 His shoulder-blade receiv'd th' ungentle shock ;
 He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock ;
 But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd, 550
 Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd,

And inly form'd revenge: then back withdrew;
 Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw,
 And thus with semblance mild address the crew: }

May what I speak your princely minds approve, 555
 Ye peers and rivals in this noble love!

Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.

If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,
 Or if defending what is justly dear,
 From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear,
 The gen'rous motive dignifies the scar. 561 }

But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong!

Want brings enough of other ills along!

Yet if injustice never be secure,

If fiends revenge, and gods assert the poor, 565

Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,

And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.

Peace, wretch! and eat thy bread without offence,

(The suitor cry'd) or force shall drag thee hence,

Scourge thro' the public street, and cast thee there, 570

A mangled carcase for the hounds to tear.

His furious deed the gen'ral anger mov'd;

All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd; and some reprov'd:

Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd?

Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound. 575

Unblest thy hand! if in this low disguise

Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies?

They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign

In forms like these, to round the earth and main,

Just and unjust recording in their mind, 580

And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind:

Telemachus, absorpt in thought severe,

Nourish'd deep anguish, tho' he shed no tear;

But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook:

While thus his mother to her virgins spoke: 585

"On him and his may the bright god of day

"That base, inhospitable blow repay!"

The nurse replies: "If Jove receives my pray'r,

"Not one survives to breathe to-morrow's air."

All, all are foes, and mischief is their end ; 590
 Antinous most to gloomy death a friend,
 (Replies the queen ;) the stranger begg'd their grace,
 And melting pity soften'd ev'ry face ;

From ev'ry other hand redress he found,
 But fell Antinous answer'd with a wound. 595
 Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,
 Then bade Eumæus call the pilgrim in.
 Much of th' experienc'd man I long to hear;
 If or his certain eye, or list'ning ear
 Have learn'd the fortunes of my wand'ring lord. 600
 Thus she, and good Eumæus took the word :

A private audience if thy grace impart,
 The stranger's words may ease the royal heart :
 His sacred eloquence in balm distills,
 And the-sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills. 605
 Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run
 Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
 Unfinish'd yet, and yet I thirst to hear !
 As when some heav'n-taught poet charms the ear,
 (Suspending sorrow with celestial strain 610
 Breath'd from the gods to soften human pain)
 Time steals away with unregarded wing,
 And the soul hears him, tho' he cease to sing.

Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
 (His father's guest) for Minos' birth renown'd. 615
 He now but waits the wind, to waft him o'er,
 With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia's shore.

To this the queen: The wand'rer let me hear;
 While yon' luxurious race indulge their cheer,
 Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat, 620
 And turn my gen'rous vintage down their throat.
 E'er where's an arm, like thine, Ulysses, strong,
 To curb wild riot, and to punish wrong ?

She spoke. Telemachus then sneez'd aloud ;
 Constrain'd, his nostril-echo'd thro' the croud. 625
 The smiling queen the happy omen blest :
 " So may these impious fall, by fate oppress !

Then to Eumæus: Bring the stranger, fly !
 And if my questions meet a true reply,
 Grac'd with a decent robe he shall retire, 630
 A gift in season which his wants require.

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies
 In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries :
 The queen invites thee, venerable guest !
 A secret instinct moves her troubled breast 635
 Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
 Some light, and sooth her soul's eternal pain.
 If true, if faithful thou, her grateful mind
 Of decent robes a present has design'd ;
 So finding favour in the royal eye, 640
 Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.

Fair truth alone (the patient man reply'd)
 My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
 To him, to me, one common lot was giv'n,
 In equal woes, alas ! involv'd by heav'n. 645
 Much of his fates I know ; but check'd by fear
 I stand : the hand of violence is here :
 Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
 And injur'd suppliants seek in vain for aid.
 Let for a space the pensive queen attend, 650
 Nor claim my story 'till the sun descend ;
 Then in such robes as suppliant's may require,
 Compos'd and chearful by the genial fire,
 When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
 Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace. 655

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain :
 And, say (she cries) does fear, or shame, detain
 The cautious stranger ? with the begging kind
 Shame suits but ill. Eumæus thus rejoind :

He only asks a more propitious hour, 660
 And shuns (who wou'd not ?) wicked men in pow'r ;
 At ev'ning mild (meet season to confer)
 By turns to question, and by turns to hear.

Whoe'er this guest (the prudent queen replies)
 His ev'ry step and ev'ry thought is wise. 665

For men like these on earth he shall not find,
In all the miscreant race of humankind.

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
And parting, to the suitor pow'rs descends;
There seeks Telmemachus, and thus apart 670
In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart:

The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge; my charge demands my care.
These sons of murder thirst thy life to take;
O guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake! 675

Thanks to my friend, (he cries;) but now the hour
Of night draws on, go seek the rural bow'r:
But first refresh: and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the gods convey.

Our life to heav'n's immortal pow'rs we trust, 680
Safe in their care, for heav'n protects the just.

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sate
And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along
'Twas riot all amid the suitor-throng, 685 }
They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song.
'Till now declining tow'rd the close of day,
The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

THE
ODYSSEY

OF
HOMER.

BOOK XVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The fight of Ulysses and Irus.

The beggar Irus insults Ulysses : the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XVIII.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sate,
 A mendicant approach'd the royal gate ;
 A surly vagrant of the giant kind,
 The stain of manhood, of a coward mind ;
 From feast to feast, insatiate to devour
 He flew, attendant on the genial hour ;
 When on his mother's knees a babe he lay,
 She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day,
 But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
 Practis'd the common messenger to fly,
 Irus, a name expressive of th' employ.

5

10 }

From his own roof with meditated blows
 He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.

Hence dotard, hence ! and timely speed thy way,
 Lest, dragg'd in vengeance, thou repent thy stay !
 See how with nods assent yon' princely train !
 But honouring age, in mercy I refrain :
 In peace away ! lest if persuasions fail,
 This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.

20

To whom with stern regards : O insolence,
 Indecently to rail without offence !
 What bounty gives, without a rival share ;
 I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air :
 Alike on alms we both precarious live :
 And canst thou envy when the great relieve ?

25

F f

Know from the bounteous heav'ns all riches flow,
 And what man gives, the gods by man bestow :
 Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
 Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood ;
 Old as I am, should once my fury burn, 30
 How wouldst thou fly, nor even in thought return !

Mere woman-glutton ! (thus the churl reply'd)
 A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide !
 Why cease I, gods ! to dash those teeth away,
 Like some vile boar's, that greedy of his prey 35
 Uproots the bearded-corn ? rise, try the fight,
 Gird well thy loins, approach, and feel my might :
 Sure of defeat, before the peers engage ;
 Unequal fight ! when youth contends with age.

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display 40
 More fierce intents, preluding to the fray :
 Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
 Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train :

This happy day in mirth, my friends, employ,
 And lo ! the gods conspire to crown our joy. 45
 See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
 Yon' furly mendicants contentious stand :
 Why urge we not to blows ? Well-pleas'd they spring
 Swift from their seats, and thick'ning form a ring.

To whom Antinous : Lo ! enrich'd with blood
 A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food !) 50
 On glowing embers ly ; on him bestow
 The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
 Grant him unrival'd in these walls to stay,
 The sole attendant on the genial day. 55

The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
 And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart :

Worn as I am with age, decay'd with woe,
 Say, is it baseness, to decline the foe ?
 Hard conflict ! when calamity and age 60
 With vig'rous youth, unknown to cares, engage !
 Yet, fearful of disgrace, to try the day
 Imperious hunger bids, and I obey ;

But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear, to stand neutral while we cope in fight. 65

The peers assent : when strait his sacred head
Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said ;

Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
Of this bold insolent, confide, be strong !
Th' injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow, 70
That instant makes Telemachus his foe ;
And these * my friends shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality, for they are wise.

Then girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares ; 75
Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
By just degrees like well-turn'd columns rise :
Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong,
(Attendant on her chief :) the suitor-croud 80
With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud :

Irus, alas ! shall Irus be no more !
Black fate impends, and this th' avenging hour !
Gods ! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim ;
Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame ! 85

Then pale with fears, and sick'ning at the sight,
They dragg'd th' unwilling Irus to the fight ;
From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood.

O that such baseness should disgrace the light ! 90
O hide it, death, in everlasting night !
(Exclaims Antinous) can a vig'rous foe
Meanly decline to combat age and woe ?
But hear me, wretch ! if recreant in the fray,
That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day, 95
Instant thou fail'st, to Echetus resign'd,
A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant kind,
Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.

F f 2

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke, 100
In ev'ry joint the trembling Irus shook ;

Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
And poises high in air his adverse hands.

The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
To sell the giant at one vengeful blow, 105

Or save his life ; and soon his life to save

The king resolves, for mercy sways the brave.

That instant Irus his huge arm extends,

Full on his shoulder the rude weight descends :

The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose 110

The hero latent in the man of woes,

Check'd half his might ; yet rising to the stroke,

His jaw-bone dash'd ; the crashing jaw-bone broke :

Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound,

His feet extended quiv'ring beat the ground, 115

His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood,

His teeth all shatter'd rush immix'd with blood.

The peers transported as outstretch'd he lyes,
With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies.

Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,

His length of carcass trailing prints the ground ; 120

Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,

'Till propp'd reclining on the palace walls :

Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,

And thus with just reproach address'd the slave : 125

There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign

A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train !

But mercy to the poor and stranger show,

Lest heav'n in vengeance send some mightier woe.

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung 130

The broad patch'd scrip ; the scrip in tatters hung

Ill join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.

Then turning short, disdain'd a further stay,

But to the palace measur'd back the way.

There as he rested, gath'ring in a ring 135

The peers with smiles address'd their unknown king :

Stranger, may Jove, and all th' aerial pow'rs,

With ev'ry blessing crown thy happy hours !

Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
From bold intrusion of thy coward foe; 140
Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
To Echetus, the monster of a king.

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food;
A kid's well fatt'd entrails, rich with blood :
The bread from canisters of shining mold 145
Amphinomus, and wines that laugh in gold,
And oh ! (he mildly cries) may heav'n display
A beam of glory o'er thy future day !
Alas ! the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
The gripes of poverty, and stings of care. 150

To whom with thought mature the king replies :
The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise ;
Such was thy father ! in imperial state,
Great without vice; that oft attends the great :
Nor from the fire art thou the son declin'd ; 155
Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind !
Of all that breathes, or grov'ling creeps on earth,
Most vain is man ! calamitous by birth.
To-day with pow'r elate, in strength he blooms ;
The haughty creature on that pow'r presumes : 160
Anon from heav'n a sad reverse he feels ;
Untaught to bear, 'gainst heav'n the wretch rebels.
For man is changeful as his bliss or woe,
Too high when prosp'rous, when distress too low.
There was a day, when with the scornful great 165
I swell'd in pomp and arrogance of state ;
Proud of the pow'r that to high birth belongs ;
And us'd that pow'r to justify my wrongs.
Then let not man be proud : but firm of mind,
Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd ; 170
Be dumb when heav'n afflicts ! unlike yon' train
Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain ;
Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey :
But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
O may'st thou, favour'd by some guardian pow'r, 175
Far, far be distant in that deathful hour ?

For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
These lawless riots end in blood and death.

Then to the gods the rosy juice he pours,
And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores. 180
Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
He shook the graceful honours of his head;
His boding mind the future woe forestalls,
In vain! by great Telemachus he falls,
For Pallas seals his doom: all sad he turns 185
To join the peers, resumes his throne, and mourns.

Mean-while Minerva with instinctive fires,
Thy soul, Penelope, from heav'n inspires,
With flatt'ring hopes the suitors to betray,
And seem to meet, yet fly the bridal day, 190
Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's to raise,
And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
Then while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries:

Eurynome! to go where riot reigns 195
I feel an impulse, though my soul disdains;
To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor-friend unmask the foe;
Who smooth of tongue, of purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

Go warn thy son, nor be the warning vain, 200
(Reply'd the sagest of the royal train)
But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd descend;
pow'rful of charms, bid ev'ry grace attend;
The tide of flowing tears a while suppress; 205
Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
Some joy remains: to thee a son is giv'n,
Such as in fondness parents ask of heav'n.

Ah me! forbear, returns the queen, forbear;
Oh! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care! 210
No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
Those charms, for whom alone I wish'd to please.
The day that bore Ulysses from this coast,
Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.

But instant bid Autopoe descend, 215
 Instant Hippodame our steps attend;
 Hl suits it female virtue to be seen
 Alone, indecent, in the walks of men.

Then while Eurynome the mandate bears,
 From heav'n Minerva shoots with guardian cares: 220
 O'er all her senses, as the couch she prest,
 She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest,
 With ev'ry beauty ev'ry feature arms,
 Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms,
 In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires, 225
 (Immortal gifts! to kindle soft desires)
 From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
 And the pure iv'ry o'er her bosom spreads.
 Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
 She smoothly gliding swims th' harmonious round, 230
 When with the Graces in the dance she moves,
 And fires the gazing gods with ardent loves.

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
 And to the queen the damsel-train descends:
 Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes uncloze; 235
 The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes:

Howe'er 'tis well, that sleep a while can free,
 With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me!
 Oh! were it giv'n to yield this transient breath,
 Send, oh Diana! send the sleep of death! 240
 Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
 Nor bury in the silent grave my cares?
 O my Ulysses! ever honour'd name!
 For thee I mourn till death dissolves my frame.

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends, 245
 On either hand a damsel-train attends:
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
 Radiant before the gazing peers she stands;
 A veil translucent o'er her brow display'd,
 Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade: 250
 Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
 And sudden flames in ev'ry bosom rise;

They send their eager souls with ev'ry look,
'Till silence thus th' imperial matron broke :

O why ! my son, why now no more appears 255
That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years ?
Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
A man in stature, still a boy in heart !
Thy well-knit-frame, unprofitably strong,
Speaks thee an hero, from an hero sprung : 260
But the just gods in vain those gifts bestow,
O wife alone in form, and brave in show !
Heav'n's ! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
Beneath thy roof, and could'st thou tamely stand ?
If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline, 265
His is the suff'rance, but the shame is thine.

To whom, with filial awe, the prince returns :
That gen'rous soul with just resentment burns ;
Yet taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow
For others good, and melt at others woe : 270
But impotent these riots to repel,
I bear their outrage, tho' my soul rebel :
Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
And numbers leagu'd in impious union dread :
But now no crime is theirs : this wrong proceeds 275
From Irus ; and the guilty Irus bleeds.
O would to Jove ! or her whose arms display
The shield of Jove ! or him who rules the day !
That yon' proud suitors, who licentious tread
These courts, within these courts like Irus bled : 280
Whose loose head tott'ring as with wine oppress'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast ;
Pow'rless to move, his stagg'ring feet deny.
The coward wretch the privilege to fly.

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies : 285
O justly lov'd, and not more fair than wife !
Should Greece thro' all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway,
In rival crouds contest the glorious prize,
Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes : 290

O woman ! loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and complete in mind !

Ah me ! (returns the queen,) when from this shore
Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more !

The gods decreed these eyes no more should keep 295
Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.

Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
My virtues last ; my brightest charm is love.

Now, grief, thou all art mine ! the gods o'ercast
My soul with woes, that long, ah long must last ! 300

Too faithfully my heart retains the day
That sadly tore my royal lord away :

He grasp'd my hand, and, Oh my spouse ! I leave
Thy arms, (he cry'd) perhaps to find a grave :

Fame speaks the Trojans bold ; they boast the skill 305
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,

To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car

With dreadful inroad thro' the walks of war.

My sentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed

Perhaps by righteous heav'n that I must bleed ! 310

My father, mother, all, I trust to thee ;

To them, to them transfer the love of me !

But when my son grows man, the royal sway

Resign, and happy be thy bridal day !

Such were his words ; and Hymen now prepares 315

To light his torch, and give me up to cares ;

Th' afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear :

A wretch the most complete that breathes the air !

Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due !

Careless to please, with insolence ye woe ! 320

The gen'rous lovers, studious to succeed,

Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed ;

By precious gifts the vow sincere display :

You, only you, make her ye love your prey.

Well pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive 325

The suitor train, and raise a thirst to give :

False hopes she kindles, but those hopes betray,

And promise, yet elude the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries ;
 Offspring of kings, and more than woman wise ! 330
 'Tis right ; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
 And custom bids thee without shame receive ;
 Yet never, never from thy dome we move,
 'Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love.

The peers dispatch their heralds to convey 335
 The gifts of love ; with speed they take the way.
 A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
 The varying hues in gay confusion rise
 Rich from the artist's hand ! twelve clasps of gold,
 Close to the leftning waist the vest infold ; 340
 Down from the swelling loins the vest unbound
 Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.
 A bracelet rich with gold. with amber gay,
 That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
 Eurymachus presents ; and ear-rings bright, 345
 With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.
 Pisander bears a necklace, wrought with art ;
 And ev'ry peer, expressive of his heart,
 A gift bestows : this done, the queen ascends,
 And slow behind, her damsel-train attends. 350

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
 Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train ;
 And now he raises, as the day-light fades,
 His golden circlet in the deep'ning shades :
 Three vases heap'd with copious fires display 355
 O'er all the palace a fictitious day ;
 From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
 And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king : Ill suits your sex to stay
 Alone with men : ye modest maids, away ! 360
 Go, with the queen the spindle guide, or cull
 (The partners of her cares) the silver wooll ;
 Be it my task the torches to supply
 Ev'n till the morning lamp adorns the sky ;
 Ev'n till the morning, with unwearied care, 365
 Sleepless I watch ; for I have learn'd to bear.

Scornful they heard : Melantho fair and young,
 (Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
 Who with the queen her years an infant led,
 With the soft fondness of a daughter bred) 370
 Chiefly derides : regardless of the cares
 Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
 Nocturnal with Eurymachus : with eyes
 That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies :

Oh ! whither wanders thy disemper'd brain, 375
 Thou bold intruder on a princely train ?
 Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair ;
 Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.
 Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
 Or flows licentious from the copious bowl ? 380
 Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind ?
 A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,
 Who short'ning with a storm of blows thy stay,
 Shall send thee howling all in blood away.

To whom with frowns : O impudent in wrong !
 Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue ; 386
 Know, to Telemachus I tell th' offence :
 The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
 Nor longer durst sustain the sov'reign look. 390

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
 His royal hands ; each torch refulgent burns
 With added day : mean-while, in museful mood,
 Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.
 And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs 395
 To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors tongues :
 Scornful of age, to taint the virtuous man,
 Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began :

Hear me (he cries) confederates and friends !
 Some god, no doubt, this stranger kindly sends ; 400
 The shining baldness of his head survey,
 It aids our torch-light, and reflects the ray.

Then to the king that levell'd haughty Troy :
 Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ

Those hands in work; to tend the rural trade, 405
 To dress the walk, and form th' embow'ring shade?
 So food and raiment constant will I give:
 But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,
 And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive.

To whom, incens'd: Should we, O prince, engage
 In rival talks, beneath the burning rage 411

Of summer suns; were both constrain'd to wield,
 Foodless, the scythe along the burden'd field;
 Or should we labour while the ploughshare wounds
 With steers of equal strength th' allotted grounds; 415
 Beneath my labours how thy wond'ring eyes
 Might see the sable field at once arise!

Should Jove dire war unloose, with spear and shield,
 And nodding helm, I tread th' ensanguin'd field, 419
 Fierce in the van: then would'st thou, would'st thou, say,
 Misname me glutton in that glorious day?

No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace;
 'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.

Proud to seem brave among a coward-train!

But know thou art not valorous, but vain. 425

Gods! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
 These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
 With indignation flashing from his eyes:

Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong, 430

Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue;

Irrev'rend to the great, and uncontroll'd,

Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold?

Perhaps these outrages from Irus flow,

A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe! 435

He said, and with full force a footstool threw:

Whirl'd from his arm with erring rage it flew.

Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,

Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.

Not so a youth who deals the goblet round, 440

Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound;

Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,

He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky,
Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry; 445
O had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
To the black realms of darkness and of death,
Ere yet he trod these shores! to strife he draws
Peer against peer; and what the weighty cause?
A vagabond! for him the great destroy, 450
In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy!

To whom the stern Telemachus uprose!
Gods! what wild fury from the goblet flows?
Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
But from the licence of the copious bowl? 455
Or heav'n delusion sends. But hence, away!
Force I forbear; and without force obey.

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke:

True are his words; and he whom truth offends, 460
Not with Telemachus, but truth contends.
Let not the hand of violence invade
The rev'rend stranger, or the spotless maid:
Retire we hence! but crown with rosy wine
The flowing goblet to the pow'rs divine: 465
Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands;
This justice, this the social right demands.

The peers assent; the goblet Mulius crown'd
With purple juice, and bore in order round;
Each peer successive his libation pours 470
No the blest gods that fill th' aereal bow'rs;
Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crouds obey,
And rushing forth tumultuous reel away.

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XIX.

G 2

THE ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

Ulysses and his son remove the weapons out of the armory. Ulysses's conversation with Penelope: gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete, and describes exactly his person and dress; affirms to have heard of him in Phaeacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

BOOK XIX.

Instant convey those steely stores of war
To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
To soothe their fears a specious reason feign ;
Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost,
His arms deform'd the roof they wont adorn :
From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
Left they by sight of swords to fury fir'd,
Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul,
Defame the bridal-feast, and friendly bowl.

In happy hour, (pleas'd Euryclea cries)
Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wife!
Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.

But who the lighted taper will provide,
(The female train retir'd) your toils to guide?

Without infringing hospitable right,
This guest (he cry'd) shall bear the guiding light: 30
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said; from female ken she strait secures
The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors:
Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears 35 }
The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears,
With shields indented deep in glorious wars. }
Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
And with her golden lamp his toil befriends:
Not such the sickly beams, which unsincere 40
Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere:
A present deity the prince confess'd,
And rap'd with ecstasy the fire address'd:

What miracle thus dazzles with surprise!
Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise: 45
The walls, where-e'er my wond'ring sight I turn,
And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn!
Some visitant of pure ethereal race,
With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.

Be calm, replies the fire; to none impart, 50
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart:
Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
Seek thou repose; whilst here I sole remain,
T' explore the conduct of the female train: 55
The pensive queen perchance desires to know
The series of my toils to soothe her woe.

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends:
Soft slumb'rous shades his drooping eye-lids close, 60
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses staid
In council secret with the martial maid;

Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
 The queen, descending from her bow'r of state. 65
 Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
 An iv'ry seat with silver ringlets grac'd;
 By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd:
 With iv'ry silver'd thick the foot-stool shone, 70
 O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown:
 The sov'reign seat with graceful air she pres'd;
 To diff'rent tasks their toil the nymphs address'd:
 The golden goblet some, and some restor'd
 From stains of luxury the polish'd board; 75
 These to remove th' expiring embers came,
 While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
 Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen:
 Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight! 80
 Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night;
 Into the woman-state asquint to pry;
 A day-devourer, and an ev'ning-spy!
 Vagrant, begone! before this blazing brand:
 Shall urge—and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

Th' insulted hero rous'd his wrathful eyes;
 And, Why so turbulent of soul? he cries:
 Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
 These poor, but honest rags, enkindle rage?
 In crowds we wear the badge of hungry fate, 90
 And beg, degraded from superior state!
 Constrain'd! a rent-charge on the rich I live;
 Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give:
 A palace, wealth, and slaves I late possess'd,
 And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd: 95
 My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
 Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
 Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid!
 'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd!
 Nor think thyself exempt: that rosy prime 100
 Must share the gen'ral doom of with'ring time:

To some new channel soon the changeful tide
 Of royal grace th' offended queen may guide ;
 And her lov'd lord unplume thy tow'ring pride. }
 Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware ; 105
 Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care ;
 Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys,
 Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sov'reign's ear ;
 Loquacious insolent ! (she cries) forbear : 110
 To thee the purpose of my soul I told,
 Venial discourse unblam'd with him to hold :
 The storied labours of my wand'ring lord,
 To soothe my grief he haply may record.
 Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung ; 115
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue !
 But thou on whom my palace-cares depend ;
 Eurynome, regard the stranger-friend :

A seat soft-spread with furry spoils prepare ;
 Due-distant for us both to speak and hear : 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste :
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd :
 Due-distant for discourse the hero sate ;
 When thus the sov'reign from her chair of state :
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy natal land.

He thus : O queen whose far-resounding fame
 Is bounded only by the starry frame ;
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey ! 130
 In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd ;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd :
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd ;
 And fish of ev'ry fin thy seas afford :
 Their affluent joys the grateful-realms confess ; 135
 And bless the pow'r that still delights to bless.
 Gracious permit this pray'r, imperial dame !
 Forbear to know my lineage, or my name :

Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep ;
 In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep ! 140
 My woes awak'd will violate your ear,
 And to this gay cenforious train appear
 A winy vapour melting in a tear. }

Their gifts the gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd,)
 Exterior grace, and energy of mind, 145
 When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
 Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.
 My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
 My drooping verdure, and extend my praise !
 Peers from the distant Samian shore resort ; 150
 Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court :
 Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves :
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
 They press the Hymenaeon rite abhorr'd. 155
 Mis-rule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state-affairs :
 Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve ;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve !——
 This art, instinct by some coelestial pow'r, 160
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour :
 " Ye peers, I cry, who press to gain a heart,
 " Where dead Ulysses claims no future part ;
 " Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 " 'Till this funereal web my labours end : 165
 " Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeathe
 " A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 " For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 " With just reproach were licens'd to defame,
 " Shou'd he, long honour'd in supreme command, 170
 " Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."
 The fiction pleas'd ! their loves I long elude ;
 The night still ravell'd what the day renew'd ;
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd : 175

Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The wooff unwrought the suitor-train surprise.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the brede.
 My anxious parents urge a speedy choice, 180
 And to their suff'rage gain the filial voice :
 For rule mature, Telemachus deploras
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores——
 But, stranger ! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate : 185
 Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race ;
 No poor un-father'd product of disgrace.

Princess ! he cries, renew'd by your command,
 The dear remembrance of my native land,
 Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source, 190
 And tears repeat their long-forgotten course !
 So pays the wretch, whom fate constrains to roam,
 The dues of nature to his natal home !——
 But inward on my soul let sorrow prey ;
 Your sov'reign will my duty bids obey. 195

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil !
 And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle :
 Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
 In various tongues avow their various claims :
 Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew, 200
 And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due :
 The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
 Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share :
 Cnossus, her capital of high command ;
 Where scepter'd Minos with imperial hand 205
 Divided right ; each ninth revolving year
 By Jove receiv'd, in council to confer.
 His son Deucalion bore successive sway ;
 His son, who gave me first to view the day !
 The royal bed an elder issue blest, 210
 Idomeneus, whom Ilian fields attest
 Of matchless deed : untrain'd to martial toil.
 I liv'd inglorious in my native isle.

Studious of peace; and Æthon is my name.
 'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came; 215
 For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
 From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
 To bright Lucina's fane; the shelly coast
 Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
 His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port!) 220
 The hero speeded to the Cnossian court:
 Ardent the partner of his arms to find;
 In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
 Vain hope! ten suns had warm'd the western strand,
 Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225
 Had fail'd for Troy: but to the genial feast
 My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest:
 Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
 A public treat, with jars of gen'rous wine.
 Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aerial space, 230
 My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace:
 And when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
 He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.

Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
 With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235
 The queen's attentive ear: dissolv'd in woe,
 From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.
 As snows collected on the mountain freeze;
 When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
 The fleecy pile obeys the whisp'ring gales, 240
 Ends in a stream, and murmurs thro' the vales:
 So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
 Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd:
 She to her present lord laments him lost,
 And views that object which she wants the most! 245
 With'ring at heart to see the weeping fair,
 His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;
 Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
 Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;
 Firm wisdom interdicts the soft'ning tear. 250
 A speechless interval of grief ensues,
 'Till thus the queen the tender theme renews:

Stranger ! that e'er thy hospitable roof
 Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof :
 Delineate to my view my warlike lord, 255
 His form, his habit, and his train record.

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden sight
 Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight :
 Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,
 Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd : 260
 But what I can, receive.——In ample mode,
 A robe of military purple flow'd
 O'er all his frame : illustrious on his breast,
 The double-clasping gold the king confest.
 In the rich woof a hound Mosaic drawn 265
 Bore on full stretch, and seiz'd a dappled swan :
 Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold ;
 They pant, and struggle in the moving gold.
 Fine as a filmy web, beneath it shone
 A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun : 270
 The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
 In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
 A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
 I gave, enamel'd with Vulcanian art :
 A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest, 275
 Dimension'd equal to his size, express
 Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.
 A fav'rite herald in his train I knew,
 His visage solemn sad, of sable hue :
 Short woolly curls o'erfleec'd his bending head, 280
 O'er which a promontory-shoulder spread :
 Eurybates ! in whose large soul alone
 Ulysses view'd an image of his own.

His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd ;
 In all he told she recognis'd her lord : 285
 But when the storm was spent in plenteous show'rs,
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd pow'rs ;
 O thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate !

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With all thy wants the name of poor shall end ; 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend !
 The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold embost,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blissful bow'r enjoy'd : 295
 The fall of Troy, erroneous and forlorn,
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return !

Then he, with pity touch'd : O royal dame !
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim. 300
 I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord ! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase ;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace :
 Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend ; 305
 Truth forms my tale ; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care,
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air :
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd : 310
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store !
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day,
 Were doom'd by Jove, and Phoebus' just decree, 315
 To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
 To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
 And rode the storm ; 'till by the billows tost,
 He landed on the fair Phaeacian coast. 320
 That race, who emulate the life of gods,
 Receive him joyous to their blest abodes :
 Large gifts confer, a ready sail command
 To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
 But your wise lord, (in whose capacious soul 325
 High schemes of pow'r in just succession roul,)

H h

His Ithaca refus'd from fav'ring fate,
 'Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.
 Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sov'reign sway
 Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey : 330
 And bade the gods this added truth attest,
 (While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)
 That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
 To waft the hero to his natal land.
 I for Dulichium urge the wat'ry way, 335
 But first the Ulyssæan wealth survey :
 So rich the value of a store so vast
 Demands the pomp of centuries to waste !
 The darling object of your royal love,
 Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove ; 340
 By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
 To form the conduct of his great design :
 Irresolute of soul, his state to shrow'd
 In dark disguise, or come a king avow'd ?
 Thus lives your lord ; nor longer doom'd to roam, 345
 Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.
 By Jove, the source of good, supreme in pow'r !
 By the blest genius of this friendly bow'r !
 I ratify my speech ; before the sun
 His annual longitude of heav'n shall run ; 350
 When the pale empress of yon' starry train
 In the next month renews her faded wane,
 Ulysses will assert his rightful reign. }
 What thanks ! what boon ! (reply'd the queen) are due,
 When time shall prove the storied blessing true : 355
 My lord's return shou'd fate no more retard,
 Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
 But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage,
 The wounds of destiny's relentless rage :
 I long must weep ! nor will Ulysses come, 360
 With royal gifts to send you honour'd home ! —
 Your other task, ye menial train, forbear :
 Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare ;

With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn :
 Up-rising early with the purple morn, 365
 His sinews thrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
 In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
 Then with Telemachus the social feast
 Partaking free, my sole invited guest ;
 Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due, 370
 The breach of hospitable right may rue.
 The vulgar of my sex I most exceed
 In real fame, when most humane my deed :
 And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
 If, stranger ! I permit that mean attire, 375
 Beneath the feastful bow'r. A narrow space
 Confines the circle of our destin'd race ;
 'Tis ours, with good the scanty round to grace.
 Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues ; 380
 By death disrob'd of all their savage pow'rs,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose in-born worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend ;
 The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
 And distant tongues extol the patron-name.
 Princess, (he cry'd,) in vain your bounties flow
 On me, confirm'd, and obstinate in woe.
 When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
 And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew ; 390
 These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
 I chose, the liv'ry of a woeful mind !
 Nor will my heart corroding cares abate
 With splendid palls, and canopies of state :
 Low couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
 And catch the glances of the waking morn.
 The delicacy of your courtly train
 To wash a wretched wand'rer wou'd disdain ;
 But if, in tract of long experience try'd,
 And sad similitude of woes ally'd, 400

Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.

Pleas'd with his wife reply, the queen rejoin'd :
Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
In all who grac'd this hospitable bow'r 405
I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.
Such servant as your humble choice requires,
To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,
New from the birth ; and with a mother's hand
His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd : 410
Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind ;
Though now to life's extremest verge declin'd,
Of strength superior to the toil assign'd.—— }

Rise, Euryclea ! with officious care
For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare : 415
This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same !
Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now !
For age untimely marks the careful brow.

Instant obsequious to the mild command, 420
Sad Euryclea rose : with trembling hand
She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes ;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies :

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares !
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears ! 425
Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid ?
He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain :
There oft implor'd his tutelary pow'r, 430
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour ;
That form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognize an equal heir.
O destin'd head ! The pious vows are lost ;
His God forgets him on a foreign coast !—— 435
Perhaps, like thee, poor guest ! in wanton pride
The rich insult him, and the young deride !

Conscious of worth revil'd, thy gen'rous mind
 The friendly rite of purity declin'd :
 My will concurring with my queen's command, 449
 Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
 A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast ;
 In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd :
 Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
 None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost. 445

Thus half discover'd thro' the dark disguise,
 With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies :
 You join your suffrage to the public vote ;
 The same you think, have all beholders thought.

He said : replenish'd from the purest springs, 450
 The laver strait with busy care she brings :
 In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
 The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
 Mean-time revolving in his thoughtful mind
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd ; 455
 His face averting from the crackling blaze,
 His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays.
 Thus cautious, in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
 The curious search of Euryclea's eye. 460
 Cautious in vain ! nor ceas'd the dame to find
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.

This, on Parnassus combating the boar,
 With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
 Attended by his brave maternal race, 465
 His grandfire sent him to the sylvan chace,
 Autolycus the bold, (a mighty name
 For spotless faith, and deeds of martial fame :
 Hermes his patron-god those gifts bestow'd,
 Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load.) 470
 His course to Ithaca this hero sped,
 When the first product of Laertes' bed
 Was new disclos'd to birth : the banquet ends,
 When Euryclea from the queen descends,
 And to his fond embrace the babe commends. 475

“ Receive, she cries, your royal daughter’s son ;
 “ And name the blessing that your pray’rs have won.”

Then thus the hoary chief: "My victor arms

“ Have aw’d the realms around with dire alarms :

" A sure memorial of my dreaded fame 489

"The boy shall bear; Ulysses be his name!"

“ And when with filial love the youth shall come

"To view his mother's foil, my Delphic dome

"With gifts of price shall send him joyous home."

Lur'd with the promis'd boon, when youthful prime.

Ended in man, his mother's natal clime 786

Ulysses fought ; with fond affection dear

Amphithea's arms receiv'd the royal heir :

Her antient * lord an equal joy posselt ;

Instant he bade prepare the genial feast : 493

A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled,

Whose stately growth five flow'ry summers fed :

His sons divide, and roſt with artful care

The limbs; then all the tasteful viands share.

Nor ceas'd discourse (the banquet of the soul) 495

'Till Phoebus wheeling to the western goal'

Resign'd the skies, and night involv'd the pole.

Their drooping eyes the slumb'rous shade oppress,
Sated they rose, and all retir'd to rest.

Soon as the morn, new-rob'd in purple light, 500.

Pierc'd with her golden shafts the rear of night ;

Ulysses, and his brave maternal race.

The young Autolyoi, assay the chace.

Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades, 505

With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter-troop invades:

What time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream,

Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam.

The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale ;

The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail:

And foremost of the train, his cornel spear.

Ulysses wav'd, to rouse the savage war.

• **Auto!yous.**

Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood :
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thund'rous show'r,
 Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bow'r, 515
 With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store ;
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rous'd by the hounds and hunters' mingling cries,
 The savage from his leafy sounder flies :
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine, 520
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine.
 Young Ithacus, advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his list'd lance in act to throw :
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed ! 525
 His tusks oblique he aim'd the knee to goar ;
 Aslope they glanc'd, the sinewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone : Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubled force the wound repay'd ;
 To the right shoulder-joint the spear apply'd, 430
 His further flank with streaming purple dy'd :
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain ;
 With joy, and vast surprise, th' applauding train.
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain. }
 With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound ; 535
 Then chaunting mystic lays, the closing wound
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force ;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
 Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim.
 Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame, 540
 Confirm'd the cure : and from the Delphic dome
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
 He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
 Relates the chace, and early praise atchiev'd.
 Deep o'er his knee inseam'd remain'd the scar : 545
 Which noted token of the woodland war
 When Euryclea found, th' ablution ceas'd ;
 Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd ;

The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;
 The vase reclining floats the floor around ! 550
 Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express
 Of grief, and joy, alternate in her breast.
 Her fluttering words in melting murmurs dy'd ;
 At length abrupt—My son !—my king !—she cry'd :
 His neck with fond embrace infolding fast, 555
 Fall on the queen her raptur'd eyes she cast,
 Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd :
 But studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present bliss abstracts her thought. 560
 His hand to Euryclea's mouth apply'd,
 Art thou foredoom'd my pest ? the hero cry'd :
 Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd ;
 And have the fates thy babling age ordain'd }
 To violate the life thy youth sustain'd ? 565 }
 An exile have I told, with weeping eyes,
 Full twenty annual suns in distant skies :
 At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast
 To know thy king, and here I stand confess.
 This heav'n-discover'd truth to thee consign'd, 570
 Reserve, the treasure of thy inmost mind :
 Else if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,
 And prostrate to my sword the suitor-train ;
 With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
 Shall bleed, a victim to vindictive rage. 575
 Then thus rejoind the dame, devoid of fear :
 What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe ?
 Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd,
 With ribs of steel, and marble heart immur'd.
 When heav'n, auspicious to thy right avow'd, 580
 Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd ;
 The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair ;
 The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.
 Thy aids avails me not, the chief reply'd ;
 My own experience shall their doom decide ; 585

A witness-judge precludes a long appeal :
Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.

He said : obsequious with redoubled pace
She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase :
The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil

390

With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil.
Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
His former seat receiv'd the stranger guest ;
Whom thus with pensive air the queen address :

}

Tho' night, dissolving grief in grateful ease, 595
Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize ;
A while, reluctant to her pleasing force,
Suspend the restless hour with sweet discourse.

The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy !) 600
My menials, and domestic cares employ :

And, unattended by sincere repose,
The night assists my ever-wakeful woes :
When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.

As when the months are clad in flow'ry green, 605
Sad Philomel, in bow'ry shades unseen,

To vernal airs attunes her varied strains ;
And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains :
Young Itylus, his parents darling joy !

Whom chance mis-led the mother to destroy : 610
Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous boy.

}

So, in nocturnal solitude forlorn,
A sad variety of woes I mourn !

My mind reflective, in a thorny maze
Devious, from care to care incessant strays. 615

Now, wav'ring doubt succeeds to long despair ;
Shall I my virgin nuptial-vow revere ;

And joining to my son's my menial train,
Partake his councils, and assist his reign ?

Or, since mature in manhood, he deplores 620
His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores ;

Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord ;

And from the peers select the noblest lord ?

So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
 These waltful love-debates, a mourning bride?— 625
 A visionary thought I'll now relate,
 Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate.

A team of twenty geese, (a snow-white train ↓)
 Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
 Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove 630
 Pierce from his mountain-cyrie downward drove;
 Each fav'rite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
 My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream,
 To view their death thus imag'd in a dream : 635
 With tender sympathy to soothe my soul;
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole,
 But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
 Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd :
 Parch'd on the battlements he thus began, 640
 (In form an eagle, but in voice a man;)

O queen ! no vulgar vision of the sky
 I come, prophetic of approaching joy :
 View in this plummy form thy victor lord ;
 The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd, 645 }
 Portend the suitors fated to my sword.
 This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd,
 When from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
 Past by the limpid lake my swan-like train
 I found, insatiate of the golden grain. 650

The vision self explain'd (the chief replies)
 Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies :
 Ulysses speaks his own return decreed,
 And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the task, and rare, (the queen rejoin'd,) 655
 Impending destinies in dreams to find :
 Immur'd within the silent bow'r of sleep,
 Two portals firm the various phantoms keep :
 Of iv'ry one ; whence flit to mock the brain
 Of winged lies a light fantastic train : 660

The gate oppos'd, pellucid valves adorn,
And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horn;
Where images of truth for passage wait,
With visions manifest of future fate.

Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd, 665
Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd;
Delusive semblance!——But my remnant life
Heav'n shall determine in a gameful strife:
With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
For me the rival archers shall contend. 670

As on the lifted field he us'd to place
Six beams, oppos'd to six in equal space;
Elanc'd a-far by his unerring art,
Sure thro' six circlets flew the whizzing dart.
So, when the sun restores the purple day, 675
Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay:
To him the spousal honour is decreed,
Who thro' the rings directs the feather'd reed.

Torn from these walls (where long the kinder pow'rs
With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!) 680
On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam;
The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful dream! }

Propose the sportive lot, (the chief replies,)
Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize. 685
Ulysses will surprise th' unfinish'd game
Avow'd, and falsify the suitors' claim.

To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd:
In all thy speech what pleasing force I find!
O'er my suspended woe thy words prevail, 690
I part reluctant from the pleasing tale.
But heav'n, that knows what all terrestrials need,
Repose to night, and toil to day decreed:
Grateful vicissitude! yet me withdrawn,
Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn 695
Establish'd use enjoins: to rest and joy
Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!

Mean-time instructed is the menial tribe
Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.

Thus affable, her bow'r the queen ascends ; 700
The sov'reign step a beauteous train attends :
There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose ;
Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows :
'Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed. 705

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XX.

THE ARGUMENT.

While Ulysses lyes in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him, and casts him asleep. At his awaking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them; notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesiphus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XX.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
 And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed;
 (The remnants of the spoil the suitor-crowd
 In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd :)
 Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste 5
 With duteous care a downy carpet cast :
 With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
 And ruminating wrath, he forms reproach.
 As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
 Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey. 10
 Whilst to nocturnal joys impure, repair
 With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
 His heart with rage this new dishonour rung :
 Wav'ring his thoughts in dubious-balance hung ;
 Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame 15
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame ;
 Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
 And let the peers consummate the disgrace ?
 Round his swol'n heart the murmurous fury rolls ;
 As o'er her young the mother-maistiff growls, 20
 And bays the stranger groom : so wrath compress
 Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.
 Poor suffering heart ! (He cry'd) support the pain
 Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.
 Not fiercer wees thy fortitude could soil, 25
 When the brave partners of thy ten years toil

Dire Polypheme devour'd : I then was freed
By patient prudence from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on reason's peaceful coast,
Tempests of wrath his soul no longer tost; 30

Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd :

As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,

The sav'ry cates on glowing embers cast

Incessant turns, impatient for repast :

Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd, 35

In self-debate the suitors doom resolv'd.

When in the form of mortal nymph array'd,

From heav'n descends the Jove born martial maid ;

And hov'ring o'er his head in view confess'd,

The goddess thus her fav'rite care address'd : 40

Oh thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes !

Why roul those eyes unfriended of repose ?

Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care ;

Blest in thy queen ! blest in thy blooming heir !

Whom, to the gods when suppliant fathers bow, 45

They name the standard of their dearest vow.

Just is thy kind reproach, (the chief rejoin'd)

Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,

In contemplation rapt. This hostile crew

What single arm hath prowess to subdue ? 50

Or if by Jove's and thy auxiliar aid

They're doom'd to bleed ; O say, coelestial maid !

Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain

Nations embattled to revenge the slain ?

Oh impotence of faith ! (Minerva cries) 55

If man on frail unknowing man relies,

Doubt you the gods ? Lo Pallas' self descends,

Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.

In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,

Tho' myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest ; 60

My sure divinity shall bear the shield,

And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.

Now pay the debt to craving nature due,

Her faded pow'rs with balmy rest renew.

She ceas'd : ambrosial humbers seal his eyes ; 65 }
 His care dissolves in visionary joys :
 The goddess, pleas'd, regains her natal skies.

Not so the queen ! the downy bands of sleep
 By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep ;
 A gloomy pause ensu'd of dumb despair ; 70
 Then thus her fate invoc'd with fervent pray'r :

Diana ! speed thy deathful ebon dart,
 And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
 Snatch me, ye whirlwinds ! far from human race,
 Toss'd through the void illimitable space : 75
 Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud !
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, & ree orphans fair
 Were doom'd to wander through the devious air ;
 Thyself untimely and thy consort dy'd, 80
 But four coelestials both your cares supply'd.
 Venus in tender delicacy rears

With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years ;
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind ; 85
 With shapely growth Diana grac'd their bloom,
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But whilst, to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea fought the bow'r of Jove ;
 (The god supreme, to whose eternal eye 90
 The registers of fate expanded ly)

Wing'd Harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
 And to the furies bore a grateful prey.
 Be such my lot ! or thou Diana speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead, 95
 To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
 When woes the waking sense alone assail,
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends : 100
 No truce the warfare of my soul suspends !

The night renews the day-distracting theme,
 And airy terrors sable ev'ry dream.
 The last alone a kind' illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought, 105
 In manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace :
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne, 110
 In audible laments she breathes her moan.
 The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear ;
 Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms ;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115
 Up-springing from his couch, with active haste
 The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd ;
 (The hide, without, imbib'd the morning air,)
 And thus the gods invok'd with ardent pray'r :

Jove, and ethereal thrones ! with heav'n to friend,
 If the long series of my woes shall end ; 120
 Of human race now rising from repose,
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose ;
 And to confirm my faith, propitious Jove !
 Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above. 125

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
 The pitying god his guardian aid avows.
 Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds :
 With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
 Soon, with consummate joy to crown his pray'r, 130
 An omen'd voice invades his faviſh'd ear.
 Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind ;
 Talk'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pure flour (the growth and strength of man.)
 Discharging to the day the labour due, 136
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew ;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind ;
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd : 140

Father of gods and men ! whose thunders roul
 O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole ;
 Whoe'er from heav'n has gain'd this rare ostent,
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
 In this blest moment of accepted pray'r, 145
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care !
 Instant, O Jove ! confound the suitor-train,
 For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain :
 Far from the dome the lewd devourers cast,
 And be this festival decreed their last ! 150
 Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
 Mean time the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food :
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir ; 155
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant fabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
 His steps impetuous to the portal press'd ;
 And Euryclea thus he there address'd : 160

Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
 Was care for due refection, and repose,
 Bestow'd the stranger guest ? or waits he griev'd,
 His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd ?
 Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers ; 165
 (In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs.)
 The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
 And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus : O cease that ever-honour'd name
 To blemish now ; it ill deserves your blame. 170
 A bowl of gen'rous wine suffic'd the guest ;
 In vain the queen the night-refection prest ;
 Nor wou'd he court repose in downy state,
 Unblest'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate !
 A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
 And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed :
 A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
 Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel javelin pois'd, with regal port,
To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court, 180
Forth-issuing from the dome, the prince repair'd:

Two dogs of chase, a lion-hearted guard,
Behind him sow'ry stalk'd. Without delay
The dame divides the labour of the day;
Thus urging to the toils the menial train: 185
What marks of luxury the marble stain!

Its wonted lustre let the floor regain;
The seats with purple clothe in order due;
And let th' absterfive sponge the board renew:
Let some refresh the vase's sullied mold; 190

Some bid the goblets boast their native gold;
Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
And copious waters pure for bathing bear:
Dispatch! for soon the suitors will assay
The lunar feast rites to the god of day. 195

She said; with duteous haste a bony fair
Of twenty virgins to the spring repair:
With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
Some wield the sounding ax; the dodder'd oaks 200
Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.

Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
(Eumæus in their train) the maids return.
Three porkers for the feast, all brawny chin'd,
He brought; the choicest of the tusk kind: 205
In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
Then to the king this friendly speech renew'd:

Now say sincere, my guest! the suitor train
Still treat thy worth with lordly dull disdain;
Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane? 210

Some pitying god (Ulysses sad reply'd)
With vollied vengeance blast their tow'ring pride!
No conscious blush, no sense of night restrains
The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins:
From vice to vice their appetites are tost, 215
All cheaply fated at another's cost!

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
 Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
 The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
 Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd : 220
 Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound ;
 With quav'ring cries the vaulted roofs resound :
 And to the chief austere, aloud began
 The wretch unfriendly to the race of man :

Here, vagrant, still ? offensive to my lords ! 225
 Blows have more energy than airy words ;
 These arguments I'll use : nor conscious shame,
 Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
 On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
 A plenteous board ! Hence ! seek another host ! 230
 Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
 Bot shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephallenia crosses the surgy main
 Philaetius late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
 A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace, 235
 And goats he brought, the pride of all their race ;
 Imported in a shallop not his own :
 The dome re-echo'd to their mingled moan
 Strait to the guardian of the bristly kind
 He thus began, benevolent of mind : 240

What guest is he, of such majestic air ?
 His lineage and paternal clime declare :
 Dim thro' th' eclipse of fate, the rays divine
 Of sov'reign state with faded splendor shine.
 If monarchs by the gods are plung'd in woe, 245
 To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go !
 Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
 Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd :

Stranger ! may fate a milder aspect shew,
 And spin thy future with a whiter clue ! 250
 O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries,
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies !
 Unpiteous of the race thy will began,
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,

With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 235
 The gauling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wand'rer still,
 Upbraids thy pow'r, thy wisdom, or thy will :
 O monarch ever dear ! ——— O man of woe ! ———
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow ! 240
 Like thee, poor stranger guest, day'd his home !
 Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam !
 Or haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
 O, grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, 'till sorrow sink me to the grave !
 His kind protecting hand my youth prefer'd.
 The regent of his Cephaleian herd :
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed : and blackens for the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest heeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that crowd his court :
 Who in partition seek his realm to share ;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine reverse.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending, rattle my anxious heart divide.
 Now, to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy :
 Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail : 280
 In op'ning prospects of ideal joy
 My king returns ; the proud usurpers die.
 To whom the chief : In thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd ;
 Attend a deed already ripe in fate : 285
 Attest, oh Jove, the truth I now relate !
 This sacred truth attest each genial pow'r ;
 Who blest the board, and guard this friendly bow'r ?
 Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey, 290
 Thy wond'ring eyes shall view : his rightful reign
 By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
 And to the shades devote the suitor train. }

O Jove supreme! (the raptur'd swain replies,)
 With deeds consummate soon the promis'd joys! 295
 These aged nerves, with new-born vigor strong,
 In that blest cause shou'd emulate the young——
 Assents Eumæus to the pray'r address;
 And equal ardors fire his loyal breast.

Mean-time the suitors urge the prince's fate; 300
 And deathful arts employ the dire debate:
 When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
 Truſt'd with his finewy pounce a trembling dove:
 Sinister to their hope! this omen ey'd
 Amphinomus, who thus preſaging cry'd: 305

The gods from force and fraud the prince defend;
 O peers! the sanguinary ſcheme ſuſpend:
 Your future thought let ſable fate employ;
 And give the preſent hour to genial joy.

From council ſtrait th' aſſenting peerage ceaſt, 310
 And in the dome prepar'd the genial feaſt.

Diſ-rob'd, their veſts apart in order lay,
 Then all with ſpeed ſuccinct the victims ſlay;
 With ſheep and ſraggy goats the porkers bled,
 And the proud ſteer was on the marble ſpread. 315

With fire prepar'd they deal the morſels round,
 Wine roſy bright the brimming goblets crown'd,
 By ſage Eumæus born: the purple tide
 Melanthius from an ample jar ſupply'd:
 High caniſters of bread Philætiſtus plac'd; 320
 And eager all devour the rich repaſt.

Diſpos'd apart, Ulyſſes ſhares the treat!
 A trivet-table, and ignobler feat,
 The prince appoints; but to his fire aſſigns
 The taſteful inwards, and nectareous wines. 325

Partake, my gueſt, (he cry'd,) without controul
 The ſocial feaſt, and drain the cheering bowl:
 Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruſſian's rage;
 No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
 This dome a refuge to thy wrongs ſhall be, 330
 From my great ſire too ſoon devolv'd to me!

Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease,
 Left arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
 Be patient, peers ! (at length Antinous cries ;) 334
 The threats of vain imperious youth despise :
 Would Jove permit the meditated blow,
 That stream of eloquence should cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd : 340
 Mean-while the pomp of festival increas'd :
 By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
 The city tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove :
 Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid ; 345 }
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
 But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side-board set) Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger-guest ; 350
 Whom Pallas with unpard'ning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest ;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen, 355
 Unnumber'd acres, arable and green ;
 (Ctesippus nam'd) this lord Ulysses ey'd,
 And thus burst out, imposthume with pride :

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend ;
 Since due regard must wait the prince's friend, 360
 Let each a token of esteem bestow :
 This gift acquits the dear respect I owe ;
 With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
 And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said : and of the steer before him plac'd, 365
 That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
 Where to the pastern-bone by nerves combin'd,
 The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd ; }
 Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd.

The chief, indignant, grins a ghastly smile ; 370
 Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :

When thus the prince, with pious rage inflam'd :
 Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
 Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear : 375
 Nor shou'd thy fire a queen his daughter boast,
 The suitor now had vanish'd in a ghost :

No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless pow'r
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
 For genuine worth, of age mature to know, 380
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or if each other's wrongs ye still support,

With rapes and riots to profane my court ;
 What single arm with numbers can contend ?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend, 385 }
 And with my life such vile dishonours end.

A long cessation of discourse ensu'd,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd :

A just reproof, ye peers ! your rage restrain
 From the protected guest, and menial train : 390
 And, prince, to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.

Whilst hope prevail'd to see your fire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord :
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate, 395
 To think he still survives to claim the state ?

Now press the sov'reign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire :
 The lord, selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long-contended prize : 400
 Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty blest,
 You reign, of this imperial dome possesst.

Sage and serene Telemachus replies :
 By him at whose behest the thunder flies !
 And by the name on earth I most revere, 405
 By great Ulysses, and his woes I swear !

K k

(Who never must review his dear domain ;
 Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train.)
 Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
 My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse : 410
 But from this dome my parent-queen to chase !
 From me, ye gods ! avert such dire disgrace.

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
 The suitors' souls, insensate of their doom !
 A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd the fated croud ; 415
 The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud :
 Floting in gore, portentous to survey !
 In each discolour'd vase the viands lay :
 Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
 And sudden sighs precede approaching woe. 420
 In vision rap'd, the * Hyperesian seer
 Up-rose, and thus divin'd the vengeance near :

O race to death devote ! with Stygian shade
 Each destin'd peer impending fates invade :
 With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd ; 425
 With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round :
 Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts,
 To people Orcus, and the burning coasts !
 Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
 But universal night usurps the pole ! 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
 The peers reproach the sure divine of fate ;
 And thus Eurymachus : The dotard's mind
 To ev'ry sense is lost, to reason blind :
 Swift from the dome conduct the slave away ; 435
 Let him in open air behold the day.

Tax not (the heav'n-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
 Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind ;
 No clouds of error dim th' ethereal rays,
 Her equal pow'r each faithful sense obeys. 440
 Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
 Far hence, before yon' hovering deaths descend ;

* Teoclymenus.

Left, the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer, 445
His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.

O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
And aim to wound the prince with pointless wit :
Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice ; 450

Why such profusion of indulgence shown
To this poor, tim'rous, toil-detesting drone ?
That other feeds on planetary schemes,
And pays his host with hideous noon-day dreams.

But, prince ! for once at least believe a friend, 455
To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,

Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
Dear sell the slaves ! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they ; but nought the prince replies ;
Full on his fire he roll'd his ardent eyes ; 460

Impatient strait to flesh his virgin-sword,
From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.

Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
To see the circle sat, of all unseen.

Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare 465
An eve repast, with equal cost and care :

But vengeful Pallas with preventing speed
A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;
A feast of death ! the feasters doom'd to bleed ! }

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XXI.

N. k. 3.

THE ARGUMENT.

The bending of Ulysses' bow.

Penelope, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who should first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses, taking Eumaeus and Philaetius apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter, in the same instant, thunders from heaven; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XXI.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires:
Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well aim'd arrow thro' the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame; 5
But discord and black death await the game!

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin-train attends;
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd: 10
Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay;
There shone high-heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
And there the bow which great Ulysses bore,
And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd:
Beneath Orsilochnus his roof they meet;
One loss was private; one a public debt: 20
Messena's state from Ithaca detains
Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains:
And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
The King and elders trust their common cause.
But Iphitus, employ'd on other cares, 25
Search'd the wide country for his wand'ring mares,

And mules, the strongest of the lab'ring kind ;
 Hapless to search ! more hapless still to find !
 For journeying on to Hercules at length,
 The lawless wretch, the man of brutal strength, 30
 Deaf to heav'n's voice, the social rite transgress ;
 And for theauteous mares destroy'd his guest.
 He gave the bow ; and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart :
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges ! for they met no more.
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land,
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend. 40

Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went ;
 Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring ;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round ;
 The bars fall back ; the flying valves resound ; 50
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.
 She moves majestic thro' the wealthy room,
 Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume :
 There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung :
 Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
 And pensive sate, and tears began to flow.
 To full satiety of grief she mourns ;
 Then silent, to the joyous hall returns, 60
 To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
 Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.
 Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
 Which held th' alternate brags and silver rings.

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Full in the portal the chaste queen appears,	65
And with her veil conceals the coming tears :	
On either side awaits a virgin fair ;	
While thus the matron, with majestic air :	
Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,	
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ;	70
If these neglected, faded charms can move ?	
Or is it but a vain pretence, you love ?	
If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,	
Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.	
Who first Ulysses' wond'rous bow shall bend,	75
And thro' twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,	
Him will I follow, and forsake my home,	
For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,	
Long, long the scene of all my past delight,	
And still to last the vision of my night !	80
Graceful she said, and bad Eumæus show	
The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.	
From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,	
Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.	
Philaetius too relents, but secret shed	85
The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said :	
Hence to your fields, ye rustics ! hence away,	
Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day ;	
Nor to the royal heart recall in vain	
The sad remembrance of a perish'd man.	90
Enough her precious tears already flow——	} }
Or share the feast with due respect, or go	
To weep abroad, and leave us to the bow :	
No vulgar talk ! ill suits this courtly crew	
That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew.	95
I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er	
While yet a child) what majesty he bore !	
And still (all infant as I was) retain	
The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man !	
He said, but in his soul fond joys arise,	100
And his proud hopes already win the prize.	

To speed the flying shaft thro' ev'ry ring,
Wretch ! is not thine : the arrows of the king
Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing !

Then thus Telemachus : Some god I find
With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind ;
When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart ?
Come then, ye suitors ! and dispute a prize
Richer than all th' Achæan state supplies,

Than all proud Argos, or Mycæne knows,
Than all our isles or continents enclose :

A woman matchless, and almost divine,
Fit for the praise of ev'ry tongue but mine.

No more excuses then, no more delay ;
Haste to the trial——Lo ! I lead the way.

I too may try, and if this arm can wing
The feather'd arrow thro' the destin'd ring,
Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
I shall not sorrow for a mother lost ;

But blest in her, possess these arms alone,
Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

He spoke ; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
And cast his purple garment on the ground,

A trench he open'd ; in a line he plac'd

The level axes, and the points made fast,

(His perfect skill the wond'ring gazers ey'd,

The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd)

Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand ;

And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand.

Three times, with beating heart, he made essay ;

Three times, unequal to the task, gave way :

A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd ;

And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd.

The fourth had drawn it. The great sire with joy

Beheld, but with a sign forbid the boy.

His ardor strait th' obedient prince suppress,

And artful, thus the suitor-train address :

Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature !

(For heav'n forbid, such weakness should endure)

How shall this arm unequal to the bow,
Retort an insult, or repel a foe?
But you! whom heav'n with better nerves has blest,
Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
Against the polish'd quiver prop'd the dart.

Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son,
The bold Antinous, to the rest begun:

"From where the goblet first begins to flow,

"From right to left, in order take the bow; 150

"And prove your sev'ral strengths."——The princes
heard;

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd;

The eldest born of Oenop's noble race,

Who next the goblet held his holy place:

He, only he, of all the suitor throng, 155

Their deeds detested, and atjir'd the wrong.

With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,

The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!

Already in despair he gives it o'er;

Take it who will, (he cries) I strive no more. 160

What num'rous deaths attend this fatal bow!

What souls and spirits shall it send below!

Better indeed to die, and fairly give

Nature her debt, than disappointed live,

With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165

Yet still to-morrow false than to-day.

How long in vain Penelope we sought?

This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,

And send us with some humbler wife to live,

Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give. 170

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd,

(With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)

At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,

And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said, 175

What words ill omen'd from thy lips have fled?

Thy coward function ever is in fear;
 Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
 Why should this bow be fatal to the brave,
 Because the priest is born a peaceful slave? 180
 Mark then what others can——He ended there,
 And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare;
 He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
 Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.
 With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
 Chafe ev'ry knot, and supple ev'ry pore.
 Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain;
 The bow inflexible resists their pain.
 The force of great Eurymachus alone
 And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown: 190
 Those only now remain'd; but those confess
 Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
 The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.
 The king observes them: he the hall forsakes, 195
 And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.
 Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke:
 Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!
 Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,
 Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell? 200
 Say, should some fav'ring god restore again
 The lost Ulysses to his native reign;
 How beat your hearts? what aid would you afford?
 To the proud suitors, or your antient lord?

Philaetius thus: Oh were thy word not vain! 205
 Would mighty Jove restore that man again!
 These aged sinews with new vigour strung
 In his blest cause should emulate the young.
 With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd
 Each pow'r above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began:
 Those vows the gods accord: behold the man!
 Your own Ulysses! twice ten years detain'd
 By woes and wand'rings from this hapless land:

At length he comes ; but comes despis'd, unknown, 215
And finding faithful you, and you alone.

All else have cast him from their very thought,
Ev'n in their wishes and their pray'rs forgot !
Hear then, my friends ! if Jove this arm succeed,
And give yon' impious revellers to bleed, 220
My care shall be to bless your future lives

With large possessions and with faithful wives ;
Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
And each on young Telemachus attend,
And each be call'd his brother and my friend. 225 }
To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye :
Lo ! the broad scar indented on my thigh,

When with Autolychus's sons, of yore,
On Parnass' top I chas'd the tusky boar.

His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd 230
The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd :
Eager they view'd ; with joy they stood amaz'd ;
With tearful eyes o'er all their master gaz'd :
Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd : 235
Tears followed tears ; no word was in their pow'r,
In solemn silence fell the kindly shew'r.

The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun ; 240
But first the wise man ceas'd, and thus begun :
Enough——on other cares your thought employ,
For danger waits on all untimely joy.
Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near :
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245
Re-enter then not all at once, but stay
Some moments you, and let me lead the way.

To me, neglected as I am, I know.
The haughty suitors will deny the bow ;
But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis born away, 250
Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.

L 1

At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :
 Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;
 Tho' arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear. 255
 To thy strict charge, Philætiüs, we consign
 The court's main gate: to guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd : the faithful swains
 At distance follow, as their king ordains.
 Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
 And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands ;
 Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
 Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began :

I mourn the common cause ; for, oh my friends !
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ? 265
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on ev'ry shore ;)
 But baffled thus ! confess'd so far below
 Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow !
 How shall all ages our attempt deride, 270
 Our weakness scorn ? Antinous thus reply'd :

Not so, Eurymachus : that no man draws
 The wond'rous bow, attend another cause.
 Sacred to Phoebus is the solemn day,
 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away : 275
 Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forgo,
 And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a row.
 Now bid the few'r approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine ;
 So end our night ; before the day shall spring, 280
 The choicest off'rings let Melanthius bring ;
 Let then to Phoebus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes high-curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow. 285

They heard well-pleas'd: the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :
 The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.

That right compleat, up-rose the thoughtful man, 290.
And thus his meditated scheme began :

If what I ask your noble minds approve;
Ye peers and rivals in the royal love !
Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear;
(Whose sage decision I with wonder hear) 295
And if Eurymachus the motion please;
Give heav'n this day, and rest the bow in peace :
To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies !
But since 'till then this trial you delay, 300
Trust it one moment to my hands to-day :
Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
What once I was, whom wretched you dispise ;
If yet this arm its antient force retain ;
Or if my woes, (a long-continu'd train) 305
And wants and insults, make me less than man.

Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors eyes,
Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
Antinous then : O miserable guest !
Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast ! 310
Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd
To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
Admitted here with princes to confer,
A man unknown, a needy wanderer ?
To copious wine this insolence we owe ; 315
And much thy betters wine can overthrow :
The great Eurytion when this frenzy stung,
Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung :
Boundless the Centaur rag'd ; 'till one and all
The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall ; 320
His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
Hence with long war the double race was curst,
Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.
Such fate I prophesy our guest attends. 325
If here this interdicted bow he bends :

L l. 2.

Nor shall these walls such insolence contain ;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main ;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings.) 330
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike express :
 'Tis impious, prince ! to harm the stranger-guest,
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.
 What if th' immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow ?
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 Accept a wand'ring stranger for my lord ? 340
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain :
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean.

O fair ! and wisest of so fair a kind ! 345
 (Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)
 Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of fame ;
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350
 " Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 " Of that brave chief whose bow they cou'd not bend !
 " In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 " And did what all those princes could not do."
 Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355
 And thus posterity upbraid our name.

To whom the queen : If fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;
 Wrong and oppression no renown can raise ;
 Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360
 The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey ;
 And to his hand if Phoebus give the day,

Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear 365
A two edg'd faulchion and a shining spear,
Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother ! ever honour'd name !
Permit me (cries Telemachus) to claim 370
A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
Has pow'r this bow to grant, or to deny.
Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
To me alone my father's arms descend ; 375
And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
Retire, oh queen ! thy household task resume,
Tend, with thy maids, the labours of the loom ;
The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
These cares to man belong, and most to me. 380

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd.
His sage reply, and with her train retir'd :
There in her chamber as she sat apart,
Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul, 385
Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
'Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Now thro' the press the bow Eumæus bore,
And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar. 390
Hold, lawless rustic ! whither wilt thou go ?
To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow ?
Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
Far from the sweet society of men,
To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made ; 395
If heav'n and Phoebus lends the suitors aid.

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on :
Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words ;
What ! hopes the fool to please so many lords ? 400
Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand,
Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.

Oh! could the vigour of this arm as well
 Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expell!
 Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
 To fill with tumult the dark courts below!

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 The youth, indulging in the genial day.
 Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
 The strife-full bow, and gives it to the king. 410
 Old Euryclea calling then aside,
 Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cry'd)
 At ev'ry portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate;
 And if unusual sounds invade their ear, 415
 If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
 Let none to call or issue forth presume,
 But close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits;
 Clos'd in an instant were the palace gates. 420
 In the same moment forth Philætiüs flies,
 Secures the court, and with a cable tyes
 The utmost gate; (the cable strongly wrought
 Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Egypt brought;)
 Then unperceiv'd and silent, at the board 425
 His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,
 Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er;
 Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
 Its owner absent, and untry'd so long. 430
 While some deriding :—How he turns the bow!
 Some other like it sure the man must know,
 Or else wou'd copy; or in bows he deals;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals —
 Heav'n to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind! 435
 And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd,
 With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Heedless he heard them; but disdain'd reply;
 The bow perusing with exactest eye.

Then, as some heav'nly minstrel, taught to sing 440
 High notes responsive to the trembling string,
 To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
 Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
 Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro ;
 So the great master drew the mighty bow ; 445
 And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
 The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.
 From his essaying hand the string let fly,
 Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 A gen'ral horror ran thro' all the race, 450
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was ev'ry face.

Signs from above ensu'd : th' unfolding sky
 In light'ning burst : Jove thunder'd from on high.
 Fir'd at the call of heav'n's almighty Lord,
 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board : 455
 (Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
 But soon to fly the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the chord he drew,
 Thro' ev'ry ringlet levelling his view ;
 Then notch'd the shaft, releast, and gave it wing ; 460
 The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,
 Sung on direct, and threaded ev'ry ring. }
 The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;
 Pierc'd thro' and thro', the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince : Nor have I wrought thee shame ;
 Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ; 466
 Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
 That antient vigour, once my pride and boast.
 Ill I deserv'd these haughty peers' disdain ;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train, 470
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait till ev'ning for the genial joy.
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night,
 Music, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

He said ; then gave a nod ; and at the word 475
 Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
 Fast by his father's side he takes his stand ;
 The beamy jav'lin lightens in his hand.

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XXII.

THE ARGUMENT.

The death of the suitors.

Ulysses begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus, and Philæteus. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Phemius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXII.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode ;
Stript of his rags, he blaz'd out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store !
Before his feet the ratling show'r he threw ;
And thus terrific to the suitor crew :
One vent'rous game this hand has won to-day ;
Another, princes ! yet remains to play ;
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phoebus assist ! nor be the labour vain.
Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings :
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul !
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl ;
Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath ;
Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death :
For fate who fear'd amidst a feastsful band ?
And fate to numbers by a single hand !
Full thro' his throat Ulysses' weapon pass,
And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'ersflows,
A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose ;
Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls :
Before him spurn'd, the loaded table falls,
And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood
Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.

Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall;
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye;
 Each look'd for arms in vain; no arms were nigh: 30
 Aim'st thou at princes! (all amaz'd they said)
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed;
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vultures shall tear thee.—Thus incens'd they spoke, 35
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wond'rous stroke,
 Blind as they were! for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then, grimly frowning, with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke: 40

Dogs! ye have had your day: ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore;
 While to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay:
 Not so content, with bolder phrenzy fir'd, 45
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd:
 Laws or divine or human fall'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of gods above;
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or fame's eternal voice in future days: 50
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus dreadful he. Confus'd the suitors stood,
 From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood;
 Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide, 55
 Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd.

If, as thy words import, (he thus began)
 Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
 Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
 In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land; 60
 The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
 Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.
 Not love, but wild ambition was his guide,
 To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
 These were his aims, but juster Jove deny'd. 65

Since cold in death th' offender lies, oh spare
 Thy suppliant people, and receive their pray'r !
 Brafs, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray,
 Two hundred oxen ev'ry prince shall pay :
 The waste of years refunded in a day. 70 }

'Till then thy wrath is just. ——— Ulysses burn'd
 With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd :

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
 Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
 If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call ; 75

'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all ;
 Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
 'Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.

Hence with those coward terms : or fight or fly,
 This choice is left ye, to resist or die ; 80
 And die I trust ye shall. ——— He sternly spoke :

With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train :

Yon' archer, com'rades, will not shoot in vain ;
 But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85
 (Who e'er he be) 'till ev'ry prince ly dead.

Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,

And to his shafts obtend these ample boards,

(So need compells.) Then all united strive

The bold invader from his post to drive ; 90

The city rous'd shall to our rescue haste,

And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
 And like a lion rush'd against his lord :

The wary chief the rushing foe repress, 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast :

His failing hand deserts the lifted sword,

And prone he falls extended o'er the board !

Before him wide, in mixt effusion roll

Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100

Full thro' his liver past the mortal wound,

With dying rage his forehead beats the ground ;

M m

He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.

Next bold Amphinomus his arm extends 105
To force the pass: the god like man defends.

Thy spear, Telemachus! prevents th' attack,
The brazen weapon driving thro' his back,
Thence thro' his breast its bloody passage tore:
Flat falls he thund'ring on the marble floor, 110 }
And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.

He left his jav'lin in the dead, for fear
The long incumb'rance of the weighty spear
To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
To rush between, and use the shorten'd sword. 115

With speedy ardour to his fire he flies,
And, Arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries)
Lo, hence I run for other arms to wield,
For missile jav'lins, and for helm and shield;
Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
Lest thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost. 125

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies;
Four brazen helmets, eight resplendent spears,
And four broad bucklers, to his fire he bears:
At once in brazen panoply they shone, 130

At once each servant brac'd his armour on;
Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand:
Chief after chief expir'd at ev'ry wound,
And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground. 135

Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,
Against the wall he set the bow unbent:
And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
And now his hands two beamy jav'lins wield;

He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd 142
O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
From o'er the porch, appear'd the subject town,
A double strength of valves secur'd the place,
A high and narrow, but the only pass : 145

The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there.
When Agelaus thus : Has none the sense
To mount yon' window, and alarm from thence
The neighbour town ? the town shall force the door, 152
And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more,

Melanthius then : That outlet to the gate
So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
But other methods of defence remain,
Myself with arms can furnish all the train ; 155
Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said ; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears :
All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe,
On ev'ry side he sees the labour grow :
Oh curs'd event ! and oh unlook'd-for aid !
Melanthius or the women have betray'd ——— 165
Oh my dear son ! ——— the father, with a sigh ;
Then ceas'd. The filial virtue made reply :

Falseness is folly, and 'tis just to own
The fault committed : this was mine alone ;
My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170
And hence the villain has supply'd their war.
Run, good Eumæus, then, and (what before
I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door :
Learn if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son. 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain ;

Not unobserv'd. Eumæus watchful ey'd,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side :

The miscreant we suspected takes that way ; 180
Him, if this arm be pow'rful, shall I slay ?

Or drive him hither, to receive the meed,
From thy own hand, of this detested deed ?

Not so (reply'd Ulysses) leave him there ;
For us sufficient is another care, 185

Within the stricture of this palace wall
To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall.

Go you and seize the felon ; backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind ;

On this, his body by strong cords extend, 190 }
And on a column near the roof suspend ;
So study'd tortures his vile days shall end.

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste ;
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they past,

As round the room in quest of arms he goes : 195
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes)

One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,

Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn : 200

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stept,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leapt ;

Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.

Active and pleas'd, the zealous swains fulfil 205
At ev'ry point their master's rigid will :

First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,
Then streighten'd cords involv'd his body round ;

So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,
The howling felon swung from side to side. 210

Eumæus scoffing, then with keen disdain :

There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain !

On that soft pillow, from that envy'd height

First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light ;

So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215
To drive thy victims to the suitors feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,
Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :
Each, breathing death, resum'd his dang'rous post
Near great Ulysses ; four against an host. 220
When lo ! descending to her hero's aid,
Jove's daughter Pallas, war's triumphant maid :
In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;
Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd :

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ; 225
Oh ev'ry sacred name in one ! my friend !
Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown.
What-e'er through life's whole series I have done
Or good or grateful, now to mind recall,
And aiding this one hour, repay it all. 230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom-warrior ey'd,
And first, loud threat'ning, Agelaus cry'd ;

Mentor, beware ; nor let that tongue persuade 235
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;

Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the fire's and son's commix thy blood.
What hop'st thou here ? Thee first the sword shall slay
Then lop thy whole posterity away ; 240

Far hence thy banish'd comfort shall we send ;
With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend ;
Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend. }

His barb'rous insult ev'n the goddess fires,
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires : 245

Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind ;
That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead ?
And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust 250
Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust ?

If this, when Helen was the cause, were done,
 What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son ?
 Rise then in combat, at my side attend ;
 Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
 And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !

255

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
 The sire and son's great acts, with held the day ;
 By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
 And levell'd pois'd the wings of victory :
 Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
 Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
 And unperceiv'd enjoys the rising fight.

260

Damastor's son, bold Agelaus, leads
 The guilty war ; Eurynomus succeeds ;
 With these Pisander, great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus : these six survive,
 The best of all the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desp'rate as they stand,
 Thus Agelaus rous'd the lagging band :

365

270

The hour is come, when yon' fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor :
 Lo ! Mentor leaves him with an empty boall ;
 The four remain, but four against an host.
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart :
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain :
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain.

275

Then all at once their mingled lances threw, 280
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew ;
 In vain ! Minerva turn'd them in her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death ;
 With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls ;
 The storm past innocent. The godlike man
 Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began :
 'Tis now, brave friends our turn, at once to throw
 (So speed them heav'n !) our jav'lines at the foe.

285

Book XXII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 415

That impious race to all their past misdeeds 290
Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.

He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew:
Great Demoptolymus, Ulysses slew;
Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart; 295
Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumaeus, falls;
Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.

The rest retreat. The victors now advance,
Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
Again the foe discharge the steely show'r; 300
Again made frustrate by the virgin pow'r:

Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall;
Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall;
Some weak, or pond'rous with the brazen head,
Drop harmless, on the pavement sounding dead. 305

Then bold Amphimedon his jav'lin cast;
Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd;
And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd,
On good Eumaeus' shield and shoulder glanc'd;
Not lessen'd of their force, so slight the wound, 310
Each sung along, and drop'd upon the ground.

Fate doom'd thee next; Eurydamus, to bear
Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.
By the bold son Amphimedon was slain;
And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315
Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled;
And thus Philaetius glory'd o'er the dead:

There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain,
Oh sharp in scandal, voluble and vain!
How weak is mortal pride! To heav'n alone 320
Th' event of actions, and our fates are known.
Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear;
The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
And Damastorides that instant fell; 325
Fast by, Leocritus expiring lay,
The prince's jav'lin tore its bloody way

Through all his bowels : down he tumbles prone,
His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd ; aloft she spreads 33●

The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads ;

The dreadful Ægis blazes in their eye ;

Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly :

Confus'd, distracted, through the rooms they fling, }
Like oxen madden'd by the breeze's sting, 335 }

When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle spring. }

Not half so keen, fierce vulturs of the chace

Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race,

When the wide field extended snares beset,

With conscious dread they shun the quiv'ring net : 44●

No help, no flight ; but wounded ev'ry way,

Headlong they drop : the fowlers seize the prey.

On all sides thus they double wound on wound ;

In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,

Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345

And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Liodes first before the victor falls.

The wretched augur thus for mercy calls :

O gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed :

Still undishonour'd or by word or deed 350

Thy house, for me, remains ; by me repress'd :

Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest :

Averse they hear'd me when I counsell'd well,

Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.

Oh spare an augur's consecrated head, 355

Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead.

Priest as thou art ! for that detested band

Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land :

Against Ulysses have thy vows been made ;

For them thy daily orisons were paid : 360

Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires :

One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took

Which Agelaus' dying hand forsook ;

Full through his neck the weighty faulchion sped : 365
 Along the pavement roll'd the mutt'ring head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,
 Phemius the sweet, the heav'n-instructed bard.
 Beside the gate the rev'rend minstrel stands ;
 The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands ; 370
 Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,

Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
 And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
 His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
 Between the laver and the silver throne :
 Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
 Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began :

O king ! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
 And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380

A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
 For dear to gods and men is sacred song.

Self-raught I sing : by heav'n and heav'n alone
 The genuine seeds of poesy are sown ;

And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
 To gods alone, and god-like worth, we pay.

Save then the poet, and thyself reward ;

'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.

That here I sung, was force and not desire ;
 This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire : 390

And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay

Nor servile flatt'ry stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
 His fire approaches, and the bard defends :

Oh mix not, father, with those impious dead 395
 The man divine ! forbear that sacred head.

Medon the herald too our arms may spare,

Medon, who made my infancy his care ;

If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give

Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live. 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
 Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,

Wrapt in a new-slain ox's ample hide :
 Swift at the word he cast his screen aside.
 Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears, 405
 And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears :

O prince ! O friend ! lo here thy Medon stands ;
 Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands !
 Incens'd too justly by that impious brood,
 Whose guilty glories now are set in blood. 410

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye :
 Be bold, on friendship and my son rely ;
 Live, an example for the world to read.
 How much more safe the good than evil deed :
 Thou, with the heav'n-taught bard, in peace resort 415
 From blood and carnage to yon' open court :
 No other work requires.—With tim'rous awe
 From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw,
 Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
 To the bright altars of protector Jove. 420

Mean while Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
 If yet there live of all th' offending kind.
 Not one ! complete the bloody tale he found,
 All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.
 So, when by hollow shores the fisher train 425
 Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
 And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught contain,
 All naked of their element, and bare,
 The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air ;
 Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiff'ning prey, 430
 'Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
 Old Euryclea to the deathful hall :
 The son observant not a moment stays ;
 The aged governess with speed obeys : 435
 The sounding portals instant they display ;
 The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
 On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
 All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.

So the grim lion from the slaughter comes, 440
Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,
His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed complete ; 445
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd :
The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said :

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, controul
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
T' insult the dead is cruel and unjust ; 450
Fate, and their crime, have sunk them to the dust.
Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails an unlamented shade. 455
But thou, sincere, oh Eurycea ! say,
What maids dishonour us, and what obey ?

Then she : In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave, 460
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive.
Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
Nor me nor chaste Penelope obey ;
Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
Where slumbers lost now close the royal eye ;
There wake her with the news, — the matron cry'd.
Not so (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)
Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds. 470
In haste the matron parts : the king proceeds :

Now to dispose the dead the care remains
To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains ;
Th' offending females to that task we doom,
To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475
These (ev'ry table cleans'd, and ev'ry throne,
And all the melancholy labour done)

Drive to yon' court, without the palace wall,
 There the revenging sword shall smite them all ;
 So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
 Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said : the lamentable train appear ;
 Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear ;
 Each heav'd her mournful burden, and beneath
 The porch, depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
 The chief severe, compelling each to move,
 Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.
 With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
 (The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor }
 Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore. }
 Once more the palace set in fair array, 491
 To the base court the females take their way ;
 There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince : To these shall we afford 495
 A fate so pure, as by the martial sword ;
 To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
 And base revilers of our house and name ?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
 A ship's tough cable, from a column hung ; 500
 Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
 Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
 Their heads above, connected in a row,
 They beat the air with quiv'ring feet below.
 Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
 The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
 Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
 The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
 Their bloody work : they lop'd away the man, 510
 Morsel for dogs ! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
 The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears ;
 His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel :
 He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell——

They wash, and to Ulysses take their way, 515
So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address'd the king :
Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace : then the queen attend,
And let her, with the matron-train, descend ; 520
The matron-train, with all the virgin band,
Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea: Joyful I obey,
But cast those mean dishonest rags away ;
Permit me first thy royal robes to bring : 525
Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.
" Bring sulphur strait and fire," (the monarch cries)
She hears, and at the word obedient flies.
With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
He purg'd the walls and blood-polluted rooms. 530
Again the matron springs with eager pace,
And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,
A gazing throng, a torch in ev'ry hand.
They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace 535
Each humbly kiss'd his knee, or hand, or face ;
He knows them all ; in all such truth appears,
Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.
BOOK XXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Euryclea awakes Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her, but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XXIII.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse, with eager rapture, speeds her way ;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

And sleeps my child ? the rev'rend matron cries : §
Ulysses lives ! arise, my child, arise !
At length appears the long-expected hour !
Ulysses comes ! The suitors are no more !
No more they view the golden light of day ;
Arise and bless thee with the glad survey ! 10

Touch'd at his words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
Ah ! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind ?
The righteous pow'rs who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,
And human thought, with unresisted sway, 15
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away :
Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And folly with the tongue of wisdom speaks.

Unkind, the fond illusion to impose :
Was it to flatter, or deride my woes ? 20
Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy :
Why must I wake to grieve, and curse thy shore,
O Troy ?—may never tongue pronounce thee more !
Be gone : another might have felt our rage, 25
But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth : My soul a lie disdains ;
 Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns :
 That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
 And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30
 He, he is thine ! thy son, his latent guest
 Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast ;
 With well-concerted art to end his woes,
 And burst at once in vengeance of the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
 Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung ; 36
 Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,
 Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here ?
 How could that num'rous and outrageous band
 By one be slain, though by an hero's hand ? 40

I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,
 When death was busy, a loud dying groan ;
 The damsel train turn'd pale at ev'ry wound,
 Immur'd we sat, and catch'd each passing sound.
 When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends, 45
 And at his nod the damsel train descends ;
 There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
 And the dead suitors almost swam in blood ;
 Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,
 Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey, 50
 Glorious in gore !——now with sulphureous fires,
 The dome he purges, now the flame aspires ;
 Heap'd by the dead without the palace walls——
 Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls !
 Thy ev'ry wish the bounteous gods bestow, 55
 Enjoy the present good, and former woe.
 Ulysses lives his vanquish'd foes to see ;
 He lives to thy Telemachus and thee !

Ah no ! with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
 Excess of joy disturbs thy wand'ring mind ; 60
 How blest this happy hour, should he appear,
 Dear to us all, to me supremely dear !
 Ah no ! some god the suitors' deaths decreed,
 Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed,

Blind to condemn the stranger's righteous cause, 65
And violate all hospitable laws !

The good they hated, and the pow'rs defy'd ;
But heav'n is just, and by a god they dy'd.
For never must Ulysses view this shore ;
Never ! the lov'd Ulysses is no more ! 70

What words, the matron cries, have reach'd my ears ?
Doubt we his presence, when he now appears ?
Then hear conviction : ere the fatal day
That forc'd Ulysses o'er the wat'ry way,
A boar fierce-rushing in the sylvan war 75
Plow'd half his thigh ; I saw, I saw the scar,
And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound ;
But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
Then, daughter, haste away ! and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die ! 80

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies :
Wise is thy soul, but errors seize the wife ;
The works of gods what mortal can survey ?
Who knows their motives ? who shall trace their way ?
But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
The paths of death, by man or by a god.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
But with alternate joy and fear descends ;
At ev'ry step debates, her lord to prove !
Or rushing to his arms, confess her love ! 90
Then gliding through the marble valves in state,
Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sat :
The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground ;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break : 95
Amaz'd she sat, and impotent to speak ;
O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
At length Telemachus : ——— Oh who can find
A woman like Penelope unkind ! 100
Why thus in silence ? why with winning charms
Thus slow to fly with rapture to his arms ?

Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
 When twice ten years are past of mighty woes :
 To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
 The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone !

O my Telemachus ! the queen rejoin'd,
 Distracting fears confound my lab'ring mind ;
 Pow'rless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
 Nor dare to question: doubts on doubts arise. 110
 O deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
 These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove !

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies :
 Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wife ;
 Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring ; 115
 This garb of poverty belies the king ;
 No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
 Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
 If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,
 The homicide retreats to foreign lands ; 120

By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls,
 Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
 The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise ;
 For wisdom all is thine ! lo I obey, 125
 And dauntless follow where you lead the way ;
 Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
 Thy coward son degen'rate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath, the monarch cries,
 Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
 Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
 And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay ;
 While the sweet lyrift airs of rapture sings,
 And forms the dance responsive to the strings.

That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135
 Lo ! the queen weds ! we hear the spousal lay !
 The suitors' death unknown, till we remove
 Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king: Th' observant train obey,
 At once they bathe, and dress in proud array ; 140

The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
 And fair zon'd damsels from the sprightly dance.
 The voice, attun'd to instrumental sounds,
 Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;
 Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say, 145
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.

Thus they—but nobly chaste she weds no more.

Mean-while the weary'd king the bath ascends;
 With faithful cares Eurynome attends, 150
 O'er ev'ry limb a show'r of fragrance sheds:
 Then drest in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
 His thick large locks, of Hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
 His heav'nly skill, a breathing image lives;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mold,
 And the pale silver glows with fusile gold: 160
 So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a god he moves;
 More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
 Radiant before his gazing consort sate.

And oh, my queen! he cries; what pow'r above 165
 Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love!

Canst thou, Penelope, when heav'n restores
 Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
 Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
 Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day? 170

Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
 For me, and me alone; th' imperial bed:
 My weary nature craves the balm of rest:
 But heav'n with adamant has arm'd her breast:

Ah no! she cries, a tender heart I bear, 175
 A foe to pride; no adamant is there:
 And now, ev'n now it melts! for sure I see
 Once more Ulysses, my belov'd, in thee!

Fix'd in my soul, as when he sail'd to Troy,
 His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy ! 180
 Haste, from the bridal bow'r the bed translate,
 Fram'd by his hand, and be it drest in state !

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious with disguise ;
 Touch'd at her word, the king with warmth replies,
 Alas for this ! what mortal strength can move 185
 Th' enormous burden ; who but heav'n above !

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;
 But the whole earth must move, if heav'n commands.
 Then hear sure evidence, while we display
 Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190
 This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread
 Full in the court its ever-verdant head.

Vast as some mighty column's bulk on high
 The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;
 Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bow'r, 195
 And roof'd defensive of the storm and show'r ;
 The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;
 And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.

I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
 Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ; 200

Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
 And bore it regular from space to space ;
 Athwart the frame at equal distance lay
 Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye ;
 Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mold 205
 With silver shone, with elephant, and gold.

But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,
 Or still inviolate the olive stands,
 'Tis thine, oh queen, to say : and now impart,
 If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart ? 210

While yet he speaks, her pow'r's of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away ;
 At length recov'ring, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew ;
 The tears pour'd down amain : and, Oh, she cries, 215
 Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise !

O vers'd in ev'ry turn of human art,
 Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart !
 The righteous Pow'rs that mortal lots dispose,
 Decree us to sustain a length of woes ; 220
 And from the flow'r of life, the bliss deny
 To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 O let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus, to speak my love ;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms, 225
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms !
 I dreaded fraud ! men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey :
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, oh my lord ! not want of love : 230
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms,
 Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day,
 Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But heav'n, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed :
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
 But why these sorrows, when my lord arrives ?
 I yield, I yield ! my own Ulysses lives ! 240
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bow'r.)
 Since what no eye has seen, thy tongue reveal'd, 245
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.
 Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
 As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores,
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars, 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulph'd in crouds at once the sailors die ;
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Out lives the tumult of conflicting waves,

All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand, 255
And plunging forth with transport grasps the land.

The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.

Nor had they ended till the morning ray :

But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260

The wheels of night retarding, to detain

The gay Aurora in the wavy main :

Whose flaming steeds, emerging through the night,

Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265

Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;

A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;

By heav'n above, by hell beneath enjoin'd :

For, to Tiresias through th' eternal gates

Of hell I trode, to learn my future fates. 270

But end we here—the night demands repose,

Be deck'd the couch ! and peace a-while my woes !

To whom the queen : Thy word we shall obey,

And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away !

Since the just gods who tread the starry plains 275

Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.

But what those perils heav'n decrees, impart ;

Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

To this the king : Ah why must I disclose

A dreadful story of approaching woes ? 280

Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,

When thou must learn what I must speak with tears ?

Heav'n, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,

Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;

From realm to realm a nation to explore 285

Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,

Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,

A painted wonder, flying on the main.

An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes

The unknown instrument with strange surprise, 290

And calls a corn-van : this upon the plain

I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;

Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
 Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar :
 Then swift re-sailing to my native shores, 295
 Due victims slay to all th' ethereal pow'rs.
 Then heav'n decrees in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays ;
 Unknown to pain in age resign my breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ; 300
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest ;
 My people blessing, by my people blest.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous pow'rs display,
 By their dread seer †, and such my future day.

To whom thus firm of soul : If ripe for death, 305
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath ;
 While heav'n a kind release from ills foreshows,
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !

But Euryclea, with dispatchful care,
 And sage Eurynome, the couch prepare : 310
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day ;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynome descends ;
 A torch she bears to light with guiding fires 315
 The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
 Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair ; 320
 But in discourse the king and consort lay,
 While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away ;
 Intent he hears Penelope disclose
 A mournful story of domestic woes,
 His servants insults, his invaded bed, 325
 How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
 His gen'rous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
 And the wild riots of the suitor-train.

O O

† Tiresias.

The king alternate a dire tale relates,
 Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates. 330
 All he unfolds : his list'ning spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale,
 Sleepless devours each word ; and hears, how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain ;
 How to the land of Lote unblest he sails ; 335
 And images the rills and flow'ry vales !
 How, dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore,
 How the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
 From friendly Æolus with prosperous gales ; 340
 Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars,
 And whisks him groaning from his native shores :
 How on the barb'rous Laestrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
 How scarce himself surviv'd : he paints the bow'r, 345
 The spells of Circe, and her magic pow'r ;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death ;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade, 350
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts !
 Then how unharm'd he past the Siren-coasts,
 The jutting rocks, where fierce Charybdis raves,
 And howling Scylla whirls her thund'rous waves,
 The cave of death ! How his companions slay 355
 The oxen sacred to the god of day,
 Till Jove in wrath the ratt'ling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides :
 How struggling through the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bow'rs ; 360
 Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life exempt from age and woe :
 How, sav'd from storms, Phæacia's coast he trode, 365
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a god,

Who gave him last his country to behold,
With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
Minerva rushes through th' aerial way,
And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills :
Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed; 375
And thus with thought mature the monarch said :

My queen, my consort ! through a length of years,
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
Thou, for thy lord ; while me th' immortal Pow'rs
Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380

Now, blest again by heav'n, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway :
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty'd folds with gifts or spoils.
But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes. 385

With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies ;
The good old man, to' waisting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.
But hear, though wise ! this morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes, heroes roll'd : 390
Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away !

He spoke, and, sheath'd in arms, incessant flies
To wake his son, and bid his friends arise :
To arms ! aloud he cries : his friends obey, 395 }
With glitt'ring arms their manly limbs array, }
And pass the city-gate ; Ulysses leads the way.

Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

THE
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BOOK XXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes, the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

T H E
O D Y S S E Y.
B O O K XXIV.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
 Conveys the dead, a lamentable train !
 The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
 That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day, 5
 Points out the long, uncomfortable way.
 Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
 Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
 As in a cavern of some rifted den,
 Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene ; 10
 Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
 They move, and murmurs run through all the rock :
 So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
 And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
 And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends, 15
 And now the gates where ev'ning Sol descends,
 And Leuca's rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of dreams ;
 And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
 In ever-flow'ring meads of asphodel. 20
 The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air !
 Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before ;
 Ajax, and great Achilles, are no more !
 Yet still a master ghost, the rest he aw'd, 25
 The rest ador'd him, tow'ring as he trod ;

Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er. 30

When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
Of great Atrides : him in pomp pursu'd
And solemn sadness through the gloom of hell,
The train of those who by Ægysthus fell,
O mighty chief ! (Pelides thus began,) 35

Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man !
King of an hundred kings ! to whom resign'd
The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind !
Com'st thou the first, to view this dreary state ?
And was the noblest the first mark of fate ? 40

Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
The lot which all lament; and none can shun;
Oh ! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round !
Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise 45

Historie marbles to record thy praise :
Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone,
Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
But heavier fates were destin'd to attend :
What man is happy till he knows his end ? 50

O son of Peleus ! greater than mankind !
(Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)
Thrice happy thou ! to press the martial plain
Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain :
In clouds of smoke, rais'd by the noble fray, 55

Great, and terrific ev'n in death you lay,
And deluges of blood flow'd round you ev'ry way. }
Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
And all in tempests the dire ev'ning clos'd

Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load; 60
And decent on the fun'ral bed bestow'd.

Then unguents sweet, and tepid streams we shed ; }
Tears flow'd from ev'ry eye, and o'er the dead
Each clipt the curling honours of his head. }

Struck at the news, thy azure mother came; 65
 The sea-green sisters waited on the dame.
 A voice of loud lament through all the main
 Was heard, and terror seiz'd the Grecian train:
 Back to the ship the frightened host had fled;
 But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd: 70
 (From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
 And long vicissitudes of human things)
 "Forbear your flight: fair Thetis from the main
 "To mourn Achilles leads her azure train."
 Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75
 Robe thee in heav'nly vests, and round thee weep;
 Round thee, the Muses, with alternate strain,
 In ever-consecrating verse, complain.
 Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
 And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80
 Till sev'nteen nights and sev'nteen days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
 To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep and sable oxen slay;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mixt clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase.
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold)
 There we thy relics, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:
 In the same urn a sep'rate space contains
 Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100
 Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround:
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound:

High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th' extended Hellespont surveys;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast, 105
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims

Heroic prizes and exequial games.

The gods assented; and around thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day. 110

Oft have I seen, with solemn fun'ral games,
 Heroes and kings committed to the flames;
 But strength of youth, or valour of the brave
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.

Such were the games by azure Thetis giv'n; 115

And such thy honours, oh belov'd of heav'n!

Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor feeds

Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.

But what to me avail my honours gone,

Successful toils, and battles bravely won? 120

Doom'd by stern Jove at home to end my life,

By curst Ægythus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain.

Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.

On each majestic form they cast a view, 125

And tim'rous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.

But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,

Nis antient host Amphimedon survey'd:

Son of Melanthus! (he began,) O say!

What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130

To tread the downward, melancholy way?

Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?

Were all these partners of one native air?

Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep

Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep? 135

Did nightly thieves, or pyrates cruel bands,

Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?

Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,

Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?

Inform thy guest ; for such I was of yore, 140
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore ;
 Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king of men ! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate. 145

Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursu'd his royal dame ;
 Her coy reserve, and prudence mixt with pride,
 Our common suit nor granted, nor deny'd ;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd ; 150
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.

Her hand, laborious in delusion, spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread :
 Ye peers, she cry'd, who press to gain my heart
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part, 155
 Yet a short space your rival suit suspend,
 Till this funereal web my labours end :

Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death :
 Left, when the fates his royal ashes claim, 160
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;
 Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
 Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd : our gen'rous train complies,
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 165

The work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,
 Each following night revers'd the toils of day.
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;
 The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
 And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand, 170
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.

Forc'd, she completes it ; and before us lay
 The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
 Display'd the radiance of the night and day. }

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil, 175
 All fortune led Ulysses to our isle.

Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
 At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
 Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
 And speedy lands, and secretly confers. 180
 They plan our future ruin, and resort
 Confed'rate, to the city and the court.
 First came the son ; the father next succeeds,
 Clad like a beggar, whom Eumaeus leads ;
 Propt on a staff, deform'd with age and care, 185
 And hung with rags, that flutter'd in the air.
 Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?
 Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
 Ill-us'd by all ! to ev'ry wrong resign'd,
 Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind. 190
 But when, arising in his wrath t' obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way ;
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room :
 Then, to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
 The archer's strife ; the source of future woes,
 And omen of our death ! In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew :
 'To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands ;
 In vain we threat ; Telemachus commands : 200
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent ;
 Through ev'ry ring the victor arrows went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood ;
 Pour'd forth the darts, that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god ! 205 }
 First bleeds Antinous : thick the shafts resound ;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground ;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall ;
 Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all :
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans ; 210
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.
 Thus, great Atrides ! thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon' fair realms above.

Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor, 215
No friend to bathe our wounds ! or tears to shade
O'er the pale corse ! the honours of the dead.

Oh blest Ulysses ! (thus the king express'd
His sudden rapture) in thy consort blest !
Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue, shin'd ; 220
Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.
Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
And model to the future age, shall last :
The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
(Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
Not such, oh Tyndarus ! thy daughter's deed,
By whose dire hand her king and husband bled :
Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
Example dread ! and theme of tragic song !
The gen'ral sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
Conferr'd the mournful phantomes of the dead ;
While from the town, Ulysses, and his band,
Past to Laertes' cultivated land. 235

The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
And labour made the rugged soil a plain :
There stood his mansion of the rural fort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court :
Where the few servants that divide his care 240
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare ;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son Ulysses gave command : 245
Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the pow'r's divine.

Alone, and unattended, let me try
If yet I share the old man's memory ;
If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know, 250
(Their light and dearest object long ago)
Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe !

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;
 The house they enter, and he seeks the field;
 Through rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,
 And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round. 256
 Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,
 Nor servants, absent on another care;
 To search the woods for sets of flow'ry thorn,
 Their orchard-bounds to strengthen and adorn. 260

But all alone the hoary king he found;
 His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;
 His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,
 Fenc'd with a double cap of goat-skin hair:
 His buskins old, in former service torn, 265
 But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.
 In this array the kingly gard'ner stood,
 And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.

Beneath a neighb'ring tree, the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing ev'ry line, 270
 The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their war'ry store;
 The much-enduring man could bear no more;
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his rev'rend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul.
 Not so: his judgment takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay, 280
 More gentle methods on weak age employs,
 And moves the sorrows to enhance the joys.
 Then to his fire with beating heart he moves,
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves;
 Who digging round the plant still hangs his head,
 Nor aught remits the work, while thus he said: 286

Great is thy skill, oh father! great thy toil;
 Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil;
 Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear; 290
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.

On ev'ry plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.
 Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
 Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim. 295
 Not for thy sloth I deem thy lord unkind,
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind;
 I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
 Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300
 These are the rights of age, and should be thine.
 Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
 So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?
 But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most)
 Is this the far-fam'd Ithacenan coast? 305
 For so reported the first man I view'd,
 (Some surly islander, of manners rude)
 Nor farther conference vouchsaf'd to stay;
 Heedless he whisk'd, and pursu'd his way,
 But thou, whom years have taught to understand, 310
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand:
 A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,
 Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?
 Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
 When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest; 315
 He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name,
 To him whatever to a guest is ow'd
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd;
 To him sev'n talents of pure ore I told, 320
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics fin'd with
 A bowl that rich with polish'd silver flames, [gold,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.

At this the father, with a father's fears,
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears :) 325
 This is the land; but ah! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:
 Sunk is the glory of this once-fam'd shore!
 Thy ancient friend, oh stranger, is no more!

Full recompence thy bounty else had born; 330
 For ev'ry good man yields a just return :
 So civil rights demand ; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest ?
 That hapless guest, alas, for ever gone ! 336
 Wretch that he was ! and that I am ! my son !
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn !
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign, 340
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter through the air :
 Nor could his mother fun'ral unguents shed,
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead, 345
 Nor his sad comfort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or drop'd a tender tear !
 But tell me, who thou art ? and what thy race,
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place ?
 Or if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main ?
 Or com'st thou single ? or attend thy train ? }
 Then thus the son : From Alybas I came,
 My palace there ; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born ; from Aphidas the king 355
 Of Polyphemon's royal line I spring.
 Some adverse daemon from Sicania bore
 Our wand'ring course, and drove us on your shore :
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Reliev'd our weary vessel from the sea. 360
 Five years have circled since these eyes pursu'd
 Ulysses parting through the fable flood ;
 Prosp'rous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
 And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
 Well hop'd we then to meet on this fair shore, 365
 Whom heav'n, alas ! decreed to meet no more.

Quick through the father's heart these accents ran ;
 Grief seiz'd at once, and wrap'd up all the man ;
 Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and forrowing spread
 A cloud of ashes on his hoary head. 370

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
 Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight :
 He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
 With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face :

I, I am he : oh, father ! rise, behold 375

Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old ;

Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,

Restor'd, and breathing in his native land :

These floods of sorrow, oh, my sire ! restrain :

The vengeance is complete ; the suitor-train, 380

Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands ly slain. }

Amaz'd, Laertes : " Give some certain sign,

" If such thou art, to manifest thee mine."

Lo here the wound, (he cries) receiv'd of yore,

The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385

When by thyself and by Anticlea sent,

To old Autolychus' realms I went.

Yet by another sign thy offspring know ;

The sev'ral trees you gave me long ago,

While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace, 390

And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace :

To ev'ry plant in order as we came,

Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,

Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd ;

Twelve pear-trees bowing with their pendent load, }

And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd ; 395

Full fifty purple figs ; and many a row

Of various vines that then began to blow,

A future vintage ! when the Hours produce

Their latent buds ; and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,

His heart within him melts ; his knees sustain

Their feeble weight no more ; his arms alone

Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown ;

He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd : 405
Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.

Soon as returning life regains its seat,

And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat ;

Yes, I believe, (he cries) almighty Jove !

Heav'n rules us yet, and gods there are above. 410

'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—

But what shall guard us, if the town invade ;

Hi, while the news through ev'ry city flies,

All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise ?

To this Ulysses : As the gods shall please 415

Be all the rest ; and set thy soul at ease.

Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,

And take the banquet which our cares provide :

There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,

And there the young Telemachus attends. 420

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,

And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.

The swains and young Telemachus they found,

The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.

The hoary king his old Sicilian maid 425

Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.

Pallas attending gives his frame to shine

With awful port, and majesty divine ;

His gazing son admires the god-like grace,

And air celestial dawning o'er his face : 430

What god, (he cry'd) my father's form improves ?

How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves !

Oh ! would to all the deathless pow'rs on high,

Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky !

(Reply'd the king, elated with his praise) 435

My strength were still, as once in better days ;

When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,

And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.

Such were I now, not absent from your deed.

When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440

This arm had aided yours ; this hand bestrown

Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on ;

Nor had the fire been sep'rate from the son.

They commun'd thus ; while homeward bent their
way

The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day ; 445

Dolius the first, the venerable man,

And next his sons, a long succeeding train,

For due refection to the bow'r they came,

Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame,

Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire ; 450

They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.

On chairs and beds in order seated round,

They share the glad some board ; the roofs resound.

While thus Ulysses to his antient friend :

" Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend ; 455

" The rites have waited long." The chief commands

Their loves in vain ; old Dolius spreads his hands,

Springs to his master with a warm embrace,

And fastens kisses on his hands and face :

Then thus broke out : Oh long, oh daily mourn'd !

Beyond our hopes, and to our wish return'd ! 461

Conducted sure by heav'n ! for heav'n alone

Could work this wonder : welcome to thy own !

And joys and happiness attend thy throne !

Who knows thy blest, thy wish'd return ? oh say, 465

To the chaste queen shall we the news convey ?

Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day ?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride

Already is it known (the king reply'd

And strait resum'd his seat ;) while round him bows 470

Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows :

Then all beneath their father take their place,

Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying fame the swift report had spread.

Through all the city, of the suitors dead. 475

In throngs they rise, and to the palace croud ;

Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,

Inhume the natives in their native plain,

The rest in ships are wasted o'er the main. 480

Then sad in council all the seniors sat,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.
 Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes :
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.
 Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As mixing words with sighs, he thus began :
 Great deeds, oh friends ! this wond'rous man has wrought,
 And mighty blessings to his country brought : 490
 With ships he parted, and a num'rous train ;
 Those, and their ships, he bury'd in the main.
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.
 Haste then, and ere to neighb'ring Pyle he flies, 495
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies ;
 Arise (or ye for ever fall) arise !
 Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed !
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed.
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd : dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wond'ring throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along ; 505
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke)
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke :
 Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand ;
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with blood :
 In vain old Mentor's form the god bely'd,
 'Twas heav'n that struck, and heav'n was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shock, 516
 When, slowly rising, Halitherses spoke,

(Rev'rend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew :)
 Me too ye fathers hear ! from you proceed 520
 The ills ye mourn ; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein,
 (Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain,)
 An absent hero's bed they sought to soil.
 An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil : 525
 Immod'rate riot, and intemp'rate lust !
 Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.
 Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,
 Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail.

His mod'rate words some better minds persuade : 530
 They part, and join him ; but the number stay'd.
 They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,
 And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.
 They cast their limbs in bras ; to arms they run ;
 The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535
 Before the city, and in ample plain,
 They meet : Eupithes heads the frantic train.
 Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air ;
 Fate hears them not, and death attends him there.

This past on earth, while in the realms above 540
 Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove :
 May I presume to search thy secret soul ?
 Oh Pow'r supreme, oh ruler of the whole !
 Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state
 Or peaceful amity, or stern debate ? 545
 Declare thy purpose ; for thy will is fate.

Is not thy thought my own ? (the god replies
 Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)
 Had not long since thy knowing soul decreed,
 The chief's return should make the guilty bleed ? 550
 'Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.
 Yet hear the issue ; since Ulysses' hand
 Has slain the suitors, heav'n shall bless the land.
 None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own ;
 Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son : 555

Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
 And o'er the past, oblivion stretch her wing :
 Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
 His people blessing, by his people blest.
 Let all be peace.——He said, and gave the nod 560
 That binds the fates ; the sanction of the god :
 And prompt to execute th' eternal will,
 Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,
 The rage of hunger and of thirst repress : 565
 To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent :
 A son of Dolius on the message went,
 Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach'd, embattel'd on the field.
 With backward step he hastens to the bow'r, 570
 And tells the news. They arm with all their pow'r.
 Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace,
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race ;
 Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on :
 And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone. 575
 Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
 And brazen panoply invells the band.
 The op'ning gates at once their war display :
 Fierce they rush forth : Ulysses leads the way.
 That moments joins them with celestial aid, 580
 In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended maid
 The suff'ring hero felt his patient breast
 Swell with new joy, and thus his son address :

Behold, Telemachus ! (nor fear the sight)
 The brave embattled ; the grim front of fight ! 585
 The valiant with the valiant must contend :
 Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,
 Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread ;
 Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.

Thy eyes, great father ! on this battle cast, 590
 Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus : the gallant boy
 Good old Laertes heard with panting joy ;

And, Blest ! thrice blest this happy day ! he cries,
The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
A son and grandson of th' Arceſian name
Strive for fair virtue, and conteſt for fame!

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear :
Son of Arceſius, rev'rend warrior, hear !
Jove and Jove's daughter firſt implore in pray'r, 600
Then whirling high, diſcharge thy lance in air.

She ſaid, infuſing courage with the word.
Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implor'd,
And whirling high, diſmiſſ'd the lance in air.
Full at Eupithes drove the deathful ſpear : 605
The braſs-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound ;
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms reſound.

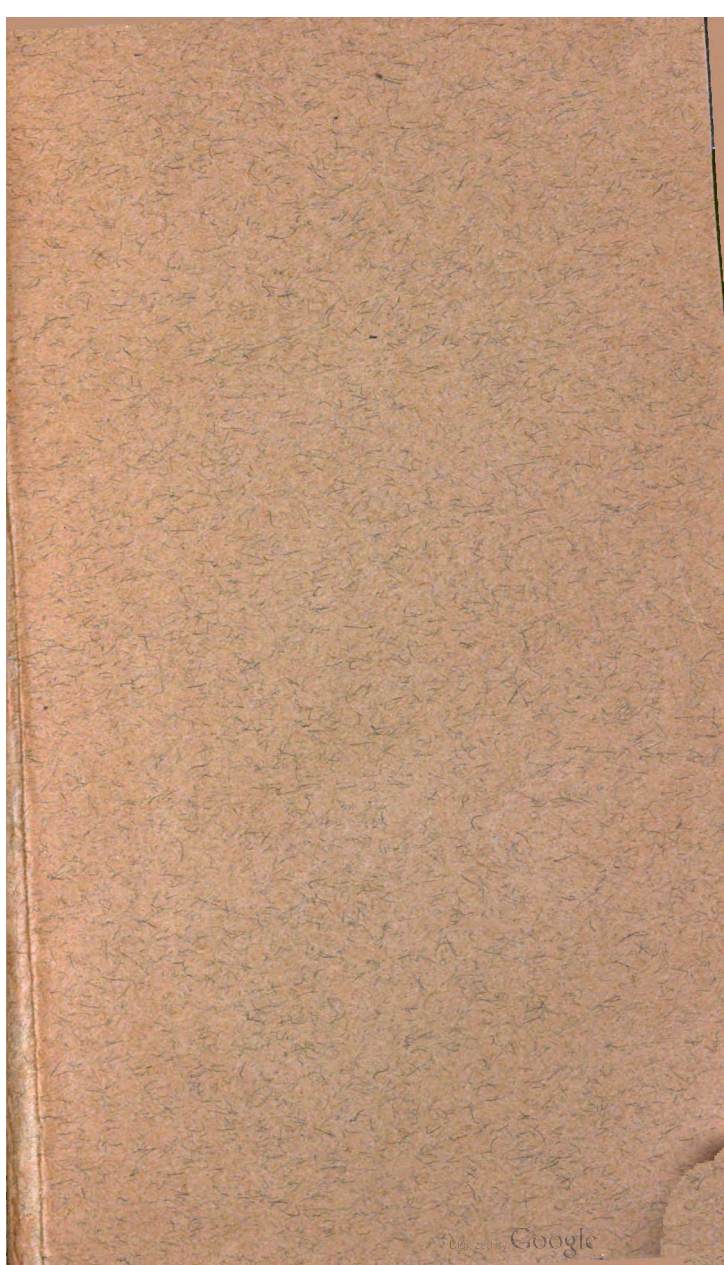
Before the father and the conqu'ring ſon
Heaps ruſh on heaps ; they fight, they drop, they run.
Now by the ſword and now the jav'lin fall 610
The rebel race, and death had ſwallow'd all :
But from on high the blue-ey'd virgin cry'd ;
Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide :
“ Forbear, ye nations ! your mad hands forbear
“ From mutual ſlaughter : Peace deſcends to ſpare.”

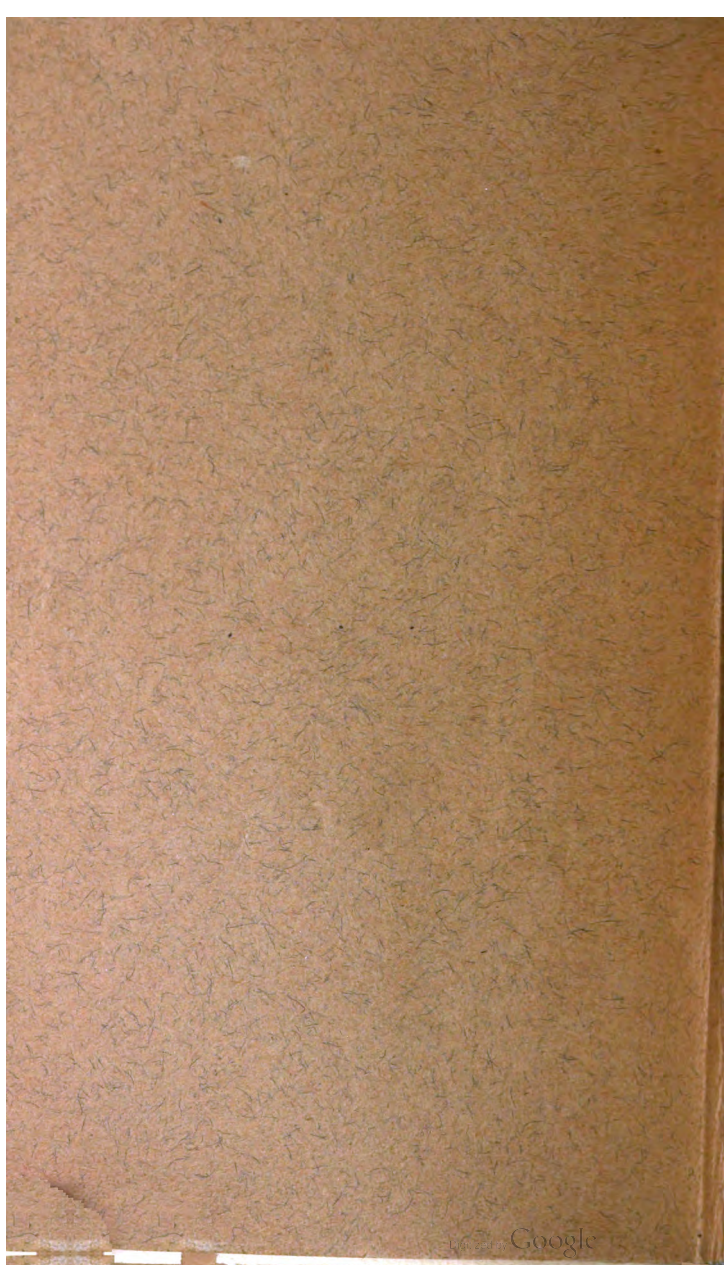
Fear ſhook the nations. At the voice divine 616
They drop their jav'lins, and their rage reſign.
All ſcatter'd round their glitt'ring weapons ly ;
Some fall to earth, and ſome confus'dly fly.
With dreadful ſhouts Ulyſſes pour'd along, 620
Swift as an eagle, as an eagle ſtrong.

But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims ;
Before Minerva ſhot the livid flames ;
Blazing they fell, and at her ſeet expir'd :
Then ſtopt the goddeſs, trembled, and retir'd. 625

Deſcended from the gods ! Ulyſſes, ceaſe ;
Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.
So Pallas ſpoke. The mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-ſeed of Jove,
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord, 630
“ And willing nations knew their lawful lord.”

THE END.





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